

SCOPING PHASE PUBLIC MEETING

MOTUOANE PRODUCTION RIGHT EIA 12/4/016

MOTUOANE ENERGY (PTY) LTD



WHAT DO WE WANT TO ACHIEVE?

PURPOSE

- Present and contextualize the proposed development to the I&APs
- Outline the licensing requirements
- Outline the involvement of Interested and Affected Parties
- Provide update on project progress
- Highlight the way forward and key next phases in the project
- Record issues raised by I&APs

AGENDA

- Ground Rules / Announcements
- Project Overview and Description
- Legislated Requirements
- Involvement of Interested and Affected Parties
- Summary of Scoping Report / Findings
- EIA Plan of Study
- Project Timelines (Anticipated)



GROUND RULES

- Please be respectful
- Please do not interrupt other speakers
- Please keep questions to the end of the presentation
- Please first state your name before your comment or question
- Keep comments and questions to the point of the meeting
- Please speak up and clearly- Must use the microphone to ensure accurate record.

SAFETY / ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Safety Brief
- Announcements:
 - Assembly Point
 - Restrooms
 - Tea / Coffee

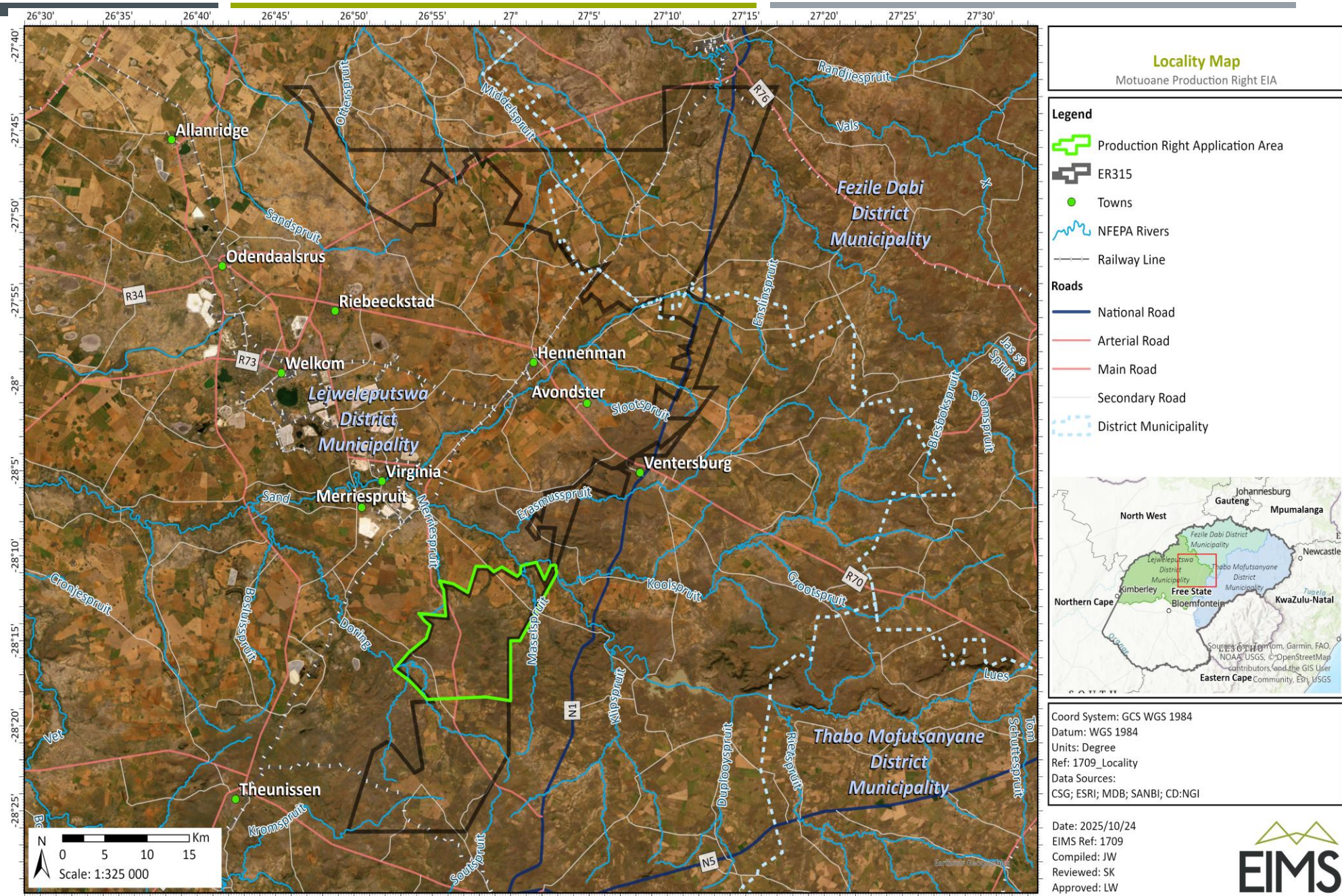
APPLICANT AND EIA TEAM DETAILS

- Developer / Applicant: Motuoane Energy (Pty) Ltd
- Independent EAP: Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd
- Specialists:

Discipline	Consultant / Company
Agricultural Potential, Soils & Land Capability	The Biodiversity Company
Air Quality Assessment	Airshed Planning Professionals
Climate Change Assessment	Airshed Planning Professionals
Noise Impact Assessment	Enviro Acoustic Research
Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment	EIMS (Pty) Ltd
Palaeontological Impact Assessment	Banzai Environmental
Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment	The Biodiversity Company
Aquatics and Wetland Assessment	The Biodiversity Company
Geohydrological Assessment	Gradient Groundwater Consulting
Hydrological Assessment	SMEC South Africa
Social Assessment	Equispectives Research and Consulting Services
Financial Provisions	EIMS (Pty) Ltd
Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA)	Riscom (Pty) Ltd

	26°30'	26°35'	26°40'	26°45'	26°50'	26°55'	27°	27°5'	27°10'	27°15'	27°20'	27°25'	27°30'
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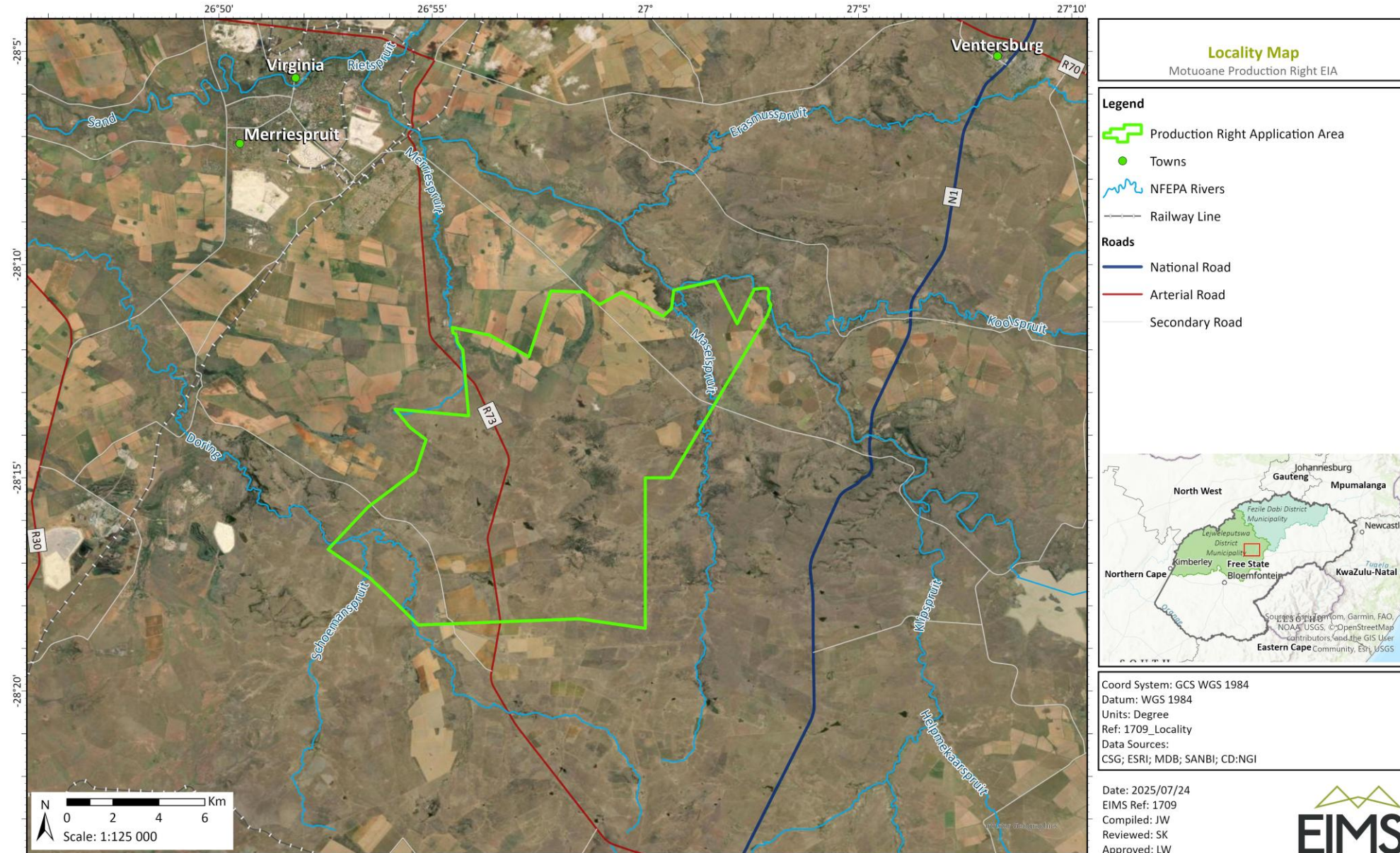
- Motuoane holds an ER315 granted on 19th of October 2018, covering ~95 483 ha.
- Environmental Authorisation
 - Ref: 12/3/315 issued by the then DMRE.
- Amended EA for additional wells was granted on the 31st of October 2024.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

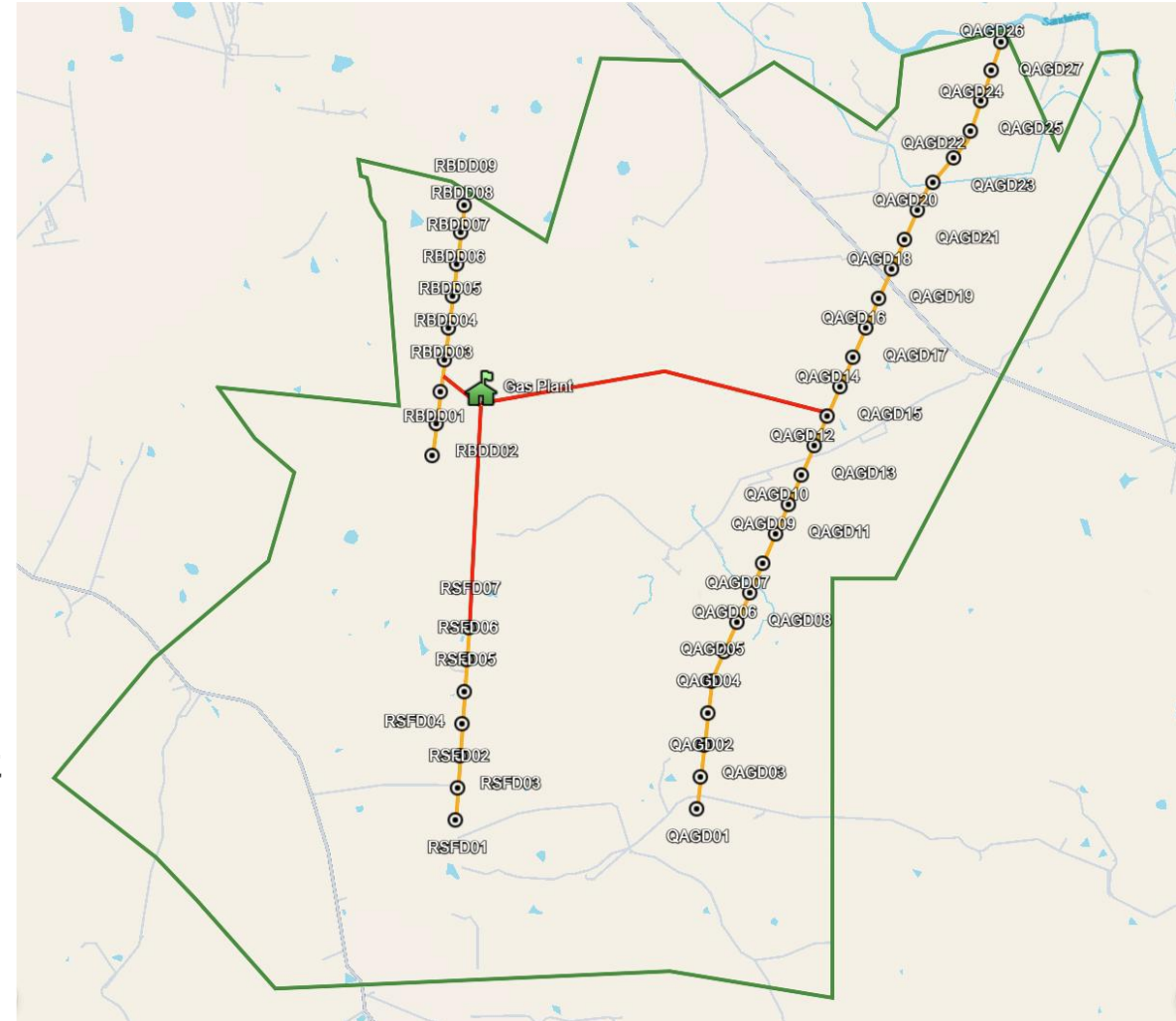
Project Proposal:

- Application to convert portion ER315 into a Production Right (PR)
- Application area of ~14 440 ha, covering various farm portions southeast of the town of Virginia, Free State.
- The proposed extraction and production will target helium and methane gas.



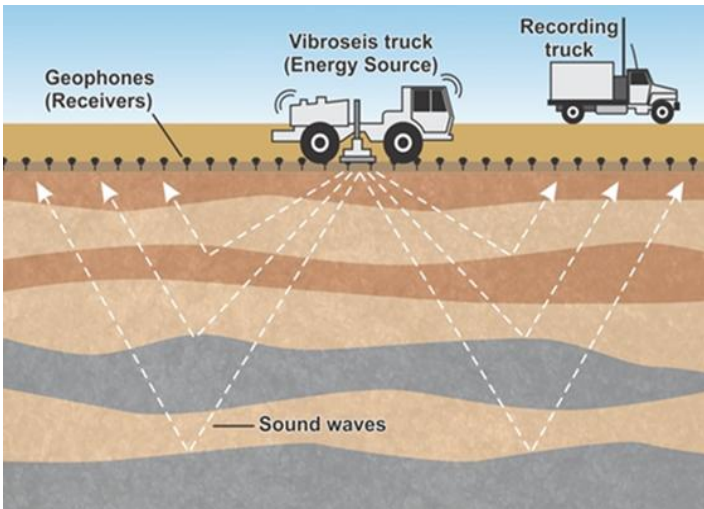
PROJECT OVERVIEW

- The proposed project will involve the following activities:
 - Pre-drilling **seismic and/or audio magnetotelluric surveys** to optimize well locations for maximum deliverability;
 - Drilling and completion of up to **43 production wells** (within 500m corridors);
 - Construction of **gas gathering pipeline** systems (installed length ~28 800 m);
 - Construction of a **helium recovery facility (gas or liquid helium) and gas (methane) processing plant** ~15 ha (CNG and/or LNG); and
 - Construction of associated infrastructure such roads and communications facilities, if necessary.



SEISMIC SURVEY

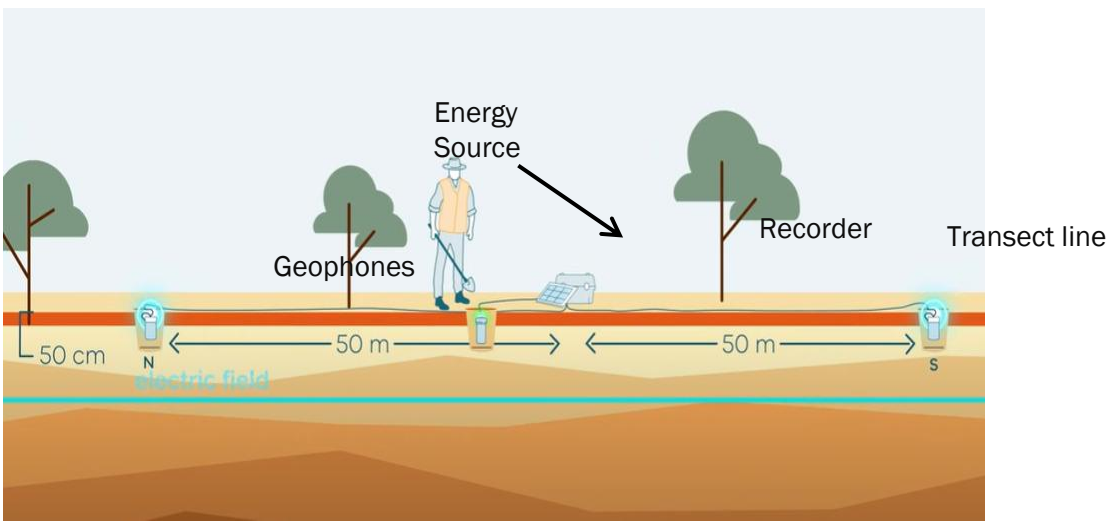
VIBROSEIS TECHNIQUE



ACCELERATED WEIGHT DROP



MAGNETOTELLURIC SURVEY

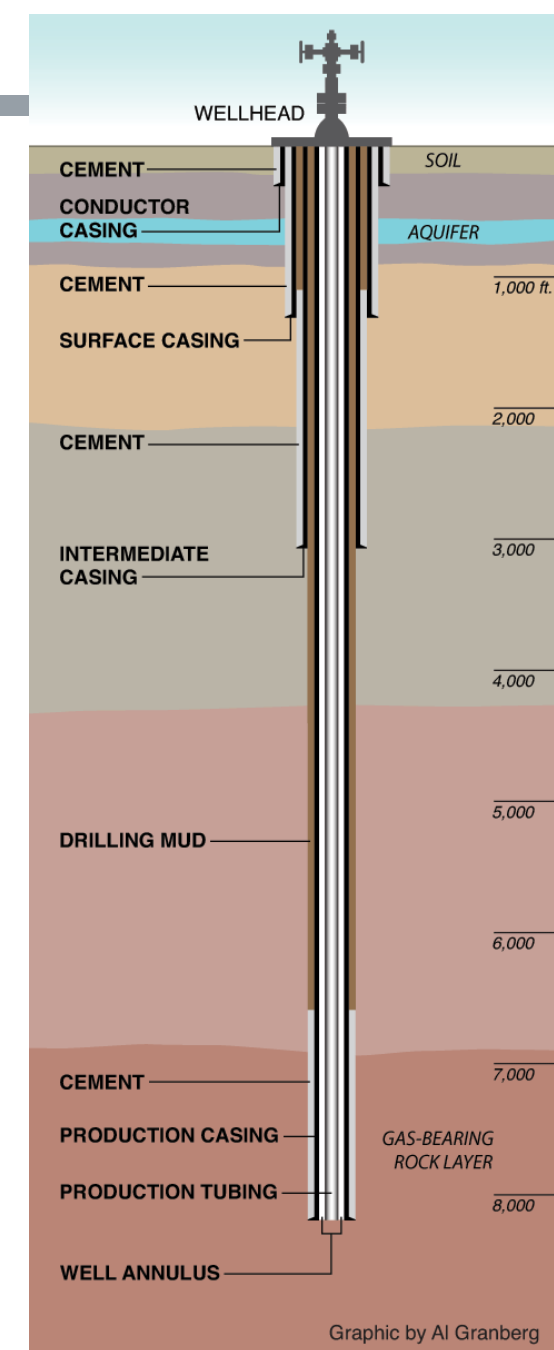


Key Specs

- Total Length ~68,33 km
- Within 25m corridors

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- Motuoane proposes to undertake
 - Exploration wells will be drilled and, if successful (gas producing), converted into production wells
 - Up to 43 production wells within the PR area
 - Percussion or rotary drilling method proposed
 - 50x50m drill pad and overall depth of approximately 500-600m
 - Each well will be **steel cased and have cement barriers to prevent leaks as well as plugged** at the end of production to prevent groundwater seepage / contamination
 - Drilling activities are estimated to be one to two weeks per hole
 - Major construction activities will occur during the initial 5 years of the development
 - The production right area has an expected life of at least 30 years



<https://www.propublica.org/article/anatomy-of-a-gas-well-426>

WELL DRILLING

DRILL RIG



STEEL CAPPED EXPLORATION WELL



DRILL PAD



WELLHEAD SURFACE INFRASTRUCTURE

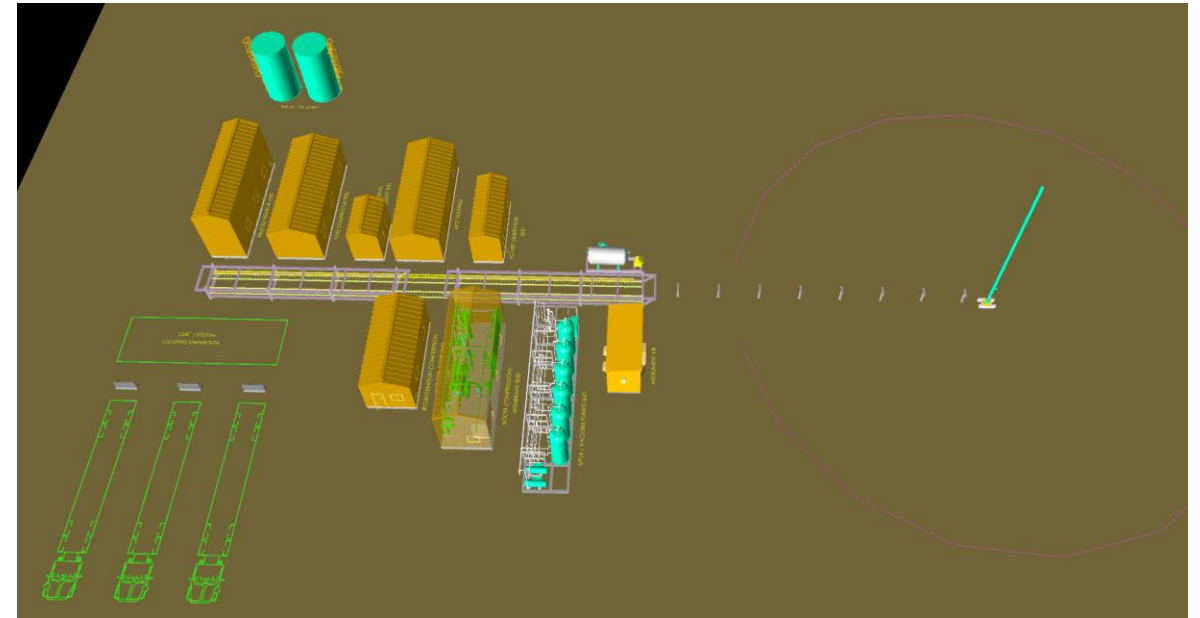


GAS PRODUCTION NETWORK

GAS GATHERING PIPELINES

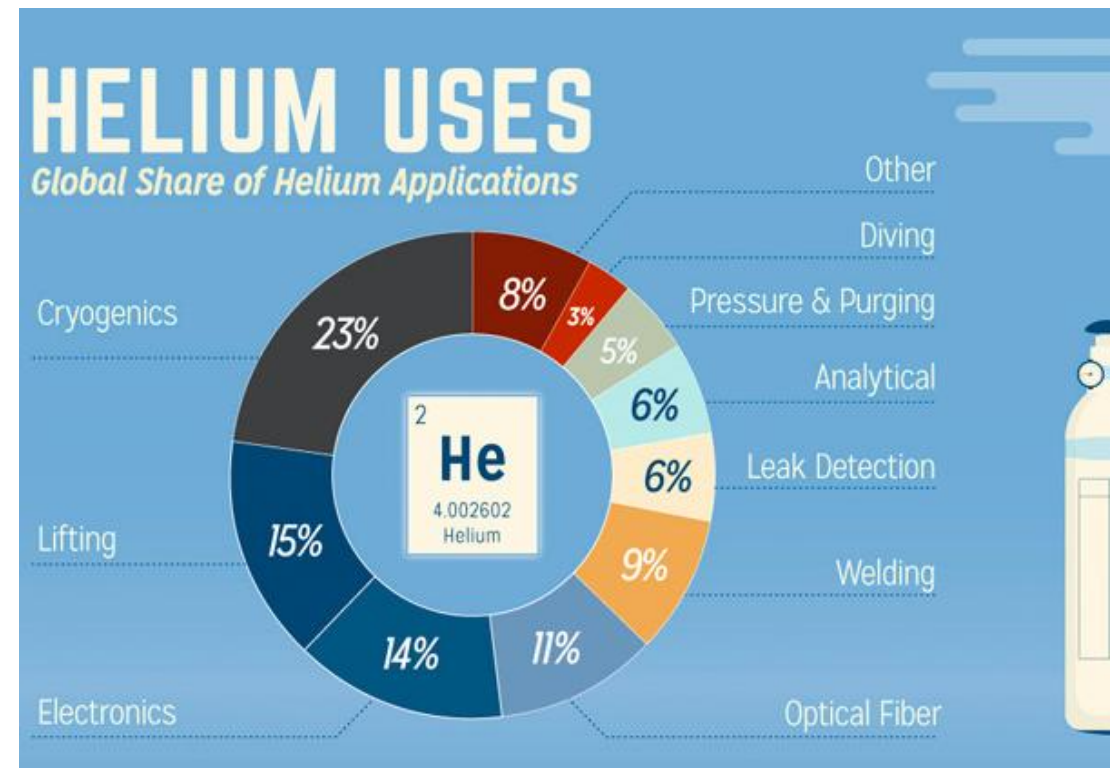
- Low-pressure underground pipelines from the wellhead to the gas processing plant (total installed length ~28 800 m)
- High-density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) pipelines ~110 – 315 mm diameter
- Depth ~750mm (grazing land) and ~1000mm (cultivated crop land)
- Servitude corridors (~10 m wide) with aboveground concrete markers

HELIUM AND GAS PROCESSING PLANT



NEED & DESIRABILITY

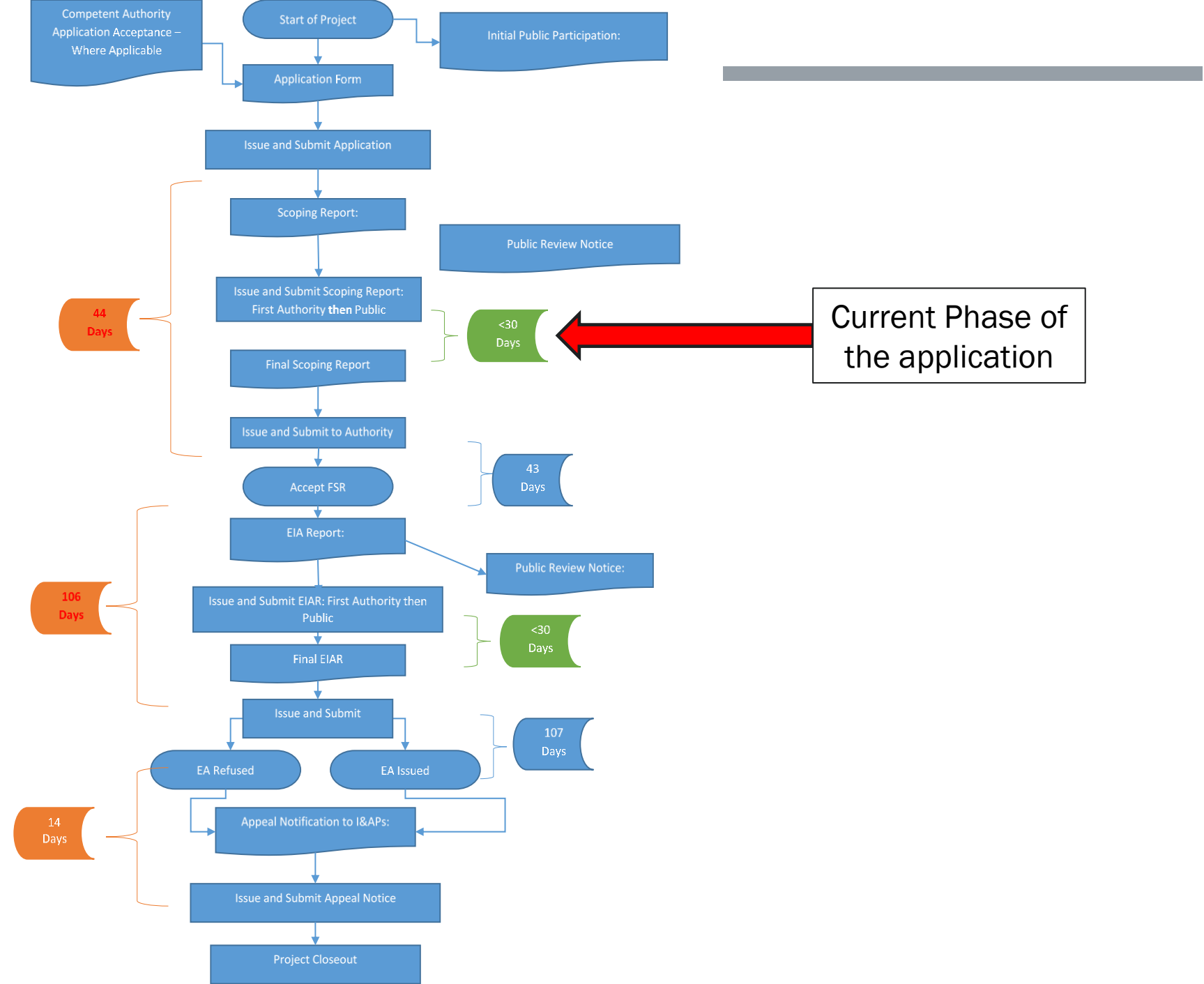
- Why is this project / in this area?
 - Targets strategic & Irreplaceable Resource (no substitute)
 - High-Tech Applications (MRIs, semiconductors, fiber optics, etc)
 - Virginia gas fields have high concentrations – target helium.
 - Improved security of supply
 - Minimal to short-term opportunities - potential in the long-term for local economic stimulation through direct employment, future business opportunities, royalties and tax revenues
 - The Department of Energy's IRP states that regional and domestic gas options should be pursued.



LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- Full EIA process is required in terms of NEMA EIA Regulations (2014, as amended) for the proposed activities
 - **GNR 983 Activity 21C:** onshore seismic survey which requires an exploration right...
 - **GNR 984 Activity 20:** activity including the operation which requires a production right in terms of MPRDA...
 - Additional NEMA triggers include:
 - GNR 983 Activity 12, 19, 24, 27, 28, 56, 67
 - GNR 984 Activity 5, 7
 - GNR 985 Activity 4, 12, 14, 18
 - **Other potential triggers include:**
 - NEMAQA: Section 21 Subcategory 2.4 (handling and storage of petroleum products)
 - NWA: Section 21 (c), (g) and (i)

NEMA Scoping & EIA Flow Diagram



INVOLVEMENT OF INTERESTED AND AFFECTED PARTIES

- **Pre-Application Phase (November 2025)**
 - Initial call to register
 - Registered Letters, Faxes and Emails
 - Newspaper Advertisement
 - Government Gazette
 - Placement of site notices
- **Scoping Phase (January – February 2026)**
 - Public Review and Comment on Scoping Report: 23 January 2026 – 23 February 2026
 - **Public meeting: 18 February 2026**
- **EIA Phase (TBC ~June – July 2026)**
 - Public Review and Comment on EIA Report: **Registered I&APs to be notified**
 - Public meeting: **Registered I&APs to be notified**
- **Notification of Decision Phase (TBC ~November 2026)**
 - Notification of Authority's Decision and appeals process: **Registered I&APs to be notified**

SUMMARY OF SCOPING REPORT: ALTERNATIVES

➤ Locality / Property Alternatives

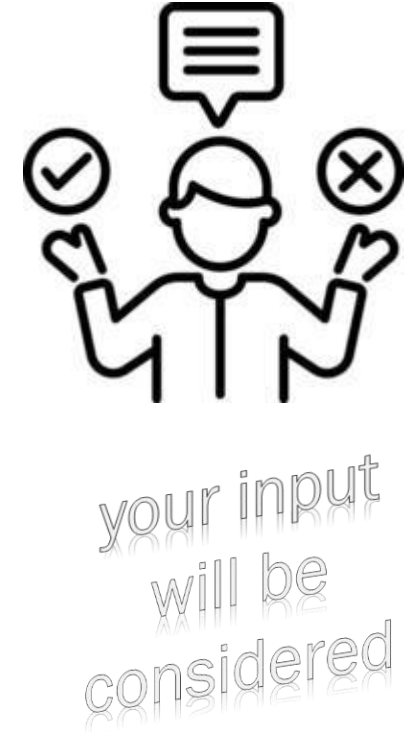
- Undertaking the activities within preliminary identified production corridors or
- Within preliminary identified production corridors but excluding the directly **affected renewable energy developments**.
- Undertaking the activities **outside preliminary production corridors**.

➤ Design / Layout Alternatives

- Traditional excavated lined pond (drill sump pits) or
- Aboveground tanks with secondary containment (Pitless drilling).

➤ Process Alternatives

- Drilling Alternatives
 - Rotary Drilling Method;
 - Percussion Drilling Method;
 - Rotary-Percussion Drilling Method; or
 - Diamond Core Drilling Method.
 - Seismic Survey Alternatives
 - Vibroseis Technique;
 - Accelerated Weight Drop; or
 - Magnetotelluric Survey.
 - Venting vs Flaring
- ## ➤ The No-Go Option



BASELINE SPECIALIST STUDIES

- Agricultural Potential, Soils & Land Capability
- Air Quality Assessment
- Climate Change Assessment
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Assessment
- Palaeontological Impact Assessment
- Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment
- Aquatics and Wetland Assessment
- Geohydrological Assessment
- Social Assessment

PRELIMINARY IMPACTS IDENTIFIED

- **Biological / Biodiversity**

- Loss/ destruction of natural habitat
- Introduction/ Invasion by Alien Species
- Loss of floral species.
- Displacement of faunal species

- **Geo-physical (geology, topography, air, water)**

- Erosion due to storm water runoff
- Impact due to topsoil stripping
- Surface water contamination
- Groundwater contamination
- Loss of fertility
- Loss of flow paths
- Emissions and dust
- Impacts on wetlands



- **Archaeological and Cultural Heritage**

- Disturbance/ destruction of archaeological sites or historic structures
- Disturbance/ destruction of fossils

- **Socio-economic**

- Stakeholder fatigue
- Visual impact and impact on sense of place
- Nuisance and impact on sense of place
- Perceptions and expectations
- Traffic Impacts
- Safety and security (i.e., access to properties, theft, fire hazards...)
- Impact on existing infrastructure
- Employment opportunities (minimal & short-term)

PRELIMINARY MITIGATION MEASURES

- **Biological / Biodiversity**

- Minimise vegetation clearance
- An Invasive Species Management Plan
- Duration of the construction should be minimized to as short term as possible
- Any disturbed area must be re-habilitated to its pre-disturbed state
- Use of existing roads as far as possible
- No-go areas: sensitive areas, SCC, etc...
- Compliance monitoring during the activities

- **Geo-physical (geology, topography, air, water)**

- Best drilling fluid option should be selected
- All drilling sites must be properly sealed to trap all gases from escaping
- Reduce to nuisance factor of dust to neighboring residents
- An emergency response plan
- No-go areas and apply appropriate buffers, etc...
- No potential formation water must be discharge into the environment
- No uncontrolled discharges from the drilling pad or site shall be permitted
- Surface and groundwater quality monitoring before, during and after drilling activities

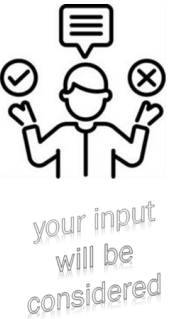


- **Archaeological and Cultural Heritage**

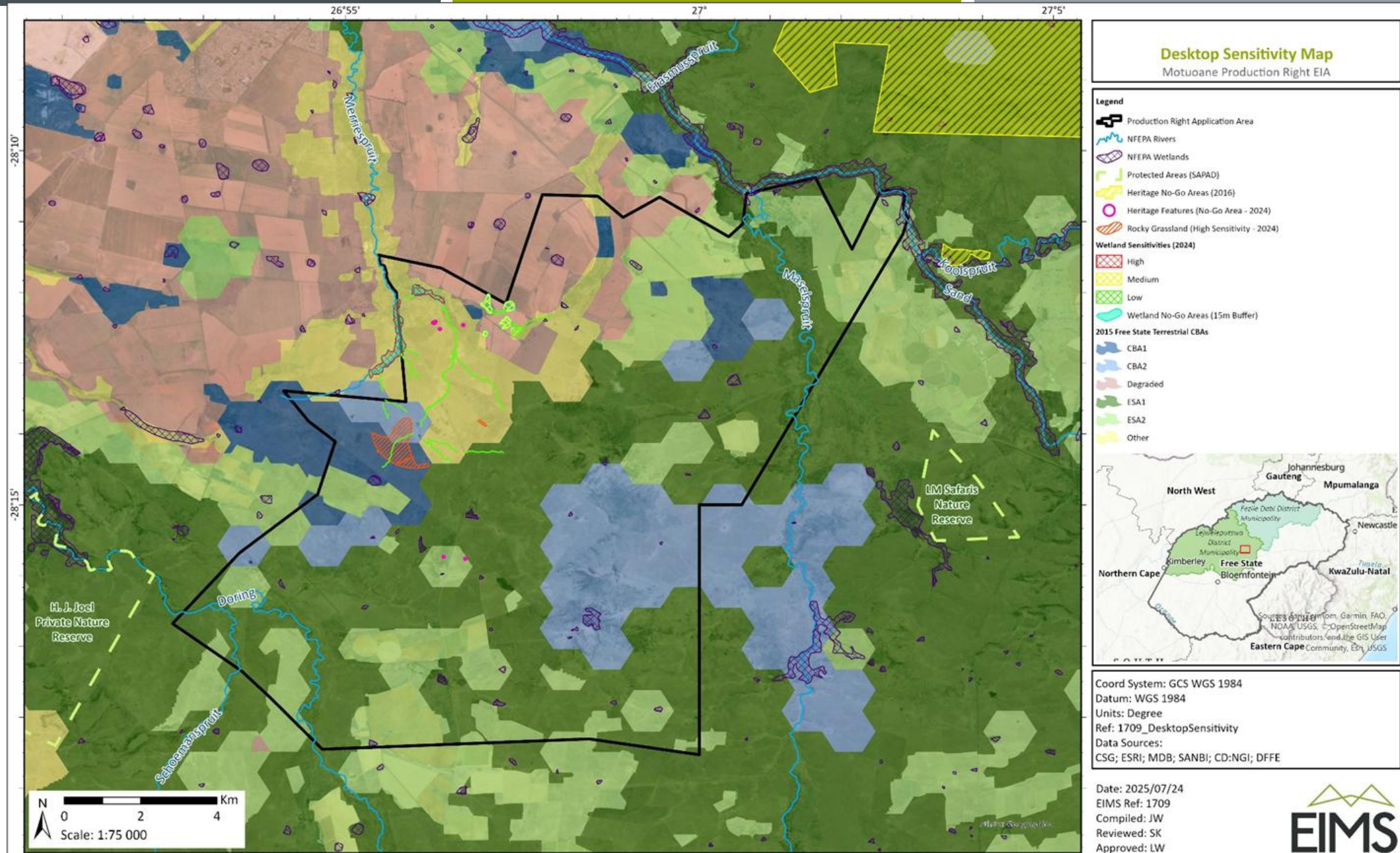
- All burial grounds and graves should be retained and avoided with a buffer zone of 30m
- Permits for collection / removal of fossils (if necessary)
- Chance Find Protocol must be implemented

- **Socio-economic & Safety**

- Fewer, but more informative / effective stakeholder consultations
- Formal written agreement with the affected landowner
- An asset and services baseline of services that may be affected within 50 m
- Engagement with overlapping right holders
- Access control to the entry / exit points of the work sites
- Developer to be liable to fix / replace any damage to infrastructure
- Services impact and interruption plan
- As far as possible interference with existing land uses/livelihoods should be avoided
- Compensation to affected landowner should be fairly compensated for any loss / disturbance to activities / production
- Local suppliers and workers must be prioritized as far as possible



DESKTOP SENSITIVITY



EIA PLAN OF STUDY FOR EIA PHASE

- EIA Phase will commence on acceptance of the Scoping Report by the PASA.
- Specialists will undertake site specific assessments of the study area (500m corridors for wells, 25m corridors for seismics and plant footprint).
- EAP & specialists consider all available information including input from I&APs in drafting their respective EIA reports.
- The following alternatives will be assessed further in the EIA phase:
 - Locality/Property.
 - Technology/Process.
 - Design/Layout.
 - No-Go.
 - Refined sensitivity planning approach to guide the future placement of infrastructure moving forward.

■ Public & authority engagement

- Notification of the availability of the EIA Report for review and comment to all registered I&AP's
- Public meeting
- Focus group meetings (if necessary)
- Site visit with PASA and/or DMRE Officials (if necessary)

INDICATIVE APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **Public Review and Comment on Scoping Report: 23 January – 23 February 2026**
- Submit Final Scoping Report: TBC (end February 2026)
- Authority Review of Scoping Report: TBC (February – April 2026)
- Public Review and Comment on EIA Report: TBC (June – July 2026)
- Submit Final EIA Report: TBC (end July 2026)
- Authority Review of EIA Report: TBC (August 2026 – November 2026)
- Notification of EA Decision and Appeals Process: TBC (November 2026)

FEEDBACK / QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Reminder:

Public Review & Comment on the Scoping Report ends

23 February 2026

Description of event:	Availability of the Scoping Report for Public Review and Comment
Where:	Hard copy of the report can be viewed at the Virginia Public Library (Cnr of Civic and Garden Route, Virginia), Hard copy of the report can be viewed at the Welkom City Library (Corner Reinet & Tulbagh Str, Welkom), and Electronic copy of the report can be downloaded from the EIMS website: https://www.eims.co.za/public-participation/
When:	The report will be available for public Review and comments for 30 days, from 23 January 2026 to 23 February 2026

All inputs received by EIMS will be included in subsequent submissions to the relevant competent authorities for consideration in their decision making process.

I&AP registrations, or any queries, comments, or concerns with regards to this application, can be directed to EIMS at:

Contact Person: Mbali Tshabalala

EIMS Reference Number: 1709

Postal Address: P.O. Box 2083; Pinegowrie; 2123

Telephone: (011) 789 7170

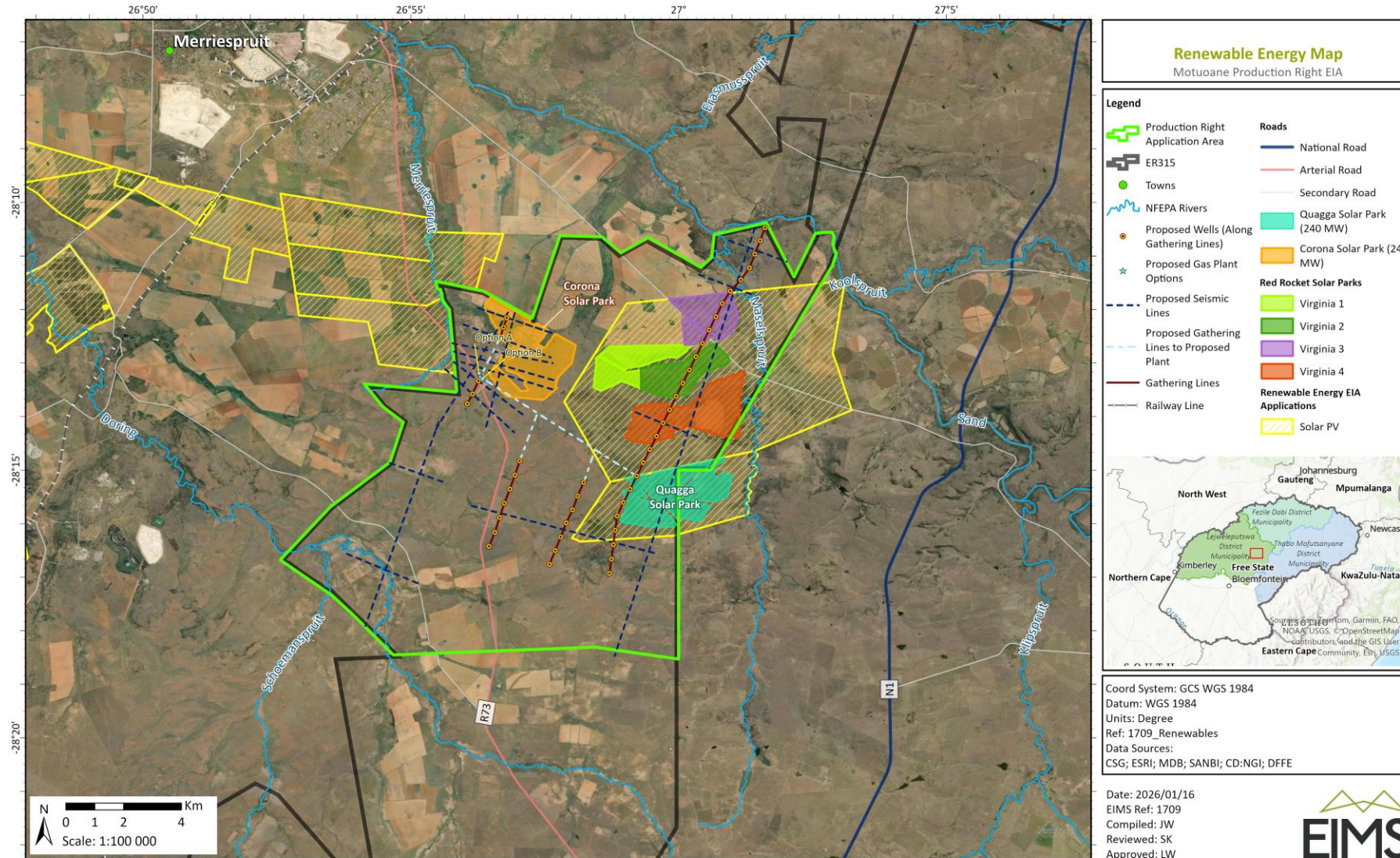
Fax: (086) 571 9047

E-mail: motuoanepr@eims.co.za

Please include the project reference number 1709 in all correspondence.



LOCATION ALTERNATIVES – RENEWABLE ENERGY MAP



		MINUTES OF MEETING	
EIMS Ref	1709	Project Name	Motuoane Production Right EIA

MEETING DETAILS

Meeting	Motuoane Production Right EIA – Scoping Phase Public Meeting		
Meeting Venue	Harmonie Primary School (Virginia area)	Date	2026/02/18
		Time	15h00 – 17h30

MEETING CONTRIBUTORS

Representative	Company	Email Address
SK	Sikhumbuzo Mahlangu "SK"	EIMS – Environmental Assessment Practitioner / Meeting Chair
LW	Liam Whitlow	EIMS – Technical Director (support)
FM	FJ Marx	Motuoane Energy / D3 Energy – Geologist
TS	Tshadi Mohloli	Motuoane Energy – Virginia office
CO	Celine Oates	Richard Summers Inc. – on behalf of Red Rocket
JN	Janine	Red Rocket South Africa
ER	Elmar Roberg	Interested and Affected Party – representative of another gas project
PM	Papi Matlhakwane	MACUA social movement / community representative
LL	Lebohlang Lesengeho	MACUA social movement / community representative
TM	Tinashe Maramba	ASP Isotopes
LM	Lerato Matebese	MEJCON SA
MS	Maklotwa Sefuli	Gubico
TF	Thabang Mafatle	Lejweleputswa Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining and Anti-Zama Zama / community representative
**Please refer to the attached Appendix for a list of all Attendees.		

AGENDA

Item
1. Welcome, introductions and ground rules [SK] 2. Presentation [SK]: a. Ground Rules / Announcements b. Project Overview and Description c. Legislated Requirements

		MINUTES OF MEETING	
EIMS Ref	1709	Project Name	Motuoane Production Right EIA

Item
d. Involvement of Interested and Affected Parties e. Summary of Scoping Report / Findings f. EIA Plan of Study g. Project Timelines (Anticipated)
3. Discussion and Q&A
4. Next steps, comment period and closure

MINUTES / KEY DISCUSSION

**This section represents a summary of the key discussion points based on category of issue. For further context please refer to the Appendix for the full transcript.

Item No	Item
1.	Welcome, introductions and ground rules [SK] opened the meeting at approximately 15:05, welcomed attendees and explained that the purpose of the scoping phase public meeting was to present the Motuoane Production Right application, outline the licensing requirements and process, and record issues and comments from interested and affected parties (I&APs). He confirmed that the meeting was recorded to support accurate minute-taking. [SK] set out ground rules: participants should treat one another with respect, not interrupt speakers, and use the microphone so that contributions are captured clearly. Before speaking, each person should state their name, affiliation and whom they represent, to ensure that comments are correctly attributed in the record. [SK] gave a brief safety announcement (assembly point in front of the school; location of restrooms; availability of tea and coffee) and introduced EIMS as the appointed Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) acting on behalf of the applicant, Motuoane Energy. He noted that specialist consultants (e.g. groundwater, biodiversity, social, heritage) would support the EIA and their work would feed into the reports.
2.	Project overview and description [SK] explained that Motuoane Energy currently holds an exploration right in the Virginia area, granted in 2018 and amended in 2024 to add additional exploration wells. The exploration right area covers a large block from around Allanridge down towards Theunissen. The current production right application covers a portion of that exploration right, approximately 14 000 hectares, situated about 15 km south-east of Virginia. [SK] stated that the application is for a production right to extract and produce both helium and methane gas. The project comprises four main components: (1) seismic surveys to refine subsurface understanding and identify optimal well locations; (2) drilling of up to 43 production wells along identified fault zones; (3) underground low-pressure gas gathering pipelines connecting wells to a central processing plant; and (4) a small modular gas processing plant from which product is trucked off site.

MINUTES OF MEETING

EIMS Ref	1709	Project Name	Motuoane Production Right EIA
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Item No	Item
	[FM] provided additional geological context. Motuoane is focusing on the Virginia Fault Zone and Fochville–Fentersburg fault-related structures, using legacy wells drilled in the 1970s–1980s and recent Motuoane wells as reference points. Desktop studies and magnetotelluric surveys have been used to identify palaeo-high structures where the Witwatersrand Supergroup lies relatively close to surface beneath Karoo cover. These structures, aligned with fault zones, act as migration pathways for gas. Magnetotelluric surveys have yielded a strike success ratio of approximately 70% to date, with gas intersected in two of three recent wells, although not yet at fully economic rates. [FM] noted that to achieve a viable project, production of around three million standard cubic feet (scf) of gas per day is required, whereas current tested flow is about 500 000 scf/day. Approximately 43 wells are planned along fault-aligned corridors, with well spacing in the order of 500–1 000 m. Each well pad will be about 50 m x 50 m, hosting drilling equipment and associated infrastructure during drilling. Wells will be steel-cased and cemented to isolate aquifers and prevent interaction between groundwater and deeper gas-bearing strata. An individual well is drilled over a period of one to two weeks. [SK] clarified that during construction there will be short-term increases in activity when rigs are mobilised to specific sites, but that in the long-term, visible infrastructure will be limited mainly to small wellheads and above-ground monitoring and control boxes; pipelines will be buried (typically 700–1 000 mm deep). The overall production right has an indicative life of around 30 years, with most drilling and surface construction expected within the first five years and additional wells drilled as needed to maintain production.
3.	Regulatory process and scoping phase status [SK] summarised the regulatory framework. The production right application triggers a full Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process under NEMA, as well as associated environmental authorisation for seismic surveys and well drilling. Other permits, such as water use licences, will be applied for separately where required. The Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) is the competent authority for the EIA. Parallel obligations under the MPRDA (including Social and Labour Plans (SLPs) for production rights) also apply, although SLPs are processed under separate legislation from the EIA. [SK] described the three main EIA stages: (1) Scoping – identify stakeholders, collate baseline information, identify key issues and preliminary alternatives, and record initial public concerns; (2) EIA – undertake detailed site-specific specialist studies along corridors and around well pads, quantify impacts, evaluate alternatives and develop mitigation; and (3) Decision-making – authorities consider the final EIA and EMPr and issue an environmental authorisation (or refusal) with conditions. Scoping phase public review is underway, with comments due by 23 February 2026, after which the final Scoping Report will be submitted to PASA for acceptance.
4.	Public participation to date and suggestions for improvement [CO] asked where and how scoping-phase adverts were placed, in which languages, and which other methods were used to notify local communities and enable them to register as I&APs and access the Scoping Report (including data-free options). [SK] responded that the initial call-to-register adverts were placed in local newspapers, with notices also published in the Government Gazette. Notices were placed on site in and around the study area and in surrounding towns (Virginia, Meloding, Merriespruit, Theunissen, Ficksburg and others), with approximately fifty site notices posted. Registered letters, emails, faxes and SMS messages were sent to pre-identified I&APs, ward councillors, interest groups and landowners, drawing on existing databases from previous projects. Notifications included a link to a data-free website hosting the Scoping Report

MINUTES OF MEETING

EIMS Ref	1709	Project Name	Motuoane Production Right EIA
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Item No	Item
	and indicated that, if users experienced data cost challenges, EIMS would provide an alternative access link on request. [JN] sought clarity on whether notices were placed where local residents in townships and locations would realistically see them and be able to register as I&APs and learn about the meeting, rather than relying only on existing stakeholder lists. [SK] confirmed that site notices were placed both within the exploration / production right area and in nearby townships, with guidance from ward councillors on suitable venues and languages. Social specialists have also spent time in communities to conduct interviews and share information. However, he acknowledged that outreach can always be improved and welcomed practical suggestions for the EIA phase. [LL] and other community representatives suggested additional methods such as using loud-hailer vans (similar to municipal imbizos) and arranging transport from townships like Meloding to meeting venues, noting that distance and cost of travel to Harmony had limited attendance. They emphasised that public participation should be genuinely accessible to affected communities, not only a formal requirement. [LW] acknowledged these concerns and agreed that they would be taken seriously in planning the EIA-phase public meetings. He indicated that, based on feedback, a future meeting in Meloding would likely be more inclusive and that EIMS would work with community structures and ward councilors to refine the public participation strategy.
5.	Preliminary impacts and specialist work (desktop level) [SK] explained that the Scoping Report is based mainly on desktop studies and existing information. It identifies broad environmental themes and potential impacts, including: • Biophysical: loss of natural vegetation, disturbance to fauna, potential impacts on wetlands and watercourses, soil compaction and erosion, and archaeological / paleontological disturbance. • Geophysical and water: potential groundwater contamination and interaction with existing acid mine drainage (AMD) plumes, impacts on aquifers and surface water, and the need to manage drilling fluids, sumps and well integrity. • Socio-economic: stakeholder fatigue, expectations around jobs and community benefits, safety and security of landowners, and cumulative impacts with other gas and energy projects in the region. [SK] stated that detailed, site-specific specialist studies (groundwater, surface water, wetlands, biodiversity, heritage, noise, air quality, traffic, social, etc.) will be undertaken in the EIA phase. Specialists will walk proposed corridors and well-pad radii (typically 500 m), map sensitivities, refine “no-go” areas and buffers, and recommend mitigation and monitoring measures. Desktop sensitivities will be updated accordingly.
6.	Socio-economic issues, jobs, SLP and community benefits [CO] asked for more detail on job creation: approximate numbers of skilled and unskilled jobs, duration, and whether skilled positions would be filled locally or from abroad (e.g. Australian based directors). She also asked how Motuoane intended to upskill local workers and whether this would be aimed at long-term retention or only for short-term construction roles. [FM] explained that it is difficult at this stage to provide exact job numbers because gas production depends on proving up sufficient flow (around 3 million scf/day) and on the outcomes of drilling campaigns. During drilling, a typical crew of around 5–10 specialised staff is required per rig for short periods per well, with mobilisation between sites. Once wells are in place and connected, field operations

MINUTES OF MEETING

EIMS Ref	1709	Project Name	Motuoane Production Right EIA
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	are relatively low-staff and the central plant will employ a small operational team. He confirmed that Motuoane's intent is to source skilled and unskilled labour locally as far as possible, with only certain specialist or director-level roles based overseas. [LW] added that the Scoping Report acknowledges that job numbers are limited and that oil and gas projects are not labour-intensive. Nevertheless, the EIA-phase socio-economic study will be required to quantify jobs by category (local/expat, skilled/unskilled, construction/operations) and to identify realistic community benefits. He noted that obligations arising from the Social and Labour Plan (SLP) under the MPRDA, while outside the NEMA process, must also be considered and communicated more clearly to communities. [PM] and [TF] stressed that the community is already involved in litigation with another gas company (Tetra4) due to perceived failures to implement SLP commitments, and that local people have expectations of tangible benefits given that "money will be made" from gas. They asked what Motuoane will do for the community if not through significant direct employment, and emphasised that SLPs are crucial for practical benefits such as infrastructure, education and business development. [TF] noted that many attendees had heard similar presentations in 2025 and felt that the discussion was repeating itself without Motuoane clearly stating what concrete benefits (jobs, SLP projects) will be provided. He argued that once drilling takes place, the company is effectively operating and should be transparent about SLP obligations and timelines. [LW] clarified that "exploration" drilling does not trigger SLP obligations, but a **production** right does. Since Motuoane is now applying for a production right (equivalent to a mining right), an SLP is required and will need to be implemented once the right is granted. He acknowledged that more information on SLP commitments and community benefits should be made available and undertook to ensure that the EIA-phase documentation provides clearer, accessible information on potential community benefits associated with exploration and production phases. [LL] expressed concern that holding only one scoping public meeting at Harmony, without adequate transport or translations, risks reducing public participation to a "tick-box exercise" rather than meaningful consultation as required by NEMA. He argued that many community members could not attend due to travel costs and that venues and communication methods should be selected to enable genuine participation. [LW] acknowledged the criticism and confirmed that additional EIA-phase meetings, including one in Meloding, will be considered, using appropriate languages and communication tools. He emphasised that specialist social studies will include in-community interviews and that their findings will inform both impact assessment and the design of public participation interventions.
7.	Groundwater, water management and leak detection [CO] asked how often pipelines would be surveyed for leaks, whether leaks would be detected immediately, and how information would be shared with affected farmers and the public, given regional water scarcity and the risk of contamination. [SK] stated that Motuoane will be required to undertake leak detection and that the detail (frequency, methods, thresholds and reporting) will be defined during the EIA phase and captured in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr). Pipelines will be HDPE and buried, with groundwater and surface water monitoring undertaken throughout the project life cycle. Baseline water quality will be

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	established before construction, with ongoing monitoring to identify changes. He emphasised that leaks are not something the company would wish to hide and that early detection and response will be critical. [FM] described the wellhead monitoring system installed at each production well, comprising sensors for flow, pressure, temperature and gas detection powered by solar panels. Data are transmitted frequently (e.g. every few seconds), enabling prompt identification of abnormal conditions or leaks. He noted that monitoring helps both production optimisation and early leak detection. [LW] confirmed that EMPr provisions will include clear obligations for Motuoane to monitor methane emissions and groundwater, and that independent NEMA compliance audits will periodically review monitoring results and identify non-compliances. Audit reports must be made available on request, providing a formal route for transparency. [LM] asked whether alternative water sources for drilling (construction water) had been considered and how well water quality would be tested and maintained, as well as how grievance procedures for affected parties would operate. [SK] explained that drilling water will be sourced from existing allocations held by farmers, under commercial agreements with those landowners, and not from new abstractions. Baseline groundwater and surface water quality will be tested before drilling, with regular monitoring during and after construction. He noted that Motuoane will be required to implement a formal grievance mechanism, including a local liaison person in the Virginia area, clear contact points, timeframes for responses, and documentation of complaints and resolutions.
8.	Land use compatibility, existing AMD, FPIC and overlapping mineral rights [MS] highlighted the serious existing **acid mine drainage (AMD)** problem in the Free State goldfields and its long-term impact on agriculture and water resources. He questioned whether drilling more wells risks exacerbating AMD-related contamination, particularly as aquifers flow westwards to the Vaal River, and asked whether free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) is being obtained from communities before drilling on farms. He also asked whether the project might displace agricultural jobs, which have historically been a major employer in the region. [SK] acknowledged the AMD legacy and stressed that Motuoane's activities must be assessed as **additional** to existing impacts. The groundwater specialist will map the aquifer system, sample wells, and model potential interactions between new wells and existing AMD plumes. Monitoring will be used to detect any incremental impacts so that they can be addressed quickly. He emphasised that the gas project is fundamentally different from deep gold mining, with relatively small footprints per well and most infrastructure underground or low-profile, allowing continued agriculture on most of the land. He noted that co-existence of gas infrastructure and farming has been observed at neighbouring projects such as Tetra4. [LW] clarified that gas drilling is akin to installing water boreholes with additional casing and sealing to protect aquifers. It does not create AMD in itself, although care is required to ensure that existing AMD water is not mobilised or intersected in a way that worsens contamination. He confirmed that FPIC and meaningful consultation obligations under NEMA and MPRDA require ongoing engagement with landowners and communities, including consent and agreements with landowners before wells are drilled on their properties. [TF] raised concerns about perceptions that civil society organisations such as MACUA "hold" projects in their hands. He clarified that MACUA is a social movement advocating for the rights of mining-affected communities and does not hold licences or projects. MACUA's role is to scrutinise EIA and SLP processes

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	and, where necessary, to lodge appeals if statutory processes are not properly followed or if impacts are inadequately addressed, as in the Tetra4 case. [TF] asked whether Motuoane would allow other parties to apply for different minerals (e.g. aggregate, sand, diamonds) on land within the production right area if only a portion of the land is used for gas wells and pipelines. [LW] responded that under the MPRDA, multiple mineral rights can co-exist over the same surface, provided they are for different minerals and appropriate consultation and agreements are reached. A prospective aggregate miner would need the landowner's consent and a mining right for aggregate and would be required to consult the existing rights holder (Motuoane) to ensure that surface mining activities do not compromise gas wells and pipelines. Co-existence has precedent in other mining areas, but requires careful coordination and legal agreements.
9.	Exploration vs production rights, timelines and strategic infrastructure (SIP) status [TM] asked about the probability of success in intersecting gas using different geophysical methods (vibroseis versus magnetotellurics) and also raised a broader question about whether the project will be registered as a Strategic Infrastructure Project (SIP) under the Infrastructure Development Act, to align with the national resource plan and gas utilisation strategy. [FM] stated that magnetotelluric surveys have shown a good correlation with gas occurrences, with a current strike success of roughly 70%. Vibroseis and other seismic techniques will be used to refine deeper structural understanding, supported by expertise from the University of the Witwatersrand and international specialists, as South Africa has limited oil and gas geophysical capacity. He emphasised that exploration is inherently uncertain and that well locations are refined stepwise as data are gathered. [LW] noted that neighbouring projects such as Tetra4 have registered as SIPs, but that, as far as EIMS is aware, Motuoane has not yet applied for SIP status. He indicated that Motuoane is considering this possibility and may explore SIP registration in parallel with the EIA, although SIP processes are lengthy and complex. [CO] queried why Motuoane is seeking a production right while still planning further exploratory-type drilling and asked whether, under the MPRDA, a production right holder is required to commence production within a set period. She also raised concerns that reserving a large production area for many years while exploration continues may limit other economic opportunities for communities on that land. [FM] and [LW] explained that under current legislation, exploration and production for gas are closely linked. Motuoane has already undertaken several years of exploration, including drilling under an exploration right, and has demonstrated the presence of the resource. The production right application involves converting part of the exploration area into a production-right area. Exploration drilling within the production area is still needed to optimise well placement and achieve economic flow rates. When a production right is granted, a portion of the exploration right is relinquished and converted, while the remainder continues as exploration right (subject to its own timelines and renewals). [LW] acknowledged that exact timelines to first production and associated jobs are uncertain and depend on EIA and production right decisions, potential appeals, and technical success in achieving economic gas flows. He committed to ensuring that as the process progresses, Motuoane and EIMS will communicate key milestones and timing transparently to communities and I&APs.

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10.	Next steps, comment period and closure [SK] summarised the way forward. The Scoping Report remains available for public review, with comments due by **23 February 2026**. Comments can be submitted by email, phone, SMS or letter using the contact details in the notification documents. All comments and responses will be included in the final Scoping Report and Comments and Responses Report submitted to PASA. [SK] stated that, once PASA accepts the Scoping Report, the EIA phase will commence, including site-specific specialist studies, refinement of infrastructure placement, and additional public participation (including further public meetings, with at least one planned in Meloding based on feedback). The final EIA Report and EMPr are tentatively expected to be submitted to PASA around July 2026, with a decision anticipated towards the end of 2026, although this is subject to change. [TS] informed attendees that Motuoane maintains a local office at Quest Centre in Virginia township, open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 09:00 to 17:00. Community members are welcome to visit the office with questions or concerns about the project. [LW] thanked all participants for their time and constructive engagement, reiterated the importance of submitting written comments by the deadline, and closed the meeting. Attendees were invited to make use of remaining refreshments before departing.

APPENDICES

1. Attendance Register.
2. Full Transcript.
3.