Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Appendix 2 – Call-Off Procedure:

for The Research, Development and Evidence Framework 1

Call-Off Contract Reference: C28152 – Cost of Soil Degradation Project

Date: 17 March 2025

[redacted]

1.0 Request for Proposal

1.1 The following document is to be used as a Call-Off template to be sent to all Contractors on a sub-lot by the Project Manager of the Contracting Authority for completion and return in accordance with the Call-Off procedures detailed in the Form of Agreement.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL**				
Project title:	Cost of Soil Degradation Project			
Call off Reference:	RDE744			
Atamis project ref (if applicable):	C27026 – Project C28152 – Contract			
Cost Centre Code **(for admin purposes only)**	10021222			
Date:	21 November 2024			
Contracting Authority (Defra and its arms-length bodies etc)	Defra			
Commercial Contact (if applicable):	Call-off from RDE framework sub lot 1.1 – Supporting a Resilient and Secure Food System.			
Project Start Date	17 March 2025			
Project Completion Date	31 March 2026			
For any projects over the direct award threshold, full competition is required (i.e. all contractors on the Sub-Lot are invited to quote).	**Direct Award**		**Mini-comp**	X
Call off from Sub-Lot number	Sub-lot 1.1 – Supporting a Resilient and Secure Food System.			
Clarification period ends: **Proposal return date:**	09 December 2024 12:00 (GMT) 19 December 2024 23:59 (GMT) [redacted]			

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Evaluation criteria:

E01 to E05 will be scored using the following scoring criteria:

• **For a score of 100:** Excellent - Response is completely relevant and excellent overall. The response is comprehensive, unambiguous and demonstrates a best-in-class thorough understanding of the requirement and provides details of how the requirement will be met in full.

• **For a score of 70:** Good - Response is relevant and good. The response demonstrates a good understanding and provides details on how the requirements will be fulfilled.

• **For a score of 50:** Acceptable - Response is relevant and acceptable. The response provides sufficient evidence to fulfil basic requirements.

• **For a score of 20:** Poor - Response is partially relevant and/or poor. The response addresses some elements of the requirements but contains insufficient / limited detail or explanation to demonstrate how the requirement will be fulfilled.

• **For a score of 0:** Unacceptable - Nil or inadequate response. Fails to demonstrate an ability to meet the requirement.

If the Tenderer scores 20 or less in respect of questions E01 – E05 they will be eliminated from the procurement.

Contractors: Failure to meet any minimum score threshold stated will result in the bid being removed from the process with no further evaluation regardless of other quality or price scores.

Quality	**Weighting**	**60%**
Sustainability	**Weighting**	**10%**
Price	**Weighting**	**30%**

Quality Sub-Criteria Weightings:		
E01. Understanding of Requirement	Describe your understanding of the requirements detailed in **section 2** of this ITT. In doing so you should set out what you see as the policy opportunities and the technical and practical challenges of conducting this evidence review and delivering the expected outcomes and deliverables (**Section 5**).	**20%**

[redacted]

	Evaluation criteria Your response should demonstrate: • A clear understanding of the policy context. • Your understanding of the key technical and practical challenges associated with the project. Your response must not exceed 2 sides of A4, font size 11. Any responses exceeding 2 sides of A4 will not be evaluated beyond the 2nd page. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename: "E01 Your Company Name".	
E02. Approach and Methodology	Please detail the approaches to be adopted to achieve the objectives set out in **section 2**. In particular, the Tenderer should state what will be delivered within the time and financial constraints of the programme, broken down for each of the individual outputs, outlined in **section 5** of the specification, demonstrating a clear understanding of the requirements and consideration of issues. Please outline a proposed work plan to meet the project objectives; expected outcomes and output requirements, within the specified timetable (please include a Gantt chart). Please describe any resources that you think are relevant to delivery of the project such as modelling and data handling/analysis systems. Approaches and Work Plan will be included in the contract issued to the successful Tenderer, therefore please restrict your entry to the salient points and set these out clearly and concisely. **Evaluation Criteria:** Your response should demonstrate: • An outline of the general aims of the project and specific evidence objectives (measurable and time bound), any interdependence (the extent to which the success of one objective depends on the successful completion of another), and where there are sub-contractors, clearly show the roles of each.	**35%**

[redacted]

	• A clear understanding of the desired objectives. • How the work will be conducted in order to ensure that those objectives and steps are met. • How you will use your knowledge of soil science and economic research to deliver the objectives. Include any economic methodology to achieve the objectives, and how you will address the key challenges associated with delivery of the specification. • A work plan and detailed programme in Gantt chart format with key deliverable dates. The programme format should be generic, commencing from award (Week 0) and should show each activity in the project itemised under each specific objective with start and end times, timing of proposed progress meetings and scheduled dates for project deliverables. • How you will consult and / or collaborate with relevant external experts and potential users, including Defra policy owners. • How it will show awareness of other relevant evidence to inform the scoping work and exploration of datasets • A degree of creativity in proposing solutions to the conceptual, methodological and data challenges that arise. **Please note: Tenderers should not include commercial values in their technical responses, all price information should be submitted in the commercial section only.** Your response must not exceed 10 sides of A4, font size 11. Any responses exceeding 10 sides of A4, will not be evaluated beyond this. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename 'E02 Your Company Name'	

E03. Project Team - Expertise, Capability and Experience	Please describe your recent experience and capability (within 3 years) in delivering projects that are relevant or comparable to this Specification of Requirements. Please include details of the number of years you have been involved in this activity. Please also provide details of the structure of the project team (including any sub-contractor/joint contractor if appropriate) and the key personnel who will be involved in delivering the project, outlining their roles and responsibilities along with demonstrable evidence as to their relevant skills and expertise to deliver the scope of services. Where sub-contractors/joint contractors are being used, please provide the name and address of the organisation, contact name, telephone number and email address. Please also specify if they are sub-contractor or joint contractor. Provide details of how skills and expertise of the project team will be maintained or improved throughout this contract. CVs should be attached as an annex; these must be specific to the requirements of this scope of services. **Evaluation Criteria**: Your response should demonstrate: • A track record in their respective fields of soil science and environmental economics. • Experience of working in an interdisciplinary setting. • Experience of applying natural capital and ecosystem services concepts. • What specialist expertise and prior knowledge and experience you can bring to add value. • How the team's skills, knowledge and experience are relevant to meeting the project requirements. • Overall balance of the project team, recognising the potentially interdisciplinary nature of the work.	**20%**

[redacted]

	• Clear reporting lines and an appropriate escalation procedure. Please do not repeat the level of detail of the CV(s). Your response must be a maximum of 2 sides of A4 font size 12. (CVs no more than 2 pages each can be uploaded in addition to this). Any responses exceeding 1 side of A4, and/or CVs exceeding 2 pages will not be evaluated beyond the first page and 2nd page respectively. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename 'E03 Your Company Name'	
E04. Project and Risk Management	Please identify the individual(s) who will have overall management responsibility for the research and/or identify the Project Director and nominate a representative for day-to-day contact with the Authority's Project Officer. Please set out how the project will be managed. Please also provide your risk assessment profile for delivering this specification. Your response should contain a list of relevant perceived risks to the project which could affect your ability to deliver the required outputs, an indication of the level of risk (high, medium or low) and the mitigation measures to be put in place. **Evaluation Criteria:** Your response should demonstrate: • Scope of consideration of the risk, rationale for assignment of risk levels, and appropriateness of mitigation measures. • Your organisational approach to project management and how this is implemented, including: plans for keeping the authority informed of progress made and any difficulties encountered. • The level of input and guidance that the successful Tenderer will require from the Authority's Project Officer and Steering Group; if there are proposals for consortium/sub-contracting arrangements, the measures that	**15%**

[redacted]

	will be in place to effectively manage these arrangements throughout the contract; and clear reporting lines and appropriate escalation procedures. **Please note: Tenderers should not include commercial requirements in their technical responses, all price information should be submitted in the commercial section only.** Your response must not exceed 3 sides of A4, font size 11. Any responses exceeding 3 sides of A4, will not be evaluated beyond this. Links to other documents will not be considered as part of your response e.g. links to published documents online. Please upload a document with the filename 'E04 Your Company Name'	
E05. Sustainability	The Authority has set itself challenging commitments and targets to improve the environmental and social impacts of its estate management, operation and procurement. These support the Government's green commitments. The policies are included in the Authority's sustainable procurement policy statement published at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defra-s-sustainable-procurement-policy-statementWithin this context, please explain your approach to delivering the services and how you intend to reduce negative sustainability impacts. Please discuss the methods that you will employ to demonstrate and monitor the effectiveness of your approach. **Evaluation Criteria**: • Demonstrate that there is a sustainable policy in-place. • Provide evidence how you will reduce the environmental impacts of delivering this contact that may include the following; o Using innovative sustainable tools, techniques and technologies. o The procedures and systems in place for communicating what needs to be	**10%**

[redacted]

	done to improve sustainability to those engaged on this contract. • Explain how you measure sustainability performance and be able to report to the Authority on progress if required. Your response must be no more than one side of A4, minimum Arial font size 11. Please upload your response with filename 'E05_Your Company Name'. Please note your Sustainability Policy will be accepted in addition to this limit	

Cost of Soil Degradation Project Specification

1. Description of work required – overall purpose & scope (including reporting requirements)

Background and policy context

Soils are an important natural resource that provide a broad range of ecosystem services with environmental, economic and societal benefits. Soil degradation poses a significant threat to these services and to soil health. Consequences of soil degradation include risks to food security, flooding, biodiversity loss and the climate[1]. A Defra report published in 2011[2] estimated the total economic cost of soil and peat degradation in England and Wales to inform priority areas for future research and policy. Six main processes of soil degradation and their effects on soil quality were identified for analysis: erosion, compaction, decline in organic matter content, loss of soil biodiversity, diffuse contamination, and surface sealing. The cost of soil degradation in England and Wales has been estimated to cost £1.2 billion a year. This is mainly linked to loss of organic content of soils (47% of total cost), as well as compaction (39%) and erosion (12%)[1].

Since the analysis took place there has not been any updated economic analysis conducted for England and Wales, though a recent report produced by the Green Finance Institute[3] suggested that soils have continued to be degraded meaning that the costs to the economy will probably be higher than in 2011. The current policy focus at Defra is moving towards encouraging heathy and resilient soils, however, without an up-to-date understanding of the economic, environmental and social impacts of soil degradation, the government is unable to prioritise threats and risks effectively. The costs estimated from the previous study are still used extensively by policy and arm's length bodies to communicate the importance of protecting and enhancing soil health, despite the values being outdated. Additionally, climate change is likely to drive faster and increased degradation, and the associated costs are only going to increase[4]. This work is an important step towards improving understanding and communicating the true costs that climate change poses on soil health to farmers/land managers and the wider community.

Much of the costs associated with soil degradation are not felt by those who make land

[redacted]

management decisions[5]. Many of the impacts of soil degradation are off site costs, such as the flooding of properties caused by runoff from cultivated soils.

Estimating the economic value of soil will enable us to better communicate the importance of soil health, the cost of the threats associated with soil degradation and help land managers to make more informed land-management decisions.

Aims

The purpose of this research is to identify the current soil degradation threats and to produce updated economic values for the cost of the identified threats.

Research questions

- What are the current soil degradation threats to soils in England and Wales? How do these compare to the original study carried out by Graves et al., 2011?
- What is the most appropriate economic method for assessing the cost of soil degradation? How does this compare with the method used by Graves et al., 2011?
- What are the total economic costs of soil degradation for England and Wales? How are the costs broken down by soil degradation threats?

Proposed methods

1. Rapid evidence review- soil degradation threats

Review evidence from a range of scientific sources on the current soil degradation threats in England and Wales. This should focus on literature since 2011. The review should include peer review and grey literature. It should be England and Wales focused. If possible, the review should determine threats and the extent of the threat based by country, soil type (including peat) and management.

The review should:

- Determine the current quantifiable threats to soil degradation in England and Wales.
- Determine the extent to which the threats identified are occurring in England and Wales.
- Determine how the scientific literature has developed since 2011, and highlight differences, similarities and emerging threats to soils.

2. Rapid evidence review- economic methodology for cost of soil degradation.

Review will investigate if the methodology used for Graves et al., 2011[2] is still relevant. Evidence will be reviewed from a range of scientific sources on methodologies for assigning an economic value on soils. This review should focus on alternative economic methodologies since the Graves et al., 2011 analysis. The review should include peer review and grey literature. The review should consider literature globally. The review should conclude with pros and cons to the Graves et al., 2011 methodology and give recommendations on alternative approaches, if required for the analysis.

The review should:

- Determine if the methodologies used and referred to in Graves et al., 2011 are still relevant or if an updated analysis is needed for this project.
- The review should highlight constraints with the methodology used in Graves et al., 2011.
- If a new methodology is required, the review should give recommendations on alternative approaches.
- Facilitate the identification of data required to carry out the analysis. If possible, list available data, data gaps and how these gaps can be addressed.

3. Data collection and report on economic estimations

The two rapid evidence reviews will inform the analysis. Analysis and report will be produced on the economic costs of soil degradation for the key threats using most appropriate economic method identified from both rapid literature reviews.

Data will be collected from a range of open sources or secondary sources. ALB's will be part of the steering committee to help with data access.

The report will derive estimates on the cost of soil degradation by country, land use and soil type, if possible. This allows for the spatial pattern of different types and extents of soil degradation. The total costs of degradation and the likely extra costs or benefits of soil degradation are assessed to inform policy priorities and decision making. The report will include major sources of uncertainty, gaps in the knowledge or data and recommendations on addressing these issues.

Dissemination

- Data and results presented to Defra soil policy, evidence and economics team and relevant Welsh Government teams.
- Data and results presented to relevant arms-length bodies (e.g.- Environmental Agency).
- Steering committee will be formed with regular update meetings throughout the duration of the project, with members from Defra soil evidence, economic and soil policy teams. The suppliers will give project progress updates, discuss risks to project delivery and solutions. Additional technical staff will join the meetings where appropriate.

Deliverables

1. Interim milestone 1- Review: Soil degradation threats
2. Interim milestone 2- Review: economic methodology for cost of soil degradation
3. Final Report summarizing, data collation, methodology development and identification of the model required toestimateor the cost of soil degradation

Estimated project timeframe: 12 months for completion.

[redacted]

Risks

- Available data- Graves et al., 2011 found that there was limited available data when they conducted the analysis, and the data was not always available at a national level.
- Access to data- Soil data behind paywalls.

References

1. Rojas, R.V., Achouri, M., Maroulis, J. and Caon, L., 2016. Healthy soils: a prerequisite for sustainable food security. *Environmental Earth Sciences*, *75*, pp.1-10.
2. Graves, A.R., Morris, J., Deeks, L.K., Rickson, R.J., Kibblewhite, M.G., Harris, J.A., Farewell, T.S. and Truckle, I., 2015. The total costs of soil degradation in England and Wales. *Ecological Economics*, *119*, pp.399-413.
3. Ranger, N., Oliver, T., Alvarez, J., Battiston, S., Bekker, S., Killick, H., Hurst, I., Liadze, I., Millard, S., Monasterolo, I. and Perring, M., 2024. Assessing the materiality of nature-related financial risks for the UK. REPORT (greenfinanceinstitute.com)
4. Lal, R., 2012. Climate change and soil degradation mitigation by sustainable management of soils and other natural resources. *Agricultural Research*, *1*, pp.199-212.
5. Tepes, A., Galarraga, I., Markandya, A. and Sánchez, M.J.S., 2021. Costs and benefits of soil protection and sustainable land management practices in selected European countries: Towards multidisciplinary insights. *Science of the Total Environment*, *756*, p.143925.

2. Required skills / experience from the contractor and staff.

Tenderers should refer to the specification and evaluation question E03: Project Team - Expertise, Capability and Experience for details on the skills and experience required for this project.

3. Proposed program of work and payment table (Detailing specific tasks, key milestones, deliverables & completion date where appropriate)

Task no.	Task and deliverable	Completion date	Payment schedule

Tenderers should provide the total fixed cost and a breakdown of costs for each milestone task.

[redacted]

Prices submitted should not include any pricing assumptions and should detail exactly what has been included in the price submitted. Any assumptions should be clarified during the clarification period
4. Risk
Tenderers should refer to the specification and evaluation question E04: Project and Risk Management for relevant information.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The following document is to be used as a Call-Off template to be sent to all Contractors on a sub-lot for completion and return in accordance with the Call-Off procedures detailed in the Form of Agreement.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework 2 **PROPOSAL**
Contractor's Name: RSK ADAS Limited **Call off Reference: C27026** **Sub-Lot Number:** 1.1 – Supporting a Resilient and Secure Food System. [redacted]
The Tenderer must not make or append Caveats and Assumptions in their proposal. Any points of uncertainty must be raised as a clarification point during the specified clarification period. Please see technical response section for limits on page counts and required formats
E01. Understanding of Requirement
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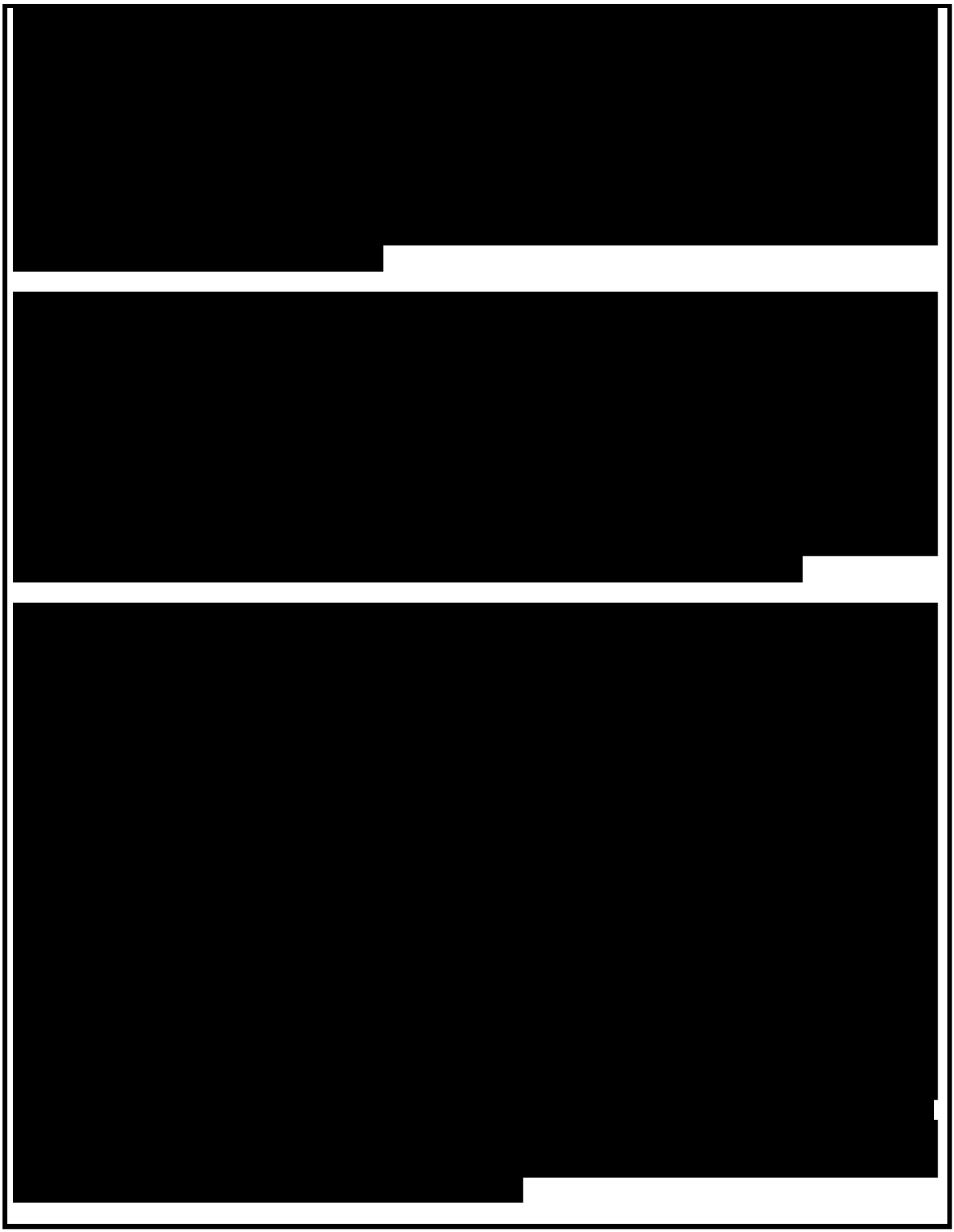
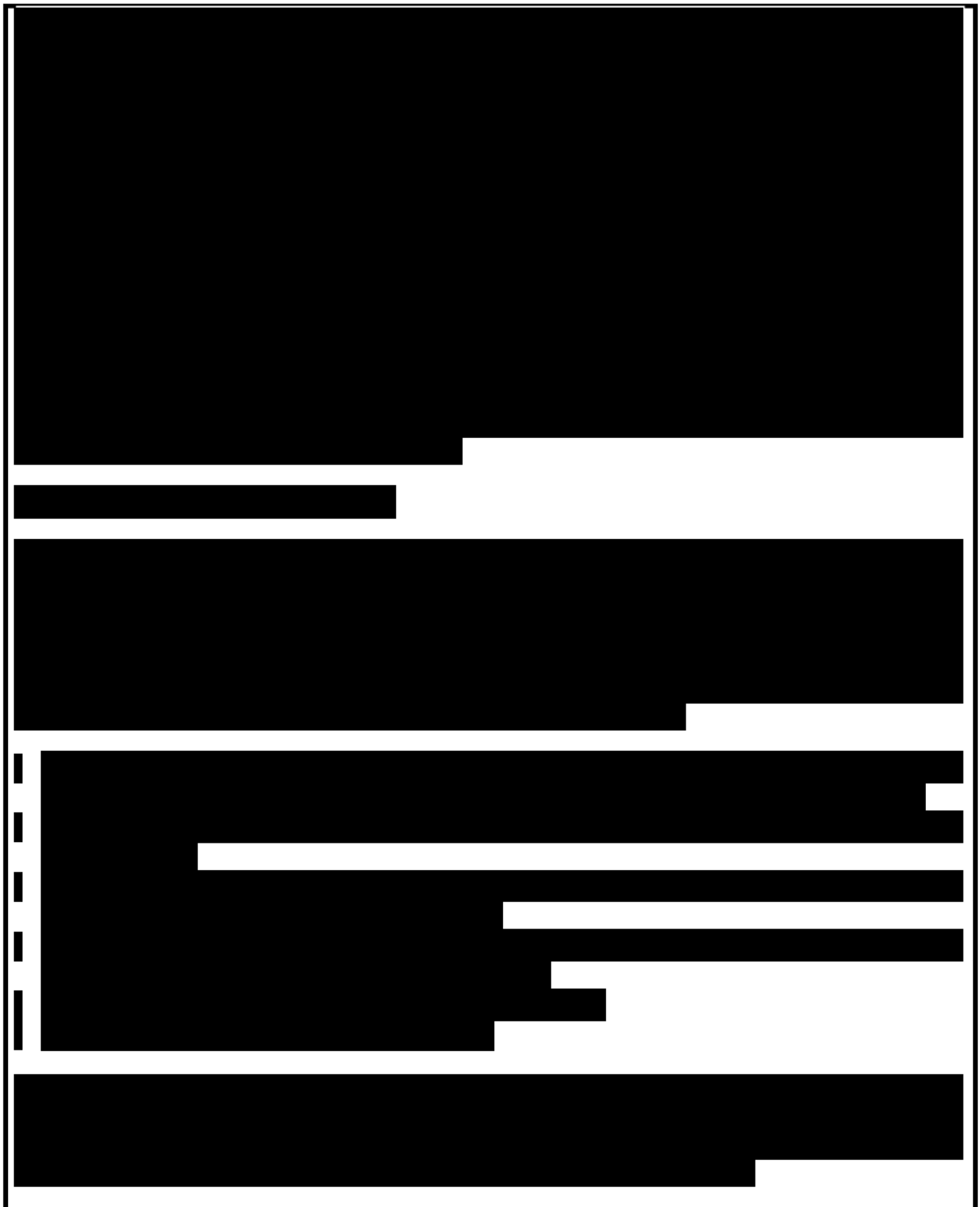
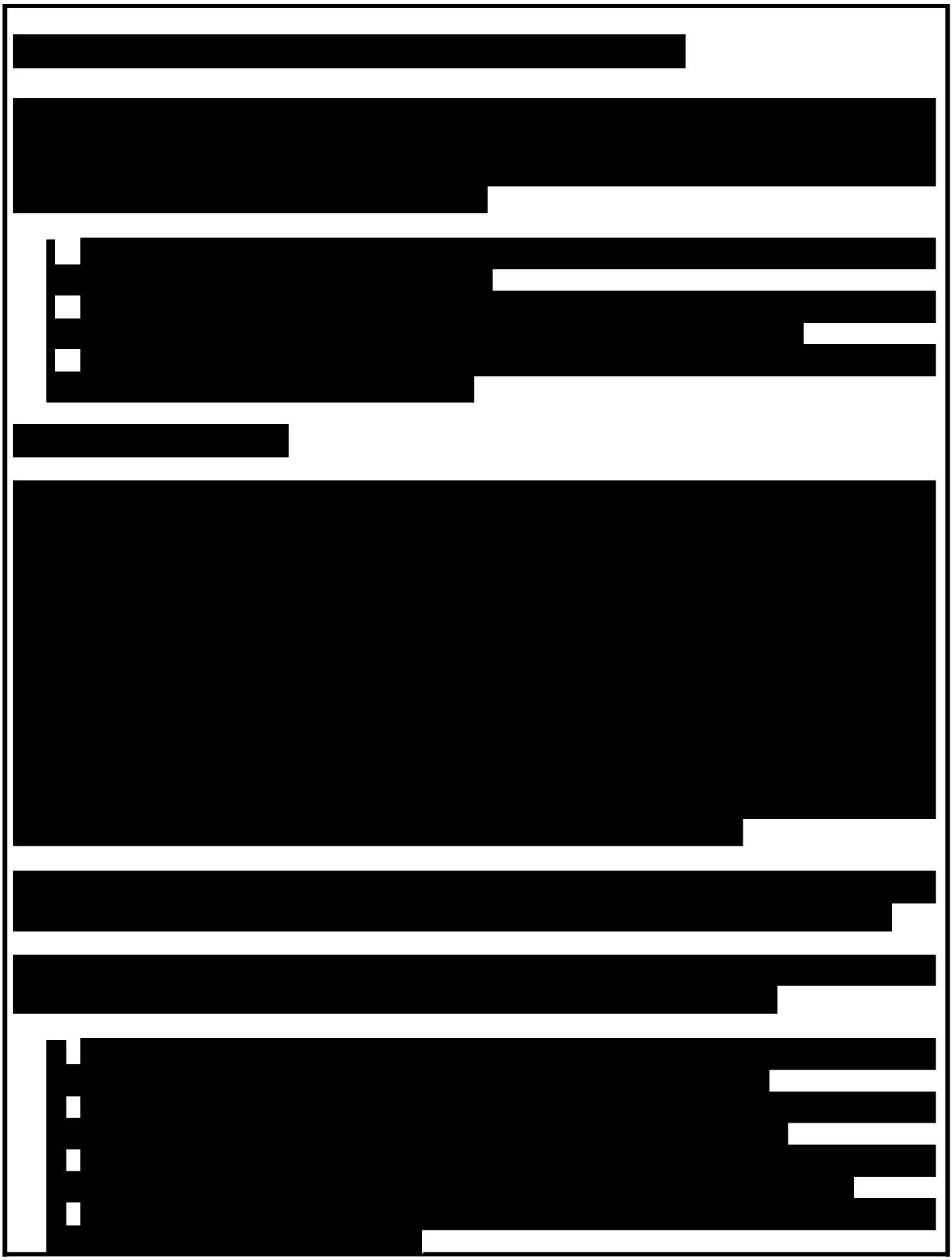
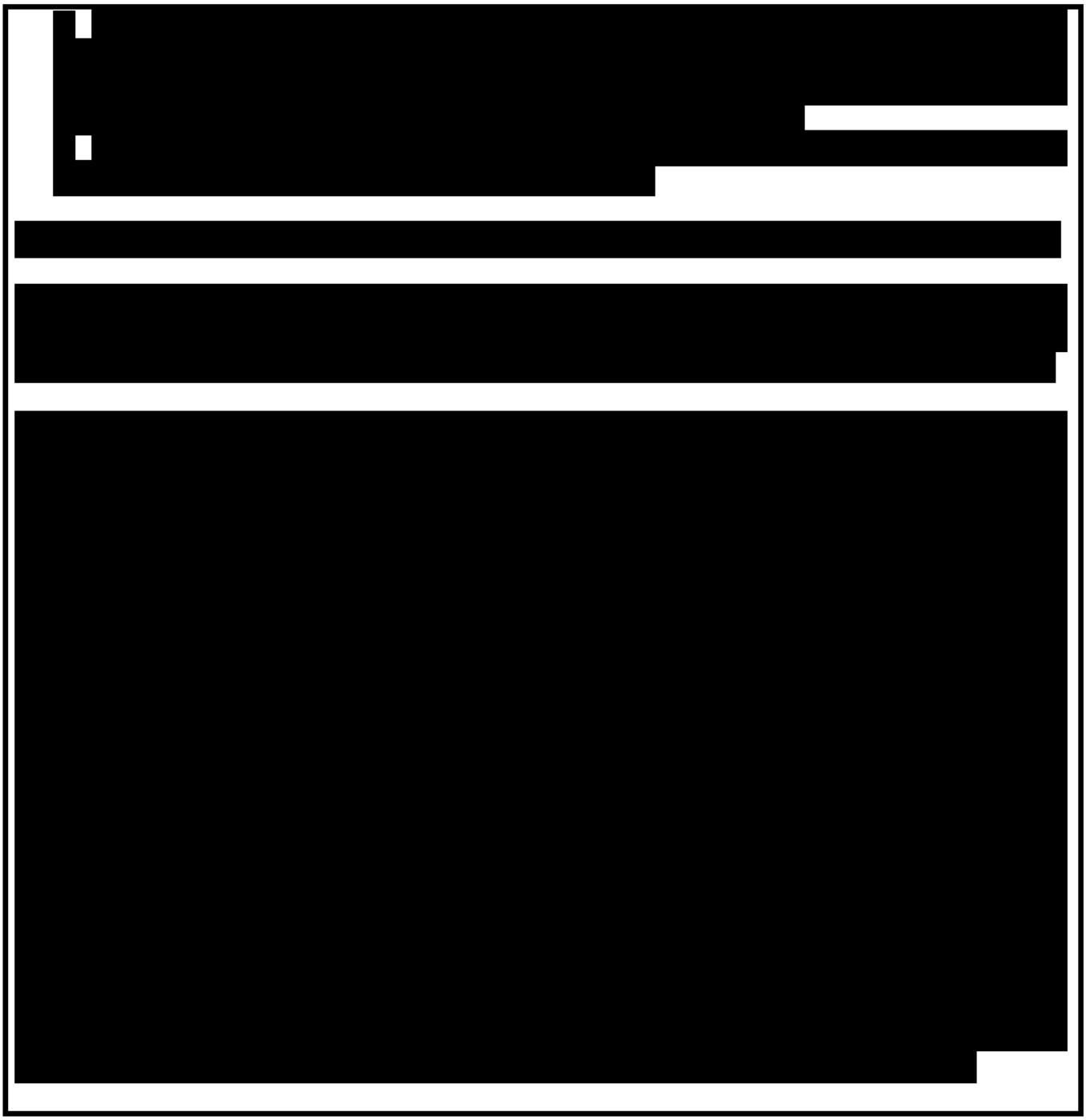
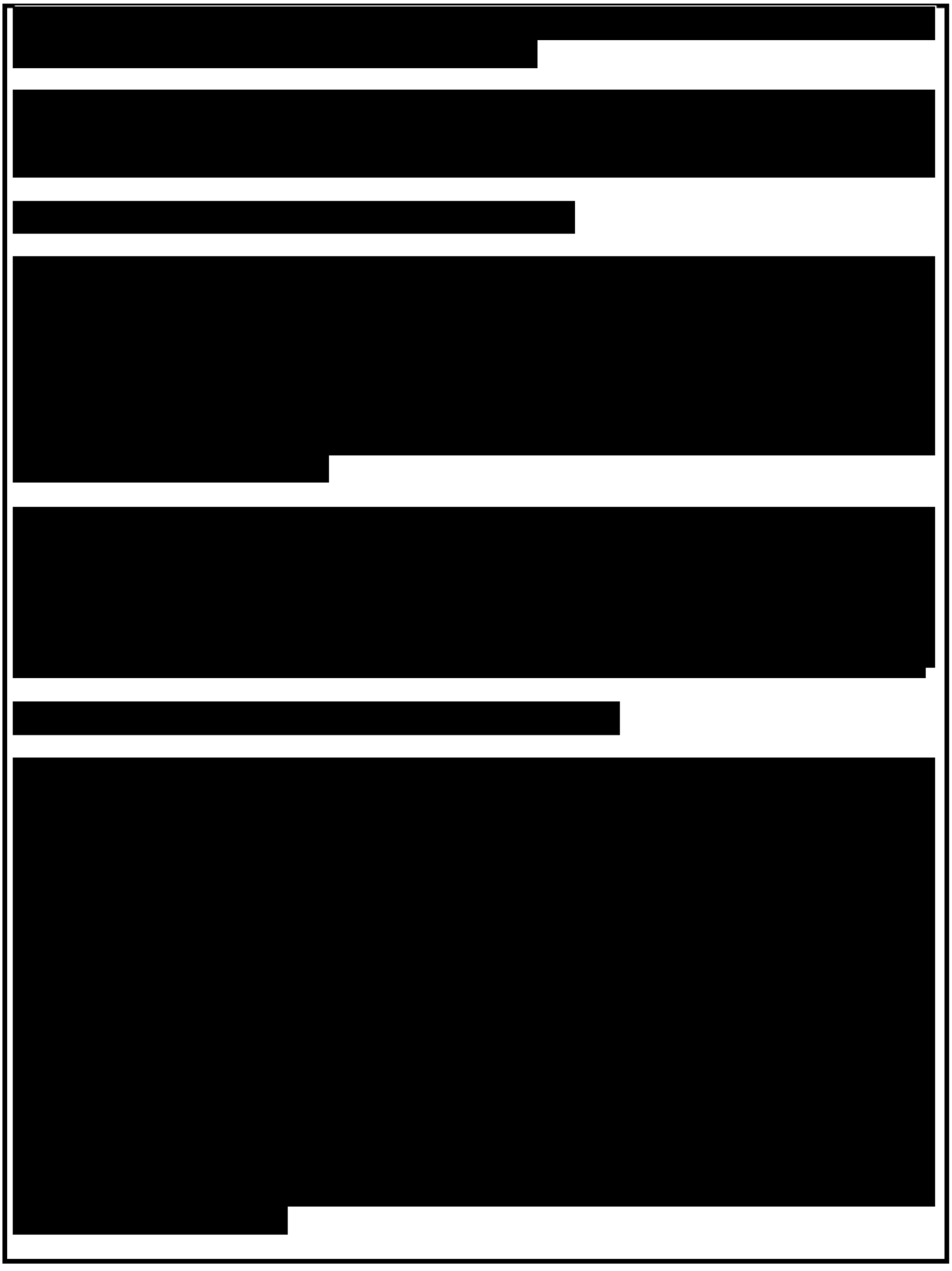


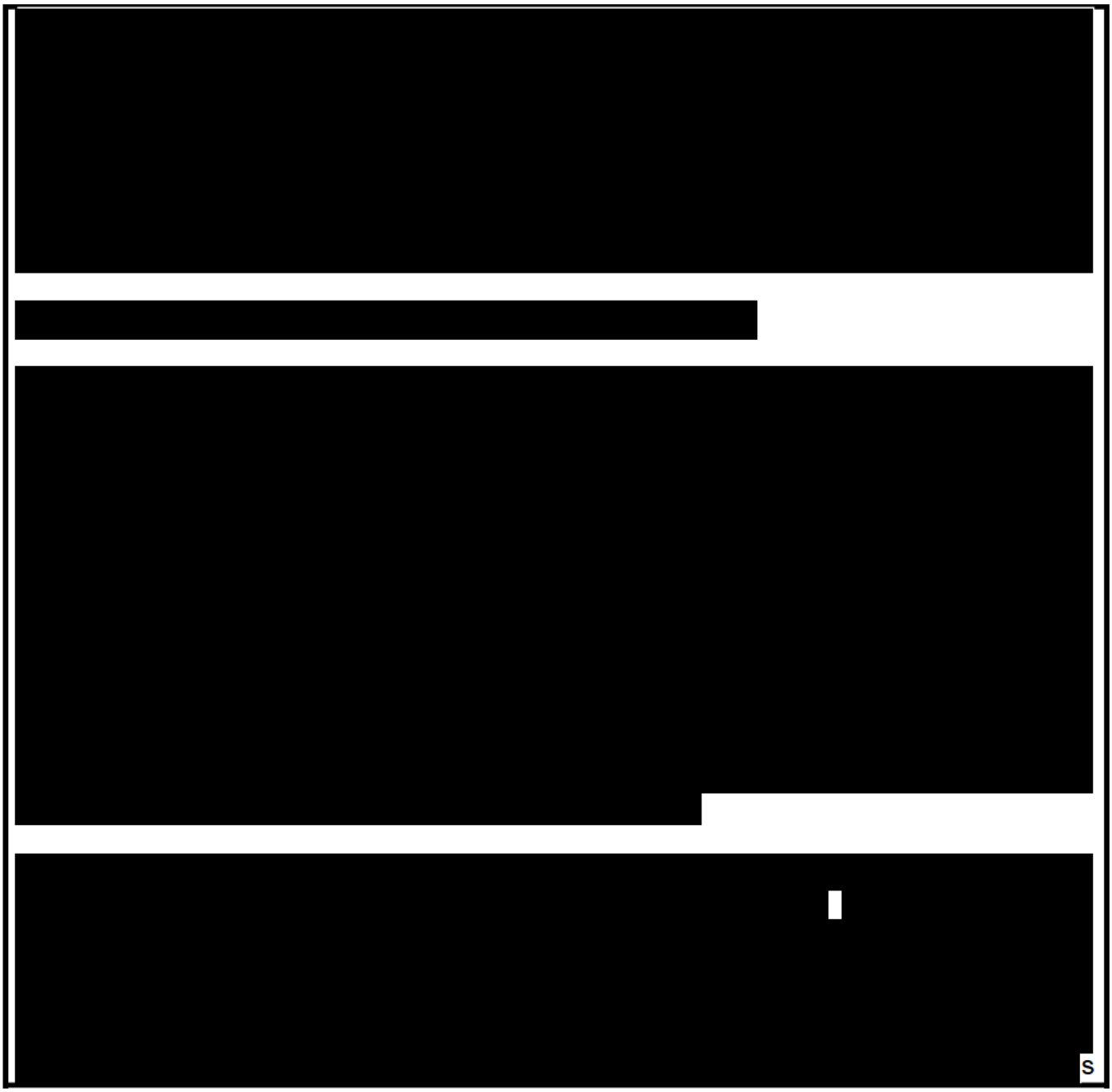


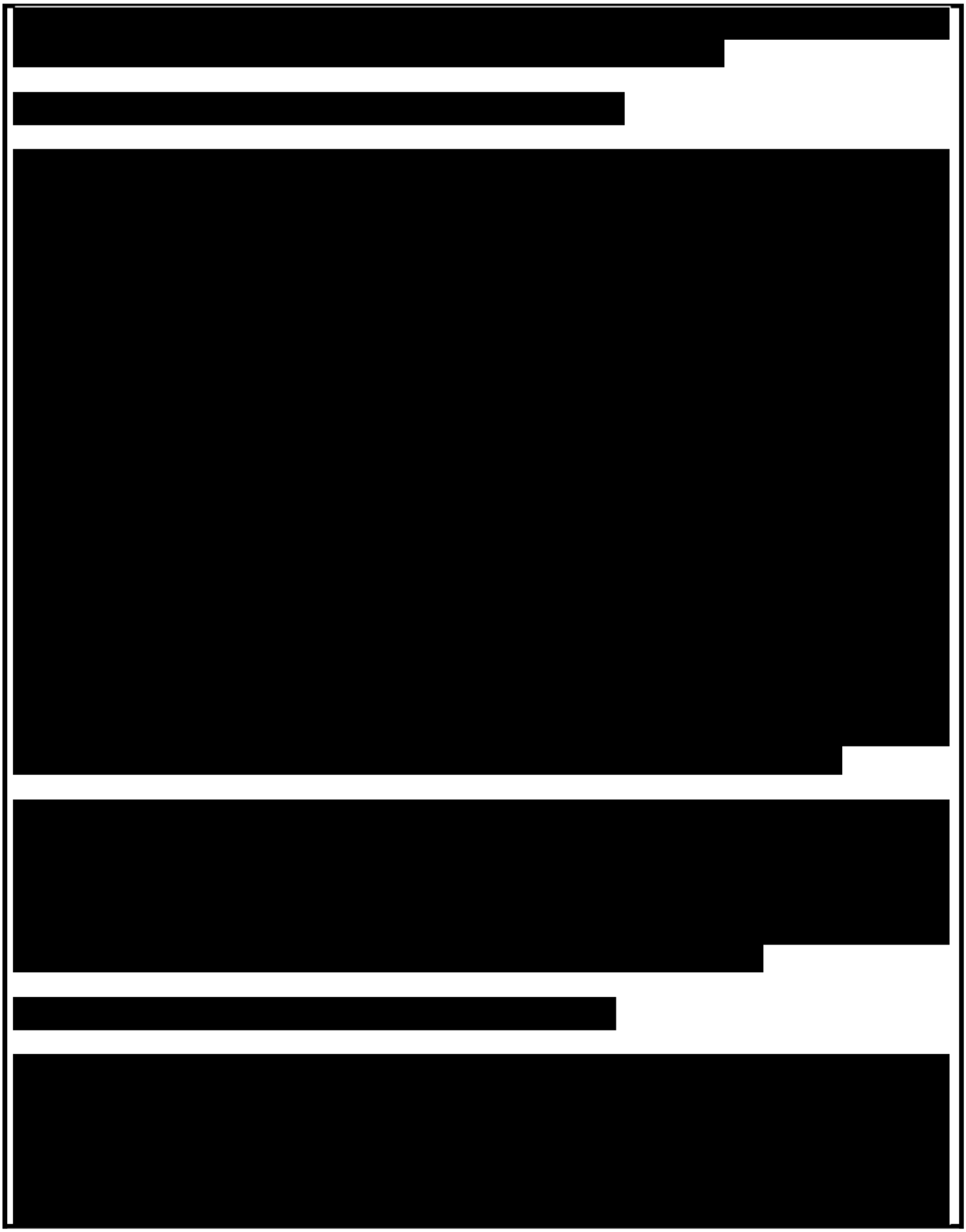
E02. Approach and Methodology

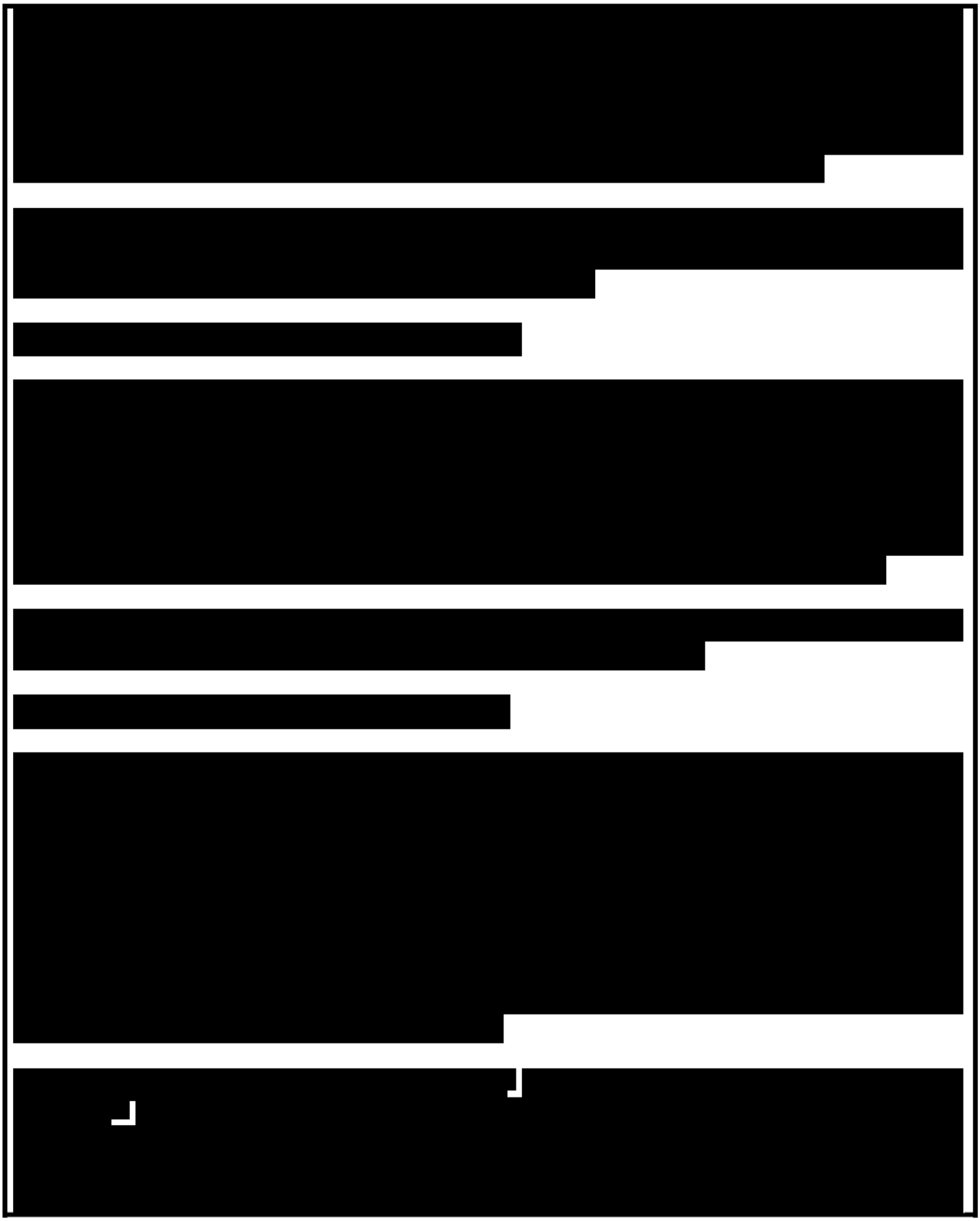












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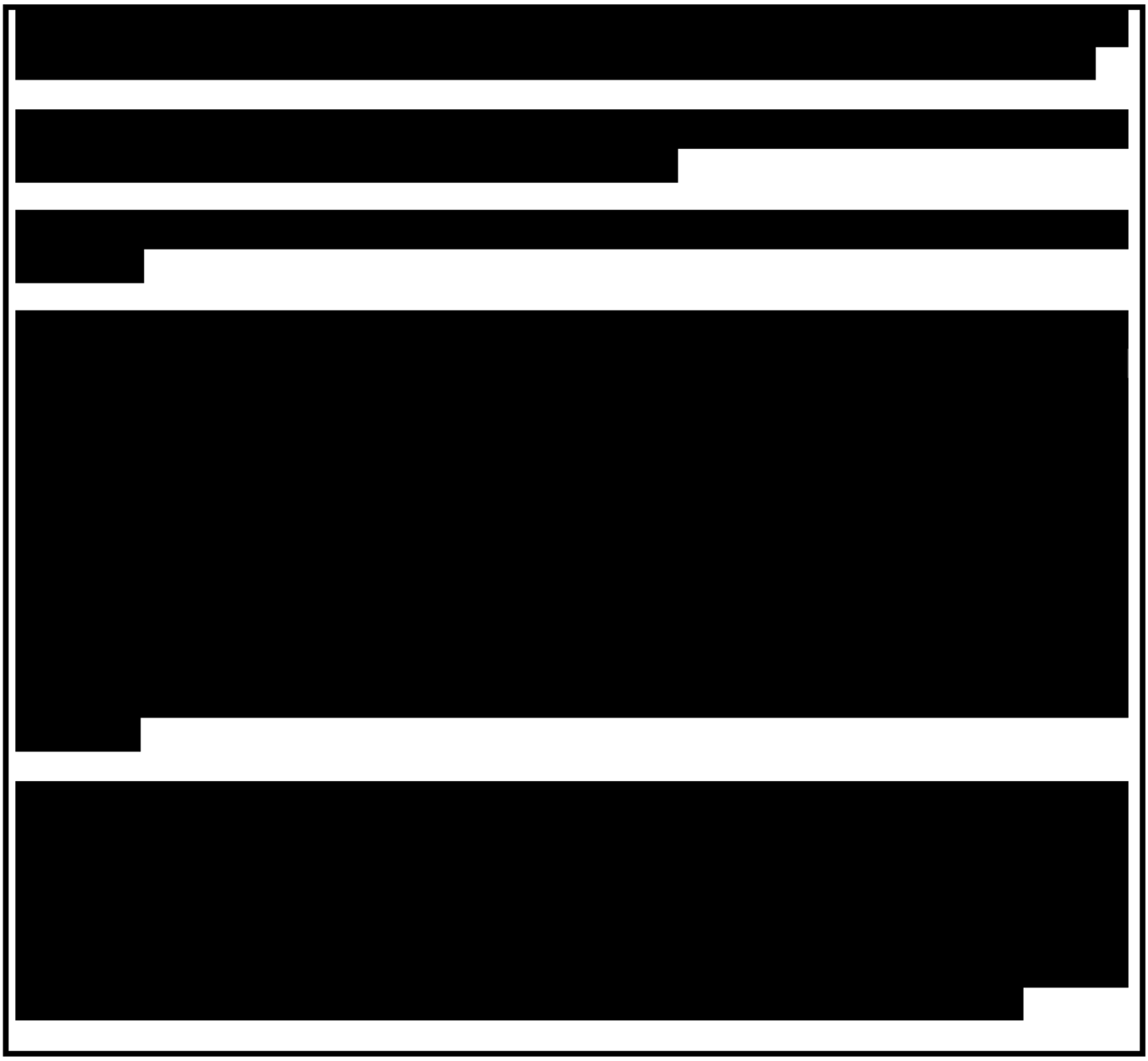

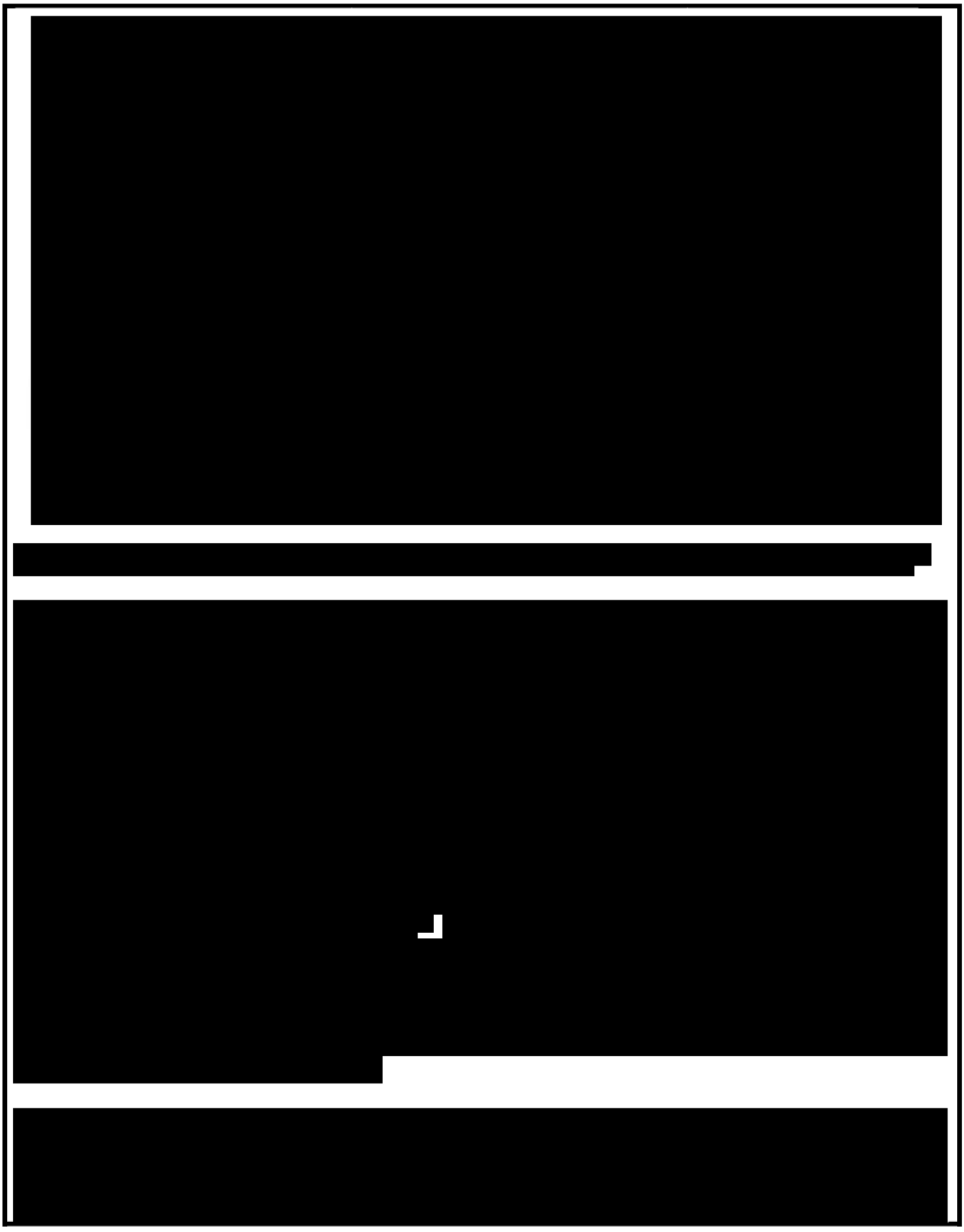

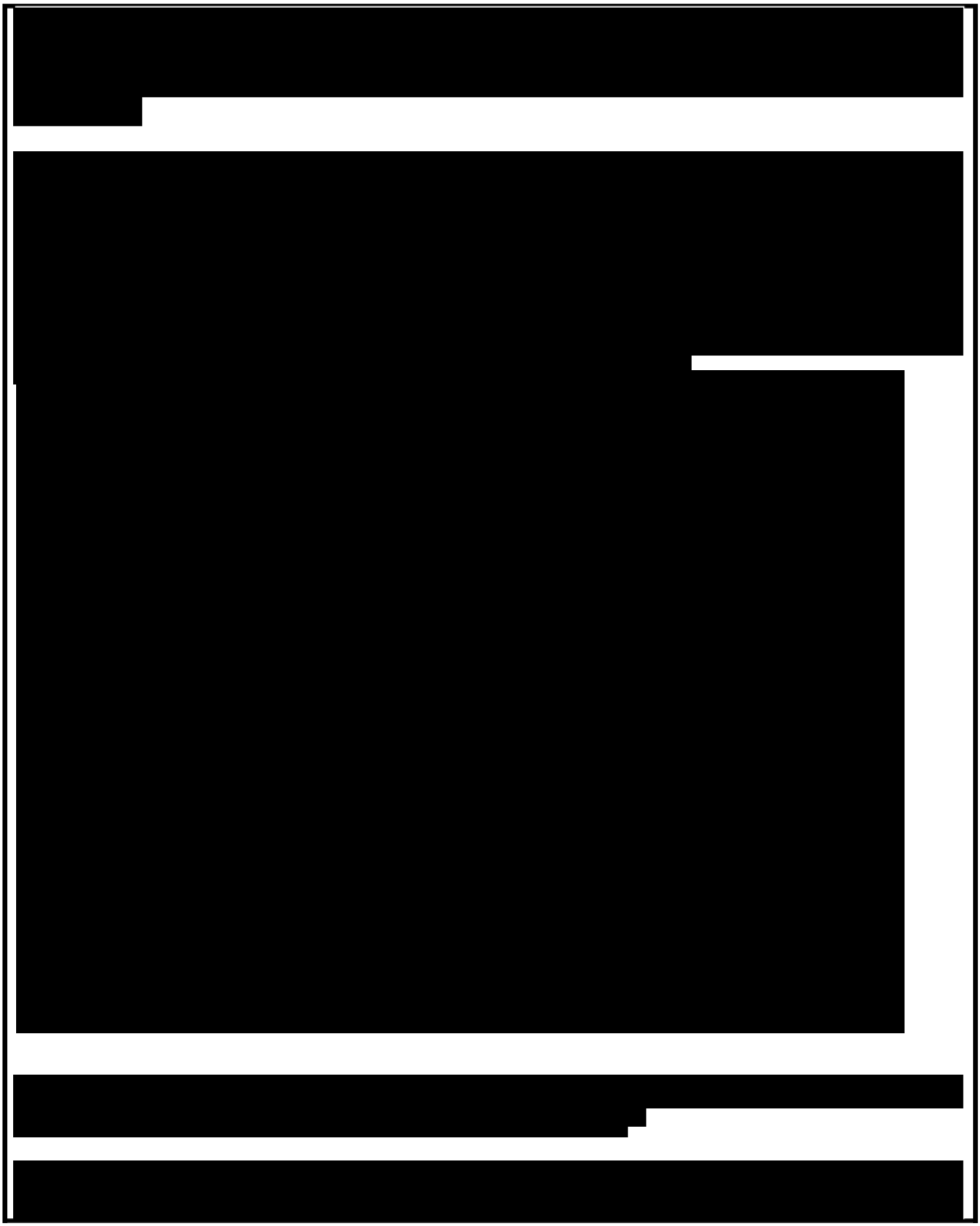

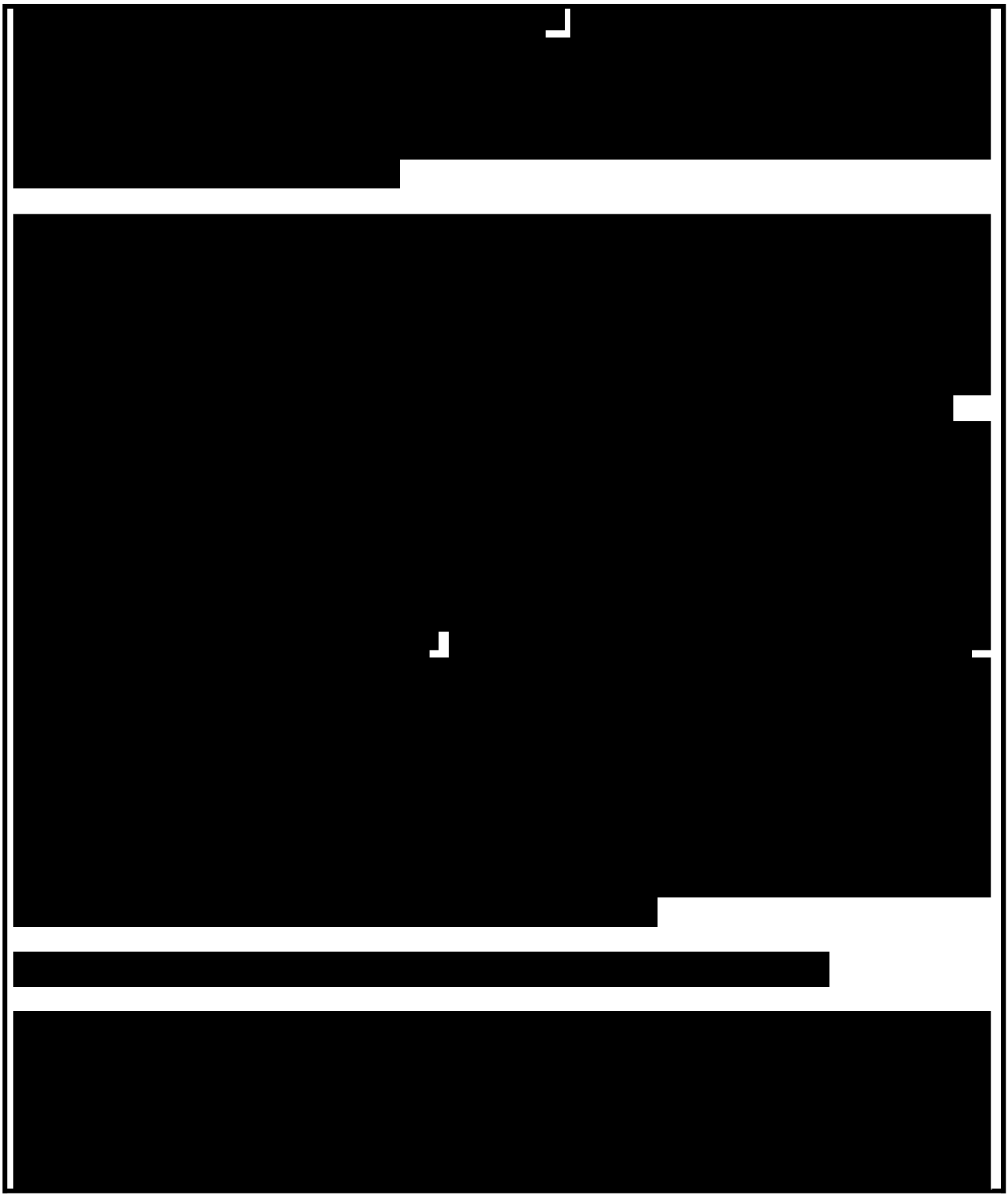

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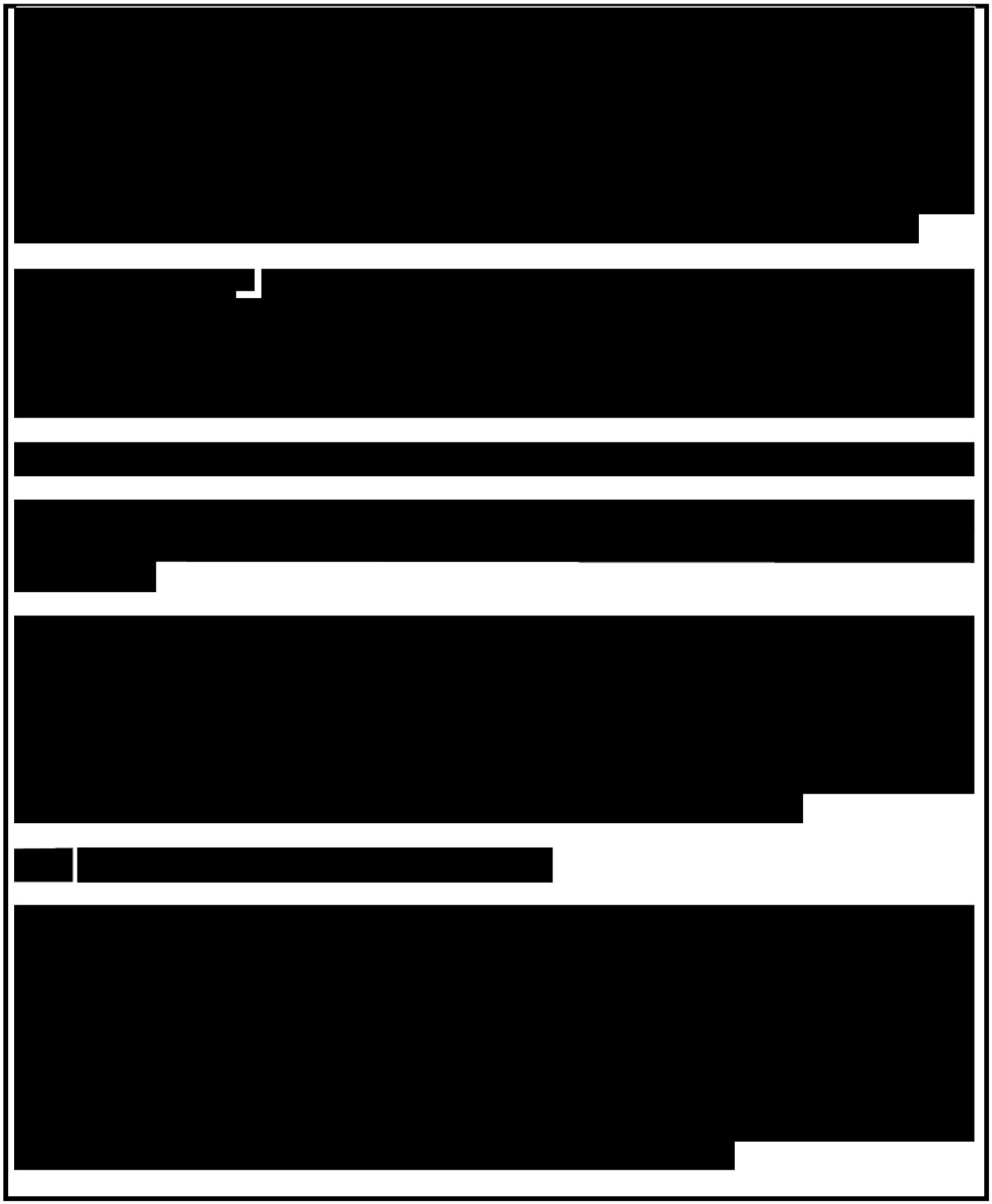

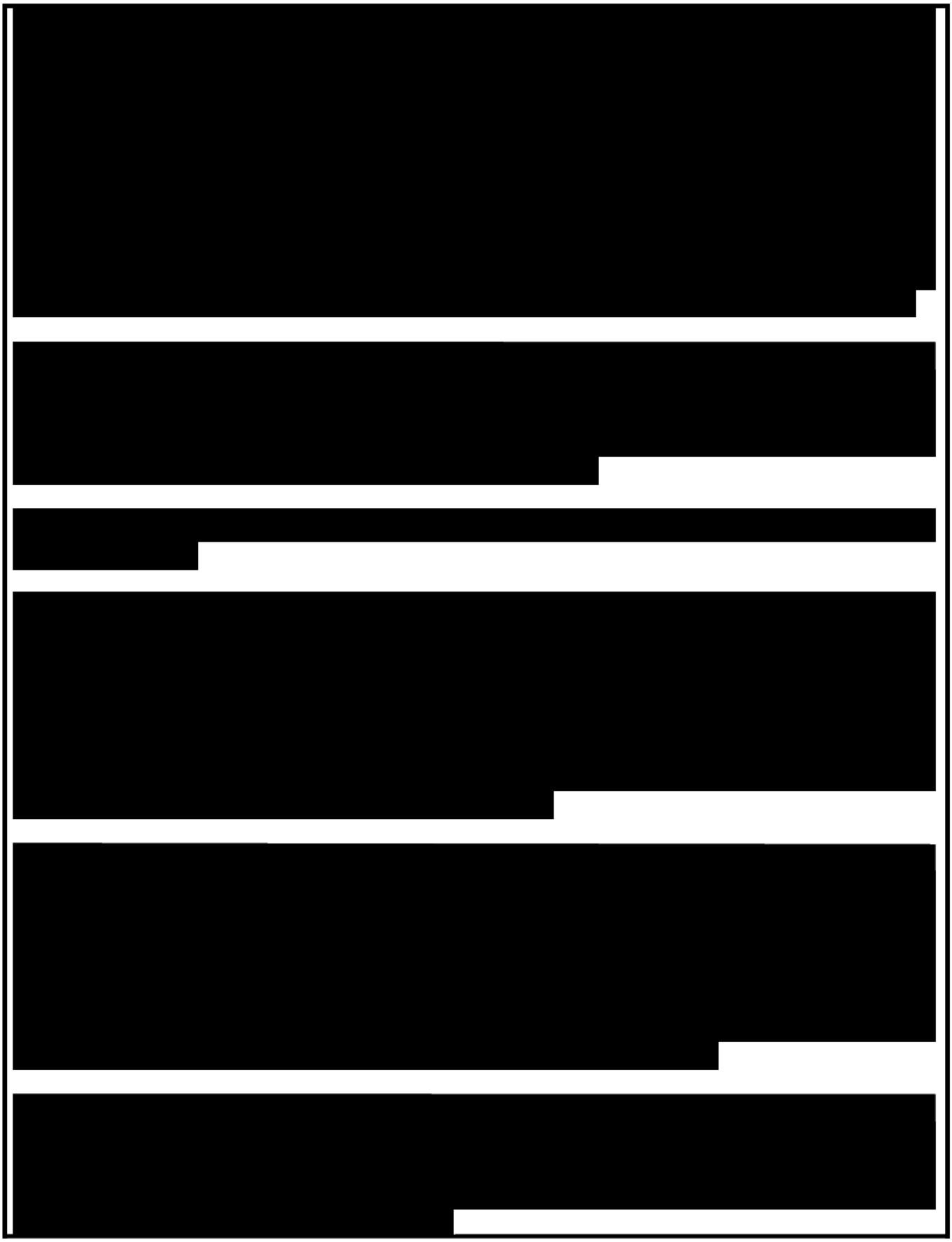

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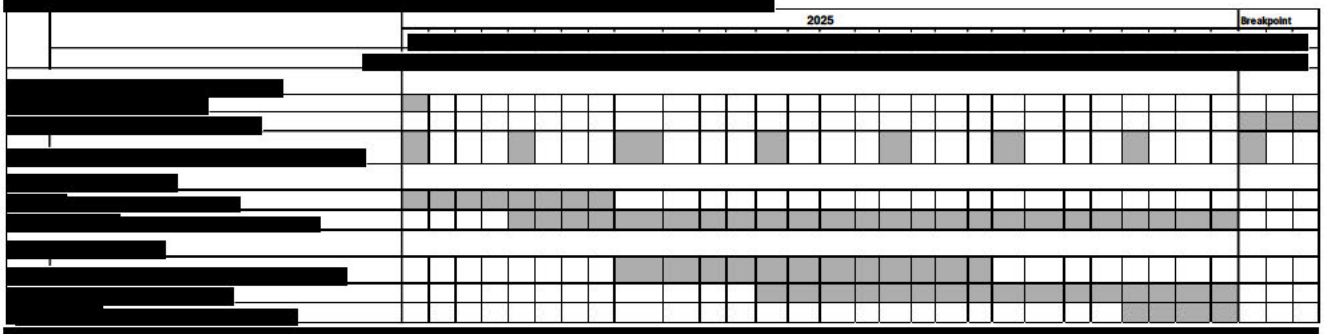

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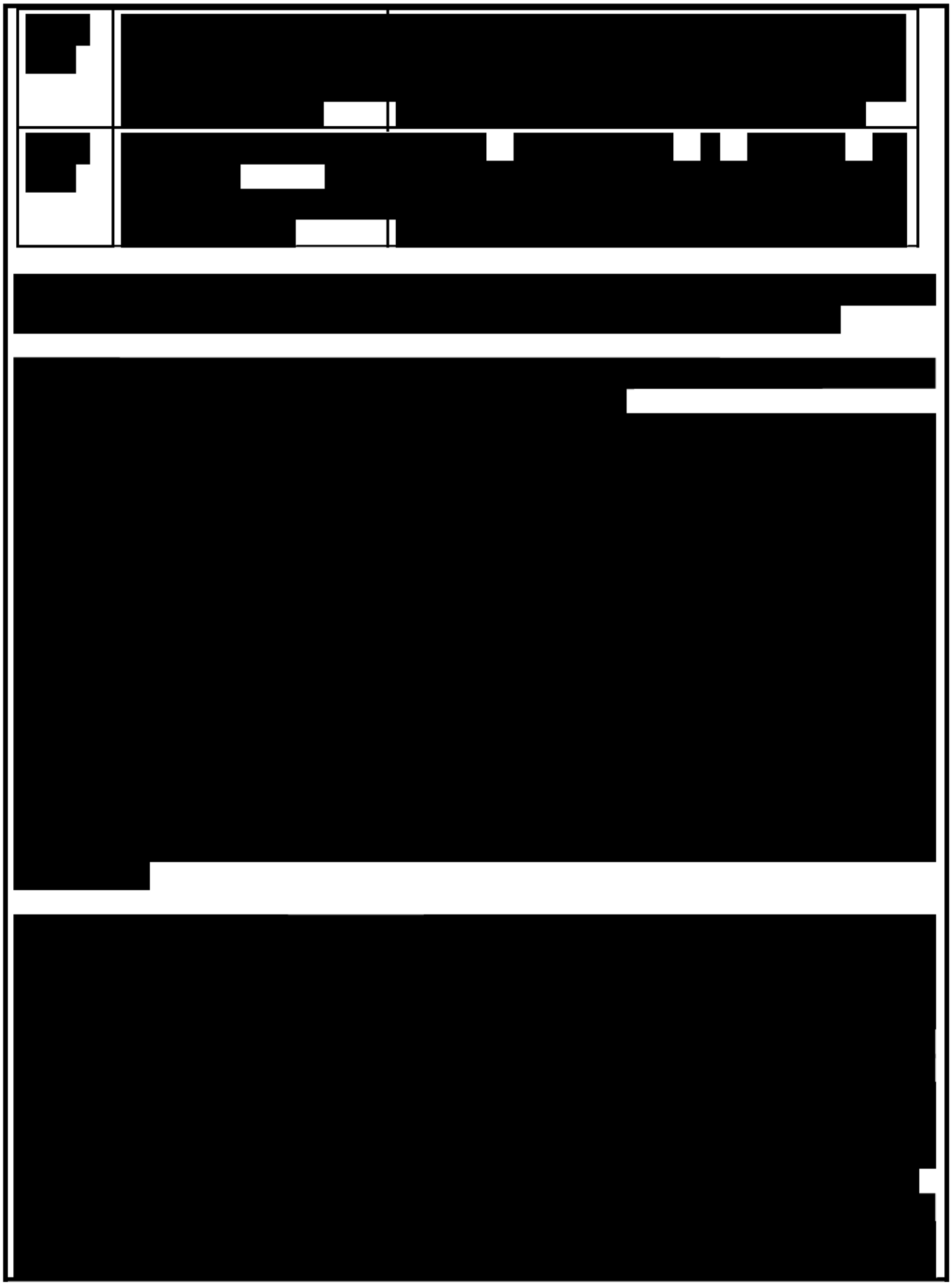

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E04. Project and Risk Management

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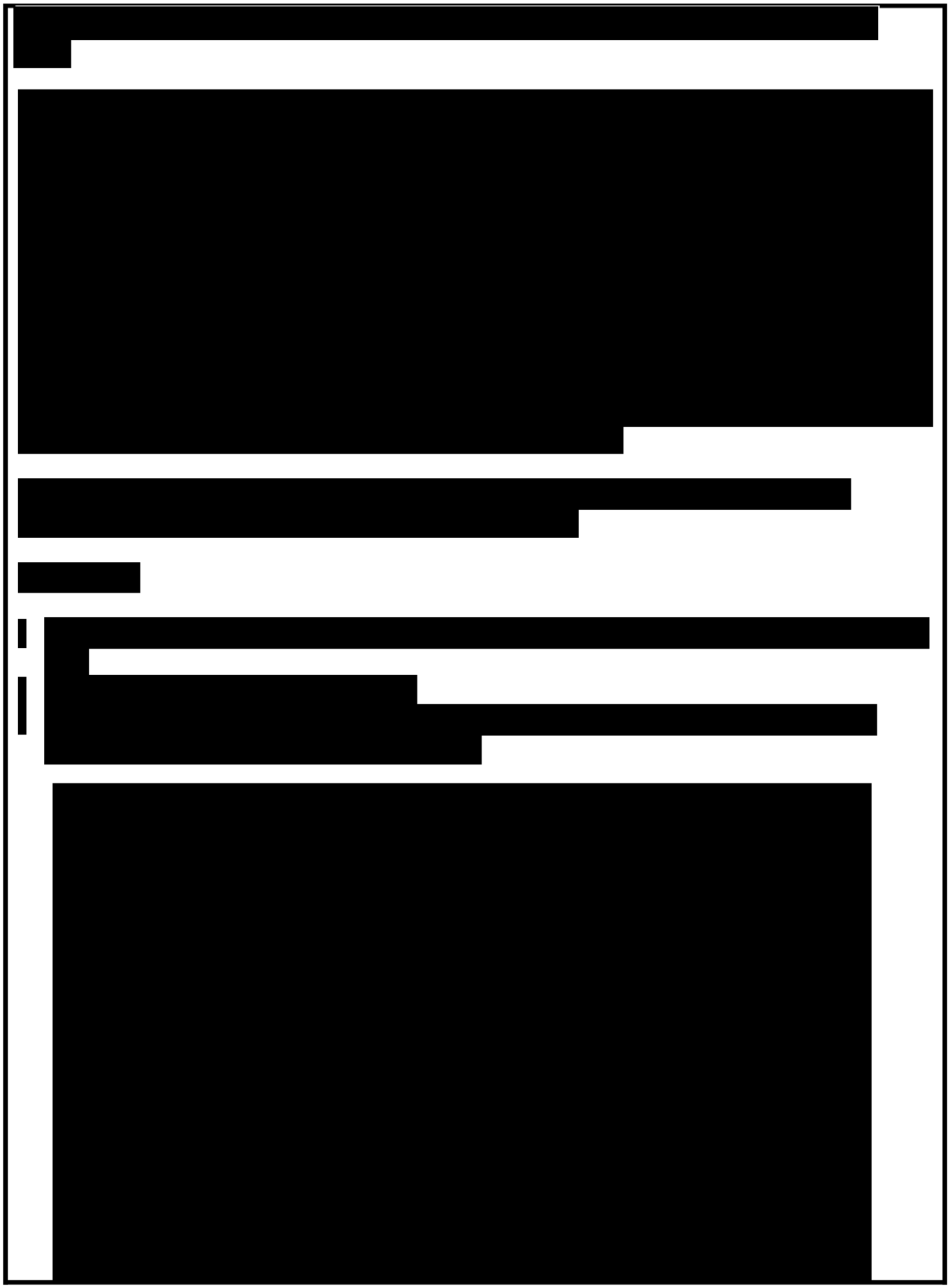

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E05. Sustainability

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3.0 Order Form

3.1 The following document is to be completed by the Contracting Authority and sent to the Contractor for counter signature to form a Call-Off contract.

PLEASE NOTE:

It has been agreed by all parties to include this break clause within the Order form. The findings of Work Packages 1 and 2 will be reviewed before the outline approach to Work Package 3 is agreed. If the cost of Work Package 3 exceeds the indicative costs detailed in this Order Form then the project MAY be terminated by the Authority if additional funding is not secured. This condition will also apply to any organisations acting as Sub-Contractors.

Research, Development and Evidence Framework 2
ORDER FORM

Project title: Cost of Soil Degradation Project

Call off Reference: RDE744

Atamis project ref: C27026

Atamis Contract ref: C28152

[redacted]

THE Contracting Authority: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

THE CONTRACTOR: RSK ADAS Limited, Spring Lodge, 172 Chester Road, Helsby, Cheshire WA6 0AR.

This Order Form, when completed and executed by both Parties, forms a Call-Off Contract.

APPLICABLE FRAMEWORK CONTRACT

This Order Form is for the provision of the Call-Off Deliverables and dated 17TH March 2025. It's issued under the Research Development & Evidence Framework Agreement reference 30210 for the provision of the ***Cost of Soil Degradation Project***.

CALL-OFF INCORPORATED TERMS The following documents are incorporated into this Call-Off Contract. Where numbers are missing we are not using those schedules. If the documents conflict, the following order of precedence applies:

1. Defra Framework Terms and Conditions;
2. Request for Proposal;
3. Proposal;

No other Supplier terms are part of the Call-Off Contract. That includes any terms written on the back of, added to this Order Form, or presented at the time of delivery.

CALL-OFF CONTRACT START DATE: 17 March 2025

CALL-OFF CONTRACT EXPIRY DATE: 17 March 2026

CALL-OFF PERIOD: 12 Months – Provision for additional 3-month extension period at the discretion of the Contracting Authority.

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