

**Appendix E2 – Correspondence with Organs of State:  
DEFF (Biodiversity Directorate)**

## Vivienne Thomson

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**From:** Stanley Tshitwamulomoni <StanleyT@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** 20 April 2020 11:14  
**To:** Vivienne Thomson  
**Cc:** 'Jackie | Enviro Africa'  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Visserspan Solar PV Facilities - Projects 1 to 4

Thanks so much

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**From:** Vivienne Thomson [mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za]  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 April 2020 11:13 AM  
**To:** Stanley Tshitwamulomoni <StanleyT@environment.gov.za>  
**Cc:** 'Jackie | Enviro Africa' <info@enviroafrica.co.za>  
**Subject:** FW: Proposed Visserspan Solar PV Facilities - Projects 1 to 4

Dear Stanley

I received a call from our office manager this morning saying that you requested a link to our website to access the files on the cds sent to you for the above projects since you do not have the facilities to access cd information any more.

Please see the email below for the information you requested. Should there be any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,  
Vivienne Thomson



**EnviroAfrica**

*Environmental Consultant*

**EnviroAfrica cc**

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**From:** Vivienne Thomson <[vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za](mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za)>  
**Sent:** 09 March 2020 16:33  
**To:** 'StanleyT@environment.gov.za' <[StanleyT@environment.gov.za](mailto:StanleyT@environment.gov.za)>  
**Subject:** Proposed Visserspan Solar PV Facilities - Projects 1 to 4

Dear Interested and Affected Party (I&AP)

You have been registered as an I&AP for the four above-mentioned proposed projects.

Please note that the draft basic assessment reports (DBARs) are now available for comment:

1. Cd copies of the DBAR for each of the four projects have been posted to you (if you provided a postal address).

2. Hardcopies of the four DBARs, have been couriered to BKB Dealesville for public viewing.
3. All documentation for the DBARs are also available on EnviroAfrica's website at [www.enviroafrica/projects/forpublic participation](http://www.enviroafrica/projects/forpublic%20participation) then scroll down to [Visersspan Solar Facility - Project \(number\) DBAR](#).

Should you have any comments queries or concerns regarding any of the projects, please notify EnviroAfrica in writing by **15 April 2020**, at the contact details below.

Please also inform and encourage any other parties you feel may be interested in, or affected by, the proposed developments, to register as part of this process. Future correspondence will be sent to registered I&APs.

I trust everything is in order and look forward to your valued input.

Thank you,  
Vivienne Thomson



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## Vivienne Thomson

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**From:** Jackie | Enviro Africa <info@enviroafrica.co.za>  
**Sent:** 21 August 2020 09:16  
**To:** Vivienne  
**Cc:** 'Bernard De Witt'  
**Subject:** FW: Visserspan 1, 2, 3 & 4 PV facilities DBAR comments  
**Attachments:** Visserspan 4 PV comments... (1).pdf; Visserspan 3 PV comments.pdf; Visserspan PV 1 2 facility.pdf

Morning,

Hope you are well?

Please see below and attached for your attention!

Enjoy your day and weekend.

Jackie Jv Vuuren



Office Manager

**EnviroAfrica cc**

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**From:** Portia Makitla <PMakitla@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** Friday, 21 August 2020 09:11  
**To:** info@enviroafrica.co.za  
**Cc:** Seoka Lekota <SLekota@environment.gov.za>  
**Subject:** Visserspan 1, 2, 3 & 4 PV facilities DBAR comments

Good morning

Attached please find the Directorate Biodiversity Conservation comments.

Regards

Portia

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## environmental affairs

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Tel (+ 27 12) 399 9372

**Reference:** Visserspan 1 & 2 PV facility

**Enquiries:** Ms Portia Makitla

**Telephone:** 012-399 9411 **E-mail:** [pmakitla@environment.gov.za](mailto:pmakitla@environment.gov.za)

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Dear Sir/Madam

### **COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN 1 AND 2 SOLAR PV FACILITIES FREE STATE PROVINCE**

The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the aforementioned draft report. Based on the information provided in the DBAR, the study area is located within the Renewable Energy Development Zone 5 (REDZ 5), the Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) and Ecological Support Area (ESA).

According to the DBAR the Botanical Impact Assessment is attached to the report as Appendix G1 for Visserspan project 1 & 2 but during the review Appendix G1 could not be found.

Based on the above; the Directorate Biodiversity & Conservation is unable to comment on the proposed development you are therefore requested to attach the specialist studies and resubmit the DBAR for comments.

Yours faithfully

**Mr Seoka Lekota**  
**Control Biodiversity Officer Grade B: Biodiversity Conservation**  
**Department of Environmental Affairs Forestry and Fisheries**  
**Date: 17/08/2020**

## Vivienne Thomson

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**From:** Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>  
**Sent:** 24 August 2020 07:28  
**To:** 'Portia Makitla'  
**Cc:** 'Seoka Lekota'  
**Subject:** Visserspan Project 1  
**Attachments:** Botanical Impact Assessment - Visserspan Project 1 - Final.pdf

Dear Portia

Thank you for your response. Please find Project 1's report attached. Please confirm receipt. Project 2's report to follow ...

Thank you,  
Vivienne Thomson



**EnviroAfrica**

*Environmental Consultant*

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**From:** Portia Makitla <PMakitla@environment.gov.za>  
**Sent:** 21 August 2020 19:47  
**To:** Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>  
**Cc:** Seoka Lekota <SLekota@environment.gov.za>  
**Subject:** RE: Visserspan Projects 1 & 2

Dear Vivienne

Sorry for commenting late on this project.

You can email me the Botanical Study we will ensure that we provide you with the comments before the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Regards  
Portia

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**From:** Vivienne Thomson [<mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>]  
**Sent:** Friday, 21 August 2020 11:52  
**To:** Portia Makitla  
**Cc:** Seoka Lekota; Stanley Tshitwamulomoni  
**Subject:** Visserspan Projects 1 & 2  
**Importance:** High

Dear Portia

Thank you for the Directorate Biodiversity Conservation's (Directorate's) comments received today for the four Visserspan projects.

I am a bit concerned regarding the comment made that the Appendix G1 for both Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153) and Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154) were not available since they have been on EnviroAfrica's website as part of the public participation process and as indicated in email correspondence sent to the Directorate in June, when the public participation process deadline was extended for a third time to the 19 July 2020 (as per the email below).

I have tried to call the Directorate a few times this morning to gain clarity on this issue since the Directorate's comment has been received at a rather late stage. In the comments received from the Directorate today (Friday, 21 August 2020 09:11), I was instructed to resubmit the required appendices and DBARs to the Directorate for comment. The Visserspan projects are all on a very tight deadline and the final BAR is due to be submitted to the Department for decision on 28 August 2020. Both the DBARs and appendices are on EnviroAfrica's website but I can also try to compress the files and email them to you if that will make it easier?

Please let me know if I may email you the required files today.

Thank you,  
Vivienne Thomson



*Environmental Consultant*

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**From:** Vivienne Thomson <[vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za](mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za)>

**Sent:** 30 June 2020 10:47

**To:** 'StanleyT@environment.gov.za' <[StanleyT@environment.gov.za](mailto:StanleyT@environment.gov.za)>

**Subject:** Extension: Proposed Visserspan Solar PV Facilities - Projects 1 to 4

Dear I&AP

Please note that the **deadline for comments** on the following developments proposed on Visserspan Farm No. 40, near Dealesville, Free State Province, has been **extended to 19 July 2020**:

Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153);

Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154);

Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 3 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155);

Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 4 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2156).

Comments/queries must be made in writing. All documents as, originally made available at the start of this public participation process earlier in March 2020 are still relevant and are also still available on EnviroAfrica's website ([www.enviroafrica.co.za / projects / for public participation](http://www.enviroafrica.co.za/projects/forpublicparticipation)).

**Please note:** The above stance is in keeping with communication sent to environmental assessment practitioners from the national Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries' in relation to project timelines. No further extension, beyond **19 July 2020**, will be made.



Thank you for your active involvement in this process.

Regards,  
Vivienne Thomson



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## environment, forestry & fisheries

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**Reference:** 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154

**Enquiries:** Ms Portia Makitla

**Telephone:** 012-399 9411 **E-mail:** [pmakitla@environment.gov.za](mailto:pmakitla@environment.gov.za)

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### PER E-MAIL

Dear Vivienne

### COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN 1 SOLAR PV FACILITIES FREE STATE PROVINCE

The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation reviewed and evaluated the aforementioned draft report. Based on the information provided in the DBAR, the study area is located within the Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA1) and Ecological Support Area (ESA); Therefore, the proposed development would result in the loss of Vaal-Vet Sandy grassland which is listed as a threatened ecosystem (Endangered A1) in the National List of Threatened Ecosystems.

The botanist in the conclusion of the study highlighted that “although the study area is in an area classified and mapped as a CBA1 area, my findings were that the area does not warrant CBA1 status and is suitable for building a solar PV installation”. This statement is confusing, please elaborate further in the final report and also obtain comments from the provincial department and or any conservation agencies to confirm whether they are in agreement with the specialist as they are the custodianship of biodiversity in the Free State Province.

Based on the information provided the Directorate Biodiversity Conservation is of the view that the proposed Visserspan 1 solar PV facility will result in fatal flaw since projects sites cover major part of an

**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED  
VISSERSPAN 1 SOLAR PV FACILITIES FREE STATE PROVINCE**

area designated as highly sensitive and according to the specialist the degraded areas are no longer degraded since they have successfully reverted to Vaal-Vet Sandy Grassland (good condition)  
In conclusion; the development within an areas classified as CBA1 is not supported.

Yours faithfully



**Mr. Seoka Lekota**  
**Control Biodiversity Officer Grade B: Biodiversity Conservation**  
**Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries**  
**Date: 24-08-2020**