

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

Vivienne Thomson

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

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

p: +27 21 851 1616 m: +27 82 464 2874

f: +27 86 512 0154

a: Unit 7, Pastorie Park, Reitz St, Somerset West, 7130
P.O. Box 5367, Helderberg, 7135

w: www.enviroafrica.co.za e: vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za

Please consider the environment and only print this mail if necessary.

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 09 March 2020 16:33
To: 'StanleyT@environment.gov.za' <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 [Viserspan 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

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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Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 447 · PRETORIA · 0001 · Environment House · 473 Steve Biko Road, Arcadia, · PRETORIA
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

Vivienne Thomson
EnviroAfrica CC
P.O. Box 5367
Helderberg
7135

Telephone Number: +27 (21) 851 1616
Email Address: info@enviroafrica.co.za

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

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 24 August 2020 07:31
To: 'Portia Makitla'
Cc: 'Seoka Lekota'
Subject: RE: Visserspan Project 2
Attachments: Botanical Impact Assessment - Visserspan Project 2 - Final.pdf

Dear Portia

Please find Project 2's report attached. Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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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 28th.

Regards
Portia

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>

Sent: 30 June 2020 10:47

To: 'StanleyT@environment.gov.za' <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



EnviroAfrica

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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 24 August 2020 11:53
To: 'Portia Makitla'
Cc: 'Seoka Lekota'
Subject: RE: Visserspan Project 1

Hi Portia

Did you receive Project 2's report as well?

Vivienne Thomson



EnviroAfrica

Environmental Consultant

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Sent: 24 August 2020 10:32
To: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Cc: Seoka Lekota <SLekota@environment.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Visserspan Project 1

Dear Vivienne

Report received

From: Vivienne Thomson [<mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>]
Sent: Monday, 24 August 2020 07:28
To: Portia Makitla
Cc: Seoka Lekota
Subject: Visserspan Project 1

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



Environmental Consultant

EnviroAfrica cc

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Sent: 30 June 2020 10:47

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Thank you for your active involvement in this process.

Regards,

Vivienne Thomson



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environment, forestry & fisheries

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X447, Pretoria, 0001, Environment House, 473 Steve Biko Road, Pretoria, 0002 Tel: +27 12 399 9000, Fax: + 27 86 625 1042

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

Enquiries: Ms Portia Makitla

Telephone: 012-399 9411 **E-mail:** pmakitla@environment.gov.za

Vivienne Thomson
EnviroAfrica CC
P.O. Box 5367
Helderberg
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Telephone Number: +27 (21) 851 1616
Email Address: info@enviroafrica.co.za

PER E-MAIL

Dear Vivienne

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN 2 SOLAR PV FACILITY 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.

Conclusion of the botanist is that "even though the area of Visserspan Solar PV Project 2 is acceptable for building renewable energy infrastructure, the impact of clearing of the vegetation would still be Negatively high. No meaningful mitigation measures would be possible". According to the mitigation hierarchy this warrant avoidance. Please explain how the mitigation hierarchy were applied in determining the suitability of the project site in relation to the management and conservation of biodiversity.

**COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED
VISSERSPAN 2 SOLAR PV FACILITY FREE STATE PROVINCE**

Based on the information provided the Directorate Biodiversity Conservation view the proposed solar PV facility as a fatal flaw there would be high local loss of this vegetation type (habitat) and loss of ecological functionality. Mitigation options are minimal to zero and the impact at a local scale is thus Negatively high, which cannot be avoided.

Yours faithfully



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