

Appendix E1 – Correspondence with Organs of State:
DEFF



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

DEA Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153

Enquiries: Juliet Mahlangu

Tel: 012 399 9320 E-mail: jmmahlangu@environment.gov.za

Vivienne Thomson/ Bernard de Witt
EnviroAfrica
P O Box 5367
SOMERSET WEST
7135

Tel: 021 851 1616

Email: vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za

PER EMAIL / MAIL

Dear Sir/Madam

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF THE NEW APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION (BASIC ASSESSMENT PROCESS) FOR THE FOR PROPOSED VISSERSPAN SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FACILITY PROJECT 1 ON VISSERSPAN FARM NO.40, NEAR DEALESVILLE, TOKOLOGO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE

The Department confirms having received the Application for Environmental Authorisation and a Draft Report for the abovementioned project on 11 March 2020. You have submitted these documents to comply with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended.

Please take note of Regulation 40(3) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that potential Interested & Affected Parties, including the Competent Authority, may be provided with an opportunity to comment on reports and plans contemplated in Regulation 40(1) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, prior to the submission of an application but must be provided an opportunity to comment on such reports once an application has been submitted to the Competent Authority. **You are required to submit an updated Application form with a screening tool report as has been a requirement since 04 October 2019. Your application will be considered invalid without a screening tool report.**

All documentation delivered to the physical address contained in this form must be delivered during the official Departmental Office Hours which is visible on the Departmental gate. EIA related documents (includes application forms, reports or any EIA related submissions) that are faxed; emailed; delivered to Security or placed in the Departmental Tender Box will not be accepted.

Note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the time-frames prescribed in terms of these Regulations, unless an extension has been granted by the Department in terms of Regulation 3(7) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of the application.

Yours sincerely



Mr Sabelo Malaza

Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations

Department of Environmental Affairs

Letter signed by: Mr Rhulani Kubayi

Designation: Control Environmental Officer: EIA Systems and Tools

Date: 12-03-2020



environmental affairs

Department
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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

DEA Reference: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153

Enquiries: Ms Bathandwa Ncube

Telephone: 012 399 9368 E-mail: BNcube@environment.gov.za

Vivienne Thomson
EnviroAfrica CC
P.O. Box 5367
SOMERSET WEST
7135

Tel : 021 851 1616
Email : vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za

PER MAIL / E-MAIL

Dear Ms Thomson

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC FACILITY PROJECT 1 ON VISSERSPAN FARM NO. 40, NEAR DEALESVILLE, TOKOLOGO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE

The Application for Environmental Authorisation and Draft Basic Assessment Report (BAR) dated March 2020 and received by the Department on 11 March 2020 and the acknowledgement thereof dated 12 March 2020, refer.

This Department has the following comments on the abovementioned application:

Application Form and DBAR

1. Activity 1 of GN R.983 (as amended): You are advised to remove this activity as the development applied for has a proposed capacity of 100MW and you have applied for activity 1 of GN R.984 (as amended).
2. Activity 11(i) of GN R.983 (as amended): The activity description states that the development of the evacuation powerlines will be assessed in a separate environmental application process. Please clarify why this activity has been included in the application form. Should the associated infrastructure include an on-site substation, you are required to state the capacity of the substation and its footprint. Also note that infrastructure that triggers this activity requires a generic EMPr to be submitted with the final BAR.
3. **Should it apply:**
 - a) The *Generic EMPr for the development and expansion of substation infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of electricity* can be downloaded from <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>
 - b) Part B: Section 2 of the generic EMPr must be completed, and an originally signed EMPr must be submitted with the final BAR. Please note that Point 7.1.1 in Part B: Section 2 needs to match the details of the applicant as contained in the application form.
4. **Should it not apply:** You are advised to remove this activity from the list of activities applied for.
5. Activity 15 of GN R.984 (as amended): Indicate the total area of indigenous vegetation proposed for clearance in hectares.
6. Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description.

7. An amended application form must be submitted with the final BAR. Please note that the Department's application form and other templates can be downloaded from the following link <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>
8. You are required to submit the updated application form with a screening tool report, as has been the requirement since 04 October 2019. Your application will be considered invalid without a screening tool report.
9. You have not provided an electronic copy of the application form for the proposed development. Please ensure that an electronic and hard copy of the updated application form and screening tool is submitted to the Department with the final BAR.
10. You are required to include the details and expertise of the EAP in the BAR, including a curriculum vitae, in order to comply with the requirements of Appendix 1(3)(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.
11. It is noted that the submitted application form has an undertaking under oath or affirmation by the EAP. However, the aforementioned oath was not included in the draft BAR. Please note that the final BAR must also have an undertaking under oath/ affirmation by the EAP in order to comply with the requirements of Appendix 1(3)(1)(r) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.

Technical details of the proposed facility and design alternative

12. The EIAR must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. A sample for the minimum information required is listed under point 2 of Annexure 1, of the EIA information required for PV facilities below.
13. Further, the EIAR must include the design alternative for the proposed 100MW PV facility.

Alternatives

14. Please note that Appendix 1(3)(1)(h)(x) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended, requires that *"if no alternatives, including alternative locations for the activity were investigated, the motivation for not considering such"* must be included in the BAR. You are therefore required to provide a motivation should other alternative sites, routes, layouts and technologies not be considered.
15. A description of the process followed to reach the preferred alternative within the site as per Appendix 1(3)(1)(h)(i) of the EIA Regulations (2014), as amended, must be incorporated into the final BAR.

Coordinates

16. Provide the coordinates for the bend points of the proposed 218ha site boundary (for Project 1 only), within Visserspan Farm, in degrees, minutes and seconds.

Specialist studies

17. You are required to conduct Ecology and Hydrology specialist studies; to assess the impacts of the proposed development on the biodiversity of the area (CBAs, ESA, surface water and ground water features, fauna etc.); to determine the indigenous and disturbed vegetation to be cleared (in square metres); as well as provide mitigation and management measures. This/ these reports must be included in the final BAR.
18. The Specialist Declaration of Interest forms submitted for the specialist studies are for Visserspan Solar Photovoltaic Facility Project 4. You are required to submit forms related to Project 1.
19. The Soil, Land Use and Agricultural Potential study, as well as the Socio-Economic study that have been submitted with the draft BAR are for Visserspan Solar Photovoltaic Facility Project 3. You are required to submit studies related to Project 1.

20. All specialist studies must provide a detailed description of all limitations to their studies. It must be noted that all specialist studies must be conducted in the correct season, and conducting a specialist study in the incorrect season and providing that as a limitation will not be accepted.
21. The Archaeological and Palaeontological Impact Assessments must be submitted to SAHRA for comments, via the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS). These comments must be must be addressed and incorporated in the final BAR.
22. Should the comments from SAHRA (or any other I&AP) propose significant changes or new information to be added to the BAR (or EMPr), you are advised to refer to Regulation 19(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.
23. Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defensible reasons; and where necessary, include further expert advice.

A copy of the final site layout map and alternatives.

All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map.

24. The layout map must indicate the following:
 - PV positions and its associated infrastructure;
 - Permanent laydown area footprint;
 - Internal roads indicating width (construction period width and operation period width) and with numbered sections between the other site elements which they serve (to make commenting on sections possible);
 - Wetlands, drainage lines, rivers, stream and water crossing of roads and cables indicating the type of bridging structures that will be used;
 - The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g. CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected by the facility and its associated infrastructure;
 - Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint;
 - Connection routes (including pylon positions) to the distribution/transmission network;
 - All existing infrastructure on the site, especially roads;
 - Buffer areas;
 - Buildings, including accommodation; and
 - All "no-go" areas.

Topographical and sensitivity Maps

25. The maps in Appendix D provide biodiversity information for the entire Visserspan Farm No. 40. The maps submitted with that final BAR may provide information for the entire extent of Visserspan Farm, but it is required that maps displaying geographical information particular to the portion of the farm designated for Project 1 only, be included in the report.
26. The Biodiversity map provided in Appendix D utilises similar colours for "Protected" and "CBA 1, which makes it difficult to distinguish between the two.
27. A locality map indicating the location of the proposed site, in relation to the nearest town (within the region) must be on an A3 page and submitted with the final BAR.
28. An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmentally sensitive areas and features identified during the basic assessment process must be on an A3 page with a clear legend.
29. A topographical map combining the final layout map superimposed (overlain) on the environmental sensitivity map must be submitted with the final BAR.

Shapefile of the preferred Development layout

30. A shapefile of the preferred development layout/footprint must be submitted to this Department.

31. The shapefile must be created using the Hartebeesthoek 94 Datum and the data should be in Decimal Degree Format using the WGS 84 Spheroid.
32. The shapefile must include at a minimum the following extensions i.e. .shp; .shx; .dbf; .prj; and, .xml (Metadata file). If specific symbology was assigned to the file, then the .avl and/or the .lyr file must also be included.
33. Data must be mapped at a scale of 1:10 000 (please specify if an alternative scale was used). The metadata must include a description of the base data used for digitizing.
34. The shapefile must be submitted in a zip file using the EIA application reference number as the title. The shape file must be submitted to:

Postal Address: Department of Environmental Affairs
Private Bag X447
Pretoria
0001

Physical address: Environment House
473 Steve Biko Road
Pretoria

For Attention: Muhammad Essop
Integrated Environmental Authorisations
Strategic Infrastructure Developments

Telephone Number: 012 399 9406

Email Address: MEssop@environment.gov.za

The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)

The EMPr to be submitted as part of the BAR must include the following:

35. All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the BAR and the specialist studies conducted.
36. A good quality final site layout map with clear legend.
37. Measures as dictated by the final site layout map and micro-siting.
38. An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmental sensitive areas and features identified during the basic assessment process.
39. A map combining the final layout map superimposed (overlain) on the environmental sensitivity map.
40. An alien invasive management plan to be implemented during construction and operation of the facility. The plan must include mitigation measures to reduce the invasion of alien species and ensure that the continuous monitoring and removal of alien species is undertaken.
41. A plant rescue and protection plan which allows for the maximum transplant of conservation important species from areas to be transformed. This plan must be compiled by a vegetation specialist familiar with the site and be implemented prior to commencement of the construction phase.
42. A re-vegetation and habitat rehabilitation plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility. Restoration must be undertaken as soon as possible after completion of construction activities to reduce the amount of habitat converted at any one time and to speed up the recovery to natural habitats.
43. A traffic management plan for the site access roads to ensure that no hazards would result from the increased truck traffic and that traffic flow would not be adversely impacted. This plan must include measures to minimize impacts on local commuters e.g. limiting construction vehicles travelling on public roadways during the morning and late afternoon commute time and avoid using roads through densely populated built-up areas so as not to disturb existing retail and commercial operations.
44. A storm water management plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility. The plan must ensure compliance with applicable regulations and prevent off-site migration of contaminated storm water or increased soil erosion. The plan must include the construction of appropriate design measures that allow surface and subsurface movement of water along drainage lines

so as not to impede natural surface and subsurface flows. Drainage measures must promote the dissipation of storm water run-off.

45. A fire management plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility.
46. Measures to protect archaeological sites, artefacts, paleontological fossils or graves from construction and operational impacts.
47. Ensure that the EMPr complies with Appendix 4 of the EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended).
48. The EMPr must not contain any ambiguity. Where applicable, statements containing the word "should" or "may" are to be amended to "must".

Public Participation

49. Ensure that all relevant stakeholders' comments are submitted to the Department with the final BAR. This includes but is not limited to the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD), Free State Department of Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the South African Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA), the Department of Transport, Tikogolo Local Municipality, Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), Department of Mineral Resources and Energy, National Energy Regulator of South Africa (NERSA), South African National Defense Force, Eskom and Birdlife South Africa.
50. Comments must be obtained from this Department's Biodiversity and Conservation Section of this Department. Further to that, these comments must be addressed and incorporated in the final Basic Assessment Report. The contact details are as follows:

Biodiversity and Conservation

- o Attention: Mr. Stanley Tshitwamulomoni
 - o Tel: 012 399 9587
 - o Email: StanleyT@environment.gov.za
51. The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.
 52. Copies of original comments received from I&APs and organs of state, which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are submitted to the Department with the Final BAR.
 53. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final BAR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof should be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments. In terms of Regulation 41(2)(b) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, please provide proof of written notice for the availability of the BAR for comment.
 54. All issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft BAR from I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the final BAR, including comments from this Department, and must be incorporated into a Comments and Response Report (CRR).
 55. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&APs. All comments from I&APs must be copied verbatim and responded to clearly. Please note that a response such as "noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to an I&AP's comments.
 56. Attendance registers and minutes of any meetings held by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) with Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and other role players must be included in the final BAR.

The final BAR must also provide the following:

57. Clear description of all associated infrastructure. This description must include, but not limited to the following:
 - o Power lines;
 - o Internal roads infrastructure; and;
 - o All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house and control room etc.

- All necessary details regarding all possible locations and sizes of the proposed satellite substation and the main substation.
 - Information on services required on the site, e.g. sewage, refuse removal, water and electricity, agreements with suppliers and confirmation of capacity been obtained must be provided.
58. A **cumulative impact assessment** of the facility with other solar energy facilities within a 30km radius of the proposed development site.
59. Please note that information on location of renewable energy developments can be accessed from <https://www.environment.gov.za/mapsgraphics>.
60. Details of the future plans for the site and infrastructure after decommissioning in 20-30 years and the possibility of upgrading the proposed infrastructure to more advanced technologies.
61. Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads and internal cables is allowed in the 'no-go' areas.
62. Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer.

The EAP must provide detailed motivation if any of the above requirements is not required by the proposed development and not included in the EMPr.

General

The EAP is requested to contact the Department (subsequent to the national lockdown) to make the necessary arrangements to conduct a site inspection.

You are reminded that the final BAR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of the basic assessment reports in accordance with Appendix 1 of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended.

You are further reminded to comply with regulation 19(1)(a) of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, which states that:

"Where basic assessment must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 90 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority -

(a) a basic assessment report, inclusive of specialist reports, an EMPr, and where applicable a closure plan, which have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority"

Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the basic assessment report or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you would then be required to comply with regulation 19 (b) which states:

"a notification in writing that the basic assessment report, inclusive of specialist reports an EMPr, and where applicable, a closure plan, will be submitted within 140 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant new information has been added to the basic assessment report or EMPr or, where applicable, a closure plan, which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process contemplated in sub-regulation (1)(a) and that the revised reports or EMPr or, where applicable, a closure plan will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days".

Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 19 of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, your application will lapse.

You are requested to submit one (1) electronic copy (1 CD/DVD/USB) and one (1) hard copy of the final BAR to the Department.

Please also find attached information that must be used in the preparation of the final BAR. This will enable the Department to speedily review the BAR and make a decision on the application.

You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No 107 of 1998, as amended, which stipulates that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.

Yours sincerely



Mr Sabelo Malaza

Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations

Department of Environmental Affairs

Signed by: Ms. Masina Litsoane

Designation: Assistant Director: National Infrastructure Projects

Date: 26/03/2020

CC:	Ventura Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd	Cornelius Weyers Janse van Rensburg	Email: weyers@kerenenergy.com
	EnviroAfrica CC	Bernard De Witt	Email: Bernard@enviroafrica.co.za
	Economic, Small Business Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs	Grace Mkhosana	Email: mkhosana@destea.fs.gov.za

A. EIA INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR SOLAR ENERGY FACILITIES**1. General site information**

The following general site information is required:

- Descriptions of all affected farm portions
- 21 digit Surveyor General codes of all affected farm portions
- Copies of deeds of all affected farm portions
- Photos of areas that give a visual perspective of all parts of the site
- Photographs from sensitive visual receptors (tourism routes, tourism facilities, etc.)
- Solar plant design specifications including:
 - Type of technology
 - Structure height
 - Surface area to be covered (including associated infrastructure such as roads)
 - Structure orientation
 - Laydown area dimensions (construction period and thereafter)
 - Generation capacity
- Generation capacity of the facility as a whole at delivery points

This information must be indicated on the first page of the BAR. It is also advised that it be double checked as there are too many mistakes in the applications that have been received that take too much time from authorities to correct.

2. Sample of technical details for the proposed facility

Component	Description / dimensions
Height of PV panels	
Area of PV Array	
Number of inverters required	
Area occupied by inverter / transformer stations / substations	
Capacity of on-site substation	
Area occupied by both permanent and construction laydown areas	
Area occupied by buildings	
Length of internal roads	
Width of internal roads	
Proximity to grid connection	
Height of fencing	
Type of fencing	

3. Site maps and GIS information

Site maps and GIS information should include at least the following:

- All maps/information layers must also be provided in ESRI Shapefile format
- All affected farm portions must be indicated
- The exact site of the application must be indicated (the areas that will be occupied by the application)
- A status quo map/layer must be provided that includes the following:

- Current use of land on the site including:
 - Buildings and other structures
 - Agricultural fields
 - Grazing areas
 - Natural vegetation areas (natural veld not cultivated for the preceding 10 years) with an indication of the vegetation quality as well as fine scale mapping in respect of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas
 - Critically endangered and endangered vegetation areas that occur on the site
 - Bare areas which may be susceptible to soil erosion
 - Cultural historical sites and elements
- Rivers, streams and water courses
- Ridgelines and 20m continuous contours with height references in the GIS database
- Fountains, boreholes, dams (in-stream as well as off-stream) and reservoirs
- High potential agricultural areas as defined by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- Buffer zones (also where it is dictated by elements outside the site):
 - 500m from any irrigated agricultural land
 - 1km from residential areas
- Indicate isolated residential, tourism facilities on or within 1km of the site
- A slope analysis map/layer that include the following slope ranges:
 - Less than 8% slope (preferred areas for PV and infrastructure)
 - between 8% and 12% slope (potentially sensitive to PV and infrastructure)
 - between 12% and 14% slope (highly sensitive to PV and infrastructure)
 - steeper than 18 % slope (unsuitable for PV and infrastructure)
- A site development proposal map(s)/layer(s) that indicate:
 - Foundation footprint
 - Permanent laydown area footprint
 - Construction period laydown footprint
 - Internal roads indicating width (construction period width and operation period width) and with numbered sections between the other site elements which they serve (to make commenting on sections possible)
 - River, stream and water crossing of roads and cables indicating the type of bridging structures that will be used
 - Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint.
 - Cable routes and trench dimensions (where they are not along internal roads)
 - Connection routes to the distribution/transmission network (the connection must form part of the EIA even if the construction and maintenance thereof will be done by another entity such as ESKOM)
 - Cut and fill areas at PV sites along roads and at substation/transformer sites indicating the expected volume of each cut and fill
 - Borrow pits
 - Spoil heaps (temporary for topsoil and subsoil and permanently for excess material)
 - Buildings including accommodation

With the above information authorities will be able to assess the strategic and site impacts of the application.

4. Regional map and GIS information

The regional map and GIS information should include at least the following:

- All maps/information layers must also be provided in ESRI Shapefile format

- The map/layer must cover an area of 20km around the site
- Indicate the following:
 - roads including their types (tarred or gravel) and category (national, provincial, local or private)
 - Railway lines and stations
 - Industrial areas
 - Harbours and airports
 - Electricity transmission and distribution lines and substations
 - Pipelines
 - Waters sources to be utilised during the construction and operational phases
 - A visibility assessment of the areas from where the facility will be visible
 - Critical Biodiversity Areas and Ecological Support Areas
 - Critically Endangered and Endangered vegetation areas
 - Agricultural fields
 - Irrigated areas
 - An indication of new road or changes and upgrades that must be done to existing roads in order to get equipment onto the site including cut and fill areas and crossings of rivers and streams

5. Important stakeholders

Amongst other important stakeholders, comments from the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development must be obtained and submitted to the Department. Any application, documentation, notification etc. should be forwarded to the following officials:

Ms Mashudu Marubini
Delegate of the Minister (Act 70 of 1970)
E-mail: MashuduMa@daff.gov.za
Tel: (012) 319 7619

Ms Thoko Buthelezi
AgriLand Liaison office
E-mail: ThokoB@daff.gov.za
Tel: (012) 319 7634

All hardcopy applications / documentation should be forwarded to the following address:

Physical address:
Delpen Building
Cnr Annie Botha and Union Street
Office 270
Attention: Delegate of the Minister Act 70 of 1970

Postal Address:
Private Bag X120
PRETORIA
0001
Attention: Delegate of the Minister Act 70 of 1970

In addition, comments must be requested from Eskom regarding grid connectivity and capacity. Request for comment must be submitted to:

Mr John Geeringh
Eskom Transmission

Megawatt Park D1Y38
PO Box 1091
JOHANNESBURG
2000

Tel: (011) 516 7233
Fax: (086) 661 4064
John.geeringh@eskom.co.za

B. AGRICULTURE STUDY REQUIREMENTS

- Detailed soil assessment of the site in question, incorporating a radius of 50 m surrounding the site, on a scale of 1:10 000 or finer. The soil assessment should include the following:
 - Identification of the soil forms present on site
 - The size of the area where a particular soil form is found
 - GPS readings of soil survey points
 - The depth of the soil at each survey point
 - Soil colour
 - Limiting factors
 - Clay content
 - Slope of the site
 - A detailed map indicating the locality of the soil forms within the specified area,
 - Size of the site
- Exact locality of the site
- Current activities on the site, developments, buildings
- Surrounding developments / land uses and activities in a radius of 500 m of the site
- Access routes and the condition thereof
- Current status of the land (including erosion, vegetation and a degradation assessment)
- Possible land use options for the site
- Water availability, source and quality (if available)
- Detailed descriptions of why agriculture should or should not be the land use of choice
- Impact of the change of land use on the surrounding area
- A shape file containing the soil forms and relevant attribute data as depicted on the map.

Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 08 July 2020 12:54
To: 'BNcube@environment.gov.za'
Subject: Correction to link in email

Dear Ms. Ncube

Please note that the link in the two emails sent to your earlier today does not work directly – it is best to go to the website ([www. enviroafrica.co.za / projects / for public participation](http://www.enviroafrica.co.za/projects/forpublicparticipation)) and then scroll down to the required project.

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.

Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 08 July 2020 12:48
To: 'BNcube@environment.gov.za'
Subject: FW: Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154)
Attachments: Appendix H - Screening Tool Report.pdf

Dear Ms. Ncube

Please refer to the email below. Please confirm if item one (1) below is acceptable.

Please note that with regards to item two (2), all I&APs were notified that the deadline for comments on the development proposed on Visserspan Farm No. 40, near Dealesville, Free State Province, has been **extended to 19 July 2020**. This will give I&APs almost 60 days for public participation (excluding the lockdown period).

I&APs were further reminded that comments/queries must be made in writing and that 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/forpublicparticipation).

I would like to call to discuss some of the issues raised in the comments received for the proposed development before I address them in writing. Please let me know when you will be available telephonically.

I trust this is in order.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



EnviroAfrica

Environmental Consultant

EnviroAfrica cc

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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 June 2020 18:21
To: 'jmmahlangu@environment.gov.za' <jmmahlangu@environment.gov.za>
Subject: FW: Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154)

Dear Ms. Mahlangu

I have two queries regarding the above project:

1. In the Department's letter (dated 12 March 2020) acknowledging receipt of the application for the above project on 11 March 2020, it was stated that an updated Application Form with the national Screening Tool Report must be submitted to the Department for the application to be considered valid. However, the Screening Tool Report was submitted to the Department (at the same time as the Application Form) as an

appendix (Appendix H, attached) to the draft basic assessment report (DBAR) and it was indicated on the application form that the DBAR accompanied the application form.

Please could you confirm if this will suffice.

2. The public participation (PP) process for the DBAR was the second round of PP for this project, intended to obtain comment and/or queries on the DBAR by I&APs/relevant stakeholders.

Originally, prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, the PP for the DBAR would have ended on 15 April 2020 giving interested and affected parties (I&APs)/stakeholders more than the minimum 30 days of public participation. Registered I&APs were notified via email of the availability of the DBAR and all associated appendices to the DBAR, on EnviroAfrica's website on 09 March 2020. All I&AP's that provided their postal addresses were also posted electronic (cd) copies of the DBAR and all associated appendices. In addition, hardcopies of the DBAR and all associated appendices (including the national Screening Tool Report) were couriered to the Department, as well as to the local agricultural and maintenance supply store in Dealesville (BKB Dealesville) for accessibility by local I&APs who did not have access to internet or computer facilities. This was done since the local Municipal office is a small, satellite office which is not always open for a full day.

The above indicates that at least 15 to 17 days of PP had passed before the COVID-19 lockdown was announced. It must also be noted that even during lockdown, I received correspondence from and communicated with I&APs (local farmers, community member and governmental commenting authorities) relating to the project. This interaction, initiated by the relevant I&APs, was based on the cd copies, internet access and the hard copy of the DBAR which was distributed during the PP process (since the local BKB agricultural store appears to have been open even during Level 4 lockdown).

I am aware that all time periods have been extended for the duration of the lockdown which includes an "additional 21 days or such further date as may be determined by the relevant authority". However, based on items 4.3 and 4.4 of the Directions (No. 650) issued by the Department on 05 June 2020, I request permission be granted for the second round of PP for this project to be concluded on 30 June 2020 which would have given I&APs at least 40 days for PP if the lockdown period prior to the issuing of the 05 June 2020 Directions are excluded.

Please advise regarding points 1 and 2 above.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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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: 27 August 2020 16:34
To: 'ElAapplications@environment.gov.za'
Subject: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Dear Madam/Sir

Please provide me with a password for online submission of the final basic assessment report and corrected application form for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153).

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 18 August 2020 09:27
To: 'Muhammad Essop'
Cc: 'Rhulani Kubayi'; 'Bathandwa Ncube'; 'Masina Litsoane'
Subject: RE: Visserspan Solar PV Project 1 (14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Dear Muhammad

Thank you for your prompt and efficient response.

Much appreciated,
Vivienne Thomson



Environmental Consultant

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

From: Muhammad Essop <MEssop@environment.gov.za>
Sent: 18 August 2020 08:53
To: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Cc: Rhulani Kubayi <RKubayi@environment.gov.za>; Bathandwa Ncube <BNcube@environment.gov.za>; Masina Litsoane <MLitsoane@environment.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Visserspan Solar PV Project 1 (14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Dear Vivenne.

Please note that I am getting the 11th of September for the due date for the submission of the Final BAR.

Regards

Muhammad Essop

Assistant Director – Priority Infrastructure Projects

Integrated Environmental Authorisations

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Private Bag X447

Pretoria

0001

(012) 399 9406

MEssop@environment.gov.za

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 17:30
To: Muhammad Essop <MEssop@environment.gov.za>

Cc: Rhulani Kubayi <RKubayi@environment.gov.za>; Bathandwa Ncube <BNcube@environment.gov.za>
Subject: FW: Visserspan Solar PV Project 1 (14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)
Importance: High

Dear Mr. Essop

Please see email below with reference to the final BAR submission due date for the above project. Please could the Department provide the requested feedback on this case.

I had previously sent email enquiries to the email address supplied on the acknowledgement letter i.e. jmmahlangu@environment.gov.za, but did not received any response (emails sent on 09/06/2020 and 30/06/2020). I recently sent the email below and would appreciate some form of confirmation from the Department.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 15 August 2020 01:32
To: 'rkubayi@environment.gov.za' <rkubayi@environment.gov.za>
Cc: 'BNcube@environment.gov.za' <BNcube@environment.gov.za>; 'EIAadmin@environment.gov.za' <EIAadmin@environment.gov.za>
Subject: Visserspan Solar PV Project 1 (14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Dear Rhulani

The application and draft basic assessment report (BAR) for above project was acknowledged as received by the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries (DEFF) on 11 March 2020 (as per the attached letter from the Department, dated 12 March 2020). I would like to confirm if my calculation of the final BAR submission due date for the above project is correct especially considering the directions issued by the DEFF on 05 June 2020 in terms of the Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002:

12 March 2020 to 26 March 2020 equates to 15 days, less 21 March public holiday = **14 days**
This leaves a remaining 76 days of the original 90 days final BAR submission period.

As per the DEFF's directions, calculating from 06 June 2020 and adding 21 days to accommodate the lockdown period implies that the above 76 days commenced again on 28 June 2020 i.e. 06 June 2020 to 27 June 2020 equates to 22 days, less 16 June public holiday = **21 days**

Counting 76 days from 28 June 2020, brings the deadline for final BAR submission to 13 September 2020 i.e. 28 June 2020 to 31 July 2020 = **34 days** + 01 August 2020 to 31 August 2020 equates to 31 days, less 09 and 10 August public holidays = **29 days**
+ 01 September 2020 to 13 September 2020 = **13 days**

Thus, 14 days + 21 days + 34 days + 29 days + 13 days = **111 days** (or 90 days +21 days)

However, 13 September 2020 is a Sunday, so as per EIA regulation 3(1), the deadline for submission will be 14 September 2020.

Please confirm if the calculation of the FBAR final submission date is correct.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 31 August 2020 09:40
To: 'EIAAdmin'
Cc: 'Ephron Maradwa'; 'Muhammad Essop'
Subject: RE: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155)

Dear Rhulani

Thank you for your very quick response.

I apologise for sending you my query - I followed the instructions in the email below from EIAApplications dated 28 August 2020 (12:18) which states, **"Please note that this email is for the receipt and processing of online applications only, and is not monitored for responses. All queries must be directed to EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za."**

I also received comments from my case officer for Visserspan Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153) stating that original copies of I&AP interaction must be sent to the Department with the final BAR – hence my question to you regarding hardcopies but you have cleared up that query.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



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From: EIAAdmin <EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za>
Sent: 28 August 2020 14:53
To: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Cc: Ephron Maradwa <EMaradwa@environment.gov.za>; Muhammad Essop <MEssop@environment.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155)

Dear Vivienne

My understanding is that a password is valid for once instance of use and expires after use. So the password that had been provided will no longer be valid meaning you will need to obtain a new password. You could use one password and upload multiple files in the folder as long as they are correctly labelled for identification purposes. I have copied colleagues in the unit that receives applications so they can assist you. Application related queries must be directed to EIAApplications@environment.gov.za.

The department no longer accepts hard copies of applications and everything is done online.

Kind regards

From: Vivienne Thomson [<mailto:vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>]
Sent: Friday, 28 August 2020 14:02
To: EIAAdmin <EIAAdmin@environment.gov.za>
Subject: RE: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155)
Importance: High

Dear Madam/Sir

As per the email below, I requested a password in four separate emails for the online submission of four separate final BARs. I only received one email response back in reply to my four requests.

Please confirm if the same password must be used for the four separate applications I will be submitting early next week?

Also, could you confirm whether the Department is now also receiving hardcopies of the final BAR, or is everything for final BAR submission still being done online?

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



Environmental Consultant

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

From: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@environment.gov.za>
Sent: 28 August 2020 12:18
To: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Subject: RE: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155)

Dear Vivienne

Kindly note that applications/documents submitted on a Saturday, Sunday or Public Holiday will be noted as received on the next working day.

N.B. for every new application for Environmental Authorisation or an application for amendment of a valid Environmental Authorisation; where Public Participation must be conducted, it is a requirement of the Department that the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is approved prior to lodging the application (refer to Annexure 2 and 3 of the Directions published on 5 June 2020). Please submit a request for a Pre-application Meeting and attach the PPP for approval, the allocated official will revert back to you.

Submitting an application, including an amendment application, without the necessary approval of the PPP will result in the application not being considered and removed from the system.

You are requested to ensure that you fully comply with the rules for submitting documents to the Department as outlined in the attached gazette as well as the "Process for submitting files to the CD:IEA_062020" document. This is

also attached for ease of reference. If the correct procedure for submitting applications/documents is not followed, or incomplete or unsigned forms are submitted, your application/documents will not be considered and removed from the system.

You are further informed that our application templates have also been amended, and all clients must use the latest templates, which can be found on our website: <https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms>. Failure to do so will result in your documents being removed from the system.

Please ensure that the document control form is completed and attached to the email, indicating proof of submission.

- ⇒ **Public Participation Plan to be approved, prior to lodging an application or an amendment application. (The PP Plan, as well as the pre-application reference number must be filled in and attached in the application forms (where applicable)).**
- ⇒ **Latest templates from the website used. These templates are dated June 2020.**
- ⇒ **Documents uploaded on system according to “Process for submitting files to the CD:IEA_062020” document.**
- ⇒ **Email sent confirming proof of upload with screenshot.**
- ⇒ **Document control form completed and attached to email.**

If more than one application needs to be submitted, ensure that each application/ documents for application is uploaded separately, and a separate email and document control form is attached per upload.

Please note the Username and Password as follows:

Username: EIAApplications

Password: @ugu5t2020

EIA Applications

Integrated Environmental Authorisations

Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries

Please note that this email is for the receipt and processing of online applications only, and is not monitored for responses. All queries must be directed to EIAadmin@environment.gov.za.

You are advised that this mailbox has a 48 hour response time.

Please note that this mailbox has a 5mb mail limit. No zip files are to be attached in any email.

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

Sent: Thursday, 27 August 2020 16:34

To: EIA Applications <EIAApplications@environment.gov.za>

Subject: Request for Password (Ref. No.: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155)

Dear Sir/Madam

Please provide me with a password for online submission of the final basic assessment report and corrected application form for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 3 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2155).

Thank you,

Vivienne Thomson



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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 07 September 2020 17:38
To: 'EIAApplications@environment.gov.za'
Subject: Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Importance: High

Dear Sir/Madam

Please provide me with a password for online submission of the final basic assessment report and corrected application form for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153). I have not made any submissions under this project as yet and the password I received on 28 August 2020 (@ugu5t2020) does not work anymore.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



Environmental Consultant

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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 08 September 2020 05:59
To: 'Muhammad Essop'
Cc: 'Bathandwa Ncube'; 'Weyers Janse van Rensburg'; Bernard de witt
Subject: Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153 - Shapefiles (Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1)
Attachments: LayoutOverlay.zip; LayoutOverlayMapDataNotes.pdf;
VisserspanRegionalMapESRIshpfiles.zip; RegionalMapDataNotes.pdf;
VisserspanStatusQuoShpFiles.zip; StatusQuoMapDataNotes.pdf

Dear Muhammad

Please find the shapefiles, metadata and pdf notes for the above project.

Please note: In response to a comment received from the Department, the scale for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 development footprint layout overlay is 1:15000.

Should there be any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



EnviroAfrica
Environmental Consultant

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Vivienne Thomson

From: Vivienne Thomson <vivienne@enviroafrica.co.za>
Sent: 08 September 2020 15:55
To: 'EIAApplications@environment.gov.za'
Subject: Request for password (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153)

Importance: High

Dear Sir/Madam

Please provide me with a password for online submission of the final basic assessment report and corrected application form for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1 (Ref. No. 14/12/16/3/3/1/2153). I have not made any submissions under this project as yet and the password I received on 28 August 2020 (@ugu5t2020) does not work anymore.

Thank you,
Vivienne Thomson



Environmental Consultant

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