

# PROPOSED VISSERSPAN SOLAR PV FACILITY – PROJECT 2

APPLICANT: Ventura Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd

## DBAR COMMENT AND RESPONSE REPORT

### Copies of actual correspondence in Appendix F1 (Supporting documents) of FBAR

(Public participation comment period started 09 March 2020 and ended 19 July 2020)

(DEFF Ref. No: 14/12/16/3/3/1/2154)

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Verbatim comments as quoted from I&AP correspondence	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
1	<b>Date:</b> 10/03/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Sello Meko, Free State Department of Health, Bloemfontein	“Morning Mam, I will definitely be happy to send me the CD copies of DBARs at De Waal Road, Ehrlich Park, Bloemfontein please. Thank you Regards”	<b>EAP:</b>  Email sent on 10/03/2020 requesting specific address, as well as clarification of I&AP’s section within the Department of Health.
2	<b>Date:</b> 10/03/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Annette Geertsema, Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)	“Good day Can you please confirm in which Province the proposed development is situated. Regards Annette”	<b>EAP:</b>  Email response sent on 10/03/2020 stating that the proposed developments are in the Free State Province in REDZ 5 (near Dealesville).
3	<b>Date:</b> 12/03/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email letter <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Sabelo Malaza, Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations, Department of Environmental Affairs. Letter signed by: Mr. Rhulani Kubayi, Control Environmental Officer: EIA Systems and Tools	“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 and 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 with 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	<b>EAP:</b>  Paragraph 1 - cognisance taken of contents of paragraph.  Paragraph 2 - Email response sent to Ms. Mahlangu as per enquiries contact listed on Departmental letter, on 09/06/2020 stating that 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) hardcopy and electronic copy and it was indicated on the application form that the DBAR accompanied the application form. Email resent on 08/07/2020 to Ms. Ncube as project case officer listed on Departmental letter dated 26/03/2020.

		<p>2019. Your application will be considered invalid without a screening tool report.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Not 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Kindly quote the abovementioned reference number in any future correspondence in respect of the application.</p> <p>Yours sincerely Mr. Sabelo Malaza”</p>	<p>Paragraph 3 - cognisance taken of contents of paragraph.</p> <p>Paragraph 4 - Various emails sent to the Department to confirm: i. time-frame for public participation (emails sent 09/06/2020 &amp; 08/07/2020) ii. deadline for submission of final BAR (emails sent 15/08/2020 &amp; 17/08/2020)</p> <p>Paragraph 5 - cognisance taken of contents of paragraph.</p> <p>Paragraph 6 - cognisance taken of contents of paragraph.</p>
4	<p><b>Date:</b> 26/03/2020 (email) <b>Format:</b> Email letter <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Sabelo Malaza, Chief Director: Integrated Environmental Authorisations, Department of Environmental Affairs. Issued by Ms. Masina Litsoane, Assistant Director, National Infrastructure Projects (Letter not dated)</p>	<p><u>“Application Form and DBAR</u></p> <p>1. Activity 1 of GN R.983 (as amended): You are advised to remove this activity as the development applied for has a capacity of 100MW and you have applied for Activity 1 of GN R.984 (as amended).</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 <a href="https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms">https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms</a> 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.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>1. Activity removed.</p> <p>2. Underground evacuation powerlines internal to the footprint of the proposed development site on the Farm Visserspan No. 40, as well as leading to an adjacent site on the Farm Visserspan No. 40 i.e. Visserspan Solar PV – Project 2, form part of this application but the development of a substation and tie-in/connection to the Eskom grid will only take place (in a separate EIA process) if the applicant is successful in the next round of REIPPP bidding process. The underground 22kV powerline/s leading to Project 2’s site from Project 2 will be along the road of an existing farm access road between the two projects (approximately 90m in length).</p> <p>3. Does not apply.</p> <p>4. Does not apply. Activity removed from the list of activities applied for.</p>

	<p>4. Should it not apply: You are advised to remove this activity from the list of activities applied for.</p> <p>5. Activity 15 of GN R.984 (as amended): Indicate the total indigenous vegetation proposed for clearance in hectares.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 <a href="https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms">https://www.environment.gov.za/documents/forms</a></p> <p>8. 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.</p> <p>9. You are required to include 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.</p> <p>10. 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.</p> <p><u>Technical details of the proposed facility and design alternative</u></p> <p>11. 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.</p> <p>12. Further, the EIAR must include the design alternative for the proposed 100MW PV facility.</p> <p><u>Alternatives</u></p> <p>13. Please note that Appendix 1(3)(1)(h)(x) of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations, 2014, as amended, requires that <i>"if no alternatives, including alternative locations for the activity were investigated, the motivation for not considering such"</i> must be included in the BAR. You are therefore required to provide a motivation should other alternatives sites, routes, layouts and technologies not be considered.</p> <p>14. A description of the process followed to reach each preferred alternative within the site as per Appendix 1(3)(1)(h)(i) of the EIA</p>	<p>5. The total development footprint will be cleared. Since there are patches of degradation and existing farm roads in the area, it is estimated that the total indigenous vegetation proposed for clearance is approximately 213ha.</p> <p>6. Cognisance taken of request.</p> <p>7. Amended application form submitted with the final BAR.</p> <p>8. Cognisance taken of request.</p> <p>9. Cognisance taken of request. EAP Curriculum Vitae included in Appendix L of the final BAR after EAP Declaration.</p> <p>10. EAP Declaration included in Appendix L of the final BAR.</p> <p>11. Table format of technical details for the proposed facility included in final BAR. Minimum information requirements addressed in report.</p> <p>12. Motivation for technology design alternative provided in final BAR in a comparative table.</p> <p>13. Motivation for lack of alternative sites, routes and layouts provided in final BAR.</p> <p>14. Description provided in the final BAR.</p> <p>15. Coordinates for the bend points of the proposed 223ha site boundary (for Project 2 only), within Visserspan Farm, in degrees, minutes and seconds provided in Appendix A1 (Locality Maps) of the draft BAR, as well as Appendix A2 (Maps - Project Site Coordinates) of the final BAR.</p> <p>16. Specialist studies conducted prior to submission of Bar. All specialist reports included under Appendix G of the final BAR with recommendations included in BAR and EMPr.</p> <p>17. Specialist Declaration of Interest forms for Project 2 included as Appendix L of final BAR.</p> <p>18. The Soil, Land Use and Agricultural Potential study, as well as the Socio-economic study for Project 2 included as appendices G4 and G5, respectively, in the final BAR.</p>
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	<p>Regulations (2014), as amended, must be incorporated into the final BAR.</p> <p><u>Coordinates</u> 15. Provide coordinates for the bend points of the proposed 223ha site boundary (for Project 2 only), within Visserspan Farm, in degrees, minutes and seconds.</p> <p><u>Specialist studies</u> 16. 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.</p> <p>17. The Specialist Declaration of Interest forms submitted for the specialist studies are for Visserspan Solar Photovoltaic Facility Project <u>4</u>. You are required to submit forms related to Project 2.</p> <p>18. 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 <u>3</u>. You are required to submit studies related to Project 2.</p> <p>19. 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.</p> <p>20. 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.</p> <p>21. Should the comments SAHRA (or any other I&amp;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.</p> <p>22. 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.</p> <p><u>A copy of the final site layout map and alternatives</u> All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map.</p> <p>23. The layout map must indicate the following:</p>	<p>19. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>20. The Archaeological and Palaeontological Impact Assessments were submitted to SAHRA for comment. Please refer to final comment from SAHRA as per Appendix E of the final BAR, recommendations of which were included in the final BAR and EMPr.</p> <p>21. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>22. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>23. The layout map must indicate the following:</p> <p>24. Individual site and cumulative maps submitted.</p> <p>25. Additional biodiversity map layer included in Regional Map (Appendix A of Bar and Appendix 13 of EMPr) where CBA region is indicated with hatched lines. There are no protected areas in on close to the proposed development site.</p> <p>26. Included in Appendix A (Maps) of the final BAR and Appendix 13 of EMPr.</p> <p>27. Included in Appendix A (Maps) of the final BAR and Appendix 13 of EMPr.</p> <p>28. A topographical map combining the final layout map superimposed (overlain) on the environmental sensitivity map must be submitted with the final BAR.</p> <p>29. Shapefile of the preferred development layout/footprint submitted to the Department on 08/09/2020.</p> <p>30. Cognisance taken of Department's instruction (WGS 84 Spheroid used).</p> <p>31. Cognisance taken of Department's instruction.</p> <p>32. For Project 2, data was mapped at a scale of 1:12p; 000 to include all features. Metadata (and notes) include description of base data used for digitizing.</p>
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	<p>29. A shapefile of the preferred development layout/footprint must be submitted to this Department.</p> <p>30. The shapefile must be created using the Hartebeesthoek 94 Datum and the data should be in decimal Degree Format using the WGS 84 Spheroid.</p> <p>31. The shapefile must include at a minimum the following extensions i.e. .shp, .shx, .dbf, .prj, and, .xml (Metafile). If specific symbology was assigned to the file, then the .avi and/or the .lyr file must also be included.</p> <p>32. 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.</p> <p>33. 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:</p> <p><b>Postal Address:</b> Department of Environmental Affairs, Private Bag X447, Pretoria, 0001</p> <p><b>Physical Address:</b> Environment House, 473 Steve Biko Road, Pretoria</p> <p><b>For Attention:</b> Muhammad Essop, Integrated Environmental Authorisations, Strategic Infrastructure Developments</p> <p><b>Telephone Number:</b> 012 399 9406</p> <p><b>Email Address:</b> <a href="mailto:MEssop@environment.gov.za">MEssop@environment.gov.za</a></p> <p><u>The Environmental Management Programme (EMPr)</u></p> <p>34. The EMPr submitted with the draft BAR is for Visserspan Solar Photovoltaic Facility Project 1. You are required to submit an EMPr related to Project 2.</p> <p>The EMPr to be submitted as part of the final BAR must include the following:</p> <p>35. All recommendations and mitigation measures recorded in the BAR and the specialist studies conducted.</p> <p>36. A good quality final site layout map with clear legend.</p> <p>37. Measures as dictated by the final site layout map and micro-siting.</p> <p>38. An environmental sensitivity map indicating environmentally sensitive areas and features identified during the basic assessment process.</p> <p>39. A map combining the final layout map superimposed (overlain) on the environmental sensitivity map.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>45. A fire management plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility as per the EMPr.</p> <p>46. EMPr includes measures to protect archaeological sites, artefacts, palaeontological fossils or graves from construction and operational impacts.</p> <p>47. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>48. EMPr edited to remove ambiguous statements where relevant.</p> <p>49. All relevant stakeholders' comments submitted as Appendices E (Correspondence with Organs of State/National Partner Entities) and F1 (Supporting Documents) of the final BAR.</p> <p>50. Comments from the Department's Biodiversity and Conservation Section included in Appendix E2 (DEFF Biodiversity Directorate) and F1 (Supporting Documents) of the final BAR.</p> <p>51. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>52. I&amp;AP comments submitted as Appendices E (Correspondence with Organs of State/National Partner Entities) and F1 (Supporting Documents) of the final BAR.</p> <p>53. Proof of correspondence with various stakeholders included in Appendices E and F of the final BAR.</p> <p>54. Cognisance taken of Department's comment. CRR included as Appendix F of final BAR.</p> <p>55. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>56. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>57. Clear description of all associated infrastructure. This description must include, but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerlines;</li> <li>• Internal roads infrastructure; and;</li> <li>• All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house, and control room etc.</li> </ul>
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	<p>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.</p> <p>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 of natural habitats.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 dissipation of storm water run-off.</p> <p>45. A fire management plan to be implemented during the construction and operation of the facility.</p> <p>46. Measures to protect archaeological sites, artefacts, palaeontological fossils or graves from construction and operational impacts.</p> <p>47. Ensure that the EMPr complies with Appendix A of the EIA Regulations 2014 (as amended).</p> <p>48. The EMPr must not contain any ambiguity. Where applicable, statements containing the word “should’ or “may’ are to be amended to “must”.</p> <p><u>Public Participation</u></p> <p>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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All necessary details regarding all possible locations and sizes of the proposed satellite substation and the main substation.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>58. A <b>cumulative impact assessment</b> of the facility with other solar energy facilities within a 30km radius of the proposed development site.</p> <p>59. Maps as sourced from <a href="https://www.environment.gov.za/mapsgraphics">https://www.environment.gov.za/mapsgraphics</a> on the location of renewable energy developments in the region, included as Appendix A6 of the final BAR.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>61. Cognisance taken of Department’s comment.</p> <p>62. The botanical specialist disagrees with the Biodiversity Directorate’s stance that the site area warrants BCBA1 status. It should be noted that the area which the botanical specialist stated should be conserved for biodiversity reasons was designated as a no-go area and left completely out of the proposed development site footprint. The</p> <p>63. Motivation provided where applicable.</p> <p>64. Telephonic communication with Departmental case officer to make the necessary arrangements to conduct a site inspection made on 02 September 2020. Department’s stance regarding site visits during Lockdown Level 2 discussed.</p> <p>65. Cognisance taken of Department’s comment.</p> <p>66. Cognisance taken of Department’s comment.</p> <p>67. Cognisance taken of Department’s comment.</p>
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	<p>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 Defence Force, Eskom and BirdLife South Africa.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The contact details are as follows:  <u>Biodiversity and Conservation</u>  <b>Attention:</b> Mr. Stanley Tshitwamulomoni  <b>Tel:</b> 012 399 9587  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:StanleyT@environment.gov.za">StanleyT@environment.gov.za</a></p> <p>51. The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulation 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 &amp; 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended.</p> <p>52. Copies of original comments received from I&amp;APs and organs of state, which have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity are submitted to the Department with the final BAR.</p> <p>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 <u>proof</u> of written notice for the availability of the BAR for comment.</p> <p>54. All issues raised and comments received during the circulation of the draft BAR from I&amp;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).</p> <p>55. Please refrain from summarising comments made by I&amp;APs. All comments from I&amp;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&amp;AP's comment.</p> <p>56. Attendance registers and minutes of any meetings held by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) with Interested and Affected Parties (I&amp;APs) and other role players must be included in the final BAR.</p> <p><u>The final BAR must also provide the following:</u></p> <p>57. Clear description of all associated infrastructure. This description must include, but not limited to the following:</p>	<p>68. Submission of final BAR in accordance with Department's COVID-19 (lockdown) regulations. Verification regarding submission of hardcopy made – EIA Administration confirmed that hardcopies and CD/DVD /USB submissions are <u>not</u> being accepted during lockdown (as per Appendices E1 and F1 of the final BAR).</p> <p>69. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p> <p>70. Cognisance taken of Department's comment.</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powerlines;</li> <li>• Internal roads infrastructure; and;</li> <li>• All supporting onsite infrastructure such as laydown area, guard house, and control room etc.</li> <li>• All necessary details regarding all possible locations and sizes of the proposed satellite substation and the main substation.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul> <p>58. A <b><u>cumulative impact assessment</u></b> of the facility with other solar energy facilities within a 30km radius of the proposed development site.</p> <p>59. Please note that information on location of renewable energy developments can be accessed from <a href="https://www.environment.gov.za/mapsgraphics">https://www.environment.gov.za/mapsgraphics</a>.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>63. 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.</p> <p><u>General</u></p> <p>64. The EAP is requested to contact the Department (subsequent to the national lockdown) to make the necessary arrangements to conduct a site inspection.</p> <p>65. 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.</p> <p>66. You are further reminded to comply with regulation 19(1)(a) and (b) of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended [<i>regulations quoted</i>]</p> <p>67. Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 19 of the 2014 EIA Regulations, as amended, your application will lapse.</p>	
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5	<p><b>Date:</b> 06/04/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Gerhard van Rhyn (Landowner/ farmer and temporary co-ordinator of about 35 farmers in region)</p>	<p>“Dear Vivienne  The current lock down situation prohibits any meaningful liaison between affected farmers. May we request a postponement of the cut-off date?  Regards  Gerhard van Rhyn”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Email response sent on 06/04/2020 extending the public participation period for an additional 22 days after the initial 16 April end of lockdown date, to the 08 May 2020. Subsequent emails from EAP extended comments period to 30 June 2020, with a final extension to 19 July 2020.</p>
6	<p><b>Date:</b> 17/04/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email letter  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Ragna Redelstorff, Heritage Officer, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)</p>	<p><b>“Final Comment In terms of Section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act (Act 25 of 1999)</b></p> <p><b>Four, solar PV projects are proposed on the Farm Visserspan No. 40 near Dealesville (Figure 4). Each stand-alone facility will have a maximum generating capacity of 100MW and include the following infrastructure: Solar panels covering an area of about 200ha. The solar arrays will be raised approximately 500mm above ground level and will have single axis tracking systems. Transmission and distribution lines for connection to the Eskom Perseus substation; Invertor-transformer stations on concrete beds. Offices, workshops, stores, maintenance sheds, ablution facilities, and Security/fencing.</b></p> <p>The proposed project entails the construction of a total of four Solar PV projects including associated infrastructure (transmission and distribution lines for connection to the Eskom Perseus substation; invertor-transformer stations on concrete beds; offices, workshops, stores, maintenance sheds, ablution facilities and security/fencing) over an area of approximately 800ha on the Farm Visserspan 40 near Dealesville, Tokologo Local Municipality, Free State Province. An Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) and a Palaeontological Impact Assessment (PIA) were submitted with the application. It must be noted that SAHRA will provide a separate comment for each of the four projects as each of them constitutes a separate NEMA application.</p>	<p>EAP:</p> <p>Cognisance taken of introductory summary of project.</p> <p>Archaeological Specialist’s recommendations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cognisance taken of recommendation.</li> <li>2. Area of historical/heritage significance excluded from development site footprint and designated as a heritage no go area.</li> <li>3. Archaeological Specialist’s recommendations included in final BAR and EMPr with contact numbers should any human burials be found during construction.</li> <li>4. Archaeological Specialist’s recommendations included in EMPr.</li> </ol> <p>Palaeontological Specialist’s recommendations:  Palaeontological Specialist’s recommendations included in final BAR and EMPr with contact numbers should any human burials be found during construction.  Cognisance taken of Specialist’s recommendation.</p> <p>Final Comments:  Cognisance taken of scope of SAHRA’s comment and that SAHRA has no objection to the proposed development subject to the respective specialists’ recommendations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Requirement to stop work immediate should any objects of archaeological or palaeontological remains be found during construction included in the final BAR and EMPr.</li> </ol>

	<p><b>This comment is issued specifically for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2.</b>  <i>KAPLAN, J. 2020. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN SOLAR PV FACILITY ON THE FARM VISSERSPAN NO. 40 NEAR DEALESVILLE, TOKOLOGO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE.</i></p> <p>A field survey revealed the following results for Solar PV Project 2: No archaeological resources were identified in this area  <i>Author's Recommendations:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>No mitigation of archaeological resources is required is required prior to construction activities commencing.</i></li> <li>2. <i>Historic (c. 1899), calcrete and clay, sheep and cattle enclosures within the farm werf must not be disturbed, damaged or altered in any way by development activities. The structures are protected under Section 34 of the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 29 of 1999) and cannot be disturbed in any way without a permit issued by SAHRA.</i></li> <li>3. <i>If any human burials are uncovered during construction activities then work in the immediate area should be halted. The find would need to be reported to the heritage authorities and will require inspection by a professional archaeologist.</i></li> <li>4. <i>The above recommendations must be included in the Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the proposed development.</i></li> </ol> <p><i>ALMOND, J. 2020. PALAEOONTOLOGICAL SPECIALIST STUDY: COMBINED DESKTOP &amp; FIELD-BASED ASSESSMENT - FOUR PROPOSED SOLAR PV PROJECTS ON FARM VISSERSPAN NO. 40 NEAR DEALESVILLE, TOKOLOGO LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, FREE STATE PROVINCE.</i></p> <p>It is noted that the proposed associated grid connection to Eskom's Perseus substation has not been assessed in the PIA.  The proposed area is underlain by sediments of the Tierberg Formation (Ecca Group, Karoo Supergroup) that are extensively disrupted and veined by Quaternary calcrete as well as baked by dolerite intrusions of the Karoo Dolerite Suite, and as such are of low sensitivity. They are mantled by Quaternary to Holocene orange sands, in part of aeolian origin. The calcrete hardpans encountered within the study area are of low palaeontological sensitivity.  A few small blocks of petrified fossil wood – reworked from Tierberg bedrocks – were found among surface gravels around the margins of a pan in the SE corner of Visserspan No. 40, which fall outside the solar PV project area.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Process that the ECO must follow to inform the SAHRA and contact an archaeologist and/or palaeontologist included in final BAR and EMPr.</li> <li>3. Cognisance taken of regulator's comment.</li> <li>4. A Chance Finds Procedure included as Appendix 19 of the EMPr.</li> </ol>
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		<p>project. These procedures should outline the steps and reporting structure to be followed in the instance that heritage resources are found. This must be included in the Environmental Awareness Plan.</p> <p>5. The final BAR and appendices must be submitted to SAHRA upon submission to DEA. Should the project be granted Environmental Authorisation, SAHRA must be notified and all relevant documents submitted to the case file.</p> <p>Should you have any further queries, please contact the designated official using the case number quoted above in the case header.”</p>	
7	<p><b>Date:</b> 05/05/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Deon Edwards (Telephonic call followed by email)</p>	<p>“Good day Vivienne  Ref: Visserspan Solar Plant ( Dealesville )  From: Deon Edwards</p> <p>Further to our discussions of todays date,  Having been employed on a similar project, Boshof 65mw Solar plant as a Safety officer, I hereby wish to register as an I&amp;AP pertaining to the above project.</p> <p>Your assistance regarding this matter will be greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Kind Regards  Deon Edwards”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Email response sent on 06/05/2020 thanking I&amp;AP for telephonic conversation and email and confirming registration as I&amp;AP for the projects: Visserspan Solar PV Plants 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>
8	<p><b>Date:</b> 06/05/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Deon Edwards</p>	<p>“Many thanks pertaing to the matter  Deon”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Cognisance taken of I&amp;AP’s thanks.</p>
9	<p><b>Date:</b> 08/06/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. John Geeringh, Senior Consultant Environmental Management, Land and Rights, Eskom Transmission Division, Megawatt Park</p>	<p>“Please find Eskom General comments and setbacks guideline for consideration by the applicant. Please send me KMZ files of the affected properties and proposed layouts as well as the proposed grid connections.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>John Geeringh (Pr Sci Nat)”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Cognisance taken of I&amp;APs email response to notification of public participation comment period extension to 30 June 2020. A second extension to the comment period deadline was made to 19 July 2020. Email sent to I&amp;AP on 26 August 2020 for Visserspan Solar PV Plants 1, 2, 3 and 4, stating that: “the requested kmz files were attached to email. The four Visserspan projects are all ground based, crystalline, solar PV facilities. The proposed/draft layout drawing for Projects 1 to 4 will be sent in a subsequent email due to possible email file size limitations.</p> <p>Email further stated that there are <u>no</u> overhead power lines linked to any of these four applications since all electrical cables/evacuation power lines will run underground to a proposed common <u>future</u> sub-</p>

			<p>station from where evacuated power will tie-in to the Eskom grid. Underground electricity lines from the four Visserspan solar PV facilities only lead up to the proposed future sub-station. The development of the substation and connection to the Eskom grid <u>does not</u> form part of this application. Only if the proponent is successful in the next independent power producer (IPP) bidding process, will the design and various authorisation processes for construction of the proposed IPP sub-station and above ground pylons (for grid connection) take place.</p> <p>Lastly, email stated that the proponent has communicated to EnviroAfrica that they have made application for cost estimate letters from Eskom for the near-by Perseus sub-station and initial indicators are that there is enough capacity at Perseus for tie-in.</p> <p>A second email sent to I&amp;AP on 26/08/2020, with a combined draft layout drawing for the four proposed ground based, crystalline solar PV facilities proposed on Visserspan Farm No. 40, near Dealesville, Free State Province.</p> <p>Individual draft layout drawings (per project) are available if required. Please zoom in for drawing details.”</p>
10	<p><b>Date:</b> 01/07/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. John Geeringh, Senior Consultant Environmental Management, Land and Rights, Eskom Transmission Division, Megawatt Park</p>	<p>“Please find Eskom General comments and setbacks guideline for consideration by the applicant. Please send me KMZ files of the affected properties and proposed layouts as well as the proposed grid connections.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>John Geeringh (Pr Sci Nat)”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Cognisance taken of I&amp;APs email response to notification of public participation comment period extension to 30 June 2020. A second extension to the comment period deadline was made to 19 July 2020. Email sent to I&amp;AP on 26 August 2020 for Visserspan Solar PV Plants 1, 2, 3 and 4, stating that: “the requested kmz files were attached to email. The four Visserspan projects are all ground based, crystalline, solar PV facilities. The proposed/draft layout drawing for Projects 1 to 4 will be sent in a subsequent email due to possible email file size limitations.</p> <p>Email further stated that there are <u>no</u> overhead power lines linked to any of these four applications since all electrical cables/evacuation power lines will run underground to a proposed common <u>future</u> sub-station from where evacuated power will tie-in to the Eskom grid. Underground electricity lines from the four Visserspan solar PV facilities only lead up to the proposed future sub-station. The development of the substation and connection to the Eskom grid <u>does not</u> form part of this application. Only if the proponent is successful in</p>

			<p>the next independent power producer (IPP) bidding process, will the design and various authorisation processes for construction of the proposed IPP sub-station and above ground pylons (for grid connection) take place.</p> <p>Lastly, email stated that the proponent has communicated to EnviroAfrica that they have made application for cost estimate letters from Eskom for the near-by Perseus sub-station and initial indicators are that there is enough capacity at Perseus for tie-in.</p> <p>A second email sent to I&amp;AP on 26/08/2020, with a combined draft layout drawing for the four proposed ground based, crystalline solar PV facilities proposed on Visserspan Farm No. 40, near Dealesville, Free State Province.</p> <p>Individual draft layout drawings (per project) are available if required. Please zoom in for drawing details."</p>
11	<p><b>Date:</b> 17/07/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Gerhard van Rhyn (Landowner/ farmer and temporary co-ordinator of about 35 farmers in region)</p>	<p>"Hallo Vivienne</p> <p>Van ons benadeeldes het weer gepraat oor al die sonplaasontwikkelings in ons streek,asook oor die feit dat ons nie baie suksesvol is wanneer ons aan die prosesse deelneem nie. Ons gevoel is dat daar nie werklik indringend aan ons objeksies en versoeke aandag gegee word nie. Reaksies wat ons ontvang oor ons bekommernisse word telkemale weerspreek deur algemene vae antwoorde,sonder die nodige diepgaande ontleding daarvan. Ongelukkig word ontwikkelings goedgekeur wat op die langtermyn nie die gewenste uitkomst in ons streek gaan meebring nie. Ons gevoel is dat ons bloot deel vorm van die wetlike prosese en vereiste om die prosese legitiem en suksesvol af te handel. Die hele prosese word uitsluitlik tot voordeel van die ontwikkelaar hanteer. Objektiwiteit en rasionaliteit t.o.v. van ons klagtes en besware bestaan tans glad nie. Ons voel dat ons nie meer blindelings aan hierdie uitmergelende prosese kan deelneem nie. Ons gevoel is om hierdie situasie met verantwoordelike departemente en rolspelers verder te bespreek voordat ons weer aan prosesse deelneem.</p> <p>Die feit dat ons tans onderworpe is aan "lock down " maak dit vir ons verder moeilik om suksesvol aan prosesse te kan deelneem. Ons werkswyse en strategie sal moet aangepas word,aangesien ons tans ons tyd mors om aan die prosesse deel te neem.</p> <p>Hiermee versoek ons `n verdere uitstel asook grasie om hierdie situasie met die nodige rolspelers te bespreek totdat die situasie rondom Covid 19 verbeter..</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Email response sent on 03/08/2020 thanking I&amp;AP for telephonic conversation and email and confirming registration as I&amp;AP for the projects: Visserspan Solar PV Plants 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>

		Groete Gerhard van Rhyn”	
<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENT PERIOD CLOSED (approximately 58 days excluding COVID-19 lockdown period of 27 March 2020 to 05 June 2020)</b>			
12	<p><b>Date:</b> 31/07/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Gerhard van Rhyn (Landowner/ farmer and temporary co-ordinator of about 35 farmers in region)</p>	<p>“Hallo Vivienne  Ek wag vir `n reaksie op my skrywe asb.  Groete  Gerhard van Rhyn”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  Email response sent on 03/08/2020 thanking I&amp;AP for telephonic conversation and email and confirming registration as I&amp;AP for the projects: Visserspan Solar PV Plants 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>
13	<p><b>Date:</b> 17/08/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email letter (email received 21/08/2020; letter attached to email dated 17/08/2020)  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Portia Makitla, Letter signed by Mr. Seoka Lekota (Control Biodiversity Officer Grade B: Biodiversity Conservation, DEFF)</p>	<p><b>“COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN 1 AND 2 SOLAR PV FACILITIES FREE STATE PROVINCE</b>  The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation review and evaluated the aforementioned draft report.  Based on the information provided in the DBAR, the study area is located with 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 2 &amp; 2 but during the review Appendix G1 could not be found.  Based on the above; the Directorate Biodiversity &amp; Conservation is unable to comment on the proposed development you are therefore requested to attached the specialist studies and resubmit the DBAR for comment.”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  Email response sent to Ms. Makitla on 21/08/2020 and copies to Seoka Lekota and Stanley Tshitwamulomoni of the DAFF: “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 2 (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?  <u>Please</u> let me know if I may email you the required files today.”</p>
14	<p><b>Date:</b> 21/08/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Portia Makitla, Biodiversity Conservation, DEFF</p>	<p>“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>.”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  Email response sent to Ms. Makitla on 24/08/2020: “Thank you for your response. Please find Project 2’s report attached. Please confirm receipt. Project 2’s report to follow ...”</p>

15	<p><b>Date:</b> 24/08/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Portia Makitla, Biodiversity Conservation, DEFF</p>	<p>"Report received."</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Email response sent to Ms. Makitla on 24/08/2020: "Thank you for your response. Please find Project 2's report attached. Please confirm receipt. Project 2's report to follow ..."</p> <p>Email query sent to Ms. Makitla on 24/08/2020: "Did you receive Project 2's report as well?"</p>
16	<p><b>Date:</b> 24/08/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email letter (email received 25/08/2020; letter attached to email dated 24/08/2020)  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Portia Makitla. Letter signed by Mr. Seoka Lekota (Control Biodiversity Officer Grade B: Biodiversity Conservation, DEFF)</p>	<p>"Attached please find the aforementioned DBAR comments.  <b>COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BASIC ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE PROPOSED VISSERSPAN 1 AND 2 SOLAR PV FACILITIES FREE STATE PROVINCE</b>  The Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation review and evaluated the aforementioned draft report.  Based on the information provided in the DBAR, the study area is located within the Critical Biodiversity Area (CBA) 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 <i>"even though the areas of Viasserspan 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."</i> 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.  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.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Emailed EAP and specialist letters included in final BAR (Appendice G6c and G6a respectively) and also sent in response to Ms. Makitla on 11/09/2020 (Due to size, refer to Appendix G6c of the final BAR for letter with photographs).</p>
17	<p><b>Date:</b> 26/08/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Davis Sibongile</p>	<p>"Subject: re: Inviro Practitioner</p> <p>Good Day  Please see attached.  Regards"</p> <p>Attachment: Original I&amp;AP notification letter sent by EnviroAfrica on 06 March 2020 as part of the public participation process, as well as a</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>Email query sent 26/08/2020 stating that, "As previously communicated to Ms. Galeboe, please note the information letter/email sent out was <b>not for employment or work/tender opportunities</b> - this process was merely for information sharing as part of the environmental impact assessment process for the above project.</p>

		NOSA bursary application form for Mr. Serame Petrus Galeboe with a handwritten note providing banking details and asking, "Please send me a letter for employment detail. Email 407 Bhubueng Street Tshwaraganang Dealesville 9348"	The public participation process ended on 19 July 2020."
18	<b>Date:</b> 27/08/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. John Geeringh, Senior Consultant Environmental Management, Land and Rights, Eskom Transmission Division, Megawatt Park	"Thank you, Regards John"	<b>EAP:</b>  Cognisance taken of I&P's thanks.
19	<b>Date:</b> 26/08/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email from EAP in response to telephonic enquiry <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Thembi Nyoka (National DAFF)	Ms. Nyoka from national DAFF made a telephonic enquiry as to the footprint sizes of the proposed developments relative to the total farm\ size.  <i>(Written response given by EAP).</i>	<b>EAP:</b>  "Dear Thembi As per your telephonic request this morning, The total footprint of the Farm Visserspan No. 40 = 1275.4069ha (c.f. Appendix 3 of the application form which contains the landowner's consent information including the farm extent) Footprint of: Visserspan Project No. 1 = approximately 218ha Visserspan Project No. 2 = approximately 223ha Visserspan Project No. 3 = approximately 222ha Visserspan Project No. 4 = approximately 237.5ha (made up of Visserspan Project 4 east = 175ha and Visserspan Project 4 west = 62.6ha and excluding the heritage no-go area in Project 4 east, of approximately 0.07ha)  Thus, the footprint of the land proposed to be left undeveloped by the proposed solar PV facilities = approximately 375ha.  This is 'undeveloped' area is made up of the current farm and heritage structures (including internal farm access roads), as well as areas of the property which, for biodiversity reasons, were deliberately avoided and designated as 'no-go' areas when planning the layout of the solar PV facilities e.g. the wetland areas/pans on the farm - a buffer area of at

			least 100m (in most instances, more than 100m) was left surrounding the Visserspan wetland/pan features and certain patches and corridors of good condition grassland (particularly adjacent to Project 2 and Project 2 solar facility sites). These areas which were deliberately avoided, will also allow recovery of the biodiversity post the projected lifespan of the proposed solar PV developments.”
20	<p><b>Date:</b> 08/09/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Jack Morton, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Free State (DARD)</p>	<p>“Thanks have received it.  Just to keep you up to speed with the process that the applications will follow:  1.I will hand the applications over to one of my officials to investigate.  2.He will present his findings at our next meeting that is on 16 September 2020  3. After the meeting I will compile a recommendation letter to National Department in Pretoria for signature by our Chief Director.  4.After I receive the signed recommendation it will be sent to Pretoria for the final letter from the Delegate of the Minister.  5. Unfortunately the National Department is the only authorised entity to give an letter / approval / permit regarding applications and they will only consider an application after receipt of a recommendation from the provincial recommendation committee.  Hope this give you an understanding into the process.”</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  Cognisance taken of I&amp;P’s receipt of emailed information and explanation of the process followed by the provincial authority, DARD.</p>
21	<p><b>Date:</b> 08/09/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email letter  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Samantha Ralston-Paton, BirdLife South Africa</p>	<p>Thank you for approaching BirdLife South Africa for comment on the above proposed developments.  BirdLife South Africa supports the responsible development of renewable energy. While we are not aware of any obvious “red flags” to development with regards to impacts on birds, the loss of Critical Biodiversity Areas and Endangered grassland habitat is a concern. However, it is impossible to provide an informed opinion of the proposed development without further information on the faunal communities potentially affected.  We have consulted the Southern African Bird Atlas Project 2 and habitat suitability models which indicate the area contains potential habitat for threatened species including Ludwig’s Bustard, <i>Neotis ludwigii</i> (Endangered) and Secretarybird, <i>Sagittarius serpentarius</i> (Vulnerable). It is, however, not clear how important this habitat is for these and other threatened species. For example, are there any leks or nests in the project area of influence? Based on the information available, we suspect (but cannot confirm) that greatest impact of the proposed developments will be as a result of the associated</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  Cognisance taken of I&amp;P’s concern regarding loss of critical biodiversity area and endangered grassland habitat.  Inclusion in final BAR and EMPr of BirdLife South Africa’s Position Statement regarding solar PV developments (summarises guideline document referred to in I&amp;AP’s comment).  I&amp;AP’s suspects that the greatest impact from the development (which they cannot confirm), would be as a result of the associated infrastructure i.e. collisions with powerlines. However, this development specifically does not have any overhead powerlines. Therefore, the I&amp;AP’s suspicion (for this particular project) is not relevant.  I&amp;AP’s encouragement to appoint a bird specialist to thoroughly assess the impacts of the proposed development and propose an appropriate mitigation strategy was already addressed to a large degree even before comment was received since the Position Statement was referenced and recommendations were made in both the final BAR and</p>

		<p>infrastructure (i.e. collisions with powerlines). Species affected would include water using the nearby wetlands) and pans (e.g. Lesser and Greater Flamingos, <i>Phoenicopterus minor</i> and <i>roseus</i>, Near Threatened).</p> <p>In conclusion, we are of the opinion that there is insufficient information to make an informed decision and encourage you to appoint a bird specialist to thoroughly assess the impacts of the proposed development and propose an appropriate mitigation strategy. Please see the attached guidelines for solar energy and birds for your future reference.</p>	<p>EMPr for an ecologist / biodiversity specialist (fauna, including avifauna, and flora) to survey the site <u>prior</u> to construction, so that appropriate plans such as search and rescue / relocation, mitigation and management, would be developed as required.</p> <p>Guideline is a book summarised in the Position Statement which is included in the final BAR as well as the EMPr.</p>
22		<p>END OF DBAR COMMENT AND RESPONSE REPORT</p>	

# PROPOSED VISSERSPAN SOLAR PV FACILITY – PROJECT 2

APPLICANT: Ventura Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd

## PRE-APPLICATION COMMENT AND RESPONSE TRAIL REPORT

(Public participation comment period started 13 November 2019 and ended 15 December 2019)

(DEFF Ref. No: To be provided)

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
1	<p><b>Date:</b> 14/11/2019 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Sello Meko, Demand and Acquisition, Free State Department of Health, Bloemfontein</p>	<p>With reference to Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Request for authority to inform consumers regarding what type of source of electricity is being supplied to consumers (i.e. renewable vs. non-renewable) since I&amp;AP claims that non-renewable should be cheaper.</li> <li>ii. Complaint that the cost of electricity is not affordable and the electricity tariff should go down as the country stabilises as renewable energy input increases.</li> <li>iii. Comment that the energy harvested from renewable sources should have a storage system and use of renewable energy for national supply should be disclosed to the public.</li> <li>iv. Suggestion that any product produced using renewable energy should be taxed at a lower rate.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. to vi. Cognisance taken of comments.</li> <li>v. Individual registered as an I&amp;AP. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Date:</b> 18/11/2019 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Primrose Ndzululeka</p>	<p>With reference to Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 1, several statements made on what appears to be another company/organisation (no company name/details provided):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Entity 'keeps the lights on' when state entities fail to.</li> <li>ii. Lights are 'kept on' at affordable prices through the use of solar panels.</li> <li>iii. Potential customers will have power when the rest of the country has outages.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. to vi. Cognisance taken of comments.</li> <li>vii. Registration of organisation (represented by contact individual) as an I&amp;AP included since a second email was received shortly after the current one with more contact details. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>iv. Entity differs from competitors since they also supply road lighting.</li> <li>v. Entity claims to have a team that specialises in installing solar panels and determining customers' needs.</li> <li>vi. The biggest milestone reached is getting a local supplier and contributing towards the country's economy and the next target milestone is to sell 10 000 solar panels by the end of 2020.</li> </ul>	
3	<p><b>Date:</b> 18/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Second email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Primrose Ndzululeka, Golden Four Trading</p>	<p>A second email received shortly after the above email but no specific project number specified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Proposal to purchase solar panels from Golden Four Trading for solar powered irrigation and solar power street lights for the proposed developments.</li> <li>ii. Comment that Golden Four Trading sold solar powered irrigation panels to Glen College with effective results (lasting up to 10 years with minimum maintenance).</li> <li>iii. Statement that electricity tariffs are high at the proposed facility will be high primarily due to irrigation systems and other electrical equipment. In addition, electricity demand fluctuates with peak demands in the morning and evenings.</li> <li>iv. Statement that solar panels are part of the fourth industrial revolution and the proposed facility should purchase solar panels at the prices provided.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. to vi. Cognisance taken of comments.</li> <li>v. Registration of organisation (represented by contact individual) as an I&amp;AP for all projects. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Date:</b> 18/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Albertus Teseling representing Concordia Trust</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Request for registration as an I&amp;AP (for Visserspan Solar PV Facility no project number specified)</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of organisation (represented by contact individual) for all projects. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 02/03/2020.</li> <li>ii. <b>Note:</b> Email from I&amp;AP was forwarded from Mr. Pieter Venter who sent with a group email the initial maildrop information sheets for Projects 1 to 4, to several entities – all addresses in forwarded email added to I&amp;AP register and email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Date:</b> 18/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Ralph Damonse, Pontus Consulting (Pty) Ltd, Panorama, Cape Town</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Request for registration as an I&amp;AP for Visserspan Solar PV Facility - Project 2</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of individual as an I&amp;AP. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
6	<p><b>Date:</b> 18/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Meisie Nel, Farm Brakfontein 1/636 close to Eskom power line</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Request for registration as an I&amp;AP for Visserspan Solar Project (no number specified).</li> <li>ii. Mention that I&amp;AP's farm is Brakfontein 1/636 and is very close to Eskom power line which goes through the farm.</li> <li>iii. Statement that I&amp;P is not opposed to providing her entire farm for the project.</li> <li>iv. Request to please consider iii above.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of individual as an I&amp;AP. Email notification of same and of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Date:</b> 19/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email sent  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Stanley Robertson, Director of Lezmin 1383 CC and Trustee of Three Star Trust (Owner of Farm Beestepan)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Record of telephonic <u>contact made by EAP</u> with I&amp;AP and registration of I&amp;AP in two capacities - Director of Lezmin 1383 CC and Trustee of Three Star Trust (Owner of Farm Beestepan immediate neighbour to the south west of Visserspan Solar PV Project 1).</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP and request for I&amp;AP to inform other I&amp;APs of project. Email notification of same sent 19/11/2019. Email notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Date:</b> 19/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email sent  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Pierre Greyling, Farm Perseus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Record of telephonic <u>contact made by EAP</u> with I&amp;AP and registration of I&amp;AP as representative of Farm Perseus (south of Farm Visserspan)</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP and request for I&amp;AP to inform other I&amp;APs of project. Email notification of same sent 19/11/2019. Email notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
9	<p><b>Date:</b> 25/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email facsimile  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Thabang Peter Nakedi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Receipt of faxed copy of <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> (CV) and identity document of I&amp;AP.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP. Email response to I&amp;AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&amp;AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
10	<p><b>Date:</b> 26/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email (fax)  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Senelo Kaneng, Director, Kaneng Security and Trading (Pty) Ltd</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Note that the Visserspan Solar PV Project 2 includes a fence and maintenance office and that Kaneng Security has been operating in the Tokologo Local Municipal area since 2014.</li> <li>ii. Request for more information related to Visserspan Solar PV Project 2 in terms of opportunities for small business development and benefits for Kaneng Security.</li> </ul>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP. Email response to I&amp;AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&amp;AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</li> </ul>
11	<p><b>Date:</b> 26/11/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Note that I&amp;AP's name is Sylvester and would like to know more about the EIA process for the Visserspan Solar PV Facility Project</li> </ul>	

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
	<b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Thabo (Sylvester) Seliba	<p>since I&amp;AP is interested in applying for a job and has experience in includes a fence and maintenance office and that Kaneng Security solar plant construction.</p> <p>ii. Further note that I&amp;AP is aware that EnviroAfrica CC has been appointed by Ventura Renewable Energy (Pty) Ltd.</p> <p>iii. Query as to where to forward a CV for open vacancies.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP. Email response to I&amp;AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&amp;AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</p>
12	<p><b>Date:</b> 02/12/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email facsimile  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> . Thabang Peter Nakedi</p>	<p>i. Receipt of faxed copy of <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> (CV) and identity document of I&amp;AP.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP. Email response to I&amp;AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&amp;AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</p>
13	<p><b>Date:</b> 02/12/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Serame Petrus Galeboe</p>	<p>i. Receipt of email with copy of <i>Curriculum Vitae</i> (CV) and identity document of I&amp;AP.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>i. Registration of entity as an I&amp;AP. Email response to I&amp;AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&amp;AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.</p>
14	<p><b>Date:</b> 10/12/2019  <b>Format:</b> Email with letter and signed petition  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Gerhard van Rhyn (temporary co-ordination of registration for various farmers in region)</p>	<p>i. Email received (following telephonic conversation) of interested and affected farmers who want to register.</p> <p>ii. Letter addressed to EAP indicating application to register for the Visserspan Solar PV Facility Project:</p> <p>a. Note that the farmers included on a two-page typed list attached to the letter, hereby apply to register to take part in the EIA for the Farm Visserspan, identified as "Solar PV Facility".</p> <p>b. Mention that contact details as well as names of parties concerned are enclosed and request that correspondence and important information be sent to each of the parties individually from now on since this letter serves only to co-ordinate the effort to ensure the farmers are registered in time.</p> <p>c. Statement that this is the third solar development close to Dealesville in the Free State and that the properties identified for these developments are almost adjacent. Comment that the first two</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b></p> <p>i. Email sent on 17/12/2019, confirming receipt of correspondence from I&amp;AP and acknowledging that I&amp;APs have been registered.</p> <p>ii.</p> <p>a. Inclusion of list of farmers in I&amp;AP register</p> <p>b. Email of notification of availability of DBAR sent to individual parties on 06/03/2020 (where possible after attempting to get postal addresses, electronic copies of DBAR sent to I&amp;APs).</p> <p>c. Agreed – the cumulative effect should all the proposed solar PV developments be constructed, should have been considered/assessed when Renewable energy Development Zone 5 (REDZ 5) was declared by the Government.</p> <p>d. Noted.</p> <p>e. Agreed – all input/comments from I&amp;APs are valued to allow a more robust assessment process.</p>

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
		<p>impact studies were done by the CSIR and Visserspan's study will be done by EnviroAfrica. Statement that since the three developments are so close to one another, it simply does not make sense to undertake the studies in isolation since the combined impact of all the development on the environment is dramatically different from that indicated for an individual impact study.</p> <p>d. Statement that since the projects are so close to each other, the same farmers will be negatively impacted by all of them. Further statement that besides the wider impact on Dealesville and the environment, the collective effect of these developments in an area already compromised by Eskom power developments is being ignored. Comment that these developments will have a catastrophic effect on agricultural activities and farmers in the area.</p> <p>e. Request that as part of the study, the I&amp;APs would like to voice their concerns regarding the negative impact of the development and provide reasons as to why it is not viable.</p> <p>f. Statement that criteria currently used by developers to justify their choice of the specific area around Dealesville, are the strongest arguments amongst the farmers as to why it is <b>not</b> suitable for any further power developments.</p> <p>g. Statement that no private development can be sanctioned if it is to the detriment of other peoples' careers and livelihoods. Further statement that none of the developments are undertaken due to national importance but they are being undertaken by private developers solely to make money in the process.</p> <p>h. Offer that should any additional information be required, the farmers would be glad to co-operate.</p>	<p>f. The criteria currently used by solar facility developers to justify the location of their respective proposed developments around Dealesville is due to the fact that the area has been zoned or allocated by the national Government as one of 8 areas currently earmarked for such development (the developers merely source a farmer willing to sell or lease property for the development within the REDZ. The selection of areas in the country for REDZs would have undergone an impact assessment process which should have been subject to public scrutiny and comment before the area was declared a REDZ. This would have been done prior to any private developer proposing to develop facilities in the region. Therefore, the comment that the area is not suitable for solar PV facility developments is an issue that needed to be raised when the REDZ were being assessed before they were declared by Government as such.</p> <p>g. The statement that private developers make money in the process is true since this is the nature of their business - they develop plants to meet a need that has been identified. In this case the need has been identified by the national Government as having national importance and is considered one of the Government's 18 Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs). Offer that should any additional information be required, the farmers would be glad to co-operate</p>
15	<p><b>Date:</b> 16/12/2019  <b>Format:</b> Resend of email with letter and signed petition  <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Mr. Gerhard van Rhyn (temporary co-ordination of registration for various farmers in region)</p>	<p>i. Original communication resent by I&amp;AP (i.e. email detailed in no. 12 above).</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  i. Noted.</p>
16	<p><b>Date:</b> 27/01/2020  <b>Format:</b> Email</p>	<p>i. Thanks expressed for notification of the Visserspan Solar PV Facility Projects.</p>	<p><b>EAP:</b>  i. Email acknowledged on 06/03.2020 and content noted.</p>

No.	Comment Date, Comment Format, Organisation/I&AP	Comment	Response from EAP/Applicant/Specialist/Project Manager
	<b>I&amp;AP:</b> Ms. Ragna Redelstorff, Heritage Officer (Archaeology, Palaeontology and Meteorites Unit, South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA))	ii. Reminder that SAHRA does not accept hardcopies, emails or website links but that the application information must be submitted on the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS). Website link provided.	ii. Archaeology specialist appointed to upload all heritage related information and issue a SAHRA notice of intent to develop document on SAHRIS.
17	<b>Date:</b> 02/03/2020 <b>Format:</b> Email <b>I&amp;AP:</b> Serame Petrus Galeboe	i. Receipt of email stating I&AP is waiting for a response and address has changed.	<b>EAP:</b> i. Registration of entity as an I&AP. Email response to I&AP that EnviroAfrica is responsible for the EIA process and not employment opportunities but that I&AP should follow the process to see when potential employment opportunities may arise, should the project be developed. Email of same and notification of availability of DBAR sent 06/03/2020.
18		END OF TRAIL REPORT	