



**mineral resources  
& energy**

Department:  
Mineral Resources and Energy  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**Enquiries:** Ms Sinazo Mnyaka

**EAP Reg No.:** 2022/5486

**Email Address:** [mnyakas@petroleumagencysa.com](mailto:mnyakas@petroleumagencysa.com)

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**By E-MAIL**

**Searcher Geodata UK Ltd**

Unit 6 Albion House  
High Street  
Woking  
United Kingdom  
GU21 6BG

**Attention** : Ms Debbie Sewell  
**Email** : d.sewell@searcherseismic.com

**ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION IN TERMS OF SECTION 24 OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACT, 1998 (ACT 107 OF 1998) AS AMENDED, READ WITH REGULATION 19 OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, 2014 AS AMENDED, FOR THE PROPOSED THREE-DIMENSIONAL SEISMIC SURVEY, OFF THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA**

I, Mr Tseliso Maqubela, in terms of the powers delegated to me, in terms of regulation 20 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998): Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014 as amended (hereinafter referred to as the 'EIA Regulations') decided to grant an environmental authorisation (hereinafter referred to as the 'authorisation') in respect of the application lodged on 28 May 2024. Herewith attached is a copy of the authorisation and reasons for the decision to grant.

You are instructed in terms of regulation 4(2) of the EIA Regulations to notify all interested and affected parties (I&APs), in writing, within fourteen (14) days of the date of the decision, of the outcomes of your application. You are also required to inform I&APs of the procedure to submit appeals against the decision as contained in the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998): National Appeals Regulations, 2014 (hereinafter referred to as the 'Appeals Regulations').

Should you wish to appeal the decision or any aspect thereof, you must submit an appeal in the prescribed form and in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Appeals Regulations, within twenty (20) days from the date of notification of the decision. The said must be submitted to the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, and copies sent to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (Head Office) and the Petroleum Agency SA by one of the following means:

**1) Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment**

Appeals and Legal Review Directorate

Attention : Director: Appeals and Legal Review

Email : [appeals@dfre.gov.za](mailto:appeals@dfre.gov.za)

Post : Private Bag x 447, Pretoria, 0001

By Hand : Environmental House, Corner Steve Biko and Soutspansberg Street, Acardia, Pretoria, 0083

**2) Copy(s) of the lodged appeal(s) to the Petroleum Agency SA**

Attention : The Acting Chief Executive Officer

Email : [EAappeals@petroleumagencyrsa.com](mailto:EAappeals@petroleumagencyrsa.com)

Post : Private Bag x 5111, Tygervalley, 7536

By Hand : Heron Place, Heron Cl, Second Floor, Century City, Cape Town, 7441

**3) Copy(s) of the lodged appeal(s) to the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy**

Legal Services Directorate

Attention : Director: Legal Services

Email : [Pieter.Alberts@dmre.gov.za](mailto:Pieter.Alberts@dmre.gov.za)

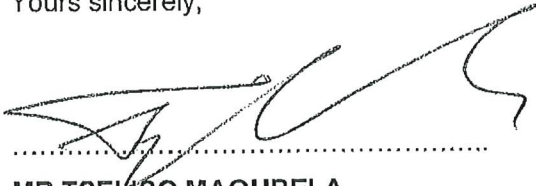
Post : Private Bag x 59, Arcadia, 0007

By Hand : Trevenna Campus, Building 2C, c/o Meintjes and Francis Baard Street, Sunnyside

Searcher Geodata UK Ltd 12/1/048

The authorised activities shall not commence within twenty (20) days of the date that the notification of this authorisation decision was sent to I&APs. Please note that should the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment receive appeals against this authorisation or conditions thereof, this authorisation will be suspended in accordance with section 43(7) of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998) pending the decision on such appeals.

Yours sincerely,



MR TSELISO MAQUBELA

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 21/10/2024



**mineral resources  
& energy**

Department:  
Mineral Resources and Energy  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: Ms Sinazo Mnyaka

EAP Reg No.: 2022/5486

Email Address: [mnyakas@petroleumagencyrsa.com](mailto:mnyakas@petroleumagencyrsa.com)

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION IN TERMS OF THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
MANAGEMENT ACT, 1998 (ACT 107 OF 1998) AS AMENDED AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, 2014 AS AMENDED**

**IN RESPECT OF**

**THE PROPOSED THREE-DIMENSIONAL SEISMIC SURVEY ACTIVITIES, OFF THE WEST COAST OF  
SOUTH AFRICA**

**APPLICATION DETAILS**

<b>Application Reference Number</b>	12/1/048
<b>Holder of Environmental Authorisation</b>	Searcher Geodata UK Limited
<b>Location of the Activity</b>	The environmental authorisation application area is located between ~256 km offshore of St Helena Bay, extending north along the western coastline to ~220 km offshore of Hondeklip Bay over several petroleum licence blocks. The survey area, at its closest point is ~218 km offshore from the Western Cape and Northern Cape coast.
<b>Size of the Environmental Authorisation Application Area</b>	~ 30 000 km <sup>2</sup> in extent



**This environmental authorisation (hereinafter referred to as the “authorisation”) does not negate the holder of this authorisation of the responsibility to comply with any other statutory requirements that may be applicable to the undertaking of the proposed activity.**

## **DECISION ON THE AUTHORISATION**

### **ACRONYMS**

AGENCY	: Petroleum Agency SA
BAR	: Basic Assessment Report
DEPARTMENT	: Department of Mineral Resources and Energy
ECO	: Environmental Control Officer
EIA	: Environmental Impact Assessment
EIA REGULATIONS	: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended
EMPr	: Environmental Management Programme
I&APs	: Interested and Affected Parties
MPRDA	: Mineral and Petroleum Resource Development Act, 2002 (Act 28 of 2002), as amended
NEMA	: National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), as amended
APPEALS REGULATIONS	: National Appeals Regulations, 2014
NEMPAA	: National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act, 2003 (Act 57 of 2003)
SOPEP	: Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan
SANHO	: South African National Hydrographic Office
3D	: Three Dimensional

The Department is satisfied with the information made available to it, and subject to compliance with the conditions of this authorisation, Searcher Geodata UK Limited should be authorised to undertake activities listed under the EIA Regulations, specified below. Details regarding the basis on which the Department reached this decision are set out in Annexure 1 of this authorisation.

### **ACTIVITY (S) AUTHORISED**

By virtue of the powers conferred on it by NEMA and the EIA Regulations the Department hereby **grants** the authorisation to **Searcher Geodata UK Limited** to undertake activities listed under the EIA Regulations, specified in section 3 below and as described in the BAR/EMPr submitted on **08 August 2024**.

The granting of this authorisation is subject to compliance with conditions specified under section 5 below.

### 1. DETAILS OF THE HOLDER OF THIS ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

Searcher Geodata UK Limited  
Unit 6 Albion House  
High Street  
Woking  
United Kingdom  
GU21 6BG

Contact Person : Ms Debbie Sewell  
Email : [d.sewell@searcherseismic.com](mailto:d.sewell@searcherseismic.com)

### 2. DETAILS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER

Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd  
8 Dalmeny Road  
Pine Park  
Randburg  
2194

Contact Person : Mr Vukosi Mabunda  
Email : [vukosi@eims.co.za](mailto:vukosi@eims.co.za)

### 3. LIST OF ACTIVITIES AUTHORISED

Table 1 below tabulates the listed activity(s) authorised under the EIA Regulations: Listing Notice 1 (Government Notice No. R 983) of 04 December 2014, as amended.

Table 1: Authorised Listed Activity

Activity No.	Activity Description	Applicability
21(b)	Any activity including the operation of that activity which requires a reconnaissance permit in terms of section 74 of the MPRDA, as well as any other applicable activity as contained in this Listing Notice or in Listing Notice 3 of 2014, required to exercise the reconnaissance permit, excluding: (a) any desktop study; and (b) any arial survey	The undertaking of 3D seismic survey reconnaissance activities requires a reconnaissance permit in terms of section 74 of the MPRDA.

The holder of this authorisation is authorised to conduct the following activities within the area described under section 4 below:

- The acquisition of 3D seismic survey data, which involves the generation of low frequency sound pulses by an acoustic instrument towed behind a survey vessel below the sea surface.
- The use of a seismic sound source and multiple hydrophone streamers, which are ~12 000 m long and 2 000 m wide. The sound source would be towed behind the vessel at a depth of between 5 – 10 m below the surface.
- The towing of streamers at a depth of 6 to 25 m below the surface. The streamers are therefore not visible, except for the tail-buoy at the terminal end of the cable.
- The operation of an array at a pressure of 2 000 pounds per square inch.
- The use of a support vessel to ensure other vessels remain at a safe distance from the survey vessel.

#### 4. LOCATION OF THE APPLICATION AREA

The authorisation application area is located between St Helena Bay (~256 km offshore), extending north along the western coastline to Hondeklip Bay (~ 220 km offshore). It covers the Northern Cape Ultra Deep, Mid Orange Basin and various other offshore exploration areas. The authorisation application area is ~30 000 km<sup>2</sup> (9 000 km<sup>2</sup> area surveyed between January and April 2024 is excluded) in extent. It is adjacent to the Namakwa District Municipality and the West Coast District Municipality located in the Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces respectively. The authorisation application area coordinates are listed in Table 2 below.



Table 2: Coordinates of the Authorisation Application Area

Point	Latitude	Longitude	Point	Latitude	Longitude
<b>Reconnaissance Permit Application Area</b>					
1	~30° 14' 20.3646"	~14° 04' 01.4328"	12	~32° 10' 00.5402"	~13° 58' 47.2533"
2	30° 27' 02.4644"	14° 16' 06.5743"	13	~31° 53' 40.5803"	~13° 50' 17.2474"
3	31° 00' 01.3293"	14° 47' 37.1143"	14	~31° 49' 20.6094"	~13° 47' 47.2497"
4	31° 05' 40.9497"	14° 53' 02.6665"	15	~31° 42' 20.6158"	~13° 44' 07.2416"
5	31° 05' 40.9497"	14° 59' 56.5256"	16	~31° 36' 40.6302"	~13° 41' 17.2488"
6	31° 05' 40.9497"	15° 09' 38.6339"	17	~31° 15' 30.7137"	~13° 33' 07.2379"
7	31° 15' 01.0986"	15° 09' 38.8124"	18	~31° 01' 20.7564"	~13° 28' 17.2401"
8	32° 00' 01.2222"	15° 09' 38.8811"	19	~30° 50' 40.7684"	~13° 24' 37.2354"
9	32° 35' 25.5423"	15° 09' 38.9210"	20	~30° 39' 24.9181"	~13° 21' 01.7084"
10	~32° 35' 33.6389"	~13° 54' 25.9869"	21	~30° 32' 20.7014"	~13° 35' 39.2243"
11	~32° 33' 10.4617"	~13° 54' 27.2447"	22	~30° 25' 05.6174"	~13° 47' 32.1985"
EZ A	~30° 40' 30.43"	~13° 21' 21.07"	EZ D	~ 31° 05' 24.61"	~14° 34' 08.27"
EZ B	~ 30° 35' 01.67"	~13° 34' 12.98"	EZ E	~31° 30' 04.88"	~13° 55' 28.74"
EZ C	~ 30° 20' 58.61"	~13° 56' 52.74"	EZ F	~30° 56' 52.61"	~13° 26' 50.26"
<b>Survey Exclusion Zone</b>					
EZ A	~30° 40' 30.43"	~13° 21' 21.07"	EZ D	~ 31° 05' 24.61"	~14° 34' 08.27"
EZ B	~ 30° 35' 01.67"	~13° 34' 12.98"	EZ E	~31° 30' 04.88"	~13° 55' 28.74"
EZ C	~ 30° 20' 58.61"	~13° 56' 52.74"	EZ F	~30° 56' 52.61"	~13° 26' 50.26"

## 5. CONDITIONS OF THE AUTHORISATION

### 5.1 SCOPE OF AUTHORISATION

- 5.1.1 The holder is authorised to undertake activities specified in section 3 above.
- 5.1.2 The authorised activities must only be carried out within the authorisation application area specified in section 4 and table 2 above.
- 5.1.3 The holder of this authorisation is responsible for ensuring compliance with the conditions of this authorisation.
- 5.1.4 Any person(s) acting on behalf of the holder, inclusive of contractor(s), subcontractor(s), consultant(s), and employees are also subject to the conditions of this authorisation. This condition, however, does not exonerate the holder from its accountability and responsibility to ensure compliance with the conditions of this authorisation.



5.1.5 Any changes to, or deviations from, and amendments to the proposed activities and conditions of this authorisation must be approved in writing by this Department before such changes, deviations or amendments are effected. The Department reserves the right to request the submission of information deemed necessary to assess and evaluate the significance and impacts of such changes, deviations, and amendments. Any changes, deviations and amendments may be subject to the provisions of Chapter 5 of the EIA Regulations pertaining to the amendments of this authorisation.

## **5.2 NOTIFICATION AND APPEAL OF AUTHORISATION**

5.2.1 The holder must, in writing, within fourteen (14) days of the date of this authorisation, notify all I&APs of the outcome of the application.

5.2.2 The notification contemplated above must, amongst other issues:

- 5.2.2.1 Stipulate the date of the decision, and the date of issue of the authorisation.
- 5.2.2.2 Provide reasons for the decision.
- 5.2.2.3 Inform I&APs of the appeals procedure in terms of the NEMA:NA Regulations.
- 5.2.2.4 Draw the attention of the I&APs to the manner in which they may access the decision, including obtaining the copy of the authorisation.

## **5.3 COMMENCEMENT OF THE ACTIVITY(S)**

5.3.1 This authorisation will only be effective in the event that an application for a reconnaissance permit is granted in terms of the MPRDA. None of the activities listed in this authorisation may therefore commence without a reconnaissance permit.

5.3.2 The authorised activities shall not commence within twenty (20) days of the date that the notification of this authorisation decision was sent to I&APs, pending potential lodgement of appeal(s).

5.3.3 Where an appeal is lodged against the decision by any party, this authorisation or any provision or condition thereof will be suspended in accordance with section 43(7) of the NEMA; and as such you may not commence with any activity, until a decision on the appeal(s) is taken.

5.3.4 This authorisation is granted for one (1) year from the date of commencement of the authorised activity contained in section 3. If the authorisation lapses and the holder intends to undertake the authorised activity(s), a new authorisation in terms of the EIA Regulations must be obtained.

#### **5.4 MANAGEMENT, MONITORING AND AUDITING OF OPERATIONS INCLUDING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.4.1 The EMPr submitted with the BAR is hereby approved. It is hence mandatory for the holder to implement all the recommendations and management measures stipulated in the EMPr throughout all phases of the proposed activities.
- 5.4.2 Any non-compliance with the EMPr constitutes non-compliance with this authorisation, and any non-compliance with this authorisation may result in its suspension and may render the holder guilty of an offence in terms of section 49A of the NEMA and may, if convicted, be liable for penalty as contemplated in terms of section 49B(1) of the NEMA.
- 5.4.3 Should there be changes in the operation and management of the authorised activities, the EMPr must be amended to accommodate those changes and be submitted in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
- 5.4.4 The holder of this authorisation must undertake the necessary measures, to ensure that operators, contractors, subcontractors, and any person(s) acting on behalf of the holder, has full awareness of the recommendations of the EMPr before commencing with any authorised activity.
- 5.4.5 The EMPr must be included in all contractual documentation entered in between the holder and contractor(s).
- 5.4.6 A copy of the EMPr must always be kept onboard the survey vessel(s).
- 5.4.7 The holder must, before the commencement of the authorised activity, appoint the following:
- 5.4.7.1 An independent and experienced ECO who will ensure that the conditions of this authorisation and recommendations of the EMPr are implemented and adhered to.
  - 5.4.7.2 Independent, qualified, and experienced Marine Mammal Observers (MMO) and Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM) Operators to monitor the interaction between marine mammals and survey operations for the duration of the activity.  
An independent, qualified and experienced Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) to monitor interactions with other marine users for the duration of the activity.
- 5.4.8 The holder of this authorisation must submit daily and monthly environmental monitoring reports during the seismic survey operations. Furthermore, the holder must within sixty (60) days of completion of the 3D seismic survey, submit an audit report, completed by the ECO.

## 5.5 SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- 5.5.1 The holder or appointed ECO must, thirty (30) days before the commencement of the seismic survey, distribute notifications to the I&APs including the Agency informing them of the operational plans. The said notifications must include the following:
- 5.5.1.1 Commencement date, including survey and support vessel(s) mobilisation date, and anticipated duration of the survey.
  - 5.5.1.2 Details of the seismic survey and support vessel(s).
  - 5.5.1.3 Sketch plans showing the operational area(s) including survey grids.
  - 5.5.1.4 Details of the ECO, FLO, MMO, PAM Operators and contact details for reporting environmental issues associated with the planned activities.
  - 5.5.1.5 Invitations to I&APs to confirm if they should be included in the distribution list for the daily MMO, PAM and FLO reports.
- 5.5.2 Avoid operating during periods of peak fishing efforts and migratory season of cetaceans and their aggregates from the southern feeding grounds into the low latitude waters and the summer feeding grounds between St Helena Bay and Dassen Island.
- 5.5.3 MMO must be equipped with infra-red cameras.
- 5.5.4 PAM must be used 24- hours a day when the seismic source is in operation. If the PAM system is not functional, operations must temporarily be suspended to prevent any potential impacts to marine mammals.
- 5.5.5 The holder must submit a Shipboard Oil Pollution Emergency Plan (SOPEP) which is developed in accordance with MARPOL 73/78 Annex I and the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan.
- 5.5.6 In addition to the SOPEP, an Emergency Response and Medical Evacuation Plan must be submitted. The said plans must take into consideration all resources that may be required in the event of an oil spill incident or any emergency incident. The plans must be submitted to the Agency thirty (30) days before the mobilisation of the seismic survey vessel.
- 5.5.7 Ensure that "turtle-friendly" tail buoys are used by the survey contractor or existing tail buoys are fitted with either exclusion or deflector "turtle guards".
- 5.5.8 Ensure that solid streamers are used instead of fluid-filled streamers to avoid leaks.
- 5.5.9 Maintain a pre-acquisition watch of sixty (60) minutes before any instances of seismic source testing. This must be implemented to confirm that there are no penguins or feeding aggregations of diving seabirds, shoaling large pelagic fish, turtles, seals, or cetaceans within 500 m of the seismic source. A soft- start" procedure as defined in the approved BAR/EMPr must be implemented. If only a single lowest power seismic source is tested, the pre-acquisition watch period can be reduced to thirty (30) minutes.



- 5.5.10 Line changes and breaks of more than 5 minutes but less than 20 minutes in acquisition must follow the procedures defined in the approved BAR/EMPr and must be synchronized with soft start procedures as defined in the approved BAR/EMPr.
- 5.5.11 A 60-minute pre-acquisition watch and a "soft-start" procedure must be implemented prior to continuing with the survey operation for seismic source breaks of 20 minutes or longer.
- 5.5.12 Terminate seismic source on detection and/or observation of penguins or feeding aggregations of diving seabirds, turtles, slow swimming large pelagic fish (including whale sharks, basking sharks, manta rays) or cetaceans within the 500m mitigation zone.
- 5.5.13 Illegal dumping of waste or any equipment aboard the vessels is prohibited. In the event of loss of any equipment that presents a risk to navigational activities, other marine users and the environment, measures to retrieve lost equipment must be undertaken. Such incidents must be reported to the Agency and SANHO within twelve (12) hours of occurrence.
- 5.5.14 During the demobilisation process, the holder must ensure that the survey area is left as it was prior to the operations and all I&APs must be informed of the completion of the survey.
- 5.5.15 A grievance mechanism must be implemented for any issues or complaints related to the seismic survey operations.
- 5.5.16 The community engagement protocol developed in 2023/2024 must be implemented during the seismic survey operations.
- 5.5.17 A distance of 40 km must be mainlined from other survey vessels in the event where multiple surveys are taking place at the same time.
- 5.5.18 All recommended mitigation measures included in the BAR and EMPr dated 08 August 2024 are deemed to be conditions of this authorisation and must therefore be adhered to.

## 6. DISCLAIMER

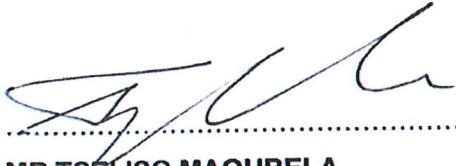
The Department shall not be responsible for any damages or losses suffered by the holder in an instance where the operation is temporarily or permanently stopped for reasons of non-compliance with the conditions as set out herein or any other subsequent document or legal action emanating from this decision.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

In view of the above, and having taken into consideration environmental management principles as set out in section 2 of the NEMA, and information presented in the authorisation application and the BAR, and subject to compliance with conditions of this authorisation, this Department is satisfied that the



proposed activities will not be in conflict with the objectives of the integrated environmental management set out in Chapter 5 of the NEMA and will not result to any detrimental risks to the environment and public. This authorisation is accordingly granted.



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**MR TSELISO MAQUBELA**

**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE OF THE AUTHORISATION:** 21/10/2024

## APPENDIX 1: REASONS FOR DECISION

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### 1. Information Considered in Making the Decision

All the information presented to the Department was considered in making this decision. The said information includes amongst others:

- 1.1 The provisions of Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act 107 of 1998), as amended (NEMA) which relates to the integrated environmental management and section 2 of the NEMA principles; the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended (EIA Regulations) and other relevant NEMA regulations and guidelines.
- 1.2 The environmental authorisation (hereinafter referred to as the "authorisation") application dated 28 May 2024.
- 1.3 The information contained in the final basic assessment report (BAR) and environmental management programme (EMPr), compiled by an independent Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) from Environmental Impact Management Services (Pty) Ltd, submitted to the Department on 08 August 2024.
- 1.4 The information contained in the following specialist reports submitted with the BAR on 08 May 2024:
  - 1.4.1 Marine Ecological Assessment prepared by Pisces Environmental Services (Pty) Ltd.
  - 1.4.2 Fisheries Impact Assessment prepared by Capricorn Marine Environmental (Pty) Ltd.
  - 1.4.3 Heritage Assessment prepared by PGS Heritage (Pty) Ltd.
  - 1.4.4 Social Impact Assessment prepared by Equispectives Research & Consulting Services.
  - 1.4.5 Acoustic Technical Report prepared by SLR Australia.
- 1.5 The results of the public participation process (PPP) submitted with the BAR, which highlighted issues, concerns, and comments raised by various interested and affected parties (I&APs) and responses by the EAP.

## **2. Submission and Consideration of the Basic Assessment Report and Supporting Documents**

2.1 In terms of regulation 19(1)(a) and (b) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, the applicant must, within ninety (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 was subjected to a PPP of at least thirty (30) days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority; or

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

2.2 The BAR and supporting documents, subjected to a PPP of thirty (30) days, were submitted to the Department within the regulated timeframe.

## **3. Key Findings**

Careful consideration of information submitted to the Department, resulted in the following conclusions:

3.1 All fundamental and procedural requirements prescribed in the applicable legislation are satisfied.

3.2 The proposed 3D seismic survey is a widely used oil and gas exploration technology worldwide. The said technology is currently used in South Africa and is generally regarded as non-intrusive in nature. The technology poses potential impacts on fisheries and marine fauna. However, the majority of the potential impacts were assessed to range from low to very low significance with mitigation.



- 3.3 The identification and assessment of potential impacts of the activity, including cumulative impacts, was adequately undertaken, and the proposed mitigation and management measures are aligned with potential impacts. Furthermore, the implementation of mitigation measures in all phases of the proposed 3D seismic survey activities will ensure that the planned activities will not result in any detrimental impacts on the environment.
- 3.4 The motivation for the need and desirability of the proposed 3D seismic survey activity is in line with the requirements of the EIA Regulations and it addressed key issues in the Need and Desirability Guideline (2017), published by the then Department of Environmental Affairs. The need and desirability of the proposed activity is motivated by its potential to provide information regarding the presence of viable gas and/or oil resources and alternative energy supply options.
- 3.5 Policy and legislative framework relevant to the proposed project was assessed. This amongst others include NEMA, MPRDA, NEMPAA, Integrated and Coastal Management Act, 2008 (ICMA), marine pollution related legislation, energy and climate change policies. The requirements of the aforementioned including section 63 of the ICMA are adequately addressed in the BAR.
- 3.6 Project Alternatives: The location, layout, technology, and no-go alternatives were identified and briefly assessed. However, due to the nature of proposed exploration operations, no in-depth assessments were carried out. The preferred location was selected based on its high likelihood of containing significant hydrocarbon reserves and because it is located outside fisheries ring fenced areas. No layout alternative was considered, because there are no proclaimed or no-go environmentally sensitive areas overlapping with the proposed seismic survey area. The preferred 3D seismic survey is considered a suitable technology to achieve the intended objective of the proposed project. In addition, seismic survey technology is currently the only commercially available technology to achieve the desired objectives of the project. The no-go alternative was not preferred due to the positive impacts that might be derived from undertaking the planned project.
- 3.7 The PPP complied with Chapter 6 of the EIA Regulations, and related guidelines. The PPP included the following:
- (a) Identification of I&APs inclusive of authorities, fisheries, and non-governmental organisations.
  - (b) Notifications in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa were distributed to pre-identified I&APs through registered mails, fax and emails.
  - (c) Newspaper advertisements were published in five newspapers i.e., Cape Times (English and IsiXhosa), Sentinel News (English and Afrikaans), Weslander (English and

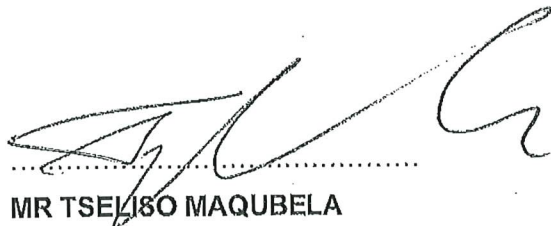


Afrikaans), Ons Kontrei and Die Platterlander (English and Afrikaans) on 18 and 19 April 2024 and on 20, 21, 27 and 28 June 2024.

- (d) The proposed project was advertised in the national government gazette on 26 April 2024 and 21 June 2024.
- (e) Site notices written in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa were placed at 100 onshore locations along the west coast stretching from Hout Bay to Port Nolloth from 22 to 26 April 2024.
- (f) Radio advertisements were published in four radio stations i.e., KFM (English), Radio NFM (English and Afrikaans, and isiXhosa), Radio West Coast (English and isiXhosa) and Radio Namaqualand (English and Afrikaans) between 15 to 19 April 2024.
- (g) Public meetings were held in Port Nolloth, Springbok, Doring Bay, Elands Bay, St Helena Bay, Langebaan, Yzerfontein, Hout Bay and Mitchell's Plain between 24 June and 05 July 2024. A report summary and a comment form both written in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa were made available at meeting venues. A virtual meeting was held on 10 July 2024.
- (h) Hard copies of the draft BAR were placed at Hout Bay, Sea Point, Vredenburg, Lamberts Bay and A.J Bekeur libraries and at Kamiesburg Local Municipality on 21 June 2024.
- (i) Comments and issues raised by I&APs were adequately addressed in the BAR.

#### 4. Conclusion

In view of the above and having taken into consideration the environmental management principles as set out in section 2 of the NEMA, this Department is satisfied that the proposed activities will not conflict with the objectives of the integrated environmental management set out in Chapter 5 of the NEMA and will not result to any detrimental risks to the environment and public. This authorisation is accordingly granted.



MR TSELISO MAQUBELA

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE OF THE EA: 21/10/2024