

# Boegoebaai Port, SEZ and Namakwa Region SEA

## *Public Briefing Webinar Key Notes & Actions<sup>1</sup>*

**Date:** 08 October 2025

**Time:** 09:30 – 12:30

**Platform:** Microsoft Teams

**Attendees:** Appendix A

### Purpose:

- Create a platform for Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to engage with and provide input to the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) outputs.
- Provide progress on the Works Package (WP) 1 SEA process.
- Present summarised draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies, aligned with the WP1 draft SEA outputs.

### Agenda:

1. Welcome and Meeting Objectives
2. Presentation of the summarised draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies for WP1
3. Questions/Comments/Discussion
4. Closure and Next Steps

### Key Notes

#### **1) Welcome and opening:**

The Public Briefing Webinar for the SEA of the Boegoebaai Port & Special Economic Zone (SEZ) & Namakwa Region (WP1) was opened by the Chairperson (Abulele Adams, CSIR), who outlined the objectives and agenda of the meeting:

- To present the summarised draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies, aligned with WP1 draft SEA outputs and provide a platform for I&APs to engage and provide input on the SEA outputs.

#### **2) WP1 summarised draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies:**

Luanita Snyman-Van der Walt (CSIR) presented a summary of the draft findings from the Specialist Assessment studies for WP1. The presentation is available in both English and Afrikaans on the project webpage: <https://www.csir.co.za/boegoebaai-port>.

#### **3) Questions /Comments/ discussion:**

- A question was raised as to where Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is addressed within the SEA and how it applies to affected indigenous communities. It was noted that on the presentation delivered, recommendation no.7 refers to FPIC; however, there is no explicit reference to FPIC in the full technical report. The participant emphasised that FPIC is a constitutional principle recognised by the courts and must be addressed explicitly. It was further

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<sup>1</sup> These notes summarise key points from questions asked and discussions held during the engagement. These are not captured verbatim and are not meeting minutes.

stated that Chapter 3 recommends reconsidering alternative sites due to high ecological sensitivity at Boegoebaai, and it was asked whether other locations had been explored as possible alternatives. Concern was also expressed that no final feasibility study or confirmed positive Net Present Value (NPV) / profitability exists for the proposed harbour, raising questions about the rationale for selecting Boegoebaai as a preferred greenfield development site.

- CSIR explained that FPIC and related social considerations are addressed more comprehensively in WP2 (focussed on the wider Namakwa region) which examines cumulative and regional social impacts. It was also noted that the SEA serves primarily as an information-basis that provides recommendations based on current knowledge, rather than having the authority to impose decisions on any party.
- Regarding ecology, CSIR acknowledged that Boegoebaai area contains unique and sensitive terrestrial ecosystems. It was also highlighted that extensive areas have already been transformed from their natural state due to mining activities. As a result, the placement of infrastructure in such areas, while avoiding intact vegetation, is proposed in the SEA as a measure to avoid additional transformation of surrounding vegetation.
- Transnet Ports Authority (TNPA) stated that consultations have been undertaken in line with relevant legislation, including the Restitution of Land Rights Act and the Communal Property Associations (CPA) Act. It was added that feasibility studies are ongoing as part of the broader development planning process.
- TNPA stated that alternative sites were evaluated through a multi criteria analysis during earlier feasibility assessments, with Boegoebaai emerging as the most feasible option. It was emphasised that information regarding the NPV, is the responsibility of project financiers and does not fall within the SEA's mandate.
- A participant noted that the golden mole mentioned in the presentation is a critically endangered species and requested clarity on whether the Northern Cape Provincial Government has guidelines or policies to guide development near such sensitive habitats. Clarity was also requested on how the golden mole's habitat will be accommodated within the Boegoebaai development plan, including its proximity to the proposed port footprint and whether it may impact the route chosen for the development of the rail solution to link the port with the inland mining activities.
  - CSIR explained that the golden mole is a shy and rare creature - it was not directly observed during fieldwork but is likely to occur within the study area. It was further clarified that when finer scale planning is done, in-depth assessments will be undertaken to verify species presence and distribution to guide planning and development. It was noted that systematic conservation planning underpins the identification and protection of key environmental features and landscape functions. The SEA utilised available systematic conservation planning data. Detailed, site-specific investigations will be required in future assessment phases (e.g. during Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)).
  - Regarding the rail component, CSIR noted that the component is being further examined under WP2, which adopts a broader regional perspective. It was also mentioned that community feedback, particularly from seasonal herders, had raised

concerns that the rail could potentially disrupt movement for both people and animals. It was noted that there are components that would need to be taken into consideration to design rail in a way that still allows corridors for the movement of animals and people.

- A participant raised a concern about the Avifauna Specialist Report; noting that while much of the study area is classified as having high and medium sensitivities, the report does not appear to include specific recommendations for avoidance or mitigation. The participant remarked that the findings seem to defer detailed guidance to future project-level studies and requested clarity on whether any firm strategic recommendations for avoidance and mitigation were provided at this stage.
  - CSIR explained that the SEZ is not anticipated to host large-scale wind projects, apart from one already approved. The avifauna specialist (AfriAvian Environmental) added that the avifauna team faced difficulty providing detailed mitigation measures at this strategic stage, as the specific development layout is not yet known. The team's approach was to flag sensitivity and possible species that would require further investigation once more specific studies and detailed information is available.
- A request was made to clarify the key distinctions between SEA and EIA, as some questions posed appeared more relevant to the EIA process, to ensure understanding of the purpose of the SEA.
  - CSIR explained that SEA is a high-level, evidence-based process that guides policy, unlike EIA, which is project- and site-specific and results in a yes/no decision on a project. It was emphasised that SEAs consider long-term, multi-decadal cumulative effects, provide high-level principles and management actions, and are not decision-making, advocacy, or public relations exercises.
- Concerns were raised that some community members experience challenges participating in the process due to language and internet connectivity barriers, as most local residents primarily communicate in Afrikaans. Although some SEA documentation are available in Afrikaans, it was noted that the Afrikaans is still too technical.
  - It was confirmed that a Summary for Policymakers (SPM) has been prepared in both English and Afrikaans to improve accessibility. In-person engagements have been conducted in communities in Afrikaans, and comments welcomed in Afrikaans as well. Hard copies of the Afrikaans PowerPoint presentation were provided at the in-person meetings held from 11 to 16 August 2025, and the presentation is also available on the project website.
- A participant requested clarification on whether the SEA is formally required under legislation. They also raised questions regarding community participation, highlighting that the assessment is highly technical and sought clarity on how communities are expected to provide feedback, given the technical nature of the assessments. They emphasised the potential frustration for communities if their input is deferred to WP2, including being expected to provide references to specific lines in reports when commenting. They also stressed the importance of empowering communities to meaningfully engage in the SEA process.

- CSIR clarified that while SEA processes in South Africa are not legislated in the same way as EIAs; however, the National Ports Act requires an SEA for new port developments.
- CSIR acknowledged that the SEA content is technical, but reasonable steps are taken to make technical content more accessible – e.g. the SPM is available in English and Afrikaans and community presentations in Afrikaans were also provided. It was also highlighted that referencing specific lines when submitting comments on the SEA reports ensures there is a clear and structured record; however, general comments will still be considered and addressed. It was further noted that all comments and responses, whether directly within the SEA scope or not, will be published alongside the final SEA report to maintain transparency.
- A participant highlighted challenges with community access to SEA documents, noting that reliance on online platforms assumes internet access and technical capacity, which many community members do not have. They emphasised the value of local knowledge, pointing out that community members possess extensive environmental understanding through lived experience. The participant also noted concerns about the participation of community representatives and how information is communicated to the wider community. They stressed that FPIC is a legal requirement under South African customary law and must be central to the SEA process.
  - CSIR acknowledged the challenges of including all stakeholders, noting that the assessment covers a vast area and population, making it technically impossible to reach every individual. It was explained that the process relies on a diversity of stakeholders, representatives, and expert author teams to act as proxies for the interests, values, and knowledge of communities across the region and the main mechanism to reach a broad audience is the Working Group which consists of organisations, entities and people that are representative of stakeholders in the study area.
- A participant asked about the long-term management and monitoring of the biodiversity framework, including how offset commitments would be legally and financially secured.
  - CSIR explained that these issues are addressed in more detail in WP2, which covers a broader regional scale.
  - The biodiversity offset specialist (Conservation Strategy, Tactics and Insight) noted that implementing offsets would require pre-approval from competent authorities and incorporation of offset requirements into conditions of authorisation, with commitments ideally in place before impacts occur. The importance of engaging affected landowners and communities was emphasised, as well as establishing a reputable statutory agency, potentially with local partners, to manage large-scale offset schemes over the long-term.
- TNPA highlighted the need to clarify the status of community consent in relation to the port development. Explaining that affected communities were identified and consulted, with the scope disclosed and consent obtained through the existing structures for conducting the studies. They emphasised that there is currently no approval or no-go decision on the project.

The project is at a stage where studies are being conducted. It was emphasised that the project has not yet reached the stage of seeking community consent on whether the project should proceed (go/no-go). Current efforts are focused on conducting studies to assess environmental and social impacts.

- Concerns were expressed that land valuation or sale might be occurring before the completion of the SEA.
  - TNPA clarified that no land sale has taken place. All affected communities have legal representation to navigate and negotiate land acquisition processes, and continue to receive updates through established engagement processes.
- It was requested that the chapter with FPIC related content be shared for review.
  - CSIR explained that WP1 and WP2 are parallel components of the SEA. WP2 will address FPIC comprehensively and undergo a separate bilingual public participation process.
- A request was made to extend the public commenting period to allow sufficient time for stakeholders to review the draft report.
  - CSIR mentioned that the project team will discuss the request internally and communicate the outcome via email. Stakeholders were reminded of the current comment deadline, 13 October 2025.
  - CSIR also reiterated that all comments will be incorporated into the formal comments and response report and addressed accordingly.

#### **Questions Posted in the Meeting Chat**

- A participant asked whether the marine portion of the spatial extent of the project had been presented.
  - CSIR confirmed in the chat that the marine component had already been presented. It was also highlighted that the presentation slides are available on the website, and the meeting notes (these notes) will be shared with all attendees once finalised.
- A participant enquired whether the SEA only envisage the Boegoebaai SEZ as a green hydrogen port, noting that the site was originally designed as an export route for NC iron ore and manganese and that might still be a more likely first phase. They added that the model for most new ports these days is as a multi-use port, not a mono-economic zone
  - CSIR explained in the chat that the current planning anticipates the port's primary export to be green ammonia, and its economic justification is also supported by mineral resources including ore, manganese, zinc, etc.
- Questions were raised regarding the availability of the business-case study which scored potential port sites for feasibility. It was also asked how this information can be accessed or requested and whether the port-locality scoring information used to identify Boegoebaai as the preferred site can be shared.
  - [this response is provided after the meeting in these notes] TNPA indicated that the Port site selection summary stemming from the business case study was shared during Working Group meeting on 10 October 2024, was made available and can be accessed at [https://www.csir.co.za/sites/default/files/2025-10/Appendix%20C\\_Overview%20of%20Boegoebaai%20Site%20Selection%20process.pdf](https://www.csir.co.za/sites/default/files/2025-10/Appendix%20C_Overview%20of%20Boegoebaai%20Site%20Selection%20process.pdf)

- Participants enquired when the WP2 Report and consultation processes would commence. They further requested that the WP2 consultation process be moved to early 2026, noting that a December period may limit public participation.
  - CSIR indicated that the draft WP2 Reports are anticipated in November 2025, and that dates will be communicated well in advance post the finalisation of these drafts
- A participant indicated that the community feels the notice for comments was issued too late, was not according to FPIC principles and was not in a language they understood.
  - [this response is provided after the meeting in these notes] Notification of the draft WP1 reports being made available was issued via email to stakeholders on 26 August. The comment period was between 26 August to 13 October. At the in-person meetings held from 11 to 16 August 2025, meeting attendees were made aware that the draft reports will be made available shortly for review. The Summary for Policymakers (SPM) has been prepared in both English and Afrikaans to improve accessibility. In-person engagements were conducted in communities in Afrikaans, and comments welcomed in Afrikaans as well. A 45-day comment period, already extended from an initial planned 30 days, was set to provide a reasonable best-practice opportunity.
- A question was raised on whether marine species that contribute to small-scale fisheries, such as crayfish and other fish species, were included in the Environmental Sensitivity Report, or if this will be addressed later during the EIA phase.
  - [this response is provided after the meeting in these notes] The marine ecology chapter describes habitat types (rocky, mixed, sandy shore, subtidal reefs) and their biodiversity value and sensitivity. The coastal livelihoods chapter acknowledges small-scale and nearshore fisheries along the Northern Cape coast, including species such as crayfish (West Coast rock lobster), linefish, and other fish important for local livelihoods, indicating that these marine resources are considered. Detailed, site-specific investigations will be required in future assessment phases (e.g. during EIA).
- A suggestion was made that the SEA Report be distributed in Afrikaans to enhance accessibility for affected communities.
  - The socio-economic specialist (Karoo Development Foundation) noted in the chat that while translation of the entire 1 500 page document would be ideal, this would be costly and time-consuming. The report serves multiple audiences, including scientists, peer reviewers, and policymakers, and therefore requires a high level of technical detail.
- A question was asked whether the specific port and related developments would be subject to only a Basic Assessment process, as is the case in other SEAs.
  - CSIR confirmed in the chat that the SEA does not replace or reduce the requirements of future project-level EIA processes.
- A participant commented that even if an economic/ financial feasibility has been undertaken, it has not included a range of likely costs- including biodiversity mitigation and offsets. These costs are substantial and would need to be factored in by any assessment, whether govt, private or international. It seems obvious that some form of transparency on an updated comprehensive economic feasibility of various aspects of Boegoebaai green hydrogen need to be shared publicly to make it clear who benefits and who pays.
- A question was raised about the location of the renewable energy infrastructure required for green hydrogen production and where is this development footprint visible.



- The biodiversity offset specialist (Conservation Strategy, Tactics and Insight) explained in the text that wind energy facilities are planned for the larger WP2 site (5 mil ha inland). It was noted that solar photovoltaic facilities must be located outside the fog zone, and approximately 144 000 ha could be occupied by renewable energy and infrastructure to power a big GH2 scenario (40 GW) in the adjoining four municipalities.

#### **4) Closure and Next Steps:**

- CSIR to draft and distribute the Public Briefing Webinar notes (these notes) via the project website.
- Discussions from the webinar will be considered in the SEA process.
- Participants were reminded that the current deadline for comment period for the Draft WP1 SEA Chapters is 13 October 2025.
- Working group representatives are encouraged to facilitate access and feedback within their broader stakeholder communities
- Draft WP2 SEA Report is anticipated for release in November 2025. Once available, stakeholders will be informed through formal communication, and public briefing sessions for WP2 will be announced well in advance.
- Participants were encouraged to continue engaging through the project's communication platforms.
- Stakeholders will be notified of any future engagement opportunities related to WP2.
- **Key Actions from the meeting include:**
  - The project team (CSIR) to discuss the extension of the commenting period internally and communicate any decision via email.
  - All comments received will be captured in the formal comments and responses report and addressed in the final version of the SEA.
  - Final SEA outputs will be made available on the CSIR webpage once finalised.

The meeting was closed at 12:10 PM: appreciation was expressed to the CSIR for their presentation on summarised findings of the Specialist Assessment studies for WP1, and to the stakeholders for their valuable and constructive inputs. Stakeholders were reminded and encouraged to send comments or questions for the release of WP1 draft SEA Report by 13 October 2025.

## Appendix A: Public Briefing Webinar attendance

**Note:** The register below includes participants whose names and/or organisations were visible during the meeting. Some attendees appeared as “unverified,” missing identification details, or joined using a single shared account and were thus not identifiable by name or organisation. A total of 93 participants were recorded, although actual attendance may have been higher.

Organisation	Name and Surname
<b>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)</b>	Paul Lochner Greg Schreiner Luanita Snyman-Van der Walt Rinae Tsedu Susan Taljaard Babalwa Mqokeli (Project Manager) Abulele Adams (Chairperson)
<b>Northern Cape Economic Development Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (NCEDA)</b>	Napo Ramabina Hastings Nel
<b>NCDEDAT</b>	Luvuyo Mabena
<b>South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI)</b>	Anza Tshirame Mandisa Nkosi Azwihangwisi Nemaadandila Phumlile Kunene
<b>Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA)/ Transnet Corporate/ Transnet Freight Rail</b>	Yastheel Sheochand Jabulani Maluleke Zanele Manyathi Aphelele Tomsana Elekanyani Phundulu Daisy Molamodi Motlatso Molapo Takalani Radzilani Nonkululeko Hadebe Nosicelo Biyana Ndivhuwo Netshilaphala Katlheho Lepati Zizipho Tolobisa
<b>DFFE: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (IEA)</b>	Sindiswa Dlomo
<b>DFFE: Climate Change Mitigation Research and Analysis Unit</b>	Paseka Mabina
<b>DFFE: Oceans &amp; Coast (Coastal Pollution Management)</b>	Lona Nondaka
<b>DFFE</b>	Sabelo Malaza
<b>South African National Parks (SANParks)</b>	Marthan Theart
<b>idc</b>	Rob Adam Charles Mabuza
<b>dsti</b>	Mandy Mlilo
<b>Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)</b>	Mike Levington
<b>Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAERL)</b>	Natalie Uys
<b>Namakwa District Municipality</b>	Gareth Cloete
<b>South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)</b>	Tsamaelo Malebu Hlengiwe Mtshali Prideel Majiedt
<b>The Nature Conservancy</b>	D'Reull de Beer
<b>Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)</b>	Oscar Mohale
<b>World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)</b>	Katherine Forsythe
<b>Viridus</b>	Hendrik Louw



#### **ASHA Consulting**

**Alexkor, Richtersveld Mining Company and Joint Venture  
 (Alexkor RMC JV)  
 Alliance for Law in Development**

**WoMin African Alliance  
 Conservation Strategy Tactics & Insight  
 TCTA  
 University of Free State  
 Natural Justice**

**Liz Day Consulting  
 EcosolGIS  
 AfriAvian Environmental**

**Environmental Traits  
 nccoghsta**

**Birdlife  
 Biodiversity Law  
 University of Stellenbosch  
 Nelson Mandela University  
 Voltex  
 NRA  
 Anchor Environmental  
 NC DEDAT  
 Conservation South Africa  
 EMG  
 Not Specified**

Lita Webley  
 Jayson Orton  
 Leilani Swartbooi

Henk Smith  
 Maria Smith  
 Alexandria Hotz  
 Mark Botha  
 Thulisa Zukulu  
 Doreen Atkinson  
 Melissa Groenink  
 Dean Palmer  
 Lebohang Dube  
 Zenani Mhlungu  
 Amelia Heyns  
 Liz Day  
 Philip Desmet  
 Albert Froneman  
 Lizandé Kellerman  
 Not Specified  
 Feroza Fredericks  
 Livhuwani Tshilate  
 Delia Alison Starr  
 Sam Ralston  
 Kate Handley  
 Smith R  
 Sokupa Mzwandile  
 Marlon Swartbooi  
 Nicole Abrahams  
 Barry Clark  
 Not Specified  
 Christopher Ovies  
 Thabo Lusithi  
 Hendrina smith  
 Garrith Bezuidenhoudt  
 Dahveed Khakhane  
 Pieter Blackie  
 Salau Cilacs  
 Jeanene Jessnitz  
 Bonolo Mokaedi  
 Marvin Qhekwana  
 Christiaan Fortuin  
 Caleb Classen  
 Steve  
 Masego Modisaotsile  
 Zenande Gwilikana  
 Gerda Bezuidenhoudt  
 Vuyo Roji  
 D Moyses