

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Shell Offshore Upstream South Africa B.V. Proposed Exploration Drilling in Block Northern Cape Ultra-Deep, South Africa

Draft Scoping report
August 2024

AREA OF INTEREST

THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA EXTENDS FROM ABOUT 300 KM OFFSHORE OF PORT NOLLOTH SOUTH ALONG THE WESTERN COASTLINE TOWARDS STRANDFONTEIN, ABOUT 5,254KM² IN SIZE. THE AREA IS IN WATERS OF APPROXIMATELY 2,500 M TO 3,200 M DEEP.

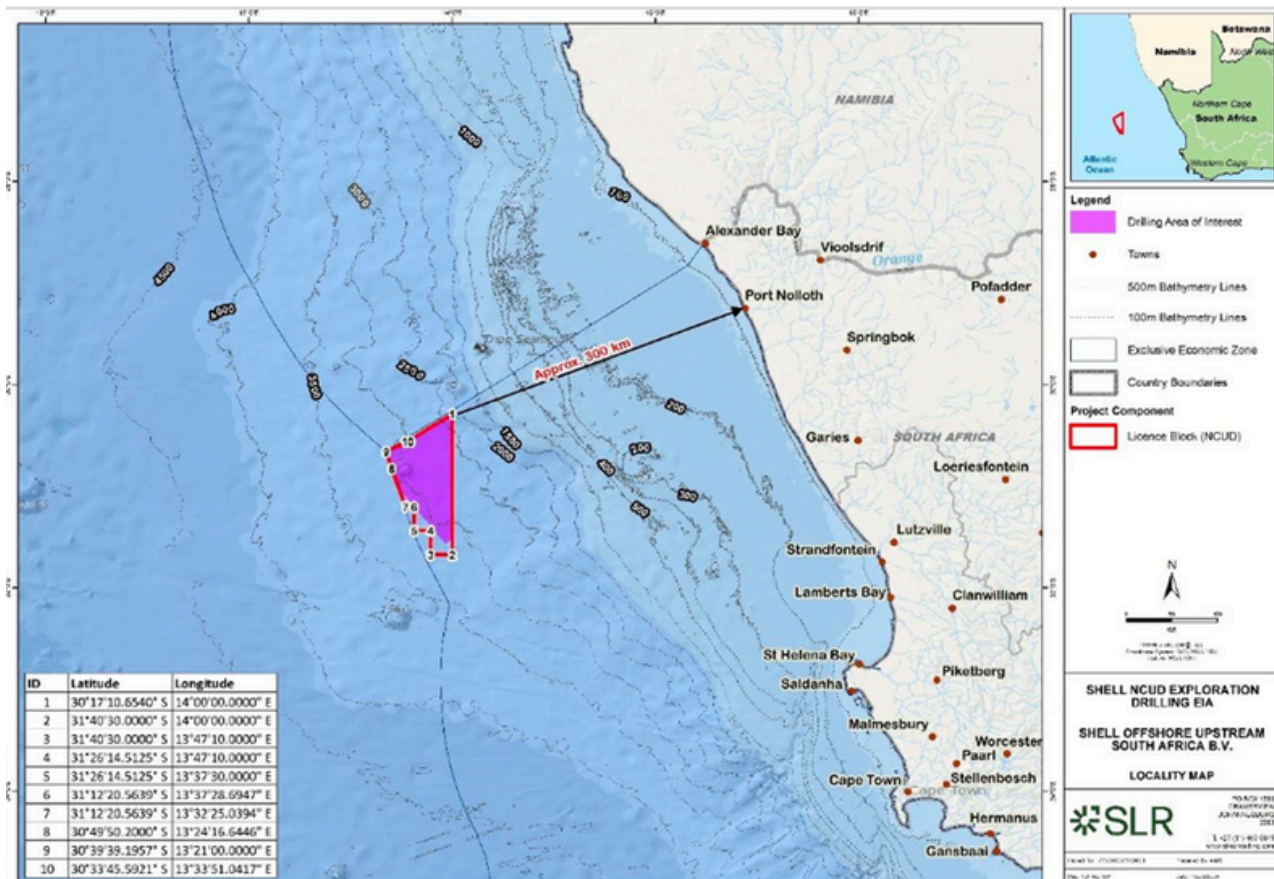


Figure 1: Locality map of Licence Block NCUD off the South African coast, page 5 of the Basic Scoping Report, by SLR accessed here: <https://www.slrconsulting.com/afr/public-documents/shell-ncud/>.



SHELL OFFSHORE UPSTREAM SOUTH AFRICA B.V. AND ITS JOINT VENTURE PARTNERS CURRENTLY HOLD AN EXPLORATION RIGHT FOR THE LICENCE BLOCK NORTHERN CAPE ULTRA DEEP (NCUD) OFF THE WEST COAST OF SOUTH AFRICA. TO BEGIN THEIR ACTIVITIES, SHELL AND ITS PARTNERS MUST CONDUCT AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA) FOR THEIR PROPOSED ACTIVITIES. THE ESIA CONSISTS OF TWO PHASES, THE SCOPING PHASE AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT PHASE. SLR CONSULTING HAS BEEN CHOSEN AS THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PRACTITIONER (EAP) TO CONDUCT THE ESIA.

IF ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION IS GRANTED, THE DRILLING ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED TO BEGIN IN 2026 OR 2027.

THE ESIA IS CURRENTLY IN THE SCOPING PHASE. THE DRAFT SCOPING REPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT. COMMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY NO LATER THAN 8 AUGUST 2024.



THE TIMELINE OF EVENTS

EXPLORATION RIGHT

This is obtained from the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) to undertake activities to explore for oil and gas.

SCOPING PHASE:

This phase aims to set out what needs to be assessed in the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), how to approach the assessment and what information may be needed to identify the likely impacts of the activity. This information is placed in a report and based on this, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) decides whether to accept the Scoping Report, after which the Environmental Impact Reporting Phase continues.

SLR consulting is the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) in this instance, and they are completing the Scoping Report.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The public are provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft Scoping Report that is available [HERE](#)

We are here

FINAL SCOPING REPORT PUBLISHED:

This incorporates all comments received on the draft Scoping Report. This is submitted to DMRE for consideration.

WHAT NEXT?

If DMRE accepts the Scoping Report, all Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) registered on the project database will be notified of the outcome and the reasons for the decision within 14 days of the date of the decision.

If the DMRE accepts the Scoping Report, the environmental impact reporting phase will commence, and the EAP will undertake specialist studies and an environmental and social impact assessment.



ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS AND RELATED COMPONENTS*

*This is a summary of the activities that appear in the Draft Scoping Report, but does not include all possible activities.

Shell and JV Partners intend to drill up to 5 exploration and appraisal wells within the designated area of Northern Cape Ultra Deep and conduct geophysical surveys. The estimated time frame for drilling each well is two months, with additional time needed for onshore mobilisation, well testing, plugging and abandonment. After sealing and plugging of the wells, they will be abandoned and the well heads will be left on the seafloor after the project is finished.

PRE-DRILLING SURVEYS

Before drilling can take place, pre-drilling surveys may be done to assess baseline conditions, identifying potential seabed and sub-seabed hazards. Surveys include sonar, seabed sampling, and remote-operated vehicle activities. Sonar surveys are sound pulses that are sent to the ocean floor. The project estimates these surveys would take four weeks.



DRILLING UNIT OPTIONS

A semi-submersible drill unit or drillship will be used to drill the wells, which are equipped for challenging deep-water marine environments. A 500 m safety zone will be enforced around the drilling unit throughout the project. Some low-level radioactive tools may be used in well testing. The project anticipates that around 500 to 1,000 litres of oil-based hydraulic fluid could be vented into the sea per month during well drilling, along with various other wastes, cement, water and detergent discharge.



SUPPORT VESSELS

There may be up to three vessels supporting operations by moving equipment and materials between the drilling unit and onshore base and providing standby services.



HELICOPTERS

Helicopters would be used to transport personnel and provide other support from a base in either Alexander Bay and Kleinsee in South Africa or Oranjemund in Namibia. There will be rotation of staff about every 28 days by helicopter for the project's duration, with an estimated six helicopter trips per week between the drilling unit and support base.



ON-SHORE LOGISTICS BASE

The primary logistics base would be located along the west coast of South Africa, potentially in Saldanha or Cape Town, and will be used for office functions, equipment storage and personnel accommodation. Additional bulk supply support may come from Mossel Bay.



POTENTIAL CONCERNING IMPACTS IDENTIFIED*

*These impacts have been highlighted in the Draft Scoping Report. This is a summary and therefore not all the impacts are described.

IMPACTS ON FISH AND MARINE SPECIES

Due to limited information relating to marine life in the proposed area, the Scoping Report refers primarily to seabed habitat, however there may be additional species that could be impacted in this area. The report identified that seamounts and canyons are located within the proposed area that are important for attracting a variety of marine life and productive fishing grounds, as well as an identified Critically Biodiverse Area. The proposed area is also within the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem, a key area for plankton production. Many common cetaceans, like long and short-finned pilot whales, sperm whales, humpback whales, sei whales, fin whales, and common dolphins, are expected to move throughout the proposed project area.

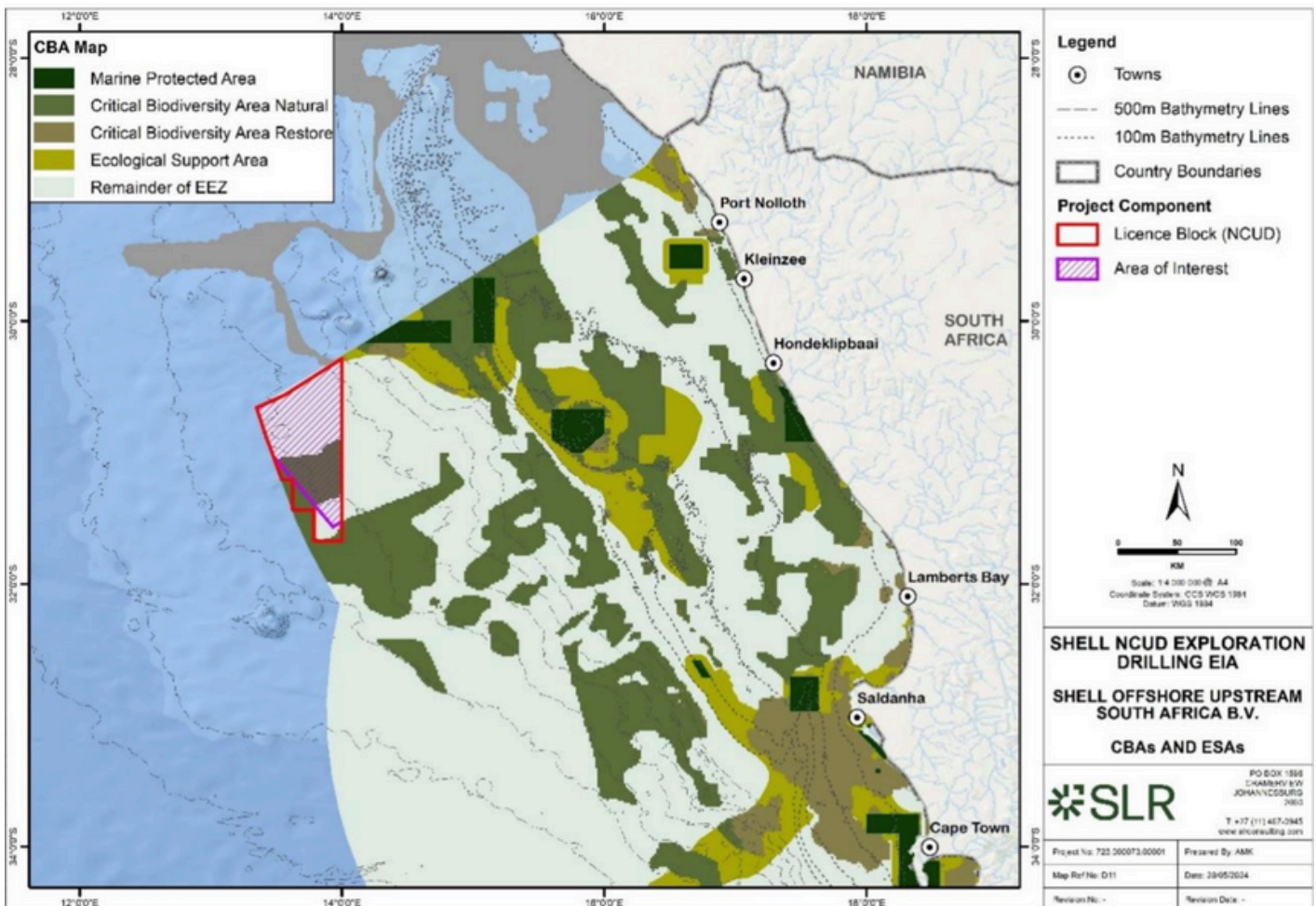
There may be disturbances of macrofauna, which are an important food source for commercially valuable fish species, that reside in the proposed activity area, including sea urchins, benthic shrimps, crabs and other species. Varieties of dogfish, catshark, electric ray, skate and chimaera have been identified in the project area, as well as large migratory species such as various tunas, billfish and pelagic sharks (shortfin mako, blue shark, oceanic whitetip shark and others) that are considered threatened or endangered.

The drilling activities, noise emissions and routine discharges into the sea can disturb the seabed, modify habitats, create underwater noise and introduce invasive species that may disturb marine life. Discharge of various materials during drilling may lead to the release of radioactive materials and smothering and toxic effects on fauna. The underwater noise caused by the drilling could lead to physical injuries (permanent or temporary), disturbances and behavioural changes. Behavioural avoidance by marine mammals could cascade throughout the marine ecosystem. Fish, predator and marine mammal populations are not possible without plankton. The report states that it has not yet been possible to determine how acoustic impacts and human disturbances will affect the plankton in the proposed area.



The use of helicopters in close proximity to breeding/feeding areas, bird colonies and seal colonies could impact behaviour and breeding success. The drilling activities, should it lead to commercial exploration, will produce greenhouse gas emissions that will contribute to climate change and potentially impact human health through reduced air quality.

In the event of a spill of crude oil or natural gas, pollutants that are harmful to marine ecosystems may be released into the sea and could contaminate fishing areas. The damage could impact offshore and coastal environments, affecting water quality, animal and human health.



IMPACTS ON LIVELIHOODS

The proposed activities may have negative impacts on commercial and local fishing activities due to changes in fish behaviour, reduction in catch rates, and a potential increase in fishing efforts. It is expected that fishing operations for tuna and shark species within and around the proposed area of interest will be impacted.

Due to a 500m safety clearance zone around the drilling unit, shipping vessels may have to change their route to avoid the unit and its safety zone. There are further potential impacts on the availability of services in the ports, disturbance of archaeological material and altering the sense of place due to drilling activities and the presence of vessels.

The release of pollutants into the air during drilling activities can impact local air quality and lead to negative health impacts, such as respiratory illness.

In the event of a major oil spill, there is potential for fishers to be excluded from polluted areas and species being displaced from normal feeding/fishing areas, which could result in reduced catches.

IMPACTS ON CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Exploration drilling in the ocean can disrupt the cultural way of life and livelihoods of local communities who have a connection to the sea. It can lead to the destruction of cultural and spiritual resources which are key to the sense of self, identity and dignity. Any disturbance of the water can impact spiritual connections, customs, well-being, and rituals.

POSITIVE IMPACTS IDENTIFIED

***This is a summary of the positive impacts identified by SLR Consulting in the draft Scoping Report and does not include all of the positive impacts.**

The scoping report notes that the project may create jobs, increase sales for local businesses, and generate state income from taxes. While the project will employ between 200-250 people, a limited number will be local staff, as the majority of the work requires specialised skills.



GET INVOLVED

Why should I get involved?

The proposed activity may impact communities residing close to the project area and communities relying on the ocean. It is, therefore, important to share your views on the proposed activity. However, even if you do not live close to the area of interest, you can still get involved.

How to get involved

Gather as much information about the project. All project documents can be accessed online [HERE](#) or physically at the following locations:

Location	Name of Facility	Physical Address
Full Report and Non-Technical Summary are available at:		
Port Nolloth	Port Nolloth Public Library	Harbour Street, Port Nolloth
Lamberts Bay	Lamberts Bay Public Library	44 Church Street, Lamberts Bay
Saldanha Bay	Saldanha Public Library	Municipal Building, Berg Street, Saldanha
Hout Bay	Hout Bay Public Library	Melkhout Crescent, Hout Bay, Cape Town
Non-Technical Summary is available at:		
Alexander Bay	Alexander Bay Public Library	Oranjeweg, Alexander Bay
Port Nolloth	Port Nolloth Public Library	Harbour Street, Port Nolloth
Hondeklip Bay	Kamiesberg Municipality	83 Dolphin Street, Hondeklipbaai
Vredendal	Vredendal Public Library	37 Church Street, Vredendal
Lamberts Bay	Lamberts Bay Public Library	44 Church Street, Lamberts Bay
Elands Bay	Elands Bay Public Library	Main Road, Elands Bay
St Helena Bay	St Helena Public Library	26 Columbine Crescent, Britannica Heights, Saint Helena Bay
Velddrif	Velddrif Public Library	Voortrekker Rd, Velddrif
Doringbaai	Doringbaai Public Library	Harbour Rd, Doringbaai
Langebaan	Langebaan Public Library	Corner Oostewal & Bree Street, Langebaan
Paternoster	Paternoster Public Library	Corner Street. Augustine's Way (in the Civic Centre building)
Yzerfontein	Yzerfontein Municipal Office	46 Main Rd, Yzerfontein

To receive information about the process, members of the public can register as I&APs and can do so via email: shell-NCUD@slrconsulting.com.

If you have already registered as an I&AP for this project, you do not need to do so again.



Submit comments

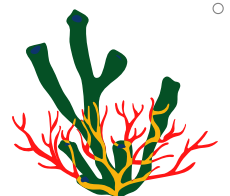
Submit any comments that you have on the proposed project and/or Scoping report by 8 August 2024. Comments or queries can be submitted via

- post: 5th Floor, Letterstedt House, Newlands on Main, Newlands, 7700;
- phone call: +27 21 461 1118;
- SMS / WhatsApp: +27 76 402 1409 or
- email: shell-NCUD@slrconsulting.com

Monitor and participate in the Scoping and Environmental Assessment Impact Process

Public participation is essential in the ESIA process as it ensures that the voices of those most impacted by the project are heard.

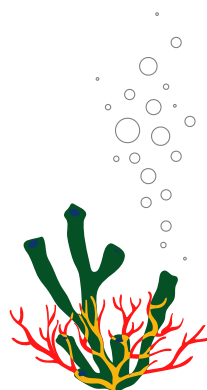
Monitor the different steps in the ESIA process, to know when to submit written comments and when public participation meetings will be held.



WHAT SHOULD YOU BE THINKING ABOUT?

Projects have direct and indirect effects on communities, and it is important to think about what these effects could be. The questions below will help you identify and think about the influence of the project on your community.

- **How will this project impact my livelihood?**
- **Will the project activity affect how fish and bird species move in the area, and will this impact our livelihoods?**
- **Do I normally fish in the project area or travel through the project area to access my usual fishing grounds?**
- **Will I be able to access the beach and ocean as I have before?**
- **Will the project provide our community with employment, what kinds of skills are required to be employed and will it be long-term employment?**
- **Once the project is complete, what benefits will the community enjoy?**
- **If you work in the aquaculture sector, will the project impact the businesses and jobs in this sector?**
- **If you are from the tourism sector, will the project have a positive or negative impact on tourism?**
- **How will this project impact my cultural and spiritual practices?**
- **How will this project impact our children and future generations?**



HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR COMMENT

There are no templates or requirements of how you need to structure your comment. Below is an example of how you can structure your comment.

1. List your main concerns with the project and speak about whether these concerns were addressed or dealt with at the public consultations.

2. State how you believe this Project will affect your livelihood, the livelihood of your community and of future generations?

3. State how you believe the Project will impact your access to and use of the ocean, and how it will impact the movement of animal species (birds, fish, etc.).

4. State whether you think the Project will benefit you or your community, and what those benefits will be.

5. State whether the positive and negative impacts of the Project were discussed with you prior to or at the public consultations.

6. State how you believe the Project will impact your cultural and spiritual heritage if it goes ahead.

7. State whether the public consultations were done in a language you understand and whether it helped you understand what the project was about.

8. Any other comments

Name: _____

Community/Area: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Email: _____

Signature _____

Date _____

