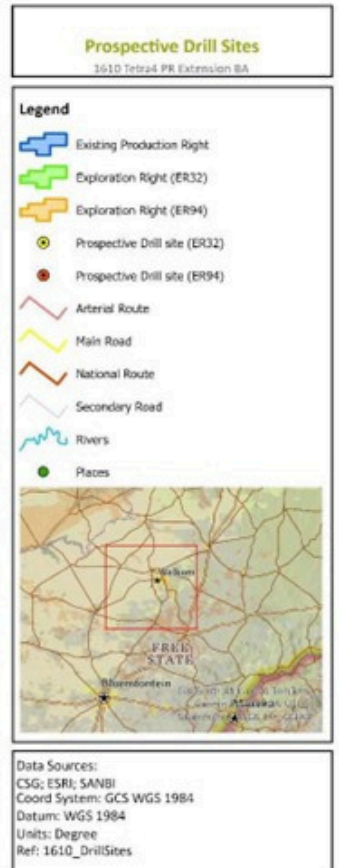
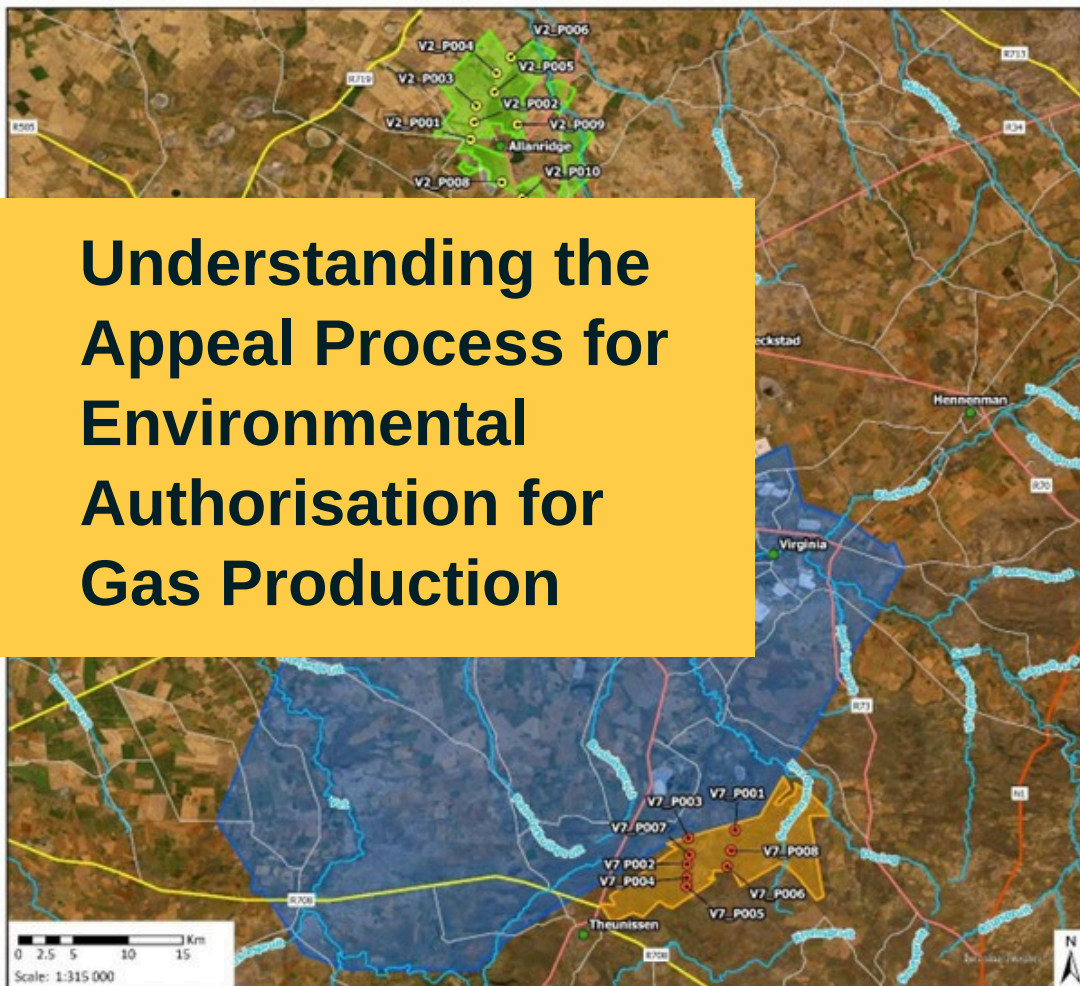


OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION IN THE FREE STATE

EXTENSION TO VIRGINIA AND WELKOM GAS PRODUCTION RIGHT RECEIVES

ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

Appeals are due 10 June 2025



A COMMUNITY GUIDE

Background

Tetra4 (Pty) Ltd (previously known as Molopo South Africa Exploration and Production Pty Ltd) was established in 2005 and received its first Exploration Right in 2007. In 2012, it became the first company in South Africa to receive an onshore petroleum Production Right. This right now covers around 187,000 hectares of gas fields across Welkom, Virginia and Theunissen in the Free State. It also has Exploration Rights spanning 18,732.93 hectares of land.

Since receiving its first environmental authorisation, Tetra4 has made additional applications to extend its operations and include more production-related activities. But these applications have not gone unchallenged. Community-based organisations such as Mining and Environmental Justice Community Network-South Africa (MEJCON-SA) and Mining Affected Communities United in Action (MACUA), and non-profit organisations, such as the Centre for Environmental Rights (CER) and Natural Justice (NJ), have successfully appealed these authorisations.*

Then, in May 2025, Tetra4 received another [environmental authorisation](#), which has allowed them to integrate their Exploration Rights 32 and 94 within their existing Production Right, thereby expanding their production activities. This authorisation has expanded the area in which Tetra4 can undertake production activities to 205,733.1 hectares.



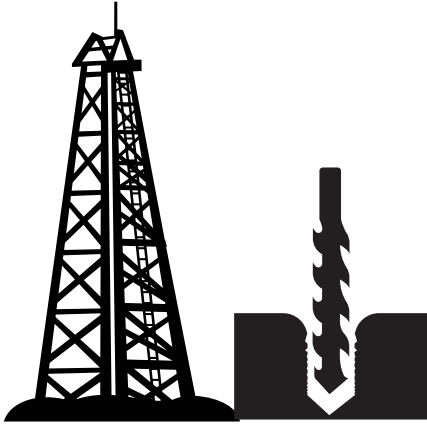
Interested and Affected parties have the right to appeal this decision within 20 days from the date of notification.

This means that [appeals are due on 10 June 2025.](#)

*Environmental Authorisation for massive gas extraction expansion set aside: Tetra4/Renergen sent back to the drawing board – Centre for Environmental Rights

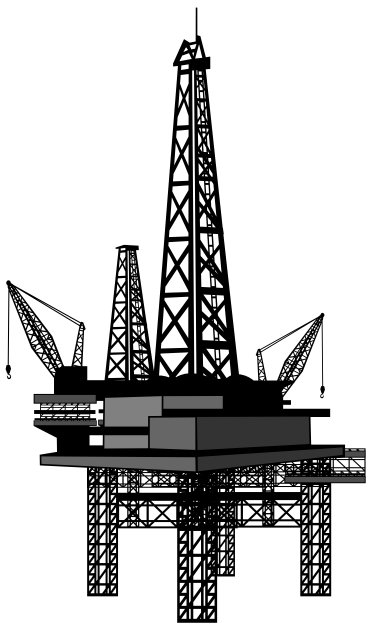
What does 'Exploration' and 'Production' mean?

Exploration



Activities undertaken, such as conducting seismic surveys and drilling test wells, to discover if there are minerals and petroleum, including oil and gas.

Production



Production is the process of extracting petroleum resources, like oil, gas and condensate, from the earth and under the ocean floor. It involves locating the oil and/or gas and extracting them through drilling wells. For onshore production, the resources are usually transported via pipelines to the surface, where the oil and gas are further processed.

MAP of Free State Gas activities

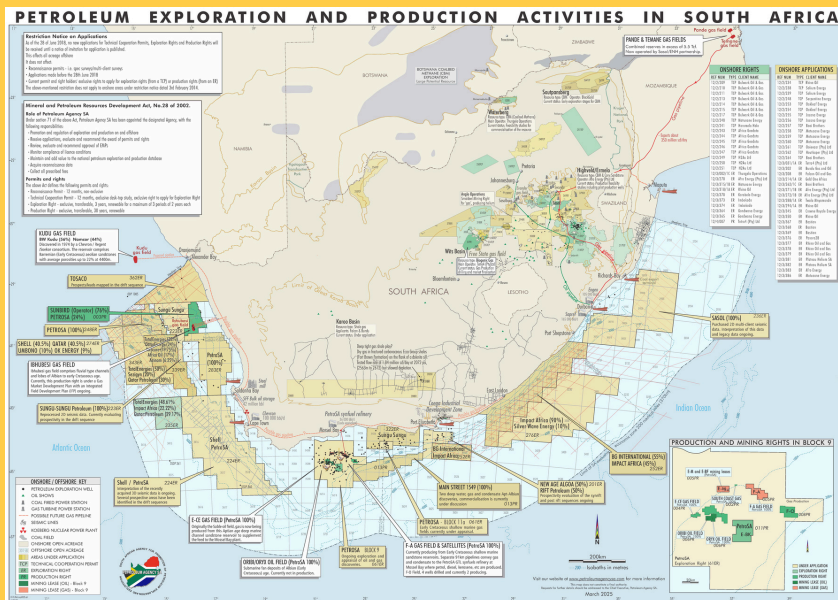
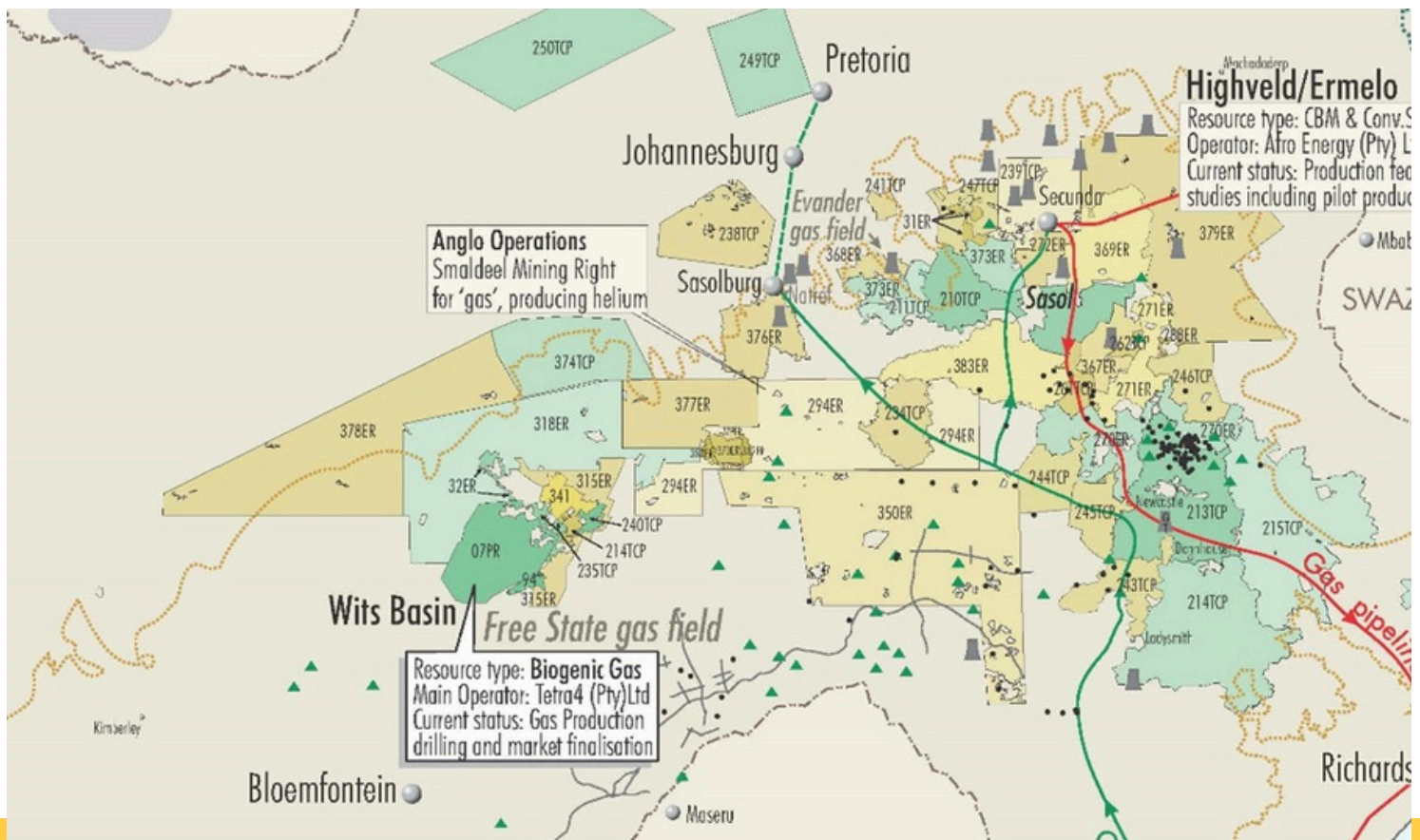


Figure 1: Map from Petroleum Agency SA showing current exploration and production activities in South Africa as of May 2025. Source: www.petroleumagencysa.com. (<https://www.petroleumagencysa.com/wpcontent/uploads/2024/12/Hubmap1224.pdf>)

*** The Exploration Right shown in green and the Exploration Right shown in orange have been added to Tetra4's current Production Right in blue.**

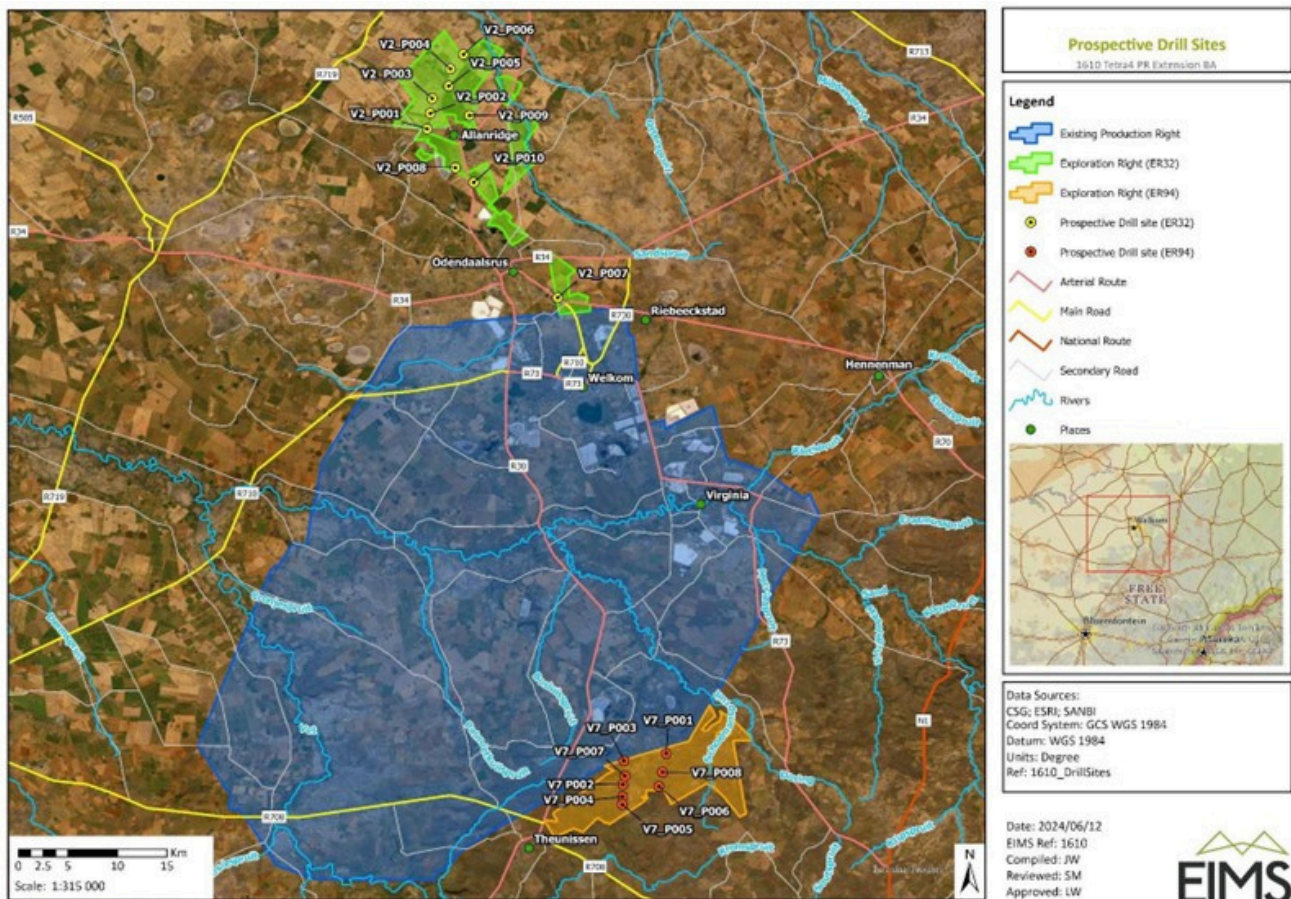


Figure 2: Locality Map of the Tetra4's activity area, Basic Assessment Report.
Source: www.eims.co.za
(<https://www.eims.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2024/Public/1610/BAR/BAR.pdf>)



What are Tetra4's Planned Activities?

18

**Number of
new wells
expected to
be drilled**

- Up to 18 new wells will be drilled, and if gas is successfully found, these wells will be converted into production wells.
- Clearing of an area of 50 x 50m per drill site of vegetation and removing topsoil and subsoil.

50x 50m

**Affected
land area
per drill site**

- Drilling-related equipment will be used, including a drilling rig and diesel-powered generators, and additional infrastructure such as a site office will be put up.
- Municipal water will be used for these activities, about 6,000 litres per well per day.

6000

**Litres of
water to be
used per
well per day**

- Gas burning will be used to test the wells.
- The Production Right includes building gas transmission pipelines, compressor stations and LNG/ Helium gas facilities.



How could communities be impacted?

There are potential impacts on local communities identified in the Basic Assessment Report and specialist studies, including social and economic concerns, and environmental risks. These include:

- **Livelihood disruptions:** The project's construction and operations may negatively affect local farming operations and land use, including leading to a loss of productive land and disrupting agricultural activities. This may impact livelihoods derived from or associated with the affected land.
- **Heritage and cultural impacts:** The project may disturb heritage resources, including burial grounds and historic sites. The Basic Assessment Report rated these as medium to high environmental risk before mitigation. The visual changes to the area may also lead to a loss of sense of place.
- **Economic development:** While these activities may create some job opportunities for local communities, only a few long-term jobs will be available, as most of the work requires specialised skills.
- **Environmental concerns:** Increased noise and dust may impact the health of communities. Drilling chemicals could lead to the pollution of water sources. Clearance of drill wells and sites will lead to a loss of biodiversity in those areas. Gas flaring and chemical use will affect the air quality.





The Right to Appeal the Decision

If you have concerns or comments about this Environmental Authorisation approval, you can appeal under the National Environmental Management Act: National Appeal Regulations of 2025.

Who can Appeal?



- All Interested and Affected parties (I&AP)
- Landowners, farmers and local community members in the project area;
- Community groups, NGOs and traditional leaders;
- Anyone who participated in the EIA process (if you commented or attended consultation meetings)

How to Appeal



Step 1

Register as an I&AP by emailing prextension@eims.co.za



Step 2

Write your appeal on the prescribed appeal form ([download here](#))



Step 3

Submit your appeal (why you disagree with this decision) by **10 June 2025**.



Step 4

Send your appeal to:

1

- Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment Appeals and Legal Review Directorate
- For the attention of **Director: Appeals and Legal Review**
- **By Email:** appeals@dffe.gov.za
- **By Post:** Private Bag X 447, Pretoria, 0001
- **By Hand:** Environmental House, Corner Steve Biko and Soutpansberg Street, Arcadia, Pretoria, 0083

And

2

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

For the attention of **The Chief Executive Officer**

By Email: EAappeals@petroleumagencyrsa.com

By Post: Private Bag X 5111, Tygervalley, 7536

By Hand: Heron Place, Heron Cl, Second floor, Century City, Cape Town, 7411

And

3

Copy(s) of the lodged appeal(s) to the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources

For the attention of **Director: Legal Services**

By Email: Pieter.Alberts@dmre.gov.za;

Rudessa.Harris@dmre.gov.za

By Post: Private Bag X 59, Arcadia, 0007

By Hand: Trevenna Campus Building 2C, c/o Meintjies and Francis Baard Street, Sunnyside, 0007



Step 5

Remember, your email must include one of the following compliance statements (choose one that applies to you).

a) If you received notification of the environmental authorisation:

- “I received notification of the decision on [insert date], so this appeal is submitted within 20 days. Attached is a copy of the notification and environmental authorisation. I do not have the facilities to send the appeal to all I&APs and request that the EAP send the appeal to its database.”

b) If you did not receive notification of the environmental authorisation:

- “I did not receive notification of the environmental authorisation but became aware of it on [insert date], so this appeal is submitted within 20 days. I have attached a copy of the environmental authorisation. I do not have the facilities to send the appeal to all I&APs and request that the EAP send the appeal to its database.”

Remember



Your appeal must include:

- 1. Your contact number or email address;**
- 2. The project reference number: 1610;**
- 3. Specific reasons why you are appealing;**

How to write a strong appeal

- **Organise as a community** to submit your concerns as a collective
- **Clearly state your concerns** (e.g. water risks, unfair public consultation)
- **Group your concerns** (one issue per paragraph)
- Put your **strongest argument first**
- **Include evidence** (such as photos, expert reports or community stories)
- **Consult experts** such as lawyers or environmental groups for advice and tips.

Stay informed and take action



Attend public meetings about developments in your area and voice concerns directly.

If the Appeal is not successful, follow up by monitoring Tetra4's activities and reporting any environmental concerns.



You can access all Tetra4 project documents by email. Using the reference '1610' email prextension@eims.co.za to request these documents and share this information with your neighbours and community.



If you need more information or help with this process, contact:

*DFFE Appeals: **012 399 9000** or by emailing them using appeals@dffe.gov.za.*

