

Communication On Engagement

United Nations Global Compact



30 October 2015

1. Statement of continued support by the CEO

Treasure Karoo Action Group (TKAG) is a small non-profit organisation founded in 2011 that strives to ensure awareness and advocacy within communities and accountability of all stakeholders and decision-makers in order to facilitate a fair outcome on shale gas exploration and development in South Africa with the focus on sustainability and democratic decision-making.

The UN Global Compact principles on human rights, anti-corruption and the environment form the foundation of our organisation. We hereby pledge our continued commitment to uphold the UN Global Compact principles in our day to day activities and conduct.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Deal

CEO

2. Description of practical actions

Since becoming a participant of the UN Global Compact, TKAG has focused on a few key areas to deliver the most effective outcomes. Through our strategic alliance and cooperation with other civil society groups, we have managed to reach more people in communities within the areas earmarked for exploration activities. We continued to engage on social media platforms with the broader public, while at the same time focusing our energy on specific communities, attending public meetings, distributing information and providing guidance to affected landowners.

In a joint project with the Cancer Association of South Africa, we conducted a pilot baseline groundwater monitoring project in one of the affected areas to ensure that background data is available for water resources prior to the commencement of any exploration activities. This ensures transparency and accountability in the event that groundwater becomes contaminated at a later stage.

We submitted extensive comments on the environmental management plans of a number of companies applying for exploration rights for unconventional gas, as well as the draft technical regulations on petroleum exploration and exploitation released by the Department of Mineral Resources in 2013. We also commented on the final regulations, released in 2015.

We have submitted a formal complaint to the Public Protector of South Africa on a number of grounds, including suspected corruption in the accepting of a specific exploration right application and a vested interest by the ruling party in the largest applicant. The matter is still pending.

We continued to lobby for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on shale gas mining in South Africa and for exploration rights to not be issued before the assessment has been concluded and has been able to appropriately influence regulations.

We are currently preparing to approach the High Court to prevent the issuing of licenses prior to the finalisation of the assessment.

3. Measured Outcomes

By far the most significant measurable outcome of our efforts of more than four years has been the announcement of an SEA on shale gas mining during 2015. Following an instruction from Cabinet, the Department of Environmental Affairs, on behalf of a number of government departments, briefed the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to conduct the assessment in partnership with the Council for Geosciences and the South African National Biodiversity Institute.

A variety of panels have been set up that formally form part of the SEA to ensure oversight of the process and a fair and balanced author team. A scientific review panel has also been set up. TKAG forms part of the Process Custodians Group of the SEA together with other NGOs and interest groups, to scrutinise the integrity of the process and its participants.

A study on the technical readiness of South Africa to undertake shale gas exploration and development has been commissioned by the Department of Science and Technology, expected to be released later during 2015.

Another recent development was in the form of an announcement that hydraulic fracturing (technology intrinsic to shale gas exploration and mining) has been listed as a controlled activity under the South African National Water Act. Since South African environmental legislation is fragmented and the Department of Mineral Resources is responsible for issuing environmental authorisations for mining operations, this development was a much needed act to ensure that the Department of Water Affairs reserves the right to aspects of the mining process related to water.