

Boegoebaai Port, SEZ and Namakwa Region SEA

Work Package 2 public engagement notes, 11 May 2026

This document summarises key discussions and issues raised during stakeholder engagement conducted for Work Package 2 (WP2) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the proposed Boegoebaai port, Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and broader Namakwa region.

Engagement for the WP2 SEA was conducted as:

- 1) Online and in English on 05 May 2026.
- 2) In-person and in Afrikaans in one town in each local municipality that comprises the SEA study area Springbok (Nama Khoi), Porth Nolloth (Richtersveld), Pofadder (Khâi-Ma) and Garies (Kamiesberg), 20-23 April 2026.

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

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Work Package 2: Online Webinar Key Notes & Actions

Date: 05May 2026

Time: 09:00 – 11:30

Platform: Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Appendix A

Purpose:

- Provide a platform for stakeholders and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to participate in the SEA process for the proposed Boegoebaai Port, SEZ, and broader Namakwa region.
 - To encourage open discussion and engagement with stakeholders during the SEA process.
 - To gather stakeholder inputs, comments, and perspectives to inform the assessment.
 - To provide a brief overview of the SEA and its purpose.
 - To present the progress and draft findings of WP2.

Agenda:

1. Welcome and Meeting Objectives
2. Presentation of the summarised draft findings of WP2

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, SEZ & Namakwa Region (WP2) was opened by the Chairperson (Abulele Adams, CSIR), who outlined the objectives of the session:

- To present the draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies, aligned with WP2 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 of WP2. Key points covered, included:

- The purpose and role of the SEA as an independent, strategic planning tool that identifies potential risks and opportunities associated with large-scale green hydrogen development, and not a process to approve or reject development proposals.
- An explanation of green hydrogen and Power-to-X (PtX) products, including how green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy such as wind and solar power.
- The infrastructure and resource requirements for green hydrogen development, including desalination, renewable energy facilities, power lines, pipelines, roads, rail, and port infrastructure.
- The need for the SEA due to the environmental, social, cultural, and economic sensitivities of the Namakwa and Richtersveld regions.
- The distinction between:
 - Work Package 1 (already completed), which focused specifically on the proposed port and SEZ; and
 - Work Package 2, which focuses on the wider regional impacts across the Namakwa region (encompassing the Richtersveld, Nama Khoi, Kamiesberg, and Khâi-Ma Local Municipalities).
- The use of three development scenarios to assess possible future impacts:
 - A “dynamic baseline” with no green hydrogen development;
 - A small-scale green hydrogen scenario; and
 - A large-scale green hydrogen scenario.
- Key environmental and socio-economic sensitivities of the region, including biodiversity hotspots, water scarcity, cultural heritage, tourism, agriculture, infrastructure constraints, and municipal capacity challenges.
- Potential opportunities associated with green hydrogen development, such as:
 - Economic diversification and job creation;
 - Improved infrastructure and services;
 - Increased water security through oversized desalination facilities; and
 - Potential conservation and biodiversity offset programmes.
- Potential risks associated with large-scale development, including:
 - Habitat loss and biodiversity impacts;

- Pressure on water resources;
 - Loss of heritage and cultural landscapes;
 - Increased inequality, housing pressure, and social conflict; and
 - Strain on municipal infrastructure and governance capacity.
- Strategic recommendations from the SEA, including avoiding sensitive environmental areas, strengthening municipal and infrastructure planning, improving governance coordination, and ensuring meaningful stakeholder engagement and community participation.
 - The next steps in the SEA process, including the public review period for the WP2 draft report, submission of stakeholder comments, revision and finalisation of the report, and publication of the final SEA outputs.

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 participant asked whether the definition of green hydrogen consider all environmental impacts or only CO₂ emissions.
 - CSIR confirmed in the chat that the term “green hydrogen” refers specifically to hydrogen produced using renewable energy sources, meaning that the upstream production process is powered by renewable energy sources.
- A stakeholder raised the importance of considering geopolitical and global economic dynamics within the SEA process, specifically noting how conflicts in the Middle East and disruptions in the Red Sea and Suez Canal shipping routes may create strategic opportunities for South Africa’s ports. The stakeholder highlighted the potential for increased shipping traffic around the Cape of Good Hope and suggested that the proposed Boegoebaai Port could strengthen South Africa’s position as a strategic trade and logistics hub on the West Coast. The stakeholder further noted that while environmental protection is important, there is also a need to balance environmental considerations with broader economic development opportunities and national economic interests. Concern was raised that an emphasis on protecting environmentally sensitive habitats could limit opportunities for economic growth and infrastructure development. The stakeholder acknowledged the need for neutrality in the SEA process but encouraged consideration of both environmental and economic impacts in a balanced and strategic manner.
 - The Socio-economics specialist (Karoo Development Foundation) confirmed that broader socio-economic and geopolitical considerations had been taken into account in the assessment. It was noted that recent global events and disruptions to international trade routes highlight the importance of economic and transport diversification, and that the proposed port and green hydrogen development could strengthen South Africa’s economic resilience and strategic positioning. The response also emphasised the need to distinguish between potential national-level benefits and local or regional impacts within the Namakwa region. While the project may provide broader economic advantages for South Africa, it could also result in significant local

environmental and socio-economic impacts that would need to be carefully managed, mitigated, and planned for. It was noted that balancing national interests with local and regional concerns remains an important policy and planning consideration.

- A comment was posted on the chat that grazing management reforms need to consider maintaining or the potential changes to local grazing heritage.
 - The Socio-economics specialist noted that the socio-economic study includes a dedicated section on agriculture, distinguishing between irrigation farming along the Orange River and livestock grazing systems in the region. The response indicated that large-scale development is not necessarily expected to have a significant direct impact on grazing land itself, as development planning can avoid prime agricultural areas. The concern would be regarding the potential indirect impacts associated with transport infrastructure. It was noted that road-based transport systems could result in pollution and other secondary impacts affecting nearby grazing areas, whereas rail transport would likely have fewer economic, social, and environmental impacts.
- A participant asked on the chat under what conditions will the desalination facilities be "oversized", and what frameworks can be put in place to ensure that domestic and possibly agricultural water uses are prioritised over industrial uses.
 - CSIR noted that ensuring desalination facilities are oversized would require clear and strong policy signals, including the development of specific policies. It was further stated that desalination is not disproportionately expensive within the broader green hydrogen development context, and that developers could consider oversizing desalination facilities as part of their social licence to operate.
- A participant asked on the chat whether alternative land parcels or receiving areas for biodiversity offsets had already been identified as part of the SEA process, and whether maps showing potential biodiversity offset receiving areas were available.
 - In response, the Biodiversity Offset Framework specialist (Conservation Strategy, Tactics and Insight) noted that broad biodiversity offset receiving areas had been identified, although no specific land parcels had yet been designated. The response indicated that receiving areas would need to balance impacted ecosystems with low land rights conflicts, and support opportunities for coordinated implementation and management. It was further confirmed that maps and related information are included in the Work Package 2, Chapter 3 report.
- A stakeholder questioned the level of certainty and confidence that can be attached to the SEA development scenarios, noting that they are based on pre-feasibility studies and socio-economic benefit analyses rather than a completed feasibility study or formal business case. Concern was raised regarding the absence of confirmed details relating to the port location and railway routing. The stakeholder also queried when the IDC- and IFC-sponsored business case, including aspects such as options analysis, risk transfer, value-for-money analysis, and affordability considerations, would be made publicly available. The stakeholder further queried inconsistency between the presentation and the draft WP2 reports regarding Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). It was noted that the presentation referred to incorporating FPIC and sustained engagement as a foundation for social legitimacy and strategic risk management, similar to recommendations made in the final Work Package 1 report. However, the stakeholder

indicated that they could not locate a clear commitment to FPIC within the current WP2 draft report, where FPIC appeared to be referenced only alongside the German Green Hydrogen Toolbox as part of a broader decision-making framework. The stakeholder requested clarification on where, within the WP2 report, a specific commitment to FPIC is made.

- In response to the concern regarding inconsistency on FPIC references in the WP2 reports, it was clarified via the chat that the Summary for Policymakers (SPM) and Chapter 7 of the report do include references to FPIC-aligned engagement approaches. Specific reference was made to page 60 of the SPM and Chapter 7, Section 7.7 (page 7-101), which state that compliance-based consultation is insufficient for developments of this scale and complexity, and that strategic engagement approaches aligned with Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles are essential for maintaining legitimacy, reducing conflict, and supporting informed participation.
- The Socio-economics specialist noted that the SEA is intended to provide a higher-level strategic assessment that identifies key issues and considerations in the entire process of pre-feasibility, feasibility, institutional design, and planning processes. It was further noted that public participation and FPIC were taken seriously within the socio-economic assessment, with detailed discussion included in the socio-economic chapter. The response emphasised the importance of meaningful, iterative, and professionally facilitated public participation processes, including community involvement in the design of engagement processes themselves.
- Regarding the use of scenarios, CSIR explained that scenarios are specifically intended to address uncertainty about future development pathways. The SEA scenarios range from no green hydrogen development to large-scale development, allowing the assessment to evaluate potential impacts, opportunities, and risks across a broad spectrum of possible futures up to 2050. It was noted that the exact future outcome cannot be predicted, but that the scenarios provide realistic boundaries within which future development is expected to occur.
- The Infrastructure and Planning specialist (CSIR) further emphasised that the SEA should be viewed as a dynamic process informed by the best available information at the time of assessment, and that findings and conclusions may evolve as new information becomes available in future planning and decision-making processes.
- A stakeholder asked on the chat whether an assessment had been undertaken of the current skills availability within the region in relation to the proposed development. The stakeholder further queried what infrastructure, education, training, and development programmes would need to be introduced to ensure that the anticipated future skills demands associated with the project could be adequately met once the development becomes operational.
 - The Socio-economics specialist noted that the socio-economic study considered a broad range of technical, industrial, social, and service-related skills that may be required should development proceed. The response highlighted potential opportunities for skills development through local colleges, university partnerships, and the possible return of skilled individuals to the region. It was also noted that the broader economic impacts could extend beyond Port Nolloth to surrounding towns and linked infrastructure corridors.

- A stakeholder raised concern about the potential use of foreign labour during construction and operation of the proposed development, citing previous experiences where external companies brought in their own workforce and support services with limited local participation. The stakeholder queried whether the proposed development would prioritise local employment and skills development opportunities.
 - In response, the Socio-economics specialist noted that there is a risk of minimal local participation if localisation requirements are not prescribed. However, it was indicated that government could include localisation and community benefit requirements as part of project conditions, including skills development and corporate social responsibility initiatives. It was further noted that while some specialised foreign expertise may be required during initial setup phases, local employment, skills development, and broader community benefits would likely be expected as part of the development process.

4) Closure:

- The meeting concluded with a reminder that the draft Work Package 2 report had been released for a 45-day public review period on 18 March 2026, with comments closing on 8 May 2026. Stakeholders were encouraged to review the report on the SEA website and submit comments, preferably using the structured spreadsheet format provided, although comments submitted via email would also be accepted.
- Appreciation was expressed to participants for their engagement and contributions during the session.

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 107 participants were recorded, although actual attendance may have been higher.

Organisation	Name and Surname
Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	Babalwa Mqokeli (Project Manager) Abulele Adams (Chairperson) Luanita Snyman-Van der Walt Johan Maritz Rinae Tsedu Nonjabulo Malinga Greg Schreiner Paul Lochner Jabulani Jele
Northern Cape Economic Development Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (NCEDA)	Napo Ramabina Luvuyo Mabena
South African National Energy Development Institute (SANEDI)	Anza Tshirame Phumlile Kunene
Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA)	Khethelo Mhlanga-Mnganela Cebile Nzuza Jabulani Maluleke Aphelele Tomsana
Transnet Freight Rail	Katleho Lepati Elekanyani Phundulu Paulita Whon Dirk Engelbrecht Candice Calvert Sam Fiff Zanele Manyathi
Transnet Corporate	Nonkululeko Hadebe
Transnet Rail Infrastructure	Tebogo Thaba Matodzi Mulaudzi
Transnet	Given Mnisi Simon Moganetsi
DFFE: Strategic Environmental Instruments Development and Training	Sindiswa Dlomo
DFFE: Integrated Environmental Authorisations (IEA)	Lona Nondaka
DFFE: Oceans & Coast (Coastal Pollution Management)	Ntombovuyo Madlokazi
DFFE: Marine Protected and Conservation Areas	Jo-anne September
Western Cape Government	Marthan Theart
South African National Parks (SANParks)	Rob Adam
Industrial Development Corporation (idc)	Sipho Rikhotso Mandy Mlilo
Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (dsti)	Mike Levington
Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)	Shaun Moses
Department of Agriculture, Environmental Affairs, Rural Development and Land Reform (DAERL)	Natalie Uys
South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI)	Louise Geldenhuys Dewidine Van Der Colff Hlengiwe Mtshali
South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)	Mthobisi Nzimande Nokukhanya Khumalo

Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)

Viridus

ASHA Consulting

**Alexkor, Richtersveld Mining Company and Joint Venture
(Alexkor RMC JV)**

Alliance for Law in Development

WoMin African Alliance

Conservation Strategy Tactics & Insight

Karoo Development Foundation

Natural Justice

Liz Day Consulting

EcosolGIS

AfriAvian Environmental

NCCOGHSTA

Birdlife

University of Stellenbosch

NC DEDAT

Conservation South Africa

Voltalia

Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (SEDFA)

African Community Resource Rights Alliance (ACRRA)

Savannah

Phakamani Funds

Xina Solar One RF (Pty) Ltd

Enertrag

Energiequelle

South Africa Wind Energy Association (SAWEA)

PNE Group

Webber Wentzel

GIZ

SPU

SANRAL

ARTEMIS Group

Genesis

Not Specified

Zanne Brink
Hendrik Louw
Lita Webley
Jayson Orton
Leilani Swartbooi
Jacques Farmer
Carbyn Goosen
Henk Smith
Alexandria Hotz
Elsbeth Engelbrecht
Mark Botha
Doreen Atkinson
Stephan Borchardt
Melissa Groenink
Dean Palmer
Lauren Nel
Liz Day
Philip Desmet
Robin Colyn
Lizandé Kellerman
Feroza Fredericks
Livhuwani Tshilata
Sam Ralston
Calumet Links
J van Schalkwyk
Christopher Ovies
Elana Mostert
Bernadine Losper
Henrold Losper
Talitha Wyne
Kirthi Singh
Soriah Van Wyk
Michael Maasdorp
Annalise Lourence
Kyle Swartz
Stevie Txala
Mellissa Pholoholo
Jasper Dick
Marang Dikgale
Makoma Moloto
Katlego Makena
Chantelle Serithi
Ulrich Witbooi
Lerato Molekoa
Nadeemah Shaikjee
Madre Delport
Stanley E
Wilhelm Reichert
Lydia Petersen
BSG
E VS
Vuyo Roji
Ralph Damonse
Hendrina Smith



Ruth Hall
Jacobus Mouton
Othniel Farmer
Lloyd Kitso Seleke
Leo Crisp
Chief Mokalane
Willem Louw

Work Package 2: In-Person Engagement Sessions

Town	Date	Place	Time
Springbok	21 April 2026	Libra Hall: Libra Street, Bergsig, Springbok	09:00 – 11:30
Port Nolloth	21 April 2026	Port Nolloth Community Hall	13:30 – 16:00
Pofadder	22 April 2026	Blyvooruitsig Community Hall	12:00 – 14:30
Garies	23 April 2026	Garies Community Hall	10:00 – 12:30

Purpose:

- Create a platform for I&APs to engage with and provide input to the SEA outputs.
- Provide progress on the WP2 SEA process.
- Present summarised draft findings of the Specialist Assessment studies, aligned with the WP2 draft SEA outputs.

Key Notes

Despite local differences, the same core concerns came up repeatedly in **Springbok, Port Nolloth, Pofadder and Garies**. Overall, the outreach sessions revealed that **the technical analysis of WP2 is largely accepted**, but **social legitimacy is fragile**.

Trust, legitimacy and decision-making power

Participants expressed a strong perception that planning is largely top-down, with decisions often made for communities rather than with them. There is significant confusion about roles and accountability across institutions (CSIR, government, SOEs and private developers). This is compounded by deep mistrust rooted in historical experiences, including mining legacies, Alexkor, CPAs, state capture, and unfulfilled promises. Many felt that consultation processes happen too late, are rushed, and do not reach enough communities. There were also ongoing questions about FPIC — what it means in practice, when it applies, and whether communities meaningfully have the right to say no.

“Who benefits?” – uneven development and exclusion

A recurring concern was that proposed developments (energy, hydrogen and water) are primarily geared towards export markets, with limited direct benefit to local communities. Participants highlighted a pattern where communities bear environmental and social risks while seeing few tangible returns. There is a strong fear of uneven development, with benefits concentrating in a few “anchor towns” while smaller and rural areas are left behind. This informed calls for more inclusive models, including community shareholding or ownership, clear benefit-sharing mechanisms, and early, visible socio-economic gains.

Water security concerns

Water emerged as a critical and non-negotiable issue, with widespread concern that green hydrogen development could worsen existing water challenges. Participants were particularly skeptical about desalination, raising questions about water safety, allocation, and environmental impacts such as brine discharge. There were also concerns about Orange River abstraction, hydropower implications, and transboundary dynamics, alongside fears that pipeline infrastructure may prioritise industrial use over community access.

Safety, health and environmental risk perceptions

There is notable anxiety around safety risks associated with hydrogen and related industries, including fears of explosions, ammonia leaks, and broader oil, gas and shipping hazards. Participants also raised concerns about cumulative environmental impacts, particularly on fisheries, marine ecosystems, and marine mammals, as well as the effects of desalination infrastructure. These risks are often viewed in the context of past negative experiences with industrial port developments.

Land, heritage and community concerns

Discussions highlighted unresolved tensions around land ownership and governance, particularly relating to CPAs, including questions of representation, legitimacy, and internal divisions. Concerns about land claims and historical injustices remain prominent. Participants also stressed the importance of protecting graves, living heritage, and UNESCO World Heritage values, with a fear that agreements may be made with select stakeholders rather than reflecting the full spectrum of community voices.

Youth, skills and long-term preparedness

There was repeated frustration about high levels of youth unemployment and the quality of education, particularly in maths and science. Many felt that without early and targeted intervention, future job opportunities linked to new industries will go to outsiders rather than local residents. Participants called for proactive skills development and alignment with project timelines to ensure communities are prepared.

Municipal capacity and governance failure

Participants expressed frustration with weak municipal engagement, poor communication, and declining infrastructure. There is a strong concern that municipalities currently lack the capacity to manage the scale of development and its associated impacts, yet are expected to play a central role in implementation.



Improvements to engagement, communication & process

The audience expressed a need for engagement in more towns, over more days, not single central venues only, transport support for smaller communities, consistent presenters or representatives from Government (avoid rotating officials). Furthermore, there is a need for a live information platform (“finger on the pulse”) showing: Where the project/s are; what decisions have and have not been made; and development timelines and opportunities.
