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**APPENDIX 2.6:**  
**COMMENTS AND RESPONSE REPORT**

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**PROPOSED OFFSHORE EXPLORATION  
ACTIVITIES IN LICENCE BLOCKS 3617 AND  
3717 OFF THE SOUTH-WEST COAST OF  
SOUTH AFRICA**

**COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT**

Prepared for:  
**Petroleum Agency of South Africa**

On behalf of:  
**Rhino Oil & Gas Exploration South Africa (Pty) Ltd**

Prepared by:  
**CCA Environmental (Pty) Ltd**





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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Comments and Responses Report is to record comments received from Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs), including authorities and general public, during the pre-application public participation process undertaken for the proposal by Rhino Oil & Gas Exploration South Africa (Pty) Ltd (Rhino) to undertake oil and gas exploration activities in Licence Blocks 3617 and 3717 off the South-West Coast of South Africa. Where applicable, responses to comments and questions are provided or cross-referenced to the relevant section of text in the Scoping Report.

## 2. PRE-APPLICATION PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The objective of the pre-application public participation process was to ensure that authorities and I&APs were notified of the proposed project and given a reasonable opportunity to register on the project database and provide any initial comments.

Steps undertaken during this phase are summarised below and detailed in Box 2.1 of the Scoping Report:

- *Identification of I&APs:* A preliminary I&AP database of authorities, Non-Governmental Organisations, Community-based Organisations and other key stakeholders was compiled. Additional I&APs were added to the database based on responses to the advertisements, notification letter and attendance at a public information-sharing meeting. There are currently 202 people on the project database.
- *Distribution of Background Information Document (BID):* A notification letter and BID were distributed for a 30-day registration and comment period from 5 August 2015 to 7 September 2015.
- *Advertisements:* Advertisements announcing the proposed project, the availability of the BID, I&AP registration and comment period and the Information-sharing Meeting were placed in two regional and three local newspapers in two languages (English and Afrikaans).
- *Public Information-sharing Meeting:* A Public information-sharing meeting was held in Cape Town on 20 August 2015.

## 3. COMMENTS AND ISSUES RAISED

A total of nineteen written submissions were received during the pre-application public participation process. A breakdown of the written submissions is provided in Table 1. These relate to registration on the project database, and the impact of exploration activities on marine fauna and the fishing industry.

A copy of all written submissions is provided in Appendix 2.5 of the Scoping Report.

Comments are presented and responded to in Section 4 (authority comments) and Section 5 (general I&AP comments). No importance should be given to the order in which the categories within each section are presented. As far as possible, comments are presented verbatim from written submissions.





**Table 1: Written submissions were received from the following authorities / organisations during the BID comment period.**

<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	<b>METHOD, DATE RECEIVED:</b>
<b>Authorities</b>	
1. Transnet National Ports Authority - Craig Butcher	Meeting - 20 Aug 2015
2. CapeNature – Andrew Turner and Alana Duffell-Canham	Email - 1 Sept 2015 Email - 2 Sept 2015
3. Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry - Janet Coetzee	Email - 4 Sept 2015
4. South African National Parks (SANParks) - Marné van der Westhuizen	Email - 7 Sept 2015
<b>General I&amp;APs</b>	
1. Sea Search Africa – Dr Simon Elwen & Dr Tess Gridley	Email – 4 Aug 2015
2. Western Province Deep Sea Angling Association – Malcolm Grant	Email – 5 Aug 2015
3. Graeme Morgan	Email – 5 Aug 2015
4. South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association – Dr Aidan Wood	Email – 6 Aug 2015
5. Smit Amandla – Sandile Mtshali	Email – 7 Aug 2015
6. Trade Ocean Shipping Services – Paul Giusti	Email – 7 Aug 2015
7. Trans Marine Shipping – Anne Louw	Email – 11 Aug 2015
8. Robor (Pty) Ltd – Phillip Pretorius	Email – 11 Aug 2015
9. Nedbank – Thabo Thobejane	Email – 18 Aug 2015
10. Total Safety Services - Venesh Ramdhani	Email - 19 Aug 2015
11. Necotrans South Africa - Benott Buron	Email - 20 Aug 2015
12. Birdlife South Africa – Christina Hagen	Email – 21 Aug 2015
13. Petroleum Pipe Middle East - Fraser MacDonald	Email - 2 Sept 2015
14. Large Pelagic SMME Association - Michael Smith	Fax - 7 Sept 2015



## 4. AUTHORITY COMMENTS AND ISSUES



 = Letter/Fax/Post     = E-mail     = Information-sharing Meeting






NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
<b>4.1. GENERAL</b>					
4.1.1	Impacts on ports	Transnet National Ports Authority – Craig Butcher	 20 Aug 2015	Development may impact future developments required in the ports in the Western Cape.	The proposed exploration activities include multi-beam bathymetry and seismic surveys. As such, no significant onshore logistics facilities are required. Rhino would engage with the relevant Port Manager and seek the necessary permissions for any facilities that may be required prior to the commencement of any related activities.
4.1.2	Extension of comment timeframe	CapeNature – Andrew Turner	 1 Sep 2015	In light of the short notice given and a temporary constraint on the staff we have available to respond to this application I hereby request extension for delivery of our comment until the 14 September at the earliest. Please let me know if this is acceptable.	Due to the timeframes imposed by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations 2014 an extension of the comment period on the Background Information Document (BID) was not possible. Mr Turner was informed that the Scoping Report will be made available to all I&APs registered on the database for a 30-day comment period. It was also noted that if any comments were received after the BID comment period that they would be incorporated into the revised Scoping Report which would be submitted to the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) for acceptance.
4.1.2	No capacity to comment	CapeNature - Alana Duffell-Canham	 2 Sep 2015	Although we currently do not have the capacity to comment on the BID for this project, we would like to comment on the Draft Scoping Report when it is available.	The Scoping Report will be made available to all I&APs registered on the project database for a 30-day comment period.
4.1.3	Standard requirements for providing comments			In the interim, please keep on record and refer to our standard letter (attached) which outlines CapeNature's requirements for commenting on development applications.	
4.1.4	Impacts on National Parks	SANParks - Marné van der Westhuizen	 7 Sept 2015	The national parks including West Coast National Park, Table Mountain National Park and Agulhas National Park of SANParks, their Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) (current or future) and surrounds may be affected by this	This comment relates to the proposal by Rhino to undertake oil and gas exploration activities in various inshore licence blocks off the South-West Coast of South Africa (PASA reference 12/3/292).






NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
				application.	The proposed offshore exploration licence area (PASA reference 12/3/293) is located well away from any of the identified conservation areas. The exploration licence area is situated between approximately 190 km and 385 km off the South-West Coast of South Africa.
<b>4.2 I&amp;AP REGISTRATIONS</b>					
4.2.1	I&AP registration	<p>The following authorities were requested to be registered on the project database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CapeNature - A Duffell-Canham.</li> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Fishery and Forestry - J Coetzee</li> <li>• SANParks - M van der Westhuizen</li> <li>• SANParks: Agulhas National Park - B Msengi</li> <li>• SANParks: Agulhas National Park – P Bopape</li> <li>• SANParks: National Marine Co-ordinator - A Oosthuizen</li> <li>• SANParks: Planning &amp; Environmental Coordination: A Riley</li> <li>• SANParks: Table Mountain National Park – M Slayen</li> </ul> <p>The following I&amp;APs were requested to be registered on the project database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sea Search Africa - S Elwen and T Gridley</li> <li>• Western Province Deep Sea Angling Association - M Grant</li> <li>• South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association - A Wood</li> <li>• Smit Amandla - S Mtshali</li> <li>• Trade Ocean Shipping Services - P Giusti</li> <li>• Trans Marine Shipping - A Louw</li> <li>• Robor Pty Ltd – P Pretorius</li> <li>• Smit Amandla Marine - D Murray</li> <li>• Petroleum Pipe Middle East (FZE) - F Macdonald</li> <li>• South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association - J Pledger</li> <li>• Western Province Deep Sea Angling Association - M Grant</li> </ul>			All these I&APs have been registered on the project database (see Appendix 2.1 of the Scoping Report).






## 5. GENERAL I&AP COMMENTS AND ISSUES








 = Letter/Fax/Post    = E-mail    = Information-sharing Meeting





NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
<b>5.1 IMPACTS ON MARINE FAUNA</b>					
5.1.1	Impact on cetaceans	Sea Search Africa - Dr Simon Elwen & Dr Tess Gridley	 4 Aug 2015	<p>The survey area, especially the inshore area is prime habitat for whales and dolphins. The animals in this area do follow the pattern of 'whale season' that is seen along the Cape south coast for right whales, with potentially large effects on survey timing and stoppages.</p> <p>Although data for much of this area is relatively sparse - we'd be happy to help CCA in collating it and putting together a desktop study on the potential impact on cetaceans in the area.</p>	<p>A marine faunal assessment is scheduled for the EIA Phase and will be undertaken by an independent specialist (refer to Section 6.2.2 of the Scoping Report for the Terms of Reference of this study). This assessment will consider the impacts of the proposed exploration activities on marine fauna (including cetaceans, seals, birds, turtles, fish, invertebrates and benthic fauna).</p> <p>CCA Environmental (CCA) will request that the appointed specialist liaise directly with Dr Elwen (Sea Search Africa) in this regard, prior to the finalisation of the specialist report.</p>
5.1.2	Noise impacts on fish	South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association - Dr Aidan Wood	 6 Aug 2015	<p><i>The impact of low frequency sounds on fish.</i> Research indicates negative impacts at sound levels &gt;180db. Noise impacts can cause physical damage, physiological stress and auditory masking resulting in spatial deterrence and other behavioural modifications. Physical damage includes capillary rupture, neurotrauma, eye haemorrhage and swim bladder rupture. Negative impact on fish resources (pelagic and sedentary) will have knock-on impacts for the recreational fishery.</p>	<p>Noise associated with operational activities will be assessed as part of the marine faunal assessment (see Response 5.1.1).</p>

NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
<b>5.2 IMPACTS ON TOURISM ACTIVITIES</b>					
5.2.1	Impact on tourism activities	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	In the inshore areas there are high levels of shark-cage diving and whale watching activities. The proposed exploration activities can have possible impacts on these activities.	These issues relate to the proposed inshore exploration activities proposed by Rhino. Due to their distance offshore he proposed exploration activities associated with Licence Blocks 3616 and 3717 would not influence shark-cage diving, whale watching and recreational ski-boat fishery activities that are undertaken in inshore areas.
5.2.2	Impact on tourism activities	South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association - Dr Aidan Wood	 6 Aug 2015	Impact on recreational ski-boat fishery due to exclusion from survey area (safety zones) during survey period.	
<b>5.3 IMPACTS ON FISHING INDUSTRY</b>					
5.3.1	Impacts on recreational ski-boat fishery	South African Consolidated Recreational Angling Association - Dr Aidan Wood	 6 Aug 2015	Long-term impact on recreational ski-boat fishery if mining goes ahead, e.g. permanent rigs that excludes fishing vessels from operating in their vicinity, and structures located on existing popular fishing grounds.	The project proposal for which this Scoping and Environmental Impact Assessment (S&EIA) is being undertaken does not include any production (mining) activities. The proposed exploration activities would not require any permanent infrastructure. The activity would only entail multi-beam bathymetry and seismic surveys. However, a 500 m exclusion zone will be required around the survey vessels for the duration of the survey (15 – 20 days).  A fisheries assessment is scheduled for the EIA Phase and will be undertaken by an independent specialist (refer to Section 6.2.3 of the Scoping Report for the Terms of Reference of this study). This assessment will consider all fishing sectors that operate within and adjacent to the proposed exploration licence area that could be impacted by the exclusion zone around the survey vessels.
5.3.2	Impacts on Tuna Pole and long line fisheries	Large Pelagic SMME Association - Michael Smith	 7 Sept 2015	We represent about 40% of the active Tuna Pole fishing concerns as well as a few of the long line fishing concerns and our activities take place in both areas. This activity may directly affect our activities and will certainly affect movement and stocks.	
5.3.3	Impacts on trawl and pelagic fisheries	South African Deep Sea Trawling Industry Association -	 20 Aug 2015	The area between Cape Point and Saldanha Bay is an area of high fishing activity for the trawl and pelagic fisheries. Will the proposed exploration activities avoid periods of high	This impact will be assessed in the fisheries assessment (see Response 5.3.1). The assessment will identify fishing activities and would make realistic recommendations to minimise any impact on fisheries. Mitigation will also have to

NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
		Johan Augustyn		fishing activity for these fisheries.	consider other exclusion periods (e.g. key cetacean migration and breeding periods).
5.3.4	Importance of trawl and pelagic fisheries	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	The combined value of the trawl and pelagic fisheries make up a significant proportion of the Western Cape fisheries Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and create 22 000 direct jobs. In addition there are numerous smaller companies which are dependent on these industries.	These comments are noted.
5.3.5	Economic impact on fisheries	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	Although the exclusion zone is small (500 m) it could result in a significant period of fishing time being lost to an individual vessel. This could potentially be a significant impact for a mid-sized trawl company. The specialist assessment should consider the economic impact of lost fishing time.	A description of the commercial fisheries that are active on the South-West Coast is provided in Section 4.1.4.1 of the Scoping Report. It should be noted that the offshore exploration licence area is located outside of the distribution of fishing effort for the identified fisheries. Thus no economic impacts on fisheries are anticipated for the proposed offshore exploration activities.
5.3.6	Economic impact on fisheries	Irvin and Johnson - Rob Landman	 20 Aug 2015	Will the fisheries specialist assessment quantify the economic impact of the possible decreased fishing effort and / or loss of catch as a result of the proposed projects?	Potential impacts will be assessed in the fisheries assessment (see Response 5.3.1). The assessment will identify fishing activities and will make realistic recommendations to minimise any impact on fisheries. The Terms of Reference of this study are presented in Section 6.2.3 of the Scoping Report.
5.3.7	Economic impact on fisheries			If the fisheries specialist assessment does find a correlation between fishing and the flight response of fish from seismic surveys, would the economic impact be quantified?	
5.3.8	Economic impact on fisheries	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	The theoretical study does not consider real impacts on fisheries. Last year no anchovies were caught and the catch this season will make-up for the lost effort from last year. Such possible impacts on a seasonal basis should be taken into consideration into account by the study.	A spatial and temporal assessment of expected fishing effort and catch in the proposed exploration licence area for each fisheries sector identified will be undertaken as part of the specialist assessment (see Response 5.3.1). Consideration will also be given to the proposed exclusion zones around the survey vessels and potential disturbance of fish on the fishing activities based on the estimated percentage loss of catch and effort.
5.3.9	Impact on fisheries	South African Deep Sea Trawling Industry Association - Johan Augustyn	 20 Aug 2015	For some fisheries, there are limited periods of time where the fisheries are active. These limited opportunities are likely to coincide with the timing for the proposed surveys. The specialist assessment must consider the pulse-nature of the fishing industry.	

NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
5.3.10	Fisheries impacts and historical assessments	South African Oil & Gas Alliance - Belinda Williams	 20 Aug 2015	This is not the first time that seismic activities have been undertaken offshore. The related issues should be taken into consideration and been resolved in previous EIA processes. Is there a record of the previous seismic surveys and related impacts on the fishing industry?	A large amount of information exists on the potential impacts of offshore seismic surveys on the South-West Coast, however previous surveys were not necessarily located as close to shore as Rhino's proposed inshore exploration activities. The proposed specialist assessments will base the identification and assessment of potential impacts related to the proposed offshore exploration activities on a review and collation of existing information (including previous seismic surveys off the South-West Coast) and data from the international scientific literature.
<b>5.4 SCOPING AND EIA STUDY</b>					
5.4.1	Provide additional project information	Smit Amandla - Sandile Mtshali	 7 Aug 2015	Kindly alert me should there be any further information to be provided and we look forward to receiving further information as and when it becomes available.	All registered I&APs will be included in all future communication for the S&EIA process for the proposed project.
5.4.2	Independent review of fisheries assessment	South African Deep Sea Trawling Industry Association - Johan Augustyn	 20 Aug 2015	As CCA has undertaken a number of S&EIA for seismic surveys in the past, SADSTIA may request that an independent review of the Fisheries Assessment be undertaken.	The merit for undertaking an independent review of the fisheries assessment would be discussed with Rhino should such a review be requested.
5.4.3	Legislative requirements	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	The BID and presentation focussed on the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA), 2002 (Act 28 of 2002) and Chapter 5 of the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), 1998 (Act 107 of 1998). There is no mention of the National Environmental Management: Protected Areas Act (NEM:PAA), 2003 (Act No. 57 of 2003) and the fact that recent amendments thereto prohibit exploration activities within Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).	The proposed offshore exploration licence area is located a substantial distance away from any identified proclaimed conservation areas. The exploration licence area is situated between approximately 190 km and 385 km off the South-West Coast of South Africa. No proclaimed MPAs are located in proximity to the exploration licence area, however, a portion of the eastern edge of the proposed offshore exploration area is located within the potential Southeast Atlantic Seamounts MPA identified by Operation Phakisa.
<b>5.5 INFORMATION-SHARING MEETING ATTENDANCE</b>					
5.5.1	Meeting Attendance	Robor (Pty) Ltd - Phillip Pretorius	 11 Aug 2015	I would also like to attend the Information-sharing Meeting will be held in Cape Town on 20 August 2015.	These comments were noted.

NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
5.5.2	Meeting Attendance	Smit Amandla - Sandile Mtshali	 7 Aug 2015	Further to the above, please note that it is our intention to be presented at the scheduled information-sharing meeting on the 20 <sup>th</sup> of August 2015.	
5.5.3	Meeting Attendance	Trade Ocean Shipping Services - Paula Giusti	 7 Aug 2015	I will try to attend meeting on 20 <sup>th</sup> August.	
5.5.4	Meeting Attendance	Trans Marine Shipping - Anne Louw	 11 Aug15	Kindly advise if we are to confirm attendance for the Information Meeting.	
<b>5.6</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ISSUES</b>				
5.6.1	Undertaking of drilling activities	Graeme Morgan	 5 Aug 2015	Saw your ad in the newspaper this morning regarding the drilling for gas project you're working on in the West Coast. Please avoid any use of fracking in order to attain the gas. You probably already aware of the incredible damage this does but if not you can watch the documentary 'Gas Land' to see.	The project proposal for which this S&EIA is being undertaken does not include drilling or fracking activities. It is proposed that multi-beam bathymetry and seismic surveys would be undertaken in order to investigate subsea geological formations within the exploration licence area. Should the interpretation of the collected data be favourable, there is a possibility that Rhino could explore undertaking well-drilling at a later stage. However, any future well-drilling activities would require Environmental Authorisation and be subject to a separate S&EIA process. It is not anticipated that hydraulic fracturing would be undertaken for a standard offshore exploration well.
5.6.2	Undertaking of drilling activities	Irvin and Johnson - Rob Landman	 20 Aug 2015	Does the proposed project entail any drilling of exploration wells?	
5.6.3	Licence holder	Nedbank - Thabo Thobejane	 18 Aug 2015	Is Rhino the 100% holder of the two blocks? Or are there other partners in the blocks?	Rhino is the sole applicant for an Exploration Right within the identified exploration licence area.
5.6.4	Transportation of oil and gas	Irvin and Johnson - Rob Landman	 20 Aug 2015	How would oil and gas be transported to land in the event that exploration and subsequent well-drilling is successful?	As indicated in Response 5.6.1, the project proposal does not include drilling activities. However, if future resources are discovered and are economically viable, the transportation of oil and gas to shore would be dependent on the nature of the resource found (gas or oil) within the exploration licence area and associated financial implications of the preferred method. A pipeline or FPSO facility are possibilities that could be considered in the event that exploration and subsequent well-drilling is successful. Any future well-drilling activities would require Environmental Authorisation and be subject to a separate S&EIA process.

NO.	ISSUE	NAME	METHOD	COMMENT	RESPONSE
5.6.5	Experimental procedure to assess impact of seismic surveys on fish populations	South African Deep Sea Trawling Industry Association - Johan Augustyn	 20 Aug 2015	Would Rhino be prepared to collaborate with DAFF to undertake surveys before and after the proposed seismic surveys?	CCA has been appointed by Rhino to undertake the S&EIA process for the proposed project. The possibility of collaborating with DAFF would need to be discussed directly with Rhino. This request has been passed onto Rhino for consideration.
5.6.6	Experimental procedure to assess impact of seismic surveys on fish populations	Birdlife South Africa - Christina Hagen	 21 Aug 2015	Birdlife South Africa would like to request that CCA Environmental (Pty) Ltd cooperate with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) to set up an experimental procedure to assess the impact of seismic surveys on fish populations. Ideally a pre-and post-survey assessment should be conducted to determine the effects on fish stocks in the survey area. This assessment will be important for both the fishery sector and seabird and other marine predators.	
5.6.7	Historic seismic survey data	Irvin and Johnson - Rob Landman	 20 Aug 2015	A lot of seismic data has been collected previously. Is there not enough existing data to determine if there is oil and gas present in the proposed inshore and offshore exploration licence areas?	The available historic seismic data is not as detailed as the information which can be obtained using current technologies. Furthermore, different geologists have different interpretations of the data obtained. From the review of the existing data, Rhino believe that undertaking new surveys within the proposed exploration licence areas would provide a better understanding of the seabed geology.
5.6.8	Ownership of the seismic survey data			Will the data obtained from the proposed surveys be publically available?	
5.6.9	Time frames for proposed surveys	Feike Natural Resource Management Advisors - Shaheen Moolla	 20 Aug 2015	Are the time frames for the surveys known?	It is anticipated that the duration of the proposed surveys would be approximately 15 - 20 days in the summer of 2017.