APPENDIX K5 – Comments and Responses Report

PROPOSED 750MW COMBINED CYCLE GAS TURBINE POWER PLANT IN RICHARDS BAY, CITY OF UMHLATHUZE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, KING CETSHWAYO DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, KWAZULU-NATAL

COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORTING PHASE

(DFFE REFERENCE NO.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/2799)

SEPTEMBER 2026



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APPENDIX 1 – COAL-FIRED VS. GAS FIRED GENERATION COMPARISON

1 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Nemai Consulting was appointed by Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd (the "Applicant"), to conduct the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay, City of uMhlathuze (CoU) Local Municipality, King Cetshwayo District Municipality (KCDM), Kwazulu-Natal (KZN) (the "Project").

Following the promulgation of the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) in 2019, the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy determined that the procurement of new generation capacity is required to ensure energy security and that approximately 3000 megawatts (MW) would be procured, to be generated from gas. The Gas Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (GASIPPPP) was identified by the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) as the appropriate programme to procure the new generation capacity.

The Applicant intends to bid for the GASIPPPP and/or other suitable energy markets. The Project is located within Phase 1F of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) under a long-term lease agreement. The RBIDZ, which is a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), is a purpose-built and secured industrial estate linked to the Port of Richards Bay (PoRB) which aims to attract local and foreign direct investment.

2 APPLICATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION

The process for seeking Environmental Authorisation for the Project under the National Environmental Management Act (Act No. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) is being undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended). In terms of NEMA, the competent authority for this application is the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE).

Based on the listed activities triggered, the requisite environmental assessment for the Project is a Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting (S&EIR) Process.

3 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES REPORT

This Comments and Responses Report (CRR) serves to record the comments received from authorities and Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) to date, including the review of the draft Scoping Report as well as the subsequent review of the draft EIA Report. The CRR also attempts to address comments received through responses and input provided by the

Applicant, technical team, Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) and environmental specialists (as relevant).

The following is noted:

- All written comments received are included verbatim in the CRR.
- The citations, references, and footnotes contained in the written comments received from I&APs have not been reproduced in the CRR. Readers are referred to the full copies of the written submissions appended to the final EIA Report, where the original comments, including all supporting references and footnotes, are provided in full.
- In terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act (Act No. 4 of 2013), all contact details of persons provided in the comments received by the I&APs have been redacted.

4 COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

4.1 Scoping Phase

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
1.	Reference is made to the below notification, kindly provide us with a kmz file of the site.	L. Sibanyoni – South African National Roads Agency SOC Ltd (SANRAL)	Email (05/03/26)	Spatial data for the site was provided to SANRAL, as requested.	EAP
2.	Trust you are we and good can you please kindly provide us with a kmz file of the site.	S. Lamula – SANRAL	Email (05/03/26)	Spatial data for the site was provided to SANRAL, as requested.	EAP
3.	Please place me on your email list so that I also receive the emails and notices such as the one in the email below. Many thanks. Including emails for meeting notices.	N. Padayachee – uMngeni-uThukela Water (UUW)	Email (05/03/26)	The database of I&APs was updated accordingly.	EAP
4.	Please note that the development is located within KZN and not below the Maritime High Water Mark, therefore comments in terms of section 38 of the NHRA must be sought from Amafa KZN Heritage Institute.	N. Khumalo – South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA)	Email (06/03/26)	The Amafa and Research Institute was notified of the Project and the review of the draft SR.	EAP
5.	This serves as a notice of receipt and also confirms that your application has been captured in our electronic Land Use Database Details of your application as captured Type: DEVELOPMENT Your reference number: Property description: RICHARDS BAY POWER PLANT Please quote this reference number in all queries: Land Use Management Reference Number: 2028/10/4649	S.B. Thabede – KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)	Letter (10/03/26)	It is noted that the application was captured on KZN DARD's database. The specified reference number will be used for related queries.	EAP
6.	Kindly review the attached ESKOM Application requirements. Please send thorough the layout plan in one of the stipulated file formats i.e. KMZ/KML,DXF or DGN .	S. Naicker – Eskom	Email (11/03/26)	The Applicant is to adhere to all Eskom's requirements.	EAP

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	Note. We are unable to overlay PDF files on our system hence we kindly request the above formats. [*Attachments – (1) Eskom LR Application Requirements; (2) ESKOM REQUIREMENTS*]				
7.	Can you kindly register me as an I&AP for the above-mentioned project?	D. Nunez	Email (11/03/26)	The database of I&APs was updated with Mr Nunez's details.	EAP
8.	With reference to your application and accompanying plans received by Eskom on the 05th of March 2026, we confirm that an investigation has been carried out with regard to the supply of electricity, as well as any encroachment into Eskom's servitudes, in respect to the application as set out above. Eskom's GIS system does not indicate any presence of Eskom Distribution infrastructure (132-kV, 88-kV, 33-kV, 22-kV and 11-kV overhead lines/underground cables) traversing the areas depicted on the KMZ application file "Layout export". The application area is located within the Municipality's area of supply. Whilst on the ground, should you detect that there are overhead lines/underground cables located on the application area, kindly inform the Municipality and you will be advised accordingly.	S. Naicker – Eskom	Letter (12/03/26)	It is noted that Eskom's GIS system does not indicate any presence of Eskom Distribution infrastructure traversing the project area.	EAP
9.	The RBCAA kindly requests an online Focus Group meeting for the presentation of the DSR.	S. Camminga – Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA)	Email (15/03/26)	A Focus Group Meeting was held with the RBCAA on 23 March 2026 and the minutes are included in the final SR.	EAP
10.	Please note that SANRAL is not affected by the proposed development.	L. Sibanyoni – SANRAL	Email (15/03/26)	It is noted that SANRAL is not affected by the Project.	EAP
11.	My name is Nokwazi, I stay here in Richards Bay and I work with the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA). I'm writing about the public participation for the newly announced proposed 750mw combined cycle gas turbine power plant in Richards bay, City of Umhlathuze local municipality, King Cetshwayo District Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal.	N. Magubane – SDCEA	Email (18/03/26)	Thank you for your constructive engagement and for raising these matters. Personal information provided for purposes of the EIA process is processed in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act. We have updated our database of I&APs with the community members included in your list. Their information will only be used for the	EAP

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	We want to register the following community members as Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). See the list of names attached. I have heard that a person's information needs to be kept safe in terms of the POPIA Act. Please confirm. They are all from communities that are about 30km away from the proposed developments: Nseleni, KwaMbonambi, Nhlabane. (These are the communities and areas SDCEA work with.) We also see that there is public meeting on 25 March at 17:30 am. We know many people would love to join and learn about the projects, but it's not easy for them to attend at these times. Some of the reasons we hear from community people include: • The distance to the venues is far and transport money is a big problem, • 17:30 in the afternoon is also not ideal as this is the time when parents are busy with children, cooking, preparing for school, • Many families depend on one person's income and they can't take time off work to travel at these times, • Safety concerns travelling in the evening, • In general, people in poor communities often struggle to join meetings scheduled far from where they live. Because of all this, we kindly ask if you can please arrange separate or alternative meetings that are more convenient for the communities who live further out before the end of the commenting period for the scoping report so that community members have a chance to make comments. SDCEA can help with identifying suitable venues closer to them. But we would really appreciate your support in organising this with us, so that more people can participate and understand what these projects are about. We also want to ask: what else can your team do to help inform more community members about the developments? Many of them want to understand gas-to-power, the potential impacts, and what it means for their lives. If there are flyers, radio announcements,			purposes of the EIA process for this project, and will not be shared. We will exclude the contact information of all parties where our database needs to be appended to a report that is lodged in the public domain. We note and understand the points raised regarding communities living further from Richards Bay. We welcome SDCEA's offer to assist in identifying suitable venues or practical approaches and propose that this be explored further. In this regard, can SDCEA please advise on suitable venues closer to these communities. Certain measures employed to inform community members included providing notifications in English, isiZulu and Afrikaans; advertising through the Zululand Observer and Isolezwe newspapers; and the translation of the Executive Summary of the draft SR into isiZulu. Note that the public participation tasks undertaken for the Scoping Phase are further presented in Section 12.3 of the draft SR. We remain open to discussing additional practical and constructive ways of sharing information.	

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	translated summaries, extra workshops, or any other ways we can spread the info together, that will help a lot. We look forward to working with you so that everyone gets real chance to participate in these processes.				
12.	I trust you are well, and thank you. Nseleni Community Hall – Contact person: Ms H.N. Mthembu Office landline: [redacted] Email: [redacted] Nhlabane Hall – I will share the contact details tomorrow, as we are using the hall then. Kindly confirm a suitable date for this engagement to be during the week, preferably for a morning session (09:00–12:00). Please also notify the guests using the spreadsheet I previously shared.	N. Magubane – SDCEA	Email (18/03/26)	Thank you for the information provided regarding potential community venues. We are in the process of securing with the Nseleni Community Hall with the City of uMhlathuze. The hall has been tentatively booked for next week Thursday, 26 March 2026, from 9:00 to 11:00. This is pending the final approval by the municipality. Ms Mthembu is on leave, and we have been engaging with Bonginkosi. This engagement is intended to supplement the public meeting already scheduled in Richards Bay and to provide an accessible opportunity for communities located further from the project site to engage with the project and provide input. We do not therefore intend to arrange a further separate engagement at the Nhlabane Hall at this stage. *The meeting with the Nseleni Community was held on 26 March 2026 from 9:00 – 11:30 at the Community Hall.* *The Plan of Study (Section 14.5.3 of the SR) was also updated to cater for dedicated meetings with local communities during the EIA phase.*	EAP
13.	I would like to inform you that we have gas supply available to support your development in RCB. We believe this could align well with your current and future energy requirements. In addition, we would appreciate it if you could kindly connect us with the developer for the GtP Mabasa project.	S. Nkosi – SLG	Email (20/03/26)	This correspondence was forwarded to the Applicant for further consideration.	EAP

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	We are keen to explore potential collaboration and assess how our gas supply can support that development as well.				
14.	Please register me as an I&AP on the above-mentioned project's database. We are conducting a BA for a grid connection in close proximity to your development site and it will be appreciated if you can send me a KMZ file of the location of the 750MW CCGY Power Plant.	N. Venter – Savannah Environmental	Email (19/03/26)	The database of I&APs was updated accordingly. The spatial data for the site was shared with Savannah Environmental.	EAP
15.	F. Schmidt questioned the choice of 275 kV for power evacuation given the local 132 kV infrastructure.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis clarified that the scope of the Project excludes the power lines that will feed into the grid. He noted that the final voltage will be determined by the grid export study.	Technical Team
16.	F. Schmidt raised a concern about the municipality's ability to supply the required water volumes.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis confirmed that only a small portion of the water required for the plant would be potable, with the majority being raw or slightly treated water. He indicated that provision is made for on-site treatment for process needs.	Technical Team
17.	F. Schmidt noted that, for the dry cooling option, the current layout indicates that the dry cooling fans would be positioned adjacent to Bronze Bar Road, which is subject to significant dust loads from nearby transfer facilities. He highlighted that this could potentially affect the efficiency of the dry cooling systems.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis indicated that the plant layout is still at a preliminary stage and consideration would still need to be given to dust loads.	Technical Team
18.	F. Schmidt enquired about the disposal of blowdown water.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis stated that the final approach depends on the cooling configuration and water quality, with options including discharge to stormwater or other sinks, subject to assessment. He noted that the option of the evaporative cooling has significantly more wastewater that the dry-cooling option.	Technical Team
19.	F. Schmidt noted that he is aware of the separate EIA for the LNG infrastructure to supply the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ). He stated that the location of the LNG supply point in relation to the project site needs to be taken into consideration. He asked whether, in the absence of a direct pipeline connection, alternative supply options—such as tanker- delivered gas—would be considered, or whether the lack of pipeline infrastructure would preclude the use of gas for the plant.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis noted that the volume of gas required for this type of installation would be significant. As such, a gas pipeline would form an integral component of the project and is likely necessary to ensure its feasibility.	Technical Team

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20.	S. Camminga expressed concern regarding the separation of the EIA applications for the LNG pipeline and the power plant, noting that this may complicate the assessment of cumulative impacts. She further requested clarity on the proposed pipeline route from the Port of Richards Bay to the project site.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	B. Skhosana indicated that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the RBIDZ and Vopak for the development of a pipeline extending to the proposed facility. This forms part of the broader gas hub development in Richards Bay.	Applicant
				D. Henning stated that further details of the proposed LNG infrastructure will be provided in the EIA Report.	EAP
21.	C. Webb stated that from Mondi's perspective, as one of the largest consumers of natural gas in the Richards Bay area, there has been growing concern in recent years regarding the security of gas supply. It was noted that this has led to the consideration of alternative fuel sources. She also indicated that the area is already over-allocated in terms of water resources and periodically experiences significant drought conditions.	C. Webb	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that the Applicant has been in discussions with uMngeni-uThukela Water to supply water for the proposed facility. He further noted that the engineers are also considering options to lower water consumption, such as dry-cooling. He mentioned that this will be explained further in the EIA Report.	EAP
22.	S. Camminga noted that the Site Sensitivity Verification Report for Air Quality makes references to air quality monitoring undertaken by both the City of uMhlathuze and the RBCAA and this report also presents some data. She stated that all the data was sourced from the RBCAA, as the municipality has extensive challenges around keeping their monitoring network running and their data does not meet the required standards for statistical analysis. She requested that this distinction be clearly and consistently stated throughout the report wherever air quality data is discussed. She also noted issues with some of the data and the graphs presented, which will be detailed in her written comments. She mentioned that it appears that the specialist sourced data from the South African Air Quality Information System (SAAQIS). She noted that SAAQIS automatically invalidates SO_2 data above certain thresholds. In doing so, it has been incorrectly invalidating valid data from the RBCAA, as their stations only submit validated data to SAAQIS. Therefore, she recommended that the specialist request the data directly from the RBCAA rather than relying on downloads from SAAQIS.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that the written comments from the RBCAA will be forwarded to the Air Quality Specialist for his consideration and feedback.	EAP
23.	Z. Malibiji asked whether the relevant water uses under the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) *NWA) had been	Z. Malibiji	Focus Group	D. Henning noted that the Scoping Report includes a section on the NWA and its relevance to the project. He indicated that the	EAP

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	identified and whether the Water Use Licence Application (WULA) process had commenced.		Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	water uses triggered by the project still need to be confirmed and the WULA process needs to be initiated with the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS).	
24.	F. Schmidt noted that there are corrosion risks in the project area that could pose a potential threat to project infrastructure.	F. Schmidt	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis indicated that they are cognisant of Richards Bay's harsh and corrosive atmospheric conditions and confirmed that these factors will be taken into account during the selection of materials.	Technical Team
25.	S. Camminga emphasised the need for the Noise Impact Assessment to consider nighttime impacts on nearby residential areas due to local wind patterns.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that this would need to be considered as part of the Noise Impact Assessment.	EAP
26.	S. Camminga raised concerns about the direct benefits to the local community given that power is exported to the national grid while local residents bear potential negative impacts.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that this would need to be considered as part of the Socio-Economic Impact Assessment and Social Impact Assessment.	EAP
27.	S. Camminga requested inclusion of a Major Hazardous Installation (MHI) risk assessment and robust emergency response planning, considering local disaster management limitations and cumulative risks from other MHI facilities.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	D. Henning confirmed that a Quantitative Risk Assessment would be undertaken for the project and that the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) would include measures for managing emergencies.	EAP
28.	S. Camminga enquired about emissions during bypass (simple cycle) mode and worst-case scenarios.	S. Camminga	Focus Group Meeting - RBCAA (23/03/26)	G. du Plessis clarified that in bypass mode, the exhaust gas does not pass through the Heat Recovery Steam Generators (HRSGs), resulting in higher temperature but no change in exhaust constituents, and no additional chemicals are added.	Technical Team
				D. Henning indicated that the Air Quality Specialist will assess worst-case scenarios.	EAP
29.	Please note that the proposed development require approval form KZN Amafa. You are required to submit the application on Sahris.	K. Zondi – Amafa and Research Institute	Email (23/03/26)	The Amafa and Research Institute was notified of the Project and the review of the draft SR. The relevant information was uploaded to the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS).	EAP
30.	K. Robbetse asked which cooling technology will be selected.	K. Robbetse	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	G. du Plessis indicated that this still needs to be confirmed.	Technical Team

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31.	D. Mkhwanazi enquired about the location of the site.	D. Mkhwanazi	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that his presentation includes a slide with a locality map. He stated that the site is located within Phase 1F of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ).	EAP
32.	D. Mkhwanazi asked how wastewater will be managed.	D. Mkhwanazi	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	G. du Plessis indicated that all liquid effluent produced by the plant will be treated on site and discharged to the municipal sewer network. He noted that the dry-cooling option will produce less water.	Technical Team
33.	D. Mkhwanazi enquired as to where the electricity generated by the plant would be supplied.	D. Mkhwanazi	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	G. du Plessis responded that the electricity would be fed into Eskom's grid.	Technical Team
34.	P. Madibana noted that the presentation addressed Particulate Matter (PM) levels during the operational phase and recommended that information on PM levels during the construction phase also be provided.	P. Madibana	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning responded that PM levels for both the construction and operational phases would be assessed as part of the Air Quality Impact Assessment.	EAP
35.	N. Magubane noted that the Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV) Report, which is appended to the draft Scoping Report, indicated that the relative Civil Aviation Theme sensitivity is high according to the National Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool. She asked why a Civil Aviation Study will not be undertaken.	N. Magubane	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning explained that there are already a number of existing high buildings and structures located between the project site and Richards Bay Airport. On this basis, the undertaking of a dedicated Civil Aviation Study was not deemed necessary. He further indicated that the South African Civil Aviation	EAP
36.	P. Madibana emphasised the importance of effective stakeholder engagement and requested that community workshops be held with local communities during the EIA phase. She further noted that there were certain constraints affecting the ability of some community members to attend the public meeting, including the timing of the meeting.	P. Madibana	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that a separate meeting has been scheduled for 26 March 2026, from 09:00 to 11:00, at the Nseleni Community Hall to enable engagement with the local community during the daytime. He noted that provision will also be made for a similar meeting during the EIA phase.	EAP
37.	P. Madibana noted the employment opportunities associated with the construction and operational phases of the project, as presented by B. Skhosana. She enquired about the potential health risks to workers associated with working at the facility.	P. Madibana	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) system will be implemented for the facility. He further noted that a number of specialist studies forming part of the EIA will assess potential risks to human health, and that the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr) will include appropriate OHS-related mitigation measures.	EAP
38.	P. Madibana emphasised the need for the specialists undertaking the Air Quality Impact Assessment and the	P. Madibana	Public Meeting	D. Henning indicated that the Health Impact Assessment will take into consideration all	EAP

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	Health Impact Assessment to work closely together in order to adequately assess the plant's potential human health risks.		(25/03/26)	relevant specialist studies, including the Air Quality Impact Assessment.	
39.	P. Madibana stated that the assessment of cumulative impacts needs to include the supply of gas to the facility.	P. Madibana	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning noted that potential cumulative impacts were identified in the Scoping Report, which will be assessed during the EIA phase.	EAP
40.	An unknown attendee asked whether separate EIAs are being undertaken for the LNG infrastructure and the CCGT Power Plant.	-	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning confirmed that this is the case, as these projects have different proponents.	EAP
41.	An unknown attendee enquired whether approval would be required from the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) for the proposed project.	-	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	D. Henning responded that the site's sensitivity in relation to the Defence Theme, as determined using the National Web-Based Environmental Screening Tool, has been assessed and is documented in the SSV Report appended to the draft Scoping Report. He also noted that it will be confirmed whether the SANDF is included in the stakeholder database.	EAP
42.	D. Mkhwanazi enquired whether the project remains feasible in light of the increase in gas prices.	D. Mkhwanazi	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	B. Skhosana responded that this form part of the project's commercial considerations and confirmed that mitigation measures are being assessed to manage this risk.	Applicant
43.	D. Mkhwanazi asked whether gas would be stored on site and, if so, whether municipal approval would be obtained and a risk assessment undertaken.	D. Mkhwanazi	Public Meeting (25/03/26)	G. du Plessis clarified that gas will not be stored on site. He further noted that a Quantitative Risk Assessment will be undertaken for the overall project.	Technical Team
44.	Hi I was unable to attend, farm issue with cattle. Pls can you give me the just of what went on.	S. Aspden	Email (25/03/26)	Sorry you couldn't join us. We will be having more meetings when the draft EIA Report is lodged for public review, including physical and virtual meetings. I will provide further details in the future. Copies of the presentations from the meeting were shared with Mr Aspden.	EAP
45.	No electronic links? Would like to participate	T. van Tonder	Email (25/03/26)	We will be having more meetings when the draft EIA Report is lodged for public review, including physical and virtual meetings. I will provide further details in the future. Copies of the presentations from the meeting were shared with Mr van Tonder.	EAP

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
46.	Kindly confirm whether there will be a virtual session held, if so, kindly provide a link.	L. Perumal – RBIDZ	Email (25/03/26)	The public meeting was a face-to-face session. We will cater for a virtual meeting when the draft EIA Report is lodged for public review. Copies of the presentations from the meeting were shared with Mrs Perumal.	EAP
47.	I am based in Pietermaritzburg, so I can't attend the meeting tonight. Will there be a MTeams meeting soon?	N. Padayachee – UUW	Email (25/03/26)	We will cater for a virtual meeting when the draft EIA Report is lodged for public review. Copies of the presentations from the meeting were shared with Mr Padayachee.	EAP
48.	An unknown attendee enquired about the status of the Scoping Phase.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning explained that the draft Scoping Report is currently out for public review and all comments are due by 8 April 2026.	EAP
49.	An unknown attendee asked where the gas will be obtained from. She also enquired about the route of the gas pipeline.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that the Applicant would source the natural gas from the planned terminal development at the Port of Richards Bay (PoRB). He noted that the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) is expected to be supplied through a pipeline from the Transnet natural gas terminal to the proposed plant. He further stated that separate regulatory processes will be undertaken for the LNG infrastructure.	EAP
50.	An unknown attendee expressed concern about air pollution that may be caused by the plant.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that an Air Quality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the project and that the findings from this study will be included in the EIA Report, during the next phase of the process. He noted that this study will also assess cumulative air quality impacts.	EAP
51.	An unknown attendee asked if the plant will alleviate load shedding.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana indicated that the plant would contribute to reducing load shedding.	Applicant
52.	An unknown attendee asked how it would be possible to create 500 jobs during the construction phase, and only 50 permanent jobs once the plant is operational. He also asked about the qualifications necessary to apply for employment at the plant.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana explained that many more employment opportunities are available during the construction phase due to the large number of activities that will be taking place on site. Specific skills will be required during the operational phase. He noted that the qualifications required still need to be	Applicant

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				determined, and this this will be published in consultation with the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ). He stated that preference will be given to local people. He also mentioned that training will be provided to employees.	
53.	An unknown attendee enquired if the project relates to any mining activities.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	N. Ncube confirmed that the project relates to a proposed Gas-to-Power Plant, and that it is not linked to mining.	Meeting Facilitator
54.	An unknown attendee asked why Richards Bay was identified as a location for the project.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana indicated that government undertook a study to identify suitable locations for gas-to-power projects, which lead to the identification of Richards Bay, Coega and Saldanha Bay. He noted that Richards Bay is near Mozambique, from where natural gas is sourced from. He also mentioned that the site is near the PoRB and that there is spare capacity in the electrical grid. He further noted that gas-to-power will stabilise the grid. He indicated that government intends adding gas power of 15,000MW to the grid, and that the total generation capacity of the proposed plant will be 750MW.	Applicant
55.	An unknown attendee asked when the project would start.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana indicated that government wants construction to commence in 2029/2030.	Applicant
56.	An unknown attendee asked if employment opportunities will only be offered to males, or if females will also be employed.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana stated that males and females would be employed.	Applicant
57.	N. Magubane expressed concerns regarding traffic-related impacts that may be caused by the project. She enquired whether there will be more trucks on the roads as a result of the project. She also asked if LNG would be transported by trucks to the plant and, if so, what the associated risks would be.	N. Magubane	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that there would be more traffic during construction, however, mitigation measures would be identified based on the Traffic Impact Assessment. He noted that the gas would be conveyed by a pipeline to the plant.	EAP
58.	N. Magubane noted that, while gas is cleaner than coal, its use as a fossil fuel energy source appears to be	N. Magubane	Nseleni Community Meeting	D. Henning indicated that a Climate Change Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the project and that the findings from this study will	EAP

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	inconsistent with the country's commitments under the Paris Agreement.		(26/03/26)	be included in the EIA Report. He further noted that this study will also assess cumulative climate change impacts.	
59.	N. Magubane asked if the minutes of the meeting and presentations would be shared with the meeting attendees.	N. Magubane	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning confirmed that the minutes and copies of presentations would be shared.	EAP
60.	S. Williams enquired about the extent of noise and vibration impacts from the plant, and whether surrounding game reserves and residential areas would be affected.	S. Williams	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that a Noise Impact Assessment would be undertaken for the project, which will consider sensitive receptors in relation to the site.	EAP
61.	S. Williams stated that, with regard to employment opportunities, the Applicant needs to look at the database and employ people that have participated in the process.	S. Williams	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana indicated that meeting attendees may submit their CVs for consideration.	Applicant
62.	S. Williams noted that the draft Scoping Report was only placed at two libraries. She requested that the EIA-related reports be distributed wider.	S. Williams	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	D. Henning indicated that the EIA Report would be placed at additional areas that are accessible to the local communities.	EAP
63.	An unknown attendee indicated that some people may be too old when the project starts to be employed for the project.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana mentioned that the people that attended the meeting would be considered.	Applicant
64.	An unknown attendee expressed concern regarding the cost of electricity, which impacts local communities.	-	Nseleni Community Meeting (26/03/26)	B. Skhosana noted that the cost of electricity is determined by the municipality and is outside the control of the Applicant.	Applicant
65.	Apologies I could not attend, I had an online on Tuesday but there were technical issue on Unisa IT side, and yesterday at 13h00, received notification that it will happen at 17h00. When I received reminder for the meeting I was already in class. Trust that I will be added on the distribution list.	P. Thango	Email (26/03/26)	Sorry you couldn't join us. We will be having more meetings when the draft EIA Report is lodged for public review, including physical and virtual meetings. I will provide further details in the future. Copies of the presentations from the meeting were shared with Mr Thango.	EAP
66.	This is Khaya, we spoke earlier. Please kindly see my company profile.	ICAYA HOLDINGS (PTY) LTD	Email (26/03/26)	This information was forwarded to the Applicant for further consideration.	EAP
67.	Please note that all development applications are processed via our online portal, the South African Heritage	N. Khumalo – SAHRA	Email (27/03/26)	The Amafa and Research Institute was notified of the Project and the review of the draft SR.	EAP

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	Resources Information System (SAHRIS) found at the following link: http://sahra.org.za/sahris/. We do not accept emailed, posted, hardcopy, faxed, website links or DropBox links as official submissions. The SAHRA will provide comment on any portions of the development located below the Maritime High Water Mark. Please create an application on SAHRIS for each EA application and upload all documents pertaining to the Environmental Authorisation Application Process. As per section 24(4)b(iii) of NEMA and section 38(8) of the National Heritage Resources Act, Act 25 of 1999 (NHRA), an assessment of heritage resources must form part of the process and the assessment must comply with section 38(3) of the NHRA. If a case already exists on SAHRIS regarding the development, please upload the documents to that case using the "Make an additional submission to an existing case" in the application selector wizard https://sahris.org.za/form/application-selector. Please ensure that all documents produced as part of the EA process are submitted as part of the application. **PLEASE NOTE** An application fee is now required for all section 38 applications. Please ensure that the SAHRIS application contains a proof of payment as per the notice at the following link: https://www.sahris.org.za/node/383817. Please make separate payments with the specific reference numbers. Applications that do not include a proof of payment will be considered incomplete and will not be processed until proof of payment is provided. Please make use of the auto generated payment reference that can be found within the application form. Please upload the PoP using the "Make an additional submission to an existing case" in the application selector wizard https://sahris.org.za/form/application-selector. The case officer assigned to your case will approve the submission and begin to process the case.			The relevant information was uploaded to SAHRIS.	
68.	The following below project and link to the scoping report refers.	R. Moraka – Natural Justice	Email (01/04/26)	Written comments on the draft Scoping Report need to be forwarded by 8 April 2026 - refer to	EAP

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	• Proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant in Richards Bay, City of uMhlathuze Local Municipality, King Cetshwayo District Municipality, Kwazulu-Nata • https://nemai.co.za/documents/10784richardsbay2/01%20DRAFT%20SCOPING%20REPORT.pdf Please could you advice (or provide a reference document) on when the deadline for comments on the scoping are due?			the attached notification. The deadline for comments is also provided in Section 12.3.1 of the draft Scoping Report, which can be downloaded via https://nemai.co.za/10784-richardsbay/.	
69.	The Application for Environmental Authorisation and Draft Scoping Report (SR) dated March 2026 and received by the Department on 05 March 2026, refer.	M. Mogorosi - DFFE	Letter (02/04/26)	It is confirmed that the application and the draft Scoping Report (SR) were submitted to DFFE on 5 March 2026.	EAP
70.	This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included in the Final Scoping Report:			It is noted that, in some instances, the information requested by the DFFE will only be provided in the EIA Report. The relevant responses are provided below.	EAP
71.	(a) Listed Activities (i) Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific, and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure (including thresholds) as described in the project description. Only activities (and sub-activities) applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed. (ii) The description of the project to which the listed activities are related must be expanded to include thresholds, footprints and capacities of the associated infrastructure, particularly those that trigger a listed activity. (iii) The relevant authorities must be continuously involved throughout the assessment process as the development property possibly falls within geographically designated areas in terms of numerous GN R. 985 Activities. Written comments must be obtained from the relevant authorities and submitted to this Department. In addition, a graphical representation of the proposed development within the respective geographical areas must be provided.			(i) The listed activities triggered by the Project are captured in the Application Form as well as in Table 3 of the draft SR. All listed activities applied for have been reviewed to ensure that they are relevant, specific, and directly linked to the proposed development activities and associated infrastructure, including applicable thresholds, as described in the draft SR. (ii) The Project Description will be expanded in the EIA Report (as necessary) to clearly define the thresholds, physical footprints and capacities of all proposed development components and associated infrastructure that trigger listed activities. (iii) Various authorities were notified of the review of the draft SR, including the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Department of	EAP

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				Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR), South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), Amafa and Research Institute, KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), KZN DFFE, and CoU (amongst others). Refer further to the database contained in Appendix E of the SR for a list of the authorities that were informed of the review of the draft SR. The relevant sensitive geographical areas linked to Listing Notice 3 that are directly affected by the development footprint are listed in Table 3 of the SR. Refer to the corresponding maps contained in Section 11 of the SR, such as Figure 47 that shows Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) Irreplaceable areas in relation to the project area.	
72.	(b) Specialist Assessments (i) Specialist studies to be conducted must provide a detailed description of their methodology, as well as indicate the locations and descriptions of the development footprint, and all other associated infrastructures that they have assessed and are recommending for authorisations. (ii) The specialist studies must also provide a detailed description of all limitations of their studies. All specialist studies must be conducted in the right season and providing that as a limitation, will not be accepted. (iii) Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas. (iv) Should the specialist definition of 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable.			(i) The Specialist Studies will be included in the EIA Report. The specialists' reports will comply with these requirements. (ii) The specialists' reports will include the limitations, as relevant. From an ecological perspective, it is noted that the site was previously cleared under the Environmental Authorisation for RBIDZ Phase 1F that was granted in Sept 2016 (reference no.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/665). The site is currently undeveloped/vacant and is mowed and maintained by the RBIDZ. The site is also located within a controlled area and the RBIDZ Phase 1F is fenced. (iii) This definition of a 'no-go' area will be applied in the EIA Report, based on the findings of the specialists. (iv) This will be included in the EIA Report.	EAP

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	(v) All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA. (vi) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defendable reasons; and were necessary, include further expertise advice. (vii) It is further brought to your attention that Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species), have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols. Please indicate whether the protocols were applied. (viii) Please note that the protocols require certain specialist's to be SACNASP registered. As such, the Specialist Declaration of Interest forms must also indicate the scientific organisation registration/member number and status of registration/membership for each specialist. (ix) Please note that if any of the specialists' studies and requirements/protocols recommended in the Department's Screening Tool are not commissioned, motivation for such must be provided in the report, inclusive of the necessary site sensitivity verification reports and specialist compliance statements. (x) The terms of reference for the Climate Change Impact Assessment must assess the impacts of the development on climate change and vice versa and accordingly must			(v) The Specialist Studies will be included in the EIA Report. The specialists' reports will comply with these requirements. (vi) This will be considered further in the EIA Report if specialists provide contradicting recommendations. (vii) The specialist studies will be undertaken in accordance with these Protocols, as relevant. (viii) The specialists' Declarations will include this information, which will be appended to the EIA Report. (ix) The Screening Report for the Project was compiled by means of the Screening Tool, which was appended to the Application Form. Table 20 in the SR lists the specialist studies that were identified in the Screening Report and notes the relevance of these studies to the Project following Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV). The SSV Report is contained in Appendix D of the SR. (x) The terms of reference for the Climate Change Impact Assessment, which are contained in Section 14.4.5.2 of the SR, cater for these requirements.	

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	consider both mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change.				
73.	(c) Layout & Sensitivity Maps (i) Please provide a layout map that indicates the following: • Positions of the proposed facility as well as all associated infrastructure; • Permanent and temporary laydown area footprints; • All supporting onsite infrastructure e.g. roads (existing and proposed); and • All existing infrastructure on the site. (ii) The above map must be overlain with a sensitivity map that indicates the following: • The location of sensitive environmental features on site e.g., CBAs, NPEAS focus areas, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected; • Buffer areas; and, • All “no-go” areas. (iii) Provide a map of the Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant in relation to the proposed electrical grid and gas pipeline infrastructure (the potential connection points and distances), to support the feasibility of the facility. (iv) A cumulative map showing the development in relation to similar neighbouring industrial/energy developments and air pollutant emitters must also be provided. Google maps will not be accepted.			(i) Layout drawings, aerial views and schematic plans are provided in Figures 11 and 12 of the SR, as well as in Appendix A. The resolution of the layouts in Figures 11 and 12 were increased in the final SR to enable a clearer and more legible presentation of the proposed plant components. These plans indicate the spatial arrangement of the CCGT Power Plant and ancillary infrastructure. Further information will be provided in the EIA Report. (ii) Various maps reflecting the location of the site in relation to sensitive areas and environmental features (such as CBA Irreplaceable, NPAES, rivers, wetlands, groundwater level depths, air quality sensitivity, noise-sensitive receptors, etc.) are provided in Section 11 of the SR. A composite sensitivity map will be included in the EIA Report, which will also show buffer areas and ‘no-go’ areas based on the findings of the specialist studies. (iii) An indicative map of the CCGT Power Plant in relation to the proposed gas infrastructure is included in Section 9.3 of the final SR. A map of the electrical grid infrastructure will be included in the EIA Report, based on engagement with Eskom. (iv) The known existing industrial facilities or projects within a 10 km radius of the site are provided in Section 13.4.2.2 of the SR. Cumulative impacts will be assessed as part of the specialist studies, and the findings	EAP

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				(including associated mapping) will be included in the EIA Report.	
74.	(d) Public Participation Process (i) Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received during the circulation of the SR from registered I&APs and organs of state which have jurisdiction (including this Department's Biodiversity Section: [redacted]) in respect of the proposed activity are adequately addressed in the Final SR. (ii) Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the Final SR. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof must be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments. (iii) The final SR must provide evidence that all identified and relevant competent authorities have been given an opportunity to comment on the proposed development and SR, particularly, this Department's Climate Change; Air Quality, and Protected Areas Directorates; the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs; the relevant Atmospheric Emissions Licence (AEL) Authority, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development; Department of Water and Sanitation; the Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources; Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, AMAFA, SAHRA, SANRAL and the District and Local Municipalities. (iv) The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of the approved public participation plan and Regulation 39, 40 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended. (v) A comments and response trail report (C&R) must be submitted with the final SR. The C&R report must incorporate all comments received (pre and post submission of draft SR) for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report,			(i) The issues raised and comments received during the public review of the draft SR have been reviewed and addressed in the preparation of the final SR. Responses to all comments are provided in this CRR, and where applicable, the final SR has been revised to address the comments. DFFE's Biodiversity Section was notified of the review of the draft SR. (ii) Proof of notification of the review of the draft SR is provided in Appendix I of the final SR. Comments received on the draft Scoping Report are contained in Appendix J of the final SR. (iii) Proof of notification of the review of the draft SR is provided in Appendix I of the final SR. Comments received on the draft Scoping Report are contained in Appendix J of the final SR. All the authorities listed in this comment were notified of the review of the draft SR. Refer further to the database contained in Appendix E of the SR for the overall list of the authorities and I&APs that were informed of the review of the draft SR. (iv) The Public Participation Process was undertaken in accordance with the regulated requirements. Section 12 of the SR explains the following public participation tasks: • Compiling the database of I&APs. • Review of draft Scoping Report –	EAP

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	and the format must be in the table format which reflects the details of the I&APs and date of comments received, actual comments received, and response provided. Please ensure that comments made by I&APs are comprehensively captured (copy verbatim if required) and responded to clearly and fully. Please note that a response such as "Noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments. (vi) Please include the period for when the public participation period occurred i.e. when was the draft Scoping Report circulated for comment for the current application.			○ Period to review the draft Scoping Report; ○ Notification of review of the draft Scoping Report; ○ Accessing the draft Scoping Report; ○ Commenting on the draft Scoping Report; and ○ Public meeting to present the draft Scoping Report. (v) This CRR, which will be appended to the final SR, serves to capture all the comments received and the related responses. (vi) As indicated in Section 12.3.1 of the SR, the draft SR was lodged for public review from 6 March until 8 April 2026.	
75.	(e) Cumulative Assessment (i) Should there be any other similar Gas to Power plants proposed within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following: • Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e., hectares of cumulatively transformed land. • Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project. • The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. • A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.			(i) Cumulative impacts that were identified during the Scoping Phase are presented in Section 13.4 of the Scoping Report. The EIA Report will include a detailed qualitative and quantitative assessment of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with the Project, which will cover the requirements listed in this comment. The assessment will incorporate the findings of the specialist studies and technical investigations.	EAP

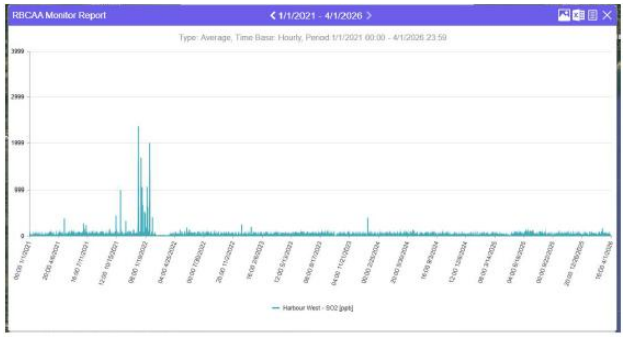
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76.	(f) Specific Comments (i) The EAP must provide details of what the proposed facility will entail, including the associated infrastructure. (ii) The EAP must provide details of the specific locations in the final SR and not provide vague locations of the proposed developments. All associated infrastructure must be clearly indicated in the final SR and its associated layout plans. (iii) Please provide evidence that the application for an air emissions licence has been submitted to the relevant AEL authority and that consultation with that authority has taken place, since the AEL process is to be run parallel to the EIA process. The AEL authority must have been given the opportunity to comment on the SR, including the terms of reference for the Air Quality Impact Assessment. (iv) Please provide an indication of what activities have already been authorised on the proposed Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant site in terms of the Environmental Authorisation (EA) for the IDZ Phase 1F dated 27 September 2016 (DFFE Ref No.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/665), versus those being applied for in this application. Please confirm that the EA is still valid. (v) Please ensure that landowner consent is provided with the final SR. (vi) Ensure that the final SR includes confirmation of the availability of services from the relevant authorities. (vii) Under the legislation and policy section of the SR, which discusses the National Environmental Management: Waste Act No 59 of 2008, please indicate whether the proposed development will require a Waste Management License. (viii) It is noted that the electrical grid infrastructure and gas pipeline for the facility are to be applied for separately.			(i) The SR provides a description of the proposed facility and its associated infrastructure, including *inter alia* the CCGT Power Plant configuration, generating capacity, site extent, layout, operational processes and associated infrastructure such as water storage, cooling systems, electrical infrastructure, access, bulk services and ancillary facilities. These details are presented primarily in Sections 9 (Project Description), 9.5 (Overview of the Proposed Plant) and related subsections of the SR. Notwithstanding the above, the Project Description will be refined in the EIA Report. (ii) The cadastral extent of the site, property boundaries and coordinates are provided in Section 4 (Project Location), supported by Table 2 (Coordinates of the Property Boundary) and Figures 1 to 4, which illustrate the regional context, local setting and site-specific layout. In addition, the location and extent of the proposed facility and associated infrastructure are described in Section 9 (Project Description) and Section 9.5 (Overview of the Proposed Plant), with supporting layout drawings, aerial views and schematic plans (Figures 11 and 12, as well as maps contained in Appendix A). These plans indicate the spatial arrangement of the CCGT Power Plant and ancillary infrastructure. (iii) As noted in Section 6.5.2 of the SR, a Pre-Application Meeting was previously convened with DFFE on 8 February 2024. One of the actions that emanated from this meeting was to set up a meeting with DFFE's Air Quality and Climate Change Units in order to:	EAP

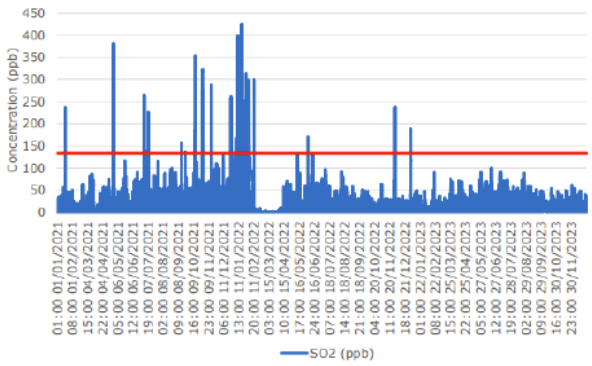
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	These components should ideally be assessed holistically together with the gas power plant. The gas power plant, if approved, would therefore not be allowed to commence, without these other authorisations also being in place. The applicant is advised to take this into consideration in the planning and timing of the project.			• Determine DFFE's requirements from the Air Quality Impact Assessment and Climate Change Impact Assessment; and • Determine DFFE's requirements for the Atmospheric Emission Licence (AEL) in terms of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act (Act No. 39 of 2004) (NEM:AQA) and how it needs to align with the S&EIR Process. Accordingly, a meeting was held with DFFE's Air Quality and Climate Change Units on 1 March 2024 (refer to Appendix H of the final SR for the notes from this meeting). During this meeting, the representative from DFFE's Air Quality Unit confirmed that the AEL process will only be initiated if Environmental Authorisation is received for the Project. Hence, the application for the AEL has not been submitted yet, as per DFFE's guidance. (iv) An Environmental Authorisation was granted by the former Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), now known as DFFE, for the RBIDZ Phase 1F in Sept 2016 (reference no.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/665). The following components of the development were catered for in the Environmental Authorisation (shown in Figure 5 in the SR): • Water infrastructure; • Sewer infrastructure; • Stormwater infrastructure; • Roads; • Electrical services; and • Infilling of wetlands (to enable the development of the site for industrial purposes).	

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				The access road and services required for the proposed Project are thus covered in the existing Environmental Authorisation for the RBIDZ Phase 1F and are not being applied for again. The infilling of the wetland on the site is also excluded from the Project's application. The Environmental Authorisation was activated when the above activities were commenced with by the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone Company SOC Ltd. (v) As noted in Section 6.5.3 of the SR, the Project is located within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ under a long-term lease agreement. Due to its designated Strategic Integrated Project (SIP) status, landowner consent is not required for the Project. Landowner consent was previously provided by the RBIDZ for the development, prior to the project obtaining SIP status, which is contained in Appendix G of the SR. (vi) Confirmation of services to be included in EIA Report. (vii) As indicated in Section 5.1.5.2 of the SR, a Waste Management Licence will not be required in terms of NEM:WA, as the Project will not include any listed waste management activities. (viii) While the electrical grid infrastructure and gas supply pipeline are not included in the scope of this application and will be assessed through separate EIA processes, their functional interdependence with the proposed CCGT Power Plant is recognised. It is acknowledged that the commencement of the power plant will be contingent on the authorisation of these separate components.	

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				This interdependency will be taken into account in the overall project planning.	
77.	General You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 21(1) of the NEMA EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, which states that: "If S&EIR must be applied to an application, the applicant must, within 44 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority a scoping report which has been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority". You are further reminded that the final SR to be submitted to this Department must comply with all the requirements in terms of the scope of assessment and content of Scoping reports in accordance with Appendix 2 and Regulation 21(1) of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended. Further note that in terms of Regulation 45 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended, this application will lapse if the applicant fails to meet any of the timeframes prescribed in terms of these Regulations unless an extension has been granted in terms of Regulation 3(7). You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.			The final SR will be submitted to DFFE within 44 days of receipt of the application by the Department. As a minimum, the SR aims to satisfy the requirements stipulated in Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations. Table 1 in the SR presents the document's composition in terms of these regulatory requirements. The Applicant, EAP and project team will endeavour to adhere to the regulated timeframes.	EAP
78.	The Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA) has reviewed the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) prepared by NEMAI Consulting, dated March 2026 and make submission as follows;	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Letter (02/04/26)	Introductory part of letter – no response required.	-
79.	**AIR QUALITY** The Atmospheric Impact Report should include;			The Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) will be incorporated into the EIA Report.	Air Quality Specialist

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	• Dispersion modelling of cumulative impacts, inclusive of existing and future developments that currently hold an authorisation. • Assessment of fugitive emissions, including the potential for mercaptan odours.			Scenario 3 of the AIR addresses the assessment of the ambient concentration resulting from emissions from the Mabasa CCPP operating in combined-cycle mode with stack emissions of SO2, NOX and PM from six major industrial sources in Richards Bay. Scenario 4 concerns the assessment of six approve applications for the establishment and operation of industrial facilities in Richards Bay. There will be no handling and transfer of LNG at the Mabasa CCPP. Therefore, fugitive emissions are not expected to arise and are excluded from the assessment. Further the Mabasa CCPP is a negligible source of mercaptan odours, hence their exclusion in the AIR.	
80.	**Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV)** The SSV sets the foundation for the air quality specialist study. The accurate representation and analysis of information and data is therefore essential. 1. Reference is made to “dust from mining activities” as a contributor to ambient concentration within Richards Bay. Please can we have clarification as to what mining activities these would be ?			Noted. This should rather refer to dust from ore storage and handling and will be corrected in the finalising the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist
81.	2. **Monitoring Networks**: The report states that air quality monitoring in Richards Bay is being undertaken by the CoU and the RBCAA. It does not distinguish between the two monitoring networks, but simply states that the sensitivity analysis used “the available data from air quality monitoring stations in the area.” It is common knowledge that the CoU experiences challenges with their network. This results in data capture percentages that do not meet SANAS requirements for statistical purposes.			Noted, the distinction will be made in finalising the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	It is imperative that the report clearly and consistently define which network's data is being analysed and presented, and to whom the stations belong. Please correct the references to "Habour AQMS" to read "Harbour West AQMS"..				
82.	3. **SAAQIS SO2 Data**: The report states that hourly data was downloaded from SAAQIS. This has resulted in a mis-representation of concentrations. The RBCAA is aware that SAAQIS invalidates SO2 concentrations above a certain threshold. It is important to note that the RBCAA data is validated before being uploaded to SAAQIS and should therefore not be invalidated on SAAQIS. RBCAA SO2 data should therefore be sourced directly from the RBCAA. Below is a comparison graph using data downloaded from the RBCAA database, which when compared to the graph in the SSV report highlights the significant discrepancies arising from the use of data downloaded from SAAQIS. The RBCAA data shows a number of hourly averages above 1000 ppb with the highest hourly average of 2537 ppb recorded at Harbour West, compared to 425 ppb in Figure 4-1 of the SSV report. **RBCAA Hourly SO2 data recorded at Harbour West 2021-2023** 			The discrepancy is noted, SO_2 data will be requested directly from the RBCAA in finalising the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	 **Figure 4-1: Hourly average SO_2 concentrations (ppb) measured at the Harbour AQMS** The same applies to the representation of daily average SO2 in the SSV report, with the highest daily average represented as being just below 350 ppb, while the highest daily average recorded by the RBCAA Harbour West station was in fact 805.80 ppb				
83.	4. Table 4-1: The table must indicate to whom the monitoring stations belong. **Table 4-1: Data Capture for data obtained from respective monitoring stations between 2021-2023** Pollutant / Data Capture (%) / Station SO_2 / 96 / Harbour PM_{10} / 92 / CBD $PM_{2.5}$ / 84 / Brackenham			Noted, the distinction will be made in finalising the AIR	Air Quality Specialist
84.	**PIPELINE** The exclusion of the pipeline as part of this EIA is not supported as it dilutes the cumulative impacts of the proposed facility.			While the gas supply pipeline is not included in the scope of this application and will be assessed through a separate EIA process, its functional interdependence with the proposed CCGT Power Plant is recognised. It is acknowledged that the commencement of the power plant will be contingent on the authorisation of this separate component. This interdependency will be taken into account in the overall project planning.	EAP

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85.	**MHI RISK ASSESSMENT** The Risk Assessment must consider existing and proposed MHI facilities. There are now three (3) proposed gas to power facilities proposed on IDZ 1F, with one having received Authorisation. The establishment of multiple MHIs on IDZ 1F will increase the risk to communities. In addition, the suitability of establishing the proposed Mabasa Energy gas to power plant adjacent to a major road and small businesses needs to be assessed. Both the local and distruct municipalities have capacity challenges when it comes to Fire & Rescue and Disaster Management. These risks should be assessed.			As mentioned in the SR, provision is made for a Quantitative Risk Assessment to be undertaken for the Project. The findings from this assessment will be incorporated into the EIA Report.	EAP
86.	**SITE IDZ 1F** The RBCAA is of the opinion that the proposed site is not suitable for the establishment of multiple gas to power plants. The cumulative impacts due to the proximity of IDZ 1F to the residential areas of Aquadene, Brackenham and Wildenweide, and the prevailing winds, will place these communities at risk, as well as neighbouring small busniesses. IDZ status does not automatically designate acceptability. An alternative site should be considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment.			The SR does not assume that the IDZ status of the site equates to automatic environmental acceptability. Instead, it recognises that site suitability must be demonstrated through a detailed assessment of impacts. Accordingly, specialist studies including Air Quality Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Climate Change Impact Assessment, Socio-Economic Assessment, Social Impact Assessment and Quantitative Risk Assessment have been identified for the EIA Phase to evaluate potential impacts on surrounding communities and neighbouring businesses, including cumulative effects. With regard to alternatives, the SR explains that no reasonable location alternatives were identified, as the project site was allocated by the RBIDZ within an established industrial precinct with appropriate zoning, services and strategic proximity to the Port of Richards Bay (PoRB). Nevertheless, the No-Go Alternative is included and will be assessed during the EIA Phase, and design-, layout- and	EAP

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				technology-related alternatives form part of the EIA assessment. The suitability of the proposed site for the gas-to-power facility will therefore be conclusively determined through the EIA Phase, based on the outcomes of the specialist studies and the application of appropriate mitigation measures.	
87.	**WATER USAGE** The area is over-allocated in terms of water resources and has in the past been subjected to severe drought conditions. Options to lower water consumption much be considered.			The technical team has identified the use of an air cooled / dry cooled condenser as an alternative to forced-draft cooling towers. Using a dry cooled condenser will reduce the proposed plant's water usage as well as wastewater. Further information pertaining to the dry cooled condenser will be included in the EIA Report. A comparative analysis of these options will also be included in the EIA Report.	EAP
88.	**SOCIO-ECONOMIC** The assessment of socio-economic benefits needs to extend beyond job creation and skills development. There need to be benefits for the greater community within uMhlathuze given that the potential negative impacts will directly affect the local residents. The reliability of electrical, water and wastewater services should be assessed. The City's infrastructure is under extreme pressure due to lack of maintenance and upgrades, with failures and extended outages well documented.			These aspects will be considered in the EIA Report.	EAP
89.	**NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT** The assessment should consider nighttime impacts on nearby residential areas.			Night-time impacts will be assessed as part of the Noise Impact Assessment. The findings will be included in the EIA Report.	EAP
90.	**EMMISSION DATA (AELS)** The RBCAA has assisted with providing emission data in the form of member's AELS for the purposes of undertaking cumulative modelling.			Confidentiality is understood and appreciated. Hence the exclusion of information from the respective AELs in the AIR. The point is made the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	We would like to reiterate that this information was provided for the sole purpose of undertaking the air quality assessment for the proposed Mabasa Energy gas to power plant. The information contained in the AELS may not be reproduced, extracted, republished, analysed or distributed for any other purposes without the prior written consent of the RBCAA. Thank you for affording the RBCAA the opportuinity to comment.				
91.	1. groundWork is a non-profit environmental justice organisation that supports communities in South and Southern Africa on issues relating to coal, climate, energy, waste and environmental health, and is a registered interested and affected party (I&AP) in this matter.	Y. Moodley – groundWork	Letter (08/04/26)	It is confirmed that groundWork is a registered I&AP for the proposed Project's EIA.	EAP
92.	2. We submit these comments on the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay (the "Project"), prepared by Nemai Consulting on behalf of Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd. We have read and support comments prepared by the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA). Our comments should be read together with their documentation, as they corroborate each other's arguments.			The comments from groundWork have been read together with the comments received from the SDCEA, as requested.	EAP
93.	3. We re-affirm our registeration as an interested and affected parties (I&APs) in terms of the EIA Regulations and wish to participate in all subsequent stages of this environmental assessment process.			It is confirmed that groundWork is a registered I&AP for the proposed Project's EIA. groundWork will be notified as the EIA process unfolds.	EAP
94.	4. We have identified concerns with the Draft Scoping Report (DSR) relating to the scope of the Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA), the Needs and Desirability Assessment, and compliance with South Africa's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) that we address more fully below.			The related comments are responded to below.	EAP
95.	5. We object, in principle, to the development of new long-lived fossil fuel generation capacity in circumstances where South Africa is already off-track to meet its Paris			These concerns are recognised and have been identified as key issues for assessment during the EIA Phase. The Project will be assessed	EAP

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	Agreement and NDC commitments, and where additional gas-fired capacity in an already heavily industrialised airshed will impose further climate, air quality, health and environmental justice burdens on surrounding communities.			within the context of South Africa's climate commitments and the existing industrial nature of the Richards Bay airshed through specialist studies, including Climate Change, Air Quality and Health Impact Assessments.	
96.	**Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) requires revision in scope** 6. In Earthlife Africa Johannesburg v Minister of Environmental Affairs (Case number: 65662/16) ("Earthlife case"), the court found that "the legislative and policy scheme and framework overwhelmingly support the conclusion that an assessment of climate change impacts and mitigating measures will be relevant factors in the environmental authorisation process, and that consideration of such will best be accomplished by means of a professionally researched climate change impact report." 7. This requirement applies with equal force to gas-fired power stations. In South Durban Community Environmental Alliance v Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (Case no. 479/2023) (September 2025) ("SDCEA case"), the Supreme Court of Appeal set aside an environmental authorisation for a 3000MW gas power plant at Richards Bay, finding that climate change impacts were not adequately considered. 8. The CCIA proposed in the Plan of Study for EIA is inadequate in the following respects: 9. The proposed scope of the CCIA is limited to the projects lifecycle emissions during construction and operation. The Earthlife court endorsed an assessment that "would comprise an assessment of (i) the extent to which a proposed [power station] will contribute to climate change over its lifetime, by quantifying its GHG emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning.".			The Climate Change Impact Assessment will include emissions associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project, including Scope 1, Scope 2 and relevant Scope 3 emissions. The Climate Change Impact Assessment will address consistency with South Africa's NDC and Paris Agreement obligations. The Climate Change Impact Assessment will consider the Project's resilience to the impacts of climate change.	Climate Change Specialist
				The Plan of Study was updated accordingly.	EAP

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	10. The DSR should require a detailed study of whether the Project emissions would be consistent with South Africa's GHG emissions commitments. 11. We therefore request that the Plan of Study for EIA be amended to require a comprehensive Climate Change Impact Assessment that includes: • Full life-cycle GHG analysis (Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions); • Assessment of consistency with South Africa's NDC and Paris Agreement obligations; and • Assessment of climate change risks to the project (adaptation and resilience).				
97.	**Deficiencies in the scope of the Needs and Desirability Assessment** 12. Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations requires motivation of "the need and desirability of the proposed activity." The DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017) provides comprehensive guidance on this assessment. Section 24(4)(b)(i) of NEMA requires investigation of alternatives, including the option of not implementing the activity.			The SR explains the Needs and Desirability of the Project, as required in Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations. This assessment was informed by the DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017). Further refinement of the assessment will be undertaken in the EIA Phase as additional specialist information becomes available.	EAP
98.	13. The DSR's treatment of the "no-go" alternative is one-sided, emphasising foregone macro-economic benefits but failing to describe the environmental, climate, health and socio-economic harms that would be avoided if the Project does not proceed. The EIA must fairly assess both negative and positive implications of the no-go option, including avoided GHG emissions, avoided local air-pollution and health burdens in an already over-polluted airshed, and the preservation of opportunities for lower-carbon, lower-impact energy pathways.			The no-go alternative is included in the Scoping Report as a baseline scenario, consistent with scoping-level requirements. The EIA Phase will provide a detailed and balanced assessment of the no-go option, including consideration of environmental, climate, air quality and health impacts, alongside foregone socio-economic opportunities, informed by the findings of the specialist studies and the cumulative impact assessment.	EAP
99.	14. Furthermore, the Plan of Study should expressly recognise that, if the EIA-phase specialist studies demonstrate that cumulative climate, air quality, health or water impacts in the Richards Bay airshed and catchment are high or very high (particularly in light of existing non-compliance with more health-protective guideline values) the EIA must consider and motivate the no-go			The Plan of Study for EIA recognises that the outcomes of the EIA-phase specialist studies will inform the overall acceptability of the Project.	EAP

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	alternative as the environmentally preferable option, rather than treating it as a purely formal baseline.			Specific attention is drawn to the following item included in the Terms of Reference for the specialist studies in Section 14.4.4 of the SR: "*The provision of a statement of impact significance for each issue, which specifies whether or not a pre-determined threshold of significance (i.e., changes in effects to the environment which would change a significance rating) has been exceeded, and whether or not the impact presents a potential fatal flaw or not. This statement of significance should be provided for anticipated project impacts both before and after application of impact management actions*." Should the specialist studies indicate that impacts cannot be mitigated to acceptable levels, the implications of the no-go alternative will be reconsidered and motivated accordingly as part of the EIA findings.	
100.	15. In addition, the Needs and Desirability Assessment must be broadened to include a robust energy system analysis that considers recent system-level modelling of the South African electricity sector. Independent analyses by Meridian Economics and others indicate that forcing large-scale gas into the power generation portfolio, beyond a limited peaking role to support renewables, materially increases overall system costs relative to a least-cost pathway dominated by renewable energy and storage, and that peaking requirements can be met by existing liquid-fuel peakers for at least the next decade.			The Applicant notes the comment. The Needs and Desirability Assessment is strictly grounded in promulgated national policy, specifically the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), which legally mandates new-build gas-to-power capacity for grid stability. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) evaluates the project against these statutory frameworks rather than independent macro-economic models. The proposed facility is designed to provide the synchronous generation and firm dispatchable capacity required to ensure security of supply and complement the integration of Variable Renewable Energy (VRE).	Applicant
101.	16. The Plan of Study for EIA must therefore require that the Energy System Analysis: • Assesses whether the same reliability, flexibility and capacity services that the Project is claimed to provide could instead be delivered by portfolios of			Under the NEMA EIA Regulations, the EIA must assess reasonable and feasible alternatives that meet the project's specific purpose and need. National macro-economic energy modelling is governed by the IRP and falls outside the purview of a project-level EIA. The	Applicant

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	renewable energy, battery storage, demand-side management and grid reinforcements; and • Evaluates the risk that continued cost declines in such technologies will render this gas capacity a stranded asset within its planned operating life, including under tightening climate policy and carbon-border-adjustment regimes.			facility's engineered modularity, including a bypass stack, enables a transition from baseload to load-following profiles. This flexibility mitigates stranded asset risk by allowing the plant to adapt to evolving grid requirements as renewable energy penetration increases. A dedicated Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) will evaluate the project's emissions trajectory.	
102.	17. In addition, the Needs and Desirability Assessment must be broadened to include a full cost–benefit analysis that internalises external costs, including the social cost of carbon, public-health impacts of additional air pollution, and losses of ecosystem services to affected communities.			A monetised macro-economic Cost-Benefit Analysis is not a statutory requirement for a project-level EIA under NEMA. The referenced externalities will be rigorously evaluated through legally prescribed specialist studies, including an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA), a CCIA, Biodiversity Assessments, and a Socio-Economic Impact Assessment. The AQIA assesses modelled emissions against statutory National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Findings and mitigations will be synthesised in the Needs and Desirability section to inform the Competent Authority's decision-making.	Applicant
				The EIA Phase will evaluate environmental and socio-economic impacts through specialist studies and will identify concomitant mitigation measures.	EAP
103.	18. As part of the need to consider a full cost-benefit analysis, scope for the consideration of natural capital accounting should be included. Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) provides a common framework for measuring and tracking over time the contribution of ecosystems and natural resources to social and economic goals, such as water security, food security and job creation, and provides a wealth of information that can improve planning and decision-making related to the management of natural resources. The underlying premise for NCA is that since the environment is important to society and the economy, it should be recognized as an asset that must be maintained and managed, and its contributions better integrated into decision making. Ecosystem accounting			The Applicant notes the reference to Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) and frameworks such as the UN SEEA. Conducting a formal, monetised NCA is a macroeconomic exercise and not a statutory requirement for a site-specific EIA under NEMA. The assessment of the project's impact on critical environmental assets (water, air, biodiversity, and livelihoods) is comprehensively fulfilled through the prescribed NEMA specialist studies. The legally binding NEMA mitigation hierarchy ensures that environmental impacts are explicitly quantified, managed, and weighed without necessitating a macroeconomic accounting ledger.	Applicant

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	incorporates a wider range of benefits to people than those captured in standard economic accounts and provides a structured approach to assessing the dependence and impacts of economic and human activity on the environment.				
104.	19. As recognised in the natural capital accounting literature, including the UN's System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and Statistics South Africa's work on NCA, ecosystems and environmental assets that support water security, air quality, climate regulation and livelihoods constitute critical economic infrastructure and their degradation must be explicitly accounted for in project-level decision-making.			The Applicant notes the reference to Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) and frameworks such as the UN SEEA. Conducting a formal, monetised NCA is a macroeconomic exercise and not a statutory requirement for a site-specific EIA under NEMA. The assessment of the project's impact on critical environmental assets (water, air, biodiversity, and livelihoods) is comprehensively fulfilled through the prescribed NEMA specialist studies. The legally binding NEMA mitigation hierarchy ensures that environmental impacts are explicitly quantified, managed, and weighed without necessitating a macroeconomic accounting ledger	Applicant
105.	**Limited Cumulative Impact Assessment** 20. Further, the DSR defines the "Project" narrowly as the 750 MW CCGT plant and certain associated onsite infrastructure within the port, while repeatedly treating other essential components, including the LNG import and storage facilities, gas pipeline(s) to the plant, grid connection infrastructure, water supply and discharge pipelines, construction laydown areas and access routes, as separate processes or as outside the scope of the Project's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). In the SDCEA case, the Supreme Court of Appeal held that "if other components of the development also include listed activities, the environmental authorisation application must include all listed activities forming part of the overall development proposal", and that the comprehensive development context is essential for a complete assessment of combined impacts. 21. The EIA should identify all listed activities triggered by the overall gas-to-power development in Richards Bay (including LNG import, gas transmission, transmission			The Project has been defined in the draft Scoping Report as the 750 MW CCGT Power Plant and its associated on-site infrastructure within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ. This is based on the fact that certain infrastructure components referred to in the comment (specifically the LNG import and storage facilities, gas transmission pipelines and electrical grid connection infrastructure) are being planned and applied for separately by different proponents and through separate regulatory processes. The Scoping Report does not disregard the broader development context. It explicitly acknowledges that the proposed gas-to-power facility is functionally linked to off-site gas supply and grid infrastructure, and it clearly records that these components fall outside the scope of the current EIA application. Their exclusion is not intended to avoid assessment, but rather reflects the legal and practical	EAP

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	lines, water infrastructure and other gas-to-power plants); and either include those activities in this application, or, at a minimum, require a cumulative impact assessment which treats them as reasonably foreseeable parts of a single development, in line with the SDCEA case, and other judicial precedent. The cumulative assessment must specifically evaluate cumulative air quality and health impacts.			separation of projects undertaken by different entities. While the electrical grid infrastructure and gas supply pipeline are not included in the scope of this application and will be assessed through separate EIA processes, their functional interdependence with the proposed CCGT Power Plant is recognised. It is acknowledged that the commencement of the power plant will be contingent on the authorisation of these separate components. This interdependency will be taken into account in the overall project planning. The combined environmental effects of existing and reasonably foreseeable developments in the area, including LNG and electrical grid infrastructure, will be assessed during the EIA Phase.	
106.	**Socio-economic Impact Assessment** 22. The socio-economic and environmental-justice assessments must also specifically consider impacts on livelihoods and food security, including small-scale and subsistence fishers in and around the Port of Richards Bay, workers whose health may be affected by increased pollution, and households already experiencing energy poverty. Climate change and environmental degradation operate as “threat multipliers” that can undermine food availability, affordability and nutritional outcomes in coastal communities; these intersections must be explicitly incorporated in the Scoping Report.			22. The EIA Phase will evaluate the combined socio-economic, health and environmental effects of the Project, informed by cumulative impact considerations.	EAP
107.	**Air Quality Impact Assessment** 23. The DSR recognises that air quality in Richards Bay is already compromised by emissions from multiple industrial and port-related sources, and that there are numerous highly sensitive receptors (including schools, clinics and residential areas) within 5 km of the Project site, yet the Plan of Study provides only generic terms of reference for			The Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) will be incorporated into the EIA Report. Monitoring data in Richards Bay will be reassessed and where possible parameters that were not included such as $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone will be included in finalising the AIR. NAAQA	Air Quality Specialist

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	the Air Quality Impact Assessment. Given the documented non-compliance with more health-protective guideline values for $PM_{2.5}$ and the significant burden of respiratory and other pollution-related disease in the area, the Air Quality Impact Assessment must be scoped far more explicitly. The Plan of Study must require that: • Recent municipal and RBCAA monitoring data for NO_2, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone be used to characterise baseline conditions, explicitly acknowledging where concentrations already meet or exceed the World Health Organization (WHO) 2021 Air Quality Guidelines; • Dispersion modelling quantify the Project's incremental contribution to ambient concentrations of these pollutants at identified sensitive receptors under representative meteorological conditions; and • The results be presented as both receptor-based tables and contour maps for Project-only and Project-plus-background scenarios.			and WHO 2021 guidelines will also be brought in. The dispersion modelling in the AIR assessed the project independently, with existing sources and with approved future sources. In so doing, the incremental contribution of the project was indeed assessed throughout the domain and explicitly at the sensitive receptors. Sensitive receptors are displayed explicitly on the isopleth maps where the respective concentrations can be obtained. We don't see that the inclusion of receptor based tables will add any further value.	
108.	24. In addition, the Air Quality Impact Assessment must not treat compliance with the South African National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) as a sufficient indicator of acceptability. The Plan of Study should expressly require that modelled concentrations and increments be compared to both NAAQS and the WHO 2021 guideline values, and that the associated Health Impact Assessment quantify the additional health risks attributable to the Project's emissions (including mortality and morbidity from cardio-respiratory and other pollution-related outcomes) with particular attention to vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and people with pre-existing illness.			The NAAQS are health-based and are the regulated standards against which compliance is assessed and against which decisions are made. WHO provides valuable ambient air quality guidelines and it is agreed that comparison can add value to an assessment, but they are not legally binding. A Health Impact Assessment was excluded from the scope of the AIR. Rather the assessment of air quality impacts compared predicted (modelled) ambient concentrations for four operational scenarios with the NAAQS. Considering this at these sensitive receptors, vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and people with pre existing illness were assessed. This approach indeed excluded mortality and morbidity from cardio respiratory and other pollution related outcomes from the assessment.	Air Quality Specialist

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				The Health Impact Assessment will cover the potential health risks associated with emissions from the project, including impacts such as cardio-respiratory outcomes and other pollution-related effects. We are also specifically looking at how these risks may affect more vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions.	Health Impact Specialist
109.	**Noise and Avifaunal Impact Assessments** 25. The terms of reference for the Noise Impact Assessment and Avifauna Assessment must likewise be expanded. For noise, the EIA must assess not only compliance with SANS 10103 and "community response" categories, but also the health implications of elevated noise levels (including sleep disturbance, stress and cognitive impacts) at nearby sensitive receptors such as schools, clinics and high-sensitivity residential areas identified in the DSR. For avifauna, the EIA must consider how both construction and long-term operational noise and lighting may affect the behaviour, breeding success and habitat use of threatened and near-threatened bird species occurring in and around the Project area.			In South Africa the document that addresses the issues specifically concerning environmental noise is SANS 10103:2008. It has been thoroughly revised in 2008 and brought in line with the guidelines of the World Health Organisation. The potential health effects from noise will be considered in the Noise Impact Assessment. Based on the findings of the Site Sensitivity Verification, the need for a dedicated Avifaunal Impact Assessment was not identified. Impacts to avifauna will be assessed as part of the Terrestrial Biodiversity Impact Assessment.	EAP
110.	**Hydrological Impact Assessment** 26. The DSR acknowledges that the Project is located within the uMhlathuze catchment, in proximity to wetlands, drainage lines and the Richards Bay/uMhlathuze estuarine system, and that a Hydrological Assessment will be undertaken in the EIA phase. However, it does not specify how that assessment will address the Project's significant water-use and pollution risks in a manner consistent with NEMA's risk-averse and cautious approach and the National Water Act's requirements regarding the water resource Reserve. The Plan of Study must therefore be strengthened to require that the hydrology and geohydrology specialist work: • Quantifies the Project's construction- and operational-phase water demand (by source and quality) and assesses this against the available			The Plant's water requirements are discussed in Section 9.5.6.18 of the SR. The Applicant and the RBIDZ have been in discussions with uMngeni-uThukela Water (UUW) regarding the water requirements of the Plant and how these requirements will be satisfied. The water requirements of the Project will be further explained in the EIA Report. The technical team has identified the use of an air cooled / dry cooled condenser as an alternative to forced-draft cooling towers. Using a dry cooled condenser will reduce the proposed plant's water usage as well as wastewater. Further information pertaining to the dry cooled condenser will be included in the	EAP

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	yield and Reserve of the relevant surface and groundwater resources; • Identifies and assesses potential impacts on nearby wetlands, drainage lines, aquifers and any strategic surface or groundwater source areas feeding the Richards Bay estuary and associated systems; and • Includes an assessment of the Project's implications for water security of surrounding communities, including whether existing and future basic human needs and ecological requirements can still be met if this additional demand and pollution load are authorised.			EIA Report. A comparative analysis of these options will also be included in the EIA Report. The impacts to aquatic biodiversity will be evaluated as part of an Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment during the EIA phase. The findings of this study will be included in the EIA Report.	
111.	27. In addition, given the City of uMhlathuze's own climate-change risk assessments, the Plan of Study must require the hydrology and geohydrology assessment to consider how climate-change-induced droughts, extreme rainfall and flooding are expected to affect both the Project and local water resources over the plant's lifetime. This should include: • Analysis of how increased rainfall variability and more frequent droughts may constrain surface- and groundwater availability and affect the reliability of the Project's water supply; • Assessment of how more intense storm events and flooding could increase runoff, erosion, and the mobilisation of contaminants from the site into surrounding watercourses and wetlands; and • A cumulative assessment of water-quantity and water-quality impacts when the Project's demands and risks are considered together with existing and authorised industrial and gas-to-power developments in Richards Bay.			The Climate Change Impact Assessment will determine how climate-change-induced impacts will affect the Project. Best environmental practices will be implemented during the operational phases to manage stormwater, which will be included in the Environmental Management Programme (EMPr).	EAP
				The technical team has identified the use of an air cooled / dry cooled condenser as an alternative to forced-draft cooling towers. Using a dry cooled condenser will reduce the proposed plant's water usage as well as wastewater. Further information pertaining to the dry cooled condenser will be included in the EIA Report. A comparative analysis of these options will also be included in the EIA Report. A stormwater management plan will be developed for the project based on best practice. Wastewater qualities, quantities and discharge options will be considered in the EIA Report.	Technical Team & Applicant
112.	**Assurances of meaningful public participation** 28. Recent jurisprudence, including the Sustaining the Wild Coast case, has confirmed that public participation			The Plan of Study for the EIA phase was updated to specify engagement with small-scale fishers, informal-settlement	EAP

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	must be a genuine, good-faith, two-way process aimed at consensus as far as possible, particularly with communities who stand to bear disproportionate environmental and cultural harms. Given the existing pollution burdens in Richards Bay and the clear environmental justice dimensions of adding another large fossil-fuel project, the Plan of Study must commit to proactive, inclusive engagement with affected communities, including but not limited to: small-scale fishers, informal-settlement residents, women, youth and people with disabilities.			residents, women, youth and people with disabilities.	
113.	**Conclusion** 29. Based on the above comments and analysis, we request that the additional scope of assessment be included in the Plan of Study for EIA. 30. Thank you for your consideration of our comments on the scoping report for the proposed project. We look forward to further engagement.			Refer to the above responses for how these comments will be attended to during the EIA phase.	EAP
114.	1. The South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) is a community-based environmental justice organisation established in 1995 in South Durban. In 2022, it expanded its footprint by opening a satellite office in Richards Bay. SDCEA represents a coalition of local organisations working to protect the environmental and health rights of affected communities. 2. We hereby submit comments on the Draft Scoping Report for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay (the "Project"), prepared by Nemai Consulting on behalf of Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd.	D. D'Sa South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)	Letter (08/04/26)	Introductory part of letter – no response required.	-
115.	3. We register as Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) in terms of the EIA Regulations and confirm our intention to participate in all subsequent stages of the environmental assessment process.			It is confirmed that SDCEA is a registered I&AP for the proposed Project's EIA. SDCEA will be notified as the EIA process unfolds.	EAP
116.	4. We have identified several concerns with the Draft Scoping Report, including the scope of the Project description, Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA), the Needs and Desirability Assessment, the Cumulative			The specific comments from SDCEA relating to the draft SR are responded to below.	EAP

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	Impact Assessment, and compliance with South Africa's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and international legal obligations. These concerns are elaborated on in detail below.				
117.	5. **Project description**: The project's water requirements are excessive, particularly given that the application does not include a Water Use Licence Application. This omission is especially concerning in a district that has long experienced water shortages for domestic use. The proposed level of water consumption would place additional strain on an already scarce resource if not properly authorised and regulated. We caution against this approach, as it risks exacerbating existing water insecurity and further impacting vulnerable communities.			The Applicant and the RBIDZ have been in discussions with UUW regarding the water requirements of the Plant and how these requirements will be satisfied. The water requirements of the Project will be further explained in the EIA Report. The technical team has identified the use of an air cooled / dry cooled condenser as an alternative to forced-draft cooling towers. Using a dry cooled condenser will reduce the proposed plant's water usage as well as wastewater. Further information pertaining to the dry cooled condenser will be included in the EIA Report. A comparative analysis of these options will also be included in the EIA Report. Section 5.1.4.2 of the SR explains the relevance of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) (NWA) to the Project. Following the delineations of the watercourses as part of the Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment, the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) will be engaged to determine their requirements and to apply for authorisation for the NWA Section 21(c) and (i) water uses triggered by the Project. At this stage, water use in terms of NWA Section 21(a) (taking water from a water resource) is not anticipated to be triggered.	EAP
118.	6. There is a requirement for back up diesel generator, for which quantities are not specified in the application.			The back-up diesel generators will have a capacity of approximately 10 to 30 MWe. These generators will only be used when a complete grid brown-out or black-out is experienced and the plant is required to start without any external electricity supply. This function is typically expected to occur 1/100 years.	Technical Team

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119.	7. The applicant indicates that decommissioning is not currently being considered, on the basis that the plant is intended to operate indefinitely. This position is inconsistent with government policy, which aims to transition South Africa from a carbon-intensive economy to a low-carbon economy.			The following is indicated in Section 9.5.9 of the SR: *Should decommissioning be required in the future, the activity will need to comply with the appropriate and prevailing environmental legislation and best practices at that time. It is envisaged that the scheme will be used indefinitely, under suitable maintenance. Decommissioning is thus not considered applicable at this stage. However, should decommissioning be required the activity will need to comply with the appropriate and prevailing environmental legislation and best practices at that time*.	EAP
120.	**Limited scope of the Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA)** 8. Section 24O(1)(b) of NEMA requires competent authorities to consider "all relevant factors," including "any pollution, environmental impacts or environmental degradation likely to be caused." The courts have unequivocally confirmed that climate change impacts constitute such relevant factors and must be considered prior to the granting of environmental authorisation. 9. In Earthlife Africa Johannesburg v Minister of Environmental Affairs (Case No: 65662/16) ("Earthlife case"), the court held that "the legislative and policy scheme and framework overwhelmingly support the conclusion that an assessment of climate change impacts and mitigating measures will be relevant factors in the environmental authorisation process, and that consideration of such will best be accomplished by means of a professionally researched climate change impact report" (para 91). 10. This requirement applies with equal force to gas-fired power stations. In *South Durban Community Environmental Alliance v Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment* (Case No: 479/2023) (September 2025) ("SDCEA case"), the Supreme Court of Appeal set aside the environmental authorisation for a 3000MW gas-			12.1) The Climate Change Impact Assessment will include emissions associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project, including Scope 1, Scope 2 and relevant Scope 3 emissions. 12.2) This will be addressed through the GHG inventory, which will include fugitive methane emissions associated with the Project and relevant gas supply chain components falling within the defined assessment boundary. The Climate Change Impact Assessment Report will set out the methodology, system boundaries and assumptions applied to the assessment. The quantified methane-related emissions will be presented, with results disclosed using both 100-year and 20-year GWP values to reflect the stronger near-term warming effect of methane. 12.3) The Climate Change Impact Assessment will address consistency with South Africa's NDC and Paris Agreement obligations. 12.4) This will be addressed through the alternatives and contextual analysis contained in the Climate Change Impact Assessment Report. The report will consider relevant alternatives, including renewable energy-based	Climate Change Specialist

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	fired power plant in Richards Bay, on the basis that the climate change impacts had not been adequately assessed. 11. The Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) proposed in the Plan of Study for the EIA is inadequate in several key respects. 12. First, the assessment must include a comprehensive life-cycle greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis, encompassing: 9.1 Scope 1 emissions: Direct emissions arising from the combustion of natural gas during the operation of the facility; 9.2 Scope 2 emissions: Indirect emissions associated with the consumption of purchased electricity and other forms of energy; and 9.3 Scope 3 emissions: Upstream emissions related to gas extraction, processing, liquefaction, transportation (including the shipping of LNG), and regasification, as well as relevant downstream emissions. 13. The Earthlife court endorsed an assessment that "would comprise an assessment of (i) the extent to which a proposed [power station] will contribute to climate change over its lifetime, by quantifying its GHG emissions during construction, operation and decommissioning." Currently, the proposed scope of the CCIA is limited to the project's lifecycle emissions during construction and operation. What this speaks to, is the legal and methodological adequacy of the Climate Change Impact Assessment for the project – the land mark case held that a proper climate assessment must include, an assessment of the total greenhouse gas emissions over the full lifecycle. At the following phases, construction, operational and at decommissioning stage. *Evaluate how these emissions contribute to climate change impacts over time/ What are the long-term impacts of the project?*			options, and the Project's emissions profile within the broader electricity generation context will also be presented. Such comparisons will be provided for contextual purposes and do not constitute an energy policy determination. 12.5) The Climate Change Impact Assessment will consider the Project's resilience to the impacts of climate change. 12.6) The Climate Change Impact Assessment will assess cumulative emissions on a project-level lifecycle basis. It will quantify the Project's annual and lifecycle GHG emissions, including direct, indirect and upstream emissions, across the 750 MW CCPP and its functionally linked infrastructure. Cumulative climate impacts will be assessed as the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative atmospheric GHG loading, rather than as a localised impact in Richards Bay. The report will not aggregate emissions from unrelated third-party developments, as climate impacts from GHG emissions are global and broader system-wide cumulative assessment falls within the mandate of the competent authority.	
				The Plan of Study was updated accordingly.	EAP

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	14. Secondly, given that natural gas consists predominantly of methane— a greenhouse gas with a global warming potential approximately 80 times greater than that of carbon dioxide (CO_2) over a 20-year period— the assessment must adequately account for fugitive methane emissions across the full supply chain. This includes emissions arising from extraction and processing, liquefaction facilities, transportation (including LNG tanker shipping), regasification at Richards Bay, and pipeline conveyance to the proposed facility. *How do you anticipate to mitigate the air pollution that comes with the handling of the gas?* 10. Thirdly, the assessment for this project must provide clear quantification of annual GHG emissions, total lifetime emissions, and emissions intensity per megawatt-hour, as well as a comparison with alternative generation technologies, including renewables. This requirement arises from judicial criticism in the Earthlife case, where the Environmental Impact Report was found deficient for containing "no quantification of CO_2 emissions" and offering only "passing mention of climate change impacts, describing these as being of 'low' and 'relatively small' significance." 11. Fourthly, the assessment must examine whether the project aligns with South Africa's emissions trajectory as outlined in its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), including adherence to the peak–plateau–decline framework. 12. We therefore request that the Plan of Study for the EIA be revised to mandate a comprehensive Climate Change Impact Assessment, incorporating the following: 12.1 A full life-cycle GHG analysis, including Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions; 12.2 A quantified assessment of methane leakage throughout the supply chain; 12.3 An evaluation of the project's alignment with South Africa's NDC and its obligations under the Paris Agreement;				

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	12.4 A comparison of the project's climate impacts with those of renewable energy alternatives; 12.5 An assessment of climate-related risks to the project, including its resilience; and 12.6 Consideration of cumulative climate impacts from all proposed gas infrastructure in Richards Bay.				
121.	**Deficiencies in the scope of the Needs and Desirability Assessment** 13. Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations requires that the "need and desirability" of the proposed activity be clearly motivated. The DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017) offers detailed guidance on conducting this assessment. Furthermore, section 24(4)(b)(i) of NEMA mandates the consideration of alternatives, including the option of not proceeding with the activity. 14. The Scoping Report primarily justifies the project with reference to macro-level energy policy, including the Integrated Resource Plan and the Gas Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (Gas IPPPP). However, courts have rejected this approach. In Earthlife, the court held that "an abstract, macro-level assessment of the climate change impact of additional coal-fired power could not cast any light on the specific climate change impacts and mitigation strategies of specific [power stations] located at specific sites." This principle is equally applicable to gas-fired power stations. 14.1 The concern lies in the need for site- and project-specific environmental assessment rather than relying solely on broad, national-level policy justifications. While macro-level energy plans, such as the Integrated Resource Plan or Gas IPPPP, provide context for energy development, they do not address the direct and localized Richards Bay environmental impacts of this specific project. Meaning, applying this principle to the proposed gas-fired power station means that the Scoping Report must include detailed, project-specific analysis of greenhouse gas			The SR explains the Needs and Desirability of the Project, as required in Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations. This assessment was informed by the DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017). Further refinement of the assessment will be undertaken in the EIA Phase as additional specialist information becomes available. The assessment of the impacts associated with the Project, including the specialist studies, will be site- and project-specific.	EAP

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	emissions, climate impacts, and mitigation strategies to comply with legal requirements and ensure informed decision-making.				
122.	15. The report states that "alternatives to energy generation are not relevant to this Project" because the applicant intends to bid under GASIPPPP. This approach is legally flawed. 16. The Supreme Court of Appeal in South Durban Community Environmental Alliance held that: “The regulations do not merely permit an assessment of the ‘preferred alternative and the no-go alternative,’ as suggested. They require an evaluation of all reasonable and feasible alternatives to a proposed project, including location, design, technology, and the ‘no-go option.’ The preferred alternative must be selected only after comparing the social, environmental, technical, and economic impacts of all options considered.” 17. The assessment must consider all reasonable and feasible alternatives, including: 17.1 Renewable energy options, such as solar PV and wind, combined with battery storage; 17.2 Grid expansion and enhanced interconnection; 17.3 Demand-side management measures; 17.4 Other low-carbon generation technologies; and 17.5 The no-go option.			The site is located within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ, which is a purpose-built and secured industrial estate linked to the PoRB that aims to attract local and foreign direct investment, such as the proposed Project. The location of the project site in the industrial estate (Erf 16673) was identified by the RBIDZ, in consultation with the Applicant. The Project’s siting is based on the advantages posed by the RBIDZ, including the appropriate zoning (current zoning of the site is “Noxious Industry”), availability of services and strategic location (including proximity to the PoRB). Hence, no site alternatives were considered. The Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) will only be identified during the EIA phase, based on a comparative analysis of all options. The no-go alternative is included in the Scoping Report as a baseline scenario, consistent with scoping-level requirements. The EIA Phase will provide a detailed and balanced assessment of the no-go option	EAP
				In accordance with NEMA and relevant case law, the EIA will assess alternatives that are reasonable, feasible, and fulfil the specific purpose and need of the project. 17.1 (Renewables + BESS): This alternative does not currently meet the project's specific mandate to provide long-duration dispatchability and physical synchronous inertia at the required scale. 17.2 & 17.3 (Grid Expansion & DSM): Grid expansion and Demand-Side Management are	Applicant

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				national or municipal macroeconomic interventions. They are not standalone generation alternatives implementable by a private Independent Power Producer (IPP) for a site-specific generation EIA. (Note: Grid interconnection infrastructure for this facility is being advanced through the necessary parallel Eskom processes). 17.4 (Other Low-Carbon): The EIA will summarise the technology screening process. 17.5 (No-Go): The No-Go alternative will be comprehensively assessed as the mandatory comparative baseline in the EIA.	
123.	18. The report fails to adequately demonstrate that this specific 750MW project is genuinely necessary. Considering that multiple gas-to-power projects have already been authorized in Richards Bay, coupled with the rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity in South Africa, the need for this additional gasfired capacity must be thoroughly and rigorously justified.			The Needs and Desirability Assessment in the EIA will provide the site-specific justification for the project. Environmental Authorisation (EA) is a statutory prerequisite for an IPP to participate in national procurement programmes. The authorisation of other independent projects in the region does not negate the Applicant's statutory right to seek an EA, nor does an EA guarantee operational capacity on the grid. The planned operational flexibility of this facility is directly designed to complement the national expansion of renewable energy.	Applicant
124.	19. We therefore request that the EIA Phase include: 1. A comprehensive needs and desirability assessment that complies with the DEA Guideline; 2. Assessment of reasonable and feasible alternatives, including renewable energy options; 3. Analysis of whether the project is consistent with South Africa's Just Energy Transition commitments; and 4. Assessment of stranded asset risk.			The Needs and Desirability section of the SR was informed by the DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017). Further refinement of the assessment will be undertaken in the EIA Phase as additional specialist information becomes available.	EAP
				The Applicant notes the requests. In strict compliance with NEMA, the EIA will assess all reasonable and feasible alternatives for the specific purpose of providing 750MW of highly reliable, dispatchable generation. Alignment with South Africa's Just Energy Transition (JET) will be integrated into the Needs and Desirability Assessment and CCIA. Stranded asset risk is	Applicant

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				inherently mitigated through the facility's engineered operational flexibility.	
125.	20. The applicant does not properly assess project alternatives but only takes the position that because there is government project for the GASIPPP then it was only in that way that they could bid for an electricity generation programme. This overlooks the Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP) which focused on renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and other renewable sources and was aligned with our international agreements. The same amount of generation (750MW) would've been achieved through renewable energy sources.			Generating 750MW of installed capacity from VRE is not technically equivalent to 750MW of firm, dispatchable capacity. The specific purpose of this project is to provide reliable dispatchable generation, synchronous inertia, and continuous availability that VRE and current storage technologies cannot currently fulfil at this scale. Substituting this facility entirely with a renewable energy alternative alters the fundamental nature of the project and does not meet the "reasonable and feasible" threshold for the project's purpose under NEMA.	Applicant
126.	21. Locational alternative is also barely considered as the entire application is built on the Zululand Energy Terminal being given authorisation, which it currently does not have and may not even have LNG supply agreements in place.			Richards Bay is designated by national spatial and energy planning frameworks as a strategic hub for gas-to-power generation and LNG importation. Locational alternatives will be addressed in the EIA. The proposed generation facility and the required fuel-supply infrastructure are advancing through parallel but independent Environmental Authorisation processes. Commercial interdependence does not preclude the Applicant from advancing the site-specific EIA for the generation facility.	Applicant
				It is acknowledged that the commencement of the CCGT Power Plant will be contingent on the authorisation of the LNG infrastructure. This interdependency will be taken into account in the overall project planning.	EAP
127.	22. The No-Go Option is also barely assessed. The country is currently not load-shedding and has a higher Electricity Availability Factor, which means the generation is enough not to load shed. This negates the need for such fossil fuel developments that are regressive.			The no-go alternative is included in the Scoping Report as a baseline scenario, consistent with scoping-level requirements. The EIA Phase will provide a detailed and balanced assessment of the no-go option, which will be informed by the findings of the specialist studies and the cumulative impact assessment.	EAP
128.	23. The applicant brands LNG as a cleaner fuel, which is false as LNG is a fossil fuel with large carbon footprint from point of extraction to transporting to generation, emitting methane which is more potent than carbon dioxide then			The Applicant acknowledges that LNG is a fossil fuel; the term "cleaner" is utilised as a comparative metric against South Africa's highly carbon-intensive, coal-dominated macro-	Applicant

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	you have emissions such as NOx and CO during electricity generation. The downplaying of these impacts should not be treated lightly.			energy baseline and diesel-burning peaking plants. Displacing coal with highly efficient natural gas represents a significant reduction in national emission intensity while maintaining grid stability. A dedicated CCIA will calculate a comprehensive GHG inventory, including upstream Scope 3 emissions. Localised pollutants (NOx and CO) will be strictly assessed through the AQIA.	
				Although the Climate Change Impact Assessment will focus on the lifecycle of the Project, it will also consider cumulative impacts of existing and reasonably foreseeable developments in the area, including the proposed LNG infrastructure.	EAP
129.	**Impact Assessments shortfalls**: 24. According to the statistics provided, only 14.6% of the population in the city of uMhlathuze holds higher education qualifications. This raises concerns regarding the extent to which local communities will benefit from the proposed project, as Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) power plants typically require specialised technical skills that are scarce, particularly in smaller towns such as Richards Bay. The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment should therefore include a comprehensive Cost-Benefit Analysis that accurately weighs the project's anticipated benefits against its social and economic costs. Furthermore, the reference to 50 employment opportunities is vague and lacks clarity on whether these include unskilled positions or are predominantly highly technical roles, as is often the case with such developments.			A monetised macroeconomic Cost-Benefit Analysis is not a statutory requirement under NEMA. The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment will objectively evaluate anticipated socio-economic benefits against potential localised costs. The 50 permanent operational roles require specialised technical skills, whereas the construction phase will generate hundreds of temporary jobs. A substantial percentage of these construction roles will be semi-skilled and unskilled, directly matching the local labour profile and offering immediate economic relief.	Applicant
				The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment will consider the adverse and positive impacts of the Project.	EAP
130.	25. The Air Quality data relied upon in the application is dated (2021–2023) and is therefore at least three years old. This is concerning given the significant increase in trucking activity within Richards Bay, particularly associated with operations at the port, which has likely contributed to a deterioration in air quality. This is further compounded by existing industrial emissions in the area. The applicant has not provided any justification for relying			The draft final version of the Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) was completed in August 2024. At the time the data for 2021 to 2023 was the most recent data a full 3-year period. Using this data was relevant at the time. Changes in emission sources since and their effects on ambient air quality is acknowledged.	Air Quality Specialist

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	on outdated data, which raises concerns about the accuracy and reliability of the assessment.				
131.	26. The applicant indicates that a fire protection system, including water storage, will be in place. However, this is inadequate, as liquefied gas fires and explosions cannot be effectively extinguished using water alone and typically require specialised chemical suppression systems. Gas-related incidents pose significant risks and require highly trained emergency responders. This presents a potential danger not only to nearby residential communities but also to surrounding industries in Richards Bay that handle flammable or hazardous materials. The application does not demonstrate that the local fire department has the capacity to respond to such incidents, nor does it include a comprehensive emergency response plan, which is a critical omission.			As mentioned in the SR, provision is made for a Quantitative Risk Assessment to be undertaken for the Project. The findings from this assessment will be incorporated into the EIA Report. The EMPr, which will accompany the EIA Report, will include an Emergency Response Plan for the proposed Plant.	EAP
132.	**Limited Cumulative Impact Assessment** 27. The EIA Regulations define “cumulative impact” as “the past, current and reasonably foreseeable future impact of an activity, considered together with the impact of activities associated with that activity.” Appendix 3 further requires an evaluation of how the impacts of a project, when combined with those of similar existing and anticipated developments, may result in significant environmental changes.			The potential negative cumulative impacts associated with the Project were identified during the Scoping Phase and are discussed in Section 13.4 of the SR. These impacts were identified based on the current understanding of the Project, its receiving environment, and existing developments and third-party projects. The EIA Report will contain a detailed assessment of cumulative impacts, which will incorporate the findings of the specialist studies and technical investigations. This will include an assessment of cumulative air quality impacts, taking into consideration sensitive receptors. Furthermore, the EIA Report will contain all information set out in Appendix 3 of the EIA Regulations, including the assessment of cumulative impacts.	EAP
133.	28. The CCIA proposes to assess “emission of GHGs during operational phase, including cumulative impacts considering incremental effects of past, present, or future activities combined with the effects of the proposed Project’s area of influence (AOI).” What is the long-term impacts of this project?			The Climate Change Impact Assessment will include emissions associated with the project life-cycle (i.e., construction, operation and decommissioning phases).	EAP

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134.	29. The Scoping Report identifies at least 6 authorized gas-to-power projects within a 10 km radius. The cumulative climate, air quality, and health impacts of these multiple projects must be comprehensively assessed.			The known existing industrial facilities or projects within a 10 km radius of the site are provided in Section 13.4.2.2 of the SR. Cumulative impacts will be assessed as part of the specialist studies, and the findings (including associated mapping) will be included in the EIA Report.	EAP
135.	30. What will that mean for the surrounding communities in terms of Air Quality, as Richards Bay is known as an industrial hub. When it comes to the cumulative impacts, even if a single gas plant meets emissions standards, the combined emissions from multiple industrial sources, "Cluster of industrial activities" this will lead to worse air quality overall. Cumulative air pollution (particulate matter) will exceed health-based thresholds when added to existing industrial emissions. In figure 6.1, Brackenham and Veld En Vlei are not placed in the sensitivity map for air quality, which are closer to the project site then Aquadene.			This importance of this point is acknowledged. Hence Scenario 4 in the AIR concerns the Mabasa CCPP together with six approved applications including four gas to power project in Richards Bay.	Air Quality Specialist
				All sensitive receptors, including Brackenham and Veld-en-Vlei, will be included in the AIR.	EAP
136.	31. The report noted that the power plant will use water cooling and steam systems. Our concern is that with a combination of the existing industrial water use demand and regional water scarcity pressures, the cumulative draw on freshwater resources, will have an impact and create stress to the Richards Bay water supplies and impact the ecosystem in the long run. How will this be guarded against? How will the waste water be disposed off and will it also be treated before sending it back to the ocean, where communal fisherfolks will be affected by the hot waste water/ change in temperature, which will affect the marine life.			The Applicant and the RBIDZ have been in discussions with UUW regarding the water requirements of the Plant and how these requirements will be satisfied. The water requirements of the Project will be further explained in the EIA Report. The technical team has identified the use of an air cooled / dry cooled condenser as an alternative to forced-draft cooling towers. Using a dry cooled condenser will reduce the proposed plant's water usage as well as wastewater. Further information pertaining to the dry cooled condenser will be included in the EIA Report. A comparative analysis of these options will also be included in the EIA Report. Liquid wastes produced during the operational phase will include wastewater (including water used in cooling processes and domestic sewage), condensate water as well as lubricants, oils and spent chemicals from	EAP

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				operation and maintenance activities. Mitigation measures to manage wastewater will be included in the EMPr. Section 9.5.6.19 of the SR provides information pertaining to sanitary sewage, water drainage and treatment.	
				The process water to be discharged from the project site comprises primarily of effluent water from the water treatment plant, heat recovery steam generator blow-down and cooling tower blow-down. Process related wastewater from the plant will be cooled, neutralised and stored on site in the process wastewater tank. Water will be tested before being discharged to the municipal sewer or the storm water system under authorisation from the relevant authority. The quality and quantities of wastewater to be discharged will be provided in the EIA Report.	Technical Team & Applicant
137.	32. The omission of the gas pipeline, LNG terminal, and other gas-to-power plants from this assessment is a significant concern. For the assessment to effectively identify actual and potential sources of pollution, the Port of Richards Bay expansion plans must be considered cumulatively. In the (SDCEA case), the Supreme Court of Appeal found that the Minister had failed to account for the cumulative effects of gas extraction and transportation, and rejected the argument that such impacts “only become relevant at a later stage." 33. The court stated: "…if other components of the development also include listed activities, the environmental authorisation application must include all listed activities forming part of the overall development proposal. The comprehensive development context is important for a complete assessment of the combined impacts of the listed activities in a combined development..." 34. Meaning, when a development has multiple activities that each require environmental approval, the application			The Project has been defined in the draft Scoping Report as the 750 MW CCGT Power Plant and its associated on-site infrastructure within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ. This is based on the fact that certain infrastructure components referred to in the comment (specifically the gas pipeline, LNG terminal, and other gas-to-power plants) are being planned and applied for separately by different proponents and through separate regulatory processes. The Scoping Report does not disregard the broader development context. It explicitly acknowledges that the proposed gas-to-power facility is functionally linked to off-site gas supply and grid infrastructure, and it clearly records that these components fall outside the scope of the current EIA application. Their exclusion is not intended to avoid assessment but rather reflects the legal and practical separation of projects undertaken by different entities.	EAP

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	and assessment must cover everything together, because the combined impacts could be more significant than each part on its own. 34.1"Other components of the development also include listed activities": -Some parts of the development might themselves require environmental approval because they are "listed activities" under environmental law. 34.2"The environmental authorisation application must include all listed activities forming part of the overall development proposal": -When the developer applies for an environmental approval, needs to not submit one part of the development but must include all the activities that are part of the overall project. This ensures regulators see the full picture. 34.3"The comprehensive development context is important for a complete assessment of the combined impacts of the listed activities in a combined development": -The competent authorities need to understand how all the activities interact within the overall project. Viewing at each activity in isolation may miss how the receiving environment will be impacted. 34.4"The assessment considers the potential impacts of all the activities, including cumulative impacts" -The report needs to view both the direct impacts and cumulative impacts. 35. We therefore request that the EIA Phase include: 1. A comprehensive cumulative impact assessment that considers all gas infrastructure components (pipeline, LNG terminal, power plant); 2. Cumulative assessment of all proposed gas-to-power projects in Richards Bay; and 3. Cumulative air quality and health impact assessment.			While the LNG infrastructure is not included in the scope of this application and will be assessed through separate EIA processes, their functional interdependence with the proposed CCGT Power Plant is recognised. It is acknowledged that the commencement of the power plant will be contingent on the authorisation of these separate components. This interdependency will be taken into account in the overall project planning. The combined environmental effects of existing and reasonably foreseeable developments in the area, including LNG infrastructure, will be assessed during the EIA Phase.	
138.	**Assurances of meaningful public participation**			37.1) The Executive Summary of the draft EIA Report will be translated into isiZulu (as was the	EAP

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	36. Section 24(4)(a)(v) of NEMA requires public participation procedures that "provide all interested and affected parties... with a reasonable opportunity to participate." The courts have emphasised that public participation must be meaningful, not merely formal. 37. We request confirmation that: 37.1 All documentation will be available in isiZulu as well as English, including the reports; 37.2 Hard copies will be made available at locations that are accessible and convenient for affected communities, rather than being limited to the two libraries in the Central Business District and Aquadene. Priority should be given to distribution within township communities such as Nseleni and Mzingazi, to ensure that community members do not have to travel long distances in order to participate. They could also be left at community halls and a few have "war rooms" where communal meetings are held. As most community members are unaware of projects within Richards Bay. 37.3 Meetings will be held at times and venues accessible to affected communities; 37.4 Adequate time will be provided for community organisations to consult with technical experts; 37.5 All comments received will be responded to substantively.			case with the draft SR). Furthermore, the presentations to be shared during the meetings with the communities will be translated into isiZulu, which was also done during the Scoping Phase. 37.2) The Plan of Study (Section 14.5.2 of the SR) was updated to read as follows: *Hardcopies of the document will be lodged for public review at public libraries, and will also be placed at suitable locations within Nseleni and Mzingazi*. 37.3) The Plan of Study (Section 14.5.3 of the SR) was updated to cater for dedicated meetings with local communities during the EIA phase. 37.4) A 30-day period will be provided to I&APs to review the draft EIA Report in accordance with the EIA Regulations. 37.5) This Comments and Responses Report (CRR) serves to record the comments received from I&APs during the review of the draft SR. The CRR also attempts to address comments received through responses and input provided by the Applicant, technical team, EAP and environmental specialists. The CRR will be expanded on as the EIA process progresses, and more comments are received related to the Project.	
139.	**Inadequate public participation**: 38. The SDCEA is of the view that this process was not correctly followed, as it was SDCEA that approached the consultants to request a community meeting. This was necessary because the originally scheduled public meeting was inaccessible to many affected community members due to the chosen time and venue.			The public meeting was held at the Zululand Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Alton, Richards Bay on 25 March 2026. The meeting started at 17:30 to allow people coming from work to attend. At the request of SDCEA, an additional meeting was held on 26 March 2026 from 9:00 – 11:30 at the Community Hall in Nseleni.	EAP

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				The Plan of Study (Section 14.5.3 of the SR) was updated to cater for dedicated meetings with local communities during the EIA phase.	
140.	39. While we welcomed the granting of this request (26 March – Nseleni Community Hall), we remain concerned about representations made regarding employment opportunities. It was indicated that contact details of the present community members would be collected, consolidated into an employment database, and that preference would be given to those who attended the meeting (this was done to community members that are unemployed). If this is the case, clarity is required: given that approximately 500 jobs during the construction phase which will to be temporary, and only about 50 permanent positions are expected to be skilled roles, does this imply that local community members will largely be limited to low-skilled positions such as security and cleaning? 40. In the SDCEA case, "…Here, we are concerned with the procedural obligation on Eskom to enable public participation in environmental decision-making through meaningful and effective participation of people in an inclusive manner. Public participation is pivotal to the fulfilment of the right to an environment that is not harmful to the health and well-being. To be effective, public consultation must be conducted in good faith, through culturally appropriate measures and procedures". In this case the good faith part means the conduct and this was not the case with community meeting on the 26th of March 2026. 41. Duty to disclose truthful, non-misleading information Regulation 13(1)(f) requires: - Disclosure of all material information that may influence decisions. This is a concern for us, because the promising jobs (especially if uncertain) is misleading or incomplete information. It can distort decision-making by both the public and the competent authority.			The Applicant explicitly confirms that no Curriculum Vitaes (CVs) were requested or collected by the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP), and no jobs were promised to community members as an inducement for support. The collection of community contact details fulfils the strict statutory obligation under NEMA EIA Regulations to maintain a register of Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs). The Public Participation Process (PPP) was conducted in good faith as a genuine two-way engagement. The EAP has executed their duties independently and transparently, strictly within the bounds of the NEMA Regulations and EAPASA Code of Ethics.	Applicant
				During the meeting with the Nseleni community on 26 March 2026, general information was provided by the Applicant regarding the potential for employment opportunities associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed project. During this meeting the EAP did not support, endorse or authorise any promises of employment, nor the establishment of a project-specific employment database as part of the public participation process. Any statements made by the Applicant during the meeting regarding possible future employment opportunities were general in nature, reflective of typical large-scale infrastructure projects, and subject to procurement processes, contractor availability, skills requirements, and labour legislation. The purpose of the public participation process is to enable meaningful engagement on environmental issues, not to serve as a	EAP

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	42. **Participation Process (PPP)** The Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) is responsible for ensuring a fair, transparent, and ethical Public Participation Process (PPP), including maintaining a register of Interested and Affected Parties (I&APs) and responding to their concerns. In terms of the Environmental Assessment Practitioners Association of South Africa Code of Ethics, the EAP must avoid conflicts of interest, provide accurate information, and uphold professional integrity. 43. Promising jobs to community members and collecting CVs during the PPP is considered unethical, as it creates a conflict of interest and undermines the integrity of the process. It may be seen as an attempt to influence community support for the project, which violates ethical obligations— particularly those relating to independence, transparency, and impartiality. 44. Furthermore, public participation must be meaningful, not merely procedural. In Sustaining the Wild Coast NPC and Others v Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy and Others, the court emphasised that meaningful consultation requires a genuine, good-faith, two-way engagement aimed at reaching consensus. The use of job promises and curriculum vitae collection may amount to misrepresentation and improper inducement, indicating that the PPP was not conducted in good faith. 45. As a result, there are grounds to conclude that the EAP has breached the EAPASA Code of Ethics, and a formal complaint may be lodged with EAPASA, which could lead to an investigation and possible disciplinary action.			recruitment or employment platform. To this end, the EAP wishes to clarify that attendance at the public meeting does not confer any form of employment preference, and no representation to this effect forms part of the Project scope, application or assessment. The Scoping Report and Plan of Study for EIA appropriately identify socio-economic impacts, including employment creation, skills requirements and limitations, as matters to be assessed during the EIA Phase through the Socio-Economic and Social Impact Assessments. With regard to allegations of bad faith, misrepresentation or unethical conduct, the EAP confirms that the public participation process has been undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations, with the objective of ensuring transparency, inclusivity and procedural fairness. The EAP remains independent of the Applicant, has no interest in the outcome of the application, and continues to act in accordance with the EAPASA Code of Ethics. To avoid any potential misunderstanding going forward, the EAP will ensure that clear and consistent messaging is provided during future engagement processes, and that public meetings remain focused on environmental issues relevant to the EIA process. Should any information shared at meetings require clarification, this will be done formally through the Comments and Responses Report (CRR) and the EIA documentation. The comments raised have been noted and will be taken into account in refining stakeholder	

<table>
<tr><th>No.</th><th>VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY</th><th>RAISED BY</th><th>SOURCE & DATE</th><th>RESPONSE</th><th>RESPONSE BY</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td rowspan="3"></td><td rowspan="3"></td><td>engagement and communication during the EIA Phase.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>141.</td><td>Alignment with International Climate Obligations

46. South Africa ratified the Paris Agreement and committed to limiting warming to 1.5°C. South Africa's NDC commits to emissions peaking by 2025, plateauing, and then declining. The EIA must assess whether authorising a new fossil fuel project with a 25-30 year operational lifespan is consistent with these commitments.

47. Recent international developments, including advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice, emphasize states' obligations to consider climate impacts when approving new fossil fuel projects. These developments are relevant to the interpretation of NEMA in light of South Africa's international obligations.

48. The EIA must include:
1. Assessment of consistency with Paris Agreement temperature goals;
2. Assessment of consistency with South Africa's NDC trajectory; and
3. Consideration of recent international climate jurisprudence.</td><td>The Climate Change Impact Assessment will address consistency with South Africa’s NDC and Paris Agreement obligations.</td><td>Climate Change Specialist</td></tr>
<tr><td>142.</td><td>Conclusion

49. Based on the above analysis, we request that the following additional studies be included in the Plan of Study for EIA:

<table><tr><th>Study</th><th>Requirements</th></tr><tr><td>Comprehensive Climate Change Impact Assessment</td><td>Life-cycle GHG analysis (Scope 1, 2 and 3); methane leakage assessment; alignment with NDC; assessment of cumulative climate impacts</td></tr><tr><td>Alternatives Assessment</td><td>Comparative assessment of renewable energy alternatives; demand-side management options; assessment of the no-go alternative</td></tr></table></td><td>Provision is made in the Plan of Study for a Climate Change Impact Assessment. The Terms of Reference for this study was updated to specify the following additional requirements:
• Assess climate change impacts associated with the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project, including Scope 1, Scope 2 and relevant Scope 3 emissions.
• Address consistency with South Africa’s NDC and Paris Agreement obligations.

The assessment of cumulative climate impacts will also form part of the abovementioned study.</td><td>EAP</td></tr>
</table>

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	<table><tr><td>Cumulative Impact Assessment</td><td>Consideration of all gas infrastructure in Richards Bay and all proposed projects; comprehensive cumulative air quality and health assessment</td></tr><tr><td>Energy System Analysis</td><td>Assessment of the actual need for the proposed capacity; stranded-asset risk; energy system lock-in implications</td></tr><tr><td>Environmental Justice Assessment</td><td>Assessment of the distribution of environmental burdens; impacts on vulnerable communities; historical exposure to pollution</td></tr></table> 34. We await your written response			The EIA Report will be compiled in accordance with Appendix 3 of the EIA Regulations. This will include an assessment of feasible project alternatives and cumulative impacts. Refer further to responses to related comments above.	
				The project-specific Needs and Desirability Assessment will evaluate how the facility fulfils the statutory mandate established by the IRP. Stranded-asset risk is mitigated by the facility's modular configuration, allowing it to adapt to evolving grid requirements. Concerns regarding carbon lock-in will be evaluated in the CCIA.	Applicant
				The Health Impact Assessment will cover the potential health risks associated with emissions from the project, including impacts such as cardio-respiratory outcomes and other pollution-related effects. We are also specifically looking at how these risks may affect more vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions.	Health Impact Specialist
143.	**1. FIRE AND SAFETY** • The fire layout plans must be in accordance with SANS 10400 T:2024. • The Fire Department must approve the plans. • Adherence to SANS 10087 and SANS 10089 is required as there will be a presence of both diesel and flammable gases. • The services of fire engineers for the rational design of fire systems on the site are strongly encouraged. • A Disaster Management Plan is required for approval by the City of uMhlathuze Disaster Management Chief.	E. Naidoo – City of uMhlathuze (Environmental Planning Department: City Development0	Letter (08/04/26)	The Applicant needs to adhere to all these requirements related to Fire and Safety. Provision is made for a Quantitative Risk Assessment to be undertaken for the Project. The findings from this assessment will be incorporated into the EIA Report.	EAP
144.	**2. SPATIAL PLANNING** • Spatial Planning has no objections to the proposed project as the project area is located within the			It is noted that CoU's Spatial Planning Unit has no objections to the proposed project.	EAP

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	Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) Phase 1F.				
145.	**3. LAND USE MANAGEMENT** • Erf 16673, Alton, is zoned as Noxious Industry and is located within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ. The proposed activity is a permitted use under this zoning. • The applicant is requested to submit building plans to the City of uMhlathuze Municipality for approval. • Please note that any new servitudes with a width of 15 m (or greater) constitute a change in Land Use and will require Municipal consent. • The draft report makes reference to the Land Use Management Scheme; the applicant is informed that a revision was undertaken in 2025. You are therefore reminded to include the most recent version of the Land Use Scheme as part of the Assessment.			The zoning of the site is also captured in the SR as 'Noxious Industry'. The Applicant needs to adhere to all these requirements related to Land Use Management. The most recent version of the Land Use Scheme will be considered in the EIA Report.	EAP
146.	**4. ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING** • The report briefly mentions storage of water with a capacity of 50 000 m³. The applicant is advised to consult the Department of Water and Sanitation regarding compliance with Section 21(b) of the National Water Act and the Dam Safety Regulations. • The applicant is requested to disclose the capacity of the back-up generators in the Scoping Report. • The Report suggests that Stormwater Management principles will be applied during construction and operation. The applicant is advised to develop a Stormwater Management Plan stipulating site-specific conditions to ensure there is controlled drainage. • It has been noted that a Cumulative Impact Assessment will be conducted during the Scoping phase of the project. The applicant is advised to not only consider impacts emanating from the			Section 5.1.4.2 of the SR explains the relevance of the National Water Act (Act No. 36 of 1998) (NWA) to the Project. The implications of the storage of water will be considered further in the EIA Report. Cumulative impacts that were identified during the Scoping Phase are presented in Section 13.4 of the Scoping Report. The EIA Report will include a detailed assessment of cumulative impacts associated with the Project. This assessment will incorporate the findings of the specialist studies and technical investigations	EAP
				Potable Water will be supplied to the RBIDZ through a 90mm diameter pipeline, from uMngeni-uThukela Water, confirmed by the RBIDZ on 23 February 2026. Potable Water will be stored on site as a supply source to the water treatment plant for the production of demineralised water as required by the steam cycle. Water will also be stored for the fire	Technical Team & Applicant

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	proposed project but to also consider surrounding industries.			protection system and for domestic use. Finalised water storage volumes and uses will be provided in the EIA Report. The back-up diesel generators will have a capacity of approximately 10 to 30 MWe. These generators will only be used when a complete grid brown-out or black-out is experienced and the plant is required to start without any external electricity supply. This function is typically expected to occur 1/100 years. This information was included in the final SR. Indicative water storage volumes (these volumes will change based on design): <u>Wet-Cooled Option</u> Raw Water: 15 000m^3 Fire Water: 2 000m^3 Demineralized Water: 2 000m^3 Potable Water: 100m^3 Neutralise Water: 300m^3 <u>Dry-Cooled Option</u> Raw Water: 2 000m^3 Fire Water: 2 000m^3 Demineralized Water: 2 000m^3 Potable Water: 100m^3 Neutralise Water: 300m^3 A Stormwater Management Plan will be compiled for the project.	
147.	**5. AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT** • Air Quality Management has no objection to the proposed project subject to compliance with the National Dust Control Regulations, 2026 and Section 28 of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 (NEMA).			An Air Quality Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the Project, and the findings will be included in the EIA Report. This study will identify mitigation measures to address air quality impacts.	EAP

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	The applicant is requested to ensure that emissions are kept at a minimum during the operational phase of the project.				
148.	You are welcome to direct further queries regarding the above to Ms. Estelle Naidoo from the Office of the Deputy City Manager: City Development on Tel: [redacted], or email: [redacted].			Ms. Naidoo is included in the database of I&APs and she will be kept informed as the EIA process unfolds.	EAP
149.	Kindly note that for the department to process any application of this nature they need to be submitted via the HODs office. Please forward all applications to [redacted] to ensure that they are processed and allocated to the relevant persons.	A. Chiya – KZN Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)	Email (10/04/26)	Please note that this email address ([redacted]) was included in the distribution list.	EAP
150.	**1. GENERAL** 1.1 The Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development: Agricultural Resource Management, Land Use Regulatory Unit acknowledges the receipt of the above-mentioned application. 1.2 The main objective of the application is to request the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to provide comments, input and make recommendations on the proposed development of a 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay.	S.B. Thabede – KZN DARD	Letter (13/04/26)	Introductory part of letter – no response required.	-
151.	**2. COMMENTS** 2.1 The Applicant intends to bid for the GASIPPPP and/or other suitable energy markets and has proposed the development of a 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay, which falls within the City of uMhlathuze. 2.2 The proposed project is located within Phase 1F of the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) under a long-term lease agreement. 2.3 Thus, Nemai Consulting was appointed by Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd, to conduct the Environmental			These points are based on the content of the draft SR, and do not include any comments that require responses.	EAP

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay. 2.4 The project site is located in Alton North within Ward 2 of the City of uMhlathuze, approximately 1.5 km from the Richards Bay Central Business District (CBD). The earmarked site is located on Erf 16673 in Phase 1F of the RBIDZ, which is approximately 12.7 ha in extent. 2.5 The proposed Project is a greenfield development however entails the clearance of indigenous vegetation, but it is noted that the site was also previously cleared under the EA for RBIDZ Phase 1F and is fenced. 2.6 Generally, the study area is characterised as a relatively flat landscape with some gradual slopes towards the south. 2.7 Properties to the immediate north and west of the site are also undeveloped. Richards Bay Alloys (formerly Tata Steel) is located more than 200 m to the west of the site. The erf bordering the site to the south-west contains a wetland. 2.8 According to the CoU 2021 Land Use Scheme Viewer, the current zoning of the site is Noxious Industry. The land located to the north and west, which also falls within the RBIDZ, has the same zoning. The land to the south and east of the site is zoned as General Industry. 2.9 Residential areas within a 5 km radius of the site include Wild en Weide, Veld en Vlei, Brackenham, Aquadene, Birdswood, and the Richards Bay Central. The Richards Bay Cemetery is also located approximately 1.2 km to the north. 2.10 The proposed Combined Cycle Power Plant (CCPP) Module will consist of a 750 MW Power Block. A Module consists of two (2) Gas Turbines each having capacity of 250 MW along with Electric Generators, two (2) Heat				

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	Recovery Steam Generators (HRSGs) and one (1) Steam Turbine Generator (STG) having capacity of 250 MW. 2.11 The proposed CCPP is based on the latest state-of-the-art heavy-duty industrial-type Gas Turbines GE 9FA, which is suitable for base load and cyclic load operation in both simple (open) cycle and combined cycle mode. 2.12 As per the expectations the project has to undertake Specialist Studies & Compile Draft EIA Report DFFE Review & Decision Submit Final EIA. 2.13 The proposed Plant will comprise of the following key equipment: • Two (2) General Electric (GE) Frame 9 (model 9F.03) combustion turbines and generators; • Two (2) triple pressure, 3-drum, natural circulation HRSGs; • One (1) condensing steam turbine and generator; • One (1) de-aerating surface condenser; • One (1) induced draft cooling tower; • Balance of plant (BOP) equipment consisting of pumps, heat exchangers, transformers, power electrics, etc.; • One (1) integrated plant distribution control system; and • 275 kV switchyard comprising of three (3) × 15 kV to 275 kV step-up transformers and one (1) station auxiliary transformer (rating to be defined during detailed design). 2.14 Then the associated infrastructure will be: • Construction camp and laydown area • Workshop • Main office • Control building • Warehouse • Fire water pump house • Maintenance facilities				

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	• Storage facilities • Ablution facilities • Guard house • Fencing and gates; and • Waste management facilities 2.15 Moreover, the demineralized water tank will be a steel construction foundation bed of reinforced concrete. 2.16 It is also proposed that oil and contaminated wastewater from turbine washing, floor washing and other processes be collected in reinforced oily water separator sumps positioned at suitable locations around the power proposed 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant, Richards Bay Scoping Report (Draft) March 2026 58 station. Moreover, heavy-duty mild steel covers including ventilation pipes with suitable hoods will be provided. 2.17 The scrap yard and schedule waste storage area will be a hard-standing area sized to allow collection of scrap and waste. 2.18 All liquid effluent waste produced by the Plant from different sections shall be collected in an Effluent Treatment Plant and treated as required. 2.19 All oil waste effluents will be collected into a separate network and sent to an oil separator and treated. Water shall also be collected in a Central Monitoring Basin (CMB) where it is continuously monitored for pH, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) and other parameters, as required. 2.20 The Effluent Treatment Plant shall also be able to handle effluent wastes from the Gas Turbine Compressor Wash Water Drain System; oily water from transformer pits; neutralised waste from the Demineralised (DM) plant; cooling tower blow down; Heat Recovery Steam Generator (HRSG) blow down; and wastewater from the plant wash area.				

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	2.21 To manage the stormwater, the drainage system will be designed to cope with surface water, maintenance and normal plant flows, oil contaminant and oil drainage, and will handle all drainage requirements including firefighting. 2.22 This will be achievable through hard flooring of all enclosed buildings and cable / fuel and other trenches will be designed and graded to ensure there is no accumulation of water at any time. The oily water drainage system will be provided for all floor drains and plant areas and areas subject to oil spillage or leakage. Oily water effluent shall be passed through oil interceptors and monitored before discharge to the storm water drainage system. Moreover, the storm water drainage systems may use open ditch, underground piping or both. All open drains in areas of operation and maintenance will be covered for safety purposes. 2.23 It will be important to note that the site is located on the Zululand coastal aquifer associated with unconsolidated sediments of the Maputaland Group; the shallow groundwater sources on site can be classified as typical marine waters with similar deeper sources inclusive of Ca-HCO_3 type waters associated with fresh, deeper-seated aquifers. 2.24 There are no rivers that traverse the site. The closest non-perennial stream (Bhizolo Stream) is approximately 1.2 km east of the site and a second non-perennial stream (Ngodweni Stream) is approximately 1.5 km to the south-east. Although there are no recognised streams near the site, a stormwater canal runs parallel to the western side of the site, which conveys stormwater from the RBIDZ in a south-westerly direction to a non-perennial stream (Mhlanganabeni stream) about 3.7 km downstream of the site. 2.25 However, the site is located within 500 m of wetlands and the proposed development thus encroaches into the regulated area of these watercourses and triggers Section 21(c) and (i) water uses in terms of the NWA.				

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	Authorisations for these water uses will be sought from DWS. 2.26 It is assumed that additional investigations will include: • impacts to aquatic biodiversity which will be evaluated as part of an Aquatic Biodiversity Impact Assessment during the EIA phase; • a Hydrological Assessment will be undertaken during the EIA phase, which will investigate the project's hydrological functioning; and • mitigation measures identified as part of the above specialist studies, as well as environmental best practices to safeguard watercourses, will be included in the EMPr.				
152.	**3. COMMENTS** 3.1 The site is located in an area that there is no agricultural production, and it also does not contribute to agriculture; however the impact will be mainly in natural resources of the area. 3.2 This is a draft scoping report; thus the application has limited information to conclude. 3.3 However Agricultural Resource Management has studied the application and request the following: • Details on environmental impacts that are associated with the project and mitigation measures. • Details on Section 21 triggers with their mitigation measures. • Details on maintenance plan of stormwater drainage system in relation to waste water that will be produced. • Detailed plan on management of wastewater in relation to Effluent Treatment Plant.			The SR confirms that the proposed development site is located within Phase 1F of the RBIDZ, an area designated for industrial development and not used for agricultural production. Accordingly, the Project does not result in the loss of agricultural land or agricultural production. Potential impacts on natural resources have been identified in the SR as key environmental issues. These impacts will be assessed in detail during the EIA Phase through the relevant specialist studies, and appropriate mitigation measures will be identified. The submitted report is a draft SR, the purpose of which is to identify the key environmental issues, define the scope of assessment, and establish a Plan of Study for EIA (amongst others). As such, it does not present final impact conclusions. The EIA Phase will provide a more detailed assessment of environmental impacts, supported by specialist studies, which will be included in the EIA Report.	EAP

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				The information requested will be addressed during the EIA Phase as follows: • Environmental impacts and mitigation measures: Potential environmental impacts have been identified at a scoping level in the draft SR. Detailed impact assessment, significance ratings and mitigation measures will be provided in the EIA Phase, informed by specialist studies. • Section 21 water use triggers and mitigation: The Scoping Report identifies potential Section 21(c) and (i) water uses in terms of the NWA due to proximity to wetlands and drainage features. These triggers will be confirmed and assessed in detail during the EIA Phase, supported by hydrological and aquatic specialist studies, and appropriate mitigation measures will be defined. • Stormwater drainage maintenance: A Stormwater Management Plan will be developed as part of the EIA Phase and reflected in the EMPr. • Wastewater and Effluent Treatment Plant management: The SR outlines the proposed collection and treatment of effluent through an Effluent Treatment Plant. Further information pertaining to wastewater management will be included in the EIA Report.	
153.	**4. RECOMMENDATIONS** Please be advised that the Provincial Department of Agriculture: Agricultural Resource Management cannot conclude on the submitted application, however will wait for a detailed application with supporting specialists' studies.			The KZN DARD will be notified when the draft EIA Report is available for review.	EAP
154.	The draft scoping report for the above-mentioned proposed development that was submitted to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development,	M. Mdamba – KZN Department of Economic	Letter (15/04/26)	Introductory part of letter – no response required.	-

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
	Tourism and Environmental Affairs (hereinafter referred to as, "the Department") via email, for review and comment, in March 2026, has reference.	Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA)			
155.	**BACKGROUND INFO ON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**: Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd (the "Applicant"), proposes to construct a 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant (CCPP) in Alton North within Ward 2 of the CoU, approximately 1.5 km from the Richards Bay Central Business District (CBD). The earmarked site is located on Erf 16673 in Phase 1F of the RBIDZ, which is approximately 12.7 ha in extent. The access point to the industrial complex is via Alumina Ale Road, which runs along the eastern boundary of the site. The coordinates of the approximate center point of the site are 28°44'44.2202"S and 32°15'2.938"E. The Applicant intends to bid for the GASIPPPP and/or other suitable energy markets. The proposed Plant will comprise of the following key equipment: • Two (2) General Electric (GE) Frame 9 (model 9F.03) combustion turbines and generators; • Two (2) triple pressure, 3 drums, natural circulation HRSGs; • One (1) condensing steam turbine and generator; • One (1) de-aerating surface condenser; • One (1) induced draft cooling tower; • Balance of plant (BOP) equipment consisting of pumps, heat exchangers, transformers, power electrics, etc.; • One (1) integrated plant distribution control system; and • 275 kV switchyard comprising of three (3) × 15 kV to 275 kV step-up transformers and one (1) station auxiliary transformer (the rating to be defined during detailed design).			This presents the background to the Project and is based on the content of the draft SR. No responses are required.	EAP

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	The application excludes the natural gas pipeline and grid connection associated with the proposed development. The Applicant will source the supply and delivery of natural gas from the planned terminal development at the Port of Richards Bay (PoRB).				
156.	**COMMENTS BASED ON PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**: The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (the Department) has reviewed the afore-mentioned draft Scoping Report and accepts the specialist studies that have been suggested & listed in the Plan of Study, and to be undertaken during the Environmental Impact Assessment phase of the development. As such, the Department believes that the suggested specialists' work will come up with the necessary mitigation measures that will minimize the level of impact of the proposed development on the receiving environment and surrounds.			It is noted that KZN EDTEA accepts the specialist studies that have been identified in the Plan of Study, which will be undertaken during the EIA phase.	EAP
157.	Furthermore, the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) is requested to take note of the following comments: a. The Department is concerned about the presence and likely impacts on wetlands on-site and those near the proposed developmental site. The proposed development includes activities which have a potential of contaminating ground water & surface water if appropriate mitigation measures are not put in place for all phases of the proposed development. Such activities that may result to impacts include but are not limited to the following: the proposed effluent treatment plant onsite, the storage of diesel supply for back-up generators, including the storage of used oil materials on site. However, the Department trusts that specialist studies such as aquatic biodiversity impact assessment to be undertaken will therefore come up with necessary mitigation measures to minimize any potential negative impact on the wetlands.			The Plan of Study for EIA provides for specialist studies, including aquatic biodiversity and hydrological assessments, which will confirm the extent of wetlands, assess potential impacts on water resources, and inform the development of appropriate mitigation and management measures. Mitigation measures and operational controls will be developed during the EIA Phase and incorporated into the EMPr to minimise potential impacts on wetlands and water resources. The location and extent of the proposed facility and associated infrastructure are described in Section 9 (Project Description) and Section 9.5 (Overview of the Proposed Plant), with supporting layout drawings, aerial views and schematic plans (Figures 11 and 12, as well as maps contained in Appendix A). These plans indicate the spatial arrangement of the CCGT Power Plant and ancillary infrastructure. Further	EAP

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	Further, the Department will appreciate it if a site-layout plan depicting the locations of the effluent treatment plant including storages of diesel for backup generator and used oil storages, etc. can be included in the Final Scoping Report.			information related to these facilities will be included in the EIA Report.	
158.	b. The Department will appreciate the details regarding the development of the stormwater management plan (SWMP) of the proposed development to be included in the final scoping report.			A Stormwater Management Plan will be developed as part of the EIA Phase and reflected in the EMPr.	EAP
159.	c. Climate change impact assessment is emphasized for this development.			A Climate Change Impact Assessment will be undertaken for the Project, and the findings will be included in the EIA Report. The terms of reference for the Climate Change Impact Assessment are contained in Section 14.4.5.2 of the SR.	EAP
160.	d. The Department appreciates the use of the Guideline for Need & Desirability (DEA, 2017) in providing the need & desirability of the proposed development. Furthermore, the draft scoping has provided a list of developments that are near the proposed 750 MW CCPP site and these include gas-to-power projects which have already been approved and awaiting implementation. The Department requests clarity regarding the desirability & need of the proposed 750 MW CCPP in the proposed location, to be included in the final scoping report.			The SR explains the Needs and Desirability of the Project, as required in Appendix 2 of the EIA Regulations. This assessment was informed by the DEA Guideline on Need and Desirability (2017). Further refinement of the assessment will be undertaken in the EIA Phase as additional specialist information becomes available.	EAP
161.	e. The draft scoping has indicated that the Applicant will source supply and delivery of natural gas from the planned terminal development at the PoRB to the proposed 750 MW CCPP; however the said natural gas pipeline is excluded from this current EIA application; but will later be subjected to a separate environmental authorization process. The Department would like to know if there is a plan for an on-site storage of natural gas, if yes, the Department will appreciate a layout plan & the design details of the on-site storage of natural gas, to be included in the Final scoping report.			The Applicant formally confirms there are no plans for the bulk on-site storage of natural gas at the proposed facility. The plant is engineered to operate on a continuous, direct-feed basis from a dedicated pipeline. Because the design relies on continuous feed rather than banked fuel reserves, layout plans and design details for bulk storage are not applicable and will not be included. The natural gas supply pipeline falls outside the scope of this application and is subject to a separate Environmental Authorisation process.	Applicant
162.	f. The Department has noted that Activity 13 of Listing Notice 1 (LN 1) of the EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, has been listed as one of the triggered listed activities by the proposed development. The Department would like to			The Applicant confirms that the proposed facility will not abstract river water; it will utilise existing regional bulk municipal infrastructure. Activity 13 of Listing Notice 1 was included provisionally	Applicant

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	confirm if the proposed development will utilize municipal water / river water for its process plant; as Activity 13 of LN 1 of the EIA Regulations, 2014 is only applicable when there is abstraction of river water, to fill a reservoir with a capacity of 50 000 cubic meters.			to account for necessary on-site off-stream storage infrastructure (e.g., raw and fire-water tanks). If final engineering confirms combined storage meets or exceeds the 50,000 cubic meter threshold, exact design details will be provided in the Draft EIA. If it remains below the threshold, the Applicant will formally request the removal of Activity 13 from the application.	
163.	g. As per the recent SCA judgement in the Eskom matter, public participation process (PPP) must be done in the language that is widely spoken in the area. The Department emphasizes that PPP must consider full compliance with this requirement.			To ensure compliance with the requirement for the use of the local language during the EIA process, isiZulu was utilised during the Scoping Phase in the following instances: • Site notices and newspaper advertisements; • The Executive Summary of the Draft Scoping Report; and • Copies of presentations distributed during public and community meetings.	EAP
164.	Please note that this correspondence is not an approval to undertake any activities listed in terms of NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, nor is it an exemption from undertaking an EIA process for listed activities. It is a comment provided as a commenting authority to the EAP and the competent authority in terms of Regulations 3(4) of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, 2014. Please be advised that it is the proponent/developer's responsibility to continually ensure that there is legal compliance to environmental requirements, especially when there are changes in the project scope or description. Please ensure that all revised documents for further comments are addressed to the Control Environmental Officer: Environmental Impact Management at the King Cetshwayo District Office (Attention: Mr. Muziwandile Mdamba), Email: [redacted] of this Department.			The EAP acknowledges that this correspondence constitutes comments provided in terms of Regulation 3(4) of the EIA Regulations, and does not represent an approval or exemption from the environmental authorisation process. Mr. Mdamba will be notified when the draft EIA Report has been lodged for public review.	EAP

4.2 Environmental Impact Reporting Phase

4.2.1 Written Comments

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165.	Are there any sections of this development located below the Maritime High Water mark? If there are none, please contact Amafa KZN Heritage Institute in order to get their procedures on how to obtain statutory comments from them.	N. Khumalo – SAHRA	Email (05/08/26)	This development will not entail any activities below the Maritime High Water. The Amafa and Research Institute was notified of the Project and the review of the draft EIA Report.	EAP
166.	We are pleased to confirm that we can provide the gas supply solution for this project. Could you please advise on a suitable time for us to meet with the development team? We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can partner with you andcontribute to delivering a successful solution for the project. We look forward to your response.	S. Nkosi – SLG	Email (05/08/26)	Please note that any discussions regarding potential commercial partnerships or gas supply arrangements do not form part of the EIA process. Hence, I have copied in the Applicant's representative for him to take note of your email below.	EAP
167.	Kindly review the attached ESKOM application requirements, please send through your cover letter as well as a layout plan in one of the stipulated file formats (KMZ,KML,DXF or DGN). [*Attachments: Eskom Requirements & Eskom LR Application Requirements*]	S. Naicker – Eskom Distribution	Email (17/08/26)	The spatial data for the proposed facility's components were shared with Eskom Distribution, as requested.. The Applicant shall adhere to all Eskom's servitude requirements, as relevant.	EAP
168.	Please can someone send me the google earth fi le (kml/kmz) for this 750 MW project asap? Below is an example of Ugesi project kml/kmz which shows the project boundary etc. many thanks.	N. Padayachee – UUW	Email (20/08/26)	The spatial data for the proposed site was shared, as requested.	EAP
169.	Your emailed application dated 05th of August 2026. We confirm that an investigation has been carried out with regard to the supply of electricity, as well as any encroachment into Eskom's Servitudes, in respect to the application as set out above.	S. Naicker – Eskom Distribution	Letter (20/08/26)	It is noted that Eskom Distribution does not raise an objection to the Project.	EAP

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	Eskom Distribution does not raise an objection to the application, as our GIS system does not indicate any presence of Eskom Distribution infrastructure (132-kV, 88-kV, 33-kV, 22-kV and 11-kV overhead lines/underground cables) traversing the area depicted on the KMZ application files referenced "GAS INLET ESD VALVE SKID". The application area is located within the Municipality's area of supply. Whilst on the ground, should you detect that there are overhead lines/underground cables in the area, kindly inform the Municipality and you will be advised accordingly.				
170.	The letter from RBIDZ (Append D) to [redacted] is of interest as RBIDZ approve the 416kl/d and not the wet cooling which is 21 ML/d (as yet, as they RBIDZ don't have the pipe infrastructure). I will discuss this with the Acting Area Manager of UUW for uMhlathuze area/region, Tshivha Rambau.	N. Padayachee – UUW	Email (24/08/26)	Water required for the operational phase of the Project is discussed in Section 9.5.5 of the EIA Report.	EAP
171.				The RBIDZ letter confirms enough potable water is available for the air-cooled case. It also states that bulk clarified water will have to be used for the water-cooled case and that the project currently under implementation will not be able to provide enough clarified water. There is a follow-up clarified water project under development, but it would require modifications in order to supply the water-cooled case for the Mabasa project. The project team has corresponded with Mr. Padayachee and has undertaken to keep UUW informed of progress regarding water use. Given the challenges of sourcing water for the water-cooled option, the dry-cooled option will be pursued, unless a solution using seawater can be developed. Clarified water as an option will no longer be considered. Should a seawater option be found, all requisite environmental approvals will be applied for separately from this EIA.	Technical Team
172.	You can include the second sentence of the earlier email below, as well as confirmation sought of the timelines for implementation i.e. when the water would be required for	N. Padayachee – UUW	Email (24/08/26)	Water requirement for the operational phase of the Project is discussed in Section 9.5.5 of the EIA Report.	EAP

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	construction, and when required for full operations. Also confirmation on the quality of the water required (raw, or clarifi ed, or potable), noting again that the official request for the water would have to be from the developers to the CoU as they are the WSA. Our queries as UUW were just to inform our timeous planning, as a bulk water service provider to the CoU.				
173.	Department of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation hereby acknowledge receipt of the invitation on the 5th of August 2026 for review and comment on the project mentioned in the subject line. Kindly note that the project has been allocated to Ms M Rabothata and Ms Khuliso Khomari (Copied in this email). Note, all Public Participation Process documents related to Biodiversity EIA review and Biodiversity EIA queries must be submitted to the Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation by email: [redacted] for attention of Mr Seoka Lekota.	K. Khomari – DFFE Directorate: Biodiversity Conservation	Email (26/08/26)	Mr Seoka Lekota was notified of the review of the draft EIA Report.	EAP
174.	The online engagement session highlighted substantive amendments that need to be made to the AIR pertaining to; 1. The use of deficient SAAQIS data instead of RBCAA data. 2. Dose Map plume/ isopleth representation 3. The significance rating of “Medium” which does not align with the fact that NAAQS are exceeded 4. Start-ups / Backup diesel scenarios not assessed/modelled When can we expect to receive an amended AIR, given that comments are due on 7th September.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Email (26/08/26)	The specialist's updated Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) was shared with RBCAA on 3 September 2026.	EAP
175.	We kindly request that we be guided to the sections in the attached AIR that have been updated. It is noted with concern that no changes have been made to the dose maps despite the specialist having conceded	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Email (07/09/26)	The Air Quality Specialist provided feedback to S. Camminga regarding the changes made to the AIR.	EAP

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	in the meeting that the dose maps are difficult to interpret due to the use of uniform white isopleths.			The Air Quality Specialist further added a section prior to the isopleth maps to assist the reader's understanding and interpretation.	
176.	INTRODUCTION The South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact assessment (EIA) report for the Proposed 750 MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant by Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd in Richards Bay. We acknowledge that the draft EIA has undertaken a range of specialist assessments, including climate change, air quality, freshwater ecosystems, terrestrial biodiversity, hydrology, health, socio-economic impacts, noise, traffic and quantitative risk. The report also acknowledges that Richards Bay is an already highly industrialised area experiencing cumulative environmental pressures. However, SDCEA has significant concerns regarding whether the assessment has adequately demonstrated that the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing environmental and social carrying capacity of Richards Bay. Our concerns are particularly focused on cumulative air pollution, climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, water security, alternatives, biodiversity and wetlands, flood risk, hazardous materials, health impacts, and the reliance on future mitigation rather than demonstrating that these impacts are acceptable before authorisation. The EIA should not assess the proposed plant in isolation from the already heavily industrialised Richards Bay airshed and the numerous existing, authorised and proposed industrial, gas and power developments in the area.	South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA)	Letter (07/09/26)	Introductory part of letter. The specific comments raised in the letter from SDCEA are responded to below.	-
177.	CUMULATIVE AIR QUALITY IMPACTS ARE A MAJOR CONCERN			Cumulative impacts can be assessed by either (1) modelling emissions from the proposed and other relevant sources to predict cumulative	Air Quality Specialist

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	This is one of our most significant concerns. The draft EIA acknowledges that Richards Bay already experiences elevated air pollution. The air quality assessment records that monitoring data from 2021–2023 showed numerous exceedances of the 1-hour and 24-hour SO_2 national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS). It also acknowledges that 2021–2023 monitoring data for NO_2 and CO were unavailable. Despite this existing pollution burden, the cumulative modelling predicts exceedances of the NAAQS when the proposed Mabasa plant is assessed together with existing and future industrial sources. The EIA's Scenario 3 predicts exceedances for SO_2, NO_2 and PM_{10}, while Scenario 4, which includes approved future projects, also predicts exceedances of these pollutants. the cumulative impact is nevertheless rated as "medium". The modelled figures are particularly concerning: • Scenario 3 SO_2: 52.5 µg/m³ annual, 243 µg/m³ 24-hour and 682 µg/m³ 1-hour • Scenario 4 SO_2: 59.2 µg/m³ annual, 315 µg/m³ 24-hour and 695 µg/m³ 1-hour • Scenario 3 NO_2: 21.2 µg/m³ annual and 273 µg/m³ 1-hour • Scenario 4 NO_2: 21.9 µg/m³ annual and 273 µg/m³ 1-hour • Scenario 3 and 4 PM_{10}: 189 µg/m³ 24-hour, compared with a stated NAAQS of 75 µg/m³. SDCEA is concerned that the existence of a relatively small incremental contribution from Mabasa does not mean that the additional pollution is environmentally acceptable. In an already degraded airshed, the appropriate question is not simply whether Mabasa is the largest contributor, but whether any additional pollution load can reasonably be accommodated without worsening cumulative exposure			ambient concentrations, or (2) adding the predicted project contribution to measured ambient concentrations. The first approach was adopted in this assessment and provides a conservative assessment, as the modelled sources are assumed to operate simultaneously at the applicable MES rather than at their actual emission rates. Not all sources within the airshed can necessarily be included where suitable emission data are unavailable. The second approach is limited by the availability and spatial representativeness of ambient monitoring data, particularly for NO_2. There is also no specific methodology in the DEA air quality modelling guidance prescribing an approach to cumulative assessment. Importantly, cumulative concentrations represent the combined contribution of the modelled sources and should not be attributed to Mabasa alone. 1. Most current monitoring data The request is noted. The latest available ambient monitoring data has been reviewed and considered where suitable and representative. However, the use of ambient data for cumulative assessment is limited by the spatial coverage of monitoring stations and, in particular, the lack of recent representative NO_2 data. NO_x is the most important pollutant emitted by Mabasa, while SO_2 and PM emissions are relatively small. 2. NO_2 monitoring The absence of recent representative NO_2 monitoring data is acknowledged. The potential	

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	and environmental health risks. The EIA itself states that the cumulative assessment raises an "important flag" for air quality management in Richards Bay. SDCEA requests: 1. That the cumulative air quality impacts be reassessed using the most current available ambient monitoring data. 2. That the absence of recent no_2 monitoring data be addressed before a decision is made. 3. That the EIA identify the actual communities, schools, residences, workers and other sensitive receptors potentially exposed to cumulative pollution. 4. That the applicant demonstrate how additional emissions can be accommodated within the airshed without compromising existing communities. 5. That ambient air quality monitoring be established independently of the applicant, including community-accessible monitoring and transparent publication of results. 6. That additional emission reduction measures be considered rather than the conclusion that further interventions are unnecessary.			NO_2 impacts from Mabasa have nevertheless been assessed through atmospheric dispersion modelling using the proposed emission parameters and representative meteorological conditions. The lack of NO_2 monitoring limits a cumulative assessment based solely on measured ambient concentrations but does not prevent assessment of the potential impact of Mabasa through dispersion modelling. 3. Sensitive receptors Sensitive receptors have been identified in the AIR and are included on the relevant isopleth maps. The predicted concentrations can therefore be considered in relation to the identified sensitive receptors within the assessment domain. 4. Capacity of the airshed The assessment does not assume that additional emissions will have no effect on ambient air quality. Rather, it quantifies the incremental contribution from Mabasa in the context of existing and approved/future sources. The relatively small incremental contribution from Mabasa has been demonstrated through the modelling. The cumulative scenarios are also conservative, as sources are assumed to operate simultaneously at the applicable MES. Cumulative exceedances therefore represent the combined effect of the modelled sources and cannot be attributed to Mabasa alone. 5. Ambient monitoring Ambient air quality monitoring is undertaken in the Richards Bay area by the RBCAA and the City of uMhlathuze. Monitoring data are available through the RBCAA and SAAQIS websites. The establishment of any additional independent or community monitoring	

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				requirements would need to be considered in consultation with the relevant authorities and stakeholders. 6. Additional emission reduction See response to the comment on mitigation measures below. The proposed Mabasa Power Plant will comply with the applicable emission limits and regulatory requirements. The proposed emission controls and potential for additional technically feasible emission-reduction measures are addressed in the mitigation section of the Air Quality Impact Assessment.	
178.	THE CONCLUSION THAT FURTHER AIR-QUALITY MITIGATION IS "UNNECESSARY" IS NOT CONVINCING We are particularly concerned by the conclusion that further emission reduction interventions are considered unnecessary because the project's individual contribution is low. This conclusion appears difficult to reconcile with the same assessment's finding that: • Richards Bay already experiences SO_2 exceedances; • cumulative scenarios exceed the NAAQS for SO_2, NO_2 and PM_{10}; • future industrial developments will add further emissions; and • the community health assessment identifies cumulative air pollution and respiratory health as major pathways of concern. The Community Health Impact assessment states that the plant is being introduced into an environment already experiencing industrial air pollution, transport-related exposure, noise, socioeconomic inequality and finite health-system capacity. It further identifies respiratory			The project has been assessed operating at the MES for SO_2, NOx and PM. Natural gas has very low sulphur and will therefore have negligible SO_2 emission. Natural gas has a negligible particulate concentration. NOx emissions are low and are a function of process temperature and can be reduced with appropriate technology if necessary. The plant will operate well within the MES for gas combustion. Hence the conclusion that further mitigation is considered unnecessary.	Air Quality Specialist

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	health and air-quality exposure as among the highest-significance pathways. We submit that the mitigation hierarchy must be applied more rigorously. Compliance with an Atmospheric Emission Licence should not be treated as sufficient evidence that cumulative health impacts are acceptable.				
179.	THE AQIA SHOULD INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RICHARDS BAY MONITORING DATA groundWork's April 2026 comments on the Draft Scoping Report for Mabasa recommended that the Plan of Study require that "[r]ecent municipal and RBCAA monitoring data for NO_2, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$ and ozone be used to characterise baseline conditions, explicitly acknowledging where concentrations already meet or exceed the World Health Organization (WHO) 2021 Air Quality Guidelines." The EAP states in Appendix K Comments and Responses Report that "Monitoring data in Richards Bay will be reassessed and where possible parameters that were not included such as PM2.5 and ozone will be included in finalizing the AIR. NAAQS and WHO 2022 guidelines will also be brought in." The Mabasa AQIA of July 202610 did not do these things, though such information is readily available, and other proposed power plants are using such data and comparisons in their AQIA assessments. The AQIA and Final EIAR must be revised accordingly before the air impacts can be adequately evaluated.			The baseline ambient air quality assessment section has been updated in the final AIR. Rather than using SAAQIS data, it was recommended that data from RBCAA is used. The assessment period has been extended from 2021 to 2025. Compliance has been assessed in the final AIR considering the health-based NAAQS and the WHO ambient air quality guidelines in the baseline ambient air quality assessment section. Note that CO and ozone are not monitored in Richards Bay. The AIR has been revised and finalised.	Air Quality Specialist
180.	NAAQS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO PROTECT HUMAN HEALTH The NAAQS were established to protect health, but they are based on grossly out-of-date science, as they have not changed since 2009 and 2012. The finding of the Pictor AQIA on this subject is notable: "WHO AQG are developed based on the latest scientific studies linking air quality to health outcomes. The comparison focuses on NO2, PM10,			The point is noted. Compliance has been assessed in the final AIR considering the health-based NAAQS and the WHO ambient air quality guideline, in the ambient air quality section.	Air Quality Specialist

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	PM2.5, and SO2 AQGs *which are notably lower than current NAAQS*." (emphasis added). The Mabasa AQIA and forthcoming Health Impact Assessment should give a detailed and thorough assessment of the NAAQS compared with current science on the impacts of ambient air pollution. The NAAQS must be considered a floor, not a ceiling, and the proponent must take a precautionary approach towards protecting public health.				
181.	AMBIENT AIR QUALITY MEASUREMENTS, RATHER THAN SIMULATIONS, MUST BE USED IN BASELINE/BACKGROUND LEVELS FOR CUMULATIVE ASSESSMENT SCENARIOS The revised AQIA must assess the extent to which the airshed reaches or exceeds the World Health Organization's Air Quality Guidelines for PM10, PM2.5, SO2, and NO2. According to the Pictor AQIA (2025), "ambient PM2.5 concentrations in 2023 were above the WHO AQGs at all AQMS within the RBCAA PM2.5 monitoring network in 2023". It also found: "In reviewing available ambient air quality monitoring data, it was observed that concentrations of PM10, PM2.5, and SO2 in the Richards Bay area are already at or exceeding the World Health Organization's Air Quality Guidelines (WHO AQG), *signaling poor air quality*. This is particularly concerning as Richards Bay is designated for significant industrial development." (emphasis added) Satellite data indicate relatively high NO_2 values (30 ppb, or 30 µg/m^3) over and northeast of Richards Bay during the winter of 2021. More recent satellite data may be available. In the absence of recent NO2 monitoring data from the monitoring stations, the EAP should conduct measurements of NO2 at the project site and at sensitive receptors during times of year and weather conditions when concentrations are likely to be at their maximum.			See the response in row no. 177 regarding the cumulative assessment methodology.	Air Quality Specialist

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182.	CUMULATIVE ANALYSES (SCENARIOS 3 AND 4) SHOULD USE MEASURED BASELINES groundWork's comments on the Draft Scoping Report argued that the models should include both Project-only and Project-plus background scenarios. The EAP's responded that "[t]he dispersion modelling in the AIR assessed the project […] with existing sources and with approved future sources. In so doing, the incremental contribution of the project was indeed assessed throughout the domain and explicitly at the sensitive receptors." The AIR, however, failed to include several existing sources of air pollution, and likely severely underestimated pollution concentrations. An AQIA for another proposed plant in the area (Pictor Thermal Power Station) included a similar modelling scenario that simulated 12 existing sources: all six of those modelled in Mabasa AQIA plus Collateral, Grindrod, Tata Steel, Tronox Sands Central Processing Complex, and RB Coal Terminal. That simulation was compared to measured baselines, revealing that the simulation remained 4 to 13 times lower than measured concentrations. The Pictor AQIA therefore concluded: The baseline model *demonstrates a consistent underestimation of current NO2 levels*. This discrepancy echoes the earlier observation regarding PM2.5 concentrations and can likely be attributed to a similar cause i.e., the omission of vehicle emissions from the model. (emphasis added) and [T]he simulated baseline provides a reasonable estimate of current pollutant levels at AQMS stations located close to or directly downwind of industrial sources modelled. However, it *significantly underestimates concentrations at AQMS stations located further away*. This shortcoming is expected, given the limitations in the model's source term. As a			See the response in row no. 177 regarding the cumulative assessment methodology. There is no established and comprehensive emission inventory for Richards Bay that includes industrial sources, vehicles and ships, controlled and uncontrolled burning, amongst others. It is inevitable that not all sources will be included in any assessment project. The AIR for Mabasa used data provided by the RBCAA for key industrial sources. The limitations of the emissions inventory are recognised in the AIR. Comparison of modelled and measured ambient concentrations is challenging. The model is ''exposed'' only to the sources in the model inventory. An AQMS is exposed to all sources to a greater or lesser extent depending on location of the AQMS to the source(s). This is a challenge experienced by all specialists. The biggest challenge is simulating the baseline is to include all sources with their inherent temporal variations. These may be diurnal, seasonal, episodic. Ideally a comprehensive and current emission inventory should be held with the appropriate authority that may be used in all project assessments and applications. A resource like this will allow meaningful comparison between projects. A standard methodology would also be beneficial.	Air Quality Specialist

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	result, the *simulated baseline is unlikely to provide an accurate estimate of background air quality near the Pictor Project and the broader Empangeni area*. (emphasis added) The Pictor AQIA showed simulations of baseline from industrial sources, even using many more sources than Mabasa AQIA, were roughly 6 to 20 times lower than measured annual averages at established monitoring stations. The Pictor AQIA therefore rejected the use of simulated baselines, and developed a new methodology based on measured average long-term concentrations, stating It was however found that the simulated baseline does not provide an accurate estimate of background air quality near the Pictor Project and the broader Empangeni area. Instead of relying on the simulated baseline, average long-term pollutant concentrations measured at RBCAA and CoU AQMSs were used. (emphasis added) The Mabasa AQIA Scenario 3 is similarly unrealistic and unrepresentative of current air quality. The Mabasa AQIA states: Note that emission rates for the area source at facilities with AELs for the bulk storage and handling of coal and ore are not specified in the AELs. Emissions resulting from these facilities are not estimated in this assessment for the cumulative assessment. These are Transnet Port Terminals, Grindrod (Kusasa and Sea Munya Terminals) and the Richards Bay Coal Terminals. While this cumulative modelling exercise provides valuable insights, it must be remembered that the emission inventory that is used does not include all possible sources affecting ambient air quality in Richards Bay. *Notable omissions are emissions from other industrial sources, from motor vehicles and shipping, from the*				

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	handling and storage of coal and other ores, and those from agricultural burning. (emphasis added) The Pictor AQIA also modeled a future baseline using emissions of 12 existing industries plus six planned industries. In contrast, it appears that Mabasa Scenario 4 did not include emissions of existing industries, or proposed facilities, such as Pictor TPP. Accordingly, Mabasa's Scenarios 3 and 4 are insufficient for decision makers and local interested and affected parties to understand the current and future air quality context of this project.				
183.	MAXIMUM POLLUTION CONTROL FOR NO2 SHOULD NOT BE OPTIONAL FOR NEW GAS PLANTS IN AN AIRSHED ALREADY PERIODICALLY EXCEEDING WHO GUIDELINE FOR ANNUAL AVERAGE NO2 NO2 measured at the Brackenham monitoring station has already reached 13 ug/m3 annual average between 2021 and 2023. This exceeds the 2021 WHO guideline of 10ug/m3. The Richards Bay Clean Air Association air quality monitoring network no longer monitors NO2. Thus higher concentrations of NO2 may already exist in the airshed compared to three or more years ago. New gas plants in the airshed must require maximum NO2 control from dry low NOX burners plus selective catalytic reduction. The revised AQIA and EIAR must assess the maximum possible NO2 mitigation technologies for the Mabasa plant.			Imposing maximum pollution control for NOx, or any pollutant for that matter, is not a function of the AIR. Rather this is a call for the licensing authority.	Air Quality Specialist
184.	THE REVISED AQIA MUST MODEL COLD START-UPS, INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF WORST-CASE SCENARIO CONCENTRATIONS AT SENSITIVE RECEPTORS NO2 rates can be up to 15 times higher during cold start-up of gas turbines, and up to 9.3 times higher during shut down, for a period of about 1 hour. In the Pictor AQIA, the scenario with the upper range of cold start up emissions			Emergency shutdown, cold start (referred to as black start), and backup diesel have been assessed qualitatively in the final AIR	Air Quality Specialist

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	resulted in a 1-hr NO2 concentration of 90.6 ug/m3, which is 45% of the relevant NAAQS. (According to the World Bank Group and International Finance Corporation, new projects should not contribute more than 25% of an ambient air guideline.				
185.	Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCS) VOCs from gas plants, including formaldehyde and benzene, are carcinogenic and toxic, even at extremely low exposures. The revised AQIA must model VOCs, including results for 1-hr maximum, 24-hr as well as annual average concentrations. The Pictor AQIA, which modelled VOCs from the plant reaching 0.439 ug/m3 24-hour average, serves as a useful reference. Given there may be several new gas-fired power plants and other industries in the Richards Bay airshed in the future, along with increased vehicle and ship traffic, future monitoring of VOCs is critical. The revised AQIA should recommend how to improve ambient air monitoring infrastructure and reporting in the airshed to address public concerns about VOCs and their health risks.			As stated, volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions from natural gas combustion are generally very low. They occur primarily due to incomplete combustion or unburned fuel. Gas turbine combustion efficiency is exceptionally high, typically reaching 98% to 99% under normal operating conditions, This means that almost all the chemical energy in the fuel is converted into thermal energy. VOC emissions will be very low, and the resultant ambient concentration after dispersion and dilution will be even lower. VOC emissions from motor vehicles and other sources will certainly be higher. VOC are therefore not modelled for this project. UHC is expected to be 5 ppmv@15% O2 dry – in stack which is negligible.	Air Quality Specialist
				Indicative screening calculations, based on US EPA AP-42 emission factors for natural gas-fired combustion turbines and the Project's fuel input parameters, estimate in-stack concentrations of benzene and formaldehyde in the order of 12 µg/Nm³ (0.0034 ppmv) and 940 µg/Nm³ (0.7 ppmv) respectively under typical operation — corresponding to mass emission rates approximately 30 (formaldehyde) and 2,500 (benzene) times lower than the Plant's NO_x emission rate, for which detailed dispersion modelling has been undertaken elsewhere in this Report and demonstrates compliance with the applicable ambient standard at the nearest	Applicant / Technical Team

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				sensitive receptor with considerable margin. Since ground-level concentration scales approximately with source emission rate for a given stack and meteorological condition, the resulting ground-level contributions of benzene and formaldehyde are expected to represent a correspondingly small fraction of the already-compliant NO_x result, and a negligible fraction of the applicable ambient benzene standard (5 µg/m³ annual average) and reference formaldehyde guideline values. The US EPA emission factors applied are also representative of older diffusion-flame combustion technology and are expected to overstate emissions from the Project's proposed Dry Low Emission combustion system. On this basis, dedicated dispersion modelling for these two compounds was not considered necessary to support the conclusions of the Air Quality Impact Assessment. Comment 185 states that the Pictor project modelled VOCs from the plant reaching 0.439 µg/m³ 24-hour average, this is far below the NAAQS of 5 µg/m³ for benzene, and given that benzene and formaldehyde are small contributors to the total VOCs, this serves to support the conclusion that dedicated dispersion modelling is not considered necessary.	
186.	THE REVISED AQIA MUST ASSESS CONTINUOUS EMISSIONS MONITORING IN AN AIRSHED POISED TO HAVE WORSENING AIR QUALITY WITH INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT New gas to power plants in the Richards Bay airshed should use continuous emissions monitoring, and make these data publicly available expeditiously. The Pictor AQIA supports this position, stating that “[a]lthough it is not			As a Listed Activity emissions monitoring will certainly be a requirement of the Mabasa AEL, at least annually. The decision for continuous emission monitoring is not a function of the AIR. Rather this is a call for the Air Quality Office who will base a decision of the nature of the emissions	Air Quality Specialist

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	a requirement under section 21 of NEM: AQA, continuous emission testing (CEM) is recommended to ensure continuous compliance with MES, effectiveness of emission abatement systems and to address the concerns of interested and affected parties." The Air Quality Specialist should review this issue in the revised AQIA.			A Continuous Emissions Monitoring System (CEMS) will be fitted to all stacks at the power plant, as this is standard practice.	
				A CEMS will be fitted on all stacks, as per Section 9.7 of the EIAR.	Applicant / Technical Team
187.	CLIMATE CHANGE: THE PROJECT REPRESENTS A SUBSTANTIAL LONG-TERM FOSSILFUEL COMMITMENT We have serious concerns regarding the climate implications of authorising a new large-scale fossil-fuel power plant. The climate change impact assessment (CCIA) acknowledges that the project will result in a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions over its operational life and contribute cumulatively to atmospheric GHG concentrations. More importantly, the assessment estimates approximately 4.6 million tonnes CO_2e per year from the project. The report states that this would represent approximately 1.1% of South Africa's 2030 upper NDC target limit and approximately 1.4% of the 2035 lower-limit trajectory. This cannot reasonably be characterised as an insignificant environmental impact, as the report acknowledges that: "*the project remains a fossil-fuel-based development*" and acknowledges that its avoided-emission scenarios are illustrative and do not demonstrate guaranteed or directly attributable emission reductions. SDCEA therefore rejects any implication that the project should be considered environmentally acceptable from a climate perspective, and as discussed below, we dispute the contention in the DEIAR and the Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) that gas produces fewer emissions than coal. The appropriate assessment must ask whether constructing a new 750MW fossil-fuel facility is consistent with South Africa's long-term emissions trajectory, international climate commitments and transition			The concern regarding the scale and long-term nature of the Project's GHG emissions is acknowledged. The CCIA does not characterise the Project's emissions as insignificant. It quantifies the net increase in annual and lifecycle GHG emissions, recognises the potential for carbon lock-in over the 25-year operational life, and does not treat the avoided-emissions scenarios as offsets or guaranteed reductions. Following review of this comment, the CCIA has been updated so that the Project's contribution to South Africa's NDC is presented using the 100-year GWP results, consistent with the basis used for national GHG reporting and NDC comparison. For the Angola supply scenario, annual emissions are approximately 3.7 million tCO2e, equivalent to approximately 0.9% of the 2030 NDC upper limit of 420 million tCO2e and 1.2% of the 2035 lower-limit trajectory of 320 million tCO2e. Importantly, these percentages are based on the Project's full lifecycle emissions, including Scope 1, Scope 2 and relevant Scope 3 emissions, whereas South Africa's NDC is based on emissions occurring within South Africa's territorial boundary. The comparison is therefore conservative and is provided for contextual purposes rather than as a direct like-for-like NDC attribution. The Project's direct emissions are approximately 2.29 million tCO_2e/year; considered alone, these would represent approximately 0.5% of the 2030	Climate Change Specialist

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	objectives over the full approximately 25-year operating life. The report itself states that the project will intensify cumulative climate impacts and that the majority of lifecycle emissions arise during operation.			upper NDC limit and 0.7% of the 2035 lower-limit trajectory. Relevant lifecycle emissions remain included in the CCIA to provide a complete assessment of the Project's broader climate impact. The 20-year GWP result of approximately 4.60 million tCO_2e/year remains presented separately as a methane-sensitive assessment. These revisions do not change the underlying GHG inventory but clarify the appropriate interpretation of the NDC comparison.	
188.	FAILURE TO ADEQUATELY CONSIDER THE CURRENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY The CCIA fails to adequately account for the urgency and scale of the current climate crisis. In particular, the CCIA does not sufficiently consider the remaining global carbon budget, the latest climate projections, the increasingly narrow pathway for limiting global warming, or the scale of emissions reductions required to avoid severe and potentially irreversible climate impacts. This is a significant deficiency in the assessment of the proposed development. The global carbon budget is an important tool for determining the amount of additional greenhouse gas emissions that can be released while retaining a reasonable prospect of limiting global warming to a specified temperature threshold, including the 1.5°C temperature goal under the Paris Agreement. It therefore provides an important basis for assessing whether proposed developments are compatible with the urgent emissions reductions required to address climate change. The CCIA should accordingly have assessed the proposed development within the context of the rapidly diminishing global carbon budget and the need for immediate and substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. It is not sufficient to assess the project's climate impacts in isolation or merely against existing regulatory requirements. The assessment must also consider			The concern regarding the urgency and scale of climate change is acknowledged. The CCIA already considers the global climate context and Paris Agreement temperature goals, South Africa's declining NDC trajectory, the Project's annual and lifecycle GHG emissions, its cumulative contribution to atmospheric GHG concentrations, carbon-lock-in risk, transition considerations and climate-related physical risks. The remaining global carbon budget provides important global mitigation context; however, it does not itself provide a defined project-specific emissions allocation or threshold against which this individual development can be directly assessed. The CCIA therefore evaluates the Project's quantified emissions within South Africa's national emissions trajectory and climate commitments, including the Second NDC, which provides the economy-wide mitigation pathway applicable to South Africa. The additional scientific sources cited in the submission provide further global context but do not alter the Project's quantified emissions or the conclusions of the project-level assessment.	Climate Change Specialist

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	whether the project is consistent with South Africa's climate commitments and the increasingly constrained global pathway for limiting warming. The urgency of this issue is reinforced by the latest scientific and international assessments, which indicate that the world is approaching the 1.5°C threshold at an unprecedented rate. The world has already nearly exceeded 1.5°C of global average temperature increase, and if existing global policies continue, the world is currently on track for 2.8°C of warming by 2100. A report published by UNEP just this week found that "global action to cut greenhouse gas emissions has not been fast enough to avoid global warming crossing 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels in the next few years. … Even an optimistic scenario of current government pledges (full implementation of all national climate plans plus meeting additional net-zero targets) puts expected peak temperature rise at 1.8°C." UNEP's most recent predictions related to surpassing 1.5°C of global average temperature increase is also consistent with recent modelling of the world's remaining carbon budget. The carbon budget is "the total net amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) that can still be emitted by human activities while limiting global warming to a specified level" like 1.5°C or 2°C relative to preindustrial temperatures. A recent study by M. Forster et al shows that the global carbon budget for a 50% chance of not exceeding 1.5°C is 88 billion tonnes of CO_2 and 538 billion tonnes of CO_2 for an 83% chance of not exceeding 2°C. This means that there is less than three years left before the carbon budget is surpassed, consistent with UNEP's findings. In other words, there is little room left to maneuver. The CCIA and DEIAR must adequately and appropriately consider the climate impacts of the project, including cumulative climate impacts, taking into account this emergency and the urgent and substantial action necessary to avoid drastic harm to the climate system.				

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	Against this background, the CCIA should have provided a clear and evidence-based assessment of: • the remaining global carbon budget and the implications of allocating additional emissions to the proposed development; • consistency of the project with the 1.5°C temperature goal and South Africa's climate commitments; • whether the proposed development could result in carbon lock-in and prolong dependence on fossil-fuel infrastructure; • the project's compatibility with South Africa's transition towards a lower-carbon and climate-resilient economy; and • the cumulative greenhouse gas emissions of this project alongside other existing and proposed developments in the Richards Bay industrial and energy landscape and throughout South Africa. The absence of this information is a material shortcoming. Given the scale and long operational lifespan of the proposed development, its climate implications cannot be treated as a secondary or peripheral consideration. The CCIA should demonstrate, using the best available climate science and evidence, whether the project remains environmentally sustainable and justifiable within the context of the current climate emergency and the need for rapid emissions reductions. SDCEA therefore submits that the climate assessment is inadequate unless it properly considers the project's contribution to cumulative greenhouse gas emissions, the rapidly diminishing global carbon budget, the latest climate science, and the urgent need to align development decisions with the objectives of climate mitigation and a just transition.”				
189.	FAILURE TO CONSIDER SOUTH AFRICA’S INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE OBLIGATIONS			The cited ICJ Advisory Opinion and Constitutional Court judgment are acknowledged. These developments form part of the broader legal framework relevant to	Climate Change Specialist

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	The CCIA fails to acknowledge and consider recent international law developments related to climate change that place stringent due diligence obligations on South Africa to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. In *Sustaining the Wild Coast NPC and Others v Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy and Others* [2026] ZACC 33 (Case CCT 194/24), the Constitutional Court affirmed that "[c]limate change, by its nature, transcends borders" and that "it is a collective concern of all." The court emphasised that "[t]here have been significant developments at the international level around climate change concerns that impact on our approach at the national level to these issues, particularly the intersection between the environment and development," and that "[i]t follows that the content and scope of the state's obligations under section 24 must be understood within the broader framework of international law." The Constitutional Court explicitly referred to the recent opinion of the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of States in respect to Climate Change, noting that it is an authoritative interpretation of binding treaty and customary international law that forms "part of an emerging and coherent body of jurisprudence reflecting what can properly be described as a global reckoning with the legal and anthropological implications of climate change." The ICJ recognises that States have a binding legal obligation under the UNFCCC, its subsequent protocols and agreements including the Paris Agreement, and customary international law, to prevent significant environmental harm arising from climate change. The obligation to prevent significant environmental harm requires "stringent" due diligence, considering that climate change "poses a quintessentially universal risk to all States" and "because of the seriousness of the threat." The due diligence standard demands that States "**use all the means** at [their] disposal in order to avoid activities			climate-related environmental decision-making. The ICJ confirmed, among other matters, that States are subject to obligations to prevent significant harm to the climate system, assessed against a stringent due-diligence standard, and that appropriate regulatory, enforcement and monitoring measures may extend to the conduct of public and private operators. The Court also recognised 1.5°C as the primary temperature goal under the Paris Agreement. The CCIA is, however, a technical climate change specialist assessment and does not purport to provide a legal opinion on the scope or application of South Africa's international or constitutional obligations. From a technical assessment perspective, the CCIA quantifies the Project's lifecycle GHG emissions, considers cumulative climate impacts, South Africa's NDC and international climate commitments, carbon-lock-in risk, and the Project's role within the energy transition. The cited legal developments do not alter the Project's quantified GHG inventory or physical climate-risk assessment. Nor does the ICJ Advisory Opinion prescribe a specific project-level methodology requiring the cumulative emissions of all proposed gas projects in South Africa to be quantified within an individual CCIA. The broader legal implications of the Opinion and the Constitutional Court judgment, including the application of South Africa's due-diligence obligations in the environmental authorisation decision, are matters for consideration by the EAP and competent authority.	

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	which take place in [their] territory, or in any area under its jurisdiction, causing significant damage to the environment of another State." In relation to climate change, "such appropriate rules and measures include, but are not limited to, regulatory mitigation mechanisms that are designed to achieve the **deep, rapid, and sustained reductions of [greenhouse gas] emissions that are necessary for the prevention of significant harm to the climate system**." The obligation to act with due diligence is tied to alignment with 1.5°C. As the ICJ acknowledges, 1.5°C of temperature rise above pre-industrial levels is the "agreed primary temperature goal for limiting the global average temperature increase" and preventing "dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system;" and that temperature goal is also the benchmark which informs the due diligence required under customary law to prevent significant environmental harm. In light of the climate emergency, it is even more urgent that States follow the obligations set out in the ICJ's Advisory Opinion and take the deep cuts necessary to avoid exceedance of the 1.5°C temperature target. As the UNEP report recommends: > **Immediate cuts to greenhouse gases are needed**. Rapid and sustained mitigation within this decade is both necessary and feasible across all sectors and GHGs to hold warming well below 2°C and as close to 1.5°C as possible by the end of the century. This requires reaching global net-zero CO_2 emissions in the 2050s, alongside deep reductions in other gases, especially in methane from fossil fuels, agriculture and waste. The ICJ clarifies that due diligence includes State responsibility for acts of third parties within the State's control. This means that States "must regulate the conduct of public and private operators within the States' jurisdiction or control and be accompanied by effective				

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	enforcement and monitoring mechanisms to ensure their implementation." The ICJ explains that a State that "does not exercise due diligence in the performance of its primary obligation to prevent significant harm to the environment, including to the climate system, commits an internationally wrongful act entailing its responsibility", or commits a violation in the case of human rights. The ICJ emphasises that "responsibility is incurred if the State **fails to take all measures which were within its power** to prevent the significant harm." As the Constitutional Court explains in summarising the ICJ Opinion: > Accordingly, decisions must be taken within a framework of heightened diligence, informed by scientific knowledge, international commitments and the foreseeable impacts of emissions on present and future generations. > This convergence reflects a moment in international law in which climate change has moved from the margins of environmental diplomacy to the centre of legal accountability. **Decisions implicating our environment demand justification, diligence and coherence in state conduct**. The ICJ decision read together with the Constitutional Court's decision in *Sustaining the Wild Coast* has several implications for the competent authority's consideration of the proposed project. This includes that the project should be assessed in terms of its cumulative climate impacts alongside the dozens of other proposed gas projects in South Africa, and that the cumulative climate impacts should be assessed against the remaining global carbon budget to keep temperatures below 1.5°C. Each of these issues is discussed in turn.				

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	Notably, the DEIAR does not discuss the ICJ Advisory Opinion, and it was published before the *Sustaining the Wild Coast* decision. However, both of these decisions are available to the Competent Authority.				
190.	FAILURE TO CONSIDER CUMULATIVE CLIMATE IMPACTS The 2014 EIA Regulations, made under NEMA s 24(5), regulate the preparation, evaluation, submission, processing and decision on environmental-authorisation applications. The definition of "cumulative impact" is deliberately functional: it includes the past, current and reasonably foreseeable future impact of an activity, considered with impacts of activities associated with it, which may become significant when added to existing and reasonably foreseeable impacts from similar or diverse activities.54 Appendix 3 items 2(c), 2(d), 2(f), 3(1)(i) and 3(1)(j) require cumulative, lifecycle, significance, mitigation, residual-risk and uncertainty analysis. The language does not confine cumulative impact to emissions physically released inside the fence line. Importantly, the ICJ in its Advisory Opinion on climate change also acknowledges that climate change is caused by the "cumulative effect of different acts undertaken by various States and by private actors subject to their respective jurisdiction or control, even if it is difficult in such situations to identify a specific share of responsibility of any particular State." As such, States must assess the possible cumulative effects of their acts and the planned activities under their jurisdiction or control. Quoting ITLOS, the ICJ explains that activities undertaken by States or within a State's jurisdiction or control "may not be environmentally significant if taken in isolation, … [but] they may produce significant effects if evaluated in interaction with other activities." Similarly, the European Court of Human Rights noted that Norway would breach its human rights obligations through "any assessment of [greenhouse gas] emissions, project by project, that would disregard the cumulative [greenhouse gas] emissions of all those [oil and gas] projects combined."			The CCIA does not confine the cumulative climate assessment to emissions occurring within the Project fence line. The assessment includes direct and relevant indirect emissions across the Project lifecycle, including upstream natural gas extraction and processing, liquefaction, shipping, regasification, proportional ZET-related operational emissions and gas transmission infrastructure where these are functionally linked to the Project. The Project's annual and lifecycle emissions are assessed as its incremental contribution to cumulative atmospheric GHG loading. The CCIA does not aggregate emissions from unrelated existing or proposed third-party gas and industrial developments. The Cohen and Cooper study cited by SDCEA assesses a broader national gas-build scenario under the IRP and therefore has a different system boundary and purpose. Such system-wide analysis may provide broader strategic context for the competent authority, but it does not replace the Project-level cumulative assessment undertaken in the CCIA.	Climate Change Specialist
				For a response regarding the comparison of gas-fired generation and coal-fired generation and the GWP20 vs. GWP100 scenarios, please refer to Appendix 1 of the CRR.	Technical Team

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	Here, the CCIA deliberately excluded cumulative impacts outside the fence line of the project. The CCIA explains: > The CCIA does not seek to quantify or model the cumulative emissions of other existing or future industrial activities, electricity generation facilities, or unrelated third-party developments in the Richards Bay region or elsewhere. Such an approach is neither methodologically appropriate nor feasible in the context of climate change, given that emissions are global whose impacts are not confined to local or regional spatial boundaries. > The assessment of broader, system-wide cumulative emissions and regional emissions trajectories falls within the mandate of the competent authority, which is best placed to consider project-level emissions information alongside national GHG inventories, sectoral pathways, energy planning instruments, and South Africa's international climate commitments. > Accordingly, even where access to national or sectoral emissions reporting platforms may be available, this CCIA limits its scope to assessing the Project's contribution to global emissions, considered in relation to South Africa's national climate goals, emissions trajectories, and international commitments. > The evaluation of how individual projects collectively align with national emissions pathways and climate commitments falls within the mandate of the competent authority, which is uniquely positioned to consider project-level emissions information alongside national GHG inventories, sectoral budgets, energy planning instruments, and South Africa's obligations under international climate agreements. In other words, the CCIA did not undertake a cumulative climate impacts assessment of the proposed project				

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	alongside other proposed gas power projects in Richards Bay or South Africa because it determined that, among other things, it would not be methodologically feasible, and the CCIA made clear that such an assessment is the responsibility of the competent authority. As an example of what should have been assessed, the IRP makes provision for 18,250 MW of installed capacity, while the South African government has already approved the Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) (including the Climate Change Impact Assessments (CCIAs)) for 14 gas power plants. If all of these are built, these plants would represent a total of 23,247.3 MW installed capacity, a difference of 4,997.3 MW from the IRP. We submit that the CCIA could have analysed the potential cumulative climate impacts of this build-out; regardless, considering the legal precedents set out above, the competent authority must assess and take into consideration the full cumulative impacts of the country's intended gas build out against South Africa's legal obligations. Fortunately, and contrary to the position of the CCIA, such a cumulative impact assessment is not only possible, but it has also been done. We attach an August 2026 report prepared by Dr Brett Cohen, Enuity Consulting, and Dr Jasmin Cooper, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Imperial College London for the Centre for Environmental Rights that quantifies the greenhouse gas emissions that would be associated with the buildout of 18,250MW of new gas power as envisioned in South Africa Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). The report assesses emissions from both the power plant and across the full gas supply chain, including from production to consumption and both within and outside of South Africa. It models the IRP build-out emissions from 2025 to 2050, drawing extensively on publicly available information on the 14 gas plants that have already received Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) approval.				

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	The report also explores the impacts of assumptions around the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of methane. Emissions calculated using both GWP100, which is used in South Africa's GHG inventory and NDC and in the GHG Protocol, and GWP20, are presented. GWP20 is included to better reflect near-term warming risks and the urgency of remaining within the 1.5°C carbon budget, given methane's shorter atmospheric lifetime and higher short-term radiative forcing. These shorter-term considerations are often ignored when considering climate change impacts of fossil fuel projects, although they are assessed in the CCIA. Cohen and Cooper explain that while combustion emissions are largely insensitive to GWP, since gas is almost entirely converted to CO_2 on burning, a large proportion of the upstream emissions are fugitive and vented methane emissions, so switching from GWP100 to GWP20 roughly doubles total upstream CO_2e emissions. The report found that under the IRP scenario, the build-out of gas plants would result in nearly 800 million tonnes of additional CO2 emissions by 2050, and almost double that if full life-cycle emissions are taken into account using GWP20 (1,542,617,000 tonnes), or 1,170,685,000 tonnes using GWP100. These emissions totals incorporate modest “central” upstream gas leakage scenarios: higher leakage rates could result in total emissions of several times these figures when using GWP20. The results demonstrate that under the IRP scenario, non-territorial emissions contribute 22 – 53% of the plants’ total lifecycle emissions under GWP100 and 27 – 73% of the plants’ total lifecycle emissions under GWP20, depending on the case considered. To put the emissions into the context of South Africa’s climate commitments, the second NDC commits to remaining within a range of 320 and 380 $MtCO_2e$ in 2035. In 2035 the direct gas plant emissions alone are on the order of 24.7 $MtCO_2e$ in the IRP case, accounting for 6.5% of the upper bound NDC commitment and 7.7% of the				

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	lower bound NDC commitment. If accounting for the full-life cycle cumulative emissions outlined in the preceding paragraph, the implications for South Africa's climate commitments become even more stark. Even more critical, is to put these emissions into the context of the remaining global carbon budget for meeting 1.5°C outlined in the preceding section. As Cohen and Cooper emphasise: "The continued and growing upstream and combustion emissions from new gas fired electricity plants in South Africa as proposed in the IRP, and as reflected in the EIAs already approved for gas plants across the country, are inconsistent with the climate obligations set out in the ICJ 2025 advisory opinion, which requires States to act with stringent due diligence to use all means at its disposal to prevent significant harm to the climate system, which includes aligning its actions with a global pathway that limits warming to 1.5°C. Implementing the IRP's gas build plan would lock the electricity sector into an emissions trajectory characterised by ongoing emissions for long after the 1.5°C budget is depleted." In summary, the CCIA and DEIAR's avoidance of presenting data on cumulative climate impacts of all the currently proposed gas projects is a fatal flaw, and the competent authority cannot ignore the cumulative emissions of these gas plants combined in light of the current climate emergency.				
191.	THE CCIA'S ESTIMATES OF SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS SHOULD BE GROUND TRUTHED AGAINST SATELLITE DATA The CCIA underestimates the Scope 3 emissions of the project by failing to ground truth fugitive emissions data against satellite data. The CCIA uses data from Algeria and the U.S. to estimate upstream fuel supply emissions. This is commonly referred			The Scope 3 inventory is based on published lifecycle emission factors rather than site-specific measurements of the future LNG supply chain. It includes emissions associated with natural gas extraction and processing, fugitive emissions, liquefaction, shipping, regasification and transmission. Algeria-derived factors are applied as the available proxy for the Angola supply scenario where suitable Angola-	Climate Change Specialist

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	to as bottom-up emissions data. Cohen and Cooper explain that methods to identify and measure methane emissions fall into two categories: top-down and bottom-up. Top-down methods use methane concentrations in the atmosphere, measured via satellites or aerial surveys by plane or drone, to estimate emissions in an area which can be linked to specific emission sources. Bottom-up methods measure emissions at the source (valve, flare vent etc.). Differences between the approaches will result in differences in emission estimates. Cohen and Cooper note that some notable research using top-down satellite and aerial technologies over the last few years has shown bottom-up approaches, particularly those comprising national emissions inventories, often significantly underestimate emissions. The CCIA should have verified its upstream emissions data by also checking against top-down data.			specific factors are unavailable, and a separate United States supply scenario is assessed. Project-specific satellite ground-truthing is not practical in this context because the final LNG supplier and the specific upstream production and processing facilities supplying the Project have not been confirmed. Such ground truthing for a specific project such as this one would require a survey of the global LNG supply chain, which is impractical. The top-down studies cited in the comment demonstrate uncertainty in methane estimates but do not provide Project-specific emissions data that can be directly attributed to the future supply chain. The CCIA addresses this uncertainty through alternative supply scenarios, conservative assumptions and presentation of both 100-year and 20-year GWP results. The 100-year GWP is applied as the primary reporting basis, consistent with the standard time horizon used for national GHG inventories and reporting under the UNFCCC framework, while the 20-year GWP is presented additionally to illustrate the greater near-term warming influence of methane.	
192.	THE CCIA'S CLAIMS AROUND AVOIDED EMISSIONS ARE NOT SUPPORTED BY EVIDENCE The CCIA makes two substantial claims related to avoided emissions that it then used to reduce the overall emissions of the project: 1) the project will result in the displacement of coal-fired electricity generation and 2) higher renewable energy penetration is supported by dispatchable gas-fired generation, resulting in additional displacement of coal-fired generation during periods of low renewable output. Using these assumptions, the CCIA claims the project would result in avoided emissions, including over 60 million tonnes of CO_2 avoided from the burning of coal over the life of the project and about 219 million tonnes of CO_2			The CCIA does not use the avoided-emissions estimates to reduce the Project's overall emissions. Section 6.1.4 reports the Project's net lifecycle GHG emissions against a conservative zero-emissions Project baseline and states that no emission reductions or removals are claimed. Avoided emissions are presented separately in Section 6.1.5 as illustrative electricity-system scenarios. The CCIA states that no assumption is made that electricity generated by the CCPP will replace coal-fired generation, and the scenarios are not presented as forecasts of grid	Climate Change Specialist

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	avoided through the increased uptake of renewable energy. The CCIA presents no evidence supporting these claims. With respect to the first point, the CCIA misses the mark, because when including adequately ground-truthed fugitive emissions data for gas leakage, the emissions of gas can exceed in some cases the emissions of coal, particularly under a GWP20 scenario. Indeed, Cohen and Cooper found this to be the case with their modeling. They explain: "A comparison was made between coal and gas emissions to explore the claims that gas is preferred as a transition fuel away from coal. Direct combustion intensity was found to be 0.36- 0.39 tCO_2e/MWh, which is significantly lower than the current average of coal, around 1.14 tCO_2e/MWh. However, including upstream emissions raises total gas emissions to between 0.48 and 0.94 tCO_2e/MWh using GWP100, and to between 0.53 and 1.7 tCO_2e/MWh under GWP20. The GWP20 High Case thus exceeds coal's emissions intensity. The difference between coal and gas combustion emissions will also decline as older coal power stations, which produce more CO_2 per unit of energy, are retired." These findings explicitly contradict the claims in the CCIA. With respect to the second point about enabling higher renewable energy penetration, again the CCIA presents no supporting evidence. Indeed, without the major uptake of gas envisioned in the IRP, there is substantial reason to believe that renewable energy deployment could proceed more rapidly. Moreover, this is what is required to avoid climate disaster. UNEP in its recent report recommended that to give the world its best chance of keeping within 1.5, "[a]ccelerating the renewable energy revolution is crucial." The report emphasizes: "On the supply side, limitedovershoot scenarios suggest scaling renewables to 60–70 per cent of global electricity generation by 2030,			operation or expected Project performance. No avoided emissions are deducted from the Project's GHG inventory. The coal-displacement results are dependent on the lifecycle emission factors and upstream gas-supply assumptions applied in the CCIA. The CCIA therefore presents both 100-year and 20-year GWP results to show the sensitivity of lifecycle emissions to methane. The increased-renewable-energy scenario is similarly presented as an illustrative system-level scenario and not as a prediction that the Project will itself result in additional renewable-energy deployment.	

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	supported by grid expansion, storage and demand flexibility."				
193.	THE ALTERNATIVES ASSESSMENT IS A MAJOR SHORTCOMING SDCEA is particularly concerned about the treatment of alternatives. The EIA states that energygeneration alternatives were not considered relevant because the applicant intends to participate in a gas procurement programme and therefore considers the technology and fuel type to be determined by the procurement programme rather than being a discretionary choice. The above is problematic. An EIA should not effectively start with the conclusion that gas is the required technology and then assess how to make that technology environmentally acceptable. The purpose of alternatives analysis is precisely to determine whether there are less environmentally damaging ways of achieving the stated objective. The report itself acknowledges that renewable energy was considered but dismissed as not being a direct substitute for dispatchable generation without substantial additional storage and transmission infrastructure. SDCEA therefore requests a proper comparative assessment of combinations such as, renewable generation and battery storage/other storage, grid strengthening, hybrid generation systems, smaller flexible generation capacity, alternative locations and alternatives that reduce dependence on imported LNG. Location alternatives are also insufficiently assessed. The EIA expressly states that no alternative sites were formally considered or comparatively assessed, because the applicant regards erf 16673 as the only practically available and strategically appropriate location.			It cannot be incumbent on a single PPA project to re-develop national IRPs and long-term national integrated energy planning. Alternatives are discussed in the CCIA report and in Section 13.9 of the EIA Report. By way of illustrating the practicality of a PV power plant with Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) equivalent of 750MW CCGT would require approximately 4,000MWp of PV panels in a reasonable location (a PV panel field requiring 6,000 to 11,200 ha space approximately (100 km^2)). plus battery storage of approx. 13,500 MWh, 20m BESS shipping containers are typically 5 MWh of storage each, hence 2,700 containers would be required. Richards Bay is not well suited to PV, more PV panels would be required. For context on the scale of the 13,500 MWh battery system required, the largest currently installed BESS is 3,370 MWh (Gujarat, India). This is only 25% of the capacity that would be required to match the utility of the Mabasa CCGT project. Currently CCGT power plants in Richards Bay being planned Pictor 2000MW, Eskom 3,000MW, Mabasa 750MW and Phakwe 2,000MW – it is simply not practical to replace this with PV generation and BESS. 18,000 MW gas allocation in IRP would require approximately 2.400 km^2 of PV panels. The solar plus BESS alternative would typically cost 4x – 6x more than the gas-fired option, excluding the need to replace or augment the	Applicant / Technical Team

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	SDCEA does not consider "availability of the site" to be sufficient justification for concluding that it is the environmentally preferred location.			batteries after 10 – 15 years. After including fuel costs, the lifecycle costs of electricity generated would be of the same order of magnitude. Wind and hybrid systems have similar challenges and would require similarly sized storage systems. Both wind and solar are susceptible to regional-scale multi-day periods of reduced production (cloudy or windless periods) and dispatchable power is necessary to mitigate this since, as illustrated above, storage to accommodate this is not practical. Solar, wind and especially BESS all have their unique environmental impacts that extend beyond just the immediate GHG emissions. For example, the mining, processing, transport and disposal or recycling of battery materials has significant environmental impact. CCGT is the most efficient and lowest emitting of the fossil fuel options and hence the support globally for this technology as transitional. Gas reciprocating engines (the technically suitable alternative for smaller flexible systems, are not as efficient as CCGT power plants and hence emit more CO_2 per MWh than the equivalent CCGT power plant. Smaller, flexible generation will have larger GHG emissions associated with it. Please also refer to Comment 196. Coal is too polluting, and cannot be financed so is not considered. Nuclear comes with nuclear waste and is hugely expensive. It also requires significantly more time to develop than gas-fired generation. This	

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				is also considered within the IRP but not as part of this EIA. Power plant size was selected in line with available GT sizes, PPA, and GasIPPP allocation. Site selection and location alternatives is discussed under comment number 195.	
				The assessment of alternatives was undertaken in accordance with the EIA Regulations and is presented in Section 10 of the EIA Report. The alternatives assessment was undertaken within the practical constraints of the proposed project, the intended procurement route (GASIPPPP), the availability of fuel supply infrastructure and the strategic industrial context of the RBIDZ.	EAP
194.	FAILURE TO ASSESS REASONABLE AND FEASIBLE ENERGY ALTERNATIVES The DEIAR states that “alternatives to energy generation technology are not relevant to this Project” because the Applicant intends to bid under the Gas Independent Power Producers Procurement Programme (GASIPPPP) and because the project’s proposed technology and fuel type are said to be functions of the procurement programme rather than discretionary choices open to comparative assessment in the EIA. This is the central flaw in the alternatives analysis. The DEIAR conflates the Applicant’s commercial preference with the legal purpose of an alternatives assessment. The relevant question is not simply what project the Applicant wishes to build or under which			See response in row no. 193 above. The Applicant does not agree that the alternatives assessment presented in the DEIAR is deficient. The IRP is South Africa's legislated, publicly consulted national electricity planning instrument, developed and approved by Cabinet specifically to determine the optimal generation technology mix required to meet the country's electricity needs, including consideration of renewable energy, storage, demand-side management, and other technologies at a system-wide level. The determination that a defined quantum of new generation capacity be sourced from gas, and	Applicant / Technical Team

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	procurement programme it hopes to bid. Rather, the EIA must examine whether the underlying objective relied upon to justify the project can reasonably and feasibly be achieved through alternatives that would avoid or reduce environmental and social harm. The Applicant's intention to participate in a GASIPPPP does not relieve either the Applicant or the EAP of their obligations under NEMA and the EIA Regulations to identify, assess and compare reasonable and feasible alternatives. The DEIAR's reliance on national planning documents does not cure this defect. Chapter 10 recites the gas allocations in successive iterations of the Integrated Resource Plan and the history of the GASIPPPP, and treats those policy choices as establishing the need for this particular project and technology. But the existence of a national allocation for gas generation does not itself establish that this 750 MW project, at this location, is the preferred alternative after comparison of its site-specific social, environmental, technical and economic implications with other reasonable and feasible means of meeting the asserted need. The DEIAR acknowledges that projected electricity demand growth has attracted informed criticism, notes that grid electricity sales have declined since 2011, and recognises a risk of overinvestment if actual demand growth falls below the assumptions in the IRP. Yet it does not carry that uncertainty into the alternatives analysis. It does not assess whether the asserted need is better met through a different combination, scale or timing of resources, nor whether another portfolio could supply the relevant capacity, energy, flexibility or ancillary services with lower environmental and social costs. Although the DEIAR identifies a range of alternative technologies and fuel pathways, it still fails to undertake a meaningful comparative assessment of several reasonable and feasible alternatives. In particular, the DEIAR contains no comparative assessment of, among other things:			the subsequent identification of the GASIPPPP as the procurement mechanism for that capacity, is the outcome of that national-level alternatives assessment process, not an unexamined policy input. It is not the role of a project-level EIA to re-perform or second-guess a generation technology and capacity-mix determination that has already been made through the IRP's own public participation and governmental approval process.	
				Decisions regarding the broader energy mix are primarily informed by national energy planning processes. The EIA has therefore focused on alternatives that are reasonable and feasible within the scope of the proposed gas-to-power project.	EAP

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	• renewable energy generation combined with battery energy storage; • hybrid portfolios comprising solar photovoltaic generation, wind generation and storage; • geographically diversified renewable energy portfolios designed to reduce variability; • demand-side management and energy-efficiency measures; • other lower-carbon sources of dispatchable capacity or system services; • transmission, interconnection and grid-strengthening measures; • a smaller or phased portfolio of resources matched to demonstrated demand; or • combinations of these alternatives. The omission is not remedied by describing gas generation as dispatchable or as supporting variable renewable energy. If the project is justified on the basis that it will provide capacity, flexibility, reserve margin, ancillary services or support for renewable generation, the EIA must identify those services with sufficient precision and compare reasonable and feasible alternatives capable of providing them. The DEIAR does not quantify the claimed system need or compare the proposed plant against alternative portfolios on a common service, cost and impact basis. In the absence of such an assessment, it is not possible to determine whether the Project represents the least damaging means of providing the asserted system benefits. Although the DEIAR discusses several alternative technologies, it does not provide the comparative assessment contemplated by the EIA Regulations. The DEIAR does not compare the identified alternatives in terms of lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, climate impacts, water consumption, biodiversity impacts, air quality impacts, cumulative impacts, land requirements, socio-economic implications, implementation costs, fuel-price exposure, infrastructure dependencies or stranded-				

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	asset risk. This omission is particularly significant given the substantial differences that may exist between the proposed LNG-fuelled power station and alternative technologies in terms of lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, biodiversity impacts, cumulative effects and long-term economic risks. Where climate impacts constitute a material consideration in the environmental-authorisation process, a comparative assessment of alternatives is necessary to determine whether equivalent energy or system services can be delivered with materially lower environmental costs. Nor does the DEIAR provide any transparent methodology, comparative matrix, ranking exercise or decision-making framework through which decision-makers can evaluate competing alternatives. Instead, the DEIAR proceeds from a brief narrative discussion of alternatives directly to the conclusion that LNG-fuelled CCGT technology is the preferred option. This deficiency is illustrated by the treatment of renewable energy alternatives. The DEIAR acknowledges renewable energy technologies, including solar photovoltaic generation, wind generation and battery storage systems, but rejects them on the basis that they would require additional storage and transmission infrastructure to provide a level of dispatchability comparable to the proposed Project. However, the DEIAR does not quantify those requirements, compare them against the infrastructure requirements associated with the proposed Project and its LNG supply chain, or assess their relative environmental, social and climate implications. Similar conclusory reasoning is applied to nuclear power, alternative fuel options and alternative gas technologies. The result is a series of assertions regarding feasibility rather than an evidencebased comparative assessment of alternatives. This omission is particularly significant because the project would operate as a 500 MW simplecycle or 750 MW combined-cycle facility on a twenty-four-hour, seven-day basis, and is described as capable of base-load operation.				

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	A plant designed and financed to operate at substantial utilisation over a period of 25 to 30 years may have materially different system and climate implications from flexible resources built to address limited periods of residual demand. Those implications should have informed both the identification of alternatives and their comparative assessment. These considerations are particularly significant because a gas-fired power station designed to operate for several decades may lock in substantial greenhouse gas emissions, fuelsupply infrastructure and system dependencies that would not necessarily arise under alternative resource portfolios. The DEIAR therefore does not demonstrate that the proposed gas-fired power station is the most sustainable, least damaging or otherwise preferred means of achieving the project's stated objectives. While the DEIAR ultimately identifies and discusses certain alternative technologies, it does not undertake the comparative assessment required to demonstrate that LNG-fueled CCGT technology is environmentally preferable to other reasonable and feasible alternatives.				
195.	FAILURE TO ASSESS ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS The DEIAR similarly fails to undertake a meaningful assessment of alternative locations. It expressly states that the project's siting was not based on an independently commissioned multisite comparative assessment and that "no alternative sites were formally considered or comparatively assessed as part of this EIA." Instead, the report provides reasons why Erf 16673 site is advantageous to the Applicant, including its industrial zoning, access to services, proximity to planned port-based gas infrastructure, institutional support from the RBIDZ and low elevation. Those considerations may be relevant to the assessment, but a justification for the preferred site is not a comparative assessment of location alternatives. The EIA identifies no alternative sites, compares no development footprints,			The necessary requirements for a gas-fired power plant are listed below. They largely rule out alternative locations: • Access to gas. This means proximity to a gas terminal, or to a suitable gas pipeline. This need alone eliminates much of South Africa. • Low altitude since gas turbines derate significantly at altitude and thus emit more GHGs per unit of power produced. This forces a coastal location and rules out inland locations with gas pipeline access. • Richards Bay has been selected as South Africa's foremost LNG import terminal, and this is the most advanced of the LNG import possibilities (ZET).	Applicant / Technical Team

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	evaluates no relative environmental sensitivities and explains no reasoned process by which alternatives were screened out. It therefore provides no basis for concluding that the preferred site presents the lowest overall environmental and social harm among reasonable and feasible locations. The omission is particularly concerning because the DEIAR identifies material sensitivities at or near the site. It records very high terrestrial biodiversity sensitivity, CBA Irreplaceable areas, Endangered Maputaland Wooded Grassland, aquatic sensitivity and wetland-related constraints. These findings should have triggered a genuine comparison of feasible alternative sites or footprints, including other potentially available industrial parcels within the RBIDZ, rather than a conclusion that the preferred site is the only practicably available location based predominantly on commercial and logistical considerations.			Furthermore, a site zoned for, and suitable for industrial development, such as the Richards Bay IDZ is necessary. Since part of the need for gas-fired power generation is related to the decommissioning of coal-fired power stations, which are largely located in the east of the country, transmission and grid constraints dictate that new gas-fired power generation should also be in the eastern regions of the country. Richards Bay already has a strong transmission network connecting it to the National grid due to the high concentration of industry located in Richards Bay which consumes large quantities of electrical power. Given the above there would be very few (if any) feasible alternatives to evaluate, and it is highly unlikely that these alternatives (if any) would present a lower overall environmental and social harm outcome than the proposed site. The project team would be interested to hear what alternative sites are suggested and for what reasons?	
				As explained in Section 10.2.2 of the EIA Report, the identification of the site was not arbitrary. The selected site benefits from several characteristics that materially influence project feasibility, including: • Existing industrial zoning ("Noxious Industry"), thereby avoiding the need for rezoning processes and associated land-use conflicts; • Location within the RBIDZ, which has been established to accommodate strategic industrial developments and is serviced by existing and planned industrial infrastructure;	EAP

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				• Proximity to the Port of Richards Bay and the proposed TNPA gas import infrastructure, thereby minimising pipeline requirements, logistical complexity, technical risk and associated environmental disturbance; and • Access to services, including roads, electricity, water supply and wastewater infrastructure required to support industrial development. A comprehensive suite of specialist investigations was undertaken for the selected site. Based on the findings of these studies, no fatal flaws were identified that would preclude development of the site subject to the implementation of the recommended mitigation measures. With regards to the comment referring to the "material sensitivities at or near the site", the following is noted in Section 15.2 of the EIA Report: • The site encroaches into areas designated as CBA Irreplaceable in terms of the KZN BP. In addition, the site is located within the Maputaland Wooded Grassland vegetation type, which is classified as Endangered. Despite this high conservation context at a regional scale, field verification indicates that the study area has been subject to varying degrees of historical disturbance. Overall, while portions of the study area retain moderate ecological value, particularly within freshwater-associated habitats, the site is characterised by disturbance, fragmentation, and reduced connectivity. • Two wetlands were delineated on the site, namely a seep wetland and wetland	

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				flat. It is important to recognise that the wetlands on the site were previously assessed as part of the RBIDZ Phase 1F environmental authorisation process, during which the clearance of indigenous vegetation and the infilling of wetlands within the authorised development footprint were approved. Consequently, the current EIA for the proposed Plant does not seek approval for wetland-related impacts on the site, nor does it re-assess the acceptability of the previously authorised habitat transformation and wetland infilling. Rather, the current assessment has focused on the environmental impacts specifically associated with the construction and operation of the proposed Power Plant and associated infrastructure within an already authorised industrial development footprint.	
196.	FAILURE TO ASSESS ALTERNATIVE PROJECT SCALES The DEIAR does not meaningfully assess alternatives to the proposed scale of development. It states that the project size is based on a 750 MW power purchase agreement and turbine availability, while acknowledging that the final generating capability could exceed 750 MW and may be as high as 900 MW. The report does not compare smaller capacity options, phased capacity additions, alternative turbine configurations or a scale matched to demonstrated system demand. Nor does it compare the environmental consequences of different capacities, including greenhouse gas emissions, air emissions, water use, fuel demand, infrastructure requirements and cumulative impacts. The section therefore explains the Applicant's preferred commercial and equipment configuration but			SDCEA mentions the possibility that smaller, localised power gen units should be considered. Emissions abatement and monitoring is easier and more effective at large-scale single point emissions sources rather than smaller, distributed emitters. Furthermore, larger CCGT units are more efficient and have lower per MWH emissions than smaller units, or than gas engines which would typically be used for smaller gas-fired power generation. Larger installations benefit from economies of scale and thus scale helps to reduce national electricity prices, which would have significant social and environmental benefits. Given that power generation takes years to plan and construct, phasing must be guided by	Applicant / Technical Team

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	does not establish, through comparative assessment, that the proposed scale is the preferred environmental option.			countrywide energy studies and long-term planning. The phasing of this project aligns with these requirements. Hillside/Bayside Smelters in Richards Bay require >1,300MW continuously, see practicality of 750MW PV plant which cannot be positioned locally. The high concentration of industries such as Hillside / Bayside Smelters makes Richards Bay an ideal location for new power generation capacity given the high demand for electricity locally.	
197.	FUEL ALTERNATIVES HAVE NOT BEEN PROPERLY ASSESSED The fuel-type section states that natural gas is the “cleanest best available technology option” for base-load hydrocarbon generation and therefore “no fuel alternatives were considered.” This is a conclusion, not a comparative assessment. The analysis defines the relevant choice as one among hydrocarbon fuels and thereby excludes fundamentally different means of producing electricity. It does not compare the project’s proposed use of imported liquefied natural gas with lower-carbon alternatives capable of providing the asserted electricity services. It also does not compare the full lifecycle impacts and infrastructure dependencies associated with the proposed fuel pathway. The possibility of future hydrogen blending does not remedy this omission, particularly where the availability, timing, source and environmental implications of hydrogen are not established in the alternatives analysis.			Please refer to the CCIA report for an evaluation of fuel alternatives, and to the response to comment number 193 above.	Applicant / Technical Team

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198.	INADEQUATE ASSESSMENT OF COOLING ALTERNATIVES Cooling technology is the one component for which the DEIAR provides a more substantive comparison. It considers direct seawater cooling, wet cooling and dry air-cooled cooling, and quantifies major differences between wet and dry cooling. The comparison shows total water consumption of approximately 21,415,000 L/day for the wet-cooled case and 415,000 L/day for the dry-cooled case. The report nevertheless leaves the choice between wet and dry cooling unresolved for the feasibility-study stage, notwithstanding the magnitude of the water-use difference and acknowledged uncertainty concerning the final water source and bulk-supply arrangements. It focuses on the modest efficiency and emissions-per-MWh advantage of wet cooling but does not provide an integrated comparison of water availability, drought and climate risk, effluent generation, chemical use, ecological effects, noise, footprint, cost and emissions sufficient to establish the preferred environmental option. The need for a reasoned selection is reinforced by the report's acknowledgement that the RBIDZ cannot satisfy the wet-cooled project's 21,000 cubic metres per day clarified-water requirement under current plans without bulk-water infrastructure upgrades. The final EIA should not defer this environmentally material choice to later design. It should identify and justify the preferred cooling technology through the comparative assessment required by NEMA and the EIA Regulations, and the environmental authorization should define the assessed and authorised option.			The base case project should be considered as a dry-cooled power plant. Should a suitable water source be found, only then will wet cooling be considered. Current indications are that given the sensitivity of supply of clarified water, this should be precluded. Only sea water cooling remains as an option to the dry-cooled base case option. Should a sea water option be found, all requisite environmental approvals will be applied for separately from this EIA.	Applicant / Technical Team
				The EIA adopted a conservative assessment approach by evaluating the project based on the more environmentally onerous wet-cooling scenario. The EIA does not preclude the adoption of dry cooling should water supply constraints necessitate such a solution.	EAP

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199.	THE NO-GO ALTERNATIVE IS NOT OBJECTIVELY CONSIDERED The assessment of the no-go alternative is also inadequate. Although the DEIAR briefly acknowledges that the no-go option would avoid impacts associated with water use, effluent, air emissions, noise and traffic, the analysis focuses predominantly on the asserted disadvantages of not proceeding, including forgone generation capacity, employment, investment, support for the RBIDZ, development of the gas value chain and potential tariff benefits from greater throughput at the Zululand Energy Terminal. The report does not give equivalent consideration to the positive implications of the no-go alternative, including avoided greenhouse gas emissions, avoided local air-pollution and health burdens, avoided water demand and effluent, avoided biodiversity and wetland impacts, avoided cumulative impacts in Richards Bay, and preservation of the opportunity to meet electricity needs through lower-impact alternatives. It also does not evaluate the potential avoidance of long-term fuel-price, infrastructure, climate-transition and stranded-asset risks. The assertion that the no-go alternative would merely cause the same need to be met by another project or at another location is unsupported by a comparative analysis. It assumes both the need and the technology-neutral equivalence of the alternative project while failing to assess whether the need could be avoided, reduced, deferred or met through a different portfolio with lower impacts. The no-go assessment therefore does not provide the balanced comparison of positive and negative implications required by NEMA and the EIA Regulations.			A gas fired CCGT power plant is technologically the lowest impact alternative for the required power plant size. No-go would necessitate ongoing reliance on an ageing, higher polluting coal-fired power plant fleet, alternatively an unstable and undersupplied national grid, prone to underserving the market during times of regional low wind or solar radiation conditions. A lack of flexible, dispatchable power may in fact hinder the development of renewable, but intermittent power supply options. Please refer to the CCIA report.	Applicant / Technical Team
				The conclusion in the EIA Report that the no-go alternative is not preferred was informed by the following: • The assessment of environmental impacts undertaken by the specialist studies; • The identification of mitigation measures capable of reducing impacts to acceptable levels; • The suitability of the selected site within an established industrial development zone; • The strategic location of the facility relative to planned gas import infrastructure; and • The absence of any identified fatal environmental flaws that would preclude the development from proceeding.	EAP
200.	WATER DEMAND IS A SERIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINT In the report it acknowledges that wet cooling produces substantially higher water consumption and effluent, while dry cooling could reduce water demand from			For the purposes of this EIA, in all areas where there is project uncertainty, the worst possible environmental case has been presented. This philosophy was applied to the wet- vs. dry-cooled question too, hence the presentation of this case.	Applicant / Technical Team

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	approximately *21.4 million litres/day to approximately 415,000 litres/day*. As discussed in the Alternatives section, the DEAIR does not address whether the facility would be wet- or dry-cooled (using air-cooled condensers), deferring the decision to the Feasibility Study phase. According to the DEAIR, the wet-cooled case would require an additional 21,000,000 l/day of cooling-water makeup compared with the dry-cooled case. The DEAIR acknowledges that there is currently insufficient water supply from the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ) to meet the additional wet-cooled option operational requirement of 21,000,000 L/day. Although the DEIAR states that "[t]he RBIDZ [Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone] has, however, informed the Project that it would be possible to execute bulk water infrastructure upgrades in order to supply the volume of clarified water required by the water-cooled case," the DEIAR does not make clear the source of new water sources, be it groundwater or surface water, or if water use in terms of the National Water Act (NWA) Section 21(a) (taking water from a water resource) would be triggered. Importantly, the DEIAR does not make clear if the possibility of new water supply from the RBIDZ is explicitly considered with other authorized or proposed heavy water use facilities in the industrial zone, namely other potentially water-cooled power generation facilities and metals processing facilities. For instance, two additional proposed combined cycle gas power plants that are approximately 5.5 km from the project (Eskom Richards Bay CCGPP 3000 MW) and 10 km (Pictor Thermal Power Plant) would require up to 65,880,000 L/day and 36,296,000 L/day of water, respectively, if they were to be water-cooled. Households within Richards Bay are stressed for adequate water services and access, with recent reports of widespread water supply failures and deteriorating			The base assumption is that the project will be dry-cooled. Notwithstanding the improved efficiency and therefore lower GHG emissions per unit of power produced in the wet-cooled option, the environmental impact of using clarified water for wet cooling is considered to outweigh the improved efficiency. The Applicant supports the SDCEA on this topic. The only remaining alternative to consider for wet cooling is the use of sea water. Should a seawater option be found, all requisite environmental approvals will be applied for separately from this EIA. Water re-use and recycling will be carefully considered and implemented where possible in the Mabasa project. In particular, boiler blowdown recovery and condensate polishing systems are ubiquitous items in CCGT projects of this scale since they improve both energy and water efficiency.	

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	municipal services. The Department of Water and Sanitation predicted in their 2021 update to the Water Reconciliation Strategy for Richards Bay and Surrounding Towns ("DWS Water Reconciliation Strategy Report") that "the existing water resources of the Mhlathize system are not sufficient to provide the users with their water at the required level of assurance from the year 2021 onwards." Despite current insufficiencies in water resources, The DWS Water Reconciliation Strategy Report predicts that the combined urban and industrial water requirements would more than double from 49.88 million m3/year in 2018 to 111.84 million m3/year by 2045. The EIA should evaluate the two cooling options for Mabasa CCPP considering water access as a potential health and safety risk associated with the cumulative impacts of the project. As part of the Social Impact Assessment, the EIA should have considered the impacts of Mabasa CCPP's water use under the wet- and dry-cooling cases in addition to the impacts of cumulative water demand from proposed facilities in the RBIDZ and surrounding area. We then request in the final report there must be clearly identify and commit to the final cooling technology and demonstrate: • a secure and legally authorised water supply; • availability of water without compromising existing users; • cumulative demand from other industrial projects; • climate-related water scarcity; • wastewater and cooling-tower blowdown management; • water recycling/reuse opportunities; and • the environmental consequences of the chosen cooling system. *No authorisation should be granted on the basis of unresolved water-supply arrangements*.				
201.	FLOODING, STORMWATER AND WATERCOURSE RISKS REQUIRE GREATER ATTENTION			Flooding, stormwater and watercourse risks were explicitly considered through the relevant	EAP

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	In the hydrology assessment it identifies an important site-specific concern, that the canal poses a flooding risk to the plant and associated infrastructure, particularly around wetland areas. The assessment states that the 1:100-year flood line should be regarded as an avoidance/buffer area. In the project it is expected to substantially transform the site through extensive industrial infrastructure and hard surfaces. SDCEA's main concern would be around the increased stormwater runoff, the flooding, the erosion, the contaminated stormwater and the impacts on downstream watercourses. The chemical and hydrocarbon mobilisation during flood events and the climate-change-related increases in extreme rainfall. The climate assessment itself identifies flooding and extreme weather as relevant risks to the project. We would like to know in the final report, will it show all permanent infrastructure will avoid the 1:100-year floodline and that detailed stormwater and flood-management designs are approved before construction.			specialist studies. Mitigation and design measures are proposed to ensure that potential impacts are appropriately managed throughout the construction and operational phases of the Project. One of the recommendations in Section 15.4 of the EIA Report reads as follows: "A detailed Stormwater Management Plan needs to be compiled for the Plant during the detailed design phase, which will need to be submitted to DFFE to approval prior to construction."	
202.	BIODIVERSITY AND THE TREATMENT OF PREVIOUSLY AUTHORISED WETLAND INFILLING In the Screening Tool, it identifies the entire project area as being within a very high terrestrial biodiversity sensitivity area, including the threatened Maputaland Wooded Grassland ecosystem, a Critical Biodiversity Area – Irreplaceable, and a Priority Focus Area under NPAES. The report notes that vegetation clearance and wetland infilling were previously authorised under the RBIDZ Phase 1F authorisation and that the current EIA therefore does not reassess the acceptability of that previous transformation. We recognise the distinction between the current application and historical authorisations. however,			The significance of impacts on biodiversity and freshwater ecosystems was assessed in the context of the current condition of the site, the authorised industrial development footprint within RBIDZ Phase 1F, and the findings of the specialist studies. The evaluation of cumulative impacts from the related specialist studies (including the Hydrology Assessment, Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment, Floral Assessment and Faunal Assessment) is contained in Section 13.27.3 of the EIA Report. Appropriate mitigation measures were incorporated into the Environmental	EAP

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	previous authorisation should not be treated as evidence that the resulting cumulative environmental loss is acceptable. The cumulative assessment needed to consider, the historic wetland loss, the current habitat condition, the remaining ecological functionality, the cumulative industrial transformation, the loss of ecological services, the stormwater and flood attenuation, the biodiversity connectivity and whether additional development further reduces ecological resilience.			Management Programme (EMPr) to manage potential ecological impacts during the construction and operational phases of the Project.	
203.	HEALTH IMPACTS SHOULD NOT BE REDUCED TO "MANAGEABLE" IMPACTS In the Community Health Impact assessment what is important to note is that it confirms that the project is entering an environment already under significant environmental stress. The assessment identifies cumulative exposure as the central health concern and identifies respiratory health, social determinants, traffic safety and health-system pressure among the highest-significance pathways. It goes on to mention that the cumulative NCD risks associated with air pollution, particulate matter, industrial noise, heat exposure and socio-economic vulnerability. Our main concern is that in the report it is repeatedly reduces these risks through the application of mitigation measures without adequately addressing whether the receiving environment itself has sufficient capacity to accommodate another major emission source. A community should not have to absorb progressively increasing pollution simply because each individual new project makes a relatively small contribution. SDCEA would like to ask for a comprehensive community health and environmental monitoring programme, including the ambient air quality, the respiratory health indicators, the community complaints, $PM_{2.5}$, PM_{10}, NO_2			The comment is noted and the concern regarding cumulative health burden is acknowledged. The Community Health Impact Assessment (cHIA) does not assess the proposed project as though it will operate in an unaffected receiving environment, nor does it conclude that cumulative health risks are removed through mitigation. A central finding of the assessment is that Richards Bay is already a highly industrialised environment in which communities are exposed to a number of existing environmental and social pressures. These include industrial emissions, port and shipping activities, heavy vehicle traffic, bulk material handling and other industrial activities. The assessment therefore distinguishes between the contribution of the proposed project on its own and the cumulative health burden within the wider Richards Bay airshed. This distinction is particularly important for air quality. The Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) found that emissions from the proposed plant, when assessed on their own, result in relatively low predicted concentrations. However, the cumulative modelling, which considers existing industrial sources and approved future developments, predicts exceedances of the	Community Health Specialist

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	and SO_2, the occupational exposure, the traffic-related risks and transparent reporting of monitoring results.			National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for short-term sulphur dioxide (SO_2), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and particulate matter (PM_{10}). The AIR also records elevated existing SO_2 conditions in Richards Bay. The cHIA therefore identifies cumulative respiratory and cardiovascular exposure as the most important long-term community health pathway. The cHIA specifically recognises that the proposed plant's contribution is incremental and that a relatively small project contribution cannot simply be disregarded where it is being added to an already stressed airshed. This is particularly relevant to children, elderly persons and people with asthma, chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and other conditions that may increase their sensitivity to pollution. The assessment consequently considers cumulative respiratory health risk, non-communicable disease, traffic safety, pressure on health services, occupational health and psychosocial wellbeing, rather than relying only on compliance with emission standards. It is also important to clarify what is meant by an impact being “manageable”. This does not mean that the health risk is absent, insignificant or fully removed. The cHIA expressly identifies residual cumulative respiratory and cardiovascular risk after mitigation. In this context, manageability means that the project's own contribution can be controlled, monitored and responded to through enforceable measures. The overall finding of acceptability is therefore conditional on those measures being implemented and maintained. The request for monitoring is supported in principle and is already substantially provided	

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				for in the cHIA. The report includes a Health Monitoring and Enforcement Framework that links identified health risks to measurable indicators, trigger levels, corrective actions and reporting requirements. For air quality, this includes monitoring of NOx/NO_2, SO_2 and PM_{10}, compliance with Atmospheric Emission Licence (AEL) requirements, ambient air-quality monitoring and investigation of community complaints. Exceedances are linked to corrective action rather than monitoring being undertaken only for record-keeping purposes. The cHIA also requires monitoring of respiratory and environmental health complaints, occupational exposure and medical surveillance, traffic incidents and near misses, health-service referral patterns and other relevant health indicators. Monitoring results should be used to identify emerging trends and to inform corrective management where necessary. Transparent communication of emissions, complaints and corrective actions is also recommended. $PM_{2.5}$ warrants a specific clarification. $PM_{2.5}$ was included in the assessment of baseline air quality and its health relevance is recognised in the cHIA; however, it was not separately modelled as a project emission in the AIR, which modelled PM_{10} together with SO_2, NO_2 and CO. It would therefore not be appropriate for the cHIA to present project-specific $PM_{2.5}$ exposure results that were not generated by the air-quality assessment. $PM_{2.5}$ should nevertheless remain part of the broader ambient air-quality and cumulative health context, particularly where data are available through the existing monitoring network. The AIR itself records baseline $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring data from the Brackenham monitoring station.	

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				The cHIA therefore agrees with the broader principle raised in the comment: cumulative health risk must remain central to the management of this project. The assessment does not rely on project-alone compliance as evidence that there is no health concern. Rather, the project is considered acceptable from a community health perspective subject to strict control of its incremental contribution, ongoing monitoring, transparent reporting and appropriate corrective action where monitoring indicates deterioration or unexpected health-related effects.	
				Section 8.2 of the EMPr (contained in Appendix I of the EIA Report) lists the environmental monitoring requirements for the Project, which caters for the following themes: • Construction phase – o Vegetation & site clearance o Terrestrial biodiversity o Air quality (dust) o Noise o Waste management o Hazardous substances o Stormwater & surface water o Traffic & access o Health & safety o Cultural heritage & palaeontological features o Rehabilitation o Socio-economic & community relations • Operational phase – o Stormwater & surface water o Air quality o Wastewater & effluent infrastructure o Groundwater surveillance monitoring o Cooling system & legionella control o Occupational health o Traffic & injury prevention o Community health & safety	EAP

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				○ Health systems monitoring ○ Mitigation effectiveness & adaptive management ○ Major hazard installation & process safety monitoring ○ Noise ○ Occupational health & safety ○ Emergency preparedness The scope of the above monitoring must be proportionate to the significance of the Project's impacts, aligned with specialist recommendations and regulatory requirements, and clearly distinguish between Project-specific monitoring obligations and broader regional environmental and public health monitoring responsibilities.	
204.	HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND POLLUTION RISKS The proposed plant will involve the storage and handling of significant quantities of hazardous substances. IN the report it identifies, among others to note like natural gas, possible diesel backup fuel, approximately 200 m³ of transformer oil, hydrochloric acid, caustic soda, ammonia, phosphate, sodium hypochlorite, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide. The report gives us two possible diesel tanks of approximately 6,500 m³ each should backup diesel be required. In the report it acknowledges the possibility of groundwater contamination because of the site's highly permeable soils and shallow perched groundwater, particularly in relation to fuels, oils, chemicals and wastewater. What this does is that it creates a significant pollution-risk pathway. What we would like to see in the final report is that it should provide a clear emergency pollution-prevention and response framework covering, the groundwater contamination, major spills, the firewater contamination, chemical releases, the diesel releases, transformer oil			Section 13.2.26 of the EMPr (contained in Appendix I of the EIA Report) caters for managing emergency procedures and incidents. An Emergency Response and Action Plan (ERAP) is also contained in Appendix A of the EMPr. The purpose of this ERAP is to: • Protect human life, the environment, property and infrastructure; • Ensure rapid and coordinated response to emergency incidents; • Minimise secondary environmental impacts; • Protect sensitive receptors including terrestrial biodiversity, freshwater features, stormwater infrastructure and surrounding industrial developments; and • Ensure compliance with the EMPr and applicable legislation.	EAP

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	releases, the flooding of hazardous-material storage areas, gas leaks, any cumulative emergency response, community notification and if any remediation responsibilities and financial liability.				
205.	TRAFFIC AND INDUSTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE In the report it acknowledges an increased construction traffic, abnormal loads, heavy vehicles and increased interaction between construction vehicles and existing road users. Richards Bay already functions as a major industrial and port logistics area. Therefore, traffic should not be assessed only as an individual project impact but as a cumulative assessment should be considered with the proposed project together with the RBIDZ development, the port expansion, the LNG infrastructure, other gas-to-power facilities, hazardous-material transport and the existing heavy industrial and freight traffic.			A Traffic Impact Assessment for the broader Phase 1F development of the RBIDZ was previously undertaken in 2013, which was updated in 2024 (refer to Section 12.15 of the EIA Report). The assessment evaluated the existing road network, projected traffic growth associated with industrial development within Phase 1F, and identified road infrastructure upgrades required to accommodate future development within the precinct. According to Zutari, cumulative traffic impacts were considered during the updating of the Traffic Impact Assessment by taking into consideration the following: • Existing background traffic; • Latent rights (land with rights that have not yet been developed or existing expansions that have not yet been completed); and • 5 year forecast horizon taking into account natural traffic growth.	EAP
206.	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS MUST BE THE CENTRAL DECISION-MAKING ISSUE In the draft report it mentions numerous existing and future industrial projects within the surrounding area. These include existing heavy industry, authorised gas-to-power projects and additional proposed power-generation projects. The report identifies cumulative impacts relating to air emissions, GHG emissions, industrialisation, habitat transformation, water demand, traffic, noise, hazardous materials and THE socio-economic impacts.			From a cumulative impact perspective, Section 13.27.2 of the EIA Report lists the current and reasonably defined/foreseeable third-party projects in relation to the Project. Cumulative impacts were assessed during the following specialist studies (refer to Section 13.27.3 of the EIA Report): • Air Quality Impact Assessment; • Climate Change Impact Assessment; • Hydrology Assessment; • Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment; • Floral and Faunal Assessments; • Noise Impact Assessment;	EAP

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	This demonstrates that the environmental question cannot be "*is the Mabasa project acceptable on its own?*" It should have been: "*Can Richards Bay's already stressed environmental and social systems accommodate another 750 MW fossil-fuel power plant in addition to existing, authorised and foreseeable developments?*" SDCEA submits that this question has not been answered adequately.			• Health Impact Assessment; • Socio-Economic Impact Assessment; and • Traffic Impact Assessment. The significance of cumulative impacts were evaluated within the specialist studies and reflected in the overall impact assessment contained in the EIA Report.	
207.	SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS SHOULD NOT OVERRIDE ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS SDCEA acknowledges that the project may generate employment, investment and electricity-generation benefits. However, in the report it mentions that operational employment will be relatively limited and that the specialised nature of the plant means some employment and procurement benefits may accrue outside the immediate area. The report estimates approximately 50 local personnel during commissioning and operation, with around 300 highly trained operations and maintenance professionals potentially graduating over 25 years. Therefore, projected economic benefits should not be used to minimise long-term environmental and health impacts. The people who bear the environmental costs must also meaningfully benefit from the project. If the project proceeds, binding local procurement, employment, skills development, environmental monitoring and community-benefit commitments should form part of the authorisation conditions.			The operations cohort will largely be made up of skilled, high earning employees, and there would be a significant multiplier effect in terms of regional employment. There would also be unskilled secondary employment in cleaning, security and other services required by the Mabasa CCGT Project. Personnel would benefit through training required.	Applicant / Technical Team
				The socio-economic benefits identified in the EIA (e.g., employment creation, local procurement opportunities, investment within the RBIDZ, skills transfer and contribution to electricity supply) are considered together with, and not in place of, environmental and health impacts. Section 13.2.11 of the EMPr caters for the management of labour associated with the Project's construction phase. Section 13.3.8 of the EMPr makes provision for managing socio-economic impacts.	EAP
208.	CONCLUSION SDCEA recognises the need for reliable electricity generation and sustainable economic development. However, energy security and economic development must not be pursued at the expense of the environmental			The EIA undertaken for the proposed 750 MW CCGT Power Plant within the RBIDZ identified a range of potential biophysical and socio-economic impacts associated with the Project. The assessment incorporated the findings of the specialist studies, the outcomes of the	EAP

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	rights, health and well-being of communities already living within one of South Africa's major industrial areas. The Draft EIA itself demonstrates that Richards Bay is an environmentally stressed receiving environment. The proposed project would introduce an additional large-scale source of atmospheric emissions and greenhouse gases, as well as increased water demand, traffic, hazardous materials and industrial activity. Of particular concern is that the report identifies cumulative exceedances of air-quality standards, significant climate-related emissions and substantial water requirements, while several critical aspects of the project and its potential impacts remain unresolved. In light of these concerns, SDCEA respectfully requests that the identified shortcomings, information gaps and uncertainties be adequately addressed before the environmental authorisation process proceeds. This should include the preparation of a substantially revised final assessment and where necessary, additional specialist investigations, site-specific monitoring and robust modelling to ensure that the project's potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are properly understood and assessed. A decision on the project should be based on complete, reliable and sufficiently site-specific information, particularly given the already stressed environmental conditions in the Richards Bay area.			public participation process to date, the consideration of alternatives, and the implementation of mitigation measures contained in the EMPr. The assessment confirmed that the Project will result in certain unavoidable residual impacts, including the loss of transformed terrestrial habitat and wetlands (for which vegetation clearance and wetland infilling was previously authorised), GHG gas emissions, incremental contributions to regional air quality impacts, and increased demand for water. However, the majority of identified impacts are localised, can be reduced through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, and are not considered to constitute fatal flaws that would preclude development of the proposed facility. Also refer to the responses above from the project and environmental teams to the specific comments raised.	
209.	*Attachment to the SDCEA letter:* *EMISSIONS FROM GAS FIRED POWER IN SOUTH AFRICA* *Prepared for: Centre for Environmental Rights (CER)* *Dr Brett Cohen, Enuity Consulting* *Dr Jasmin Cooper, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Imperial College London*			Refer to the full copy of SDCEA's written submission that is appended to the final EIA Report, which contains this August 2026 report prepared by Dr Brett Cohen and Dr Jasmin Cooper for the Centre for Environmental Rights. This report was also shared with the relevant members of the project and environmental teams. Refer to Appendix 1 of this CRR for the technical team's response to the Cohen and Cooper report.	EAP

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	August 2026			The specific matters raised by SDCEA above, based on the findings of this report, are responded to by the relevant parties.	
210.	The City of uMhlathuze has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment for the Proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant in Richards Bay, City of uMhlathuze Local Municipality, in respect of the above application. We accordingly submit the following:	M. Mhlongo – City of uMhlathuze	Letter (07/09/26)	Introductory part of letter. No response required.	-
211.	GENERAL COMMENTS • Reference is made to the City's letter dated 7 April 2026, wherein a number of comments were raised. It is important to note that some of the matters raised in the aforementioned correspondence remain outstanding. The applicant is therefore requested to provide a comprehensive response to each of the comments raised.			Responses to the comments received from the CoU's letter dated 7 April 2026 are provided in rows no. 143 to 148 above. Based on our understanding, the only comment that still needed attention during the Environmental Impact Reporting phase, apart from the findings of specialist studies, included the use of the most recent version of the Land Use Scheme. Based on the CoU 2025 Land Use Scheme Viewer (accessed via https://gis.umhlathuze.gov.za/arcgisportal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ab77974316124cc989ddc5732846f0c9), the zoning of the site is 'Noxious Industry', as reflected in the EIA Report.	EAP
212.	• It is noted that the infilling of wetlands has been accounted for in the Environmental Authorisation obtained by RBIDZ. However, further clarification is required regarding the extent and nature of the wetland infilling, in terms of the Water Use License. Further clarification is needed regarding specific license conditions.			The components of the development that were catered for in the Environmental Authorisation that was granted for the RBIDZ Phase 1F in September 2016 (reference no.: 14/12/16/3/3/2/665) are shown in Figure 5 of the EIA Report. The includes the infilling of wetlands. As discussed in Section 5.1.4.2 of the EIA Report, various wetlands were infilled in the RBIDZ Phase 1F to allow for the development on these portions of land within the industrial estate (see Figure 6), under the requisite approvals in terms of NEMA and NWA. Two wetlands in the RBIDZ Phase 1F were conserved, which are also shown in Figure 6. The wetland on the project site was partially	EAP

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				infilled, whilst a wetland (known as remainder of Wetland B) remains to the south-west of the site. The site is located within 500 m of the last-mentioned wetland, and the proposed development thus encroaches into the regulated area of this watercourse and triggers Section 21(c) and (i) water uses. Any further queries pertaining to existing environmental approvals for the site that were previously granted will need to be directed to the RBIDZ.	
213.	• The draft report makes reference to sensitive receptors. However, from the perspective of local government, it is important to note that a number of potentially sensitive receptors, partially healthcare and educational facilities, do not appear to have been adequately identified. The applicant is requested to review the assessment and ensure that all relevant sensitive receptors within the surrounding area are identified and appropriately considered.			<u>Air Quality</u> Section 11.12.3 of the EIA Report discusses the Site Sensitivity regarding air quality, which considers the existing state of air quality in Richards Bay and is based on the definition and understanding of sensitive receptors. Three sensitivity classes were defined for this Site Sensitivity assessment: • High sensitivity: Hospitals, clinics, schools, daycare facilities and old age homes; • Medium sensitivity: Residential areas; and • Low sensitivity: Commercial and industrial areas. For the Site Sensitivity assessment, receptors were assessed within a 5 km radius of the proposed Project's site (see Figure 60 in the EIA Report). Areas of high sensitivity include sensitive receptors as defined above, and up to 200 m around the respective receptors. Included are schools in, amongst others, Aquadene, Brakenham, Arboretum and Alton, and hospitals and clinics to the east of the proposed site.	EAP

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				Health Refer to Section 11.21.3 of the EIA Report. The proposed 750 MW CCGT Power Plant will be located within an established industrial zone in Richards Bay. However, several residential communities, social infrastructure facilities and ecological receptors are located within the broader 10 km Zone of Influence. Within the project's Zone of Influence, the following sensitive receptors from a health perspective were identified: • Healthcare Facilities - o Richards Bay Municipal Clinic; o Civic Centre Clinic; o Mandlazini Clinic; o Medicross Medical Centre; o Greenhill Medical Centre; and o CarePoint Industrial Health Services. • Educational Facilities - o Aquedene Secondary School; o Sinaye Primary School; o Mahubela Primary School; o Ntongande High School; o Lizwi Secondary School; o Old Mill High School; and o Siyakhanyisa Primary School. • Ecological Receptors - o Enseleni Nature Reserve; o Richards Bay Game Reserve; and o Local river systems and wetlands.	
214.	• The applicant is requested to undertake the assessment within the broader context of the surrounding environment. In particular, consideration must be given to the cumulative impacts associated with existing, approved and proposed industrial activities in the surrounding area.			From a cumulative impact perspective, Section 13.27.2 of the EIA Report lists the current and reasonably defined/foreseeable third-party projects in relation to the Project. Cumulative impacts were assessed during the following specialist studies (refer to Section 13.27.3 of the EIA Report): • Air Quality Impact Assessment;	EAP

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				• Climate Change Impact Assessment; • Hydrology Assessment; • Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment; • Floral and Faunal Assessments; • Noise Impact Assessment; • Health Impact Assessment; • Socio-Economic Impact Assessment; and • Traffic Impact Assessment. The significance of cumulative impacts were evaluated within the specialist studies and reflected in the overall impact assessment contained in the EIA Report.	
215.	• The report indicates that the visual impact of the proposed development is considered to be low. However, given the development's close proximity to residential areas, the applicant is requested to reconsider the potential visual impact on surrounding receptors and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures. Where practicable, natural features (such as trees) may be used to reduce the visual impact.			The landscape associated with the site is similar to the industrial nature of the surrounding area. The site is situated within the industrial area of Alton and the purpose-built industrial estate of the RBIDZ, which is linked to the PoRB. The following is noted in the Visual Resource Compliance Statement (contained in Appendix E9 of the EIA Report): • The proposed Project is most likely to increase the bulk appearance of industrial structures in the landscape, therefore visual exposure and visibility may be impacted, which relates directly to the perception of sensitive visual receptors towards the Project. Sensitive visual receptors have been determined to primarily comprise residents and road users, however due to the distance the receptors are considered to have a low sensitivity. Mitigation measures to minimise visual impacts are included in the EMPr.	EAP

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216.	• The applicant is requested to submit the Stormwater Management Plan to the City for review and comment. The plan should adequately demonstrate how stormwater will be managed during both the construction and operational phases and how potential impacts on surrounding properties, wetlands, watercourses and municipal infrastructure will be mitigated.			The EMPr makes provision for managing stormwater during the construction and operational phases of the Project. One of the recommendations in Section 15.4 of the EIA Report reads as follows: "A detailed Stormwater Management Plan needs to be compiled for the Plant during the detailed design phase, which will need to be submitted to DFFE to approval prior to construction."	EAP
217.	• The applicant is requested to contact Mr Jaco Schutte at [redacted] regarding Transport Planning matters.			Mr. Schutte has been included in the database of I&APs.	EAP
				The Applicant and the technical team will get into contact with Mr. Schutte regarding Transport Planning matters during construction and later during operations.	Applicant / Technical Team
218.	Please be advised that the above does not constitute any commitment from the Municipality to enter into a servitude or lease agreements over its land in relation to the proposal and a separate process has to be followed in respect of the aforementioned. Also, the Municipality has no obligation/responsibility in relation to offsets that are/may be required in response to this project/proposal. You are welcome to direct further queries regarding the above to Ms Estelle Naidoo from the Office of the Deputy City Manager: City Development on Tel: [redacted], or email: [redacted].			Ms. Naidoo is included in the database of I&APs.	EAP
219.	*Attachment to the CoU letter:* *Letter from CoU dated 7 April 2026, containing comments on the draft Scoping Report.*			Refer to the full copy of CoU's written submission that is appended to the final EIA Report, which contains this letter from CoU dated 7 April 2026. Responses to these comments are provided in rows no. 143 to 148 above.	EAP
220.	INTRODUCTION 1. Masifundise Development Trust, submits these comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report ("Draft EIA") for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine ("CCGT") Power Plant in Richards Bay	A. Madlala & B. Mngomezulu – Masifundise Development Trust	Letter (07/09/26)	Introductory part of letter. The specific comments raised in the letter from the Masifundise Development Trust are responded to below.	-

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	(the "Project"), prepared by Nemai Consulting (Pty) Ltd on behalf of Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd. 2. Masifundise works to advance the rights and interests of small-scale fishing communities in South Africa, including their livelihoods, food security, cultural practices and sustainable access to marine resources. 3. We have reviewed the Draft EIA and the comments previously submitted during the Scoping phase by other Interested and Affected Parties, including groundWork and the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA). 4. We support and note the concerns raised in those submissions, particularly regarding cumulative impacts, climate change, water resources, the broader gas-to-power development context and meaningful public participation. However, our submission focuses specifically on the implications of the proposed Project for small-scale fishing communities (KwaSokhulu and eMphembeni), fishing livelihoods, food security and access to marine resources. 5. We consider these issues particularly important because the Draft EIA itself identifies small-scale and subsistence fishers as potentially vulnerable to cumulative environmental pressures and recognises potential links between environmental degradation, marine productivity, access to safe harvesting areas, fish stocks, catches, livelihoods and food security. 6. Our concern is therefore not simply whether small-scale fishers are mentioned in the Draft EIA, but whether the information and specialist assessments are sufficiently detailed to enable the competent authority to understand the Project's actual and potential impacts on fishing-dependent communities and to make an informed decision. 7. We accordingly request that the matters set out below be addressed before the EIA is finalised and submitted for decision.				
221.	SMALL-SCALE FISHERIES REMAIN INADEQUATELY ASSESSED IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASELINE			The references to small-scale and subsistence fishers in the SEIA should be understood in the context in which they were made. The assessment identified fisheries-dependent	Socio-Economic Specialist

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	8. The Draft SEIA refers to small-scale and subsistence fishers in several parts of the assessment. It states, for example, that fisheries-dependent households may be particularly vulnerable where declining marine ecosystem health reduces fish stocks and catches and that small-scale and subsistence fishers may be affected where environmental quality and ecosystem pressures influence marine productivity and access to safe harvesting areas. 9. These acknowledgements are important. However, the assessment does not appear to provide a sufficiently detailed fisheries baseline against which these potential impacts can be evaluated. 10. A proper assessment should identify, at minimum: 11.1 the small-scale fishing communities using the Richards Bay coastal and marine environment; 11.2 the locations of fishing grounds, landing sites and access points; 11.3 the types of fishing undertaken and fishing methods used; 11.4 the species and marine resources targeted; 11.5 seasonal patterns in fishing activity; 11.6 the number and characteristics of households that depend on fishing; 11.7 the contribution of fishing to household income and subsistence; 11.8 the contribution of fishing to household food and nutritional security; 11.9 the role of fishing in local informal economic activity, including sale, exchange and distribution of catches; and 11.10 existing restrictions, hazards or other pressures affecting access to fishing areas.			households as a potentially vulnerable group in relation to cumulative environmental and health pressures, including air pollution, climate change, food-security pressures and broader ecological stressors. These references were not intended to indicate that the proposed gas-to-power facility itself would directly affect fishing grounds, fishing access or marine resources. It is understood that the proposed facility is located within the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone on a land-based industrial site. Based on the project description assessed, the proposed development comprises a land-based gas-to-power facility within the RBIDZ. No marine infrastructure, dredging, offshore pipelines, harbour works, fishing-access restrictions or other activities within the coastal or marine environment form part of the project scope described for assessment. Accordingly, no direct project-specific impact pathway between the proposed facility and small-scale fishing activities, fishing grounds or marine resource access was identified. Any separate infrastructure required to supply gas to the facility would need to be assessed on the basis of its own project scope and associated impact pathways. Accordingly, the absence of a detailed fisheries baseline reflects the project-specific scope and identified impact pathways, rather than an omission of a directly affected socio-economic receptor. For this reason, a detailed fisheries baseline covering fishing grounds, landing sites, fishing methods, target species, seasonality and household dependency was not considered	

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				proportionate to the socio-economic impacts identified for the Project itself.	
222.	THE EIA ACKNOWLEDGES IMPACT PATHWAYS TO FISHERS BUT DOES NOT ADEQUATELY ASSESS THEM 15. The Draft SEIA makes an important connection between environmental degradation, marine ecosystem health, fish stocks, catches, livelihoods and food security. 16. It further recognises that small-scale and subsistence fishers may be affected by deteriorating environmental quality and ecosystem pressures that influence marine productivity and access to safe harvesting areas. 17. This is consistent with our previous concern that an environmental impact does not need to overlap physically with a fishing ground in order to become a significant socio-economic impact. 18. For a fishing-dependent household, a reduction in the quality, safety or accessibility of fishing areas may translate into: 18.1 reduced catches; 18.2 reduced income; 18.3 increased travel distances and costs; 18.4 reduced time available for fishing; 18.5 increased exposure to unsafe conditions; 18.6 reduced availability of fish for household consumption; and 18.7 increased dependence on more expensive sources of food. 19. The final EIA should therefore provide a clear impact pathway linking each relevant environmental impact to its potential consequences for fishing livelihoods and food security. 20. This should not be left at the level of a general statement that environmental degradation "may" affect fishers. 21. The assessment should identify which project activities could cause these effects, the mechanisms through which the effects could occur, the communities potentially affected, and the significance and duration of those effects.			The SEIA agrees that socio-economic impacts do not necessarily require direct physical overlap between a Project footprint and a receptor. However, the SEIA should translate identified environmental effects into socio-economic consequences; it should not independently hypothesise environmental effects that have not been identified by the relevant specialist assessments. Potential indirect pathways were therefore considered where supported by the findings of the relevant specialist studies. In the case of small-scale and subsistence fishers, the SEIA considered a potential indirect pathway associated with air-quality and health effects. This assessment was informed by the Atmospheric Impact Report, which found that increases in air pollution associated with the proposed development are not expected to be major, with concentrations of CO, VOCs, SO_2 and particulate matter expected to remain within applicable guideline values. The specialist assessment further indicates that residential areas and other sensitive community receptors are unlikely to experience material deterioration in air quality as a result of the Project. Accordingly, while fisheries-dependent households were recognised as a potentially vulnerable socio-economic group, the available specialist evidence does not indicate that project-related air emissions would result in a material or distinct impact on fishing livelihoods or food security. The operational air-quality impact was therefore assessed primarily as a localised impact affecting persons spending extended periods within the industrial area, particularly workers, rather than as a	Socio-Economic Specialist

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				community-wide or fisheries-specific livelihood impact.	
223.	CUMULATIVE INDUSTRIAL PRESSURES AND THE "SPATIAL SQUEEZE" ON FISHERS 22. Richards Bay is an extensively industrialised and port-dominated coastal environment. 23. Small-scale fishing communities must therefore be understood within an already constrained coastal and marine environment rather than against an undeveloped baseline. 24. Existing and proposed pressures include port activities, industrial development, shipping and marine traffic, infrastructure, environmental degradation, safety restrictions, conservation measures and other development projects. 25. The Draft SEIA itself acknowledges that the proposed plant forms part of a wider cluster of gas-to-power and gas infrastructure developments around Richards Bay. It also acknowledges that cumulative impacts arise from the combined effects of gas-to-power facilities, LNG infrastructure, pipelines and existing heavy industry. 26. The Draft SEIA further recognises that cumulative environmental pressures may affect small-scale and subsistence fishers through impacts on marine productivity and access to safe harvesting areas. 27. However, the assessment does not adequately translate this recognition into a spatial assessment of fishing access. 28. The relevant question is not simply whether the proposed plant occupies a fishing ground. 29. The relevant question is whether the Project, together with associated infrastructure and other existing and reasonably foreseeable developments, contributes to a progressive reduction in the areas where small-scale fishers can safely and practically access marine resources. 30. This may be understood as a cumulative "spatial squeeze" on fishing communities. 31. We therefore request that the final EIA include a spatial assessment showing, as far as reasonably possible:			The SEIA acknowledges the highly industrialised and port-dominated environment of Richards Bay and that cumulative impacts may arise where the effects of the proposed project, when considered together with existing, approved or reasonably foreseeable developments, result in a greater overall impact than would occur from the Project in isolation. However, the assessment of cumulative impacts must distinguish between the broader cumulative context and the contribution of the project under assessment to that cumulative effect. So while a cumulative “spatial squeeze” on fishing activity may exist within the wider Richards Bay coastal and port environment, no project-specific mechanism has been identified through which the proposed CCPP itself would add to that spatial loss of access. In this case, that contribution may be indirect rather than spatially direct. For example, the CCPP may add to industrial activity, emissions, infrastructure demand or broader gas-related development pressure, but the specific claim that it contributes to loss of fishing access requires evidence that the project, together with other developments, changes access, safety, marine use or resource availability. The requested spatial mapping of fishing grounds, access routes, exclusion areas, harvesting zones and remaining accessible fishing areas would also require dedicated fisheries and marine spatial information that falls beyond the conventional socio-economic datasets used for the SEIA.	Socio-Economic Specialist

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	31.1 existing fishing areas; 31.2 fishing access points and routes; 31.3 existing exclusion or restricted areas; 31.4 port-related restrictions and safety zones; 31.5 existing industrial and infrastructure footprints; 31.6 proposed gas infrastructure and associated exclusion areas; 31.7 reasonably foreseeable developments; and 31.8 the remaining accessible areas available to small-scale fishers. 32. This assessment is necessary to determine whether the Project adds to an existing cumulative loss of access, even if the plant's direct physical footprint does not overlap with fishing grounds.				
224.	MARINE AND WATER-QUALITY IMPACTS MUST BE CONNECTED TO FISHING LIVELIHOODS 33. The Draft EIA indicates that alternative cooling arrangements are being considered and that water use, wastewater quality, quantities and discharge options are to be addressed. 34. These matters are directly relevant to small-scale fishing communities. 35. The final EIA must clearly identify: 36.1 the source, volume and quality of water required during construction and operation; 36.2 the volume and characteristics of wastewater generated; 36.3 all proposed wastewater treatment processes; 36.4 the proposed location and method of discharge; 36.5 the pollutants or other substances potentially present in the discharge; 36.6 the potential effects of discharge on receiving water resources and marine ecosystems; 36.7 the potential effects of temperature changes, where relevant; 36.8 the potential effects on aquatic organisms and marine productivity; and 36.9 the potential consequences for fishing areas and fishing-dependent communities.			The EIA includes specialist assessments relating to freshwater ecosystems, hydrology, biodiversity, air quality, climate change and socio-economic impacts (amongst others). These studies were specifically undertaken to identify potential environmental pathways through which project activities could affect the receiving environment and to determine whether such impacts could result in significant effects on ecological systems or communities. With regard to water use and wastewater management, the EIA identifies the proposed water requirements of the Project (Section 9.5.5), assesses alternative cooling technologies (Section 10.2.7), evaluates water-resource implications and considers the management of wastewater generated during operation (Sections 9.5.5 and 9.5.11.20). The final design of the facility, including the cooling technology and associated water infrastructure, remains subject to detailed engineering and permitting processes. Consequently, certain operational details will only be confirmed during subsequent project development stages.	EAP

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	37. It is not sufficient to conclude that wastewater will be managed in accordance with applicable requirements without demonstrating what the receiving environment will experience and what this means for fishing livelihoods. 38. The assessment should specifically consider the relationship between water quality, aquatic ecosystem health, fish resources and human use of those resources. 39. Where uncertainty remains regarding the effect of proposed discharges on marine resources, the precautionary approach should be applied and appropriate monitoring and enforceable mitigation measures should be specified.			The EIA nevertheless recognises the need to protect freshwater and downstream aquatic environments and includes mitigation measures aimed at preventing pollution, managing wastewater, controlling stormwater runoff and protecting surrounding water resources during both construction and operation.	
225.	CUMULATIVE AIR QUALITY IMPACTS AND SMALL-SCALE FISHERS 40. The Draft SEIA acknowledges that Richards Bay is already subject to emissions from multiple industrial sources and that the cumulative emissions burden may have implications for environmental quality, health, livelihoods and food security. 41. It specifically identifies small-scale and subsistence fishers as a vulnerable group in the context of cumulative environmental pressures. 42. We welcome this recognition, but the implications for fishers require further consideration. 43. Small-scale fishing is physically demanding work. Air pollution can therefore affect fishing-dependent households not only through general community health impacts but also through their ability to undertake livelihood activities. 44. In addition, cumulative air pollution should not be assessed only at residential receptors. The assessment should consider people who spend substantial periods working in and around the harbour and coastal environment.			The cumulative air quality assessment considers predicted ambient concentrations of SO_2, NO_2 and PM_{10} over the approximately 900 km² assessment domain, which includes areas in and around Richards Bay where small-scale fishers may undertake fishing and related activities. The AIR therefore considers potential exposure of people, including those working in these areas, to the assessed air pollutants. The potential health implications of this exposure, together with potential implications for fishing communities and livelihoods, should be considered in conjunction with the findings of the Community Health Impact Assessment as part of the broader EIA. Assessment of potential impacts of pollutant deposition on marine resources or fish populations is outside the scope of the AIR, which assesses ambient air quality and human exposure to air pollutants.	Air Quality Specialist
	45. The final EIA should therefore explain how the cumulative air-quality assessment relates to fishing communities and fishing activity, including whether exposure may affect the health, productivity and livelihood resilience of fishers.			The comment is noted. The Community Health Specialist agrees that small-scale and subsistence fishers should be considered within the wider assessment of vulnerable groups in Richards Bay, particularly where individuals	Community Health Specialist

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	46. This issue should also be considered together with the Community Health Impact Assessment and the cumulative assessment of existing industrial emissions.			spend extended periods working within or close to the Port and industrial environment. The cumulative air-quality concern raised is consistent with the findings of the cHIA. The assessment recognises that Richards Bay is already affected by emissions from a range of industrial, transport and port-related sources and that the health significance of the proposed project cannot be considered in isolation. The AIR similarly shows that, while the proposed plant's standalone contribution is relatively low, cumulative scenarios involving existing industrial sources and approved future projects predict exceedances of short-term SO_2, NO_2 and PM_{10} standards. From a health perspective, the important issue for a person who spends substantial time working in the harbour or surrounding industrial area is the total exposure experienced over time, rather than whether that person is classified as a residential receptor. Repeated exposure to elevated concentrations of air pollutants may contribute to respiratory symptoms and may worsen existing asthma or chronic respiratory disease. Particulate exposure is also relevant to cardiovascular health. People with pre-existing respiratory or cardiovascular conditions will generally be more susceptible to these effects. The AIR did not, however, undertake a separate exposure assessment specifically for small-scale fishers. Its receptor sensitivity assessment identifies residential areas, schools, hospitals and similar facilities as the more sensitive receptors and classifies commercial and industrial areas, including the Port of Richards Bay, as lower-sensitivity areas. A fisher-specific exposure concentration or	

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				health-risk estimate can therefore not reliably be derived from the available modelling, and the cHIA should not imply that such an assessment has been undertaken. This limitation does not mean that the concern is dismissed. The Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (SEIA) specifically identifies small-scale and subsistence fishers operating in and around the Port of Richards Bay as a potentially vulnerable group in the cumulative assessment. It recognises that cumulative environmental pressures may affect these households through a combination of health, work capacity, livelihood and food-security pathways. It further notes that prolonged exposure among people working within the industrial area may have implications for long-term health and productivity. The health and livelihood components should therefore be read together. From the cHIA perspective, the relevant pathway is prolonged inhalation exposure within an already burdened industrial airshed and the possible effect of respiratory or cardiovascular symptoms on an individual's wellbeing and ability to work. The separate question of changes in fish stocks, marine productivity, access to fishing grounds and livelihood income falls primarily within the socio-economic and relevant marine/ecological assessments and should not be attributed to air pollution without supporting evidence. The cHIA accordingly supports the inclusion of small-scale and subsistence fishers within ongoing stakeholder engagement and community health monitoring where these groups may experience project-related or cumulative environmental health concerns. Any respiratory or environmental health complaints	

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				received from fishers or other people working within the harbour environment should be recorded and investigated alongside the relevant air-quality monitoring data. This is consistent with the cHIA requirement for ambient air-quality monitoring, transparent complaints management and adaptive management of cumulative health risks. The proposed project cannot on its own resolve the existing cumulative air-quality burden in Richards Bay. It is, however, responsible for controlling and monitoring its own contribution and for participating in reasonable cooperative air-quality management. On that basis, the concern raised regarding small-scale fishers is considered valid and is addressed through the combined findings and management measures of the AIR, cHIA and SEIA.	
226.	CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON FISHING COMMUNITIES 47. Climate change is not an abstract or distant issue for coastal fishing communities. 48. Changes in marine and coastal conditions may affect the distribution and abundance of fish, marine productivity, fishing conditions, extreme weather exposure, coastal erosion, access to fishing areas and the resilience of fishing-dependent households. 49. The Draft SEIA recognises that climate change and environmental stressors may interact with existing socio-economic vulnerabilities and threaten fish stocks and food security. 50. The final EIA should therefore assess climate change not only as a risk to the proposed power plant but also as a cumulative risk to the communities that depend on the marine environment. 51. The Climate Change Impact Assessment should clearly address: 51.1 the Project's lifetime greenhouse-gas emissions;			The CCIA addresses the climate change matters that fall within its scope. It quantifies the Project's annual and lifetime GHG emissions and assesses these as an incremental contribution to cumulative global climate change. It also considers broader social vulnerability in Richards Bay and climate-related risks to coastal and environmental systems, including flooding, extreme storms, sea-level rise and coastal erosion. The CCIA cannot attribute a specific change in fish stocks, marine productivity, fishing access or fishing livelihoods to the GHG emissions of this individual Project, as those outcomes arise from the cumulative effects of global climate change together with local environmental and socio-economic pressures. The CCIA also considers functionally linked gas infrastructure within its assessment boundary and addresses the 25-year operational life and	Climate Change Specialist

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	51.2 the contribution of the Project to cumulative climate change; 51.3 the climate-related vulnerabilities of coastal and fishing-dependent communities; 51.4 the interaction between climate change, marine ecosystem pressures and fishing livelihoods; 51.5 the implications of climate-related changes for access to fishing areas; and 51.6 Whether the long operational life of the Project is compatible with the need to reduce climate-related vulnerability and environmental pressure. 52. The assessment should also consider cumulative gas infrastructure and other reasonably foreseeable developments in Richards Bay rather than assessing the proposed plant in isolation.			carbon-lock-in risk. No further CCIA update is required.	
227.	CUMULATIVE IMPACTS OF THE BROADER GAS-TO-POWER DEVELOPMENT 53. We reiterate the concerns raised during the Scoping phase regarding the treatment of the Project as a stand-alone power plant. 54. The Draft SEIA itself recognises that the plant forms part of a wider cluster of gas-to-power and gas infrastructure projects in Richards Bay. 55. The cumulative assessment must therefore adequately consider the broader development context, including LNG import and storage infrastructure, pipelines, gas hubs, associated electricity infrastructure and other reasonably foreseeable gas-to-power developments. 56. This is particularly important for fishing communities because cumulative impacts may arise not only from emissions from the power plant but from the combined footprint and operation of the wider gas infrastructure system. 57. These impacts may include: 57.1 additional port and marine traffic; 57.2 restrictions on access to marine areas; 57.3 construction disturbance; 57.4 increased industrial activity;			From a cumulative impact perspective, Section 13.27.2 of the EIA Report lists the current and reasonably defined/foreseeable third-party projects in relation to the Project. Cumulative impacts were assessed during the following specialist studies (refer to Section 13.27.3 of the EIA Report): • Air Quality Impact Assessment; • Climate Change Impact Assessment; • Hydrology Assessment; • Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment; • Floral and Faunal Assessments; • Noise Impact Assessment; • Health Impact Assessment; • Socio-Economic Impact Assessment; and • Traffic Impact Assessment. The significance of cumulative impacts were evaluated within the specialist studies and reflected in the overall impact assessment contained in the EIA Report. The specialist studies did not identify any fatal cumulative	EAP

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	57.5 air emissions; 57.6 water demand; 57.7 wastewater and stormwater risks; 57.8 emergency and major-hazard risks; 57.9 noise and lighting; 57.10 additional pressure on coastal and marine ecosystems; and 57.11 cumulative climate impacts. 58. The final EIA should explain how these combined pressures have been assessed from the perspective of small-scale fishing communities.			impacts that would preclude the development from proceeding. Several of the cumulative pressures identified in the comment including marine traffic, impacts on marine ecology, access restrictions, wastewater effects, major-hazard risk and impacts on coastal resources require findings from the relevant ecological, air-quality, traffic and other technical specialist assessments before their socio-economic consequences can be evaluated. The SEIA can assess the livelihood, income, health and food-security implications of those effects once a credible environmental pathway has been established but not independently assume environmental effects that have not been identified by the relevant specialist disciplines.	Socio-Economic Specialist
228.	MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH SMALL-SCALE FISHERS 59. During the Scoping phase, it was indicated that engagement with small-scale fishers would take place during the EIA phase. 60. The Draft Comments and Responses Report records that the Plan of Study was updated to provide for engagement with small-scale fishers and other vulnerable groups. 61. We therefore request a clear account of how this commitment was implemented. 62. The final EIA should identify: 62.1 which fishing communities were consulted; 62.2 which fishing organisations or representatives participated; 62.3 when and where consultations took place; 62.4 what methods were used to engage fishers; 62.5 whether consultations were undertaken in isiZulu where appropriate; 62.6 whether fishers were provided with sufficient information to understand the potential environmental and socio-economic consequences of the Project; 62.7 what concerns were raised by fishers;			The Public Participation Process for the proposed development has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations of 2014 (as amended) and was designed to provide affected stakeholders with a reasonable opportunity to obtain information regarding the proposed development and to participate in the environmental assessment process. The EIA process included stakeholder identification, notification of registered I&APs, dissemination of project information, access to the application documentation, public meetings, the review of draft reports, and opportunities to submit written comments throughout the Scoping and EIA phases. All comments received during the public participation process have been recorded and considered as part of the assessment process and are reflected in the CRR. Registered I&APs, including organisations representing fishing interests, were notified of	EAP

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	62.8 what local and traditional knowledge was obtained; and 62.9 how that information was incorporated into the specialist assessments. 63. In particular, the EIA should not merely record that fishers were identified as a vulnerable group. It should demonstrate that affected fishers were actually given an opportunity to contribute information about their livelihoods and the marine environment. 64. Local knowledge is particularly important for identifying fishing grounds, seasonal fishing patterns, access routes, changes in marine resources and areas of cultural or livelihood importance that may not be captured in desktop datasets. 65. Where such engagement has not occurred, we request that a focused engagement process with affected small-scale fishers be undertaken before the EIA is finalised.			the draft EIA Report and associated public meetings. The Masifundise Development Trust was notified of the public review of the draft EIA Report and of these public meetings. No one from this organisation attended any of these meetings, nor requested a separate focus group meeting after notification was provided. It is noted that a meeting was held at the Nseleni Community Hall to supplement the public meeting that was scheduled in Richards Bay and to provide an accessible opportunity for communities located further from the project site to engage with the project and provide input. The detailed records of stakeholder engagement undertaken during the EIA process, including notifications issued, meetings conducted, comments received and responses provided, are included within the Public Participation documentation accompanying the EIA Report.	
229.	FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOOD IMPACTS REQUIRE GREATER WEIGHT 66. Fishing is not simply an economic activity. 67. For fishing-dependent households, marine resources can contribute simultaneously to household income, food security, nutrition, cultural identity and community resilience. 68. Consequently, an impact on fishing resources or access can have consequences beyond the loss of income. 69. Reduced catches may increase household expenditure on alternative sources of protein and reduce the ability of households to meet other basic needs. 70. The final EIA should therefore assess fishing impacts through both a livelihood and food-security lens. 71. The assessment should consider: 71.1 dependence on self-consumed catches;			The level of detail required in an impact assessment must remain proportionate to the nature of the Project and the likelihood of significant effects occurring. The significance attributed to an impact within an EIA must be determined on the basis of the identified impact pathways, the likelihood of occurrence, the extent and duration of the impact, and the findings of the relevant specialist studies. The EIA includes specialist assessments relating to freshwater ecosystems, hydrology, biodiversity, air quality, climate change and socio-economic impacts (amongst others). These studies were specifically undertaken to identify potential environmental pathways through which project activities could affect the receiving environment	EAP

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	71.2 income derived from fishing and related activities; 71.3 the availability and affordability of alternative food sources; 71.4 the vulnerability of low-income fishing households; 71.5 the potential for cumulative environmental pressures to reduce household resilience; and 71.6 the distribution of these impacts among particularly vulnerable households.			and to determine whether such impacts could result in significant effects on ecological systems or communities.	
230.	CONCLUSION 81. Masifundise Development Trust appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIA. 82. We recognise the importance of employment, energy security and economic development. However, these objectives must be considered alongside the rights, livelihoods, food security and environmental interests of communities that depend upon the marine environment. 83. We welcome the fact that the Draft EIA expressly recognises small-scale and subsistence fishers as potentially vulnerable to cumulative environmental pressures. However, the assessment remains insufficiently detailed to demonstrate that the potential consequences for fishing communities have been properly understood. 84. In particular, the Draft EIA acknowledges that environmental degradation may affect marine productivity, fish stocks, catches, access to safe harvesting areas, livelihoods and food security. These acknowledgements should now be translated into a properly evidenced and community-informed assessment. 85. We therefore request that the final EIA: 1. Strengthen the fisheries socio-economic baseline, including identification of fishing communities, fishing areas, access points, fishing practices, target species, seasonal patterns, household dependence and food-security contributions. 2. Demonstrate meaningful engagement with affected small-scale fishers, including how local and traditional knowledge was incorporated into the assessment. 3. Undertake a spatial cumulative assessment of fishing access, including existing restrictions and the combined			The points raised in the conclusion section of this submission summarise and reiterate the concerns and recommendations presented in the preceding sections of the letter. These matters and are responded to in rows no. 221 to 229 above.	EAP

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	effects of existing, proposed and reasonably foreseeable developments. 4. Clearly assess the pathway between environmental impacts and fishing livelihoods, including the potential effects of water quality, wastewater, stormwater, pollution, marine ecosystem degradation and other environmental changes. 5. Assess cumulative water and marine impacts, including water abstraction, wastewater generation and discharge, and potential consequences for aquatic and marine productivity. 6. Strengthen the climate change assessment from a fishing-community perspective, including the interaction between project emissions, climate change, marine ecosystem pressures and fishing-dependent livelihoods. 7. Ensure that the cumulative assessment properly considers the broader gas-to-power development context, including LNG infrastructure, pipelines and other associated infrastructure and reasonably foreseeable developments. 8. Properly account for food-security impacts, recognising that fishing contributes not only to income but also to household nutrition, subsistence and resilience.				
231.	1. groundWork is a non-profit environmental justice organisation that supports communities in South and Southern Africa on issues relating to coal, climate, energy, waste and environmental health, and is a registered interested and affected party (I&AP) in this matter. 2. We support and endorse the comments made by South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA) on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) Power Plant in Richards Bay (the "Project"), prepared by Nemai Consulting on behalf of Mabasa Energy and Fuels (Pty) Ltd. 3. We re-affirm our registeration as an interested and affected parties (I&APs) in terms of the EIA Regulations and wish to participate in all subsequent stages of this environmental assessment process.	Y. Moodley – groundWork	Letter (07/09/26)	Refer to rows no. 177 to 208 above for the responses to the comments received from SDCEA on the draft EIA Report. The registration of groundWork as an I&AP is noted, and the organisation will continue to be included in the public participation process in accordance with the EIA Regulations.	EAP

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	4. Thank you for your consideration of our submission on the environmental impact report for the proposed project. We look forward to further engagement.				
232.	Comment 1: Absence of a dedicated estuarine and marine ecological assessment Relevant material: Draft EIA sections 11 and 15.2; Figure 45; Appendix E3 (Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment) ZDSAA comment: The report records that the site is approximately 2.6 km south of the Estuarine Functional Zone of the Richards Bay Estuary and expressly recognises the estuary as an important regional ecological receptor that could be indirectly affected. The site also lies within the Richards Bay groundwater-fed estuary Strategic Water Source Area. However, the specialist work stops at freshwater/wetland and hydrology assessment. It does not assess estuarine or marine water quality, estuarine habitat, nursery function, fish assemblages, marine food webs, fisheries resources, or the consequences of contaminant transport to the estuary and coastal waters.	P. du Preez – Zululand Deep Sea Angling Association (ZDSAA)	Completed Comment Sheet (08/09/26)	No significant direct impacts on estuarine or marine ecosystems were identified that would warrant a standalone Estuarine or Marine Ecological Assessment. The Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment, supported by the Hydrology Assessment, undertaken as part of the EIA was considered appropriate and proportionate for assessing the relevant aquatic impact pathways associated with the proposed Project. The EIA recognises the estuary as a downstream receptor and specifically considers potential indirect effects associated with stormwater management, wastewater management, groundwater protection, pollution prevention and the management of accidental releases. Appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the EMPr to minimise the risk of impacts on downstream aquatic environments.	EAP
233.	Comment 2: Contradictory description of the wastewater discharge route Relevant material: Draft EIA sections 9.5.5.6-9.5.5.11, 9.5.11.20-9.5.11.21 and 13.19; Appendix K (CRR), comment 136 ZDSAA comment: Sections 9.5.5.6 and 9.5.5.11 state that treated oily and neutralised wastewater will pass to a monitoring sump and then the RBIDZ sewer. By contrast, section 9.5.11.21 states that oily effluent may be discharged to the stormwater drainage system via the monitoring basin. The CRR repeats that process wastewater will be tested before discharge to 'the municipal sewer or the storm water system' in response to an earlier concern about effects on communal fisherfolk and marine life. These are materially different receiving			As described in section 9.5.5 of the EIAR, the drainage systems will be divided into systems where no contamination is possible, and systems where contamination could occur. During a rainfall event, the first 10 minutes of water collected from areas not prone to contamination will be drained to the Wastewater Monitoring Sump for quality checking and treatment (if necessary). After this, stormwater from these areas will be routed to the RBIDZ stormwater system. Wastewater and rainwater from areas prone to chemical contamination will be routed to a Neutralising Sump for treatment before being routed to the Wastewater Monitoring Sump.	Applicant / Technical Team

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	pathways. A stormwater discharge could enter the canal and downstream system, while a sewer discharge depends on municipal treatment capacity, acceptance criteria, bypass risk and the final destination of treated effluent. The CRR therefore confirms, rather than resolves, the uncertainty.			Wastewater and rainwater from areas prone to oil contamination will be routed to an Oil-Water Separator before being routed to the Monitoring Sump. Treated wastewater collected in the Wastewater Monitoring Sump will be monitored for compliance before being routed to the RBIDZ sewer. In the event of non-compliance, the wastewater will be returned to either the Neutralising Sump, or to the Oil-Water Separator, as appropriate, for re-treatment.	
234.	Comment 3: Baseline water-quality evidence is insufficient and uses unsuitable benchmarks Relevant material: Appendix E7 sections 5 and 9; Appendix E3 baseline discussion; Appendix E16 (Geotechnical Assessment); Appendix I section 8.2 ZDSAA comment: The hydrology assessment relies on three canal samples (upstream, midstream and downstream) collected during a single site visit and compares results primarily with drinking/domestic-use target ranges. Appendix E3 states that no surface water was present during its assessment and no in-situ water-quality measurements were recorded. A single snapshot cannot characterise seasonal, tidal, first-flush or industrial variability, and domestic-use criteria do not demonstrate protection of aquatic and estuarine biota.			The EIA, through specialist studies such as the Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment, describes existing water-resource conditions, provides for baseline and operational monitoring, and identifies mitigation measures to manage project-related impacts on surface water, wetlands and groundwater resources. Section 8 of the EMPr requires pre-construction baseline monitoring to establish reference conditions against which future monitoring results can be compared. In addition, the EMPr contains a water-quality monitoring programme that includes: • Baseline monitoring prior to construction; • Monitoring of stormwater runoff, sedimentation and pollution indicators during construction; • Triggered water-quality sampling where contamination, erosion or sedimentation is observed; • Quarterly monitoring of stormwater quality during operation; • Monitoring of pH, Electrical Conductivity (EC), Total Suspended Solids (TSS),	EAP

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				hydrocarbons/oil and grease, and metals where relevant; • Groundwater monitoring using appropriately located monitoring boreholes prior to operation and annually thereafter; and • Periodic specialist assessment of wetland condition and ecological functioning.	
235.	Comment 4: Accidental releases, firewater and emergency response require a source-to-sea consequence assessment Relevant material: Draft EIA sections 9.5.5, 13.18-13.20 and 15.2; Appendices E13, E16 and I (including the ERAP) ZDSAA comment: The plant would store and handle diesel, oils, acids, caustic, sodium hypochlorite/biocides and high-pressure natural gas. Appendix E16 confirms highly permeable sandy soils, a shallow perched water table and the Zululand coastal aquifer, creating credible subsurface as well as surface pathways for off-site contamination. The quantitative risk assessment primarily addresses human fatality and major-hazard contours. The ERAP provides generic notification to relevant authorities and neighbouring facilities but does not identify downstream fishing organisations, closure protocols or marine ecological response. Neither document quantifies ecological consequences to the estuary or operational implications for boating and fishing after a spill, fire, explosion or contaminated firewater release.			The EIA identified accidental spills, contaminated stormwater runoff, wastewater releases, and major hazard incidents as potential impact pathways requiring assessment and management. These risks were considered through various specialist studies, including the Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment, Hydrology Assessment and Quantitative Risk Assessment (amongst others). The EMPr contains various measures to prevent accidental pollution during both construction and operation. The EMPr and ERAP also include provisions for emergency scenarios involving: • Hazardous material spills; • Stormwater contamination; • Wastewater releases; • Aquatic pollution incidents; • Fire and explosion events; • Natural gas leaks; • Major hazard incidents; and • Extreme weather and flooding events. As stated in the ERAP, additional project-specific emergency response documentation will be developed and maintained, including a Site Emergency Contact List, Environmental Incident Notification Forms and other	EAP

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				operational emergency procedures. In addition, the ERAP also caters for Community Notification and External Communication, which extends beyond notification of relevant authorities and neighbouring facilities.	
236.	Comment 5: The Draft EMPr does not translate estuarine and fisheries risks into enforceable controls Relevant material: Appendix I (Draft EMPr), especially sections 8.2, 12, 13.3.4-13.3.6 and the Emergency Response Action Plan ZDSAA comment: The EMPr acknowledges that impacts to freshwater resources may affect inflows into the Richards Bay and adjacent uMhlathuze estuaries and that the Richards Bay Estuary could be indirectly affected. Nevertheless, its operational controls remain focused on the site, canal, groundwater and wetlands. Wastewater controls require only compliance with unspecified 'applicable discharge requirements'; cooling-tower blowdown has no stated flow or pollutant limits; wastewater infrastructure is inspected monthly; and there are no estuarine/marine objectives, receptors, monitoring sites, biological indicators or fisheries incident procedures. The emergency provisions use discretionary language such as 'where required' and 'relevant authorities' without a named source-to-sea notification and response chain.			The EMPr recognises that impacts to freshwater resources may have indirect consequences for the Richards Bay Estuary and adjacent estuarine environments. For this reason, the EMPr includes measures aimed at preventing pollution at source, managing stormwater runoff, controlling wastewater, protecting groundwater resources, preventing contamination of surface water resources, and ensuring appropriate responses to pollution incidents. The management approach adopted in the EMPr is therefore based on preventing potential contaminants from entering receiving environments. Compliance with any authorised discharge limits, water quality standards and operational requirements will be governed through separate regulatory mechanisms, as relevant.	EAP
237.	5. Conclusion ZDSAA's concern is not that every land-based industrial project will necessarily cause a marine impact, but that this project has identifiable hydrological, infrastructural and operational links to the Richards Bay Estuary, coastal aquifer and Port of Richards Bay. Those links must be assessed directly rather than assumed to be insignificant because the plant footprint is inland. Until the requested studies, reconciliations and enforceable controls are provided, the conclusion that impacts relevant to estuarine and marine resources will be acceptable is premature. ZDSAA accordingly requests a			The EIA acknowledges the environmental sensitivities associated with the site and surrounding area, including the presence of wetlands, the stormwater canal along the western boundary, the shallow coastal aquifer, downstream freshwater systems and the Richards Bay Estuary. Through specialist studies, the EIA identified sensitive receptors and potential impact pathways, assessed impact significance, and proposed mitigation, monitoring and emergency response measures designed to manage	EAP

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	substantive response to each numbered comment in the Comments and Responses Report and an opportunity to review the material additions before the competent authority makes a decision.			impacts to freshwater, groundwater, wetland, and downstream aquatic environments. The specific concerns raised by ZDSAA are responded to in rows no. 232 to 236 above.	
238.	The Richards Bay Clean Air Association (RBCAA) has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (DEIAR) prepared by NEMAI Consulting, dated July 2026 and make submission as follows;	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Letter (09/09/26)	Introductory part of letter. The specific comments raised in the letter from the RBCAA are responded to below.	-
239.	**ATMOSPHERIC IMPACT REPORT (Amended September 2026)** **Emissions Inventory** 1. Nitrogen Oxides; Section 4.2 states the control technology is "still to be confirmed if indeed this is deemed necessary", and Table 4-4 reads that abatement equipment and control technology still needs "To be confirmed". The report claims that the fuel is clean as it contains “no sulphur and has very low particulate content”, but says nothing about NOx, which is the pollutant this plant will actually emit in quantity. No information or assessment is presented on best available technology. Recommendation: a) Confirm the abatement technology prior to authorisation. b) AEL limits should be set at best available technology rather than minimum emission standard.			The technical team has confirmed that dry low-NO_x burners will be installed on stacks for the proposed development to reduce NO_x emissions. The assessment of NO_x emissions in the AIR has been undertaken based on the applicable Minimum Emission Standards (MES). The proposed CCGT technology is a modern gas-fired electricity generation technology, and the assessment considers the emissions associated with the proposed technology and applicable emission limits. Detailed determination of the conditions of the Atmospheric Emission Licence (AEL), including any additional emission limits or requirements beyond the applicable MES, is a matter for the relevant Licensing Authority and does not form part of the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist
240.	2. Start-up, Shutdown and Upset Conditions; Section 5.3 states that the emissions and emission profiles for these have been excluded from this assessment because “Information is not available at this early stage.” Two qualitative scenarios have been included in the amended AIR, neither of which has been modelled; • Emergency Shutdown			The unlikely event of an Emergency Shutdown is stated in the AIR. The infrequency of such an event and the short duration justify a qualitative assessment. Similarly, the anticipated frequency and short duration of a black-start event justify a qualitative assessment.	Air Quality Specialist

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	• Black-Start scenario: Page 79 of the report states that "maintenance requirements are likely to happen every three years and could take up to a week." This statement indicates a level of uncertainty regarding frequency and duration. Recommendation: (a) Quantify start-up shutdown, bypass and maintenance emissions (b) Quantify the emergency shutdown and black start scenarios (c) Specialist studies should be final and not leave gaps that require further assessments to be undertaken post authorisation.			These two scenarios have been assessed qualitatively with both having an expected low but negative impact. It is highly unlikely that qualification and modelling will elevate the predicted impact.	
241.	3. Fugitive Emissions; Section 5.4 states that fugitive emissions have not been assessed because "fugitive emissions are not expected to arise". Fugitive emissions and mercaptan odour are dismissed by assertion rather than assessed - a point the RBCAA raised in April and which remains unanswered. What abatement equipment is proposed to mitigate escaping methane gas in the event of incomplete combustion?			Fugitive emissions from natural gas equipment are not expected to be a significant source under normal operation. The technical team has confirmed that gas sensors/detectors will be installed around the gas-handling equipment to detect small leaks, including potential valve gland leaks. These form part of the plant's safety and leak-detection systems. The potential for fugitive emissions will be managed through the plant's gas detection and leak-detection systems and the associated operational and maintenance procedures. Mercaptan is a sulphur-containing chemical added to odourless natural gas to produce a strong, unpleasant smell like rotten eggs, which makes dangerous gas leaks easy to detect – this is standard practice. When natural gas burns cleanly with enough oxygen, the mercaptan burns completely and turns into SO_2 and water vapor, removing any noxious odour. Operating the plant at optimum efficiency mitigates methane emissions. SO_2 emissions are assessed at the MES.	Air Quality Specialist

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242.	4. Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs); Have not been assessed despite the requirement as per the report's own terms of reference. This is a significant omission, especially the exclusion of PM2.5 which has been recorded by the RBCAA to have exceeded the daily NAAQS; • 2021 – 2024: Sixty five (65) exceedances of the Daily NAAQS • 2025: Thirty five (35) exceedances of the 24-hour NAAQS – 18 of which were recorded at the Brackenham station. Recommendation: Update the AIR top include the assessment of PM2.5 and VOCs			The assessment uses a worst-case approach using MES for gas combustion rather than actual emissions for the technology. MES apply for SO_2, NOx and particulate matter. In so doing, all PM is assumed to be PM_{10} and the maximum predicted concentrations are well below the 24-hour and annual NAAQS for PM_{10}. Should all PM be assumed to be $PM_{2.5}$, the maximum predicted concentrations are also well below the 24-hour and annual NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$. For response to the comment here on VOC see row no. 185 above. Updating the AIR to include $PM_{2.5}$ and VOC will not make any meaningful change to the conclusions.	Air Quality Specialist
				Please refer to comment 185 for a reply regarding VOC modelling.	Applicant / Technical Team
243.	5. Exclusion of emissions from bulk storage and handling of coal and ore; The report states that “emissions resulting from these facilities are not estimated in this assessment for cumulative assessment.” This has effectively excluded emissions from Transnet Port Terminals, Grindrod and Eyamakhosi, which handle large volumes of dust generating cargos. It is the view of the RBCAA that this deems the air quality cumulative assessment fatally flawed.			Emissions from bulk storge and handling of ore and coal are primarily particulate matter and may be significant, especially in windy conditions. The Mabasa CCGT is not a significant source of PM and the predicted maximum concentrations of PM_{10} are very low. The cumulative assessment is not fatally flawed. The contribution of PM emissions from Mabasa to the ambient PM loading will be very low and the added effect is unlikely to be seen in monitored data.	Air Quality Specialist
244.	**Baseline Air Quality** 1. Sulphur Dioxide (SO2); The RBCAA acknowledges the amended AIR has replaced SAAQIS data with validated RBCAA data as requested in our April submission; however this was not carried into the assessment.			The exceedances of the 1-hour and 24-hour limit value are acknowledged in the baseline description. However, the description of SO_2 being generally low with occasional exceedances is an appropriate description and should stand.	Air Quality Specialist

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	The baseline now reflects significantly higher baseline SO2 at Harbour West, however no impact score was re-derived. Ambient SO2 is still described as “low…with occasional exceedances of the 1-hour NAAQS” The RBCAA strongly disagrees with the above conclusion. RBCAA data for Harbour West for the period 2021 – 2025 recorded the following number of exceedances at Harbour West; • One Hundred and Twenty Three (123) exceedances of the 1-hour NAAQS. • Ninety Seven (97) exceedances of the 24-hour NAAQS Recommendation: (a) Correct the reference to “Harbour” to read Harbour West as was requested by the RBCAA in April 2026 and committed to in the Comment & Responses report but not implemented. (b) Baseline assumptions to be re-assessed to align with the actual measured data..			This has been corrected in the AIR. Actual measured data obtained for the RBCAA website has been used.	
245.	2. Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2); There is no NO_2 baseline and none is proposed. The Executive Summary correctly states that monitoring data "is not available for NO2 in Richards Bay" — but then then concludes that the project's NO_2 contribution is "highly unlikely to result in elevated concentrations or further exceedances" of a standard whose current baseline is unknown. NO_2 is the pollutant of principal concern. The cumulative model predicts a 1-hour maximum of 273 µg/m³ — 136% of the standard — with no measurement anywhere against which to test it, and no monitoring is proposed as a condition of authorisation. Recommendation:			Operating at the MES, the predicted annual average NO_2 concentrations are 0.11 µg/m^3 for Single Cycle and 0.42 µg/m^3 for Combined Cycle operations. Similarly, the maximum predicted 1-hr NO_2 concentrations are 4.08 µg/m^3 for Single Cycle and 11.0 µg/m^3 for Combined Cycle operations. These predictions are very low in this worst-case emission scenario, and indeed are highly unlikely to result in elevated concentrations or exceedances. Agree with the sentiment that NO_2 monitoring is required in the airshed.	Air Quality Specialist

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	(a) Set up an NO2 ambient monitoring station, funded by the applicant and integrated into the RBCAA network, prior to commissioning of the facility. (b) In-stack monitoring. With four or more gas-to-power projects proposed in this airshed, simply noting the absence of baseline data is no longer tenable.			The technical team has indicated that in-stack emission monitoring will be installed.	
246.	3. Particulates (PM10); It is noted that the data set differs from that for SO2 in that PM is assessed for the period 2021 – 2024 and not 2025. The PM10 "regional background" of more than 20 µg/m³, which is used to attribute measured particulate matter to background rather than to local sources, comes from an outdated study whose record ends in 2017. The report's own Table 6-3 shows the annual mean at CBD increasing from 12.5 µg/m³ in 2021 to 26.4 µg/m³ in 2024, a trend that is not discussed. The report references one exceedance of the 24-hour NAAQS but does not report the following exceedances; • 2021 – 2024: Sixty eight (68) exceedances of the 24-hour NAAQS • 2025: Four (4) exceedances of the 24-hour NAAQS. Recommendation: (a) Derive the current regional background from the current data set and not from a record ending in 2017. (b) Baseline assumptions to be re-assessed to align with actual measured data.			Daily average PM_{10} data for the CBD AQMS was available on the RBCAA web site from 01/01/2021 to 22/10/2024, hence the exclusion of data for 2025 in the baseline assessment. The increasing trend is noted and has been discussed in the final AIR. Unsure where these quoted exceedances are from. Downloaded data from RBCAA website shows five exceedances of the PM_{10} daily standard at the CBD AQMS in 2024, and no data available in 2025. This has been verified again on 14 September 2026. Determining the regional background concentration without a background monitoring station is not possible. Actual measured data are used in the baseline assessment.	Air Quality Specialist
247.	4. The modelled meteorology does not match the baseline, and the regional background comes from a study ending in 2017; The ambient baseline in the amended AIR now runs to 2025 for SO2 and to 2024 for PM10 and PM2.5, however the modelling did not move. Section 6.2.2 states that the meteorological field is built from 2021, 2022 and 2023, and Figure 6-2 is a 2010–2014			The AIR was originally done in 2024 when the baseline and the modelling considered the 3-year period 2021 to 2023. The project was subsequently put on hold before being revived in 2026. In updating the final AIR, the period for the baseline description was extended to include	Air Quality Specialist

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	wind rose. The gap between the period the baseline describes and the period the model represents has widened from nothing to two years. No wind rose or summary of the modelled field is shown anywhere. Recommendation: Re-run the dispersion model using met data for the period that aligns with ambient baseline period.			2024 and 2025 for SO_2 and to 2024 for PM_{10}. Dispersion modelling was not updated. An updated windrose is presented in Fig 6.2. There is no gap between the baseline and the modelling. The description of the baseline simply covers a longer period.	
248.	**Dispersion Modelling** 1. There is no modelled scenario without the project, so its actual contribution is not calculated; The four modelled scenarios are the project alone in simple cycle, the project alone in combined cycle, the project plus industry, and the project plus industry plus approved projects. There is no run of the model for existing sources on their own. Without one, the difference the project makes at any location cannot be calculated. The central conclusion that the project's contribution is small has no arithmetic behind it.. Recommendation: (a) Add an existing-sources-only scenario and an existing-plus-approved-sources-only scenario. (b) Report the proposed project's increment at locations where a limit value is exceeded, and at every sensitive receptor.			The contribution of the project is estimated by modelling the project alone, without any other sources. The predicted concentrations of the project alone provide the contribution of the project to ambient concentrations at all and any point in the modelling domain. Adding an existing source only scenario and future source only scenario will not add any additional value. The limit value is not exceeded by the project, see the low maximum predicted concentrations. The contribution of the project to ambient concentrations at sensitive receptors can be inferred from the isopleth maps.	Air Quality Specialist
249.	2. No results are given at any school, clinic or residential area; There is still no table of predicted concentrations for Aquadene, Brackenham, Wildenweide, Veldenvlei, Birdswood or Arboretum, nor for any of the schools, clinics and old age homes the report itself maps as highly sensitive. The Comments and Responses Report nonetheless states that the increment was assessed "explicitly at the sensitive receptors" and refuses to provide tables: "We don't see that the inclusion of receptor based tables will add any further value."			All sensitive receptors are shown on all isopleth maps. The isopleths are overlaid on a Google Earth image on the modelling domain. The predicted ambient concentrations at sensitive receptors and anywhere in the modelling domain can be inferred from the isopleth maps. Sensitive receptor symbols are included in the key to the isopleth maps. The concentration	Air Quality Specialist

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	The sensitive receptors are still plotted as unnamed symbols and no concentration can be read at any of them. Recommendation: Include a table of predicted concentrations at each named residential area and each mapped sensitive receptor for the various scenarios.			value on the respective isopleths is clearly legible.	
250.	3. The isopleth maps show where a standard is exceeded but still not by how much; The magnitude is still not visible. There is no colour scale; the contour interval is still unstated and irregular. Figure 6-13 is contoured at 30, 52, 62, 98 and 125 µg/m³ on one map and at 90 and 115 µg/m³ on the other; the red contour is unlabelled and appears in no legend; the highest contour drawn is far below the reported maximum of 315 µg/m³. Recommendation: (a) Provide isopleth maps with a stated and regular contour interval, a filled colour scale, the standard drawn as a distinct labelled contour entered in the legend, and state the scenario definition in every figure caption.			The requested guide was provided on 8 September 2026. It is understood that the isopleth maps are a little difficult to interpret. A paragraph has been added in the final AIR prior to the maps to assist the reader's understanding and interpretation. The scenarios are defined in detail in the relevant sections of the AIR and referenced throughout the assessment. The full scenario definitions are therefore not repeated in each figure caption, to avoid duplication and keep the captions concise. The figures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the AIR.	Air Quality Specialist
251.	4. Sulphur dioxide; It appears that sulphur dioxide has been modelled at rates far in excess of what is achievable.			SO_2 has been modelled using the MES for each source included in the scenario. This is extreme and unlikely that all sources will simultaneously operate and emit at the MES.	Air Quality Specialist
252.	5. Cumulative Proposed Projects - RBGP2; is named in the Executive Summary as one of the cumulative projects but does not appear in the modelling tables. The omission of this project from the cumulative assessment would deem the air quality assessment flawed.			RBGP2 was not included in the cumulative modelling because suitable emission data were not available for the project. Its inclusion in the Executive Summary was therefore an error. The reference to RBGP2 has been removed from the Executive Summary. The cumulative modelling results are based only on projects for which suitable emission information was available.	Air Quality Specialist
253.	**Results and Impact Rating** 1. The proposed projects contribution to the standards is understated; Section 7.2.2.1 sets the severity score on the basis that the project's maximum concentrations are "less			The errors are noted and have been corrected in the final AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	than 0.03%" of the SO2 standard, "0.001%" for NO2 and "0.005%" for PM10. Calculated from Table 6-8: The proposed project will contribute; SO2 8.5% (annual), 29.8% (24-hour) and 31.4% (1-hour); NO2 1.1% and 5.5%; PM10 0.3% and 1.2%. A project contributing up to 30% of the 24-hour SO2 limit value, in an airshed where that standard is exceeded cannot be considered insignificant. Recommendation: Correct the percentages and rescore severity on the corrected result.				
254.	2. Cumulative exceedances scored as "almost never"; For the cumulative scenarios the frequency of impact is still scored 1, "almost never/almost impossible", on the reasoning that it is unlikely all industries emit at their limits simultaneously. The amended report states repeatedly that the cumulative scenarios are "hypothetical". This single score is what keeps the cumulative impact out of the high category. The amended baseline records that the 24-hour SO2 standard was exceeded at Harbour in 2022 (10 exceedances against 4 permitted), the 24-hour PM10 standard at CBD in 2024 (5 against 4) and the 24-hour PM2.5 standard at Brackenham in 2024 (6 against 4). Exceedances in this airshed are measured, not hypothetical. Recommendation: Rescore the frequency of impact for the cumulative scenarios against the measured exceedance record, and revise the significance rating accordingly.			The comment is noted. The measured ambient air quality exceedances identified in the baseline assessment are acknowledged and are not considered hypothetical. However, the frequency-of-impact rating for the cumulative scenarios relates specifically to the likelihood of the modelled cumulative operating condition occurring, namely the simultaneous operation of the assessed facilities at their maximum permitted emission rates. The cumulative scenarios intentionally represent conservative, hypothetical operating conditions, based on maximum permitted emission rates rather than actual emissions. It is considered unlikely that all assessed facilities would simultaneously operate at their maximum permitted emission rates. The historical measured exceedances in the Richards Bay airshed therefore provide important context for the cumulative assessment, but do not, in themselves, demonstrate that the specific cumulative operating condition modelled in Scenarios 3 and 4 occurs at the same frequency. The frequency rating of 1 is therefore retained.	Air Quality Specialist

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				The calculated significance score for both Scenarios 3 and 4 is 195 (Consequence = 15; Likelihood = 13), which falls within the Medium negative significance category in accordance with Table 7-8.	
255.	3. Air Quality Impact Scores (Table 7-12); The cumulative impacts have been allocated a MEDIUM impact rating. This does not align with Section 7.2.2.3 which states that the severity or magnitude of impacts for SO2, NO2 and PM10 is predicted to be HIGH (Score = 8). Recommendation: Correct Table 7-12 to reflect cumulative impacts as having a HIGH significance rating.			The comment is noted. However, the comment appears to interpret the severity or magnitude rating as the overall significance rating. As stated in Section 7.2.2.3, the severity or magnitude of the cumulative impact is assessed as High (score = 8) based on the predicted ambient concentrations and exceedances of the applicable NAAQS. This score forms one component of the overall consequence assessment. When combined with the spatial scale (score = 3) and duration (score = 4), the resulting consequence score is 15. The likelihood score is 13, resulting in an overall significance score of 195 (15 × 13). The High severity/magnitude rating is therefore already reflected in the assessment and should not be interpreted as the overall significance rating. The overall significance is determined from the consequence and likelihood scores in accordance with the significance assessment methodology. Table 7-12 will therefore retain the calculated significance score of 195.	Air Quality Specialist
256.	**Power Generation** 1. Emergency Generators - Inconsistency in the fuel source; Page 11 and 21 of the report state that "Emergency diesel generators are required in the event of a grid failure…" This contradicts the statement on page 79 of the AIR which states "The emergency generators will use natural gas." Recommendation:			The inconsistencies in the report regarding the fuel source for the emergency generators were noted and have been corrected in the final AIR. The emergency generators will operate on ultra-low sulphur diesel (ULSD). The emergency generator emissions were not modelled as a separate source, as their operation is limited to emergency conditions. Their potential contribution was nevertheless considered qualitatively in the cumulative assessment. The primary assessment scenarios were based on	Air Quality Specialist

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	(a) Confirm fuel source (b) Confirm that assessment was based on diesel (Worst case scenario) (c) Model worst case scenario			the normal operating configuration of the proposed power plant.	
257.	**Air Pollutants and Health Implications** 1. National Ambient Air Quality Standards; While South African standards are legally defined as being "health-based", they lag behind international best practices. For this reason the RBCAA has adopted and reports against World Health Organisation guidelines. It is the view of the RBCAA that health impacts should be assed against WHO guidelines.			The NAAQS are health-based and legally binding in South Africa. However, the need to include the WHO ambient air quality guidelines is recognised and these have been included in the update AIR, in the ambient air quality section.	Air Quality Specialist
258.	2. Synergistic Health Effects (PM and SO2); When inhaled together their combined negative impact on human health is greater than their individual impact. The pollution load in Richards Bay warrants at the very least a qualitative assessment.			Synergistic health effects of air pollutants are not part of the scope of the Health Impact Assessment.	Air Quality Specialist
				Potential health effects associated with exposure to multiple air pollutants are considered in the Community Health Impact Assessment as part of the cumulative air-quality and health assessment. The cHIA considers the combined burden of air pollution within the existing Richards Bay airshed, including the susceptibility of vulnerable receptors. However, the available project-specific exposure data do not allow a separate quantitative assessment of a specific synergistic interaction between PM and SO_2.	
259.	Mitigation, Monitoring and Conditions 1. The specialist proposes no conditions of authorisation and no monitoring; Table A-1 (Prescribed contents of the Specialist Reports) states "No conditions" against both the conditions for inclusion in the environmental authorisation and the monitoring requirements for the management programme. Section 9 defers the requirements to the AEL — a licence that has not been applied for — and lists only four generic			The comment is noted. The AIR does not propose that no mitigation or emission-control measures be implemented. Mitigation measures are addressed in Section 9, and Table 4-4 (Appliances and abatement equipment and control technology) specifies that Dry Low-NOx burners will be installed for the control of NOx emissions. The AIR also identifies routine stack emission measurements to demonstrate compliance with the applicable Minimum Emission Standards	Air Quality Specialist

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	reporting items, proposing no ambient monitoring, no continuous emission monitoring. For a 750 MW combustion plant in an airshed with measured non-compliances for two pollutants, a specialist study that proposes nothing is not a defensible output			(MES), together with annual emission inventory reporting, greenhouse gas emission reporting and annual AEL performance reporting. The reference to “No conditions” under item (l) of Table A-1 refers specifically to additional air-quality conditions proposed for inclusion in the Environmental Authorisation (EA). No additional conditions were considered necessary from the AIR, as the proposed development will be subject to the applicable regulatory requirements, including the requirements of the Atmospheric Emission Licence (AEL). The monitoring and reporting requirements identified in the AIR will be addressed through the applicable regulatory requirements and AEL. The need for additional ambient air quality monitoring and/or continuous emission monitoring will be determined in accordance with the applicable regulatory requirements and final plant configuration. The technical team has confirmed that CEMS will be installed on all stacks.	
260.	2. Abatement /Emission Reduction Interventions; The report concludes that "further emission reduction interventions are deemed to be unnecessary considering the low impact of the proposed project on air quality". Section 4.2 further states that appliances, abatement equipment and control technology are still “To be confirmed”. Recommendation: Withdraw the finding that abatement is unnecessary until a best available technology assessment has been done.			The technical team has confirmed that dry low NOx burners will be installed in the stacks to lower NOx emissions. Section 4.2 has been updated in the final AIR.	Air Quality Specialist
261.	3. No offset, and no assessment of whether the airshed has any capacity left; The report presents measured baseline non-compliance with the 24-hour SO2, PM10 and			The baseline assessment together with the predicted contribution from the proposed Mabasa Power Plant (Scenarios 1 and 2)	Air Quality Specialist

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	PM2.5, predicts cumulative exceedances and adds four more gas-to-power projects to the same domain — then proposes no offset, no trading and no condition. Where a new source is proposed into a non-compliant airshed, what is to be removed to make room for it should be the first question. Recommendation: Assess whether the Richards Bay airshed has capacity for the proposed loading. Where it does not, require an emission offset as a condition of authorisation.			provides an indication of the potential effect of the proposed loading on the Richards Bay airshed. The assessment indicates that the contribution from Mabasa is relatively small in comparison with the existing ambient concentrations and cumulative concentrations. However, the capacity of the airshed cannot be conclusively assessed for NO_2 due to the lack of representative ambient NO_2 monitoring data. Emission offsets are not proposed as part of the project, as the assessment considers the incremental contribution of Mabasa, applicable emission limits and proposed mitigation measures. Any offset requirement would be subject to the requirements of the relevant regulatory authorities.	
262.	**Process and Regulatory Compliance** 1. The report records that no comments were received; The compliance table answers the requirement for "a summary and copies of any comments received during any consultation process and where applicable all responses thereto" with "Not received". The RBCAA submitted written comments on the air quality assessment on 2 April 2026, with the air quality specialist having responded to relevant comments in the Comments and Responses Report The amended AIR does not record that the report has been amended and re-issued , nor why and what changed. Recommendation: Record and respond to the RBCAA's April 2026 comments in the Atmospheric Impact Report itself, as the regulations require.			RBCAA's comments of 02 April 2026 on the Draft Scoping Report are acknowledged and responses are included in the updated AIR.	Air Quality Specialist
263.	2. Declaration of Accuracy by the Applicant; It is noted that the Declaration of Accuracy of Information required to be signed by the Applicant, Mabasa Energy and Fuel, names uMoya-NILU Consulting as the enterprise and is signed by the specialist.			Indeed, this is an oversight. The declaration signed by the applicant has been included in the updated AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	It is not understood how a specialist can take accountability for the accuracy of the applicant's information. In our view it represents a conflict of interest for the air quality specialist to be named as the "duly authorised" representative of the applicant while conducting an independent air quality assessment. Recommendation: Provide the applicant's declaration of accuracy in the prescribed form.				
264.	**GENERAL** 1. List of Tables; Page xi – Table 6-2 – 6-5 headings not corrected following amendments and three new Tables 6-6 to 6-8 are not referenced at all. 2. Compliance Table – Site Visit; The site visit is recorded as "not applicable" although the terms of reference state that "site visit is required". 3. Data Sets: The Executive Summary states different data sets for SO2 (2021 -2025) and PM10 (2021-2024).			Formatting has been attended to. The proposed Mabasa site is currently undeveloped and a physical site visit was not undertaken for the Air Quality Impact Assessment. The assessment was based on available project information, spatial data and ambient air quality monitoring data, with sensitive receptors identified within the assessment domain. The requirement for a site visit in the Terms of Reference is acknowledged, and the final AIR clarifies this limitation and the basis on which the assessment was undertaken. Correct, no data was available for download for PM_{10} at the CBD AQMS for 2025	Air Quality Specialist
265.	**CONCLUSION** The RBCAA remains of the opinion that cumulative impacts from developments within IDZ 1F, especially MHI facilities, will place the residential communities of Aquadene, Brackenham and Wildenweide at risk. There are substantive gaps relating to the assessment of air quality impacts, including what the RBCAA deems to be a fatally flawed cumulative assessment of dust generating bulk handling and storage facilities.			Thank you for the comments. These were well received, and amendments, where applicable, were made in updating the final AIR.	Air Quality Specialist

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	These deficiencies should be addressed prior to the application being considered for authorisation. Thank you for affording the RBCAA the opportunity to comment. The RBCAA reserves the right to amend and/or provide further comment.				
266.	The Application for Environmental Authorisation and Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAr) dated July 2026 and received by the Department on 05 March 2026 and 05 August 2026, respectively, refer.	M. Mogorosi - DFFE	Letter (02/04/26)	It is confirmed that the Draft EIA Report was submitted to DFFE on 5 August 2026.	EAP
267.	This letter serves to inform you that the following information must be included in the final EIAr:			The relevant responses are provided below.	-
268.	(a) Specific Comments (i) Recommendations provided by specialist reports must be considered and used to inform the layout. (ii) Please ensure that all mitigation recommendations are in line with applicable and most recent guidelines. (iii) The final EIAr must provide the technical details for the proposed facility in a table format as well as their description and/or dimensions. (iv) Please ensure that all softcopy maps are clear and legible. (v) Please ensure that the final EIAr complies with the requirements of Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.			(i) None of the specialists recommended any changes to the layout. (ii) The mitigation measures provided in the EMPr are based on best practices, site-specific conditions and project-specific aspects. (iii) Refer to the project summary in Table 10 of the EIA Report. (iv) We have attempted to ensure that all maps contained in the EIA Report are clear and legible. Where necessary, the page orientation was changed to landscape to improve readability. In addition, the page containing the proposed plant layout has been presented in A3 format to allow the figure to be displayed at an appropriate scale and level of detail. (v) Refer to the document roadmap in Section 2 of the EIA Report. As a minimum, the EIA Report aims to satisfy the requirements stipulated in Appendix 3 of the EIA Regulations. Table 1 presents the document's composition in terms of the aforementioned regulatory requirements.	EAP

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269.	(b) Listed Activities (i) Please ensure that all relevant listed activities are applied for, are specific, and can be linked to the development activity or infrastructure as described in the project description. Only activities applicable to the development must be applied for and assessed. (ii) If the activities applied for in the application form differ from those mentioned in the final EIAr, an amended application form must be submitted. (iii) The relevant authorities with jurisdiction in respect of geographically designated areas in terms of GN R. 985 (Listing Notice 3) Activities must be continuously involved throughout the environmental impact assessment process. Written comments (or proof of consultation) must be obtained from the relevant authorities and submitted to this Department. In addition, a graphical representation of the proposed development within the respective geographical areas must be provided. Please also ensure that the potential impacts on the affected Critical Biodiversity Areas and Sensitive Areas indicated in Listing Notice 3 are fully assessed in the EIAr. (iv) The final EIAr must provide an assessment of the impacts and mitigation measures for each of the listed activities applied for. (v) Please ensure that an application form is submitted with the final EIAr.			(i) The listed activities triggered by the Project are captured in the Application Form as well as in Table 3 of the EIA Report. All listed activities applied for have been reviewed to ensure that they are relevant, specific, and directly linked to the proposed development activities and associated infrastructure, including applicable thresholds, as described in the EIA Report. (ii) To ensure full alignment between the Application Form and the EIA Report, an amended Application Form, subsequently included as Appendix L to the Final EIA Report, was prepared to reflect the same wording used in the EIA Report for GN R325, Activity 4. (iii) Various authorities were notified of the review of the draft Scoping and EIA Reports, including the KZN Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Environmental Affairs (DEDTEA), Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife (EKZNW), Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS), Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources (DMPR), South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA), Amafa and Research Institute, KZN Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), KZN DFFE, and CoU (amongst others). Refer further to the database contained in Appendix H of the EIA Report for a list of the authorities that were informed of the review of the draft EIA Report. Proof of notification of these authorities of the review of the draft EIA Report is provided in Appendix K1. The relevant sensitive geographical areas linked to Listing Notice 3 that are directly affected by the development footprint are listed in Table 3 of the EIA Report. Refer to the	EAP

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				corresponding maps contained in Section 11 of the EIA Report, such as Figure 50 that shows Critical Biodiversity Areas (CBA) Irreplaceable areas in relation to the project area. The location and related impacts of the project regarding sensitive areas was assessed as part of the relevant specialist studies, including the Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment, Terrestrial Biodiversity Assessment, Floral (Plant Species) Assessment, and Faunal (Animal Species) Assessment. (iv) The potential impacts associated with the key listed activities are broadly stated in Table 51 of the EIA Report. These impacts are further assessed in greater detail in Section 13.9 to Section 13.24 of the EIA Report. (v) The amended Application Form is contained in Appendix L of the Final EIA Report.	
270.	(c) Layout & Sensitivity Maps The final EIAr must include the following: (i) A copy of the final preferred layout map. All available biodiversity information must be used in the finalisation of the layout map. Existing infrastructure must be used as far as possible e.g. roads. The layout map must indicate the following: ➢ Clear indication of the location and envisioned area for the proposed 750MW Combined Cycle Gas Turbine Power Plant and all other associated infrastructure should be mapped at an appropriate scale; ➢ Positions of the proposed power plant as well as all other associated infrastructure associated with the proposed development; ➢ Permanent laydown area footprint;			(i) A combined sensitivity map is provided in Figure 98 of the EIA Report, which shows sensitive site features in relation to the preferred layout. As noted in Section 15.2 of the EIA Report, it is important to recognise that the wetlands on the site were previously assessed as part of the RBIDZ Phase 1F environmental authorisation process, during which the clearance of indigenous vegetation and the infilling of wetlands within the authorised development footprint were approved. Consequently, the current EIA for the proposed Plant does not seek approval for wetland-related impacts on the site, nor does it re-assess the acceptability of the previously authorised habitat transformation and wetland infilling. Rather, the current assessment has focused on the environmental impacts specifically associated	EAP

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	➢ Wetlands, drainage lines, rivers, streams, and water crossing of roads and cables indicating the type of bridging structures that will be used; ➢ The location of sensitive environmental features on-site e.g., CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines etc. that will be affected by the facility and its associated infrastructure; ➢ Powerlines; ➢ Substation(s) and/or transformer(s) sites including their entire footprint; ➢ Location of access and service roads; ➢ All existing infrastructure on the site, especially railway lines (if any) and roads; ➢ Buffer areas; ➢ Buildings, including accommodation; and ➢ All "no-go" areas. (ii) A sensitivity map indicating environmentally sensitive areas and features identified during the assessment process e.g., CBAs, heritage sites, wetlands, drainage lines, etc. that will be affected by the proposed facility, and associated infrastructure must be provided. (iii) Please ensure that buffer zones that may be recommended by the specialists are illustrated on the maps and the layout map must be overlain by all the sensitivities. (iv) It must be emphasised that the final EIAr must include a layout map which adheres to specialist recommendations as well as the identified no-go areas must be included. (v) Kindly ensure that the legend in the layout map clearly specifies the development footprint.			with the construction and operation of the proposed Power Plant and associated infrastructure within an already authorised industrial development footprint. (ii) A combined sensitivity map is provided in Figure 98 of the EIA Report, which shows sensitive site features in relation to the preferred layout. (iii) The following recommendation was included in Section 15.4 of the EIA Report: Prior to finalisation of the detailed engineering design, a detailed flood modelling assessment, informed by site-specific topographical survey data, should be undertaken to confirm flood risk to project infrastructure and to inform appropriate flood mitigation and stormwater management measures. Hence, the currently identified 1:100-year floodline is treated as a provisional development constraint pending detailed flood modelling. Permanent infrastructure should be located outside the verified floodline unless it can be demonstrated through detailed engineering assessment that flood risk can be adequately mitigated. (iv) Apart from the floodline constraints discussed above, no additional no-go areas were identified within the site. The provisions of the Environmental Authorisation issued for the RBIDZ Phase 1F development in September 2016 (Reference No. 14/12/16/3/3/2/665), particularly those relating to the infilling of wetlands and the clearance of indigenous vegetation, should be borne in mind. (v) The legend in the layout map reflects the various components of the proposed facility.	

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271.	(d) Public Participation Process (i) Please ensure that comments from all relevant stakeholders are submitted to the Department with the EIAr. This includes but is not limited to the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Department of Water and Sanitation, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife, KwaZulu-Natal Amafa and Research Institute, the South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL), Transnet, the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ), Eskom, the City of uMhlathuze Local Municipality, the King Cetshwayo District Municipality, the relevant Atmospheric Air Emission Licence (AEL) Authority, the South African Civil Aviation Authority, the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries: Directorate: Biodiversity and Conservation ([redacted]), Climate Change, and Air Quality (Ricca Marowe: [redacted]). (ii) You are reminded to provide proof that the key stakeholders received written notification of the proposed activity as well as of the availability of the draft EIAr for comment. Proof of correspondence with the various stakeholders must be included in the final EIAr. Should you be unable to obtain comments, proof must be submitted to the Department of the attempts that were made to obtain comments. The Public Participation Process must be conducted in terms of Regulations 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 & 44 of the EIA Regulations 2014, as amended. (iii) A comments and response (C&R) trail report must be submitted with the final EIAr. The C&R report must incorporate all historical comments for this development. The C&R report must be a separate document from the main report, and the format must be in a table format, which reflects the details of the interested and affected parties (I&APs), and the date comments were received, actual comments received, and responses provided. Please ensure that comments made by I&APs are			(i) These stakeholders are included in the database. Copies of the comments received on the draft EIA Report are contained in Appendix K2 of the final EIA Report. These comments were incorporated into the CRR. It is noted that other representatives from DFFE's Air Quality Unit were included in the stakeholder database and notified of the public review period for the draft EIA Report. Following receipt of these comments, Ricca Marowe has been added to the stakeholder database for future correspondence. (ii) The public participation process that was undertaken during the EIA Phase is discussed in Section 14.3 of the EIA Report. Proof of notification of the review of the draft EIA Report is contained in Appendix K1 of the final EIA Report. (iii) This CRR, which will be appended to the final EIA Report, serves to capture all the comments received and the related responses during the Scoping and Environmental Impact Reporting phases of the overall environmental assessment. All written comments received are included verbatim in this CRR. (iv) All comments received during the Scoping and EIA phases have been addressed in this CRR. Where relevant, the final EIA Report has been revised to reflect and address the issues raised by stakeholders. The manner in which the specific requirements contained in DFFE's letter accepting the	EAP

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	comprehensively captured (copy verbatim if required) and responded to clearly and fully. (iv) Please ensure that all issues raised, and comments received on the Scoping Report and comments on the draft EIAr from registered I&APs and organs of state that have jurisdiction in respect of the proposed activity, including this Department's comments, are adequately addressed in the final EIAr. Please note that a response such as "Noted" is not regarded as an adequate response to I&AP's comments. The final EIAr must also comply with all conditions of the acceptance of the final Scoping Report dated 01 June 2026. (v) Please include the period for when the public participation period occurred i.e. when was the draft EIAr circulated for comment.			Scoping Report have been addressed is described in Table 8 of the EIA Report. (v) As indicated in Section 14.3.2 of the EIA Report, the draft report was lodged for public review from 6 August until 7 September 2026.	
272.	(e) Specialist Assessments (i) Please note that the Department considers a 'no-go' area, as an area where no development of any infrastructure is allowed; therefore, no development of associated infrastructure including access roads is allowed in the 'no-go' areas. (ii) Should the specialist definition of a 'no-go' area differ from the Department's definition; this must be clearly indicated. The specialist must also indicate the 'no-go' area's buffer if applicable. (iii) All specialist studies must be final, and provide detailed/practical mitigation measures for the preferred alternative and recommendations, and must not recommend further studies to be completed post EA. (iv) Should the appointed specialists specify contradicting recommendations, the EAP must clearly indicate the most reasonable recommendation and substantiate this with defendable reasons; and where necessary, include further expertise advice.			(i) & (ii) Apart from the floodline constraints discussed above, no additional no-go areas were identified within the site. The provisions of the Environmental Authorisation issued for the RBIDZ Phase 1F development in September 2016 (Reference No. 14/12/16/3/3/2/665), particularly those relating to the infilling of wetlands and the clearance of indigenous vegetation, should be borne in mind. (iii) The specialist studies are reflected as 'final'. Where specialist reports identify actions that are more appropriately undertaken during detailed design, permitting, construction planning, or operational management, such actions form part of the normal implementation for the Project. (iv) Specialists did not specify contradicting recommendations.	EAP

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	(v) You are reminded that the Climate Change Impact Assessment must assess the impacts of the development on climate change and vice versa and accordingly must consider both mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change.
	
	(vi) It is further brought to your attention that the Procedures for the Assessment and Minimum Criteria for Reporting on identified Environmental Themes in terms of Sections 24(5)(a) and (h) and 44 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998, when applying for Environmental Authorisation, which were promulgated in Government Notice No. 320 of 20 March 2020 (i.e. "the Protocols"), and in Government Notice No. 1150 of 30 October 2020 (i.e. protocols for terrestrial plant and animal species) have come into effect. Please note that specialist assessments must be conducted in accordance with these protocols, except where the applicant provides proof to the competent authority that the specialist assessment affected by these protocols had been commissioned before the date on which the protocols came into effect, in which case Appendix 6 of the Environmental impact Assessment Regulations, 2014, as amended, will apply to such applications. Please note further that the protocols require the specialists to be registered with SACNASP.
	
	(vii) Please include a table in the EIAr or relevant appendix, summarising the specialist studies required by the Screening Tool, a column indicating whether these studies were conducted or not, and a column with motivation for any studies not conducted. Please note that if any of the specialists' studies and requirements recommended in the Department's Screening Tool are not commissioned, motivation (where the Protocols provide for such) must be provided.
	
	(viii) Kindly ensure that the final EIAr includes the Site Verification Report and Compliance Statements (where applicable) as required by the relevant themes.
				(v) The objectives of the Climate Change Impact Assessment included the following (refer to Section 12.4 of the EIA Report):
				• Determining the Project's contribution to climate change by -
				  ○ Identifying Project activities and infrastructure contributing to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (notably from fuel combustion);
				  ○ Compiling a GHG inventory for the Project across relevant lifecycle phases;
				  ○ Assessing the Project's GHG emissions in relation to South Africa's national climate change policy framework and objectives, and international commitments; and
				  ○ Identifying and proposing measures to mitigate the Project's emissions, where applicable.
				• Determining the resilience of the Project to climate change by:
				  ○ Assessing projected climate change risks and trends for the region;
				  ○ Identifying vulnerabilities in the Project's core operations, value chain, and surrounding environmental and social systems; and
				  ○ Recommending adaptation measures to enhance climate resilience.
				
				(vi) The specialist studies were undertaken in accordance with these Protocols, as relevant.
				
				The Declarations of the relevant specialists (contained in Appendix E17 of the EIA Report) reflect their SACNASP registration.
				
				(vii) Table 45 in the EIA Report lists the specialist studies that were identified in the Screening Report and notes the relevance of	

No.	VERBATIM COMMENT/QUERY	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
				these studies to the Project based on Site Sensitivity Verification (SSV). The SSV Report was contained in the Scoping Report, which was accepted by DFFE. The SSV Report is also included in Appendix M of the final EIA Report.	
273.	(f) Cumulative Assessment: (i) Should there be any other similar projects within a 30km radius of the proposed development site, the cumulative impact assessment for all identified and assessed impacts must be refined to indicate the following: ➢ Identified cumulative impacts must be clearly defined, and where possible the size of the identified impact must be quantified and indicated, i.e. hectares of cumulatively transformed land. ➢ Detailed process flow and proof must be provided, to indicate how the specialist's recommendations, mitigation measures and conclusions from the various similar developments in the area were taken into consideration in the assessment of cumulative impacts and when the conclusion and mitigation measures were drafted for this project. ➢ The cumulative impacts significance rating must also inform the need and desirability of the proposed development. ➢ A cumulative impact environmental statement on whether the proposed development must proceed.			(i) From a cumulative impact perspective, Section 13.27.2 of the EIA Report lists the current and reasonably defined/foreseeable third-party projects in relation to the Project. Cumulative impacts were assessed during the following specialist studies (refer to Section 13.27.3 of the EIA Report): • Air Quality Impact Assessment; • Climate Change Impact Assessment; • Hydrology Assessment; • Freshwater Ecosystem Assessment; • Floral and Faunal Assessments; • Noise Impact Assessment; • Health Impact Assessment; • Socio-Economic Impact Assessment; and • Traffic Impact Assessment. The significance of cumulative impacts were evaluated within the specialist studies and reflected in the overall impact assessment contained in the EIA Report. The specialist studies did not identify any fatal cumulative impacts that would preclude the development from proceeding. A Cumulative Environmental Impact Statement is provided in Section 13.27.4 of the EIA Report.	EAP
274.	General Please ensure that the final EIAr includes the period for which the Environmental Authorisation is required and the			Section 9.5.15 of the final EIA Report states that the Environmental Authorisation, if granted, should remain valid for a period of 10 years.	EAP

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	date on which the activity will be concluded as per Appendix 3 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended.			Phase II of the Project Development Plan (refer to Section 9.5.13.2 of the EIA Report) will involve the finalisation of the detailed design, followed by procurement and construction activities. It is anticipated that Phase II will take approximately 24 to 36 months to complete.	
275.	You are further reminded to comply with Regulation 23(1)(a) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states that: "The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report, or, where regulation 21(2) applies, within 106 days of the date of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority – (a) an environmental impact assessment report inclusive of any specialist reports, an EMPr, a closure plan in the case of a closure activity and where the application is a mining application, the plans, report and calculations contemplated in the Financial Provisioning Regulations, which must have been subjected to a public participation process of at least 30 days and which reflects the incorporation of comments received, including any comments of the competent authority".			Following consultation with DFFE, it was confirmed that the final EIA Report is required to be submitted to the Department by 18 September 2026. The final EIA Report will be submitted within the prescribed timeframe.	EAP
276.	Should there be significant changes or new information that has been added to the EIAr or EMPr which changes or information was not contained in the reports or plans consulted on during the initial public participation process, you are required to comply with Regulation 23(1)(b) of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, which states: "The applicant must within 106 days of the acceptance of the scoping report, or, where regulation 21(2) applies, within 106 days of the date of receipt of the application by the competent authority, submit to the competent authority – (b) a notification in writing that the documents contemplated in subregulation 1(a) will be submitted within 156 days of acceptance of the scoping report by the competent authority or where regulation 21(2) applies, within 156 days of receipt of the application by the competent authority, as significant changes have been made or significant new information has been added to the documents, which changes or information was not contained in the original documents consulted on during			The final EIA Report does not contain any significant new information or material changes relative to the version that was made available for public review. In addition, the specialists confirmed that no significant amendments were made to their respective specialist reports following the public review process.	EAP

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	the initial public participation process contemplated in subregulation (1)(a), and that the revised documents contemplated in subregulation 1(a) will be subjected to another public participation process of at least 30 days".				
277.	Should you fail to meet any of the timeframes stipulated in Regulation 23 of the NEMA EIA Regulations, 2014, as amended, your application will lapse.			See response in row no. 275 above.	EAP
278.	You are hereby reminded of Section 24F of the National Environmental Management Act, Act No. 107 of 1998, as amended, that no activity may commence prior to an Environmental Authorisation being granted by the Department.			The Applicant is to adhere to this requirement.	EAP

4.2.2 Comments Raised during Public Meetings

No.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
279.	N. Padayachee requested construction and operational water volumes, indicative timing and milestones so the water utility can plan supply capacity. He also requested evidence that reuse, recycling and water-efficiency measures had been fully considered and that the stated demand includes all processes. He highlighted below-average rainfall expectations and the finite abstraction limits under the applicable Water Use Licence.	N. Padayachee – UUW	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	PDEX Consulting explained that the EIA presents options and uses a conservative worst-case approach, with wet cooling representing the higher-water-demand case. PDEX Consulting noted that water requirements will be finalised during the feasibility study, with additional allowances included so the stated demand is not exceeded.	Technical Team
280.	S. Camminga reiterated the concerns she had raised during the review of the Draft Scoping Report regarding the data obtained by the Air Quality Specialist from the South African Air Quality Information System (SAAQIS). She noted the discrepancies between the RBCAA and SAAQIS datasets.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	uMoya-NILU Consulting indicated that the Atmospheric Impact Report (AIR) will be updated with RBCAA data.	Air Quality Specialist
281.	S. Camminga stated that the use of white lines on the isopleth maps in the AIR made it difficult to distinguish between the impact zones.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	uMoya-NILU Consulting indicated that they would relook at the isopleth maps.	Air Quality Specialist
282.	S. Camminga questioned how the AIR could identify cumulative exceedances under Scenarios 3 and 4 while assigning an overall "medium" significance rating,	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	Nemai Consulting noted that each specialist assessed impacts falling within the scope of their respective discipline and that the Air Quality Impact Assessment provides the	EAP

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	particularly when another specialist report assigned a "high" significance rating.			specialist basis for the assessment of air-quality impacts.	
283.	S. Camminga asked whether the Quantitative Risk Assessment addressed the municipality's capacity to manage emergencies.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	Nemai Consulting indicated that the applicable Major Hazard Installation requirements and detailed emergency-response arrangements would be addressed during the feasibility and detailed-design phases, including obtaining the relevant approvals, where required.	EAP
284.	S. Camminga asked how long the plant could operate on diesel in the event of a disruption to the LNG supply, whether the facility would shut down instead, and what air-quality impacts could arise from extended diesel use, particularly in view of nearby residential areas and prevailing wind conditions.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	PDEX Consulting explained that the black-start generators would be used only in the event of a national-grid failure where no external electricity supply was available to the plant. The generators would operate for a limited number of hours to enable the main generating units to start, after which the turbines would operate on natural gas. The project team considered a disruption to the natural-gas supply unlikely, given the liquid-gas storage available at the terminal and the buffering capacity within the Lily Gas Pipeline. PDEX Consulting further noted that the inclusion of diesel backup was being reconsidered and could be removed from the project design if the proposed gas-supply arrangements were shown to provide sufficient reliability.	Technical Team
				uMoya-NILU Consulting indicated that the AIR will be updated to consider black-start and diesel use.	Air Quality Specialist
285.	F. Schmidt from Richards Bay Alloys raised concerns regarding corrosion risks to pipelines, transmission infrastructure choices, coastal erosion impacts affecting fuel logistics, water use implications of cooling technologies, wastewater disposal constraints, LNG dependency, diesel transport requirements and the need for wetland offsets.	F. Schmidt – Richards Bay Alloys	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	PDEX Consulting indicated that HDPE would be used for underground pipes where practicable, while high-pressure LNG pipeline sections may require other materials and cathodic protection. He noted that the LNG pipeline itself falls outside this project's scope and is subject to a separate assessment. PDEX Consulting explained that major electrical design parameters, including	Technical Team

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				transmission voltage, were driven by grid requirements. PDEX Consulting highlighted the gas storage and buffering capacity available within the broader gas supply system to mitigate short-term supply disruptions.	
				Nemai Consulting indicated that the environmental authorisation issued in 2016 provided for wetland infilling and the clearance of indigenous vegetation associated with the authorised industrial development, and that wetland-offset measures had been undertaken by the RBIDZ. The proposed power plant would not directly encroach on the remaining wetland situated south-west of the site.	EAP
286.	F. Schmidt stated that aquifer abstraction may be prohibited. He also questioned reliance on municipal potable water and sewer systems. He further identified possible raw-water or industrial-effluent alternatives requiring further investigation.	F. Schmidt – Richards Bay Alloys	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	PDEX Consulting indicated that seawater-based wet cooling could potentially be considered in Richards Bay. The final cooling configuration would depend, among other considerations, on whether a suitable and sustainable non-potable water source could be secured. PDEX Consulting indicated that discussions with the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone's water technical personnel were planned and that further engagement with UUW would occur.	Technical Team
287.	S. Camminga noted the reported change in ownership and potential increase to approximately 150 truck movements per day at Richards Bay Alloys.	S. Camminga – RBCAA	Virtual Public Meeting (25/08/26)	Nemai Consulting indicated that the Traffic Impact Assessment considered the cumulative development of the overall RBIDZ Phase 1F area and identified the required intersection and access upgrades. However, that the newly reported traffic volume associated with Richards Bay Alloys might not have been included in the assessment.	EAP
288.	N. Magubane enquired about the cumulative traffic impacts associated with the project.	N. Magubane – SDCEA	Physical Public Meeting (26/08/26)	PDEX Consulting noted that the natural gas is expected to be supplied through a pipeline from the Transnet natural gas terminal to the proposed facility.	Technical Team

No.	COMMENT	RAISED BY	SOURCE & DATE	RESPONSE	RESPONSE BY
				Project-related truck traffic is expected to be minimal.	
289.	N. Magubane noted the presence of the airport in Zinkwazi and enquired about the potential aviation risks associated with the proposed project.	N. Magubane – SDCEA	Physical Public Meeting (26/08/26)	Nemai Consulting explained that the project area already contains a number of existing tall buildings and structures. Based on this existing environment, it was determined that a dedicated Civil Aviation Study was not required.	EAP
290.	N. Magubane expressed concern over the water requirements of the proposed project.	N. Magubane – SDCEA	Physical Public Meeting (26/08/26)	PDEX Consulting explained the water consumption requirements of the proposed project. He noted that an alternative water source such as seawater could be considered in the future.	Technical Team
				Nemai Consulting indicated that the current EIA excludes any activities related to seawater use.	EAP

APPENDIX 1 – COAL-FIRED VS. GAS FIRED GENERATION COMPARISON

This appendix serves to supplement responses pertaining to the comparison of gas-fired generation and coal-fired generation and the GWP20 vs. GWP100 scenarios. Note that this response was prepared by the Project's technical team.

COAL-FIRED VS. GAS FIRED GENERATION COMPARISON

A number of comments, most notably those from the SDCEA, were received regarding the claim that the Mabasa CCGT Power Project would serve to enable the decommissioning of existing coal-fired power stations in South Africa and thereby reduce the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission intensity of South Africa's power generation fleet.

These comments can be summarized by the SDCEA statement that "when including adequately ground-truthed fugitive emissions data for gas leakage, the emissions of gas can exceed in some cases the emissions of coal."

While the statement might possibly be true for some projects, it would require a very unlikely combination of factors to hold, especially for the Mabasa project. It is the Applicant's view that this argument is overstated in the comments received. Furthermore, the comments focus only on the GHG emissions and ignore the many other environmental impacts associated with coal-fired generation, thus presenting an unbalanced view.

Greenhouse gas emissions: gas-fired versus coal-fired generation

The comment that coal-fired generation may, in some circumstances, have lower lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions than gas-fired generation relies principally on the August 2026 report *Emissions from Gas Fired Power in South Africa* by Cohen and Cooper. The report provides a useful assessment of the uncertainty associated with upstream methane emissions from natural gas; however, its findings do not support the broader conclusion that the proposed 750 MW Mabasa CCGT would or could have higher greenhouse gas emissions than the coal-fired generation it is intended to displace.

Direct combustion GHG emissions

The Cohen and Cooper report states that direct gas-combustion emissions are 0.36–0.39 tCO_2e/MWh, but does not provide a comparable figure for coal-fired generation. Typical figures for direct combustion of coal are 0.9 to 1.1 tCO_2e/MWh or higher.

It is the oldest and most inefficient of the South African coal fleet that would be shut down first, and so the coal-fired generation capacity decommissioning enabled by the Mabasa project would likely be at the high end of the range, or possibly even higher.

Being based on the best currently available technology, the direct combustion emissions of the Mabasa project would be between 0.34 and 0.345 tCO_2e/MWh, which is 6 to 12% lower than the figures used by Cohen and Cooper.

Life Cycle GHG Emissions

Cohen and Cooper describe the methodology used to determine the life cycle GHG emissions related to the full value chain for gas-fired generation in great detail. Emissions for GWP100 and GWP20 are reported and low, central and high cases are considered. In contrast, only a single point value for coal-fired generation is provided, and no low, central or high cases are offered. This makes direct comparison between the cases difficult and misleading.

By their own admission, it is only in the Cohen and Copper GWP20 high case that gas-fired generation shows higher GHG emissions than coal-fired generation, as shown in Table 1, sumarising results from the report.

Table 1- Life Cycle GHG emissions, coal- and gas-fired generation, full value chain

Case	Lifecycle GHG emissions (tCO_2e/MWh)
South African coal benchmark	~1.14
Gas – GWP100 Low	0.48–0.57
Gas – GWP100 Central	0.55-0.65
Gas – GWP100 High	0.80–0.94
Gas – GWP20 Low	0.53–0.62
Gas – GWP20 Central	0.75-0.87
Gas – GWP20 High	1.45–1.70

It is the Applicant's view that this analysis presents a skewed view for the following reasons:

- Only one figure is presented for the South African coal benchmark. It is not clear whether this is a GWP20 or GWP100 result, and given that coal mining does emit methane, even after mining operations have ceased, this is a serious omission (literature shows a spread of 5 to 15% between GWP100 and GWP20 for coal);
- No low, central and high case is offered for the South African coal benchmark. Given that it is only the GWP20 high case where gas emissions exceed the single figure provided for coal, comparison is not possible;
- The analysis of low, central and high cases is useful, but the remarkably large discrepancy between the central and high cases must be questioned, especially in the absence of a similar approach to the single coal figure presented.

Furthermore, some of the assumptions applied by Cohen and Cooper cannot be applied to the Mabasa project. An example of this is the countries selected as providing LNG supply to South Africa. Two of the countries selected, have fugitive emissions rates well above those seen in other countries:

- Russia – aging and poorly maintained infrastructure, weak regulation and enforcement;
- USA – significant flaring due to the lack of gas infrastructure in oil-focused shale basins, poorly monitored gathering pipelines in shale basins.

Gas supply for the Mabasa project, and other projects utilizing the ZET facility will likely be sourced from Mozambique, Namibia, Angola or Nigeria, given the closer proximity. In general, production and processing technology in these countries is newer, and therefore built to better standards, than in Russia or the USA and less prone to leaks.

The Cohen and Cooper report states that “Two key factors have the greatest influence over upstream emissions: the quantity of gas sourced from different exporting countries to South Africa, and the emissions profiles of those exporters.” It would appear therefore that the Cohen and Cooper report has used higher production, processing and transport emissions estimates for the two key factors having the greatest influence than would apply to the Mabasa project.

Cohen and Cooper further acknowledge that assuming the emissions factors remain constant throughout the modelling period is an "extreme simplification" and recognise that emissions could decline over time as countries implement methane-reduction measures.

Accordingly, the assertion that gas-fired generation can have higher lifecycle emissions than coal is technically possible, but it is a specific sensitivity case rather than the general conclusion of the report. It is therefore inappropriate to present the GWP20 high case result as demonstrating that the proposed Mabasa project will, or could, result in higher GHG emissions than those from the existing coal-fired fleet.

The appropriate conclusion is therefore that upstream methane emissions introduce uncertainty into the magnitude of the GHG advantage of gas over coal; they do not demonstrate that the proposed Mabasa CCGT has higher lifecycle GHG emissions than the coal-fired generation it may displace. Any conclusion that it does would require project-specific evidence regarding the actual gas source, supply chain, methane leakage rate and operating performance of the proposed plant, rather than relying on the most conservative sensitivity in the Cohen and Cooper study.

Other environmental impacts of coal mines relative to natural gas production

Both coal mining and gas production have impacts beyond GHG emissions and these should be included in any balanced evaluation of the environmental merits of gas-fired generation relative to coal-fired generation.

Lifecycle and operational comparisons consistently show coal plants as more environmentally damaging than gas plants on most metrics (especially air quality, water and solid waste):

- Coal mining results in larger-scale land disturbance and habitat destruction than gas production;
- Coal mining produces vast quantities of solid waste and overburden. Long term erosion and land instability result;
- Acid mine drainage (AMD) and persistent water pollution (including heavy metals) is associated with coal mining. This can contaminate surface and groundwater for decades, even after the discontinuation of mining. Natural gas has risks from produced water, potential spills and oilfield chemicals/fluids, but AMD is a more prevalent and enduring coal issue;
- Coal mining is associated with higher particulate matter, dust, and local air pollution. Blasting, excavation, hauling, and stockpiling generate significant dust and particulates. Spontaneous combustion of coal or waste can add emissions;

- Coal mines emit coalbed methane, and some mines even have to be de-gassed for a period prior to mining. Gas systems also release fugitive methane. Abandoned mines unavoidably continue emitting;
- Coal mining can lead to subsidence and long-term ground stability issues;
- While this is project specific, coal often has high transport impacts when transported by road or rail. Gas also has transport-related impacts, but ships and pipelines are more efficient and less impactful, even when long distances are involved.
- Coal-fired generation results in much higher emissions of air pollutants and toxics such as SO_2, NO_x, mercury, heavy metals and PM. Gas-fired generation emits vastly lower to insignificant or even zero quantities of all of the above.
- Coal-fired generation produces vast volumes of toxic solid waste, including fly ash, bottom ash, and scrubber residues. These wastes contain heavy metals and require disposal in landfills or ponds. Risks include dust, leaching into groundwater and catastrophic pond failures. Gas plants produce minimal solid combustion waste.
- Coal-fired generation requires a larger ground footprint than gas-fired.
