

Communities to hear more about shale gas development

PRETORIA: A team for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on shale gas development will hold briefing sessions with communities in the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape as well as the Western Cape this week.



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The sessions will be conducted as a science-based assessment to improve government's understanding of the risks and opportunities of shale gas development in South Africa.

"The SEA will consider both exploration and production related activities and impacts of shale gas development, including the process of hydraulic fracturing, and will include an assessment of all material social, economic and biophysical risks and opportunities presented," the Department of Environmental Affairs said on Friday, 6 November.

In May, the Department of Environmental Affairs, in partnership with the Departments of Minerals Resources, Science and Technology, Water and Sanitation and Energy commissioned a SEA for shale gas development.

The team is supported by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) and the Council for Geosciences (CGS) along with over 70 of experts from academia, the private sector and non-governmental organisations.

South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) outlines the vision for the country's transition to an environmentally

sustainable, climate change resilient, low carbon inclusive economy.

"As articulated in our National Integrated Resource Plan (NIRP), shale gas together with other energy sources, could form an integral part of this vision if found in sufficient deposits: with its ultimate aim being to support societal transformation, economic growth, energy security and reduced greenhouse gas emissions," the department said.

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