

The pros and cons of drilling 1,5 mln hectares

A REPORT released by SLR Consulting, the independent environmental assessment practitioner for the project, shows the following preliminary issues and potential impacts have been identified and will be investigated as part of the environmental assessment process.

• Farm safety – access by unknown persons to farms has the potential to cause security risks on farms. Operating heavy vehicles and equipment may pose safety risks. Runaway fires may present a potential safety risks for both people and livestock.

• Farm infrastructure – farms roads, gates and fences may be damaged during exploration activity.

• Soil and land capability – activities at the seismic and drill sites may affect soils and land capability if poorly regulated and not rehabilitated.

• Biodiversity – activities at the seismic and drill sites have the potential to disturb and or destroy vegetation, habitat units and related ecosystem functionality, including the disturbance of protected species.

• Surface water – the proposed activities at the seismic and drill sites has the potential to pollute surface water resources through consumptive use and the discharge of contaminants.

• Groundwater – the proposed drilling has the potential to consume and contaminate groundwater resources, which could impact availability to other groundwater users and the ecosystem.

• Air – the proposed project has the potential to contribute to air pollution, particularly through dust emissions from vehicles on gravel roads and the release of gas from boreholes.

• Noise and vibrations – the proposed project has the potential to cause noise pollution during drilling activities. Seismic surveys may cause damage to structures and disturb livestock and wildlife.

• Socio-economic – the project has very limited potential to contribute towards socio-economic impacts, mainly because local people do not have the scarce skills required and migrant labour will have to be imported.

While positive impacts include job creation and stimulation of the local and regional economy, the potential negative socio-economic impacts include potential for increased crime, spread of disease and pressure on support services provision.

The Witness
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