

NEWSLETTER



RISING TIDES AND VOICES: PROTECTING OUR OCEANS AND BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES



HIGHLIGHTS:

#StopTEEPSA

NERSA and Karpowership

Bridges: A People's Initiative

Koeksister: Sustainable Living in SA

Events

The past few months have been pivotal for South African coastal communities' livelihoods and environmental justice. As we continued to encourage eco-justice and promote sustainable development, we have reached several significant milestones. From victories in environmental justice to ongoing legal battles. We remain dedicated to ensuring that communities have a voice in decisions that impact their lives and livelihoods. In this newsletter, we share highlights of some milestones from the year and give you a glimpse into upcoming projects and events.

#StopTEEPSA

In a bid to defend our oceans and to ensure sustainable livelihoods for coastal communities, Green Connection and Natural Justice approached the High Court in March to challenge the decision to grant TotalEnergies Exploration and Production South Africa (TEEPSA) environmental authorisation for exploratory drilling in block 5/6/7, located off the coast between Cape Town and Cape Agulhas.

As a result, Green Connection and Natural Justice received notification that the Minister and



The Green Connection



the Director-General of the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) and the Minister of the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFFE), along with TEEPSA would oppose their joint legal challenge against the decision to grant environmental authorisation for exploratory drilling.

Following court proceedings, DMRE finally provided record of the decision to grant TEEPSA environmental authorization for exploratory drilling in block 5/6/7. Following this, Green Connection and Natural Justice then filed a supplementary founding affidavit (on 11 October), reinforcing their legal challenge against TEEPSA and the government's approval of exploratory oil and gas drilling in Block 5/6/7.

PROTECT MARINE ECOSYSTEMS & LIVELIHOODS

On 10 May of this year, Green Connection and Natural Justice submitted comments, on the revised Environmental Impact Assessment report (EIA) concerning the offshore oil and gas Exploration Right (ER) for Block 3B/4B. The comments were supported by Masifundise Development Trust. Located off the West Coast, this project raises significant concerns regarding its potential risks and negative impacts to some of South Africa's most precious marine ecosystems and the ripple-effect for coastal communities and their livelihoods.



Since then, 11 organisations – *The Green Connection, Environmental Traits, Spirit of Endeavour Fisherfolk Women, Moeggesukkel Visserye Cooperative Ltd, West Coast indigenous Movement, Eastern Cape Environmental Network, Aukwotowa Fisheries Co-Op, Lamberts Bay Fishers Primary Co-Op Limited* – have filed appeals against the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy's approval for this project because it undermines South Africa's climate goals and does not fully account for all its environmental and socio-economic impacts.



NERSA and Karpower

In June, Green Connection returned to court, in efforts to get the National Energy Regulator of South Africa's (NERSA) and DMRE to supply critical information regarding the Karpowerships deals. However, in an interesting turn of events, while government announced intentions to oppose the challenge, the three (3) Karpowerships companies decided to withdraw their opposition and will abide by the court's decision. The application was heard in the Gauteng High Court in Pretoria.

This was a case within a case - the larger legal challenge against NERSA's decision to grant three electricity generation licenses to the Karpowership SA companies to operate powerships in the ports of Saldanha, Ngqura (Coega) and Richards Bay. This was important because we believed that NERSA had granted the license approvals unlawfully.

South Africans can not pay for Eskom's Mistakes

In November, we made oral submissions to NERSA opposing Eskom's proposed 36% hike in electricity prices next year. The proposed hike is simply unaffordable for the majority of South Africans – this system of constantly pouring money into the black hole of Eskom is not in the public's interest.



Image Credit: The Citizen



NERSA will make a decision on the proposed increase in December. Various other organisations and activists have also opposed the possible price increase, calling for a more systematic approach to the power utility's challenges, as opposed to what is in essence, asking the people of South Africa to pay for Eskom's mistakes.

Karpowership 'Dead in the Water'



In October, Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa announced that the contract between the government and Karpowership was "dead in the water", signaling the end of what would have been a costly project, resulting in even higher electricity prices than those currently proposed by Eskom.

Despite this, it was unclear whether government still opposing The Green Connection and Outa's court cases. We will remain vigilant until such time as the original NERSA generation licence and all environmental authorisations granted to Karpowership were formally cancelled or withdrawn. The Green Connection is pleased that the Karpowership debacle has finally been put to rest, from an environmental perspective. However, one unresolved issue remains: the electricity generation license.

Supporting Activists in France

Green Connection supported #StopTEPSA court challenge with Bloom, Santé Planétaire and Nuestro Futuro, against TotalEnergies' board of directors and main shareholders for their contribution to climate change and its fatal impact on human and non-human lives.

TotalEnergies - a carbon major, its board of directors and its main shareholders are being sued for deliberately endangering the lives of others, manslaughter, neglecting to deal with a disaster, and damaging biodiversity. Each offense is punishable by at least one year of imprisonment and a fine.

While the company has not given up on its numerous pursuits, here and elsewhere in the world, the efforts of activists and civil society have arguably slowed down Total's ability to develop its drilling projects.



Images Credit: Bloom



Stop TotalEnergies' Drilling Plans in Deep Water Orange Basin

In another landmark case that highlights the voices of communities facing the frontline impacts of climate change, Aukotowa Fisheries Primary Co-Operative, Green Connection, and Natural Justice (the applicants) have taken their fight to the Western Cape High Court, against Deep Water Orange Basin (DWOB) project located off South Africa's West Coast.

Total Abandons Production Rights in Two Blocks

In July, TotalEnergies announced plans to abandon offshore production right application to exploit an estimated 1 billion barrels of oil equivalent from the Brulpadda and Luiperd gas fields in Block 11B/12B, as well as on block 5/6/7. Block 11B/12B is located off South Africa's south coast and is situated between Mossel Bay and Cape St. Francis.

While these were significant victories for the socioeconomic and environmental rights of coastal communities and the planet, Petroleum Agency South Africa is still looking for another investor, while TotalEnergies will still persist with the litigation.

Opposing Seismic Surveys



In August, small-scale fisherwomen on South Africa's West Coast, supported by Green Connection and Natural Justice, raised their [voices against Searcher – an Australian company](#), now notorious for its contentious attempts to conduct seismic surveys in this region. Small-scale fishers argue that Searcher's operations could harm the ocean, which would then affect fisher livelihoods and the coastal way of life, and the eco-justice NGOs agree. In our comments on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Basic Assessment Report (BAR), submitted on 26 July, several alarms are raised, once again, about the potentially devastating impacts of these operations on the marine environment and local inhabitants.



Although Searcher began its seismic survey in January 2024, it was unable to complete it before winter. Searcher now wishes to recommence with this survey in early 2025, however their reconnaissance permit is set to expire on 10 November 2024. This means that Searcher now has to apply for a new environmental authorisation to survey the same area to continue early next year. As a result, Green Connection and Natural Justice have submitted an [appeal against](#) environmental authorization granted to Searcher, off the west coast of South Africa.



This year, The Green Connection also welcomed the Constitutional Court's dismissal of Shell and Impact Africa's leave to appeal regarding their exploration rights off the Wild Coast. This was a significant victory for the communities on the Wild Coast and for all South Africans who value environmental and climate justice. However, the Supreme Court of Appeal's (SCA) suspension of the High Court's order remains [deeply troubling](#). Not only does it allow the Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources to consider renewing an invalid right, thereby undermining the communities' hard-won protections, but it also sets a dangerous precedent.

In a separate matter, Shell Offshore Upstream South Africa B.V. and its joint venture partners are seeking environmental authorisation from the government before they can operate in the Northern Cape Ultra Deep Block (NCUD) in the Orange Basin. To begin their activities, Shell and its partners must conduct an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for their proposed activities.

The ESIA consists of two phases, the Scoping Phase and Impact Assessment Phase. SLR Consulting has been chosen as the Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) to conduct the ESIA.

The ESIA is currently in the Scoping Phase. The Draft Scoping Report is available for public comment and The Green Connection and Natural Justice will be submitting comments on this on **13 December 2024**. If Environmental Authorisation is granted, the drilling activities are planned to begin in 2026 or 2027.



The project's aim is to:

- inform and empower civil society organisations and new entrants to parliament so that these new MPs may fulfil their constitutional mandate by meaningfully participating in the parliamentary process – holding the executive to account, addressing wasteful expenditure, and linking the broader electorate to parliamentary processes – and;
- strengthen the links between parliamentarians and civil society and progressive business, to enable the sharing of practical experience of solutions to our most pressing problems.



Bridges: Taking Parliament to the People

[Africa Centre](#) and Green Connection launched the [Bridges project](#), to encourage a link between civil society organizations with members of parliament, to strengthen democratic governance.



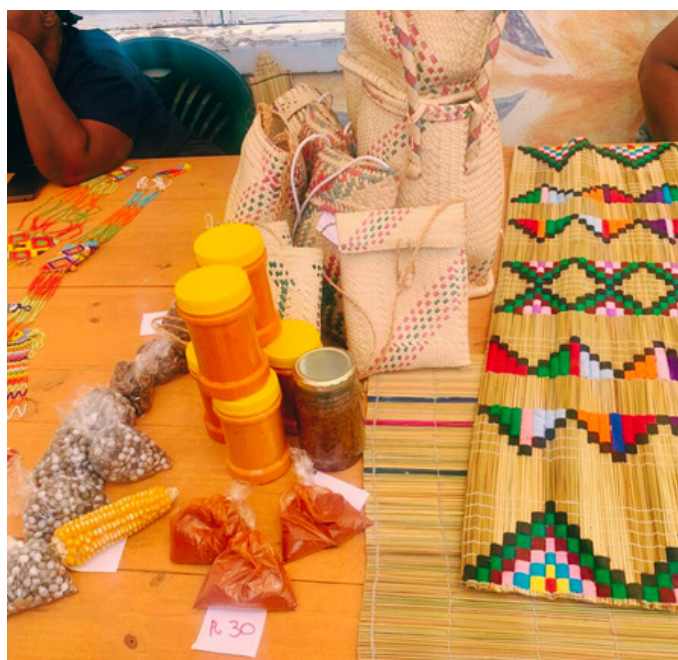
The first engagement was held on 25 March 2024. The second engagement was held online on 8 May 2024. It was hosted by Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA), in collaboration with Green Connection, the Africa Centre, PMG and OpenUp. It served as a platform for comprehensive discussions aimed at enhancing parliamentary oversight and accountability.

The third and final event for 2024, was held in October with activists, small-scale fishers, civil society organisations, as well as contributors from parliament. This final leg focused on preparing for and understanding the Budgetary Review and Recommendations Reports (BRRRs), which are a critical part of Parliament's engagement with the budget, compiled by Committees each October for every government function. We are excited for what this project will grow into in the new year as we also try to build our own relationship with Parliament and government.



Koeksister Project

The Koeksister Project, a community-led initiative, continues its work in the Western Cape, focusing on information sharing, fostering sustainable livelihoods and encouraging eco-justice. In Saldanha Bay area, the MAAKSAAK community is thriving off projects they developed. Our Economics Officer, Khetha Buthelezi who recently joined the Koeksister team, will be working closely with communities to promote resilience and prosperity for communities with an interest in using koeksister concepts for economic wellbeing and sustainable living.



Legacy Programme



Green Connection Legacy Programme 2023 Award Ceremony was held in June this year, awarding legacy activists for acquiring eco-justice advocacy skills and advocating to protect their communities and the environment against offshore oil and gas projects. Environmental Goldman Prize winner Sinegugu Zukulu, who was the guest speaker shared wise words of wisdom to uplift, motivate and inspire legacy activists.

Climate protest, during Human Rights Day, to call for systematic change towards just energy transition along with **Don't Gas Africa.**



Green Connection joined PlettOcean Festival, engaging with ocean defenders, researchers and the community. Sharing information and ideas to observe, conserve and preserve the ocean.



GC Out and About

Our Outreach team have had quite a busy year, visiting communities along the coast for oil and gas discussions, seismic survey updates, and solidarity discussions among other events.



Port Nolloth oil and gas/green hydrogen meeting. The Aukotowa fishers who is now part of the GC DWOB court action were in attendance.



Port Nolloth interactions with GC and Wild Trust. Representatives from Environmental Traits, Aukotuwa Fisher were present. GC also visited their food garden.



Oil and gas update with fishers. A seismic survey vessel was noticed and the fishers were extremely concerned.



Lambert's Bay community meeting where IEP, oil and gas update, DWOB discussions, mobilisation, as well as Koeksister training took place.



Green Connection, in collaboration with SboNdaba Dance worked on a performance to express, through dance, the urgent need to address environmental issues that are affecting our oceans. Sharing information about the risks of off-shore oil and gas drilling, Karpowerships and plastic pollution. Encouraging people to stand up for their environmental rights and live more sustainably. The performance took place at Waterfront amphitheatre.



In October, Green Connection and Extinction Rebellion Cape Town staged a peaceful protest outside the Cape Town International Convention Center as they hosted Africa Oil Week, calling on African Leaders to move away from the fossil fuel industry and invest in sustainable practices for a just energy transition.





As African Energy Week talks were underway in November, The Green Connection, along with [Project90by2030](#), [Extinction Rebellion](#) Cape Town & [GreenPeace Africa](#) took a stand against fossil fuels, using activism to call on people-centered energy solutions. Dance group [SboNdaba Dance](#) shared a powerful performance outside the Cape Town International Convention Center.

**TO PROTECT OUR OCEANS
AGAINST OFFSHORE
OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION,
SIGN THE [PETITION](#).**



Looking Ahead...

We continue to work alongside communities, advocating for environmental governance, sustainable development and protection of the ocean against offshore oil and gas exploration. With ongoing projects and new challenges ahead, we invite you to join us in making a difference. Together, we can ensure a safer, cleaner, and more sustainable environment for everyone. For more information on our work, and to learn more about the [Who Stole Our Oceans](#) campaign, visit our [website](#). Until next year, the GC team wishes you a happy holiday!

