

Operation Phakisa Initiative B3 - The Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Research Collaboration Project.

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Abstract

The Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Research Collaboration Project is a project to implement Operation Phakisa's Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration Initiative B3: Exploiting the broader research opportunities presented by offshore oil and gas exploration.

The overall objective of the project is to support the inclusive process of development of the South African Marine Research and Exploration Forum (SAMREF). SAMREF will be a multi-sector forum, inclusive of public and private sectors that would:

- Identify and take advantage of opportunities provided by oil and gas exploration activities and platforms, to gather important marine ecosystem data (e.g. wave, wind, ocean current, temperature and salinity gradients) which would otherwise be difficult and expensive to obtain.
- Facilitate new collaborative offshore studies that would increase South Africa's state of knowledge of the offshore marine environment, related to renewable energy potential, marine biodiversity and ecology, climate change and ecosystem functioning.
- Go some way towards mitigating the policy conflict between developing the oil and gas sector and the development of a low-carbon economy.

The Offshore Oil and Gas Environmental Research Collaboration Project is being managed by a project management team that currently includes DST, NRF and SAEON. This team reports to a Working Group consisting of various other government departments and the private sector. Project objectives are the following:

Objective A – The Effective management and stakeholder engagement objective

Objective B – The informed decision-making objective

Objective C – The stakeholder agreements and project launch objective

Objective D – The on-going opportunity exploitation objective