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SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023

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NATIONAL

GENERAL

2022/23 NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT REPORT PUBLISHED – The annual National Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Report (NECER), was released by the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment on 12 December 2023. The NECER showcases the successes and challenges experienced by the Environmental Management Inspectorate, known as the Green Scorpions. The NECER highlighted the increase in public awareness of green, brown and blue crimes in South Africa. The 2022/23 financial year saw a 52% rise in the number of complaints reported through various channels to the national, provincial and municipal departments, as well as to state-owned entities. The majority of these complaints relate to illegal dumping, waste, water pollution and poaching incidents. There was a fluctuation in the reporting of certain types of incidents e.g., the number of reports on poaching increased to 387, followed by a significant increase in illegal dumping and waste complaints from 46 to 146, and reports of contraventions relating to water pollution from 51 to 155 in 2022/23. Additionally, the NECER shows positive conviction results with a 55% increase in successful convictions from 58 to 91. Furthermore, more severe sentences are being handed down for environmental crimes, such as sentences of 63 years imprisonment without the option of a fine for a rhino poaching-related case, and a R10 -million fine handed down to a municipality for pollution and waste offences. The NECER revealed a 6% decrease in the overall number of environmental management inspectors nationally, although there was an increase of 6%, to 130, in the number of field rangers who protect the natural resources in the country's network of protected areas. Additionally, the

number of proactive inspections increased by 61% in the past financial year to 3 226, while the number of reactive inspections decreased by 45% to 1 084. The NECER also reported that, in the 2022/23 financial year, a total of 4 128 inspection reports were finalised, which is an 11% increase on the previous reporting period.

[Source: DFFE dated 12 December 2023](#)

ACTIVISTS RUSH TO APPEAL AGAINST APPLICATIONS FOR OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS IN SA – On 23 November, the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE) approved UK-based company CGG to conduct a seismic survey in the Algoa/Outeniqua Basin. Appeals against this approval were due on 13 December 2023. CCG wants to conduct a speculative 3D seismic survey from January 2024, which will last every day for five months, across 12,000km² through migratory whale routes between Gqeberha in the Eastern Cape and Plettenberg Bay in the Western Cape. Civil society organisations, Natural Justice and the Green Connection are funding the appeal against the DMRE's approval. Along with submitting appeals against GGC, Liz McDaid, strategic lead of the Green Connection, said the coastal communities and other civil society organisations have filed appeals against Searcher Geodata, TotalEnergies, and Karpowership, who have all received authorisation from government in recent months. Searcher is set to start a seismic survey about 220km off the West Coast. Previous appeals against Searcher were dismissed by the Environmental Minister and now a notice has been sent with information that Searcher intends to start surveying from 1 January 2024. Appeals were dismissed against TotalEnergies' application to drill for oil and gas which covers about 10,000km² offshore between Cape Town and Cape Agulhas. Those pushing the appeal are currently awaiting legal advice on the way forward as they can only apply to have the decision judicially reviewed within 180 days from when the appeal decision was handed down by the Environmental Minister (i.e. 24 September 2023). The appeal date for the controversial Karpowership application in Saldanha was scheduled to close on 14 December 2023. The Green Connection is also submitting an appeal. McDaid said they are awaiting the outcome of their appeal against Karpowership's application in Richards Bay.

[Source: Daily Maverick dated 12 December 2023](#)

2023 BLUE DROP REPORT HIGHLIGHTS FAILING STATE OF SA'S WATER QUALITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE – The 2023 Blue Drop Report (the Report) published by the Department of Water and Sanitation on 5 December 2023 provides a grim view of the quality of the country's drinking water and its water infrastructure. The Report is meant to ensure that water service authorities are held accountable for providing safe drinking water. According to SA water expert Anja du Plessis, the Report found that the quality of the country's drinkable water is getting worse. Nearly half (46%) of all water supply systems pose acute human health risks because of bacteria or other pathogens in the drinking water supply. The Report also found that more than two thirds (67.6%) of all wastewater treatment works are close to failure. On top of this it showed that over 47% of all clean and treated water was lost through leaks, or could not be accounted for. The national Blue Drop Risk Rating is an assessment focused on critical risk areas within water services. It looks at water supply systems at a specific moment in time. The Report showed that the overall risk had dropped from 52.3% in 2022 to 47.15% in 2023 after some water supply systems made improvements and improved their risk category from critical or high to medium or low risk. In order to achieve Blue Drop certification, water supply systems must meet 95% of the criteria for delivering clean, drinkable water but only 26 of South Africa's 958 water supply systems achieved certification. Another problem the report highlighted was that more than half of the country's municipalities (57%) do not notify water users when they discover that the water has been contaminated. Water plants generally lack technical and management capacity and competency and the Blue Drop report showed that water supply systems across the country need an additional 400 qualified people - 203 technical staff and 197 scientists. It also found that about 67% of water treatment works staff had no training at all over the audited period. Monitoring of water quality is also lacking. There can be no informed management practices if water supply system managers do not know the status of their water. Du Plessis also noted the poor drinking water quality, lack of monitoring and unaccountability needs to receive immediate attention because of the human health risks involved. "We cannot afford another tragic case such as Hammanskraal in Gauteng, where 31 people died of cholera earlier in May 2023, after drinking contaminated municipal water" said du Plessis.

[Source: The Conversation dated 7 December 2023](#)

INTERNATIONAL

GENERAL

COP28 CONCLUDES WITH NON-NEGOTIABLE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS BUT NO FORMAL AGREEMENTS MADE – The 28th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28), which took place from 30 November - 12 December 2023 in Dubai, resulted in several successes on the road to curb global emissions and reach the goal of restricting global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial temperatures. Most notable was the landmark agreement to support vulnerable nations facing the worst of climate change's impacts. These can include: the development of national response plans; addressing insufficient climate information and data, and promoting equitable, safe and dignified human mobility in the form of displacement, relocation, and migration, in cases of temporary and permanent loss and damage. More than 120 countries pledged to triple the world's renewable-energy generation capacity by 2030. This commitment would provide a large step forward, in part because it focuses on near-term action rather than long-term hope. Additionally, progress was made on the new collective quantified goal (NCQG), which builds on the \$100 billion pledged by developed nations to finance climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives in developing nations. Continuing a theme from COP27, COP28 saw emphasis put on supporting strategies for adapting to the impacts of climate change. The final text retains calls for a doubling in adaptation finance and plans for assessments and monitoring of adaptation needs in the coming years. The Global Stocktake was the most scrutinized text at COP28. After major pushback on the watered-down language on emissions and fossil fuels, the final text saw a few improvements. It mentions the projection of peak global emissions between 2020-2025. The final text more strongly calls on nations to take a variety of actions to reduce emissions. It also stated the intention of accelerating and substantially reducing non-CO₂ emissions globally, including in particular, methane emissions by 2030. Another closely watched area in Dubai was on carbon markets. Carbon markets are systems where countries or entities can buy and sell carbon credits, representing a reduction of greenhouse gases, to meet their climate targets. These markets can encourage cost-effective emissions reductions by providing financial incentives for emission-reducing projects. However, these markets have also been plagued by credibility concerns. Negotiators were trying to further define how credit markets would be supervised and how different types of credits would be accounted for. No agreement was reached, therefore key questions related to the permanence of the reductions/removals claimed will need to be addressed at COP29. Underpinning many of the above pledges is the 2015 Paris Climate agreement to transition away from global use of fossil fuels as rapidly as possible. However, COP28 struggled to secure an agreement on a clear and reliable fossil-fuel transitional strategy.

[Source: Forbes dated 13 December 2023](#) and [Earth Negotiations Bulletin: Summary report dated 30 November – 13 December 2023](#)

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For more information contact admin@imbewu.co.za or visit <https://imbewu.co.za/she-electronic-legal-registers/>

World Wildlife Conservation Day – 4 December 2023:

<https://nationaltoday.com/world-wildlife-conservation-day/#:~:text=World%20Wildlife%20Conservation%20Day%20is,Catfish%3F>

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