

# **REGULATORY FRAMEWORK CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORISATION APPLICATIONS FOR ONSHORE O&G DEVELOPMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

South Africa has developed a regulatory framework for the purposes of ensuring sound environmental management such that the environment is protected, for the benefit of present and future generations. The approach has been to establish an integrated framework of laws under the National Environmental Management Act, commonly referred to as NEMA, covering the various environmental resources. The integration culminated in the 'One Environmental System' which was implemented in December 2014.

The current reality of the regulatory framework for environmental matters is more akin to a complex web than the one-stop-shop that was (is) envisioned. Amongst these laws, and the authorities that administer them, there is significant duplication of effort, inconsistency and inaccuracy, uncertainty and even direct conflict. The National Department of Environmental Affairs has recognised this and is commencing with a Rationalisation and Harmonisation project to resurrect the One Environmental System.

SLR has, over the past decade, been involved with applications for environmental authorisation of O&G projects for a range of clients. Our role has mostly been as the independent environmental assessment practitioner as mandated in the EIA Regulations. In advising clients, interacting with authorities and engaging with I&APs during these processes we have learnt a number of lessons. I will share some of the challenges and lessons learnt.