

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES

NO. 804

24 JULY 2020

CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT ANTARCTIC AND SOUTHERN OCEAN STRATEGY

I, Barbara Dallas Creecy, the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment hereby publish the draft Antarctic and Southern Ocean Strategy for public comment.

The Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has embarked on a process of developing the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Strategy (ASOS), a policy under the auspices of the Antarctic Treaties Act, 1996 (Act No. 60 of 1996). The process commenced in 2017/2018 where the draft ASOS was prepared in consultation with relevant stakeholders guided by the Project Steering Committee constituted by officials from the then Departments of Environmental Affairs; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Science and Technology; and International Relations and Cooperation.

The draft ASOS outlines South Africa's strategic national interests, articulates a national vision for our engagement in Antarctica and the Southern Oceans, and describes specific national strategic objectives. Some of these strategic objectives include:

- 1) Custodial responsibility to ensure the Treaty is functional;
- 2) Optimise use of our geographic positioning and proximity to Antarctica to serve as a vibrant Antarctic sector that serves economic interests, scientific endeavour and environmental management;
- 3) Antarctica and the Southern Ocean play a definitive role in the weather and climate patterns world-wide, and South Africa is well positioned to play a leading role in Southern Ocean and Antarctic science; and
- 4) Antarctica and the Southern Ocean are special outdoor laboratories that are used to study and understand natural processes and present opportunities to study / research a number of pressing questions in the field of health, agriculture (extremophiles), oceanographic, drought (i.e. glaciology) and geological sciences.

The draft ASOS is available online at

https://www.environment.gov.za/legislations/gazetted_notices/draftantarcticasouthern_oceanstrategy.

Copies of the draft strategy can also be obtained via email by sending an email request to mdopolo@environment.gov.za.

Any person who wishes to submit representations or comments in connection with the draft strategy is invited to do so within 60 calendar days of the publication of this notice. Comments received after this time may not be considered. All representations and comments must be submitted in writing to the Deputy Director-General of the national Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, Branch: Oceans and Coasts:

By hand: The Deputy Director-General

Attention: Mr Mbulelo Dopolu

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and Fisheries

Branch: Oceans & Coasts

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