

Republic of Namibia
National Assembly

BUDGET MOTIVATION STATEMENT

Vote 38: Water And Marine Resources

BY

Honourable Ruthy Masake

Deputy Minister Of Agriculture,
Fisheries, Water And Land Reform

09 April 2026



HER
EXCELLENCY
(H.E) DR.

*Netumbo
Nandi-Ndaitwah*

**Agriculture is the
cornerstone of Namibia's
food security and prosperity.**

Honourable Chairperson of the Whole House Committee,
Honourable Members,

INTRODUCTION

1. It is my honour to present and motivate the budget allocation for **Vote 38: Water and Marine Resources for the Financial Year 2026/27** as delegated by the Honourable Minister. I am motivating a total allocation of One Billion and **Twenty-Seven Million Namibia Dollars (N\$1,027,000,000)** a strategic investment to strengthen water security, ensure sustainable management of our marine and fisheries resources, and expand livelihoods across all Namibia's communities.

2. Water and fisheries are the lifeblood of our people and the foundation of Namibia's long-term resilience. Water sustains households, fuels agriculture, underpins mining and industry, and protects public health. Fisheries and marine resources provide nutrition, employment, income, and vital foreign exchange earnings. The sustainable management of these resources is central to achieving the NDP6 targets on economic growth, poverty eradication, and environmental sustainability, as well as to delivering on the Sustainable Development Goal's commitment to universal access to safe water and a thriving Blue Economy.

SECTORAL CONTEXT

3. Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, making water our most critical and most contested national asset. Rapid urbanisation, expanding mining and agriculture, and the escalating impacts of climate change are placing unprecedented pressure on finite water resources.

4. Despite significant infrastructure investment, access to safe water in many rural communities remains a challenge, and open defecation remains at 39.4% of rural households, a public health crisis that demands urgent and sustained action.

5. Our marine resources, managed within Namibia's 1,500 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), represent one of the most productive fishing grounds in the world. Since independence, Namibia has built a globally recognised framework for sustainable fisheries management. Maintaining this reputation, and expanding the economic returns to all Namibians, requires rigorous science, transparent governance, and bold structural reforms. The 2026/27 budget seeks to advance all of these priorities.



Ministry's Drill Rig, Hon. Minister Inge I. Zaamwani during Fish Factory visit

**Honourable Chairperson,
Honourable Members**

Allow me to highlight key achievements under this Vote for the 2025/2026 Financial Year.

Integrated Water Resources Management

6. I am pleased to report that water quality laboratories in Windhoek and Katima Mulilo were upgraded, strengthening national capacity for water quality monitoring and public health protection. Real-time Data Collection Platforms were installed across major river systems, enhancing flood early warning capability. Water quality monitoring and compliance inspections were conducted across all 14 regions, covering key river systems including the Kavango, Zambezi, and Orange River.

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Infrastructure

7. Access to water services in rural areas improved through accelerated nationwide interventions such as drilling of 94 boreholes, installation of 137 boreholes, rehabilitation of 51 boreholes, construction of 55 water supply pipelines and connection of 2,886 private offtake points. Three rural water supply schemes were commissioned: Ozondati-Omatjete (Erongo), Onamatanga (Omusati), and Ohamaremba-Okangwati (Kunene).

8. Through NamWater, the Ministry continues to scale up strategic bulk water infrastructure investments across the country to strengthen national water security, supported by loans from KfW and the African Development Bank. In

November 2025, Her Excellency, the President inaugurated the Ohangwena II Wellfield. This is a transformative project which is designed to ensure reliable and sustainable water supply to communities in the region.

9. On sanitation, 1,676 sanitation facilities were constructed for vulnerable rural households, 90 villages were sensitised on Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS), and 181 Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Awareness Campaigns were conducted. The rate of rural households with access to sanitation has improved although more need to be done to eradicate open defecation.

Marine Fisheries Research and Sustainability

10. All planned marine surveys and stock assessments were conducted during the 2025/26 financial year, providing the scientific data required to determine Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for all commercially exploited species. Similarly, Namibia maintained its Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification, first obtained in 2020 and audited in 2024/25, affirming our standing as a global leader in responsible fisheries management. This MSC certification is critical for Namibia's value-added fishery products to continue accessing export markets.

Fisheries Policy and Blue Economy

11. The development of the Blue Economy Policy was finalised, providing a comprehensive framework for sustainably maximising economic returns from Namibia's marine resources while ensuring equitable distribution of marine wealth. The Policy's official launch is scheduled for the first quarter of this financial year. The Ministry has also finalised the development of a comprehensive Scorecard to evaluate the performance of right holders. This tool will guide the determination of fishing quota allocations and is grounded in the provisions of the Marine Resources Act, 2000.

Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries

12. Namibia's aquaculture sector produced approximately 700 metric tons of fish in 2025, employing 509 people across marine and freshwater subsectors. Private investment interest is strong, particularly in seaweed, Atlantic salmon, and abalone projects in Lüderitz. Inland fisheries landings were estimated at 3,000 metric tons with a value of N\$240 million, supporting over 280,000 riparian community members and fish traders along major river systems. Five community fisheries reserves were submitted for gazetting in



the Zambezi and Kavango regions to strengthen sustainable management by communities.

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND KEY PROGRAMMES 2026/27

13. The total allocation for Vote 38 for this financial year amounts to N\$1,027,000,000 (N\$650,580,000 is for Water and N\$376,420,000 is for Fisheries), which represents a reduction of 12% year on year. This allocation will be invested across six strategic programme areas, aligned directly to NDP6 goals on water security, sustainable resource management, economic diversification, and inclusive growth.

Integrated Water Resources Management - N\$78,722,000

14. This allocation will fund groundwater assessments, modernisation of hydrological monitoring infrastructure, and digitalisation of water licensing systems. The Ministry will operationalise the Water Regulator of Namibia and a Water Tribunal, crucial institutions for the full implementation of the Water Resources Management Act, 2013, and for ensuring equitable and efficient water use across all sectors. The Water Pricing Policy is also being finalised to promote affordable and sustainable water service delivery.

15. Given that Namibia shares all her perennial rivers with neighbouring countries, transboundary water governance and cooperation will be strengthened through active engagement in River Basin Organisations (RBOs).

Integrated Bulk Water Infrastructure Development - N\$355,963,000

16. This is the largest programme under Vote 38, reflecting the Government's unwavering commitment to water security for every Namibian, in addition to investments from AfDB and KfW loans. Implementation of the following transformative projects is at an advanced stage in collaboration with Namwater:

- The Oshakati Water Purification Plant Expansion will double capacity, securing water supply across Oshana, Ohangwena, and Oshikoto regions;
- The Rundu Water Treatment Plant Extension will be fully operational in September 2026, providing water to communities within a 100-km radius in both Kavango regions;
- The Olushandja Water Purification Plant, and the Outapi replacement plant will together resolve longstanding supply challenges in the western parts of the region;
- The Omundaungilo-Omutsegwonime pipeline will bring relief to eastern Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions;
- A planned seawater desalination plant north of Swakopmund (NamWater-Swakop Uranium Joint Venture) will enhance water security supply to coastal towns and industries; and
- The construction of Rural Water Supply Schemes: litapa - Okeeholongo Rural Water Supply Scheme, King Kauluma - Omutsegonime, Katima-Ngoma Rural Water Supply Scheme among others.

Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - N\$215,895,000

17. For decentralised rural water supply, the Ministry will drill 27 boreholes, install 33 boreholes, modernise 9 traditional wells, construct 8 small-scale desalination plants, build 18 new earth dams across regions, rehabilitate and/or develop water infrastructure on resettlement farms.

18. An amount of N\$21,261,000 is allocated for construction of sanitation facilities to reduce open defecation and improve public health thereby contributing directly to NDP6 targets on universal access to water and sanitation.

Marine and Inland, Monitoring, Control and Surveillance - N\$ 104 499 000

19. Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, is a threat to the sustainability of our sector. This Vote will therefore strengthen its enforcement mechanism to combat illegal fishing in our maritime boundaries especially on

our northern border. To this end, the Ministry will undertake joint patrols with other stakeholders, including the Ministry of Defence and NamPol. In addition, the Ministry will soon table the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Fisheries Agreement in this August House for Namibia to ratify so that we can enhance our efforts to combat IUU fishing.

Survey and Stock Assessment Programme - N\$81,162,000

20. This programme is the scientific cornerstone of Namibia's world-class fisheries governance, contributing to the NDP6 goal of a productive and sustainable Blue Economy. This allocation funds ongoing scientific surveys and stock assessments across the Exclusive Economic Zone, providing the evidence base for TAC determinations and conservation measures. Namibia will continue to uphold its Marine Stewardship Council certification, protecting both marine ecosystems and our access to premium international markets. Renovation of the National Marine Aquarium in Swakopmund will continue.

Fisheries Policy, Planning and Economic Advice Programme - N\$15,684,000

21. This programme will oversee the implementation of the fishing rights performance Scorecard and the variation of 163 fishing rights, ensuring that rights holders who have delivered are rewarded and underperformers are held accountable. The National Fisheries and Aquaculture Indaba, planned for July/August 2026, will advance broader sector reforms and strengthen the economic governance of Namibia's fisheries. The Ministry will also develop an economy-wide modelling framework to quantify the sector's full contribution to GDP.

22. The Ministry is developing a phased strategy to transition the Government Employment Redress Programme (GERP) toward permanent, productive employment in the fisheries value chain, both at sea and in onshore processing. Government will not sustain compensation without corresponding labour. Our focus is dignified, meaningful work for all beneficiaries.

Promotion of Aquaculture Development and Management of Inland Fisheries - N\$82,310,000

23. This allocation will fund hatchery renovation, production pond infrastructure, fingerling and feed provision to fish farmers, extension and advisory services, and research into climate-resilient aquaculture techniques. Public-private partnerships will be promoted to build a commercially viable aquaculture sector capable of contributing to export earnings. Five community

fisheries reserves will be gazetted to empower river communities as stewards of inland fish stocks, an innovation that aligns community livelihoods with sustainable resource management and contributes to NDP6 rural income and food security goals.

Coordination and Support Services - N\$92,765,000

24. Effective service delivery requires sound institutions. This allocation supports financial management, human resource development, ICT systems, and institutional capacity building. It enables evidence-based decision-making, improved audit outcomes, and responsive governance to underpin all programmes under Vote 38.

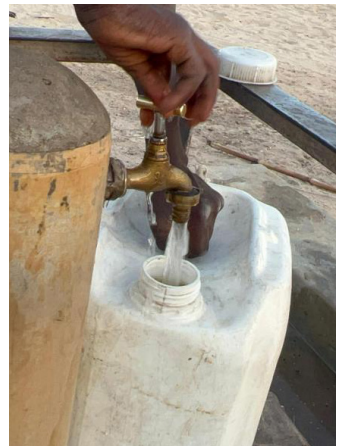
**Honourable Chairperson,
Honourable Members,**

25. As I conclude, the budget allocation for Vote 38 represents targeted investment in Namibia's most vital natural resources, our water and our seas. From the Orange River to Kunene River where they join the majestic Atlantic Ocean, from the Kavango River to the mighty Zambezi River, from village boreholes in Vaalgras to Katjinakatji, from Aminius to Daures, to a world-class desalination plant, this budget is about securing the future of every Namibian.

26. The NDP6 envisions a Namibia where every citizen has access to safe water, where our fisheries sustain both ecosystems and livelihoods, and where the Blue Economy generates wealth for all. The allocations under Vote 38 are designed precisely to make that vision a reality, programme by programme, community by community.

27. I call on this August House to endorse this budget of One Billion and Twenty-Seven Million Namibia Dollars (N\$1,027,000,000) for Vote 38: Water and Marine Resources for the Financial Year 2026/27 to enable us to continue to build a water-secure, fisheries-rich, and prosperous Namibia for all our people.

I thank you for your attention.











**Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries,
Water and Land Reform**