

Online Workshops Complete & Misinformation Continues to Circulate

Namibian Marine Phosphate (Pty) Limited (“NMP”)’s Online Information Workshops, which form part of the Job Registration Drive, were completed in April/May 2021 and were well attended. The information provided at the workshops appears to have been well received, with many Registrants expressing positive feedback in addition to requesting ongoing updates as the project progresses. NMP is still planning to conduct the In-Person Information Workshops, which are currently on hold due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Court Proceedings Update

The handing down of the Judgement in the application launched by the Confederation of Namibian Fishing Associations (and 3 other parties), challenging the legitimacy of NMP’s Mining Licence (“ML170”), has been postponed by Order of the Court to 16th June 2021.

Misinformation Continues to Circulate about Namibia’s potential Phosphate-based Industry

Misinformation continues to circulate despite authenticated information on the environmental impacts and socio-economic benefits of a Phosphate-based industry having been made available in the public domain by NMP and the Namibian Chamber of Mines (“Chamber”). On 18th May 2021, the Chamber issued a [media release](#) addressing the “factually inaccurate and grossly misleading” statements, about phosphate and seabed mining, made by the Confederation of Namibian Fishing Associations (“CNFA”) and Swakopmund Matters (“SM”).

With ongoing public interest ahead of the pending judgment on 16th June 2021, it is important to clarify misleading statements. Some points drawn from the Chamber’s media release and other sources:

1. Inaccurate and Misleading Pictures used in the Media

Featured on the cover of The Namibian’s [Spotlight Supplement](#) (26th March 2021) (“Supplement”), Fig 1 is ***blatantly inaccurate and misleading***. The accurate method is shown in Fig 2 of the Fixed Pipeline that will be used for slurry discharge by the proposed phosphate projects (source: Jan De Nul).



Fig 1: Misleading



Fig 2: Factual Image

In 2006, Namdeb’s Marine Diamond operations used this same method (fixed and/or floating sealed pipelines) (Fig. 2) for slurry discharge from the dredger to shore-based processing facilities at the Oranjemund Mine.

2. Incorrect Claims that Namibia’s Current Seabed Mining Industries Lack Adequate Regulation

In the same Spotlight Supplement, the CNFA states that “a legal framework for seabed mining is necessary but non-existent. Self-regulation by an industry does not work.”

This is factually inaccurate as the Namibian Minerals (Exploration and Mining) Act 1992 effectively regulates Namibia’s terrestrial and seabed mining industry; and, under their purview, the Diamond **seabed mining** industry has successfully operated for around 20 years, becoming a cornerstone of the Namibian economy.

3. Unfounded Claims about Seabed Recovery

The CNFA also states in the Spotlight supplement that “it is universally accepted that the type of damage caused by seabed mining is unlikely to recover for decades if not centuries.”

This is also misleading. Evidence from an independent 2008 [BCMLE study](#) on the cumulative impacts of the effects of Marine Diamond Mining, from repeated monitoring studies over a 10-year period, shows that the seabed ***does recover*** within a period of 2 - 15 years after seabed mining.

4. Unsubstantiated Allegations that More Thorough EIAs and Verification Studies are Required

In the Spotlight Supplement and in [The Namibian's 5th May 2021 article](#), both the CNFA and SM alleged that more thorough Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) and verification studies on marine phosphate mining are required as they currently do not address many of the key issues that the fishing industry has raised.

The Chamber notes that: “These assertions are factually incorrect and misleading. Namibia’s Environmental Management Act (2007) requires all mining and exploration projects to carry out a thorough EIA. Furthermore, Namibian Marine Phosphate (“NMP”)’s Environmental impact studies are publicly available and considered by experts in the Benguela marine system to be ‘one of the most extensive EIAs ever undertaken in Namibia.’ Also, the fishing industry has been part of the entire EIA process as a registered stakeholder.”

5. NMP Extends an Invitation to NGOs to Address their Concerns

Once again, environmental lobby groups have made numerous allegations that are procedurally incorrect and scientifically unsubstantiated in both the [Spotlight Supplement](#) and [The Namibian's 5th May 2021](#) article.

NMP welcomes an open dialogue with NGO groups regarding any concerns they have and, in the interim, direct them to NMP’s extensive environmental studies that have been made available to the public through the office of the Environmental Commissioner at the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism.

The graphic below outlines the steps required for NMP to reach the production stage:



Factual Information about the Marine Phosphate Industry to Note:

Independent scientists and specialists have concluded that at the proposed scale of operations:

- NMP’s Sandpiper Marine Phosphate Project (“**Sandpiper Project**”) will have no significant impact on the marine environment,
- marine-based industries can co-exist (i.e. fishing, diamonds, and phosphate), and
- phosphate mining will not kill the fishing industry.

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NMP Management

More information is available at NMP’s [website](#) and [Facebook](#)

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