



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

20 May 2026

Namibia Secures Landmark N\$1-Billion Sustainable Conservation Funding Deal

Windhoek - The Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Right Honourable Dr Tjitunga Elijah Ngurare, on Wednesday, 20 May 2026, witnessed the signing of the Namibia for Life (Namibia4Life) Project Finance for Permanence (PFP) initiative, marking a major step in securing long-term funding for Namibia's community-based conservation programme.

Valued at over N\$1 billion (approximately US\$63 million), the initiative is one of Namibia's most significant conservation financing agreements and positions the country as a leader in innovative conservation finance in Africa. The Government of the Republic of Namibia, together with communal conservancies and international partners, aims to secure the long-term conservation of more than 20 million hectares, covering over 20% of the country - an area larger than Senegal, through the Namibia for Life initiative.

This initiative is Africa's first Project Finance for Permanence model designed to secure long-term funding, policies, and systems needed to sustain conservation over the long term. The initiative builds on Namibia's widely recognised approach to community-based conservation. Since the establishment of conservancies in 1998, communities played a central role in protecting wildlife and managing natural resources. This approach has contributed to the recovery of key species, including black rhino populations that have grown from only a few hundred in 1990 to around 2,000 today, alongside strong recoveries in elephant and desert-adapted lion populations.

Therefore, Namibia for Life aims to strengthen this foundation by supporting conservancies to maintain strong governance, improve natural resources management, and expand economic opportunities for rural communities. The programme currently supports 87 communal conservancies and is expected to expand to as many as 100 over time, benefitting more than 283,000 people who depend on wildlife and natural resources for their livelihoods.

Furthermore, Namibia for Life is possible because of the collaboration between Namibia's Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), the Community

Conservation Fund of Namibia (CCFN), the Namibian Association of Community Based Natural Resource Management Support Organisations (NACSO), WWF, and other key partners: Bezos Earth Fund, Carmen Busquets, Development Bank of Namibia (DBN), Enduring Earth, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Impact Tank Analysis Foundation, the Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, National Communal Conservancy and Community Forest Alliance (NCCFA), The ProNamib Trust, Laurie and Jeffrey Ubben, and ZOMA LAB. Namibian partners also recognise the many years of critical support from the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany through KfW for CCFN and the conservancy movement.

At the centre of Namibia for Life is a long-term financing approach that includes an endowment fund to provide stable and predictable support beyond short-term projects. A dedicated Socio-Economic Development Fund will support community priorities by strengthening local enterprises, creating jobs, building skills, and investing in small-scale infrastructure, ensuring that conservation continues to deliver tangible economic value for rural communities.

The CCFN will manage the financing mechanism, while continued technical support will help conservancies to strengthen governance, financial management, and conservation practices over time.

All in all, Namibia for Life is part of a broader global effort supported through Enduring Earth, a collaboration working to secure long-term conservation financing worldwide. Since 2021, this programme has supported initiatives covering more than 231 million hectares globally and mobilised over US\$1.8 billion in funding.

This initiative marks a significant step in securing the future of conservation and community livelihoods in Namibia.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Margretha Kampulu Senior Communications Manager World Wildlife Fund Namibia Email: mkampulu@wwf.na Cell: +264 81 495 7846	Vilho Hangula Chief Public Relations Officer Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism Email: Vilho.Hangula2@mef.gov.na Cell: +264 81 444 2238
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MEDIA QUOTE BANK

KEY MEDIA QUOTES

Right Honourable Elijah Ngurare- Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia
On national value of conservation and partnerships

“Namibia’s rich biodiversity is a national asset that underpins our tourism economy, rural livelihoods, and our resilience to climate change. Initiatives such as Namibia for Life demonstrate how strategic partnerships can translate conservation achievements into long-term socio-economic benefits for our people.”

Honourable Indileni Daniel- Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism
On national ownership and community-centred conservation

“This initiative strengthens national ownership of conservation financing while ensuring that communities remain at the heart of natural resource management. The Namibia for Life PFP is aligned with government priorities and reinforces our commitment to inclusive, community driven conservation.”

Thomas Muronga- Chairperson, NCCFA
On community impact and long-term benefits

“I regard the PFP initiative as a significant milestone in advancing community-led conservation and sustainable development, it offers essential support to strengthen the capacity of our member conservancies and community forests, ensuring long-term environmental stewardship and socio-economic benefits. Through this partnership, we aim to enhance coordination, accountability, and impact for the benefit of present and future generations.”

Ms Elzine Gawaxab-Mushambi- Founder, Impact Tank
On design and long-term impact

"SEDF is an important step toward building stronger, more sustainable conservancy economies in Namibia. By combining enterprise support with access to appropriate finance, we are assisting community-based businesses to strengthen their operations,

improve investment readiness, and create long-term livelihood opportunities linked to conservation."

Mr Andrew Corbett- Chairperson, CCFN Board

On long-term funding and governance

"This is a decisive step in securing long-term funding to support communities managing wildlife and natural resources. With consistent extension services, it will help ensure communities remain well-governed and able to deliver both conservation and livelihood benefits. It also helps maintain Namibia's position as a global leader in community-based conservation,"

Ms Maxi Louis-Director, NACSO

On institutional strengthening and programme legacy

"Since 2000, NACSO has proudly supported Namibia's CBNRM programme through a collaborative, multi-partner model that delivers coordinated and cost-effective support to communities across the country. We are honoured to support Namibia for Life as a bold and transformative milestone, securing permanent, sustainable financing and strengthening community-led conservation for generations to come."

Dr Juliane Zeidler- Country Director, WWF Namibia

On long-term conservation vision

"After 30 years of commitment and support to the community-based natural resource management movement, the launch of Namibia for Life and the long-term funding it provides is a dream come true. This funding will maintain a lasting foundation from which to launch new opportunities for nature and people into the future. What a wonderful achievement. We are proud as WWF to be part of this partnership,"

Nik Sekhran- Chief Conservation Officer, WWF-US

On Namibia's global leadership

"Namibia's communal conservancies have proven that when local communities have the authority and resources to manage their wildlife, both wildlife and communities flourish, Namibia for Life builds on this trusted model by securing permanent funding and policy

support for up to 100 conservancies managing up to 20 million hectares. This is Southern Africa's first Project Finance for Permanence initiative, and it works precisely because it enables communities who are already conservation experts to scale what they do best: protecting wildlife while building sustainable enterprises that benefit their families and future generations,"

John Bernstein, Chairman of The ProNamib Trust

“Namibia for Life demonstrates how nature conservation and benefits for local communities go hand in hand. We are delighted to expand our work with the ProNamib Nature Reserve and community programmes in Hardap by supporting this outstanding initiative for the whole of Namibia.”