NEW ERA (STATE DAILY) - BUSINESS (NAMIBIA) · NAMIBIA · OFFSHORE

Namibia ministry warns oil risks fishing industry

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Namibia's Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform has issued a formal warning that offshore oil and gas exploration and production activities could pose significant risks to the country's fishing industry, marine biodiversity, and coastal fishing communities if environmental impacts are not adequately managed.

The ministry's Deputy Director of Public Relations and Official Spokesperson, Romeo Muyunda, highlighted the need for thorough assessment of potential environmental impacts as offshore activity accelerates along Namibia's Atlantic coastline. The warning signals growing institutional concern within government about how the rapid expansion of the upstream oil and gas sector could interact with one of Namibia's most established and economically significant industries.

Namibia's fishing sector is a major contributor to national employment and export revenues, particularly along the southern and central Atlantic coast. The emergence of significant offshore hydrocarbon discoveries in recent years has introduced a new dynamic, placing energy development ambitions in potential tension with existing marine resource users. The ministry's statement reflects a broader regulatory conversation about how Namibia will manage competing economic priorities as it moves from exploration toward development and eventual production phases.

Environmental impact assessments and stakeholder engagement processes are likely to become increasingly important as operators advance projects through permitting and development planning. The ministry's intervention suggests that fisheries interests will seek a formal role in those processes, potentially influencing the pace,

design, or operational parameters of offshore development activities. Coordination between the Ministry of Mines and Energy, environmental regulators, and the fisheries ministry will be a key governance factor as the sector matures.

For international service companies active in or monitoring the Namibian offshore space, the ministry's warning is a signal that environmental compliance and stakeholder engagement infrastructure will be non-negotiable components of project delivery. Operators and their contractors will face scrutiny not only on technical performance but on how their activities interact with existing marine users. The statement also underscores the broader regulatory environment taking shape around Namibia's offshore sector — one in which multiple ministries are asserting oversight roles, adding procedural complexity but also providing a clearer framework within which compliant operators can build social and regulatory licence to operate.

Why this matters to partners and clients of Saga

This is a regulatory and stakeholder development to monitor rather than act on commercially — no contract, FID, or tender has been announced. Norwegian service companies with environmental monitoring, marine survey, or subsea inspection capabilities should track how Namibia's inter-ministerial oversight framework evolves, as it will shape compliance requirements for future project scopes. Relationship-building with environmental consultancies active in the Namibian offshore permitting process may be a worthwhile preparatory step.

PARTNER ANGLES

- **Subsea/FPSO:** Monitor how environmental oversight requirements shape field development design constraints and operational exclusion zones for future Namibian offshore projects.
- **Drilling:** Track whether fisheries ministry involvement leads to seasonal or geographic drilling restrictions that affect campaign planning timelines.
- **Service:** Environmental monitoring, marine mammal observation, and acoustic management services may become mandatory contractor requirements under tightening Namibian offshore regulations.

- **Pipeline:** Subsea routing and installation planning will need to account for active fishing grounds and biodiversity-sensitive areas as regulatory scrutiny increases.

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