



Ocean Conservation Namibia Trust
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— PRESS RELEASE —

Sandpiper Approval Raises Red Flags for Benguela Ecosystem and Fisheries

Walvis Bay, Namibia – 11 August 2026 – Ocean Conservation Namibia (OCN) has received with great concern the approval of an Environmental Clearance Certificate (ECC) for the Sandpiper marine phosphate mining project. The ECC was approved on 5 August 2026 and is valid until 5 August 2029.

OCN strongly criticises the decision to issue the ECC, warning that the large-scale development could have significant impacts on the Benguela marine ecosystem, Namibia's fishing industry and marine conservation.

Environmental Concerns Over Marine Phosphate Mining

Marine phosphate mining on this scale has never been carried out anywhere in the world before. Namibia therefore risks becoming a testing ground for a new form of marine mining, with unpredictable environmental impacts.

The proposed dredging of the seabed could destroy important marine habitats and create wide-spread sediment plumes, potentially affecting water quality and marine life. Marine resources and fisheries are at risk from the possible release of heavy metals and other substances during the mining process, directly affecting the fishing industry.

“We cannot allow Namibia to become a global guinea pig!”
— Ocean Conservation Namibia

Calls for Transparency and Independent Review

Various organisations and stakeholders including the IPC are calling for the reports and scientific studies on which the ECC decision was based to be made publicly available for independent review.

It is also important to clarify that the approval of the ECC does not mean that commercial mining will begin immediately. The project must still go through further planning, permitting and development stages, including the approval of the much criticised terrestrial component of the project. Without the necessary land-based infrastructure, the marine mining operation cannot proceed.

OCN to Continue Monitoring the Project

Ocean Conservation Namibia will continue to monitor the situation and raise public awareness about the potential environmental risks of this project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Naude Dreyer', is written over a horizontal line.

Naude Dreyer
Director Ocean Conservation Namibia
Walvis Bay, 11 August 2026