

CLEAN WATER FOR A HEALTHY NATION DURING THE LOCKDOWN PERIOD.

At the time when the nation is faced with a threat posed by COVID – 19 pandemic, the importance of having clean water to maintain the health of the nation has become more important than ever before. The washing of hands and keeping high level of hygiene practices is at the centre of fighting the Covid-19 virus. As a result NamWater being a National Bulk Water Supplier had to develop measures that ensures continuous water supply for twenty four hours. The following are the main actions that the Utility has started implementing already despite the expected negative impact on the company finances:

1. WATER SUPPLY SERVICES

In terms of the water supply services, NamWater has put the following measures in place and which are in line with the Government order as part of its response to the Covid – 19 pandemic to make sure that people have clean water to wash with in order to curb the spread of the disease:

Lifting of water rationing

NamWater has lifted water rationing to all Village Councils, which were previously affected in order to supply water 24 hours to such Councils.

Customers on Pre-paid water metering system

All NamWater customers who have been put on pre-paid water metering systems have been placed on the by-pass system to allow for access to water in their respective Towns or Village Councils. It is, however, worth mentioning that despite this measure taken, it does not mean that the outstanding debts will be cancelled and arrangements have been put in place for the Local Authorities to pay for their current consumptions when the situation returns to normal. The Corporation is however engaging Central government to look at how to look into measures of a subsidy.

Provision of water via water tankers

NamWater has 5 Business Units. The 5 Business Units Chiefs in consultation with the Regional Governments have identified and will continue to identify vulnerable communities that do not have access to water supply at the current moment, so that these communities are supplied water with Water Tankers. To date a number of communities were identified and are being supplied with water using Water Tankers and hereunder are some of such communities in various Business Units:

Water Tanker services in the North West Business Unit

- Olushendje village in Oshikoto Region
- Ohameva in Oshanaana

Water Tanker services in the North East Business Unit

- Makaanga at Chivanga village, Lubunge village, Mutotela village and Nziba)
- Tuhingireni location
- Tumweneni location
- SunCity location
- Kasote location
- Ngwangwa location
- Baramasone village
- Vikota Village
- Ngaramateya Village

Water Tanker services in the Business Unit Central

Greiters Conference Facility is one of the quarantine centres in the country and NamWater is supplying the centre with water. Furthermore, NamWater is currently engaging the City of Windhoek to determine the assistance required by the City to deliver water to the community along the Nauasport-Oamites pipeline where NamWater will provide water to the informal settlements with a water tanker.

Water Tanker services in the Business Unit Coastal

In the Business Unit coastal, NamWater is supplying water through Water

Tankers to the following communities:

- Topnaar community
- Uis settlement areas
- Berseba Rural schemes
- Tubusis, Okombahe and Spitzkoppe

2. CONTINUITY OF WATER SUPPLY SERVICES

NamWater ensures that the normal supply of water is not disrupted or affected in one way or the other by the COVID pandemic. While, most of NamWater staff has been sent home as part of the lockdown initiative, the Corporation has made sure that essential staffs are either working from home or are on standby 24 hours a day. Customers are still able to pay their water bills at places and institutions as they are being announced in the media and those customers who want to apply for water connections/ re-connections are still able to do that.

3. COMMUNICATION THROUGH THE MEDIA

NamWater has extensively made use of the traditional and new media to reach the public. People are encourage to listen to the various radio stations, watch NBC TV, log onto various social media platforms and read newspapers for important information and necessary contact numbers.

4. GENERAL ASSISTANCE

NamWater has donated an amount of N\$125 000 to the Disaster Risk Management Fund to assist with the fight against the pandemic.

In order to ensure the safety of our people who provide essential services such as the Namibian Police, NamWater has as well donated gloves, masks and sanitisers to the Namibian Police services for the road blocks into the Erongo and Khomas regions. Donations were made on the 1st April 2020.

5. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

A number of contacts for essential staffs during the lockdown period have been announced in the various media including the Corporation's Website and Facebook page. The public can call these numbers for water supply assistance. However, the number +264 81 1 22 28 58 can be called at any time.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

NamWater has always emphasized the fact that water does not have a price, but it is the service of providing water to the nation that has financial implications. The current intervention measures have already resulted in financial implications ranging from current, medium and long-terms. The table below indicates the financial implications to NamWater for restoring full water supply to a number of Local Authorities and for the provision of free water using Water Tankers to the identified communities for a period ranging between 1 and 6 months.

Financial implications to NamWater for restoring full water supply to a number of Local Authorities and for the provision of free water using Water Tankers during the lockdown period from the 27 March 2020 – 04 May 2020 is summarized as follows:

ENTITY	NO	MODE OF SUPPLY	BENEFICIARY	ESTIMATED COST 27 MAR 20-04 MAY20	ESTIMATED COST 3 MONTHS	ESTIMATED COST 6 MONTHS
NAMWATER	1	Pipelines	Local Authorities (Defaulters/Prepaid)	N\$ 29 300 000	N\$ 87 900 000	N\$ 175 800 000
	11	Water Tankers	Rural areas	N\$ 840 000	N\$ 2 520 000	N\$ 5 040 000
	1	Pipelines	Rural areas	N\$ 10 800 000	N\$ 32 400 000	N\$ 64 800 000
TOTAL				N\$ 40 940 000	N\$ 122 820 000	N\$ 245 640 000

It is thus, necessary to look at the long term financial solutions such as the creation of a Water Scarcity Fund that can be used to subsidise the Corporation in case of events such as this one.