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Koninkrijk der Nederlanden

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Koninginnedag zijn alle in Namibië  
woonachtige Nederlanders van  
harte welkom op een receptie op

**DONDERDAG 24 April 2003  
VAN 18:00 - 20:30**

In de Uhlandstrasse 19  
Klein Windhoek

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## First Benguela contracts to be issued by July - official

### • MAGGI BARNARD at SWAKOPMUND

THE first project contracts of a multi-million dollar joint programme on Namibia, South Africa and Angola's marine resources and ecosystem will be issued by July.

Dr Michael O'Toole, Chief Technical Advisor of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME), told *The Namibian* that the first of the programme's almost 80 projects will be advertised in all regional newspapers within the next month.

The three countries joined forces last year in the N\$425,7 million BCLME initiative to address the transboundary situation between their nations, where fisheries have become an economic mainstay providing an important source of livelihood in the region.

According to O'Toole, the BCLME is an all encompassing programme.

Projects focus on a broad range of activities. These include early warning systems for climate change, the monitoring and management of shared fish stocks, oil pollution and littering from ships and oil rigs off-shore, the effect of algae blooms (sulphur eruptions) on the quality of fish stocks, the effects or impacts of intensive diamond mining on the ecosystem.

It also focuses on gas and oil exploration, marine biodiversity and the protection of fauna and flora in marine life, and areas where eco-tourism can be promoted to create jobs for coastal communities.

It was only at the Rio Summit in 1992 that a move was made to ecosystem-based projects called large marine ecosystems (LMEs).

The Global Environment Fa-

cility (GEF) has since identified 64 LMEs world-wide, of which 12 are up and running and another eight are in the preparation stage.

The BCLME is the first one to deal with an upwelling system that was approved by the GEF for funding (GEF contributed N\$167 million to the programme).

The Benguela system is one of four main upwelling systems in the world. The other three are the Canary current (northwest Africa), Chile-Peru current and the California current.

Ken Sherman of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) in the United States told a meeting at Swakopmund last week that the BCLME showed the most promise of all the LMEs. He said internationally it was regarded as the flagship of ocean management.

According to O'Toole, Namibia and in particular the Minister of

Fisheries and Marine Resources, Abraham Iyambo, played a major role in getting funding for the BCLME and the programme off the ground.

With the BCLME head office situated in Windhoek, O'Toole said Namibia is in the driving seat.

According to him preference will be given to scientists in the region for the projects on tender.

"We would also link in with the fisheries institutes of the three countries and their universities," he said.

The Benguela Environmental Fisheries Interaction and Training (Benefit) Programme at Swakopmund will serve as the scientific wing of BCLME.

The programme, which is a year old, will run for another four years.

"If we are successful, we might get another five years of funding. It all depends on how we deliver on our strategic plan," O'Toole said.



Minister Iyambo