



# National Fisheries Authority

## Papua New Guinea

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **NFA Sets Key Priorities for 2026, Including New Fisheries Capital Company and Sector Reforms**

**Port Moresby** – The passage of legislation to establish a new State-owned company for the fisheries sector is one of the key priorities of the National Fisheries Authority (NFA) for this year, according to Managing Director Justin Ilakini.

Speaking at a meeting of heads of government agencies and departments in Port Moresby yesterday, Mr Ilakini said the proposed Fisheries Capital Limited will be established through the passage of its Authorisation Bill and operationalised once approved by Parliament.

He said the establishment of Fisheries Capital Limited is one of the major initiatives among 11 priorities the NFA has set for 2026, building on a series of reforms implemented by the Authority in recent years.

“These priorities are part of a broader reform agenda aimed at transforming the fisheries sector into a more diversified, sustainable and revenue-generating industry for Papua New Guinea,” Mr Ilakini said.

The NFA’s priorities for 2026 include:

1. Implementation of an enhanced surveillance platform;
2. Passage of the Fisheries Capital Limited Authorisation Bill;
3. Reset and strengthening of the National Fisheries College (NFC) in Kavieng;
4. Enhancing institutional capacity for fisheries research and extension support services;

5. Implementation of the aquaculture and tuna domestication strategies;
6. Development of a coastal fisheries rollout strategy;
7. Development of market access for PNG marine resources;
8. Encouraging extensive consultation with all relevant stakeholders;
9. Promoting and facilitating investment in downstream processing and value-added sectors;
10. Maintaining visibility and leadership in the regional and international fisheries space; and
11. Submission of financial statements and reports to the Auditor-General.

Mr Ilakini said these priorities align with National Government directives to promote a broad-based fisheries sector that is not solely dependent on tuna, while maximising direct revenue returns to the State.

He said reforms initiated over the past three years include an institutional restructure to modernise the Authority, legislative and structural reforms, strengthened resource management, a market-driven coastal fisheries rollout programme, and the commercialisation of aquaculture and inland fisheries to improve food security and livelihoods.

Other reforms include increased onshore tuna downstream processing under the Tuna Domestication Policy.

Mr Ilakini also highlighted significant improvements in fisheries surveillance to combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing, which has historically cost the country millions of kina annually.

Late last year, the NFA launched three well-equipped surveillance patrol boats strategically deployed in key border areas. A state-of-the-art surveillance command centre was also commissioned in Daru, serving as the operational base for one of the vessels.

A similar command centre is scheduled for commissioning this year in Vanimo, where the second patrol boat will operate.

“These assets allow the NFA to monitor between 50 to 60 per cent of PNG’s Exclusive Economic Zone, with further expansion planned, significantly reducing illegal fishing activities,” Mr Ilakini said.

He said the NFA aims to increase the fisheries sector's contribution to the national Gross Domestic Product from 3 per cent to 10 per cent by 2030, translating to approximately K20 billion annually in a projected K200 billion economy.

"While these figures are significant, the real benefits will be felt at the grassroots level, where a broad-based fisheries sector can improve the livelihoods of the 98 per cent of Papua New Guineans who depend on coastal and inland fisheries," Mr Ilakini said.

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