



National Fisheries Authority

Papua New Guinea

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PRESS RELEASE

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FISHERIES SECTOR MARKS MILESTONE WITH GROUNDBREAKING OF PNG'S LARGEST COLD STORAGE FACILITY

Lae, Morobe Province – The Managing Director of the National Fisheries Authority (NFA), Justin Ilakini, has welcomed the groundbreaking of a 12,000-metric-ton cold storage facility by Nambawan Seafoods PNG Limited in Lae, describing it as a major milestone that signals renewed investor confidence and the beginning of a new phase of growth in Papua New Guinea's fisheries sector.

The ceremony was held at Portion 667, Busu Road in Lae, Mr. Ilakini said the US\$20 million (over K80 million) investment will become the largest cold storage facility in the country once completed.

"This groundbreaking marks an important turning point for the fisheries sector. It reflects the success of policy, structural and legislative reforms introduced by the NFA since 2022 and endorsed by the Marape-Rosso Government," Mr. Ilakini said.

He noted that Papua New Guinea's tuna industry experienced its first major investment phase between the late 1990s and 2013, culminating in the establishment of six tuna processing plants. However, from 2013 to 2024, the sector saw no new foreign direct investment.

"The tide is now turning. Investor confidence has been restored, and we are witnessing the beginning of a second phase of strategic investments," he said.

The new facility will significantly expand Nambawan Seafoods' cold storage capacity from 2,000 metric tons to 14,000 metric tons, delivering major operational and economic benefits. These include:

- Increased inventory capacity to ensure consistent supply of raw tuna and reduce production disruptions;

- An additional 18,000 metric tons of tuna processed annually;
- Increased daily production from 120–130 tons to 150–160 tons;
- Establishment of a new processing line for yellowfin and bigeye tuna steaks, with a capacity of 20–30 tons per day;
- Creation of 400–500 new jobs, increasing the company’s workforce to approximately 2,200 employees;
- Additional storage support for Majestic Tuna Corporation.

Mr. Ilakini highlighted that the investment will increase Papua New Guinea’s total tuna cold storage capacity by more than 60 percent—from 16,550 metric tons to 28,550 metric tons—addressing key industry bottlenecks and improving efficiency across the sector.

“This development will lead to more tuna landings, increased processing, greater employment opportunities, and higher export earnings for the country,” Ilakini said.

The NFA Managing Director also emphasized that the investment aligns with the Government’s Fisheries Strategic Plan and the National Tuna Domestication Strategy, which aim to ensure Papua New Guinea captures greater value from its tuna resources through local processing and value addition.

Under these reforms, production throughput has already increased significantly—from 79,000 metric tons in 2023 to 119,223 metric tons in 2024, and further to 122,609 metric tons in 2025. Further growth is expected with the reopening of Majestic Tuna Corporation’s processing plant later this year.

Mr. Ilakini said the initiative is also consistent with regional priorities set by the Pacific Islands Forum, particularly the East New Britain Initiative, which calls for greater retention of tuna value within Pacific Island countries.

He commended FCF Co. Limited, the parent company of Nambawan Seafoods, for its continued investment in Papua New Guinea’s fisheries sector.

“On behalf of the Minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources, Honourable Jelta Wong, MP, and the National Fisheries Board, I extend our best wishes to FCF and its subsidiaries for the successful construction of this important facility,” Mr. Ilakini said.

He also called on provincial governments, businesses, and local communities to support such investments, noting that strong partnerships are essential for sustained economic growth in the sector.

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