# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

## MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES, WATER AND LAND REFORM

**MEDIA BRIEF**

**Date: 06 November 2026**

**MINISTRY CLARIFIES BOREHOLE DRILLING LICENCE CONDITIONS AND PHASED REGULATORY PROCESS FOR THE LEONARDVILLE URANIUM EXPLORATION PROJECT (WINGS PROJECT)**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform wishes to clarify the purpose, conditions and implications of the borehole drilling licence issued to Headspring Investment on 23 October 2026 for the Leonardville Uranium Exploration Project, also known as the Wings Project, on Exclusive Prospecting Licence (EPL) No. 4655 at Farm Tripoli in the Omaheke Region.

The licence relates to boreholes intended for hydrogeological monitoring and exploration control**.** Its issuance does not, on its own, authorise the Proponent to commence drilling, nor does it constitute approval for pilot in-situ leaching (ISL) operations or uranium mining.

The protection of groundwater resources within the Stampriet Transboundary Aquifer System remains a central consideration in the Ministry's assessment of the proposed activities.

**1. Borehole drilling licence conditions**

Before commencing the borehole drilling programme, the Proponent is required to submit the following information to the Ministry for technical review and assessment:

1. **Inventory of existing and legacy boreholes:** A comprehensive inventory of all known existing and legacy boreholes within a 5–10 km radius of the proposed project area at Farm Tripoli. This information is required to establish the existing borehole infrastructure and assess potential groundwater pathways and associated risks.
2. **Geophysical information:** Geophysical data covering a 50 km radius around the proposed project area to establish the regional geological and structural setting.

Authorisation to commence the borehole drilling programme will be communicated in writing by the Executive Director only after the Ministry has reviewed the submitted information and confirmed that it is satisfactory. The Proponent may not commence drilling until this written authorisation has been issued.

These requirements form part of a staged process for obtaining and assessing the technical information needed to inform subsequent regulatory decisions. They do not constitute approval of the complete pilot operation.

**2. Scope and findings of the IAEA review**

The Ministry's consideration of the Licence has been informed by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Independent Technical Review of the Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plans for the proposed Wings pilot ISL operation.

The Ministry wishes to clarify that the IAEA review does not recommend either approval or rejection of the project**.** It provides an independent technical basis to assist the competent Namibian authorities in making informed decisions. Its scope is limited to the proposed pilot operation and does not extend to an assessment or approval of future full-scale mining.

The review found that the environmental documentation provides a general framework for assessing environmental risks. However, significant technical uncertainties remain concerning groundwater protection, particularly:

- Hydraulic confinement between the Auob Aquifer and the overlying Kalahari Aquifer;
- The ability of the proposed wellfield to maintain hydraulic containment;
- Groundwater chemistry during and after leaching;
- Groundwater restoration requirements and achievable restoration timeframes;
- The adequacy of the groundwater-monitoring network;
- The effectiveness of contingency measures should hydraulic control be lost or leaching solution migrate beyond the designated production zone.

The expert recommended a phased and conditional regulatory approach to the proposed pilot operation, which the Government has adopted as the basis for its regulatory oversight. Under this approach, investigations and activities will be undertaken sequentially, with progression subject to satisfactory technical findings, independent verification and approval by the competent authorities. The framework comprises four phases: aquifer characterisation and confinement testing; wellfield installation and hydraulic-control testing; controlled pilot injection; and groundwater restoration and post-operational monitoring. Importantly, the introduction of lixiviant will only be considered once the preceding phases have demonstrated adequate aquifer protection and effective hydraulic containment. Progression between phases will not be automatic, as each phase will require a thorough technical assessment and a formal decision by the competent authorities to ensure that groundwater resources, public health and the environment are adequately protected. The IAEA Expert Report is available to the public on request.

**END**

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