

Walvis Bay International Air Facility



ON TRACK: Aerial view of Walvis Bay Airport. Photo contributed

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[Coastal](#)

The completion of upgrade at the Walvis Bay airport to the status of an international, all-day, all-weather air facility that can accommodate wide-bodied passenger aircraft will result in a significant number of tourist arrival flights from Windhoek's Hosea Kutako International Airport relocating to Walvis Bay.

The Namibia Airports Company stated the upgrade project could be completed by as early as year-end, including completion of a new state-of-the-art terminal building that is in an advanced stage. Marketing Officer for the NAC, Dan Kamati, yesterday confirmed the expected completion time of the upgrade project as December 2015. Passenger air carriers, he said, will shift their focus to Walvis Bay as the result of tourism.

He added both the coastal economies stand to benefit, but also Namibia as a national economy because of the export potential unlocked with direct air access of wide-body cargo planes. Particularly fish exports to Spain as one of the prime importers of Namibian fish and the importation of spare parts and other commodities critical to the local marine industrial and ship repair businesses and fish processing industry.

The upgrade project takes place in two separate phases, the first being rehabilitation work to the airport's super jumbo standard runway. When the runway was upgraded some years ago by a Spanish consortium, the Namibian Government found some of the work to be outside the desired scope. Civils company, Namibia Construction, is currently conducting the upgrade work to the sub-standard areas and is also expected to complete all the aircraft parking aprons and the parking lot for the new terminal building in the next months. Airport avionics (lighting) and instrument landing

equipment have already been installed and activated. The second phase is the construction of the new terminal building by Chinese constructor, New Era Investments. In July, the NAC announced the expected completion date of July 2015 would not be met, and instead announced the new date as December 2015.

The completion of the Walvis Bay airport as an international air facility will also take place on the same time as an international airport on the mid-Atlantic island of Saint Helena which will see its first commercial flight between Johannesburg and Saint Helena taking place end-February 2016. Walvis Bay Airport's strategic positioning as refueling hub between Johannesburg and the America's via Saint Helena will become another unlocked potential.