



30 March 2016

THE 2016/17 BUDGET AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN ANALYSIS OF THE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT BRANCH

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1 INTRODUCTION

The long term sustainability of the fisheries sector is fully dependant on an ecosystem approach to fisheries management that is responsible and collaborative. A sustainable fisheries sector can contribute towards the growth of the social and economic integrity of South Africa, while promoting market access and opportunities. The responsibility of managing the marine resources lies within the Fisheries Management Branch (the Branch) of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (the Department) as primarily guided by the Marine Living Resources Act (MLRA), 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998). The Marine Living Resources Fund (MLRF) was established in terms of section 10 of the MLRA and is a schedule 3A Public Entity as specified under the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999). The MLRF is the main source of funding for the operational activities of the Branch. The MLRF receives transfers from the Branch and generates the other income from levies on fish products, licence fees and permits, fines and confiscations, and harbour fees.¹ In terms of section 10(3) of the MLRA, the Director-General administers the MLRF in consultation with the Minister. The functions of the MLRF are executed by the staff of the Branch in partnership with other stakeholders in the fisheries-related industry. The MLRF and the Department share a common vision and mission, and are also guided by Government's broad national priorities in terms of the Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014 – 2019 priorities and overarching national policies.²

The mandate and core business of the MLRF is to manage the development and sustainable use of South Africa's marine resources and protect the integrity and quality of the marine ecosystem. The main activities that are funded by the MLRF include the marine resource research and biological stock status assessments; monitoring, control and surveillance efforts, marine resource management involving both offshore and inshore fisheries; the development and promotion of the aquaculture sector, including both marine and freshwater aquaculture; and financial and corporate management.³ This paper will provide a brief analysis of the 2016/17 annual performance plans, budget allocation and matters arising therewith.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE 2015/16 FINANCIAL YEAR

2.1 Performance against targets

During the 2015/16 financial year, the MLRF responded directly to 3 Strategic Outcomes identified from the MTSF for 2014 - 2019. The Outcomes are:

- Outcome 4 - Decent employment through inclusive economic growth;
- Outcome 7 - Vibrant, equitable, sustainable rural communities contributing towards food security for all; and
- Outcome 10 - Protect and enhance our environmental assets and natural resources.

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) under the Working for Fisheries Programme was instrumental in the creation of work opportunities and livelihood alternatives through various projects

¹ Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (2016); Marine Living Resources Fund (2016).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.



in coastal and rural communities. The Branch sought to promote the sustainable use of fisheries resources and the recovery of depleted fish stocks by implementing the stock recovery plans and strategies for hake, abalone, West Coast rock lobster and traditional linefish. The ultimate goal was to drastically improve the status of the fish stocks by 2018/19. In line with improving the status of the fish stocks, the Branch planned to implement the Integrated Fisheries Security Strategy. The Branch further sought to embark on conducting fishery-specific research to inform the setting of total allocable catches or total allowable efforts in the 22 commercial sectors. A more pressing target was to allocate long-term fishing rights in the sectors where fishing rights were expiring in 2015 as well as ending the “interim-relief” programme by implementing the Small scale Fisheries Policy. Aquaculture development through investment facilitation, farm support and legislative reform was among key priorities.⁴

The latest 2015/16 departmental performance report tabled to the Portfolio Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (the Committee) is the 2015/16 Second Quarter Performance Report, hence that is the furthest the performance reflection will go as it pertains to the 2015/16 financial year. Based on the available information, there are some targets that showed elements of being achieved, exceeded or not yet achieved during Quarter 2. Four out of eight targets (50 per cent) were achieved or exceeded, while some targets were either achieved in the third quarter or were yet to be achieved. The exceeded targets are the implementation of the Integrated Fisheries Security Strategy (operations, compliance and enforcement) and WfF jobs, while research reports to set catch limits were adequately achieved. The departmental report is silent on the target of 134 WfF jobs that were supposed to be created during the second quarter of the 2015/16 financial year. On the Appropriation Adjustments (MTBPS) of 2015, the National Treasury reported that the Branch created 300 jobs during the first half of the 2015/16 financial year, meaning the target was exceeded.⁵

The gazetting of fisheries sector policies was one target that was misreported as achieved in the second quarter while it was actually achieved in the third quarter (gazetted on 16 November 2015, which is on the third quarter). The missed targets related to identification of small-scale fishers and Operation Phakisa (the aquaculture draft Bill and related projects). In comparison with the second quarter of the 2014/15 financial year, the Department regressed from 58 per cent achievement of targets to 50 per cent in 2015/16.

3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2016/17

3.1 Aquaculture Bill

The Department had planned to table the Aquaculture Bill to Parliament during the course of the 2015/16 financial year, however, that did not materialise. The target has thus been deferred to the 2016/17 financial year, notwithstanding the fact that there are no quarterly targets or milestones – simply a Bill approved by the end of the fourth quarter. During the previous three financial years, the Department vaguely planned to develop a policy and programme on inland fisheries which was aimed at developing economic opportunities around existing storage dams and rivers. However, this initiative does not appear on the 2016/17 Annual Performance Plan and it is unknown what became of it. It will be worth knowing the reasons for omitting it.

⁴ Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (2015);

⁵ Ginindza (2016).



- The development of a legislation can be a costly exercise, often going beyond budgeted funds. How much has the Department allocated towards the development of the Aquaculture Bill?

3.2 National Development Plan

By 2030, South Africa's rural communities are expected to have better opportunities to participate fully in the economic, social and political life of the country. The vision includes better integration of the country's rural areas, achieved through successful land reform, infrastructure development, agro-processing, job creation and poverty alleviation. The NDP identifies, among others, the core fundamental issues in the fisheries that need realistic and sustainable solutions. Transformation of the sector, fishing rights allocation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resource is advocated in the NDP to be prioritised. In view of the fundamental issues, the NDP acknowledges that the fishing sector is relatively transformed, however, fishing activities are not inclusive. Furthermore, the NDP warns against issuing many fishing rights of low value because it lowers the average gain per fisher and could be ineffective in fighting poverty and non-compliance among fishers. With view of industrial fishing, the NDP is against taking fishing rights away from industrial fishers in favour of small-scale fishers because this would cut jobs. Fisheries research and effective monitoring systems are considered as of paramount importance to ensure a viable and sustainable fishery. The NDP recommends that alternative economic opportunities need to be made to supplement livelihoods of fishing communities; and fisheries policies should seek to maximise sustainable employment and advocate for allocation of viable fishing rights.⁶

In response to the NDP, the Department and the MLRF are expected to support aquaculture investment and production, create jobs through Working for Fisheries Programme, rebuild depleted fish stocks, and allocate commercial fishing rights to promote participation in the South African fisheries.

- During 2015/16 year, the target of allocation fishing rights was not achieved mainly due to extension of consultation periods. In light of the short consultation period that the Department often planned, the Committee and the fishing sector advised to Department to extend the consultation period that related to commercial and small-scale fishing rights allocation. This happened at the time when there was a pending fishing rights allocation matter from the 2013 fishing rights allocation process in the traditional line fish sector, which at the time of tabling the 2016/17 Annual Performance Plan, was not resolved. The Department should then be able estimate the conclusion period for 2015/16 fishing rights allocation process based on the FRAP 2013 so that the Committee can conduct its oversight accordingly.
- The outcomes from the different fisheries management strategies vary. It is worth applauding that some economically important species are fully exploited, while other species are on good track of recovering to sustainable levels. There is still a need to harness the potential of the some underutilised fisheries resources such as anchovy, redeye and seaweeds. It can be safely stated that tunas and sharks are not in a healthy state, while the linefish stocks are showing signs of recovering. The Department should then have a sound plan to gain maximum use of the fisheries resources that are under-utilised in order to create jobs and new fisheries as articulated in the NDP.

⁶ National Planning Commission (2012).



- Another related matter is the fact that the available fisheries resources along the coast vary in value and distribution. The West Coast generally possess higher value species when compared to the South and East Coast. The Department should then be able to mention strategies to ensure sustainable small-scale fishing in areas that possess limited or low value fisheries species.
- The Department seeks to close the fish protein gap in the country, however, there are no programmes that will be put in place to achieve this goal and measurable milestones and timeframes. Details on closing the fish protein gap needs to be sought.

3.3 Industrial Policy Action Plan⁷

South Africa's long-term vision of an equitable society is provided by the National Development Plan. The Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP), which is developed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), is informed by this vision and is both framed by and constitutes a key pillar for the objectives set out in the NDP. The policy considerations driving the IPAP seeks to achieve diversification into non-traditional tradable goods and services, a labour-absorbing industrialisation path, increased participation of historically disadvantaged people, increased participation of marginalised regions and the long-term intensification of South Africa's industrialisation process and movement towards a knowledge economy. The plan identifies interventions which will lead to increased investment in the aquaculture sector and marketing of the growth of the aquaculture sub-sector of South Africa which in turn will lead to diversification of the sector, increased production and significant job creation. South African aquaculture has a potential to increase supply to the insatiable demand of fisheries products such as abalone, trout, mussels and oyster.

3.4 National Infrastructure Plan⁸

The Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) was established with the aim of directing infrastructure development, a key job driver as identified by the NGP. From the spatial analysis of South Africa's needs, 17 Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs) have been identified. The SIPs cover a range of economic and social infrastructure. Of relevance to agriculture, forestry and fisheries, is SIP 11: Agro-logistics and rural infrastructure. SIP 11, aims to improve investment in agricultural and rural infrastructure that supports expansion of production and employment, small-scale farming and rural development, including facilities for storage (fish storage and depuration facilities), transport links to main networks (rural roads, branch train-line, ports), improved research and development on rural issues (including expansion of colleges of agriculture), processing facilities (fish processing infrastructure), aquaculture incubation schemes and infrastructure in fishing harbours.

- During 2015/16, the Department mentioned that it will be proclaiming more fishing harbours and revitalising the harbour infrastructure. This expression was not included among targets in the 2015/16 Annual Performance Plan, and it is not included in the 2016/17 Annual Performance Plan. It is, however, acknowledged that the management of the harbours in unsatisfactory and needs to be improved and effective. The Department should be in a

⁷ Department of Trade and Industry (2014).

⁸ PICC (2012).



position of explaining whether there is any plan and timelines to proclaim more fishing harbours and implement effective management strategies.

- During the 2015 oversight visits to the Eastern Cape and Limpopo Provinces, it was clear that some aquaculture projects (such as the pilot dusky kob project in Hamburg and the Phetwane Integrated Aquaculture Project) had to rely on willing companies for fish storage, processing and marketing. The Department should be in a position of explaining their revised approach in the 2016/17 financial year to ensure that State-funded aquaculture projects do not end up stranded with fish when supposed to harvest.

3.5 Medium Term Strategic Framework⁹

Cabinet decided in 2013 that the 2014-2019 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) should form the first five-year implementation phase of the NDP and mandated work to begin on aligning the plans of national and provincial departments, municipalities and public entities with the NDP vision and goals. The Department contributes towards 3 (Outcome 4, 7 and 10) of the 14 priority Outcomes identified in the MTSF in response to the NDP. Some of the targets over the next five years under the three outcomes include:

- An increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate from 2.5 per cent in 2012 to 5 per cent in 2019
- Reduce rural unemployment from the current 49 per cent to less than 40 per cent
- Implementation of climate change responses in five critical sectors
- Increasing the percentage of the coastline with at least partial protection from 22.5 per cent in 2013 to 27 per cent in 2019

A breakdown of the 2014-2019 MTSF relating to the Department is provided for in Annexure A from Nontobeko.

3.6 2016 State of the Nation Address

The agriculture sector is among the prioritised sectors annually, as articulated during the State of the Nation Address (SONA) delivered by President JG Zuma.¹⁰ The main reason is that the sector is among the major job drivers where rural communities can earn a living, be food secured and work towards narrowing inequality. The President mentioned a continuation of the 9-point plan, focussed at growing the economy and creating jobs. Of the 9-point plans, the fisheries and aquaculture sector is directly affected by 6 points. The key issues that directly affect the aquaculture and fishing industry are as briefly contextualised below.

3.6.1 Resolving the energy challenge¹¹

The energy challenge faced by the country is a limiting factor as it impacts negatively on various operations within the fishing and aquaculture industry. Despite having some energy-dependant activities happening at sea, the aquaculture operations and fish processing establishments can be severely impacted by unreliable power supply. The inconsistent power supply can affect the quality and value of the fish and fish products thereby threaten market supply, particularly, the regions that

⁹ The Presidency (2014b).

¹⁰ Zuma (2015, 2016).

¹¹ Zuma (2015, 2016).



price fish quality such as the European, American and Asia-Pacific regions. The State is in a process of increasing its power generation capacity to avoid impairing the economic development goals of this sector. The energy challenge is not new, and the national grid is expected to be under pressure until the constructed power stations are operations. In the interim, the aquaculture and fisheries sector will have to take calculated risks when conducting its business.

- The Department should be in a position to explain on whether the currently implemented Operation Phakisa Projects face any potential threat from energy supply. Furthermore, there should be clarity on how small-scale fishers would be assisted to have back-up power supply.

3.6.2 Revitalising agriculture and the agro-processing value chain

There are several projects proposed by the Department that respond to the revitalisation of agricultural colleges, fish hatcheries, fishing harbours and irrigation schemes. This revitalisation is mainly the implementation of the Agriculture Policy Action Plan developed by the Department to respond to the National Development Plan and New Growth Path. The revitalisation of colleges is aimed at increasing the throughput of skilled and competent agriculture graduates. Furthermore, the programme seeks to create jobs in rural fishing communities where job opportunities are limited. Agro-processing has generally been a turf dominated by few large commercial companies, and the space has been challenging for the entry of smaller processors. Agro-processing in rural areas will help unlock the economic development potential in rural communities through infrastructure development, increased agricultural product diversification, economic competitiveness, sustainable job creation and poverty alleviation.¹²

- The Department should be in a position to list the planned revitalisation projects during the 2016/17 financial year in the aquaculture and fisheries sector. It should be borne in mind that during the 2015 Limpopo and Eastern Cape oversights, there was no clarity on the committed funds for revitalisation of fish hatcheries and aquaculture demonstration or training centres.
- Small-scale fishers, who are generally in rural coastal towns, are expected to be allocated fishing rights within the 2016/17 financial year. The small-scale fishers will need fish processing establishments for value-addition on their fisheries catch as was articulated in the small-scale fisheries policy and several Government commitments. Plans, timelines and budget allocation towards construction of fish processing establishment should be communicated to the Committee to aid oversight.

3.6.3 More effective implementation of a higher impact IPAP and encouraging private sector investment

The Department of Trade and Industries in partnership with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are implementing the IPAP to increase investments in both marine and freshwater fish farming as well as capture fishery, for both domestic and export markets, in order to create employment. This is made possible through the incentive programme called the Aquaculture Development and Enhancement Programme in order to enhance competitiveness and grow employment. The programme also promotes public and private investments in aquaculture. In the IPAP 2014/15 report, 20 farms were supported and received a total incentive of R87 million, attracting private investments of R384 million, with expected output of 5 000 tons and 525 direct

¹² Department of Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries (2014).



jobs. During the 2016 SONA, the President mentioned that close to R350 000 private-sector investment has been committed in the aquaculture sector.¹³

- In terms of the 2015/16 Operation Phakisa's aquaculture budget, Government was to contribute R288 million towards the implementation of the nine Phase 1 projects, with the private sector contributing R334 million. There is some variance from the expected figures because the President mentioned only R350 000 as the private sector contribution instead of R334 million. An explanation in this regard should be provided together with the monies contributed by Government towards the nine projects, as well as planned contribution in the 2016/17 financial year.
- In 2015, the Department mentioned that it will be developing an aquaculture fund in line with Operation Phakisa and will be managed by the Land Bank. The 2016/17 APP is silent on the development of the Aquaculture Development Fund.

3.6.4 *Unlocking the potential of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs), cooperatives, township and rural enterprises*

The Department has not done well in organising and supporting small-holder producers in the agriculture and forestry sectors. There are concerns that supporting small-scale fishers or small-scale fishing communities, cooperatives and SMMEs as mentioned in the Small-scale Fisheries Policy may prove to be a challenge.¹⁴ The challenge may mainly arise from the lack of clarity on the expected role players and their contributions. The Policy is expected to be implemented during the 2016/17 financial year through fishing rights allocation to registered cooperatives as the small-scale fisheries regulations have been signed off by the President.

- The Portfolio Committee will therefore have to ensure that there is a sound plan, financial and human resource allocation for successful implementation of the plan. The implementation dates of this plan have previously been missed, every year, since the policy was finalised due to poor planning.

3.6.5 *Operation Phakisa*¹⁵

The Operation Phakisa, the Ocean Economy initiative was launched in 2014, seeks to maximally explore and exploit the vast economic potential in the oceans, particularly, the oil and gas resources, transportation, and fish farming. The Department is the lead agent in the implementation of the aquaculture component of Operation Phakisa. The Department seem to be on track towards implementing the 24 aquaculture projects by March 2020. There is a need to ascertain whether funding allocation would be forthcoming under the current economic climate, because there was no mention of aquaculture funds during the 2015 and 2016 State of the Nation Address, however, funds were allocated for the exploration of the oil and gas reserves in the oceans. The total projected cost of implementing the 24 identified projects was R2.87 billion.

In the Operation Phakisa report, 8 key initiatives were identified, which are expected to spur the growth of the sector. One initiative will address the selection and implementation of 24 projects,

¹³ Department of Trade and Industry (2014); Department of Agriculture Forestry & Fisheries (2015); Zuma (2016)

¹⁴ Department of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (2012).

¹⁵ The Presidency (2014a).



improving both the number and productivity of the new farms. Three initiatives relate to the creation of an enabling regulatory environment, and others focus on funding support, increasing skills pool and awareness and improving access to markets. The Aquaculture Lab aims to grow sector revenue from the current R670 million to R3 billion; production by 20 000 tonnes; jobs from the current 2 200 to 15 000 and ensure increased participation to support transformation in the sector by 2020. By March 2016, nine “ready-to-operate” existing projects were expected to be implemented within twelve months as part of the Phase 1 Projects of Operation Phakisa. The President reported during SONA 2016 that nine aquaculture farms were already in production. These farms are located within the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Western Cape and the Northern Cape.¹⁶ The Operation Phakisa Lab report states that 6 aquaculture projects (4 new projects and 2 existing projects) are going to be implemented between April 2016 and March 2018 as the second phase (12 -24 months). Thereafter, twelve aquaculture projects of two to four years will be implemented from April 2018 so that the total of operational projects under Operation Phakisa are 24 by March 2020.

- In the 2016/17 APP, the Department plans to support five (five out of nine Phase 1 projects) and implement three (three of the four Phase 2 projects) aquaculture projects. An explanation for supporting five out of nine Phase 1 projects is required. How were the 4 projects chosen and where are they located? How many jobs were created in Phase 1 against the target of 337 new jobs? The Committee should keep in mind that a total of 513 new aquaculture jobs are supposed to be created during the 2016/17 financial year under Operation Phakisa.
- Parliament may need to be informed of the extent of funding new aquaculture operations and the level of transformation and skills development among the historically disadvantaged in the funded projects and other related conditions.
- There should be clarity and details on whether the reported farms are new farms or already operational farms, monies invested in each farm, as well as current and projected output per farm.

The implementation is already underway as some projects were already ongoing in response to other policies. The Department has been actively approaching all regulatory bodies involved in aquaculture to develop a sole and standardised process of governing aquaculture activities. To this effect, a draft aquaculture legislation has been developed and is still undergoing consultation. Other national departments have been consulted and amicable solutions relating to aquaculture species and environmental impact assessments reached in order to ease and shorten the permitting process.¹⁷

4 THE 2016/17 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN

There are 11 main targets set to be achieved during the 2016/17 financial year, including the target of creating 600 Working for Fisheries jobs (although not listed among major targets in the APP). The targets include, among others, the implementation of the supporting eight or nine Operation Phakisa projects, issuing fishing permits to nine fishing sectors, recovery of two priority fish stocks, allocation of fishing rights to small-scale fishing cooperatives, and implementation of the Integrated Fisheries Security Strategy as part of Operation Phakisa’s Marine Protection Services and Governance. The

¹⁶ The Presidency (2014a); Zuma (2016).

¹⁷ This information was obtained from the Department during an oversight visit to the Fisheries Management Branch offices in Cape Town on 3 February 2015.



Department further confirmed its commitment to respond to the overarching national policies and programmes. It is commendable that there is now a plan for collective and coordinated enforcement efforts (capacity and resources) among various Government Departments involved on the Operation Phakisa's Marine Protection Services and Governance Lab.

- The Department needs to clarify whether it will be supporting eight of nine Operation Phakisa projects because the 2016/17 MLRF APP (page 16) contradicts the 2016/17 APP of the Department (page 77).
- The Department needs to clarify whether it will be implementing 24 aquaculture projects by March 2020 as outlined in Operation Phakisa or 19 aquaculture projects as outlined in the annual targets for 2016/17-2019/20 period.
- The Department will need to populate the missing information on the strategic objectives and annual targets for 2016/17-2019/20 period that relates to supported aquaculture projects, fishing rights allocation framework and recovery plans for priority stocks. An explanation for not populating the information should be sought.
- The Department has two annual targets that are not broken into quarterly targets, the fishing rights allocation to small-scale fishers and the approval of the Aquaculture Bill. The Department should provide reasons for not breaking these annual targets into quarterly targets.
- The Department has revised downwards its priority fisheries to be rebuilt from four (abalone, hake, West Coast rock lobster and linefish) to two (abalone and West Coast rock lobster). The Department should explain whether the downward revision means the hake and linefish stocks have recovered to healthy and sustainable levels for them to be removed from priority stocks to be rebuilt.
- The Department should explain to the Committee on how it plans closing the gap that will be left by the termination of Ezemvelo's role in compliance, monitoring and enforcement in the KZN coast. The 2016/17 APP is silent on the fisheries protection mandate in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

5 BUDGET ANALYSIS

The budget of the Fisheries Management Branch of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is made up of funds from the National Treasury and revenue generated from the fisheries sector. The medium term expenditure estimate shows a possibility for an increase in the National Treasury allocation from the current R458.6 million in the 2016/17 financial year to approximately R498 million in the 2018/19 financial year. A significant portion (R241.8 million ≈ 53 per cent) of the financial allocation to the Fisheries Management Branch will be transferred to the Department's Entity, the Marine Living Resources Fund (MLRF). The estimate total revenue of the MLRF is expected to increase from the R421.8 million during the 2016/17 financial year to R465.5 million in 2018/19 financial year. The prioritised area will be enforcement and compliance operations in the priority fisheries (hake, abalone, West Coast rock lobster and linefish), job creation on rural and coastal communities, and growing aquaculture. A total of R349 million has been allocated towards the operations of the fisheries research and protection vessels in the medium term.¹⁸

¹⁸ National Treasury (2016).



The Branch received 7.24 per cent of the total departmental budget allocation in the 2016/17 financial year. The Branch experienced a marginal decrease in the budget from R465.3 million in the 2015/16 financial year to R458.6 million in the current financial year. This reflects a nominal decrease of R6.7 million and a real decrease of R35.1 million (factoring inflation), translating to about 1.44 per cent nominal percentage decrease and 7.54 per cent real reduction in the budget allocated to the Branch in the 2016/17 financial year.

There is no specific reason for the drastic reduction in the budget, however, it may be assumed that it is part of the general reduction approved by Cabinet on various goods and services as well as compensation of employees or subsistence and travelling. In some instances, budgets were cut due to lack of verifiable service delivery evidence. Based on the available information, the fisheries research work, particularly on offshore and inshore marine resources that often require subsistence and travelling and overtime was not affected by the budgetary changes. Furthermore, the reduction in the budget on goods and services seem to be doing negligible effect on fisheries and aquaculture work. In contrast to the marginal decrease, the cost of maintenance and operation of the vessels is expected to increase as aging vessels tend to cost more, in particular, the FRS Africana. Furthermore, the costs of maintenance and operation are expected to be higher as most because all departmental vessels will presumably be operational this year.

The only sub-programmes that shows a real increase is the Management (31 per cent), Aquaculture (8.12 per cent), Marine Resource Management (2.71 per cent); and Fisheries Research (1.81 per cent). However, a notable real decrease was observed in the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (-9.4 per cent); and the MLRF (-12.31 per cent) in the current financial year. Of all the sub-programmes within the Branch, the MLRF and the Monitoring, Control and Surveillance suffered a significant decrease, respectively which may cripple the execution of core functions such as fisheries resource protection and general law enforcement.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Annual Performance Plans are aligned with the mandate of the Branch, however, the allocated budget may not enable maximum service delivery as mandated by the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No 18 of 1998). The implementation of the Working for Fisheries Programme, Integrated Fisheries Security Strategy, aquaculture projects, and fisheries research (22 fisheries, new fisheries and aquaculture) which are all aligned with the NDP would require an increased budget. The current budget, the termination of Ezemvelo contract and the standing moratorium of filing of vacancies does not support the mandate of the Branch. The financial and human capacity shortages do not advance the course of achieving the 2030 vision of the NDP and may also impact on the achievement of the 2020 Operation Phakisa goals. The Department is implementing the Small-scale Fisheries Policy despite having many issues that need to be clarified and understood in relation to the implementation plan, fisheries resource availability, cooperatives support, infrastructure and funding, etc. There should be concerted effort to adequately disseminate information to small-scale fishing communities to calm the prevailing uncertainty.



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