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**Report on the Bursary Programme of  
the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE)  
for 2024 and cumulative from 2018**

**November 2024**

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## OVERVIEW

A Bursary and Internship Programme was established in 2018 by the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) to support Namibian post-graduate students in the broad environment sector. The programme has grown in the number of students supported each year and the amount invested in student support. It is the only means of support for post-graduate students from low-income backgrounds studying in the environment sector.

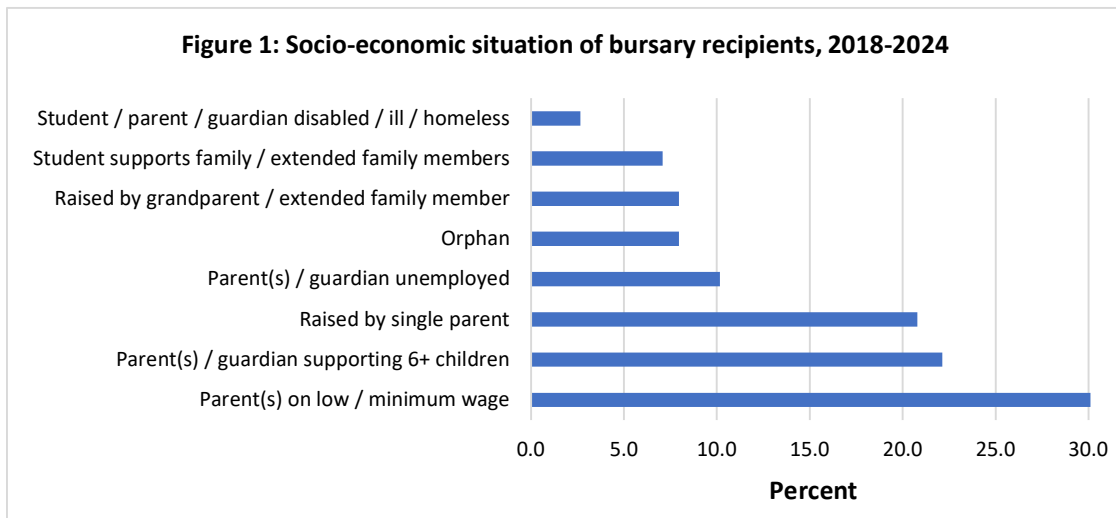
In this report we provide information on the 2024 bursary programme as well as cumulative information since the inception of the programme. The report is rich in tables and figures. A busy reader will get the gist of this Bursary Programme and its achievements by scanning these tables and figures – a process that should take less than 5 minutes.

Funds to support bursaries and internships are raised from the corporate and business sector in Namibia, and from foundations overseas. The amount of funds invested in bursaries and internships, and the number of bursaries awarded are shown in Table 1. All funds raised for bursaries are used for this purpose – there are no overheads or management fees, as the core costs of the NCE are fully covered from other sources.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
<b>Amount (N\$)</b>	688,432	1,095,586	1,084,266	1,324,916	1,464,324	1,556,957	1,491,986
<b>No. bursaries</b>	13	22	30	34	40	42	45

The following aspects of the NCE Bursary Fund are pertinent:

- All students supported come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some are orphans, some have only one parent (usually a mother) and all have no surplus resources to support their children’s studies. Indeed, many of the bursary holders have part-time jobs to help support their families (Figure 1).



**Note** – the percentages add up to more than 100 because some students fall into more than one category, e.g. raised by single parent who is on the minimum wage.

- Despite the difficult conditions under which they grew up, all bursary holders are high achievers with above average grades at the end of their primary or Honours degrees. Because of their poor schooling background, many of the students struggled in their first years of university, and then got better and better. They are all intelligent, hard-working, committed, and realise that education is their ticket to a better life – for them and their families. It is from this pool of students that many of the next generation of leaders in Namibia will emerge.
- Many of the students live under challenging conditions, in the informal settlement areas with limited access to water, no proper sanitation, no grid / mains electricity for lighting and little peace and quiet to facilitate studying. Despite all these challenges, we **have not had a single student fail** – indeed, most have excelled. This speaks to the commitment and resolve of these students to use the opportunity afforded by these bursaries to make a difference to their lives.
- There are few other funding options to support post-graduate students in the environmental (and most other) sectors. The Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF), a parastatal body established under the Ministry of Education, currently provides support to mainly undergraduate students. Since the establishment of the NCE's Bursary Fund seven years ago, the Fund has provided 226 bursaries to over 120 post-graduate students studying in the conservation and environment sector. Bursaries are awarded on an annual basis. Most Masters courses are two years, and Doctoral courses at least three years. Preference is given to existing bursary recipients for the completion of their degree courses, which explains why there are more bursaries awarded than students.
- Over the life of the Bursary Fund, 62% of bursary recipients have been women. This has not been intentional; women have simply emerged as better candidates against the bursary selection criteria. We are happy with this outcome as (i) women are under-represented in the environment sector workplace, particularly at management level, and (ii) well educated women in leadership positions are good not only for the environment sector, but for families and society in general.
- The Bursary Fund, formally registered as the Training and Bursary Trust Fund of Namibia with the Master of the High Court, is governed by an independent board of Trustees and administered by the NCE. Oversight is thus provided by both boards. This is to ensure high standards of governance and transparency, and strong networks with academia, private sector and civil society. The six Trustees are:
  - Mrs Edla Kaveru (Chairperson): *Director Operations & Finances, Namibia Nature Foundation*
  - Dr Anna Matros-Goreses: *Executive Director Research, Innovation and Partnerships, NUST*
  - Ms Lavinia N. Shikongo: *General Manager IntraHealth Namibia, former UNDP Assistant Resident Representative*
  - Mr Uda Nakamhela, LL.M: *Nakamhela Attorneys, Windhoek*
  - Mr Ignasius /Awaseb: *Manager Corporate Social Investment, B2Gold Namibia*
  - Dr Chris Brown: *CEO Namibian Chamber of Environment*
- We hold the view that education and good mentorship creates a foundation for good environmental management, conservation, good governance and transparent decision-making for the wise use of Namibia's natural resources to help develop the country in a sustainable manner. Graduates with strong technical and life skills are sorely needed in government agencies, academia, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The Bursary programme is making a significant contribution to that ideal.

## ABOUT THE NAMIBIAN CHAMBER OF ENVIRONMENT

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The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) is a membership-based non-governmental organisation established as a Voluntary Association and body corporate separate from its Members (*universitas personarum*) under Namibian Common Law. Its Members constitute the “Council”, which is the highest decision-making organ of the NCE. The Council elects Members and independent specialists to serve on an Executive Committee at each AGM. The Executive Committee has all the necessary power to oversee and give strategic direction to the Chamber between AGMs.

The NCE currently has a membership of 78 environmental NGOs and national programme coordinators, comprising 65 full members (registered Namibian NGOs) and 13 associate members (non-Namibian organisations and individuals). The Bursary Fund is a collective contribution from the entire membership towards investing in young Namibians and preparing them for future service to the environmental sector.

Further details about the NCE are available in the 2023 Bursary Fund report and on the NCE website at [www.n-c-e.org](http://www.n-c-e.org).

The Bursary Fund is one initiative under the NCE’s operational objective and strategic programme area to *build environmental skills in young Namibians through training and mentorship*. Another recent initiative is the establishment of the **Namibian Youth Chamber of Environment**, a dynamic group of students, young professionals and job seekers (18-35 years) who are eager to take up the baton for the environment and biodiversity conservation during their studies, within their communities and in their professional settings. Current membership stands at 112 individuals and two youth organisations. For more information, see their website at <https://youth.conservationnamibia.com/>.

The bursary and internship programme and the Namibian Youth Chamber of Environment are both important investments for the future of Namibia’s environment and sustainable development for both current and future generations.

## BACKGROUND ON THE BURSARY FUND

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The Bursary and Internship programme was initiated in the last quarter of 2017 for implementation in the 2018 academic year. The programme provides financial support to outstanding young men and women who have chosen to study for a career in the fields of environment and sustainable development. Priority is given to disciplines of study such as conservation biology, biodiversity, wildlife, forestry, sustainable agriculture, water and fisheries, climate change and risk management, as they are the core aspects of the environment. The programme is however not limited to conventional fields but also support students studying environmental engineering, environmental law, and social, financial, economic and business studies linked to natural resources, environment and sustainable development.

In 2019, a separate Bursary and Training Trust was registered with the Master of the High Court, under a separate board of Trustees, with administrative services provided by the NCE. The growing demand for financial support to students, and the persistent failure of the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF – a state-owned enterprise) to provide adequate and efficient funding, especially at post-graduate levels, highlights the need for civil society and the private sector to scale up bursary funding and related support to students.

In the first few years of the programme, the NCE prepared two reports annually for transparency and accountability purposes, and to assist us to fine-tune the administration of the programme. The NCE now produces one consolidated report per year, which also provides cumulative information over the life of the programme to date, in this case, 2018-2024. The reports are provided to the NCE and Bursary Fund boards, to sponsors and donors, NCE Members and colleagues in the sector, relevant government agencies and to the general public via the NCE website, Facebook and media releases.

### Bursary programme outreach

In September / October each year, the NCE bursary fund for the following academic year is announced via an advertisement in national newspapers, on notice boards at local universities and on social media platforms, e.g. <https://www.facebook.com/namchamberofenvironment>. These Facebook announcements receive over 80 primary shares to other social media platforms and then further dissemination. This public outreach approach attracts a growing number of applications each year. Deadline for applications is about mid-November, as this gives the applicants the opportunity to get provisional acceptance letters from academic institutions to which they have applied, and for the selection process to be completed before the Christmas break, so that both successful and unsuccessful students are aware of the results of their applications and can plan accordingly.



## Bursaries Offered

**The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE)** is a membership-based umbrella organisation currently representing 74 environmental NGOs and national programmes. One of the eight NCE strategic programme areas focusses on skills development and mentorship of young Namibians. The NCE has set up a bursary programme to support motivated postgraduate students in a broad range of environment disciplines. In 2023 the NCE supported 42 students with bursaries and 6 with internships.

The NCE is offering a similar number of **bursaries** for the **2024 academic year** to individuals who wish to further their studies in the fields of conservation, environment, and sustainable development. Interested applicants should submit a completed application form, a concise motivational letter explaining why they should be one of the selected candidates and provide the required supporting documents. The application form and list of required documents are on the NCE website at <http://www.n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund>. Applications should reach the NCE at [admin@n-c-e.org](mailto:admin@n-c-e.org) on or before **13 October 2023**.

For any queries, please contact us at 061 240 140

**No late applications will be considered**



**Requirements:**

- Applicants must be Namibian citizens.
- Applicants must have completed at least a primary degree and preferably an honors degree or equivalent.
- Applicants must be accepted, or have applied as full, part-time or distance students at an accredited university in the SADC region. Students wishing to study outside the SADC region may be supported at a similar financial level of those studying in the sub-region - the onus will be on the applicant to raise additional funds.
- Preference will be given to students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

### Application submission and approval

Applicants submit a completed application form (downloaded from the NCE website here <https://n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund>), a covering letter, a transcript of their university results to date, a letter of acceptance (or provisional acceptance) from their intended tertiary institution of study, proof of Namibian citizenship (e.g. their identity document) and any other supporting documentation. Submission is done usually via email but hard copy may also be delivery to the NCE office.

A multilevel screening process is done on all applicants to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants are assessed and scored using the following criteria:

- ✓ Namibian citizen
- ✓ appropriate field of study
- ✓ academic achievements to date
- ✓ financial need
- ✓ evidence of commitment and passion for the sector
- ✓ leadership potential
- ✓ longer-term goals and plans

Top rated candidates are placed on a short-list. An interview is held with each short-listed candidate to *inter alia* clarify and confirm the information they provided in their application, get a more complete understanding of their financial needs, discuss their study objectives, choice of university, projects (and where appropriate to discuss internships and mentoring), their longer-term ambitions, and to work through their budget. Based on these meetings, the final list of successful applicants is prepared, budgets confirmed and offers made. Under COVID-19 conditions, most interviews were telephonic. Post-COVID, they are both in-person and telephonic for students outside Windhoek.

An agreement is prepared, personalised to each successful applicant, and the conditions of the agreement are explained and discussed prior to signing. Academic fees are paid directly to each academic institution, referencing the student's name and university number. The student is provided with a letter of commitment for the bursary and proof of payment of their academic fees, for when they register at the start of the academic year. Payment for accommodation, transport and other items of support are made in tranches through the academic year to the student's personal bank accounts. Students are obliged to report back on their academic progress throughout the year, to notify the NCE if they receive additional bursary support and to inform us immediately if anything should arise (including personal issues) that may impact on the successful completion of their studies.

### GROWTH OF THE BURSARY FUND

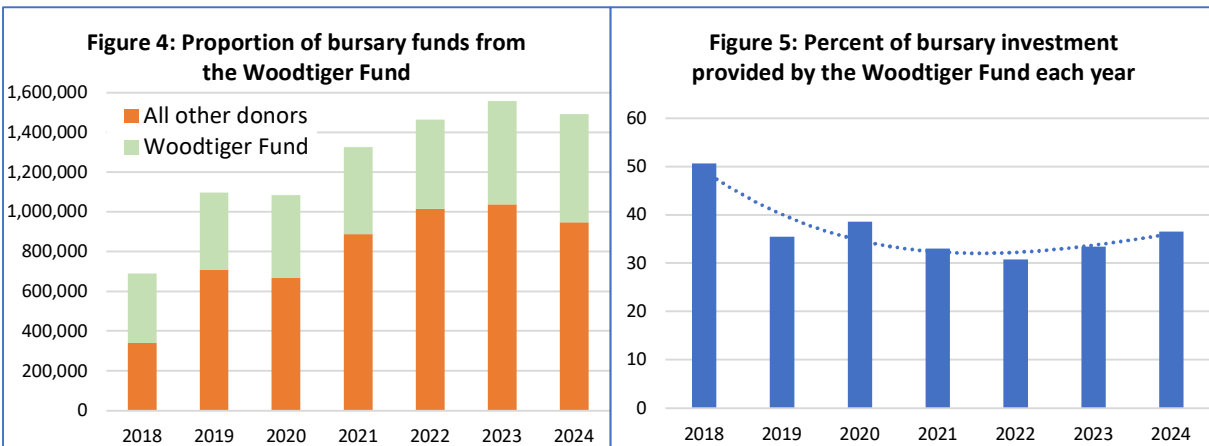
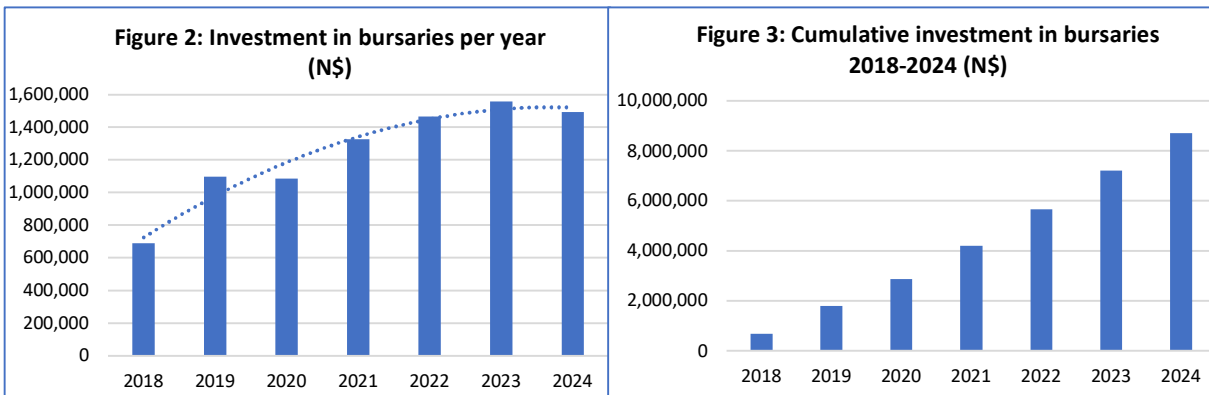
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2024 is the seventh year of operation for the Bursary Fund. The growth of the fund, in terms of resources allocated, student applications received, and bursaries provided, is shown in Table 2. Existing bursary holders going into their second year of study (most Masters courses run over two years, Doctoral courses over three or four years) receive preferential support providing they have

passed their courses and/or made adequate progress on their thesis work. About 64% of bursary recipients are supported for two or three years.

<b>Table 2: Annual and cumulative investment (N\$), Woodtiger Fund contribution, number of applicants and number of recipients annually and cumulatively 2018-2024</b>							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Annual investment (N\$)	688,432	1,095,586	1,084,266	1,324,916	1,464,324	1,556,957	1,491,986
Cumulative investment (N\$)	688,432	1,784,018	2,868,284	4,193,200	5,657,524	7,214,481	8,706,467
Woodtiger Fund investment (N\$)	348,432	388,586	417,910	437,475	450,000	520,200	545,000
Percent Woodtiger	51	35	39	33	31	33	37
No. applicants	49	108	133	161	256	244	285
No. Students supported	13	22	30	34	40	42	45
Cumulative No. Students supported	13	35	65	99	139	181	226
% successful applicants	26.5	20.4	22.6	21.1	15.6	17.2	15.8

A total of N\$8.7 million has been invested in bursaries over the past seven years (Figures 2 and 3). The investment has now reached an annual plateau of between N\$1.4 and N\$1.5 million, and about 40-45 bursaries per year.

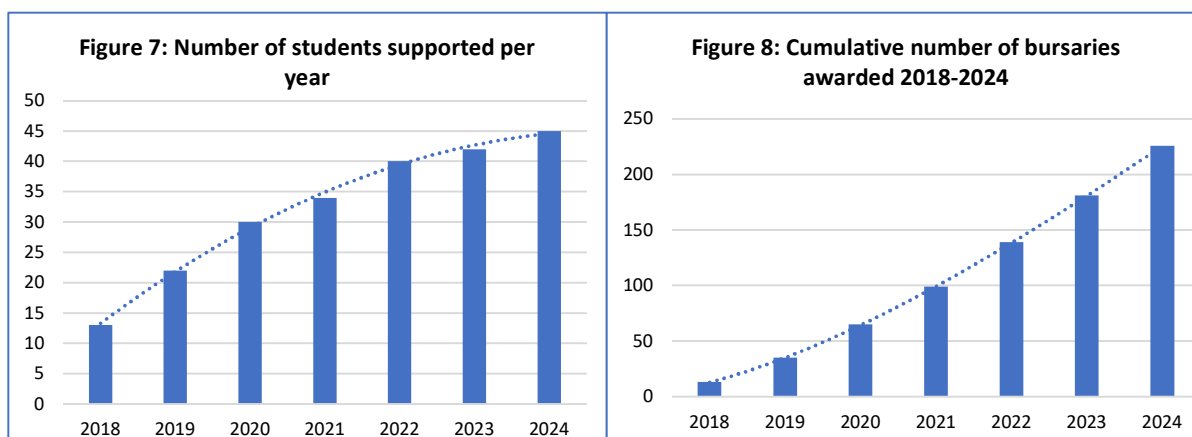


The Woodtiger Fund contributed about 50% in 2018 and for the past four years has stabilised at about 35% per year as contributions from other donors have increased (Figures 4 and 5).

Ten donors have contributed to the Bursary Funds since its inception (Figure 3). Our **anchor donor** is **B2Gold Namibia**, while key long-term donors are the Woodtiger Fund, TotalEnergies and Bannerman Resources. Their confidence in the NCE and the Bursary programme has enabled the NCE to attract further funding from other corporate donors in Namibia, and to have a significant impact on the lives of many young Namibians.

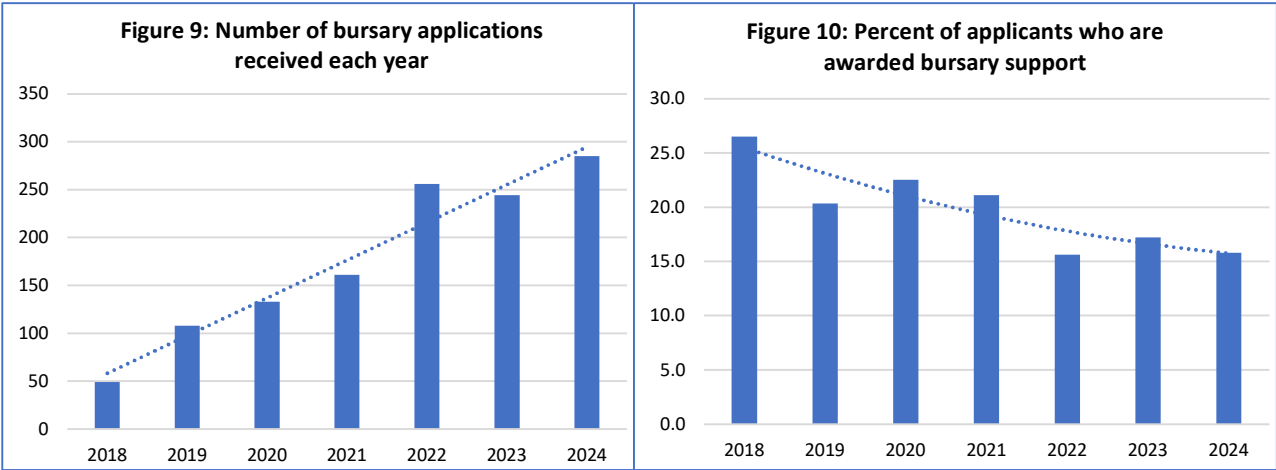


The number of students supported each year has risen, from 13 in 2018 to 45 in 2024. In total, 226 bursaries have been awarded over the life of the programme (Figures 7 and 8).



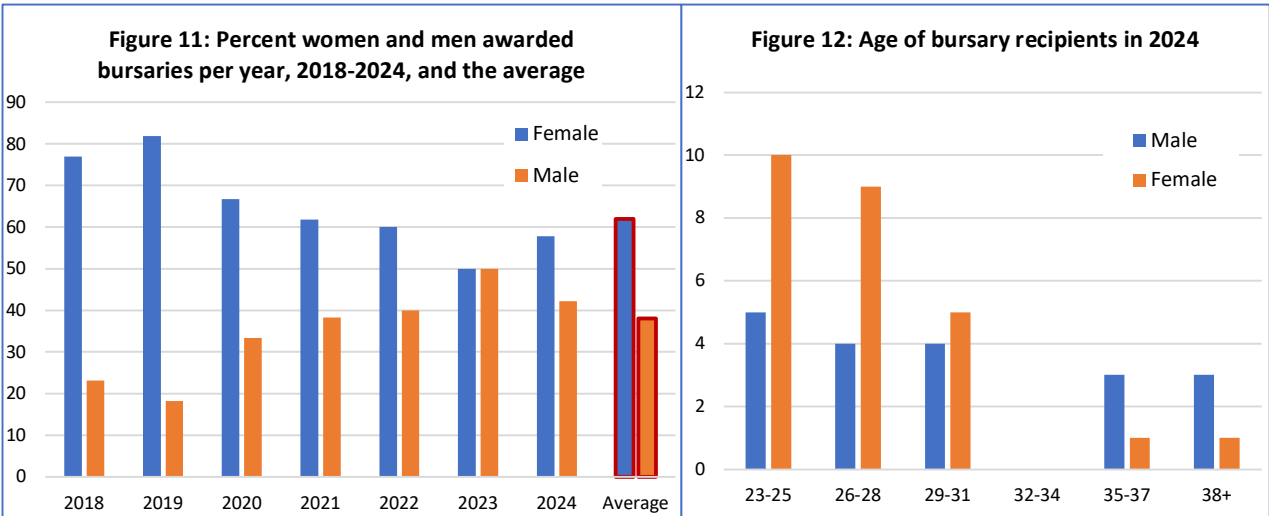
As the bursary programme has become better known, so has the number of applications increased each year, reaching 285 in 2024 (Figure 9). Despite the increase in funding and number of bursaries awarded, the percent of successful applications has declined from 25% in 2018 to about 15% in the past three years (Figure 10). This has led to greater competition for bursaries, with one in six applicants being successful.





**RECIPIENTS OF BURSARY SUPPORT**

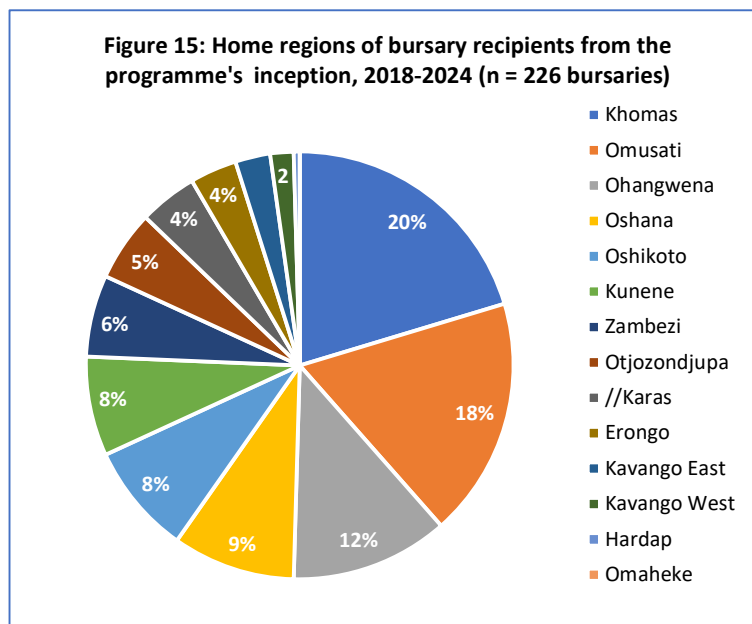
To date 62% of bursary recipients have been women. In the first two years of the Fund, about 80% were women. This declined to 63% in the next three years and declined further to 50% in 2023. In 2024 it climbed again to 58% (Figure 11). The selection process does not consider the sex of the candidates, these figures emerge solely on an evaluation of candidates against the criteria listed in the Background section of this report. The larger proportion of women receiving our bursaries is not an unwelcome outcome, as there are currently more men in the environmental workspace than women. This is particularly true for positions of management. Our bursaries will hopefully contribute to a better balance of men and women in the workplace and in managerial positions in the years ahead.



The median age of bursaries recipients in 2024 is 27 years, with men (29, range 23-41) being on average older than women (26, range 23-41). Over 80% of the recipients are 30 years or younger (Figure 12). The older recipients are PhD candidates.



Since the inception of the bursary programme, most students have come from the Khomas region (20%) followed by the four north-central regions of Omusati (18%), Ohangwena (12%), Oshana (9%) and Oshikoto (8%). The Kunene (8%) and Zambezi (6%) regions are also well represented. The Hardap region has had only one bursary recipient, and the Omaheke regions has had none, despite us looking for recipients from these regions (Figures 14 and 15).



The growing number of recipients from the Khomas region is a result of the high rate of urbanisation particularly in Windhoek. The urban population now accounts for some 54% of the Namibian population and urban centres are growing at up to 9% per year.

## ACADEMIC COURSES AND INSTITUTIONS

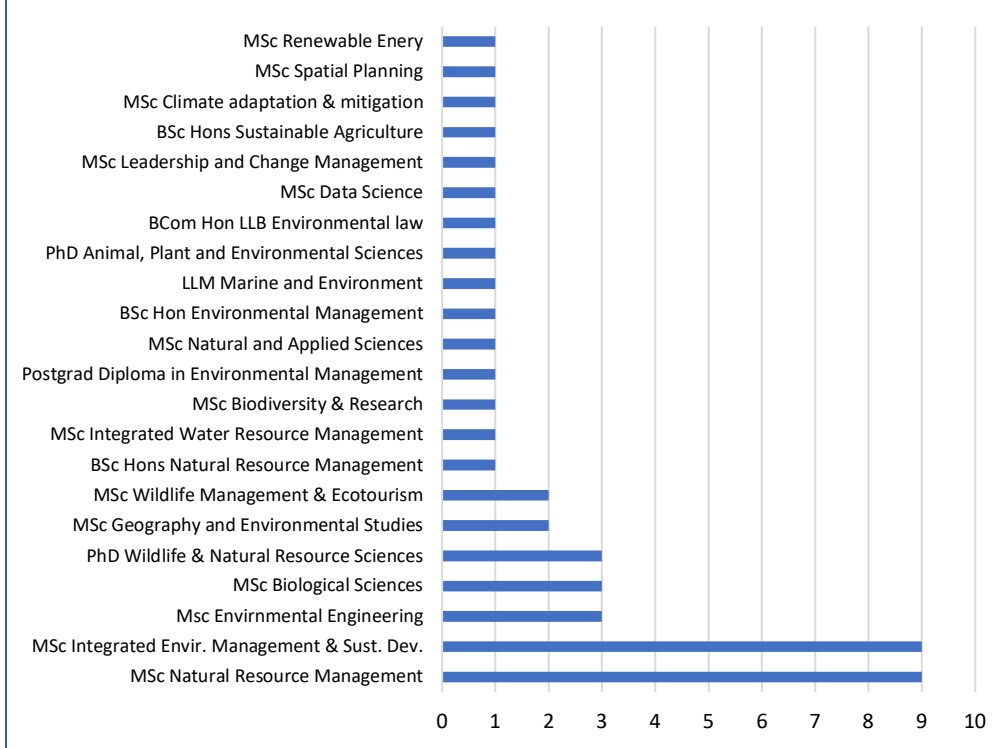
In 2024 three bursary recipients were registered at Honours, 38 at Masters and four at PhD levels. Twenty-two students were in their first bursary year while 23 were in their second year. Students registered for 22 different courses, the most popular being MSc Natural Resources Management and MSc Integrated Environmental Management and Sustainable Development (Figure 16). New courses this year were BSc Hons Sustainable Agriculture, MSc Climate adaptation and mitigation, MSc Spatial Planning and MSc Renewable Energy.

Thirty-nine students (87%) studied in Namibia, most at Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST – 50% of all students), followed by International University of Management (IUM – 22%) and University of Namibia (UNAM – 11%). Six students (13%) registered at three South African universities, Stellenbosch, Wits and Northwest University (Figure 17).

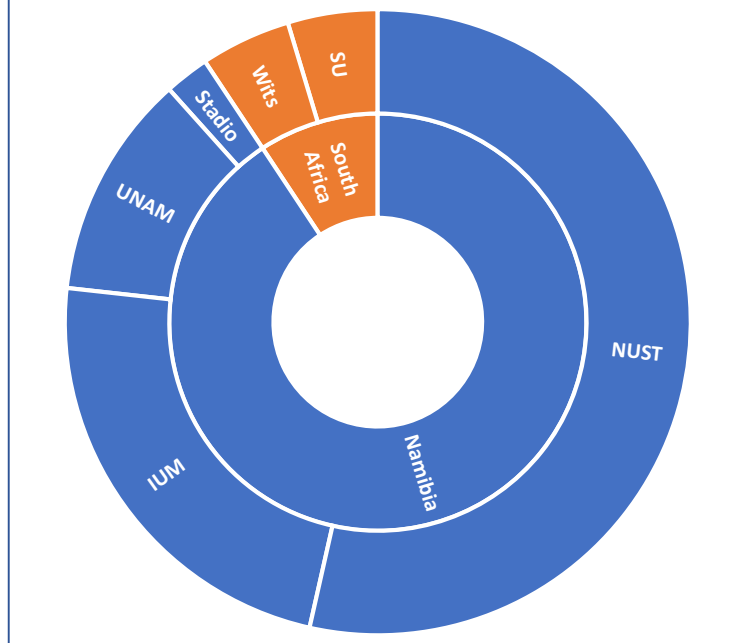
Over the life of the bursary programme, students have registered for 35 different academic courses (Figure 18) and 16 different universities (Figure 19). The most popular courses are MSc Natural Resource Management, MSc Integrated Environmental Management & Sustainable Development, MSc Environmental Engineering, BSc Hons Natural Resource Management, MSc Integrated Water Resource Management, MSc Biodiversity & Research and MSc Biological Sciences.

About 75% of all students studied at universities in Namibia, 23% in South Africa and 2% in Europe. About 48% of all students registered at NUST, 16% at UNAM and 9% at IUM. Stellenbosch was the most popular university in South Africa, attracting 11% of all students.

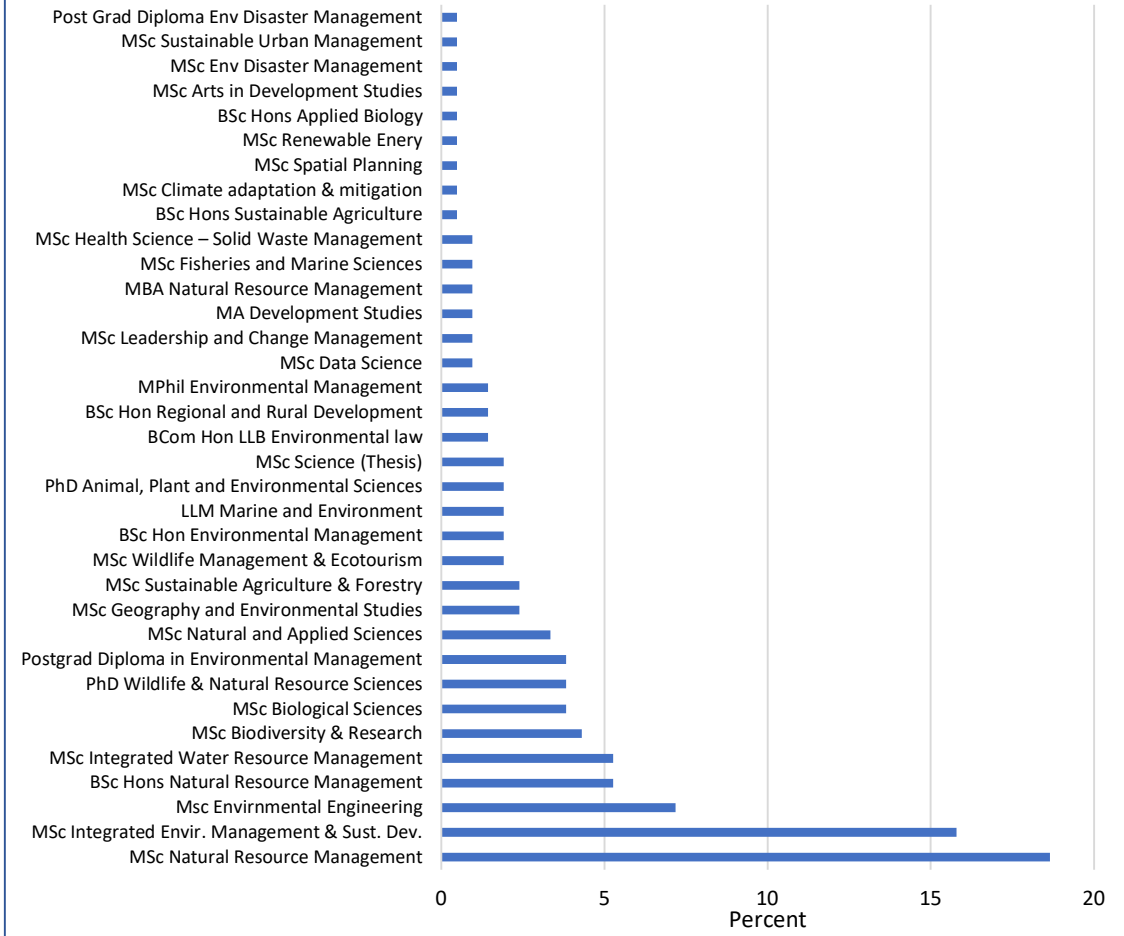
**Figure 16: Courses undertaken by bursary recipients in 2024**



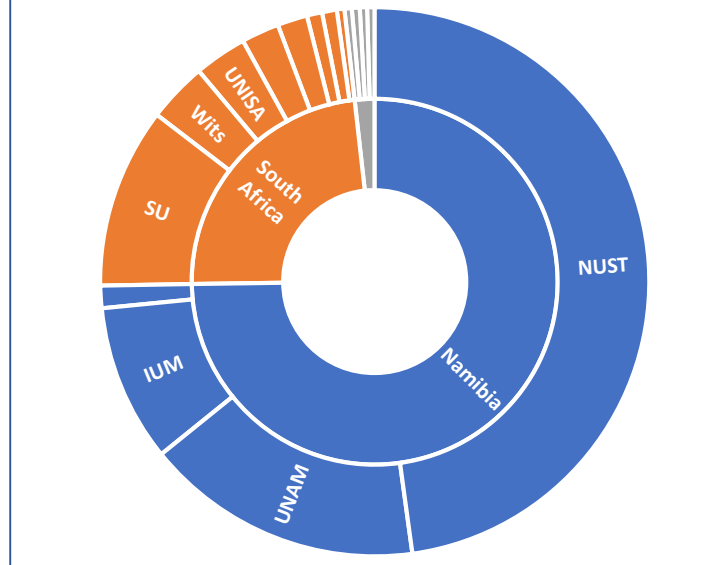
**Figure 17: Academic institutions attended by bursary recipients in 2024 (n = 45)**



**Figure 18: Courses undertaken by bursary recipients over the life of the bursary programme, 2018-2024 (n=226)**



**Figure 19: Academic institutions attended by bursary recipients 2018-2024 (n = 226)**



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

In 2025 we plan to support 40-45 post-graduate students. The number is capped by (a) our capacity to support students properly, and (b) financial resources. This number of students requires an annual investment of about N\$1. 5 million.

The Bursary Fund is working ever closer with Namibian institutions, government (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism), universities (NUST and UNAM), and NGOs such as Ongava Research Centre and Gobabeb Research and Training Centre, to design bursaries to address priority conservation, management and research questions. These institutions provide strong mentorship and supervision. We are also working with overseas universities to facilitate good training and mentorship in areas in which Namibia is weak. Prof Brian Child at Florida University is engaged in a programme to develop skills at MSc and PhD levels in wildlife and environmental economics. Environmental economics remains a priority area for us, but with few interested students.

The process of advertising and selecting candidates for 2025 is starting this week (end October 2024). In addition to the normal advertisements, we are advertising specific priority projects (Table 3). This list is updated each year with input from the partner organisations mentioned above.

<b>Table 3: Priority research topics for 2025</b>
The impact of fencing, particularly electric fencing, on Pangolins and other vulnerable species. (Background information: <a href="https://n-c-e.org/namibian-pangolin-working-group/">https://n-c-e.org/namibian-pangolin-working-group/</a> )
Status, movement patterns, source populations (subspecies) and conservation priorities for Plains Zebra in the eastern Zambezi region. (Background information: <a href="http://conservationnamibia.com/blog/b2020-zebra-migration.php">http://conservationnamibia.com/blog/b2020-zebra-migration.php</a> )
Develop of best practices for reforestation of deciduous woodlands in north and north-east Namibia.
Ecosystem impact of invasive alien plants in key areas of Namibia and recommended actions. (Background information: <a href="https://n-c-e.org/namibian-invasive-alien-species-working-group/">https://n-c-e.org/namibian-invasive-alien-species-working-group/</a> )
Testing the potentially lethal effect on large birds of electricity pylon design and configuration. (Background information: <a href="https://conservationnamibia.com/articles/birds-and-power-lines-2022.php">https://conservationnamibia.com/articles/birds-and-power-lines-2022.php</a> )
Ecology and status of the Striped Polecat <i>Ictonyx striatus</i> in Namibia. (Background information: <a href="http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193">http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193</a> - pages 122-124)
Ecology and status of the Small-spotted Genet <i>Genetta genetta</i> in Namibia. (Background information: <a href="http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193">http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193</a> - pages 160-162)
Ecology and status of the Aardwolf <i>Proteles cristata</i> in Namibia. (Background information: <a href="http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193">http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search/27193</a> - pages 78-82)
An economic analysis of wildlife restocking (translocations to Conservancies and adjacent protected areas) in Namibia.
Comparative economics of Etosha National Park to assess current policies and approaches and recommend changes for income generation of reinvestment in park management and development.
An economic assessment of tourism and low-value mining in conservancies and protected areas to guide appropriate land use and decision-making.
Macro and micro plastic pollution of rivers, urban areas, remote locations, biodiversity hotspots, and the marine environment.
Criminology studies on wildlife and environmental crimes and convicted criminals in Namibia. (Background information: <a href="http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search-wildlife-crimes">http://the-eis.com/elibrary/search-wildlife-crimes</a> )

Economic and ecological consequences of open versus closed system wildlife land-uses, and associated wildlife management implications. (Background information: <a href="https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-10948-5_18">https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-10948-5_18</a> )
Identification of ecological corridors in the greater Etosha landscape across multiple land uses using Remote Sensing tools. (Background information: <a href="http://the-eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/The%20Biodiversity%20Economy%20in%20selected%20landscapes%20in%20Namibia%20Project.pdf">http://the-eis.com/elibrary/sites/default/files/downloads/literature/The%20Biodiversity%20Economy%20in%20selected%20landscapes%20in%20Namibia%20Project.pdf</a> )
Vulture movements as indicators of land management effectiveness and land-use changes.
Case studies of effective and ineffective stakeholder engagement in Environmental Impact Assessment practices in Namibia
Perceived threats and benefits of boundary fence removals between Parks, freehold farms and communal land. (Background information: <a href="https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-10948-5_18">https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-10948-5_18</a> )

During 2025 we will arrange the second Bursary Fund Alumni event to which we invite all present and past bursary recipients, give them an overview of the programme, invite Alumni to give short presentations on their theses and award prizes to those who have performed most impressively.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We are most grateful to all our donors for the amazing support you have given to the NCE and via the NCE to this Bursary Fund. It has made a huge difference to the lives of so many young Namibians from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their academic progress would not have been possible without this support. From a national perspective, the fund is targeting both highly motivated and high-performing candidates who have great potential for making meaningful contributions to conservation and wise use of natural resources at technical level and later in leadership positions. In years ahead they may well go into other sectors such as business and politics. Having environmentally literate and concerned leaders across society is a priority for the future of sound conservation and sustainable development in Namibia.

We thank the Bursary and Training Fund Board of Trustees, and the Executive Committee of the NCE, for their commitment and strong support. We also extend a special word of thanks to B2Gold, our anchor sponsor, and the Woodtiger Fund, a special sponsor since the start of the bursary programme.

**Henriette Krohne-Frey and Chris Brown**

October 2024

