



WGA – AN MTC SUBSIDIARY LAUNCHES “MARIS”– A MONEY TRANSFER AND PAYMENT SERVICE OVER MOBILE PHONE

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04 October 2024 – Windhoek - MTC Maris is a mobile phone-based money transfer and payments service of Windhoek General Administrator (WGA), a subsidiary of Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC), the largest network operator and digital service solutions provider network operator in Namibia.

MTC Maris, (“move with your money”) allows users to deposit, withdraw, transfer money, pay for goods and all with a mobile device. “Maris” *meaning money* in Khoekhoegowab, was designed entirely by WGA - as a product to service people who have mobile phones but no bank accounts.

The service allows users to deposit money into an account stored on their cell phones, to send balances using PIN-secured SMS text messages to other users, including sellers of goods and services, and to redeem deposits for regular money.

Further, MTC Maris offers convenience to the unbanked to load money into a digital wallet, and make payments, purchase goods, cash out, move that money to other participants electronically – without the need for traditional and conventional banking systems.

WGA Board Chairperson, Jerome Namaseb, at the launch said “Namibia is a has incredible potential, but also one where the structure of the financial services industry has left many in the shadows. Financial inclusion is crucial for developing economies like Namibia, as it enables greater access to financial services for marginalized populations, fostering economic growth and reducing poverty. In Namibia, where many citizens are unbanked or underbanked, initiatives aimed at improving financial literacy and expanding access to banking services can stimulate local economies and create job opportunities.

The last Namibian Financial Inclusion survey done by the Bank of Namibia indicated that close to 22% of Namibians are excluded and approximately 65% of Namibians in rural parts of Namibia predominantly rely on cash to receive their income and payments. It is in this context that we proudly introduce a new digital e-money service, designed to bridge this divide. This initiative will serve to address the inclusion for the underserved, offering financial solutions that are not only accessible but tailored to the needs of low-income earners.”

Minister of Finance and Public Enterprise, Hon. Iipumbu Shiimi, labelled the launch of MTC Maris as towards economic inclusivity and commended WGA for launching MTC Maris after been granted the license last year. “This is a giant step towards financial inclusion, which is quite crucial for economic growth and development. This speaks to your commitment to serving the people, particularly the underserved or unbanked citizens of this country. A nation that promotes financial inclusion, is a nation that promotes stability.

Since November 2023, when WGA granted license by the central bank, the subsidiary has been preparing the governance and operational structures, systems and skills for the launch of mobile financial services trading as (MTC Maris) or Maris for short. These services will be facilitated by WGA operating independently from MTC with its distinct board of directors, workforce, and corporate identity.

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Media enquiries.

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About Maris.

Maris, Khoekhoe (Nama/Damara) for money is a mobile / device-based money transfer service, payments, and micro-financing service,

Maris is a branchless banking service where customers can deposit and withdraw money from a network of agents that includes airtime resellers and retail outlets acting as agents. Maris is simple and safe, with no monthly fees.

*MARIS is available to all Namibians with an active Mobile device that allows them to navigate on the MTC MARIS platform anytime and anywhere – by dialing the code *140*682#. As a service, Maris enables users to store, send, and receive money using their Mobile devices. No bank account is required, and the service works on every type of Mobile device including 2G/3G feature phones.*

About WGA

WINDHOEK GENERAL ADMINISTRATORS (WGA), A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF MTC, IS AN E-MONEY ISSUER LICENSE HOLDER ISSUED BY THE BANK OF NAMIBIA. WGA IS THE FINTECH ARM OF MTC – WGA OPERATES INDEPENDENTLY FROM MTC.