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Market dominance in Namibia linked to high prices, poor product quality

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MAIN STORY



Market dominance in Namibia linked to high prices, poor product quality

Namibia's heavily concentrated market structure is pushing up consumer prices, limiting choice, and affecting product quality, competition experts have warned.

Speaking at a recent Competition Law Seminar hosted by Candace Competition Law Advisory Services (CCLAS), Director Grace Mohamed said the dominance of a handful of firms across key sectors was a by-product of Namibia's small market size.

"We have an economy where very few firms dominate, and many of these large firms also own several sister companies,"

Mohamed said. "This structure often encourages business practices that are harmful to consumers. When consumers have limited options, they usually pay higher prices and do not always receive the

Crucial Dates

- Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement date:
 - * 13 August 2025
 - * 15 October 2025
 - * 3 December 2025

best products.”

She added that the lack of competition has led to a noticeable drop in quality and product turnover. “Sometimes products arrive late or are of inferior quality. In some cases, items already phased out in South Africa are still sold here. That is a direct outcome of how our economy is structured,” she said.

The Namibia Competition Commission (NaCC) has stepped up its scrutiny of dominant firms in sectors such as telecommunications, cement, retail, and milling.

NaCC Chief Executive Officer Vitalis Ndalikokule said the Commission had recently blocked a deal in the cement sector where a dominant player, already holding a 90 percent market share, tried to acquire a stake in a rival company.

“You are talking about non-compliance, but let’s look at how this plays out in real terms,” he said. “In cement, we saw a company attempt to acquire a stake in a rival firm while holding 90 percent of the market. We blocked it because allowing that deal would have destroyed any chance of fair competition.”

Ndalikokule raised similar concerns in the milling and telecom sectors. “If these firms decide to fix prices or coordinate


their actions, the effects are immediate. We are dealing with basic staple goods, so any form of collusion hurts the consumer directly and severely,” he said.



Retail and telecoms, he noted, are especially skewed. “Small shops cannot match the discounts and reach of dominant retailers. In telecoms, we only have a few providers, which limits competition and raises concerns about service quality and cost.”

State-owned entities are also under increased scrutiny. “We do not treat government-linked firms differently,” Ndalikokule said. “If their size and influence pose risks to market competition, we will step in. That includes mergers and conduct that could limit consumer choice or inflate costs.” He cited cases involving Namport and entities tied to public pension funds and infrastructure authorities.

The mining sector, particularly in light of increasing foreign ownership, is another area the Commission is reviewing, according to Ndalikokule.

The seminar brought together procurement and compliance officers to examine how competition law intersects with public and private sector conduct, and how enforcement can be strengthened to protect consumers.




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Windhoek approves N\$1.7 billion building plans in six months

The value of approved building plans in Windhoek reached N\$1.7 billion by June 2025, almost double the N\$903 million recorded in the first half (1H) of 2024.

According to Simonis Storm junior economist Almandro Jansen, this performance suggests strong investment appetite in the early part of the year, particularly in large-scale commercial and mixed-use developments.

This comes as in Windhoek, the total value of approvals fell by 27% month-on-month to N\$131 million in June, down from N\$178 million in May. While this decline is significant, it comes off a strong base.

“On a quarterly basis, however, the slowdown is more pronounced. The value

of building plans approved in Windhoek dropped from N\$1.2 billion in Q1 2025 to just N\$455 million in Q2,” said Jansen.

He added that whether this marks the beginning of a more cautious cycle or simply reflects project timing remains to be seen, but it will be important to track over the coming months.

In Swakopmund, June saw a rebound in project value, with approvals rising to N\$49 million, up nearly 22% from the N\$26 million recorded in May.

“Nonetheless, the year-to-date total remains subdued at N\$359 million, significantly lower than the N\$2.3 billion registered over the same period in 2024. It's worth noting that the high base last year was inflated by a few large, once-off

projects, and as such, this year's figures reflect a more normalized pipeline," Jansen added.

Building activity across both Windhoek and Swakopmund remains overwhelmingly residential in nature, reinforcing the persistent demand for housing, albeit at a smaller scale.

In Windhoek, residential additions dominated the construction landscape in June 2025, accounting for 73% of total building approvals (115 out of 158 projects).

"This was followed by new housing developments at 10% (23 projects), boundary walls at 7.5% (12 projects), and

commercial developments at just 4%. Most of the activity was concentrated in suburbs like Khomasdal, Katutura, and Klein Windhoek, areas that continue to absorb steady demand for incremental housing improvements and densification," Jansen said.


He noted that this pattern points to a housing market that is active but heavily driven by low- to mid-scale expansions, rather than large-scale developments.

The number of buildings completed in Windhoek by June 2025 totalled 223, which is significantly down from 577 during the same period in 2024. However, the value of completed projects rose to N\$441 million, up from N\$319 million in 2024.

"This shift suggests a clear pivot toward smaller-scale, higher-value projects, particularly residential upgrades, densification units, and possibly boutique commercial builds rather than the broader volume of completions seen in previous years," Jansen said.

Quarterly performance, however, indicates some cooling. The value of buildings completed in Q2 2025 came in at just N\$104 million (from 126 projects), compared to N\$336 million in Q1 from only 97 projects.

"This sharp decline in total value despite a higher number of completions reinforces the view that developers may be scaling back project scope or shifting toward more cost-conscious designs," Jansen said.



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NamRA recovers N\$2.3m in three months through whistleblower reports

The Namibia Revenue Agency (NamRA) recovered N\$2.3 million within a three-month period from April to June 2025, following 37 reports submitted through its Whistleblower Hotline.

"A total of N\$15 million in assessments was raised during the period, bringing overall recoveries since the hotline's inception to N\$5.7 million," said NamRA's Manager for Communications and Stakeholder Engagements, Tonateni Shidhudhu.

He said 54.05% of the reports involved tax evasion, followed by fraud-related cases at 13.51%. Meanwhile, complaints linked to unfair business practices and alleged corruption or bribery each accounted for 8.11%, while 5.41% were related to general compliance issues.

"Reports concerning general assistance,

unethical behaviour, financial irregularities, and suspicious employment credentials each made up 2.70% of the total," he said.

The Whistleblower Hotline continues to be an effective tool for building a culture of integrity and public trust since its inception.

"During this period, we received several tipoff reports across different channels, showing that the public is actively participating in the fight against tax and customs and excise-related misconduct," Shidhudhu said.

He added that each report received plays a crucial role in supporting our efforts to detect, prevent, and respond to unethical behaviour.

The development comes as NamRA intensifies its efforts to combat tax evasion and financial misconduct through its whistleblowing hotline, launched in May 2023.

People before projects

By Hileni Amadhila

No matter how groundbreaking your strategy is or how bulletproof your execution plan may seem, if you ignore the human factor, your stakeholders, your project is already halfway to failure.

Stakeholder management is often treated as a checklist: identify them, inform them, involve them, influence them. But when we reduce people to processes, we lose the very thing that makes them buy in, trust. People don't just support plans. They support people who value them, listen to them, and show up consistently.

At the heart of effective stakeholder management is empathy. It's understanding that a board member, a team leader, a regulator, and a community member all view the same initiative through very different lenses.

What excites one might concern another. What feels urgent to you may feel disruptive to them. Good stakeholder management is about more than just making everyone happy. It's about making everyone heard. And that often starts with learning to pause before pushing forward.

We sometimes believe that communicating more means communicating better. But it's not just about how often you update stakeholders, it's about the quality of the interaction. Are you tailoring your message to what matters to them? Are you engaging early, or only when you need buy-in? Have you considered not only what you say, but how your decisions impact their priorities?

Stakeholder engagement must be ongoing,



“

Stakeholder engagement must be ongoing, not an afterthought or a phase on the project plan.

not an afterthought or a phase on the project plan. It's a relationship, not a transaction. You earn support by showing integrity over time, not just during high-pressure moments. And when stakeholders feel like partners rather than spectators, they'll not only support your work, but they'll also advocate for it.

True stakeholder management goes beyond influence, it's about alignment. It means letting go of the urge to control every narrative and instead creating a space where feedback is welcomed, not feared. It means being transparent when things go off track and courageous enough to change course if that's what's required to stay true to your shared goals.

In a world that's becoming more interconnected and more scrutinised, success is no longer defined by what we build alone, but by who believe in what we're building. Projects will come and go. But the trust you build with your stakeholders will either open or close the doors to the next one.

**** Hileni Amadhila is a Senior Public Relations, Stakeholder and Communications Consultant, Old Mutual Namibia***



Momentum builds ahead of third Namibia Oil and Gas Conference

Preparations are well under way for the third edition of the Namibia Oil and Gas Conference, which is expected to draw energy professionals, delegates and international stakeholders to Windhoek for four days of discussion and networking. The event, themed “From Exploration to Action: Positioning Namibia as the Next Energy Frontier”, comes as the country continues to attract global attention following major offshore oil discoveries. Organisers say the conference will offer valuable insights, promote meaningful dialogue and strengthen Namibia’s position in the

global energy conversation. Economic Association of Namibia (EAN) Chairperson, Jason Kasuto, highlighted the importance of the event in supporting Namibia’s broader socio-economic development. “As the conference has grown in stature and reach, it has sparked the emergence of several influential partnerships and initiatives,” said Kasuto. “We are happy to have seen the signing of various MOUs at our conferences, but what was interesting is that these MOUs also had a pan-African approach. So, we are happy to have seen MOUs with Nigeria [and] Angola being signed.”

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He added that this year's edition will feature a new partnership with the Namibia Youth in Energy Forum, aimed at ensuring that younger voices are included in energy sector discussions.

"We think that they add quite a lot of value in ensuring that the youth voice in the energy sector is heard. And we believe as we grow, potential deals can be signalled via this platform, but we are happy with what we have achieved so far across the pan-African space," he said.

Kasuto also noted that the conference continues to help position Namibia as an attractive player in the global energy market, supported by its natural endowments and political stability.

"Namibia makes it on one end. I think we need to give credit to our stable democracy, our beautiful country, beautiful environment, great weather – especially in August," he said. "But mostly because we ensure that we are bringing top decision-makers in the oil and gas industry internationally... those voices carry a certain global influence, which in turn positions Namibia within the sphere of the market."

According to Kasuto, the event aims to strike a balance between local relevance and international calibre.

"We really aim for our dialogue to reach the masses in the country, but at the same time maintain our international significance and put together an event at a world-class level," he said.

He also encouraged greater public engagement in the energy discourse, saying Namibians should see the value of participation.

"I think that it's important for us to learn, grow and to participate. Let's not shy away from dialogues and platforms as a country. Let us participate so that each one teaches the other," said Kasuto.

"It's not going to employ everyone... but it's definitely going to make a difference, so be part of that difference."

With interest from global energy players and growing momentum domestically, the conference is seen as a key platform for fostering collaboration, empowering local stakeholders, especially youth, and helping shape policy as Namibia emerges as a significant energy frontier.



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Let us protect our meat industry

By Erastus Ngaruka

Livestock production in Namibia primarily includes cattle, sheep and goats. Essentially, the management practices implemented to ensure optimal performance and productivity focus on their health, nutrition and welfare among other aspects.


Livestock health is one of the aspects of economic importance to Namibian farmers as it plays a significant role in the trading of livestock and by-products.

Livestock production in the country, especially the beef production industry, holds a significant share in the Namibian export basket, ranging from live

animals, such as weaners to South Africa, or beef cuts to the lucrative international markets in Europe, for example.

Having enjoyed the worthwhile European markets for years, Namibian beef has also gained access to the United States of America (USA) and the Chinese markets. Moreover, through consistent efforts focused on market expansion and diversification, Namibia was recently accorded another window of opportunity to export goat and sheep meat to China.

This is favorable news for the goat and sheep farmers in the country. This means small stock farmers need to enhance their production capacity to




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penetrate this market and future markets while sustaining existing markets.

Overall, market exploration efforts are underpinned by the animal health and free-range statuses that the Namibian beef industry has promoted and maintained over the years to build and retain consumer confidence.

In addition, the country complies with international trade protocols and the animal health protocols of the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH). This compliance is strengthened by the country's animal health and trade protocols facilitated by regulatory or facilitating authorities such as the Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS) of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Livestock and Livestock Product Board (LLPB), embodying all meat industry stakeholders.

Furthermore, an essential part of the systems that promote and protect the meat

industry includes the FANMeat scheme of LLPB, which has established an assurance of quality and safety of Namibian beef.

This assurance includes a system known as the Namibia Livestock Identification and Traceability System (NamLITS) that enables the tracing of meat or animals back to the farm of origin, among other uses.

To access and maintain Namibian meat markets, farmers need to play a significant role by implementing and adhering to all animal health and trade regulations or protocols. To this end, it is vital for every farmer to develop and use animal health and welfare programs or protocols to enhance productivity and participation in livestock markets.

There are certain aspects that farmers need to consider when developing their programs. Firstly, the prevalence of diseases in their farming environment and the country at large. This includes



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“Notifiable Diseases”, which are diseases that must be controlled through annual vaccinations by law. These diseases include Anthrax, Brucellosis, and Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) among others.

Moreover, these diseases have economic or trade implications, hence, export markets strictly require meat products to come from farming areas that are free of or cleared from such diseases. Farmers should also pay attention to other diseases of concern, including Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), botulism, black quarter, pulpy kidney, and pasteurellosis, among others.

Another animal health practice that should be included in the program is the control of both internal (e.g., worms, flukes) and external (e.g., ticks, mites, fleas) parasites. This is critical as parasites can cause deadly illnesses in livestock.

Moreover, some parasites can negatively affect meat quality, resulting in significant economic losses. For example, “beef measles” in carcasses is caused by a tapeworm that lives in the human intestines and contaminates the environment through human feces. To prevent such contamination, it is therefore crucial to practice proper hygiene on farms through the construction of ablution facilities (toilets).

Lastly, agriculture in Namibia is dominated by livestock production and is regarded as a principal

contributor to the GDP. To this end, protecting this sub-sector not only favors our markets but also the livelihoods of many Namibians, directly or indirectly.

This is a shared responsibility between all role players, including individual farmers, the government and its agencies/institutions, farmers’ unions, traditional authorities, and the population at large.

****Erastus Ngaruka is a Technical Advisor: Livestock & Rangeland Management at Agribank. The views and thoughts expressed in this article are purely of my own and do not represent those of my employer***



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Erongo invests over N\$390 million in roads and infrastructure

The Erongo Region is making significant progress in upgrading its infrastructure, with over N\$390 million currently invested in key road projects aimed at improving connectivity and boosting regional economic activity.

This was revealed by Erongo Governor Natalia / Goagoses during her recent State of the Region Address (SORA), where she outlined ongoing developments across the region.

“Among the flagship projects is the upgrading of Main Roads 36 and 44, which is currently underway at a cost of N\$140 million,” /Goagoses said.

She noted that the 96-kilometre Henties Bay–Uis road, being upgraded to bitumen standard at a cost

of N\$215 million, is now 70.8% complete. Meanwhile, the 32-kilometre Karibib road upgrade has reached 48% completion, with N\$39 million allocated to the project.

She added that infrastructure investment also extended to housing and basic services.

“A parallel N\$75 million investment is being rolled out to construct 200 low-cost houses in towns such as Arandis and Walvis Bay,” said /Goagoses.

“The project includes the development of bulk infrastructure such as water, sanitation and electricity to ensure the homes are fully serviced.” According to her, the houses are expected to be handed over to beneficiaries by the end of September 2025.

Electrification is another key focus, with N\$24 million being invested to connect more than 1,200 erven in informal settlements across Henties Bay, Usakos, Swakopmund and Omaruru.

“In Henties Bay alone, 263 erven are being connected at a cost of N\$15 million,” /Goagoses said.

“Usakos will see 392 connections, and 295 in Swakopmund.” She added that the programme includes subsidised tariffs for pensioners and low-income households to help ease their financial burden.

The Governor expressed confidence in the region’s housing targets.

“All seven municipalities in the Erongo Region are currently constructing housing, and I am confident that we will meet our target of delivering 10,000 houses in this financial year. I’ve seen

the serviced land and ready plots – I believe we’re on track,” she stated.

To support community well-being, /Goagoses also committed to upgrading sports facilities in towns such as Usakos and Karibib.

“This forms part of a broader national effort to improve access to recreational infrastructure across all constituencies,” she said.

The Governor further acknowledged the role of national institutions in supporting economic growth.

“Institutions such as Namport have been instrumental in connecting regions to external markets and easing the process of import and export,” she added.



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10 common accounting mistakes by SME's — and how to avoid them

By Annas-Salom Nangombe

Running a small business means juggling many responsibilities, and accounting often takes a backseat. However, poor financial management can lead to serious headaches — from cash flow issues to tax penalties and even business failure.

Whether you're just starting out or looking to tighten up your financial operations, here are 10 common accounting mistake SME's make and how to avoid them:

1. Mixing Personal and Business Finances

Mistake: Using the same bank account for personal and business transactions makes it difficult to track your company's true financial health.

Solution: Open separate bank account exclusively for your business. By doing this, you will be able to get a true reflection of your company's finance, makes recordkeeping easier and improves accuracy during tax filing or audits.

2. Poor Record Keeping

Mistake: Missing receipts, invoices, and incomplete transaction records can lead to inaccurate financial reports and potential tax issues and non-compliance audits.

Solution: Establish a proper filing system and store hard copies of all



Using the same bank account for personal and business transactions makes it difficult to track your company's true financial health.

financial documents.

3. Neglecting Regular Bookkeeping

Mistake: Most SME's neglect bookkeeping for their business, leading to Inaccurate financial picture, incorrect tax fillings and poor lender's confidence.

Solution: Priorities bookkeeping, update books weekly or monthly, hire or outsource a bookkeeper and make use of accounting software if possible.

4. Disregarding Small Purchases

Mistake: Small Expenses repeated often can total to thousand. Skipping small purchases in your records leads to understated expenses and overstated profit.

Solution: Track every expense, set internal policy by requiring invoices for all purchases, and use petty cash system with strict limits and documentation.

5. Poor Cash flow management

Mistake: Confusing profit with available cash can lead to liquidity issues. Even profitable businesses can run out of cash if aren't managed properly.

Solution: Create a cash flow forecast / Budget and review it regularly. Plan for seasonal changes, delayed payments, and recurring expenses.

6. Un-reconciled Accounts

Mistake: Failing to match your bank statements with your accounting records can lead to unnoticed errors and missing funds.

Solution: Reconcile your accounts monthly to detect discrepancies.

7. Skipping Regular Financial Reviews

Mistake: Without regular reviews, you

might miss financial red flags, growth opportunities, or areas for cost-saving.

Solution: Schedule Monthly (or quarterly) financial reviews with your accountant. Review key metrics like profit margins, cash flow, and expenses.

8. Ignoring Tax filing obligations

Mistake: Missing deadlines for tax filings can result in fines. Late tax filings can trigger interest charges and audit scrutiny from tax authorities.

Solution: Keep a compliance calendar and set reminders. Consider hiring or outsource a tax advisor to help manage filing obligations.

9. Non-documented Loans

Mistake: Failing to document transactions like loans to or from owner(s) can create legal and tax complications. Unrecorded loans may be viewed as undisclosed income, disguised dividends



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or improper withdrawals, leading to tax liabilities.

Solution: Always document these transactions with clear terms and include them in your company records & financial statements.

10. Un-limited Drawings

Mistake: Without a fixed salary, owner's end up withdrawing any amount of money to cover personal expenses. This can drain the company's cash flow and leave the business unable to meet its operational obligations.

Solution: Set a reasonable, fixed salary for the owner based on the company's performance and industry norms. This

helps maintain cash discipline and protects your business's financial health and stability.

Staying financially healthy is crucial to your business's growth and survival. By avoiding these common accounting mistakes, you'll have a clearer picture of your finances, stay compliant with legal obligations, and make smarter business decisions.

** Annas Salom Nangombe is a highly skilled finance, audit, and governance professional with a strong academic background and diverse industry experience spanning banking, corporate governance, finance, internal auditing and financial reporting. He currently serves as the Lead Consultant at Excel Consulting Group, where he advises clients on Tax, strategic financial management, risk, and financial reporting.*

Currently, he is advancing his expertise through a Master's degree in Forensic Accounting (Fraud Risk Management) at the University of Pretoria. In addition to his academic pursuits, he is also in the process of completing his ACCA (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) qualification, further strengthening his credentials in global finance and accounting standards.

IN MEMORY OF PIERRE MARÉ



It is with deep sadness that we at The Brief mourn the passing of Pierre Maré, a valued contributor and respected voice in the world of branding and communication.

Pierre was a regular columnist in our publication, and his insight, wit, and thought-provoking commentary on branding and marketing made a lasting impact on our readers and editorial team alike.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and professional colleagues. His presence will be deeply missed, but his words and influence will live on in the ideas he helped shape.

The Brief editorial team



Livestock marketing drops 53.8% year-on-year in May

Namibia marketed a total of 75,768 livestock in May 2025, reflecting a year-on-year decline of 53.8% from 162,638 recorded in May 2024.

This was also a monthly decrease from 81,763 livestock marketed in April 2025, according to data released by the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA).

This comes as the Livestock Marketed Composite Index increased by 12.0% on a monthly basis, slowing from the 13.5% rise recorded in April 2025.

The Cattle Export to Approved Abattoirs and Butchers Index recorded a monthly growth of 24.8% in May, down from 27.0% in the previous month. On an annual basis, the index contracted by 49.1%.

The Index for Live Cattle Exported on Hoof declined by 11.2% in May 2025, reversing a 3.5% increase recorded in April. On a year-on-year comparison, the index dropped by 77.6%.

Small stock exports to approved abattoirs

and butchers fell by 18.5% in May 2025 on a monthly basis, compared to an 11.8% decline in April. On an annual basis, the index was down marginally by 0.03%.

NSA reported that 9,022 small stock were marketed to export-approved abattoirs and butchers during May 2025.

"Of these, 9,003 animals were sourced from the South of the Veterinary Cordon Fence (SVCF), while only 19 came from the North (N-VCF)," noted NSA.

Live small stock exports declined by 11.0% in May, following a 9.2% decline in April. Compared to May 2024, the index recorded a 57.0% annual decrease.

Meanwhile, the Pigs Slaughtered Index rose by 3.5% on a monthly basis in May, up from the 2.5% increase in April. However, the index was down 0.3% year-on-year.

"A total of 4,383 pigs were slaughtered in May 2025, higher than the 4,236 recorded in April, but slightly lower than 4,398 pigs slaughtered in May 2024," said NSA.

The Market Lens

Enriching Generations

SIMONIS STORM



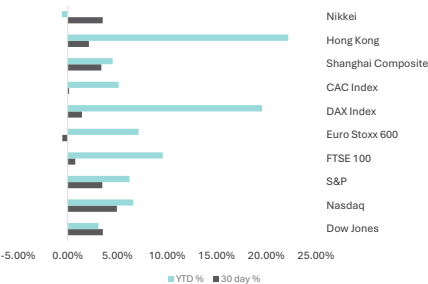
Commodities

Spot Gold	3367.77
Platinum	1422.41
Palladium	1239.45
Silver	32.17
Uranium	72.20
Brent Crude	67.96
Iron Ore (in CNY)	783.50
Copper	9645.50
Natural Gas	3.57
Lithium	8.05

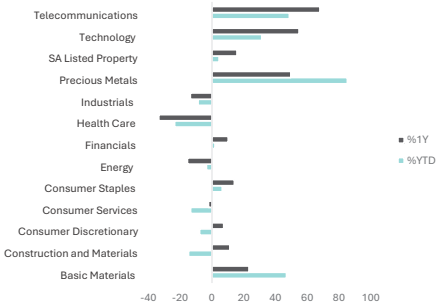
Currencies

USD/ZAR	17.80
EUR/ZAR	19.23
GBP/ZAR	23.94
USD/CNY	7.18
EUR/USD	1.18
GBP/USD	1.35
USD/JPY	147.37
Namibia CPI	3.70%
Namibia Repo Rate	6.75%
Namibia Prime Rate	10.50%

Global Indices in %



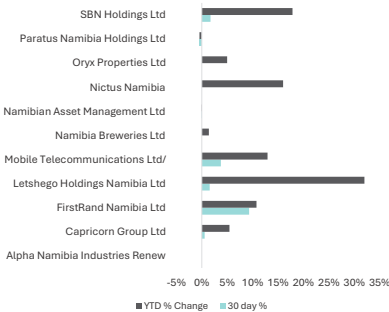
JSE Sectors: Year to Date Performance in %



Today's JSE Top 40 Top & Worst Performers in %



NSX Stocks Performance in %



Today's NSX Overall Top & Worst Performers in %

