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THE BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

Namibia's informal sector worth US$13 billion, contributes 26.5% to GDP

TUESDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2025

MAIN STORY

Namibia's informal sector worth US$13 billion, contributes 26.5% to GDP

Namibia's informal economy now contributes 26.5% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP), representing approximately US$13 billion at GDP purchasing power parity (PPP) levels for 2025.

The data, released by the Ministry of Finance during the launch of the Diagnostic Report on Informality in Namibia, reflects steady growth from 24.7% in 2023, when the sector accounted for an estimated US$8 billion.

Ministry of Finance Executive Director and Chairperson of the National Working Group on Informality, Michael Humavindu, said the 2024 approved National Informal Economy, Startups and Entrepreneurship Development Policy (NIESEP) highlighted

Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement date:**
  * 3 December 2025

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the informal economy as a significant pillar of national production.

He noted that the new diagnostic report builds on that policy, offering the first comprehensive picture of the scale, contribution, and structure of the informal sector across Namibia's regions.

"The data, however, tells a different, undeniable story. This sector is not a side economy; it is a pillar of our national life. It is the engine room where an estimated 58% of our workforce finds their livelihood. It contributes a significant portion of our GDP that demands our respect and full integration," said Humavindu.

He said the report is not just a document but a reflection of the realities faced by Namibians working outside formal employment systems, as the sector continues to be driven by women, who make up more than half of informal enterprises, and youth who are creating their first businesses despite limited access to capital and regulatory barriers.

"This report, the National Diagnostic on Informality in Namibia, is therefore a mirror we hold up to ourselves. It reaffirms a truth we can no longer ignore: Namibia cannot transition to shared prosperity while half its workforce transitions daily between survival and exclusion," said Humavindu.

The Executive Director noted that Namibia cannot effectively diversify its economy without scaling up and propelling, in the most sustainable manner, the bedrock of its indigenous entrepreneurial capital.

He said the report was produced through a participatory approach that involved speaking directly with informal workers, including street vendors, taxi drivers, mechanics, and food sellers.

The process revealed key constraints such as lack of security, financial exclusion, and a burdensome regulatory environment that hinders growth and integration into the formal economy.

"The power of this work lies not only in the diagnosis but in the roadmap it provides — a blueprint that speaks to legal reforms, inclusive finance, fit-for-purpose business registration, spatial justice, and digital inclusion. It is a roadmap that recognises that transitioning to formality is not a punishment, but an invitation into dignity, productivity, and protection," said Humavindu.

He also acknowledged the institutions and partners that made the report possible, including the Government of Namibia, the Bank of Namibia, and the United Nations.

He said the findings will serve as a foundation for legal and financial reforms aimed at ensuring that informal workers are fully integrated into the country's development agenda.

"The informal economy does not need our sympathy. It needs policy. It needs supportive legislation. It needs reform. It needs investment. Above all, it needs respect," said Humavindu.

Deputy Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Ebson Uanguta, said the report provides empirical evidence to guide targeted infrastructure, financial, and social development strategies that reflect the realities of the majority of Namibians.

"This report gives voice to the aspirations and challenges of individuals in our open markets, agricultural corridors, home-based businesses, and informal settlements. It reminds us that for a majority of Namibians, the informal sector is the economy," said Uanguta.

He said the responsibility now rests with policymakers and institutions to transform the report's findings into tangible reforms.

Uanguta urged collaboration between government, regulators, civil society, and the private sector to move beyond dialogue and implement structural solutions that promote dignity and opportunity for informal workers.

NamRA needs N$58.9m to fill vacancies as border operations expand

The Namibia Revenue Agency (NamRA) says it requires N$58.95 million to fill critical vacancies as it expands operations at national border posts.

The agency currently employs 297 staff across 18 border posts and offices but faces an 89-person staffing shortfall following the transition of three border posts from 12-hour to 24-hour operations, which significantly increased manpower requirements.

According to a briefing submitted to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, Security, Constitutional and Legal Affairs, NamRA said the shift in operations has stretched existing resources and made additional recruitment essential to maintain effective border control.

"NamRA had sufficient employees until

three border posts were transformed from 12-hour to 24-hour operations, which required more manpower. The agency is soliciting funds to fill the vacancies, estimated to cost N$58.95 million," the committee report stated.

The update formed part of the committee's oversight report following visits to selected border posts between 18 August and 9 September 2025.

The report noted that while the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises initially lacked details of the National Action Plan for border post improvements, NamRA has since outlined several key initiatives aimed at strengthening border management.

NamRA reported ongoing efforts to upgrade and modernise electronic scanning equipment at all major ports of entry. To build local expertise, nine scanner operators will undergo two weeks of training at the Nuctech Factory in Beijing, China, later this year, while 39 additional staff are set to receive similar training in South Korea.

The agency also confirmed progress in staff development and welfare, including customer care training programmes and the procurement of 11,907 staff uniforms for a two-year cycle. NamRA currently maintains 199 housing units across 15 border posts, but acknowledged that some facilities are outdated.

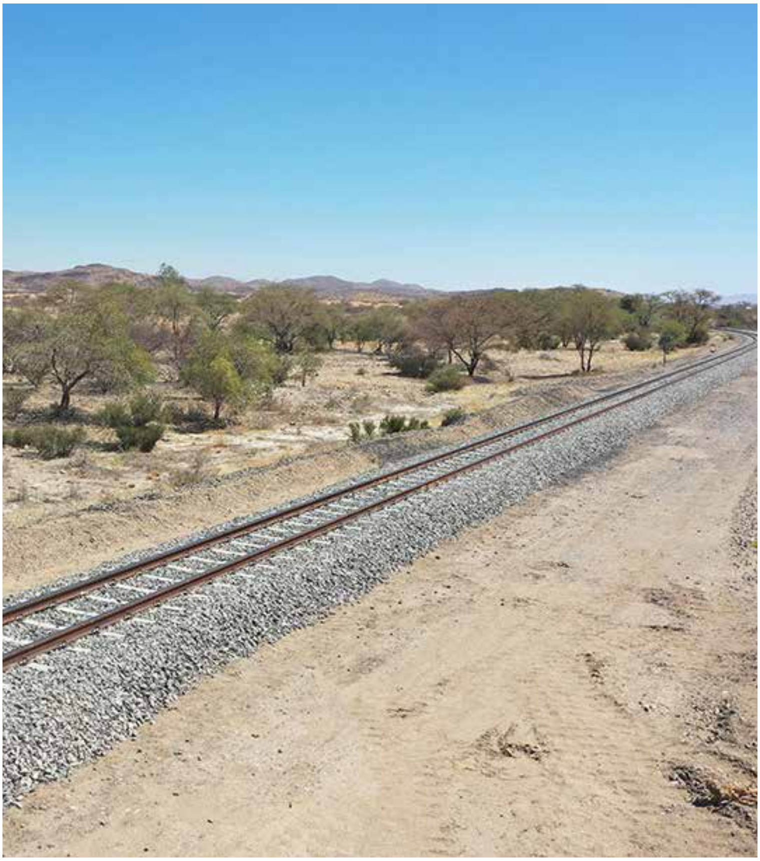
"Refurbishment plans for older units and construction of new facilities at other border posts is an ongoing exercise and is expected to be addressed in the coming financial year. Expected result: improved staff welfare and service efficiency," the report stated.

Under the upcoming One Stop Border Post Infrastructure Programme, refurbishments and new housing developments are planned for key border posts such as Katima Mulilo, Oshikango, and Trans-Kalahari.

To enhance safety, NamRA said it has deployed private security personnel at all border posts to protect staff and state property amid growing security concerns.

The agency also plans to standardise branding across border facilities, beginning with Otjikango and Katima Mulilo, following the successful implementation at Trans-Kalahari/Mamuno.

NamRA said these combined interventions are intended to improve staff welfare, strengthen operational efficiency, and ensure secure, well-managed entry points in line with Namibia's revenue protection and border modernisation goals.



Parliament urges fast-tracking of Namibia's rail and port upgrades

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economy and Industry, Public Administration and Planning has called for priority to be placed on expediting the Railway Master Plan and fast-tracking critical rail upgrade projects, including the Kranzberg–Otjiwarongo line, Windhoek–Gobabis route, and the Trans-Zambezi rail extension.

Committee Chairperson Iipumbu Shiimi said the Ministry of Works and Transport, the National Planning Commission (NPC) and TransNamib must collaborate to restore and modernise Namibia's ageing railway network to improve safety, reliability and support economic growth.

"The Ministry of Works and Transport should collaborate with the NPC, the Ministry of Finance and TransNamib Limited to restore and modernise the ageing rail infrastructure in the country, which is essential for economic growth and for Namibia to be a transport hub. The Windhoek–Gobabis and southern railway routes should be reactivated and upgraded. The Trans-Zambezi rail extension project should also commence without delay," Shiimi said.

He said the upgrades are vital to strengthening Namibia's transport and logistics network, positioning the country as a regional trade hub and enhancing competitiveness under the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6).

The Committee has also called for a review of the rail regulatory framework to align it with the road sector and for a more balanced allocation of resources between road and rail infrastructure.

Shiimi said this would ensure integrated planning and sustainable long-term investment in transport.

At the same time, the Committee urged government to continue expanding the Walvis Bay and Lüderitz ports, which play a central role in regional trade. Shiimi said addressing land shortages in Lüderitz is a priority to support urban expansion and attract new economic investment linked to port growth.

"The Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, in consultation with the NPC and Lüderitz Town Council, must address the constraints of insufficient land for urban expansion and the transformation of Lüderitz, which are needed for infrastructure development due to new investment opportunities," he said.

Shiimi said the Committee views these infrastructure projects as critical to unlocking Namibia's full potential as a strategic gateway for Southern African trade and industrial development.

Strengthening governance in Procurement: A critical imperative for SOEs

By Rosemary Tjombonde-Kakuuai

"Governance, in its essence, is about accountability, transparency, ethical and effective leadership.

Strengthening governance in procurement is crucial for State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), especially in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) business environment.

This landscape is shaped by challenges such as geopolitical tensions, leadership instability, and shifting regulatory frameworks, which impact both the public and private sectors.

In essence, procurement is more than just an ad hoc or operational function; it is a strategic lever that can either uphold or undermine the integrity of an organisation.

The intersection of governance and procurement is yet another elephant in the room that many SOEs must address and realise the impact it might have on the execution of organisational goals. Hence, this is precisely where reform must begin.

Procurement in SOEs often involves large-scale contracts, public funds, and high-stakes decision-making. Without robust governance structures, this space becomes fertile ground for corruption, bribery, and unethical practices.

The consequences are far-reaching, leading to inflated costs, substandard service delivery, reputational damage, and erosion of public trust.

Governance, in its essence, is about accountability, transparency, ethical and effective leadership. When applied rigorously to procurement, it ensures that decisions are made in the public interest, that processes are fair and competitive, and that risks are managed proactively.

Unfortunately, many corporate governance failures in SOEs can be traced back to procurement irregularities, whether it is the awarding of contracts to politically connected entities, the manipulation of tender processes, or the lack of oversight in contract execution.

The linkage between governance and procurement is not incidental; it is structural. A recent World Bank assessment report on Namibia's public procurement system, conducted using the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS), found significant weaknesses, including limited capacity, poorly defined responsibilities, and a lack of transparency. Procurement policies must be embedded within a broader governance framework that includes:

• Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for procurement officials and oversight bodies.

• Independent audit and compliance mechanisms to detect and deter misconduct.

• Transparent reporting systems that

allow stakeholders to monitor procurement activities.

- Ethical codes of conduct that guide behaviour and decision making.

Moreover, board members and executive leadership must recognise procurement as a strategic risk area.

Their oversight should go beyond financial metrics to include ethical performance and compliance with procurement laws and regulations.

Recently, we have seen major developments stemming from public procurement scandals, including the Fish Rot fallout, the recent fuel rot fiasco, the Meatco missing cattle dilemma, the Ministry of Health and Social Services' medical store entanglement, the attempt to direct procurement of the state railway company TransNamib's locomotive, and the Walvis Bay Municipality's pothole tender to mention a few.

The need for reforming procurement governance cannot be overstated. It is not merely a technical issue; it is a matter of national development. Every dollar lost to corruption is a dollar stolen from education, healthcare, housing, infrastructure, and the future of our people.

To restore integrity and efficiency in SOEs, governance must be strengthened at the procurement level. This means investing in capacity building, leveraging technology for transparency, and fostering a culture of accountability. Only then can SOEs fulfil their mandate to serve the public good and drive sustainable development.

Rosemary Tjombonde-Kakuuai holds an MPhil in Corporate Strategy from the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). She is a Certified Procurement with the Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply Chain (MCIPS). She is pursuing a Certified Director credential with the Institute of Directors South Africa (IoDSA). She is passionate about Strategy, Corporate Governance, Strategic Procurement and Leadership. The views expressed in this article are entirely her own. Connect with her on LinkedIn.

Task force given six months to draft Namibia's affordable electrcity strategy

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Economy and Industry, Public Administration and Planning has directed the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy (MIME), in collaboration with the Electricity Control Board (ECB), NamPower, and the Productivity Task Force (PTF) on Energy, to submit a comprehensive electricity plan to Parliament within six months.

Committee Chairperson Iipumbu Shiimi said the plan will outline measures to secure affordable and reliable power supply within the next three years to support Namibia's industrialisation drive.

"Within six months, present an electricity plan to the National Assembly that will ensure and secure affordable electricity in Namibia

According to the report, government aims to achieve 80% household electricity access by 2035.

within the next three years, as a catalyst for industrialisation," Shiimi said.

He said the Committee has instructed the Ministry to speed up the introduction of new energy legislation in the National Assembly to strengthen governance in the energy sector and attract investment in local power generation.

Shiimi said the Committee has also urged the Ministry to allocate resources for domestic electricity production and to launch national energy awareness campaigns promoting energy security as a foundation for economic growth.

The Committee's report calls for closer cooperation between government, the private sector and stakeholders to develop alternative energy sources.

Shiimi said this will help expand grid capacity, improve energy resilience and align Namibia with international energy and environmental commitments.

He said increasing domestic electricity generation is essential to reduce reliance on imports, lower costs for households and industries, and improve Namibia's long-term competitiveness.

According to the report, government aims to achieve 80% household electricity access by 2035, ensuring that the country's energy infrastructure supports inclusive growth, industrial development and environmental sustainability.

The underrated financial literacy underdog, NAMSACCO

By Ndatyoonawa Tshilunga-Nelumbu

The evolution of financial theories and concepts is a much-overlooked matter in the ever dynamic and developing world.

Societies are ever changing and attaching new dimensions to common words and ways of life in alignment with our nature of course.

> **"Societies are ever changing and attaching new dimensions to common words and ways of life in alignment with our nature of course.**

In my view the most underrated and misrepresented financial term, financial literacy for example has seen major transformation and evolution since its inception in the apartheid era but is still not receiving the sovereignty and respect it deserves.

Back then under the regime of Von Trotha and co, financial literacy was capped to represent home budgeting and basic education on finances.

Responsible adults were taught about what money can do in their households when managed properly and sensitized on how their money can make the white man rich, discretely in words which resonated to them better and teased their mental capacity.

The benefit of the black man's earnings to the capitalist was sugar-coated with terms which made him think that he too would be able to gain that type of financial emancipation enjoyed by his counterpart by the widespread of consumerism, which obviously meant that status was attached to the physicals things he bought like the famous Cressida, while the more financially woke "tates" invested their earnings in livestock, but still the knowledge of adults those days on finances can be equated to a narrowed down and very limited edition of what my 7-year-old is already fully aware of.

Due to the evolving financial systems after apartheid and changing behaviours of the consumers who were now independent and exposed to new ways of thinking, including developing a hunger for the full experience of mental emancipation, the term financial literacy then became widely recognized as to be included in the financial system and subsequently being an agent for sparking economic development.

In Namibia, after 1990 the government underwent a more inclusive restructuring process which resulted in the establishing of over 15 ministries, boosted by a public service framework enabling job creation leading to the boost of plus 50 000 government employees from a total of 1.4

million people.

This automatically meant that there was more money circulating in the economy and more opportunities to grow one's money or blow their money , depending on their level of financial literacy. This new era also marked the boom of financial products by insurances companies as stable income meant, deduction and greater profits for the capitalist systems.

The policies matured decades later and looking back the maths on the earnings still reeks of rip off, while the terms and conditions were not well understood and early withdrawals would mean that a client would lose great portions of their savings as penalties.

Being a public servant, was synonymous to "Cash cow", as citizens were now slightly financially empowered however not sensitized on how to remain financially empowered, leaving cracks to banks and other financial institutions who exploited the financial health of the public servants.

The revolution to this toxic notion has gracefully transitioned into a gem I recently discovered, which unlike other financial products, does not go on a debit rampage on your payslip as a government employee.

NAMSACCO, "Namibia Public Service Savings and Credit Co-operative", can be referred to as a stokvel that went to a private school, the platform is a savings and credit cooperative (SACCO) for Namibian public servants, which serves as a platform to save money and access loans under less ruthless terms.

The terms are owed to the fact that the cooperative is not commercialized but rather owned and controlled by its own members, potentially you and me.

Through this model NAMSACCO aims is to promote a savings culture among public servants and to provide borrowing opportunities at fair terms. The owning and controlling factors of the cooperative, introduce a financial confidence which allows public servants to borrow their own money and have a share in an institution that is tailor-made for them, promoting their financial health.

This great shift adds a new options available to government employees which is equalizing them with private investors, by restoring investment and saving dignity. Activities such as earning, saving and spending have now been revolutionized by the "financial emancipation underdog", as I like to term the Namibian cooperative.

The cooperative is run on the basis to benefit its members and not to exploit public servants who are already hanging on a thread in terms of financial literacy. With a mere 1.25% charged on a monthly, reducing balance basis interest rate on loans, a public servant is granted 3 times of their savings upon request.

This initiative deserves widespread knowledge across all public institutions as it enables public servants to explore alternative favourable financing models. More information can be found on their website, www.namsacco.com.na

*** Ndatyoonawa Tshilunga-Nelumbu is a passionate Construction Economist and Social Engineer, dedicated to creating sustainable, impactful solutions for Namibian society. With a focus on social housing, Ndatyoonawa is committed to addressing the nation's challenges through thoughtful, long-lasting processes. A Development Finance scholar , Ndatyoonawa' s work bridges the gap between economics, infrastructure, and social well-being.***

Standard Bank and NIFA to host market access & trade opportunity evening

Standard Bank Namibia, in partnership with the Namibia Investment and Finance Academy (NIFA), will host the Market Access & Trade Opportunity Evening on 13 November 2025 at the Hilton Hotel in Windhoek.

The event is aimed at helping Namibian entrepreneurs and MSMEs expand their trade networks, improve competitiveness, and access new regional and international markets.

It forms part of the Standard Bank Blue Growth Series, a flagship initiative focused on SME growth, financial inclusion and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Open to the public and not limited to Standard Bank clients, the session targets formal and informal businesses engaged in import,

Participants will receive practical insights into trade finance, logistics and market access opportunities across the region.

export and cross-border trade, as well as those seeking to enter the sector. Participants will receive practical insights into trade finance, logistics and market access opportunities across the region.

The evening will include a keynote address on regional trade opportunities, expert discussions on import and export dynamics, networking sessions with investors and trade facilitators, and panel discussions on how financial solutions can support business growth.

Hellen Amupolo, Head of Business and Commercial Banking at Standard Bank Namibia, said the event is part of the bank's ongoing effort to support Namibian entrepreneurs.

"Entrepreneurs in Namibia are driven by ambition and innovation, but to truly thrive, they need access to capital that's fit for purpose, supportive ecosystems and predictable regulatory environments. The Market Access & Trade Opportunity Evening is a platform to help translate entrepreneurial ambition into action by connecting MSMEs to knowledge, networks and financial solutions that enable cross-border growth. At Standard Bank, we're committed to growing SMEs because we believe that growing businesses means growing Namibia," Amupolo said.

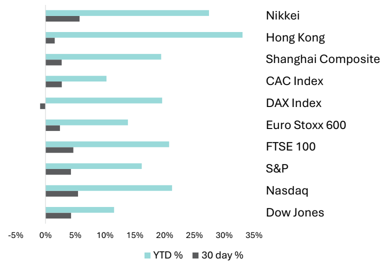
Through the collaboration, Standard Bank and NIFA aim to strengthen the participation of Namibian entrepreneurs in regional and global trade.

The Blue Growth Series provides mentorship, investment readiness training and market access support for MSMEs, helping to build capacity, unlock opportunities and promote inclusive economic participation across key sectors.

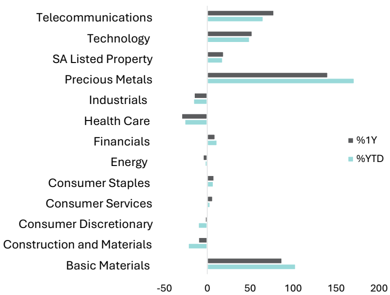
Commodities	
Spot Gold	4131.94
Platinum	1586.14
Palladium	1437.96
Silver	42.33
Uranium	79.85
Brent Crude	64.75
Iron Ore (in CNY)	770.00
Copper (in CNY)	799.50
Natural Gas	4.41
Lithium	10.15

Currencies	
USD/ZAR	17.15
EUR/ZAR	19.90
GBP/ZAR	22.60
USD/CNY	7.12
EUR/USD	1.16
GBP/USD	1.32
USD/JPY	153.87
Namibia CPI	**3.50%**
Namibia Repo Rate	**6.50%**
Namibia Prime Rate	**10.125%**

Global Indices in %

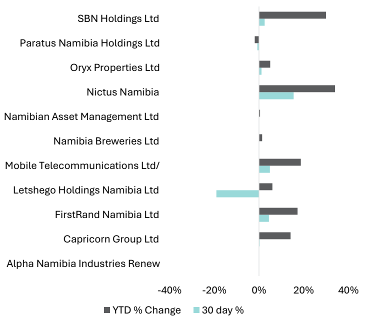


JSE Sectors: Year to Date Performance in %

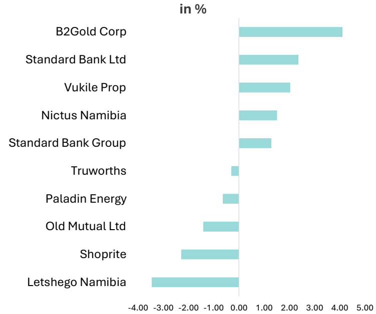


Today's JSE Top 40 Top & Worst Performers in %

NSX Stocks Performance in %



Today's NSX Overall Top & Worst Perfomers in %



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