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THE
BRIEF
News Worth Knowing

Namibia lags behind region with 235 standards, plans to develop 1,200

WEDNESDAY 15 OCTOBER 2025

MAIN STORY

Namibia lags behind region with 235 standards, plans to develop 1,200

Namibia currently lags behind its regional peers in the number of active standards and is targeting 1,200 new standards over the next three years under a national strategy led by the Namibia Standards Institution (NSI).

The plan aims to strengthen competitiveness, safety and trade compliance across key economic sectors.

Since its establishment in 2008, the NSI has published 235 standards, compared to 1,600 in Botswana, 6,500 in Zambia and more than 10,500 in South Africa.

NSI Chief Executive Officer Eino Mvula said the new National Standardisation Strategy and Plan will align Namibia's quality framework with international benchmarks and support industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, fisheries, mining and construction.

"Our ambitious national standardisation strategy plan aims at significantly elevating the standardisation landscape in Namibia, to ensure that we move from our current stock of 275 standards, and we have set for this year's goals that we must build this number to 1,267 within the next three years," Mvula said.

He explained that the initiative follows best practices guided by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the WTO Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement. Each standard will go through

Crucial Dates

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

> Namibia's National Standardisation Strategy and Plan (NSSP) aligns with national development policies including Vision 2030, NDPs 4–6, and key industrial and trade strategies.

a six-step process, from drafting and committee review to public consultation and final publication.

"We are required by law and also by international best practise to follow a process, and that process is in line with the code of practise for preparation and adoption of standards, which is contained in the Annex III of the WTO TBT agreements," Mvula said.

Mvula added that part of the strategy's focus will include developing standards for alternative building materials to help address Namibia's housing challenges.

The NSI also plans to shorten the standard development timeline from 22 months to nine months for direct adoptions and one year for new national standards.

"We must deliver, and we must try to make it standard and take it to market in the short term. Our plan is that we can shorten that, we can do, if it's a direct adoption, nine months in the future, and if it's a national development, we need ratification in March," Mvula said at the launch of the National Quality Awards and the National Standardisation Strategy and Plan.

The initiative forms part of Namibia's broader effort to strengthen its National Quality Infrastructure, which brings together public and private institutions to ensure that products and services meet international safety and performance standards.

Namibia's National Standardisation Strategy and Plan (NSSP) aligns with national development policies including Vision 2030, NDPs 4–6, and key industrial and trade strategies.

Over its three-year implementation period, 992 new standards have been identified for development, which will increase the total number of national standards to 1,267.

THE WINDHOEK JAZZ FESTIVAL
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01
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Windhoek Jazz Festival
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ARTIST LINEUP:
BONGANI SOUL | ZAMAJOBE | ESME SONGBIRD | KELLY KHUMALO | MOREIRA CHONGUIÇA
HARMONIC GROOVES | HENRY PHILEMON | BOTSELO | SIGERA JAZZ JAZZ | SEREETSI & THE NATIVES
THE SWINGERS JAZZ BAND FEAT. ALLISTAIRE VAN WYK | UGLY CREATURES
HAGE GEINGOB STADIUM
TICKETS
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AVAILABLE AT:
web tickets
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BRIEF

Tourism in Etosha unaffected despite recent fires – Minister

The Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) says tourism in Etosha National Park remains stable despite recent fires that affected parts of the park's ecosystem.

Addressing Parliament, Minister of

Environment, Forestry and Tourism Indileni Daniel said that while certain sections of the park sustained damage, there has been no noticeable decline in visitor numbers.

She noted that tourists continue to enjoy wildlife sightings, as many animals have moved to areas with more grass.

“In terms of tourism, we have not observed any reduction in visitor numbers, even during this period. It appears that, because some areas were burned, the animals have moved to regions with more grass, allowing visitors to see more wildlife at once, and they are enjoying that,” she said.

Daniel told Parliament that a management team convened a post-mortem meeting to assess the causes of the fires, evaluate mitigation measures and identify policy or operational gaps.

The findings, once finalised, will be presented to Parliament and made public to ensure transparency and accountability.

Responding to questions on property damage, the Minister said that a comprehensive assessment report had already been submitted to Parliament, along with an earlier statement issued by the Office of the President and delivered by the Prime Minister.

“It is not true that we have failed to provide information to Parliament — the report was submitted, and a statement from the Office of the President was read by the Right Honourable Prime Minister in this August House,” she said.

Daniel also confirmed that an elephant believed to have fled from Etosha National Park during the fires was euthanised in a separate incident to protect human life after the animal strayed into a populated area.

She said the situation became difficult to manage after residents followed the elephant to take pictures, prompting safety concerns.

“Our staff members, together with the Namibian Police, were on-site, but the situation became difficult to manage because the community was out of control,” she said.

Rethinking ESG: A Namibian perspective

By Hilda Basson-Namundjebo

The first time I encountered the acronym ESG was during my consulting years with ReconAfrica. On a weekly basis, we would hold meetings with a multidisciplinary team focused on embedding the ESG framework into exploration activities.

Some of my responsibilities as Government relations consultant required strategic planning and deep engagement with affected communities to reduce risk and promote long-term value for investors, stakeholders, and society.

The impact of these interventions was transformational; as they brought lasting improvements to the lived experiences of people in the two Kavango Regions.

Globally, ESG is regarded as the gold standard for stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and risk management. Yet as Namibia stands on the cusp of transformative economic opportunity, particularly with recent oil and gas discoveries, I would dare ask whether the global ESG framework is fit for our context?

I ask this, because I believe in part, that the environment pillar of ESG is overemphasised, almost to the detriment of the social and governance pillars. I do not propose this rethink as an attempt to reject the ESG principles, but to reorder its priorities.

> **“Globally, ESG is regarded as the gold standard for stakeholder engagement, sustainability, and risk management.**

In Africa generally and in Namibia specifically, our triple challenges of poverty, inequality, and unemployment demand a reframing that places Social first; Governance second; Environment third.

The environmental pillar remains vital, but it must be pursued in a way that honours our right to develop resources, our need to uplift people, and our commitment to ethical stewardship.

Namibia’s unemployment rate currently stands at 36.9 percent, the highest in SADC. This figure represents more than a statistic; it speaks to a national emergency. It underscores the urgency of placing social upliftment at the heart of our development agenda.

As our President aptly states, “We are too few to be poor.” This is not merely a demographic observation; it must become a moral imperative; one that guards our individual and collective conscience.

It demands that we place people at the centre of every policy, every boardroom decision, and every resource allocation. After all, business is about people doing business with people.

ESG originated as a framework for investors to assess non-financial risks and opportunities. It emerged from early 2000s corporate responsibility movements and gained traction through the UN Principles for Responsible Investment and the Global Reporting Initiative.

Today, ESG guides how companies manage their impact on the planet (E); people (S); and institutions (G). In theory, ESG promotes long-term value creation. In practice, its global application often assumes environmental concerns should dominate; even in regions where social justice and governance reforms are more urgent.

South Africa’s draft King V Code marks a significant evolution in corporate governance. It embeds ESG and Business and Human Rights as strategic imperatives for boards. King V introduces impact materiality; requiring boards to assess not only how external ESG factors affect the company, but also how the company’s actions affect society and the environment.

I am especially encouraged by its emphasis on human-centric leadership rooted in dignity, interconnectedness, and ethical responsibility. Business must transition to be more than transactional. Technology, apps, buildings, and systems are enablers; not the ratio essendi. When we place people centrally, business becomes a platform for dignity, creativity, and impact.

Namibia’s offshore oil

discoveries, such as the Venus and Graff fields, have the potential to reshape our economy. They offer a chance to fund infrastructure, education, healthcare, and renewable energy.

But they also raise questions about environmental impact, governance capacity, and equitable benefit-sharing. Furthermore, Namibia's low emissions profile and pressing social needs make it a prime candidate for SGE reframing.

By placing Social and Governance first, we can ensure inclusive development for our people from resource wealth; strengthen institutions to manage extractive industries transparently; and protect the environment wisely without compromising growth.

We must now craft a uniquely Namibian ESG narrative; a glocal approach - one that blends ethical leadership, local insights and strategic clarity.

This begins with educating boards and youth on SGE principles rooted in NDP 6 and the SDGs; designing workshops that explore development priorities through a governance and social lens first; and creating toolkits for directors, policymakers, and entrepreneurs to apply SGE in a manner that is practical, context-sensitive.

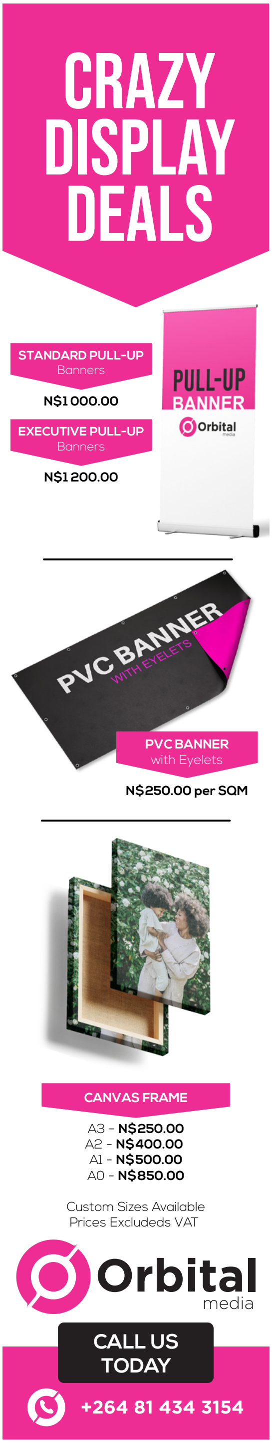
Reframing ESG goes beyond semantics, it is not a philosophical exercise. It is about reclaiming our personhood; defining our priorities; and building a future that is just, prosperous, and sustainable.

It is about bringing us closer to the realisation of Vision 2030. ESG is a powerful tool; but it must be wielded wisely. For Namibia, the path forward is not to merely emulate global models, but to adapt them. By placing Social and Governance at the forefront, we honour our people; strengthen our institutions; and steward our environment responsibly.

Let us rethink ESG; not as a borrowed acronym, but as a home-grown framework for African excellence.

One in which we have buy-in and ownership.

*** Hilda is a business leader, public speaker and a seasoned broadcast journalist. Founder of the national brand and organisation Team Namibia, Hilda believes her purpose is to impact the world with kindness, one engagement at a time.***



Bank of Namibia cuts repo rate to 6.50%

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has reduced its Repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.50% following its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting held on 13 and 14 October 2025.

The Wednesday decision, which went against analysts' expectations of an unchanged rate, aims to stimulate domestic economic activity while maintaining the one-to-one peg between the Namibia Dollar and the South African Rand.

Announcing the decision, BoN Governor Johannes !Gawaxab said the MPC took into account the weaker domestic growth outlook, contained inflation, and adequate foreign reserves before deciding to ease monetary policy.

Commercial banks are expected to adjust their prime lending rates downward by the same margin to 10.125%.

"To continue supporting the domestic economy while safeguarding the peg between the Namibia Dollar and the South African Rand, the MPC decided to reduce the Repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.50%," !Gawaxab said.

He noted that economic activity has slowed significantly, with real GDP growth dropping to 1.6% year-on-year in the second quarter of 2025, down from 3.3% recorded in the same period in 2024.

The slowdown was mainly observed in the manufacturing, fishing, and agriculture sectors. The Bank projects overall economic growth for 2025 to decline from 3.7% recorded in 2024.

Inflation has remained subdued, averaging 3.6% in the first eight months of 2025 compared to 4.6% a year earlier, largely due to lower housing and transport costs. The Bank has revised its inflation forecasts downward to 3.6% for 2025 and 4.0% for 2026.

"This revision reflects a stronger exchange rate assumption and a downward revision to the oil price outlook. Risks to the forecast remain exchange rate volatility and potential upticks in administered and oil prices," !Gawaxab said.

Private Sector Credit Extension (PSCE) showed modest improvement, rising to 5.8% in August 2025, driven mainly by business borrowing.

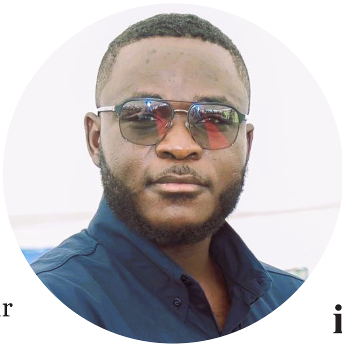
Meanwhile, Namibia's merchandise trade deficit narrowed by 16.1% to N$17.9 billion in the first eight months of the year, supported by higher export earnings from uranium and gold.

The country's international reserves stood at N$54.7 billion at the end of September 2025, providing 3.6 months of import cover — sufficient to sustain the currency peg and meet international obligations.

The next MPC meeting is scheduled for 1–2 December 2025.

Financial inclusions: Lessons we can learn from the mature markets

By Modest Ipangelwa



Many financial players across Africa, and even globally continue to make critical mistakes in how they drive financial inclusion, despite the noble intentions behind their efforts.

The lessons from more mature or progressive markets such as Kenya, Ghana, and India show that inclusion is not just about access to accounts or digital wallets, it is about creating meaningful usage, trust, and relevance in people's daily lives.

Namibia, like many other developing economies, has the opportunity to learn from these experiences and avoid repeating similar mistakes.

One of the biggest mistakes I have seen made by financial players is focusing too heavily on product rollout rather than solving real customer problems.

Many banks and fintechs introduce digital wallets, mobile banking apps, or agency banking networks without properly understanding the behavioral, cultural, and economic contexts of the communities they serve. In some rural or informal markets, for instance, the challenge is not the absence of accounts, it's the lack of consistent income, literacy, and digital confidence.

An example, Kenya's success with M-Pesa was not driven by sophisticated technology but by simplicity and a deep understanding of how people exchange value daily. Instead of forcing customers into formal systems, M-Pesa aligned its product with how people were already transacting.

> **"One of the biggest mistakes I have seen made by financial players is focusing too heavily on product rollout rather than solving real customer problems.**

Another recurring mistake is building in isolation rather than collaboration. Financial inclusion cannot be achieved by institutions acting alone.

In markets such as Ghana and Nigeria, I have seen tremendous progress where regulators, banks, mobile operators, and fintechs worked together under interoperable frameworks.

This approach ensures that users can send or receive money across networks and banks seamlessly. Namibia's financial ecosystem is still developing these interoperability layers, and this is where collaboration, especially between banks and fintechs can accelerate inclusion. When players compete instead of collaborating, the market fragments, making it expensive and inconvenient for consumers.

A third misstep is neglecting the role of education and trust. Financial literacy is often underestimated, yet it forms the backbone of true inclusion.

Opening an account or downloading an app does not mean financial inclusion has been achieved. In India, for example, government-led financial literacy drives, and community-based education programs complemented the introduction of digital banking and payment systems.

This helped people not only adopt but also trust digital channels. In Namibia, a stronger focus on building financial confidence through language-friendly, locally contextualized financial education could significantly improve usage and trust.

Financial players also err by failing to leverage data to understand inclusion gaps. In markets like South Africa, data analytics have been key in identifying underserved demographics, mapping financial behaviors, and designing tailored solutions.

Many Namibian institutions still rely on traditional segmentation models that exclude informal earners or rural communities.

Data-driven inclusion means identifying who is left out, why, and what type of product could fit their real needs, whether it's microcredit, remittances, or savings tools integrated into existing cash ecosystems.

Another major pitfall is underestimating the power of ecosystem integration. True financial inclusion thrives in connected ecosystems, where payments, credit, savings, and insurance interact in a way that supports livelihoods.

In countries like Rwanda, integration between banks, fintechs, and government platforms enabled farmers to receive subsidies, make payments, and access microloans from one digital identity.

Namibia can learn from such models by embedding inclusion into broader national strategies, linking social payments, SME financing, and financial literacy under one framework.

I have also learnt that many financial players fail to view inclusion as a long-term investment. Too often, institutions treat it as a compliance or CSR initiative rather than a sustainable business opportunity. In Kenya and Ghana, financial inclusion became part of business strategy, supported by innovation and flexible regulation. When inclusion is viewed as a core business growth driver, players are more willing to experiment, collaborate, and tailor solutions that serve the base of the pyramid profitably.

In essence, Namibia's journey toward inclusive finance should be anchored on empathy, collaboration, and innovation that reflect the realities of its diverse population. Learning from other markets, we see that financial inclusion is not about digital access alone, it's about trust, usage, and shared value.

Financial players who focus on these fundamentals will not only grow their customer base but also contribute meaningfully to the economic empowerment of communities across the country.

** Modest Ipangelwa is a Coverage eBanker for First National Bank and FinTech Expert.*

Katutura Hospital solar water heating project 20% complete, targeting early finish

The Ministry of Works and Transport says restoration works on the solar water heating system at Katutura Intermediate Hospital are now 20% complete, with the project targeting early completion by the end of November.

Works and Transport Minister Veikko Nekundi told Parliament on Monday that the N$10.2 million project, implemented by Namibia Engineering Cooperation and Pumps (Proprietary) Limited, began on 12 August 2025 and was initially scheduled for practical completion by 13 January 2026.

"The Ministry of Works and Transport, through the Namibia Engineering Cooperation and Pumps (Proprietary) Limited, commenced vital restoration works on the 12th of August this year. This contract, valued at N$10,269,158.82, has a completion timeline of six months, with practical completion scheduled for the 13th of January next year," Nekundi said.

He noted that progress on site has been steady, with all damaged panels removed and handed over to the Ministry of Health and Social Services for proper disposal.

Photovoltaic solar panels and controllers have already been delivered, and the installation of piping and circulation pumps is set to begin in mid-October once the heat pumps arrive.

"The overall project progress stands at 20%, reflecting a methodical and quality-focused approach to ensure longevity and reliability of the system," Nekundi said.

The restoration works cover the main hospital building, nurses' home, and kitchen area.

The project scope includes replacing damaged solar collectors, worn copper piping, and outdated panels, while introducing heat pumps in critical areas to improve efficiency.

Nekundi said the contractor continues to follow strict site instruction protocols to maintain transparency and accountability throughout the project.

Building Namibia's future maritime strength means investing in local marine pilots

By Bradley Claassen

Namibia's maritime sector is the lifeblood of its economy. The ports at Walvis Bay and Lüderitz are gateways for trade, logistics and regional connectivity and are critical not only for Namibia but for Southern Africa as a whole.

> Today, Namibia faces a shortage of qualified marine pilots, a challenge with both immediate and long-term consequences.

At the heart of these operations are marine pilots: highly trained professionals responsible for guiding large vessels safely into and out of harbour.

Today, Namibia faces a shortage of qualified marine pilots, a challenge with both immediate and long-term consequences. Without enough pilots, ships cannot berth on schedule. Cargo handling slows down.

Supply chains are disrupted. The cost of delays, collisions or damaged goods is borne not only by port operators but by the wider economy. It is imperative to address this shortage, as without the ability to guarantee safe and efficient port operations, Namibia risks losing its competitiveness as a regional trade hub.

The heart of the marine pilot shortage

Marine pilots play a critical role in ensuring that Namibia's ports can operate effectively, steering ships and bringing a deep understanding of Namibia's tides, currents and navigational hazards. Their expertise ensures safety, reduces the risk of accidents and keeps trade flowing smoothly.

However, the path toward becoming a marine pilot is not quick or easy. It takes between 8 and 12 years of training, including sea time, progression through ranks from cadet to master mariner, and international certification under the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW).

In Namibia, local training institutions can only take candidates part of the way, which makes achieving the rank of marine pilot complex and often expensive. To achieve the higher-level certifications needed to qualify as a pilot, students must go abroad to South Africa, Poland or Finland. Costs are prohibitive, awareness of the career path is low, and few young Namibians are prepared to spend long periods away from home at sea. The result is a limited pipeline of local talent, and a reliance on expatriates to fill the gap.

The long-term solution lies in local talent

In the immediate term, foreign marine pilots can help Namibia bridge the skills gap. Expatriates bring not only operational expertise but also knowledge that can support mentorship and skills transfer. However, their deployment requires permits, recognition of certifications and alignment with Namibian standards. It is also expensive and ultimately not a sustainable solution.

For long-term sustainability, Namibia must invest in developing its own marine pilots. This means expanding training infrastructure so that the full certification pathway can be completed locally, raising awareness among young Namibians about maritime careers and creating mentorship programmes where experienced pilots, including expatriates, train and support local officers.

Financial assistance will also be needed to make training more accessible and affordable. This is where collaboration between government and industry becomes vital. By strengthening Namibia's maritime education system, creating incentives and partnering with international institutions, the country can ensure that talented Namibians qualify at home and build a sustainable pipeline of skilled marine pilots for the future.

Securing Namibia's maritime future

Namibia's ports cannot afford to wait a decade for the skills pipeline to catch up. In the short term, foreign pilots will be needed to keep operations safe and efficient. However, investment in training must begin now, as oil and gas developments, growing shipping volumes and regional logistics opportunities will only increase demand for marine pilots.

Without a long-term pipeline of qualified marine pilots, Namibia risks bottlenecks at ports that could undermine trade and cause the country to miss out on valuable economic opportunities. By contrast, developing a sustainable pool of local marine pilots would strengthen the maritime sector, create jobs, enhance national self-sufficiency and build confidence in local expertise.

** **Bradley Claassen is an Operations Manager at Workforce Staffing Africa***

NCRST mobilises N$91m to advance science and innovation

The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) says it has mobilised a total of N$91.1 million to advance national scientific and technological development.

According to the NCRST's Integrated Annual Report for 2024/25, the Commission secured N$45 million in government funding for operational expenditure and an additional N$46.1 million through external grants, partnerships and sponsorships.

These funds supported programmes in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, renewable energy and innovation-driven entrepreneurship.

Despite higher programme costs, the NCRST achieved a 94% execution rate for both operational and external budgets, while maintaining an unqualified audit opinion for the year.

"Financial stewardship remained a priority and NCRST achieved once again an unqualified external audit opinion. Furthermore, NCRST successfully mobilised NAD 46.1 million cumulatively in external funding in addition to the government budgetary allocation of NAD 45 million for operational expenditures," the report stated.

During the year, the NCRST recorded an 82% stakeholder satisfaction rating, a 76% awareness level of its mission, and a 72% brand audit score, reflecting growing public trust in the institution's leadership.

Key achievements included the launch of the Sustainable Bioeconomy Strategy

(2024–2029), the Second National Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (NPRSTI-II), and the National Research and Experimental Development Survey.

The Commission also established the National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Council (NIKSC) and an Artificial Intelligence Working Group, while partnering with UNESCO to conduct Namibia's first AI Readiness Assessment. Namibia further gained continental recognition when the NCRST was appointed co-lead of the Innovation Agencies of Africa (IAA) Network.

In addition, the Commission resumed work on the long-delayed National Biotechnology Testing, Training and Research Laboratory (NBTTRL) project, which had been on hold since 2016.

The project progressed with the completion of the Environmental Impact Assessment, fencing and topographical work, marking a key milestone towards establishing Namibia's biotechnology hub.

"NCRST held a ground-breaking ceremony to commence the fencing of the site for its capital project, as this project had been stalled since 2016," the report noted.

Operationally, the NCRST accelerated its digital transformation efforts through the automation of its Finance Approval System, enhancement of the Online Grant Management System and digitalisation of the National Science Fair platform.

Public participation in science outreach increased sharply, with entries for the National Science Fair doubling, while Namibia earned its first medal at the Pan-African Mathematics Olympiad.

The report also highlighted the Commission's continued work in promoting inclusive innovation through the National Innovation Challenge for Women (NICW), youth STEM initiatives and grassroots innovation programmes aimed at empowering local entrepreneurs and researchers.

Looking ahead, the NCRST plans to implement the NPRSTI-II, expand the country's research infrastructure, enhance AI and digital transformation frameworks, and mobilise additional resources to strengthen Namibia's innovation ecosystem.

The Market Lens

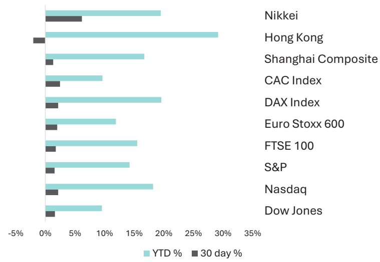
Enriching Generations

SIMONIS STORM

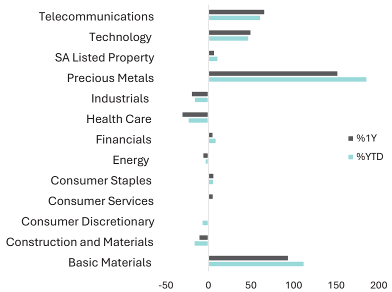
Commodities	
Spot Gold	4198.93
Platinum	1657.82
Palladium	1535.69
Silver	42.33
Uranium	79.20
Brent Crude	62.51
Iron Ore (in CNY)	771.50
Copper	10578.00
Natural Gas	3.01
Lithium	9.65

Currencies	
USD/ZAR	17.33
EUR/ZAR	20.14
GBP/ZAR	23.15
USD/CNY	7.13
EUR/USD	1.16
GBP/USD	1.34
USD/JPY	151.39
Namibia CPI	**3.50%**
Namibia Repo Rate	**6.50%**
Namibia Prime Rate	**10.25%**

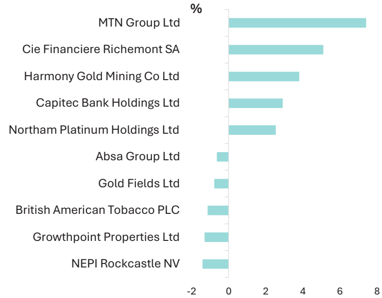
Global Indices in %



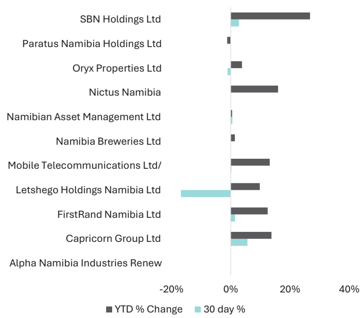
JSE Sectors: Year to Date Performance in %



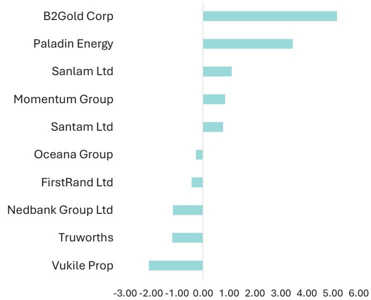
Today's JSE Top 40 Top & Worst Performers in %



NSX Stocks Performance in %



Today's NSX Overall Top & Worst Perfomers in %



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