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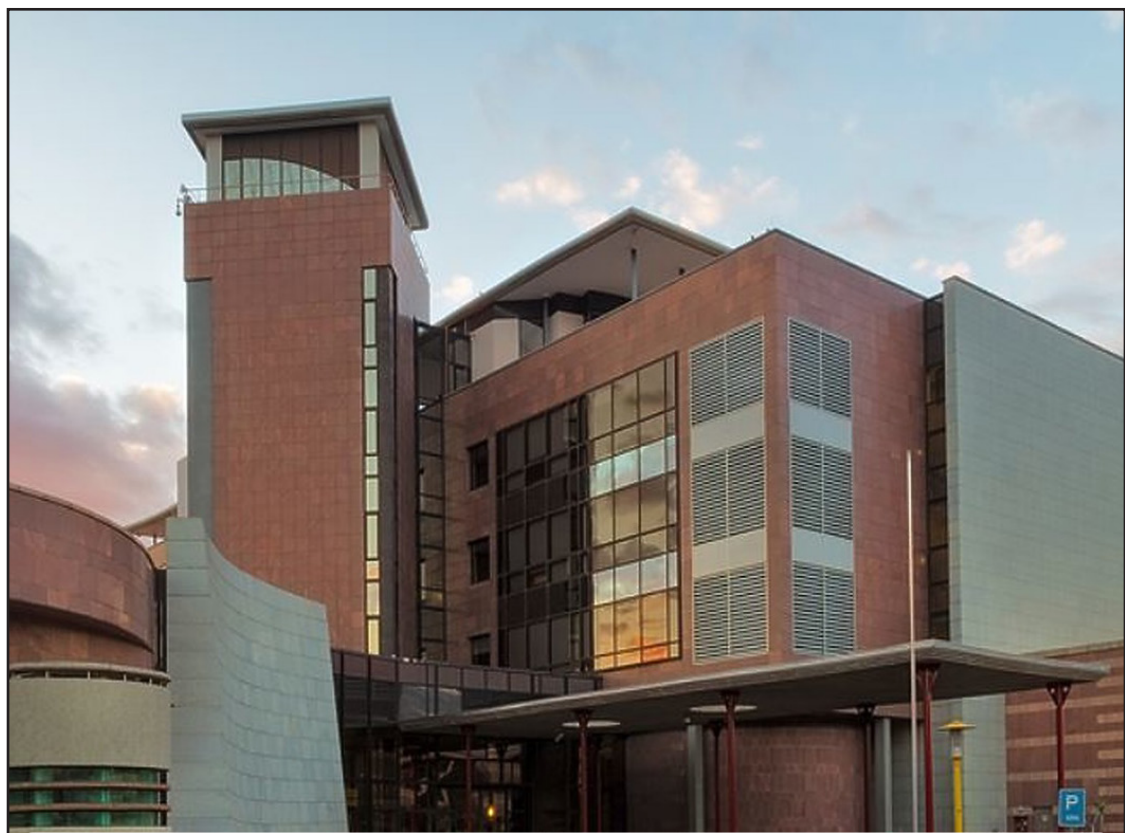
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News Worth Knowing



BoN pushes back instant payment launch, targets H1 2026

MONDAY 20 OCTOBER 2025

MAIN STORY



BoN pushes back instant payment launch, targets H1 2026

The Bank of Namibia's (BoN) long-awaited Instant Payment Platform has been delayed and will now be launched in the first half of 2026, instead of the initially targeted September 2025 rollout.

The central bank, however, confirmed successful testing phases of the national digital payment system.

First unveiled in April 2024, the project aims to provide low-cost, real-

time digital payments accessible to all Namibians, including those in rural and informal sectors. It forms part of the Bank's 2022–2024 Strategic Plan, which

Crucial Dates

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

focuses on expanding financial inclusion, reducing cash dependency, and improving transaction efficiency across the country.

BoN Governor Johannes !Gawaxab said Namibia's upcoming instant payment system is inspired by international models such as India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Brazil's Pix, both of which have transformed commerce and financial inclusion.

"Instant payment systems such as India's UPI and Brazil's Pix have revolutionised inclusion and commerce. Namibia's own Instant Payment Platform is currently in testing and will be rolled out in the first half of next year. It aims to provide low-cost, real-time payments to all Namibians, including those in rural areas, while enabling fintechs to build on open digital infrastructure," he said.

!Gawaxab stressed that financial innovation is central to Namibia's economic future, adding that the transition to digital finance must be guided by modern regulation and collaboration between the public and private sectors.

"The future of money and payments is digital. Fintech and financial innovation are no longer optional; they are inevitable. Whether Namibia chooses to lead or follow will determine the prosperity we achieve," he said.

The Governor said the Bank is exploring emerging technologies to strengthen Namibia's digital ecosystem, including stablecoins, tokenised assets, and central bank digital currencies (CBDCs).

"Over the next few years, stablecoins,

tokenised assets, central bank digital currencies, and instant payment systems will dominate global finance. Namibia, in collaboration with the IMF, is exploring retail CBDCs to strengthen the country's digital future. Wholesale CBDCs and instant payment systems will present major opportunities for local fintech firms," he said.

!Gawaxab also reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to supporting innovation through modernised regulation.

"The Bank is modernising its regulatory frameworks through the Fintech Framework and Regulatory Sandbox to foster innovation without compromising stability," he said.

The remarks were made during the FinTech Futures 2025 event hosted by the Bank of Namibia on Monday, where policymakers and industry leaders discussed Namibia's digital finance priorities.

In preparation for the platform's launch, the central bank appointed Marsorry Ickua as Head of Instant Payments Namibia (IPN), a newly established BoN subsidiary overseeing the project's implementation.

Ickua previously served as the Bank's Director of IT and as Officer in Charge (Acting Deputy Governor) for 15 months.

The Bank of Namibia has partnered with NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL), the international arm of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), to develop and operationalise the country's real-time instant payment infrastructure.

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NBL secures official distribution rights for Red Bull in Namibia

Namibia Breweries Limited (NBL) has secured the official distribution rights for Red Bull in Namibia, marking a new partnership between the local brewer and the global energy drink giant.

Under the agreement, NBL will handle the full distribution of Red Bull products across Namibia from the fourth quarter of 2025.

The range will include the classic 250ml and 355ml cans, sugar-free options, and multipacks designed to suit local consumer preferences.

Announcing the partnership, NBL said it combines Red Bull's global brand strength with its own established local market expertise and distribution reach. The collaboration aims to boost product availability, support retailers, and enhance consumer choice nationwide.

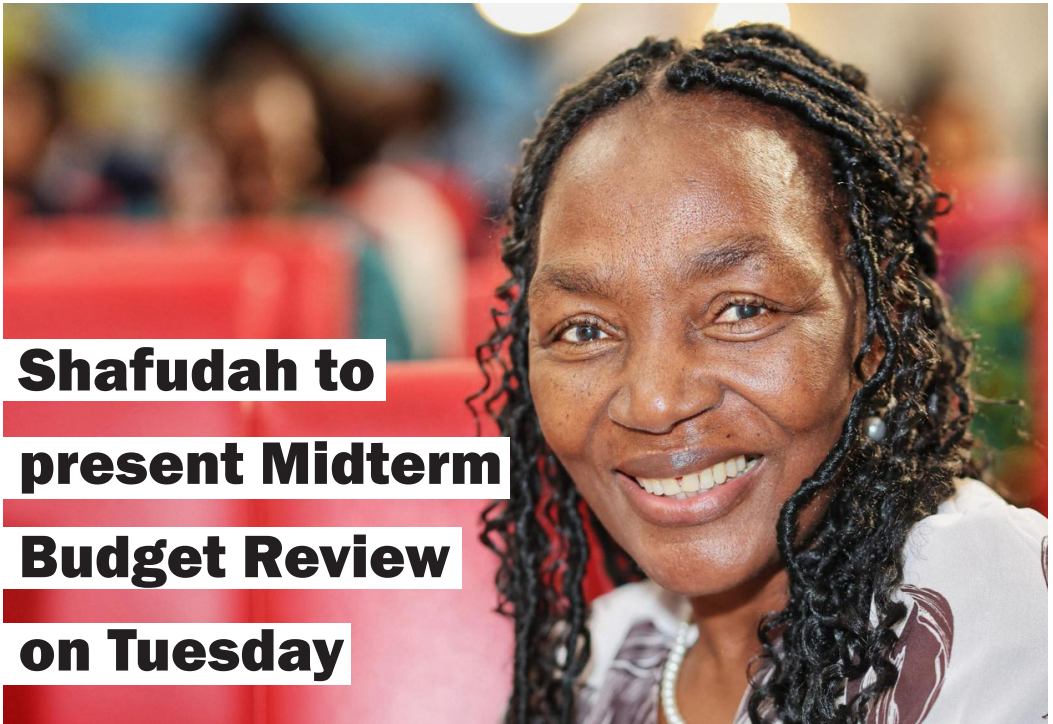
"Partnering with Red Bull allows us

to bring an iconic global brand closer to Namibian consumers. With our distribution expertise and local insights, we aim to deliver products efficiently, expand choice, and create value for retailers and communities across the country," said Waldemar von Lieres, Managing Director of NBL.

NBL added that the partnership reflects a shared commitment to sustainability, innovation, and operational excellence, with operations aligned to Red Bull's global standards while tailored to local market conditions.

The announcement follows the conclusion of NBL's 15-year FruitTree distribution agreement with PepsiCo.

NBL currently manages a portfolio of 58 beverage brands, 11 of which are produced locally and exported to 12 international destinations. Windhoek Lager remains its top export brand by volume.



Shafudah to present Midterm Budget Review on Tuesday

Finance Minister Ericah Shafudah will on Tuesday present the Midterm Budget Review before Parliament, outlining progress on fiscal targets and government spending for the 2025/26 financial year.

The review follows the N\$106.3 billion national budget tabled in March, which represented a 4.9% increase from the previous year's revised estimates.

The budget allocated N\$79.8 billion for operational expenditure, N\$12.8 billion for development spending, and N\$13.7 billion for interest payments.

At the time, Shafudah said the development budget had been increased by 22.6% to N\$12.8 billion to address infrastructure constraints, with N\$3.2 billion to be financed through external loans and grants. As a share of GDP, development spending stands at 4.6%, up from 4.2% in the previous year.

The Midterm Budget Review will provide an update on fiscal performance halfway through the financial year, reflecting progress on government priorities and expenditure commitments outlined in the national budget.



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Namibia trails the world by 17 years — and its children pay the price



Namibia's health profile in the year under review is a study in contradiction. Life expectancy rose from 47 to 56 years. But the conditions that shape daily survival remain brittle, underfunded and uneven.

Health minister Esperance Luvindao has pushed for reforms and clearer policy direction.

Her intent is not in doubt. The system itself is the problem. It is slow, fractured and incapable of matching the scale of the crisis it faces.

A life expectancy of 56 is not a milestone. The global average is 73. The Sub-Saharan African average is 62. Namibia is sitting seventeen years behind the world and eight years behind its peers.

Clinics are understaffed. Infrastructure is thin. Large parts of the population are trapped behind structural barriers that make healthcare an aspiration, not a right.

Malnutrition exposes this failure with brutal clarity.

A quarter of Namibian children under five are stunted. More than 1 100 malnutrition-related deaths were recorded this year.

The World Food Programme links the surge to drought and erratic rainfall, which have cut crop yields, raised food prices and

deepened household scarcity.

Food insecurity has reached 1.15 million people — almost 40 % of the population. The state's drought relief plan targets 360 000 households.

That leaves more than 750 000 people facing the same crisis with no direct support.

Khomas, Otjozondjupa, Omusati, Ohangwena, Kunene, Kavango West and Kavango East sit on the frontline. By June 2025, 776 000 Namibians are expected to remain in crisis.

There are isolated gains. In Omaheke, under Pijoo Nganate, targeted feeding and clinic referrals reduced malnutrition rates by 20 %.

These results matter, but they do not offset the national failure.

The health system is keeping people alive longer, but not better.

Years have been added to life without securing the basic conditions that make those years stable.

Policy statements grow thicker. Clinics remain thin.

Hunger spreads. A 56-year life expectancy in 2025 is not an achievement. It is an indictment.

** Briefly is a weekly column that is opinionated and analytical. It sifts through the noise to make sense of the numbers, trends and headlines shaping business and the economy with insight, wit and just enough scepticism to keep things interesting. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ARE NOT OUR OWN, we simply relay them as part of the conversation.*

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H₂Infra NV to acquire O&L's 51% stake in Cleanergy Solutions Namibia

H₂Infra NV, a subsidiary of CMB.TECH, will become the sole shareholder of Cleanergy Solutions Namibia following the acquisition of the 51% shareholding currently held by the Ohlthaver & List (O&L) Group of Companies.

The transaction remains subject to approval by the Namibian Competition Commission.

CMB.TECH, a global leader in clean fuel and hydrogen technologies, said it is ideally positioned to steer Cleanergy into its next growth phase, bringing world-class expertise, innovation and investment capacity to strengthen the company's contribution to Namibia's sustainable energy landscape.

"As O&L, we are immensely proud of our role in co-founding Cleanergy and laying the cornerstone of Namibia's green hydrogen future," said Sven Thieme, Executive Chairman of

the O&L Group.

"This milestone reflects our longstanding purpose of creating a future where we enhance life and our commitment to pioneering industries that empower Namibia's economy and enable sustainable, future-ready opportunities."

The establishment of Cleanergy Solutions Namibia, a joint venture between O&L and CMB.TECH, marked a significant step in the country's journey toward developing a green hydrogen economy.

As a founding shareholder, O&L played a central role in conceptualising, developing and commissioning the Hydrogen Dune pilot project in Walvis Bay — the first public green hydrogen refuelling station in Namibia and the wider region.

Commenting on the transition, a CMB.TECH Spokesperson said the company was grateful for O&L's role in the partnership.

"We are deeply grateful to

O&L for their foundational contributions and collaborative spirit throughout our joint venture. Together, we successfully delivered Namibia's first public green hydrogen refuelling station — a landmark achievement that demonstrates the power of partnership and innovation. “As we assume full ownership, we want to reassure all stakeholders that Cleanergy's future plans and projects will continue as planned. Our commitment to local impact, environmental responsibility, and innovation remains unwavering. With a growing team of employees, we are eagerly looking forward to the next project phases, including ammonia production, storage, berthing and pipeline development.”

According to O&L, the transition allows the Group to continue its pioneering legacy by strengthening its business portfolio and pursuing new ventures that set benchmarks for Namibia's future.

O&L said it remains committed to supporting national sustainability priorities through innovation, collaboration and strategic investment while exploring growth opportunities that advance economic development, industrial diversification and long-term prosperity.

“While our shareholder chapter in Cleanergy comes to an end, our partnership story with CMB.TECH

does not,” Thieme said.

“We look forward to continued collaboration with CMB.TECH on future pioneering projects that advance Namibia's and Africa's energy transition.”

O&L expressed appreciation to both the Cleanergy Solutions Namibia and CMB.TECH teams for their “dedication and shared vision”, adding that under full ownership by CMB.TECH, Cleanergy Solutions Namibia would continue to drive “transformative progress” for Namibia and contribute to the global shift toward sustainable energy.

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COMING SOON

Why we need more acquisition entrepreneurs, not just start-ups

By Chuka Okafor

When we talk about formal entrepreneurship, the story almost always begins in a garage, a dorm room, or with a bold idea sketched on a napkin.

The formal start-up narrative dominates our collective imagination of being full of creativity, disruption, and grit. It's a powerful story, and rightly so. Start-ups inject innovation into economies, challenge incumbents, and shape new industries.

But there's another path; one less glamorised, more grounded and in many respects, more suited to the realities of African markets.

This approach, known globally as Entrepreneurship Through Acquisition ("ETA"), doesn't reject the start-up dream. It complements it. Africa doesn't need to choose between innovators and acquirers. Start-ups fuel invention; acquisition entrepreneurs drive continuity, optimisation, and scale.

Put simply: instead of building from zero, you buy something already working and grow it. You become the steward, the operator, the value-creator; not from scratch, but from a base that already has traction.

Why Acquisition Is Still Entrepreneurship

There's a common misconception that buying a business is somehow "less entrepreneurial" than starting one. That's



“

The formal start-up narrative dominates our collective imagination of being full of creativity, disruption, and grit.

wrong.

By definition, an entrepreneur organises, manages, and assumes risk to create or grow value. Whether you're inventing something new or revitalising something existing, the essence of entrepreneurship remains the same. You are mobilising capital, talent, and vision toward an uncertain outcome.

Acquisition entrepreneurs face the same uncertainty, just in a different form. You trade the uncertainty of finding product-market fit for the challenge of leadership, cultural transition, and operational improvement. It's a different kind of risk, but no less real.

As the authors of Buy Then Build and researchers at Kellogg Insight have argued, ETA is gaining momentum globally because it provides a more stable entry into entrepreneurship without diluting the challenge.

Here's why it's gaining traction:

- Lower risk on the front end. The business you acquire usually has proven

product-market fit, customers, and cash flow. You're less likely to fail in the first 12–24 months.

- **Faster path to leadership.** You step directly into a CEO or operator role, focusing on improvement rather than survival.

- **Built-in value to unlock.** You can apply strategy, capital, and networks to accelerate growth or optimise performance.

Buying a business doesn't remove the hard work, it simply changes the shape of it.

Why It's Especially Relevant in Africa

The case for acquisition entrepreneurship is even stronger in African markets like Namibia, South Africa, and Kenya.

1. Limited start-up capital and support.

Africa's early-stage ecosystem is improving but still underdeveloped. Venture funding is concentrated in a handful of sectors and countries. For most entrepreneurs, access to high-risk start-up capital is limited or unavailable. Acquisition offers a practical alternative: you can buy a small, cash-flowing company, apply discipline and innovation, and scale sustainably.

2. Mature but under-optimised businesses.

Across Africa, there are thousands of small and medium-sized businesses with years of history but outdated systems, weak governance, and limited strategic direction. They generate revenue but lack sophistication. For an acquisition-minded entrepreneur, this is fertile ground — not for disruption, but for modernisation.

3. The succession gap.

Many business owners, particularly the first-generation “builder class,” are approaching retirement. They've built solid enterprises but often have no succession plan.

SPEAKERS

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They don't want to shut down, they want continuity, legacy, and fair value. This is where acquisition entrepreneurs can step in, providing exits for founders while preserving jobs and economic activity.

4. Capital alignment and arbitrage.

Institutional investors from global private equity firms to development finance institutions, are seeking exposure to African growth. Yet they often struggle to find investable, well-managed companies. Acquisition entrepreneurs bridge this gap: they can take under-institutionalised businesses and bring them up to standard, creating vehicles for regional and global investment.

When you combine these market forces of thin start-up funding, mature but inefficient SMEs, succession challenges, and rising investor appetite, you begin to see the opportunity. ETA isn't an alternative to innovation; it's a structural complement to it.

The Discipline Behind the Deal

Acquisition entrepreneurship, however, is not easy. You inherit not just opportunity, but also history. Legacy systems, staff cultures, supplier relationships, and unspoken liabilities can be as complex as any start-up problem.

Success depends on diligence and discipline:

1. Search and fit. Find a business where your skills, capital, and strategic intent align. Not every "stable business" is a good one.

2. Due diligence. Verify financials, assess working capital, examine contracts, and quantify risks. Numbers don't lie, but they don't always tell the whole truth either.

3. Structure and incentives. Deals are often funded through a mix of debt, seller financing (where the seller stays invested), and equity. Structuring these intelligently provides leverage without overexposure.

4. Transition and leadership. You're

not just buying assets; you're inheriting people. The existing culture matters. Change too fast, and you break continuity; move too slow, and you lose momentum.

5. Value creation roadmap. Post-acquisition, you need a plan; whether it's improving margins, upgrading systems, or expanding geographically.

ETA forces you to think like an investor and act like an operator - then reconcile the two. That's the real discipline.

Optionality, Liquidity, and Wealth

One of the most attractive aspects of acquisition entrepreneurship is optionality. You are not betting everything on one high-risk exit event. You can:

- Sell a portion of your equity to investors.
- Refinance and extract value through debt.
- Acquire add-ons and build a group structure.
- Prepare for a succession or management buyout.

Because you start with real cash flow and not a concept, you preserve flexibility.

In contrast, many start-up founders spend years betting on a single liquidity event, often dependent on external capital markets or venture buyers. Few succeed; most fade quietly.

Acquisition entrepreneurship treats the business as a wealth-generating asset, not just a vehicle for fundraising or innovation. In many mid-sized economies, long-term wealth rarely arises from venture-style exits. It comes from owning, improving, and institutionalising real businesses over decades.

That's how enduring wealth is built: methodically, patiently, with operational excellence rather than hype.

A Call to Action for African Entrepreneurs

It's important to emphasise: this is not an argument against start-ups. Innovation is

essential. Start-ups create new markets and technologies that acquisition entrepreneurs can later scale or integrate. Start-ups are the sparks of creation. Acquisition entrepreneurship is the force of preservation and expansion, that has the potential to even bridge the informal economy.

If you see entrepreneurship only as idea + innovation + venture capital, you may be overlooking a path that offers more predictability, earlier cash flow, and tangible economic impact.

If you have domain expertise, operational skill, or capital discipline, acquisition can be your entry point. Don't romanticise "starting from zero" out of habit. Ask instead:

- Where is value underutilised?
- Which businesses are ripe for modernisation?
- Who is stepping down without a successor?

Africa doesn't just need more start-ups. It needs more acquisition entrepreneurs that are disciplined, hands-on builders who can modernise what already exists and create jobs, income, and institutional value.

The start-up founder and the acquisition entrepreneur are partners in a broader ecosystem. One that must balance innovation with continuity, and creation with stewardship. If Africa can embrace both, it will build not only new companies, but stronger economies that endure beyond a single generation.

****Chuka Okafor is the Founder and Executive Chairperson of Value Growth Capital & Infrastructure Partners. His work sits at the intersection of infrastructure investing, M&A, financial markets development, and entrepreneurship & institutionalisation - connecting capital and capability across Africa's real economy. The views expressed herein reflect his independent perspective.***



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22-Oct	Wednesday	09:00 to 11:00	Outapi	Outapi Town Lodge
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23-Oct	Thursday	09:00 to 11:00	Oshakati	Oshakati Guesthouse
		13:00 to 15:00		
24-Oct	Friday	09:00 to 11:00 12:00 to 14:00	Ondangwa	Ondangwa Town Hotel
27-Oct	Monday	09:00-11:00	Ohangwena	Ohangwena Constituency Office
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NTA plans to replicate NEV TVET Hub model cross Namibia

The Namibia Training Authority (NTA) plans to replicate the Nakayale, Eenhana and Valombola (NEV) TVET Hub model across the country to establish regional vocational training hubs aligned with Namibia's economic priorities.

Speaking at the 3rd Joint Graduation Ceremony of the NEV TVET Hub, NTA Chief Executive Officer Erick Fundula Nenghwanya said the initiative forms part of the Authority's broader strategy to transform the country's technical and vocational education system.

"We are committed to scaling it across the country — establishing regional TVET hubs aligned with economic priorities in each region and expanding the Hub from the current three as we are at an advanced stage for the construction of Omuthiya VTC in the Oshikoto Region," Nenghwanya said.

He explained that the plan envisions hubs specialising in key economic sectors that

support Namibia's industrialisation and job creation goals.

"Imagine hubs specialising in agriculture in east and west, logistics and mining in the central regions, hospitality and fisheries along the coast, and renewable energy and oil and gas in the south. Together, these hubs will form a network of excellence that supports Namibia's industrialisation and skills agenda while creating employment and alleviating poverty in our country," he said.

Nenghwanya noted that this approach aligns with Vision 2030, the National Development Plans (NDPs), and the Human Capital Development Strategy, by ensuring that vocational training is directly linked to employment, entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth.

"This approach directly advances our Vision 2030, the National Development Plans, and the Human Capital Development Strategy

— by aligning training to employment, entrepreneurship, innovation, and national growth,” he said.

He highlighted that the NEV TVET Hub was established in 2016 through the Promotion of Vocational Education and Training in Namibia (ProVET) project — a collaboration between the NTA and its long-standing partner, GIZ. The Hub, he said, was created in response to challenges that previously affected Namibia’s TVET system, including limited resources, duplication of programmes, and fragmented operations across vocational training centres.

“At the time, our TVET system faced pressing challenges of limited resources, duplicated training programmes, and isolated operations across vocational centres. Each VTC was doing its best, but largely on its own. The question before us was clear: How can we ensure quality, efficiency, and relevance with the resources we already have? The answer was collaboration through shared resources and specialisation,” Nenghwanya said.

He said the decision by the Nakayale, Eenhana, and Valombola Vocational Training Centres to collaborate rather than compete had a transformative impact on the sector.

“These three centres joined hands to share resources, facilities, trainers, and expertise. They chose to specialise, not to duplicate. They chose to collaborate, not to compete. And that decision changed everything,” he said.

Nenghwanya described the NEV TVET Hub as “a living example” of the power of partnership and unity.

“The NEV TVET Hub became a living example of what can happen when institutions unite behind a common purpose. It became a model of efficiency, quality, and shared excellence — a model that demonstrates the true meaning of ‘one system, one vision,’” he said.

He outlined the areas of specialisation

within the three centres: Nakayale VTC in the Omusati Region focuses on ICT, Electronics, and Electrical Engineering; Eenhana VTC in the Ohangwena Region specialises in Civil Engineering; and Valombola VTC in the Oshana Region leads in Automotive Mechatronics.

Nenghwanya said the Hub was structured around seven key focus areas — governance, specialisation, training of trainers and management, stakeholder engagement, upgrading of equipment and facilities, rebranding, and the introduction of e-learning.

“These seven fields of activity form the backbone of the NEV TVET Hub model — a model that brings together governance, human capacity, infrastructure, and technology under one coordinated vision,” he said.

He added that these pillars established the foundation for the NTA’s ongoing transformation strategy to convert state-owned vocational centres into specialised technical colleges and reform TVET curricula as outlined in NDP6.

“Over the years, this collaboration has yielded impressive results. We have seen improved governance and planning across the three centres. We have seen cost savings and efficiency through shared resources. We have seen stronger industry partnerships that link our training to employment. And above all, we have seen improved training quality — producing graduates who are not just qualified, but work-ready, innovative, and resilient,” Nenghwanya said.

He noted that the NEV TVET Hub has proven the importance of collective effort.

“The NEV TVET Hub has proven something fundamental: when we work together, we achieve more. When we specialise, we enhance quality. And when we share what we have, we create value beyond measure,” he said.

While acknowledging that the journey had not been without challenges, he said these had become opportunities for learning and growth.

“These challenges have shown us that collaboration requires patience, adaptability, and a shared commitment to progress,” he said.

Nenghwanya commended the management, trainers, and teams of the three centres for their dedication and leadership.

“Your leadership and cooperation have set the standard for the rest of the country. You have shown what is possible when institutions think beyond boundaries and focus on shared purpose,” he said.

He expressed appreciation to development partners for their support, particularly GIZ, which he said had played a vital role in driving innovation and investing in Namibia’s skills development.

“To our development partners, especially

GIZ, thank you for walking this journey with us — for your investment in innovation, and your belief in Namibia’s potential,” he said.

Addressing the graduates, Nenghwanya congratulated them for their achievement, describing them as a testament to the success of the NEV TVET Hub model.

“You are the living testimony of this collaboration’s success. You are entering the world of work equipped with the skills, knowledge, and values that will help build a stronger Namibia,” he said.

“Remember — your qualification is not just a certificate. It is a responsibility. It is a call to serve, to innovate, and to uplift your communities through the power of skill,” he added.

Nenghwanya concluded by highlighting the spirit of unity that defines the NEV TVET Hub. “Indeed, that is what the NEV TVET Hub represents: individual commitment which turns into collective success,” he said.



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BoN partners with industry leaders to drive fintech growth in Namibia

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has launched the Fintech Youth Programme in partnership with several public and private sector institutions to promote youth-led innovation and strengthen the country's digital finance ecosystem.

The collaboration brings together the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB), Scale Up Namibia, the Namibia Business Angel Network, Bellatrix, CC Hub, Old Mutual, MTC and MTC Maris.

BoN Director of Strategy, Projects and Transformation, Valeria Mbango, said

the partnerships will provide mentorship, technical support and financial literacy training to help fintech start-ups grow from concept to market.

She explained that Scale Up Namibia will connect the programme with 18 local incubators, while the NIPDB will provide policy and technical guidance. CC Hub will focus on business structuring and digital security, and MTC will offer digital platforms and connectivity.

"Through this initiative, we aim to build skills, foster innovation and entrepreneurship, enhance youth employability, and strengthen collaboration

across sectors. Our success will be measured when Namibian fintechs can scale beyond borders, as we've seen with platforms like PayToday and iDToday," she said.

Mbango added that the programme aligns with the Bank's Innovation Hub and Fintech Framework, launched in 2022 to promote financial technology and cross-border digitalisation.

"If the water is too clean, the fish will die. Our regulatory approach must balance oversight with innovation. The Fintech Youth Programme was introduced to address grassroots challenges and nurture young innovators across different stages of development," she said.

BoN Governor Johannes !Gawaxab described fintech and digital innovation as vital to Namibia's future growth and financial inclusion, calling the initiative a key milestone in modernising the national financial landscape.

"The Bank of Namibia is contributing financially to the Fintech Youth Programme launched today, reaffirming our commitment to a sustainable fintech ecosystem. We will continue supporting innovation through hackathons, fintech challenges, and partnerships with investors and incubators," he said.

!Gawaxab added that financial technology presents

significant opportunities for job creation and inclusion.

"Whenharnessedeffectively, financial innovation promotes competition, creates jobs and drives inclusion by offering accessible and secure services to all Namibians. The future of money and payments is digital," he said.

Executive Director of the Ministry of Finance, Michael Humavindu, said fintech development is essential to tackling youth unemployment and positioning Namibia competitively within the global digital economy.

"Too many young Namibians remain excluded from meaningful economic participation. With youth unemployment estimated above40%,everyyoungperson without work represents a missed opportunity — a potential builder, innovator and taxpayer who could contribute to our shared prosperity," he said.

Humavindu reaffirmed the ministry's support for initiatives that promote financial innovation and inclusion.

"Fintech is more than mobile apps and online payments. It is a tool for inclusion, productivity and sustainable growth. Across Africa, fintech has demonstrated its power to democratise finance and broaden opportunity," he said.



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Subaru Forester Touring review

By Max Lodewyk

The Subaru Forester has built its reputation on being one of the most capable and dependable family SUVs.

In its latest form and in Touring spec it continues that legacy, delivering a well-balanced mix of safety, practicality and

reliability that suits drivers who value adventure and peace of mind.

Purposeful Design and Safety

Subaru has stayed true to its no-nonsense design philosophy. The Forester Touring's shape is familiar, being functional, rugged and refined where it matters.

A thoughtful detail is the gap between

the bumper and radiator area, designed to reduce engine damage during minor collisions. In more serious impacts, the engine drops downward instead of pushing into the cabin, protecting the front occupants.

Safety remains the brand's strongest card. The Forester Touring comes equipped with Subaru's EyeSight Driver Assist Technology, which includes adaptive cruise control, lane centering, pre-collision braking, autonomous emergency steering, blind-spot detection and rear cross-traffic alert.

It also features a driver recognition system that can store individual settings for up to seven users and an emergency driving stop system. With nine airbags as standard, the Forester maintains Subaru's outstanding safety record.

Practicality for everyday life

The Touring is built for families and outdoor lovers alike. The protective cladding around the body not only enhances the rugged look but also guards against stone chips and scratches on gravel roads.

Power is sent to all four wheels through Subaru's Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive system, ensuring steady control on slippery or uneven terrain, a welcome feature for Namibian potholes and gravel conditions.

It rides on 18-inch alloy wheels and roof rails make it ready for a rooftop tent or cargo box.

The electronic tailgate reveals 496 litres of luggage space, expanding further with

the rear seats folded flat. A full-size spare wheel adds real-world practicality often missing in many modern SUVs.

Inside, the cabin is simple and durable, with materials that can handle family use. There's plenty of space, rear USB ports and air vents for passenger comfort. The dark roof lining and sturdy surfaces make it easy to keep clean, making it ideal for life with kids.

Performance and ownership

Under the bonnet is a 2.5-litre naturally aspirated Boxer engine, producing 136 kW and 247 Nm of torque through a CVT gearbox. Power delivery is smooth and linear, while official fuel consumption stands at 7.9 L/100 km. Subaru's proven mechanical simplicity ensures long-term reliability and affordable upkeep.

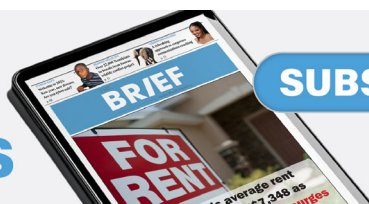
The Forester Touring is sold with a 5-year/150,000 km warranty and a 3-year/75,000 km maintenance plan, with service intervals every 15,000 km. Pricing starts around N\$740,000 at Awas Motors.

Verdict

The Subaru Forester Touring is a confident, capable SUV that prioritises what matters most: safety, practicality and reliability. It's not flashy, but it's honest and built for Namibian families who value adventure, comfort and peace of mind on every journey.

****Max Lodewyk is a motoring enthusiast. Youtube: maxlodewyk_na, Tiktok: maxlodewyk_na***

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CRAN launches inaugural tech challenge to drive youth innovation

The Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) has launch its inaugural CRAN Tech Challenge, marking a significant step toward fostering innovation, digital inclusion, and youth empowerment within Namibia's fast-growing technology ecosystem.

The CRAN Tech Challenge aims to inspire creativity and encourage youth participation by inviting Namibian citizens and permanent residents aged 18 to 35 to submit operational or prototype-stage solutions addressing real-world challenges.

Focus areas include AgriTech for off-grid farmers, HealthTech and public service tools, as well as freelance and gig economy solutions.

The initiative positions CRAN as a catalyst for innovation, nurturing a pipeline of investable ideas that strengthen consumer engagement and stimulate participation across Namibia's digital landscape.

Mufaro Nesongano, Executive: Communication and Consumer Relations at CRAN, said the challenge underscores the organisation's commitment to empowering young innovators.

"Namibia's future lies in the hands of its young thinkers and creators. Through the Tech Challenge, we are not only inviting ideas, but we are investing in the potential of our youth to shape the digital economy," said



Nesongano.

"This initiative reflects CRAN's commitment to inclusive growth, where technology becomes a tool for empowerment, sustainability, and national development."

The competition carries a prize pool of N\$100,000, rewarding the top three entries that best demonstrate creativity, impact, and alignment with CRAN's digital inclusion agenda. The first-place winner will receive N\$50,000, the second-place winner N\$30,000, and the third-place winner N\$20,000.

Nesongano said the competition seeks to develop practical solutions with lasting social impact. "We are creating a space where innovation meets impact. The Tech Challenge is not just about ideas; it is about developing solutions that can transform lives, particularly in underserved communities," he said.

The CRAN Tech Challenge will also give young innovators media exposure and potential partnerships with public and private stakeholders. Winning entries will be showcased across CRAN's digital platforms and may qualify for further development support.

"By focusing on AgriTech, HealthTech, and the gig economy, we are aligning with national priorities and global trends that call for inclusive, tech-driven solutions," said Nesongano.

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