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News Worth Knowing

Namibia's average house price hits N$1.46 million

FRIDAY 07 AUGUST 2026

MAIN STORY

Namibia's average house price hits N$1.46 million

...Windhoek remains most expensive residential market at N$1.87 million

Namibia's average house price increased by more than N$100,000 over the past year and by more than N$20,000 from the previous quarter, reaching a record N$1.46 million in the second quarter of 2026, even as property sales slowed amid affordability pressures, higher borrowing costs and constrained housing supply.

According to the latest FNB House Price Index, the national average house price rose to N$1,461,215 during the second quarter, up N$20,732 from N$1,440,483 in the first quarter and N$100,551 higher than the N$1,360,664 recorded in the corresponding period last year.

Annual house price growth accelerated to 7.4%, compared with 7.1% in the previous quarter. "The FNB House Price Index grew by 7.4% on a 12-month average in 2Q26, an uptick from 7.1% recorded in 1Q26 but below the 7.7% growth observed in 2Q25. The 12-month national weighted average house price grew to N$1,461,215 in 2Q26, from N$1,440,483 in 1Q26 and is significantly above the N$1,360,664 seen in 2Q25," said FNB Market Research Manager Mandisa Van Wyk.

Despite rising property values, market

Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
  * 12 August 2026
  * 29 October 2026
  * 10 December 2026
- **Namibia Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Mukopano**
  11 August 2026 at the Hilton Windhoek.
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference**
  18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek

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activity weakened considerably.

Annual transaction growth slowed to 2.8% in the second quarter, down sharply from 10.4% in the first quarter and 15.5% in the corresponding period last year, reflecting weaker demand as buyers grappled with rising financing costs and affordability constraints. FNB attributed the continued rise in house prices to persistent supply-side constraints, including limited housing stock, delays in servicing residential land and elevated construction costs.

At the same time, affordability pressures, higher inflation and the 25-basis-point interest rate increase implemented in June continued to weigh on buyer activity. Although mortgage credit growth improved to 2.1% year-on-year in June, it remains subdued by historical standards.

"Transaction volumes continued to lose momentum in 2Q26, with growth slowing to 2.8% on a 12-month moving average basis, down from 10.4% in 1Q26 and 15.5% in 2Q25. The moderation in transaction activity contrasts with the continued rise in house prices, as slower transaction growth points to a market where affordability and supply-side constraints are increasingly influencing buying activity," Van Wyk said.

The coastal region recorded the strongest annual house price growth at 11.9%, followed by the central region at 8.9%, while prices declined by 0.7% in the northern region and 5.2% in the southern region.

The coastal market also recorded the strongest transaction growth at 7.4%, while activity in the northern and southern regions remained largely unchanged.

A total of 756 residential property transactions were recorded nationwide during the quarter. FNB cautioned that trends in the southern region should be interpreted carefully because only 23 transactions were recorded.

Among housing categories, the luxury segment, comprising homes valued above N$6.5 million, posted the strongest annual price growth at 21%, with the average luxury property selling for N$9.25 million.

Large homes valued between N$3.5 million and N$6.5 million recorded price growth of 6.6%, while transaction volumes increased by 20%.

The medium-priced segment, valued between N$1.5 million and N$3.5 million, recorded 2.1% price growth and a 9.8% increase in transaction volumes.

Meanwhile, the small-home segment, priced between N$500,000 and N$1.5 million, recorded price growth of 2.6%, while transaction volumes declined by 1.1%, highlighting growing affordability pressures facing first-time and lower-income buyers.

Residential land sales also remained under pressure, declining 26.7% over the 12 months to the second quarter, although this represented an improvement from the 32% decline recorded in the previous quarter. The steepest declines were recorded in the coastal (44.3%) and central (33.3%) regions.

At town level, Windhoek remained Namibia's most expensive residential market, with the average house price reaching N$1.87 million, representing annual growth of 10.7%. Swakopmund recorded an average house price of N$1.37 million, while Walvis Bay averaged N$1.24 million.

Among individual towns, Mariental recorded the strongest annual house price growth at 126.8%, followed by Okakarara (71.6%) and Katima Mulilo (55.6%), although FNB cautioned that these figures may reflect relatively low transaction volumes.

Looking ahead, FNB expects house prices to remain supported by ongoing housing shortages, particularly in the central and coastal regions. However, affordability constraints and elevated borrowing costs are expected to continue limiting transaction activity until land servicing accelerates, housing supply increases and household incomes strengthen.

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Public entities gain powers to bypass Procurement Board for higher-value tenders

Public entities with proven procurement capacity will be allowed to award higher-value tenders without seeking approval from the Central Procurement Board of Namibia (CPBN), following amendments to the Public Procurement Regulations aimed at accelerating project implementation and improving service delivery.

The Ministry of Finance said the amendments introduce a new High-Value Public Entity category, allowing qualifying institutions to manage larger procurement processes independently while reducing reliance on the CPBN. The reforms are expected to shorten procurement timelines, improve operational efficiency and accelerate the implementation of government projects by reducing administrative bottlenecks.

"Another notable feature of the amendments is the establishment of a new category for High-Value Public Entities. This category has been created to enable public entities with demonstrated procurement capacity and experience to manage higher-value procurement activities independently, thereby allowing quicker responses to operational requirements and changing market conditions. Under the revised framework, only exceptionally high-value procurement transactions will be referred to the CPBN," the ministry said.

Under the revised regulations, the CPBN will focus on exceptionally high-value and strategically significant procurement transactions requiring greater oversight, while qualifying public entities will gain greater autonomy over higher-value procurement within their approved thresholds.

The ministry said the amendments also introduce stronger oversight mechanisms for entities granted expanded procurement powers to ensure accountability and compliance with procurement legislation.

In addition, newly established public entities and subsidiaries of public enterprises have been formally incorporated into Namibia's procurement framework following amendments to the Public Procurement Act.

The ministry said procurement threshold values have also been revised to reflect inflation and currency depreciation, enabling public institutions to independently manage a wider range of procurement activities within updated financial limits.

"The threshold values applicable to public entities and procurement methods have been adjusted to account for prevailing economic conditions, including inflation and currency depreciation. This reform is intended to improve operational efficiency by enabling public entities to independently manage a broader range of procurement activities within their approved limits. This will contribute to expedited procurement processes, improved service delivery, and more effective implementation of projects and programmes," the ministry said.

The amendments also reclassify all Regional Councils from Category 2 to Category 1, recognising their expanded procurement responsibilities following the decentralisation of several government functions.

According to the ministry, decentralisation has significantly increased both the value and volume of procurement undertaken by regional authorities, necessitating higher procurement thresholds.

A total of 68 newly categorised public entities have been incorporated into the revised procurement framework, including the Bank of Namibia, Namibia Revenue Agency (NamRA), Mobile Telecommunications Limited (MTC), the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB), Namibia Post Limited, the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority, the National Arts Council, and several subsidiaries of public enterprises.

The ministry said the amendments form part of broader efforts to modernise Namibia's public procurement system while maintaining transparency, accountability, competitiveness and value for money.

"The amendments are aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, responsiveness and efficiency of the public procurement system while ensuring continued transparency, accountability and value for money in the use of public resources," the ministry said.

The amendments to the Public Procurement Regulations, 2017, made under the Public Procurement Act, 2015, came into effect on 4 August 2026 following their publication in Government Notice No. 259 of 2026.

Absa expands NewWave Silver ETN offering with NSX listing

Absa Bank Limited has expanded its exchange traded note (ETN) offering in Namibia following the secondary listing of its NewWave Silver Exchange Traded Note (ETN) on the Namibia Securities Exchange (NSX).

The listing, approved by the NSX Listing Committee, became effective at the start of trading on Friday, 7 August 2026.

The NewWave Silver ETN trades on the NSX under the share code NWNSLV, while retaining its primary listing on the

Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) under the code NEWSLV.

The dual listing gives Namibian investors access to the NewWave Silver ETN through the local securities market, with the NSX listing price aligned to the prevailing price on the JSE.

Absa said the listing forms part of its broader strategy to expand its NewWave ETN offering across selected African markets where the bank operates, while improving investor access to alternative investment products.

"The dual listing is intended to improve access for investors in Namibia and forms part of Absa's broader initiative to expand its NewWave ETN offering across selected Absa presence markets in Africa," the bank said.

The NewWave Silver ETN enables investors to gain exposure to movements in the price of silver without having to purchase, transport or store the physical metal, providing an alternative investment product within a regulated exchange environment.

The ETNs are unconditional, unsecured and unsubordinated obligations of Absa Bank Limited and are listed on the JSE under the bank's NewWave Exchange Traded Note Programme.

Each NewWave Silver ETN represents approximately 1/100th of a troy ounce of silver, after accounting for an annual investor fee of 0.40%.

Silver is one of the world's most actively traded precious metals and is priced internationally in US dollars per fine ounce.

The NewWave Silver ETN is listed in the Specialist Securities sector of the JSE's Main Board.

Cirrus Securities (Pty) Ltd is the sponsoring broker for the NSX listing, while Absa Bank Limited Corporate and Investment Bank acts as sponsor on the JSE.

Kindness comes from the heart, not age

By Junias Erasmus

“Many people believe that older people are naturally kinder because they have lived longer and experienced more in life.

Kindness is one of the most valuable qualities a person can have. It does not depend on someone’s age, money, position, or level of education.

True kindness comes from the heart. A person can be young and kind, or old but not kind. Age can bring experience and wisdom, but it does not always determine whether someone has a kind heart.

Many people believe that older people are naturally kinder because they have lived longer and experienced more in life.

While older people can share important lessons and wisdom, kindness is not something that comes only with age. A young person who helps others, respects people, supports a friend, or cares for someone in need is also showing true kindness.

Kindness is shown through simple actions. It can be a smile, a kind word, listening to someone, helping a person who is struggling, or offering support during difficult times.

These actions may seem small, but they can have a big impact on someone’s life. Sometimes, a simple act of kindness can give someone hope and encouragement when they need it most.

Kindness also helps to build strong relationships. In families, workplaces, schools, and communities, people feel valued when they are treated with respect and care.

A kind person creates a positive environment where others feel supported and appreciated. When people choose kindness, they help create a better and more peaceful society.

Kindness does not mean that a person is weak. In fact, kindness requires strength and good character.

It takes courage to remain respectful when others are not respectful. It takes maturity to forgive, to help without expecting anything in return, and to do good even when nobody is watching.

In today’s world, where many people face challenges and difficulties, kindness is more important than ever. People are dealing with stress, personal struggles, and uncertainty.

A caring word, a helping hand, or a simple act of respect can make a meaningful difference in someone’s day.

Kindness should be taught and practiced from a young age. Children learn by observing the behaviour of the people around them.

When they grow up seeing respect, compassion, and care, they are more likely to show the same values to others.

Everyone has the ability to be kind. You do not need wealth, power, or a special position to make a difference. Kindness starts with simple choices we make every day, such as being respectful, helping others, and treating people with dignity.

Kindness comes from the heart, not age. It is a choice that anyone can make, regardless of how old they are. A kind heart can bring hope, create positive change, and inspire others to do the same. When we choose kindness, we make the world a better place for everyone.

*** Junias Erasmus is an Interdisciplinary Scholar, Philosopher, and Legal Researcher, with recognised expertise in Artificial Intelligence grounded in a Multidisciplinary foundation in Management Science. He is also a Motivational Speaker. This article is authored in his personal capacity. For enquiries, he may be contacted at Junias99@gmail.com.***

Lack of funding tops list of challenges facing public enterprises

A Public Enterprise Readiness to Implement NDP6 Survey has found that while state-owned enterprises (SOEs) are largely prepared to contribute to Namibia's national development agenda, funding constraints remain the biggest obstacle to delivering on key priorities.

Presented during the Public Enterprises CEOs' Strategic Dialogue with the President, the survey revealed that 63.3% of respondents identified limited financial resources as their biggest internal challenge, making it the most frequently cited barrier to improved performance.

Presenting the findings, Public Enterprises CEOs' Forum spokesperson Patty Karuaihe-Martin said funding constraints should not be viewed solely as a call for additional government allocations, but also as an opportunity for public enterprises to become more innovative and identify sustainable ways to generate revenue and improve operational efficiency.

"The most significant challenge identified was limited financial resources, with 63.3% of public enterprises citing this as their biggest internal constraint. Financial limitations emerged as the dominant concern. On this matter, I would like to emphasise that we need to be creative in finding solutions. When we highlight financial constraints, it does not necessarily mean that we should approach His Excellency or the Minister of Finance simply to request additional funding. The challenge is for us to think innovatively and explore how public enterprises can work together to create alternative avenues for mobilising resources," she said.

The survey also identified funding as the leading external challenge facing public enterprises, with 21% of respondents citing access to finance as the biggest factor affecting their operations.

Market conditions and regulatory issues were also identified as obstacles, while climate and environmental risks were viewed as having a comparatively smaller impact.

Other internal challenges included ageing infrastructure, shortages of skilled personnel and governance-related issues, although these were reported less frequently.

"Regarding external challenges, market conditions were identified by only 2% of respondents, indicating that this was not considered one of the most significant constraints. However, funding once again emerged as a major concern, with 21% of enterprises citing it as the key external challenge. This reinforces the importance of financial stability and regulatory efficiency in ensuring the successful delivery and sustainability of public enterprises," Karuaihe-Martin said.

Despite these challenges, the survey found that public enterprises are confident in their readiness to support the implementation of NDP6.

About 40.8% of respondents described themselves as "very ready", while 34.7% said they were "ready", meaning that more than three-quarters of participating enterprises believe they are adequately prepared to implement the national development agenda. A further 22.4% said they were moderately ready but would require additional government support to strengthen their capacity.

The assessment also found that more than half of the participating enterprises have fully aligned their strategic plans with NDP6, while a further 32.7% reported that their plans are mostly aligned with the country's development priorities.

"When the moderate readiness category, which accounted for 22.4% of respondents, is included, the overall readiness level increases to more than 90%. However, this moderate group also highlights the need for additional support and targeted interventions to enable these enterprises to reach the same level of readiness as those that are already fully aligned and prepared. This finding provides an important picture of where support is required and allows us, as the state and public enterprise stakeholders, to identify areas where interventions can be made," she said.

Strong governance emerged as the sector's greatest strength, with more than 41% of respondents identifying government leadership and governance structures as key enablers of performance.

Existing infrastructure, innovation, skilled employees, stakeholder collaboration and contributions to national development were also identified as key strengths.

Nearly half of the respondents (46.9%) said their organisations contribute to a very significant extent to national development, while another 30.6% believed they make a significant contribution to achieving the country's broader economic objectives.

The survey also found that public enterprises require greater government support to maximise their impact.

Almost 46.9% of respondents identified increased capital investment as the most important intervention required, while others called for policy and legislative reforms, stronger institutional capacity, improved monitoring systems, and greater investment in technical, financial and project management skills.

"The survey indicates that government support should focus on areas such as investment, enabling policies, regulatory reforms, and institutional capacity building. Approximately 46.9% of respondents identified investment support as a key requirement from the government, while 26% highlighted policy and regulatory reforms as an important area requiring attention," she said.

Karuaihe-Martin said the survey received responses from 49 of Namibia's 78 public enterprises, representing a 63% response rate.

Non-commercial public enterprises accounted for the largest share of respondents at 42%, followed by commercial public enterprises (26.5%), regulatory bodies (18%), and extra-budgetary funds and other entities making up the remainder.

"We had 78 participants in the system. It was conducted as a survey, and 49 enterprises responded, giving us an overall response rate of 63%. The study covered readiness, alignment, additional capacity, collaboration, and support requirements. Who participated? As you can see, the largest representation came from non-commercial public enterprises, accounting for 42% of respondents. They formed the majority of the respondent group. Commercial public enterprises accounted for 26.5% of the responses, and we would have preferred a higher representation from this category. Regulators accounted for 18%, which provided full representation, while extra-budgetary funds and other enterprises accounted for 6.1% of responses," she said.

Among its recommendations, the survey called for increased capital investment in public enterprises with mandates directly linked to NDP6, stronger policy and regulatory frameworks, improved coordination between government, boards and public enterprises, enhanced monitoring and evaluation systems, and continued investment in digital transformation.

Namibia Air clears first regulatory hurdle as national airline revival gathers pace

Government's plans to restore a national airline have gained momentum after Namibia Air secured scheduled and non-scheduled Air Service Licences, completing the first major regulatory milestone before launching commercial operations.

The Transportation Commission of Namibia approved the airline's applications under the Air Services Act and formally handed the licences to Minister of Works and Transport Veikko Nekundi.

Transportation Commission Chairperson Joshua Kaumbi said the licences were granted after the Commission established that Namibia Air had complied with all legal requirements and that no objections had been received during the statutory notice period.

"Following a thorough review of the applications and in the absence of any objections as prescribed by law, the Commission was satisfied that Namibia Air had fulfilled all requirements for the granting of the licences," Kaumbi said.

He said the approval marks an important step towards restoring Namibia's national flag carrier, which is expected to strengthen regional connectivity, support tourism and trade, create employment and contribute to economic growth.

While the airline has secured the operating licences, it must still obtain an Air Operator Certificate (AOC) before it can begin commercial flights.

Interim Board Chairperson Jonas

The immediate next step is to secure an Air Operator Certificate (AOC), which is essential before the airline can commence commercial operations.

Sheelongo said securing the AOC is now the airline's immediate priority.

"The immediate next step is to secure an Air Operator Certificate (AOC), which is essential before the airline can commence commercial operations," he said.

Sheelongo said the interim board remains focused on establishing a safe, sustainable and commercially viable airline.

Works and Transport Minister Veikko Nekundi said the issuing of the licences represents only the first phase of the airline's regulatory journey.

"While the granting of the air service licences marks a vital first phase, it is imperative that all regulatory, safety, and operational standards continue to be rigorously met as the project advances," Nekundi said.

The government has positioned Namibia Air as a strategic project aimed at restoring a national carrier after the liquidation of Air Namibia, with the airline expected to improve connectivity and support the country's long-term economic development objectives once operational.

Standard Bank appoints Van der Merwe as Insurance and Asset Management Executive

Standard Bank Namibia has appointed Karen van der Merwe as Executive Officer for Insurance and Asset Management, effective 1 July 2026.

Van der Merwe, who has more than 30 years of experience in the financial services sector, moves into the role after serving as Head of Personal and Private Banking at Standard Bank Namibia.

She has spent more than 20 years within the Standard Bank group, holding roles across retail, business, corporate and private banking.

In her new position, Van der Merwe will oversee Standard Bank Namibia's Insurance and Asset Management portfolio, with responsibility for growing the business, developing financial products and improving access to insurance and investment solutions.

The bank said her appointment forms part of efforts to strengthen its leadership team while developing internal talent.

Standard Bank Namibia said it plans to increase the integration of insurance products into customers' broader financial services while expanding access to financial protection and investment products.

Van der Merwe said her priorities would include strengthening client relationships and developing solutions aimed at helping customers protect and grow their finances.

"I look forward to working with our talented teams to deepen client relationships, deliver innovative solutions and help our customers build resilience, protect what matters most and achieve their long-term financial goals," she said.

She added that the business sees an opportunity to broaden access to financial protection and investment solutions in

Namibia.

Van der Merwe holds a BA (Hons) in Business Management from Lincoln University in the United Kingdom and has completed executive leadership and management programmes through Stellenbosch Business School, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) and the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business.

She has previously served as a trustee of the Standard Bank Namibia Retirement Fund and has held various governance and leadership responsibilities within the bank.

During her career, Van der Merwe has also received recognition within Standard Bank for client service and leadership, including Silver Club status and recognition as one of the group's top Client Co-Ordinators across Africa within its Corporate and Investment Banking division.

Namibia streamlines public procurement: What the new regulations mean for government and business

By Lot Ndamanomhata

Namibia's Ministry of Finance has published a significant update to the country's public procurement rules, giving government offices, municipalities, and other public bodies clearer authority to manage their own purchasing — while keeping strong checks in place for the biggest deals.

What Changed

Government Notice No. 259 of 2026, signed by Minister of Finance Ericah Shafudah on 22 July 2026 and gazetted on 4 August, amends the Public Procurement Regulations made under the Public Procurement Act, 2015. The amendment touches three areas:

1. Who runs the bidding process:

Under the revised Regulation 2, Namibia's Central Procurement Board (referred to as "the Board") only steps in to run tenders on behalf of a public entity once the contract value crosses a set threshold. Below that threshold, entities — including ministries, the National Assembly, the National Council, the Electoral Commission of Namibia, municipalities, regional councils, and certain state-linked companies — can run their own bidding processes directly.

2. New, higher thresholds:

The revised Annexure 1 sets out updated Category 1 thresholds: up to N$45 million for goods, N$60 million for works, N$35 million for consultancy services, and N$25 million for non-consultancy services. These figures are VAT-inclusive.

> **"Government Notice No. 259 of 2026, signed by Minister of Finance Ericah Shafudah on 22 July 2026 and gazetted on 4 August, amends the Public Procurement Regulations made under the Public Procurement Act, 2015.**

3. Oversight stays intact:

Entities that fall under Table 2 of Annexure 1 don't get a free pass on large purchases. If a procurement exceeds the Category 1 thresholds, the entity must submit an individual procurement plan to the Ministry's Policy Unit at least seven days before advertising the tender, and file a follow-up report — including full award details — within seven days of the contract being awarded. The Policy Unit retains the power to audit any of these procurements for compliance.

The amendment also updates Regulation 3, which governs which procurement method an entity should use (open international bidding, restricted bidding, sealed quotations, requests for proposals, or small-value procurement), tying each method to specific value thresholds set out in Annexure 2.

Why It's Good News

Faster service delivery. By raising the value at which the central Board must get involved, more every day and mid-sized procurement can be handled directly by the entity that needs the goods or services. That cuts out a layer of bureaucratic queueing, which should mean schools, clinics, municipalities, and ministries can get supplies, contractors, and consultants on board more quickly.

Accountability by design, not by accident. Crucially, the reform doesn't trade oversight for speed.

The mandatory pre-advertisement notification, the seven-day post-award reporting requirement, and the Policy Unit's ongoing audit power mean that large procurements — the ones most vulnerable to irregularity — remain squarely in view of the Ministry of Finance.

This is a "trust but verify" model: entities get more operational freedom, and the state gets a paper trail to check it's being used properly.

A clearer rulebook for suppliers and investors. Businesses bidding for government contracts — from local SMEs eyeing small-value procurement to international firms pursuing open bidding on major infrastructure — now have an explicit, published threshold table to work from. Predictable rules lower the cost of participating in public tenders and can widen the pool of bidders, which tends to improve value for money on public spending.

Modernising a young procurement system. The Public Procurement Act, 2015, and its regulations have been amended incrementally since 2017. This latest revision reflects a maturing system: recalibrating money thresholds to current realities while tightening the reporting loop between entities and the Policy Unit, rather than simply loosening the rules.

The Bottom Line

This amendment is best read as a rebalancing exercise — devolving day-to-day purchasing decisions to the public entities best placed to make them, while reinforcing the reporting and audit trail for the transactions that carry the most public money and the most risk.

For a country working to strengthen public financial management, that combination of efficiency and accountability is a welcome direction of travel.

**** Lot Ndamanomhata is from Ekoka. This article reflects his views and writes entirely in his personal capacity.***

AI can save business leaders four hours a week, says V5 Digital

Artificial intelligence (AI) can help business leaders reclaim up to four hours of productive time every week by automating repetitive work, connecting to business applications and providing persistent organisational knowledge, according to digital transformation firm V5 Digital.

Speaking during the company's First Fridays executive breakfast in Windhoek, V5 Digital executives urged organisations to move beyond basic AI prompting and begin integrating AI into everyday business workflows to unlock measurable productivity gains.

V5 Digital founder Armin Wieland said many organisations are underutilising AI by treating it as a chatbot rather than a business productivity platform.

"What we see as the danger is that busy leaders and executives are wasting precious time with simple tasks that could actually be delegated to AI. The focus is how we can buy you four hours back by next week," Wieland said.

He said the greatest gains come from creating dedicated AI workspaces containing organisational knowledge, company documents, communication preferences and operating procedures instead of relying on isolated conversations.

According to Wieland, separating work into dedicated AI projects enables platforms such as ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini to deliver more accurate, consistent and context-aware responses while keeping client information organised.

"Stop using one continuous messy chat thread for everything. Organise your work into projects inside Claude, ChatGPT or Gemini. These projects keep your client data isolated and give the AI access to the specific background documents needed for answering," he said.

He added that enterprise AI platforms also strengthen data governance by allowing organisations to keep corporate information within secure business environments instead of exposing it to public AI systems.

Customer Success Consultant and Generative AI Tools Guide Jürgen Teichert said AI adoption should focus on eliminating repetitive work rather than replacing employees.

"AI isn't about replacing people but really more about removing repetitive work so that people can spend more time doing the work only humans can do," Teichert said.

He identified four major productivity drains within organisations: repeatedly providing background information to AI tools, routine administration, report preparation and manual business processes.

Teichert demonstrated how persistent AI profiles can store users' roles, responsibilities, communication styles and organisational rules, eliminating the need to repeatedly explain context before every interaction.

"You don't need to ever reintroduce yourself to the AI platform. Your identity, responsibilities, communication style, work priorities and rules are already there before it answers," he said.

He also highlighted AI integrations with business applications such as email, calendars, accounting software and collaboration platforms as one of the fastest ways to improve workplace productivity.

Using AI connectors, he demonstrated how businesses can automatically generate daily briefings by analysing calendars, emails, outstanding tasks and priorities before employees begin work.

The technology can also review accounting systems to identify overdue invoices, analyse previous customer correspondence and prepare follow-up emails without manual intervention.

Teichert said AI has also matured to the point where it can automate business report writing and presentation development, significantly reducing the time required to produce management reports and slide decks.

"So we're already really here. Automation has become easy and accessible for the average person. You don't need coding experience or difficult technical knowledge," he said.

V5 Digital said its First Fridays series is designed to help organisations adopt AI through practical implementation strategies that improve productivity, accelerate digital transformation and strengthen long-term business performance.

Namibia, Botswana sign MoU to expand broadband and cybersecurity cooperation

Namibia and Botswana have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, cross-border connectivity and emerging technologies as the two countries seek to accelerate regional digital transformation.

The agreement, signed in Kasane, Botswana, establishes a framework for collaboration in broadband infrastructure, digital government, ICT regulation, innovation, research, emerging technologies and capacity building.

Botswana's Minister of Communications and Innovation, David Tshere, said the partnership is intended to move beyond policy discussions towards implementing practical digital projects.

"Digital transformation and ICT present one of the most important opportunities to achieve this diversification, create employment, promote innovation and improve the lives of our citizens," Tshere said.

The agreement follows commitments made under the Namibia-Botswana Bi-National Commission, where both governments identified telecommunications connectivity, infrastructure sharing, cybersecurity and digital transformation as priority areas for bilateral cooperation.

Namibia's Minister of Information and Communication Technology, Emma Theofelus, said the MoU will promote knowledge sharing and joint initiatives aimed at strengthening regional digital integration.

Implementation of the agreement will be overseen by joint technical working groups focusing on connectivity, cybersecurity, digital skills, innovation, digital public services and infrastructure development.

"Continued investment, infrastructure expansion, innovation, and sustainable business models remain critical to achieving inclusive digital transformation," Theofelus said.

The two countries are already collaborating on regional connectivity through a partnership between Mobile Telecommunications Limited (MTC) and Botswana Fibre Networks (BoFiNet), which established the first direct fibre-optic connection between Namibia and Botswana.

Botswana is also expanding broadband access through its Universal Access and Service Fund and the SmartBots Programme, with more than 228 villages already upgraded from 3G to 4G connectivity.

"Through the Universal Access and Service Fund, more than 228 villages have already benefited from the upgrading of communication networks from 3G to 4G," Tshere said.

Cybersecurity was identified as another key area of cooperation, with both countries committing to strengthen information sharing, institutional collaboration and skills development to improve resilience against cyber threats. "Cyber threats do not respect national borders, and our response must therefore include information sharing, skills development, institutional cooperation and strengthened collective resilience," Tshere said.

Botswana recently enacted the Cybersecurity Act, 2025 and the Digital Services Act, 2025 to strengthen the regulatory framework for secure digital services, fintech and digital trade, while Namibia's National Cybersecurity Incident Response Team (NAM-CSIRT) continues collaborating with Botswana's BW-CIRT on cybersecurity capacity building.

The agreement also covers cooperation in digital public services. Botswana is developing a digital ecosystem integrating services such as electronic identification, electronic payments, permit applications and revenue collection.

Tshere said Botswana's Digital Economy Roadmap aims to increase the ICT sector's contribution to 20% of gross domestic product, positioning digital technology as a major driver of economic growth.

"We therefore see ICT not merely as an enabler of other sectors, but as a sector of economic production in its own right," he said.

The people who decide who gets in

By Tangeni Namene

Namibia's hidden architects of corporate power

> **Who gets a second chance after a mistake that could have ended a career.**

There is a decision made in most organisations long before a strategy is approved, before a product launches, before a quarterly result is announced.

It happens in a room most employees never enter, in a conversation most shareholders never hear about, made by people whose names rarely appear in the annual report.

It is the decision of who gets hired. Who gets promoted. Who gets developed, coached, and quietly prepared for a role they don't yet know is coming.

Who gets a second chance after a mistake that could have ended a career. And, eventually, who becomes the next Chief Executive.

Ask most people to name the most powerful person in a bank, and they will say the CEO. Perhaps the CFO, or the Head of Corporate Banking, if they are paying closer attention to where the money moves.

Almost no one says the Head of Human Capital. And yet, in the truest sense of the word, few people hold more power over an organisation's future than the person who decides who is allowed to shape it.

The next chief executive of one of Namibia's largest companies may already be sitting somewhere inside the organisation today, several levels below the boardroom. The only open question is whether someone has identified them, invested in them, and prepared them for what comes next. That question, more than any strategy document, marketing campaign, or capital investment, will determine which Namibian companies lead the next decade, and which quietly fall behind.

This is the uncomfortable truth at the centre of a conversation Namibia's corporate sector has barely begun to have in earnest: the people building the future of business here are not always the ones standing at the podium.

A Debate Older Than It Looks

The idea that people, not machinery or capital, are an organisation's most decisive asset is not new. Economists were formalising the concept of human capital as far back as the 1960s, when Nobel laureate Gary Becker argued that investment in people, through education, training, and experience, behaves economically much like investment in any other productive asset. What has changed is not the theory but the evidence behind it.

In 1997, a team of McKinsey consultants led by Steven Hankin coined a phrase that would reshape corporate thinking for the next three decades: the war for talent.

Their research, later expanded into a study of roughly 13,000 executives across more than 100 large companies, found a direct link between how disciplined a company was about identifying and developing talent and how well it performed against competitors.

That same year, the academic Dave Ulrich published Human Resource Champions, a book that gave language to a shift already underway inside forward-thinking companies: HR needed to stop functioning purely as an administrative department and start operating as a genuine strategic partner to the business, with a seat at the table where growth decisions were made.

Nearly thirty years later, the debate has moved from theory to measurement. Deloitte's 2025 Global Human Capital Trends survey, which drew on responses from close to 10,000 business leaders across 93 countries, found that organisations which actively help employees grow are 1.8 times more likely to report stronger financial performance than those that do not. Gallup's research tells a similar story from a different angle: companies with low employee turnover report roughly 30 percent higher profitability than high-turnover peers in the same industry. The theory that people are a form of capital is no longer a philosophical position. It is, increasingly, a line item.

The Invisible Architects of Organisations

Every functioning organisation runs on a set of decisions so foundational that they become invisible. Nobody thanks the person who designed the electrical wiring of a building; they only notice when the lights go out. Human Capital leadership operates the same way. Its success looks like nothing happening: no talent gaps, no leadership vacuums, no cultural collapse, no exodus of the people the organisation can least afford to lose.

The financial weight behind that quiet success is larger than most executives assume. Gallup estimates that replacing a single employee typically costs between 50 and 200 percent of that person's annual salary once recruitment, lost productivity, and ramp-up time are accounted for, and puts the total cost of voluntary turnover in the United States alone at close to a trillion dollars a year. Scale that logic down to a mid-sized Namibian bank losing a handful of senior managers a year, and the arithmetic stops being an HR statistic and starts being a line on the CFO's risk register.

Yet these leaders influence outcomes at a scale few other functions can match. Over a career, a single Head of Human Capital may be involved, directly or indirectly, in decisions that shape thousands of employees: who is hired into the organisation, who is stretched into a bigger role, whose potential is seen early enough to matter, and who is let go with dignity rather than damage.

Multiply that across an entire banking sector, and the influence is no longer incremental. It is structural. It is the architecture beneath the visible business.

The irony is that the more effectively this work is done, the less visible it becomes. Good Human Capital leadership does not announce itself. It simply produces organisations that seem, from the outside, to have an unusual supply of capable people ready exactly when they are needed.

The Shift From HR Department to Strategic Business Function

For much of its history, the function now called Human Capital was understood narrowly: payroll, policy, discipline, compliance. Necessary, but administrative, support to the “real” business rather than a driver of it. Ulrich's original framework described this as the difference between HR acting as an administrative expert and HR acting as a strategic partner, and it is precisely that transition that Namibia's banking sector is now living through.

Across the sector, the function has moved decisively into the centre of strategy. Leadership development has replaced ad hoc promotion. Succession planning has become a formal discipline in the strongest institutions rather than a scramble that begins only after someone resigns.

Organisational culture is treated as something to be deliberately designed rather than left to chance. Employee experience is measured and managed with the same rigour once reserved for customer experience. And increasingly, business performance itself is understood to be inseparable from the quality of the people decisions behind it.

This is not a cosmetic rebrand from “HR” to “Human Capital.” It reflects a genuine change in what the function is responsible for. A modern Head of Human Capital is expected to sit in strategic conversations about market expansion, digital transformation, and risk, not because people happen to be affected by those decisions, but because the organisation's capacity to execute them depends entirely on whether it has the right people, in the right roles, ready at the right time.

Put simply: strategy tells an organisation where it wants to go. Human Capital determines whether it has anyone capable of getting it there.

Namibia's Human Capital Leaders: The People Behind the People

This shift is not theoretical. It is visible, right now, in the work being led by Human Capital executives across Namibia's banking sector, among them Retuura Ballotti, Toini Muteka, Isdor Angula, and Bianca Muller Muller.

They represent a broader movement rather than a closed list of names. Each leads Human Capital functions inside institutions that depend, more than most people realise, on the quality of their talent decisions: decisions about who is developed into future leadership, how culture is deliberately shaped rather than left to drift, and how organisations build the internal capability to keep growing without importing every senior skill from outside the country.

That last point matters more in Namibia than in almost any comparable market. The country's broad unemployment rate stands at 36.9 percent, the highest in the Southern African

Development Community, and youth unemployment sits at 44.4 percent, according to the most recent labour force data. At the same time, Namibia records documented skills shortages across more than 73 occupations. That is not a contradiction. It is a precise description of the problem Human Capital leaders are hired to solve: a country with no shortage of people, but a persistent shortage of the specific, developed, job-ready skills its growing sectors need. With roughly 70 percent of Namibia's population under the age of 35, according to World Bank figures, the raw material for that pipeline exists in abundance. What determines whether it becomes a workforce or remains a statistic is the quality of the development systems built around it.

There is a retention dimension to this as well. Afrobarometer's most recent youth survey found that the share of young Namibians who say they have thought seriously about emigrating has risen from 10 percent in 2017 to 16 percent today. Every internal promotion that succeeds inside a Namibian institution is one less reason for an ambitious young professional to look abroad for a career, and one more piece of evidence that growth is possible without leaving.

What unites leaders like these is not a job title. It is a shared understanding that their real product is not policy. It is people who are capable, ready, and retained.

The Recognition Gap

Here lies the central tension this conversation must confront: organisations are remarkably good at celebrating outcomes and remarkably poor at recognising the systems that produced them.

When a company reports strong annual growth, its financial leadership is credited publicly and immediately. When a new market is entered successfully, its strategy team is celebrated. When a bank navigates a difficult period without losing its best people, almost nobody asks why, because the absence of a crisis does not look like an achievement. It looks like nothing happened.

The scale of the underlying gap is well documented globally. Research from the Society for Human Resource Management has found that 56 percent of HR professionals say their organisation has no succession plan at all, with only 21 percent reporting a formal, documented process. A separate survey of 2,000 hiring managers by Robert Half found that while 87 percent of organisations have some form of succession planning, only 52 percent describe theirs as comprehensive and documented. In other words, most organisations know the risk exists. Far fewer have actually built the infrastructure to manage it.

Nobody applauds a succession plan on the day it quietly prevents a leadership vacuum, because by definition, nothing visibly goes wrong. Nobody sees the culture strategy behind a team that consistently outperforms its peers, because culture shows up as results, not as a line item. Nobody traces a company's five-year growth back to the talent decisions made five years earlier, because by the time the growth is visible, the decision that enabled it has long since been forgotten.

This is the recognition gap: the wider the impact of a decision, the more likely its origin is to be erased from the story. Financial capital gets a headline. Human capital gets a footnote, if it gets mentioned at all.

A Fair Counterargument: Does Process Guarantee Outcome?

It would be dishonest to present succession planning and leadership development as a guarantee of success. They are not, and the most famous succession story in modern business history proves it. When Jack Welch retired as CEO of General Electric in 2001, he had spent six years grooming internal candidates and narrowed his choice to three finalists before selecting Jeffrey Immelt. At the time, the process was widely held up as the gold standard for corporate succession, taught in business schools as a model of discipline and foresight. Immelt went on to lead GE for sixteen years, and by the time he departed in 2017, the company's market value had fallen substantially from its peak, a result that management historians still debate the causes of today.

The lesson is not that succession planning failed. It is that succession planning is risk management, not prophecy. A rigorous process improves the odds of a smooth transition and gives a board real options grounded in years of internal evidence, rather than a rushed decision made under pressure with no internal candidates to consider. It does not, and cannot, control for market shocks, competitive disruption, or the judgment calls a new leader will eventually have to make alone. Namibia's banking sector should hold both truths at once: a strong Human Capital function meaningfully reduces the odds of avoidable failure, while offering no immunity from the ordinary risks of running a business.

A related objection is worth taking seriously too: that in an economy as capital-constrained as Namibia's, talking about Human Capital as a boardroom priority risks sounding like a distraction from harder issues such as access to finance, infrastructure, and regulatory reform. That critique has force. But it misunderstands the relationship rather than contradicts it. Capital, infrastructure, and regulation set the boundaries of what is possible. Whether an organisation actually executes within those boundaries, at the pace its market demands, depends on whether it has developed the people capable of doing so. The two are not competing priorities. One is the precondition for the other actually working.

The Future of Namibia Will Be Built Through People

Namibia's next decade of corporate growth will not be decided solely in strategy documents or investor presentations. It will be decided in the quieter rooms where someone chooses to develop a promising employee rather than overlook them, where someone builds a culture worth staying for rather than merely tolerating, where someone prepares an internal successor rather than defaulting to an external search.

The organisations that recognise this early, that treat Human Capital leadership not as a support function but as a strategic discipline, will be the ones with a bench of leaders ready when the moment demands them. The ones that don't will keep discovering, too late, that their growth ambitions outran their leadership pipeline.

Namibia does not lack ambition. It does not lack capital, opportunity, or a growing generation of talented young professionals. What will determine whether that potential becomes reality is whether the country's institutions properly value the people whose job it is to find, grow, and keep that talent.

The most powerful people in an organisation are not always the ones with the biggest titles. They are the ones who decide who gets in the room in the first place, and Namibia's future will be shaped as much by them as by anyone at the top of the org chart.

Sources referenced: Gallup State of the Global Workplace research; Deloitte 2025 Global Human Capital Trends; McKinsey "The War for Talent" (1997) and related research; Dave Ulrich, Human Resource Champions (1997); Society for Human Resource Management; Robert Half succession planning survey; World Bank Namibia data; Namibia Statistics Agency labour force survey; Afrobarometer Namibia youth survey (2026).


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