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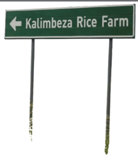

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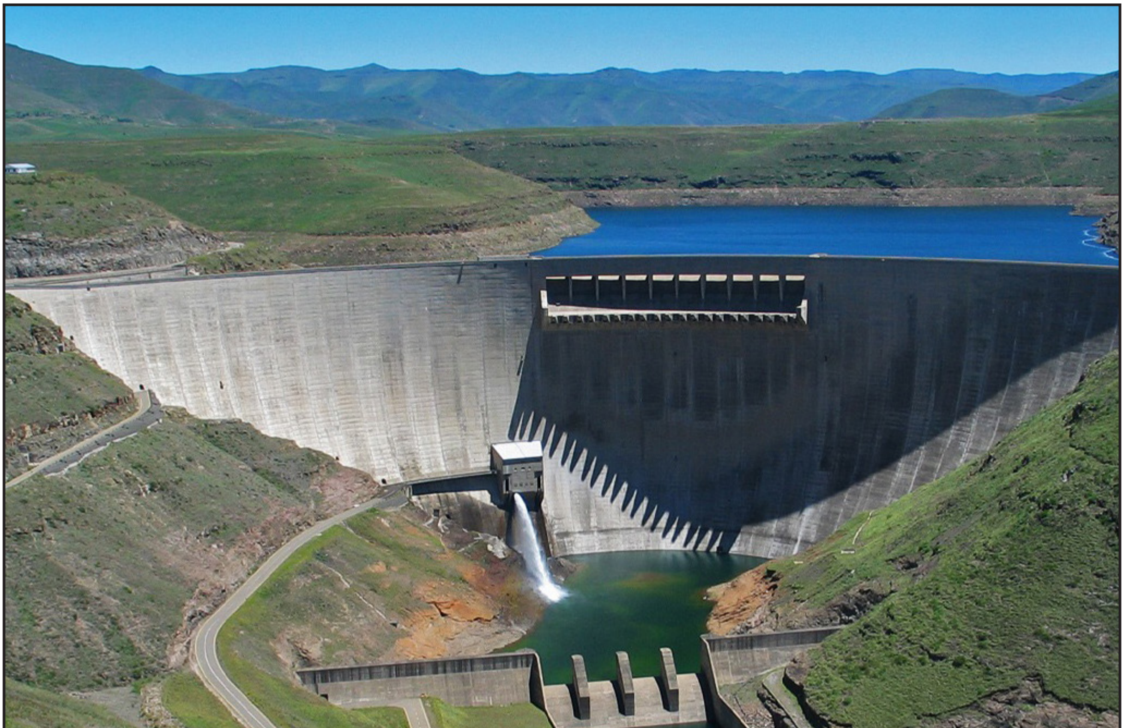
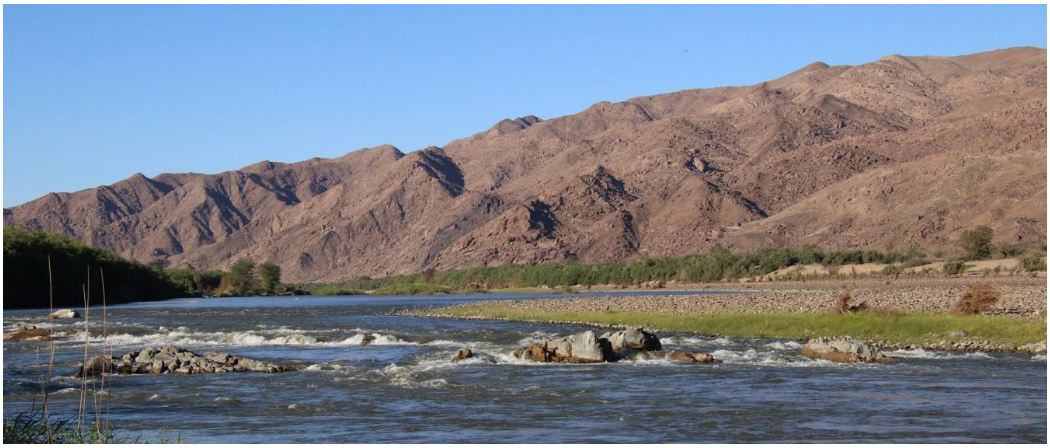


Namibia flags water risks, seeks dam commitment before backing Lesotho water project

WEDNESDAY 04 FEBRUARY 2026

MAIN STORY



Namibia flags water risks, seeks dam commitment before backing Lesotho water project

Namibia's Ministry of Agriculture, Water, Fisheries and Land Reform has told The Brief that it will continue to withhold approval for Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project until concerns over potential negative impacts on downstream water flows in the Orange–Senqu River system are addressed.

Ministry Spokesperson Simon Nghipandulwa said Namibia is also awaiting a firm commitment from South Africa to jointly develop the proposed Noordoewer–Vioolsdrift Dam on the Lower Orange River as a mitigation measure before any approval can be considered.

"In light of the potential negative impacts on Namibia as a downstream riparian

Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
  * 18 February 2026
  * 22 April 2026
  * 17 June 2026
  * 12 August 2026
  * 21 October 2026
  * 02 December 2026
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference 18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek**

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> Lesotho reportedly earns more than R3 billion annually from water sales to South Africa, while major urban centres, including Johannesburg, depend heavily on the supply.

state, it was considered appropriate that a no-objection not be issued until concerns relating to the anticipated impacts of the further development of Phase II had been satisfactorily addressed, and until a firm commitment had been provided by South Africa regarding the joint development of the Noordoewer–Vioolsdrift Dam on the Lower Orange River as a mitigation measure," Nghipandulwa told The Brief.

He said the matter continues to be addressed through established cooperative platforms, including the Orange–Senqu River Basin Commission (ORASECOM), as well as bilateral structures such as the Permanent Water Commission and the Bi-National Commission between Namibia and South Africa.

According to the ministry, these engagements are aimed at finding mutually acceptable solutions and ensuring that development within the Orange–Senqu River basin does not adversely affect downstream riparian states.

Following the completion of a feasibility study for the Lesotho Highlands Water Project in 2019, Namibia was requested to issue a "no-objection" letter to allow Phase II of the project to proceed.

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project is a bilateral initiative between Lesotho and South Africa, designed to collect, store and transfer water from Lesotho's highlands to South Africa.

Lesotho reportedly earns more than R3 billion annually from water sales to South Africa, while major urban centres, including Johannesburg, depend heavily on the supply.

South Africa's Department of Water and Sanitation has previously indicated that the absence of Namibia's no-objection letter has affected funding arrangements for Phase II of the project.

The R53 billion project aims to increase the transfer of water from Lesotho to South Africa from the current 780 million cubic metres per year to 1,260 million cubic metres per year, while also providing opportunities to generate additional hydroelectric power in Lesotho

Namibia's household debt rises by N$72.2bn

Household debt in Namibia rose sharply in 2025, increasing by N$72.2 billion to N$883.2 billion from N$811.0 billion in 2024, while growth in corporate borrowing moderated, signalling a shift in private sector credit behaviour, according to Simonis Storm.

The firm said private sector credit extension eased slightly to 4.4% year-on-year in December 2025, down from 4.5% in November.

However, the annual average growth rate of 4.9% for 2025 marked a notable improvement from 2.5% in 2024 and 2.4% in 2023.

Simonis Storm Economist Almandro Jansen said households accounted for 56.9% of total private sector credit, while corporates made up 41.7% and non-residents 1.3%.

Instalment sale and leasing, which is largely asset-backed lending, continued to dominate household borrowing, growing by 15.5% year-on-year in December. This was supported mainly by demand for vehicles and equipment.

Mortgage lending, however, remained subdued, rising only marginally to N$550.0 billion from N$547.0 billion in 2024, reflecting ongoing affordability constraints.

Other loans and advances increased to N$153.7 billion from N$143.3 billion, while overdraft credit declined to N$28.8 billion from N$33.0 billion.

"This trend underscores persistent financial pressure, particularly among lower-income consumers," Jansen said.

He added that the recovery in household credit remains slow and selective, with easing interest rates, rising living costs and weak wage growth continuing to limit broad-based borrowing.

Corporate credit growth showed more restraint over the period, with total corporate debt rising modestly to N$45.9 billion in 2025 from N$44.6 billion in 2024.

"Corporate credit growth slowed to 6.8% year-on-year in December, from 7.2% in November, driven by weaker demand and net repayments, particularly in the financial, fishing, and wholesale and retail trade sectors," Jansen said.

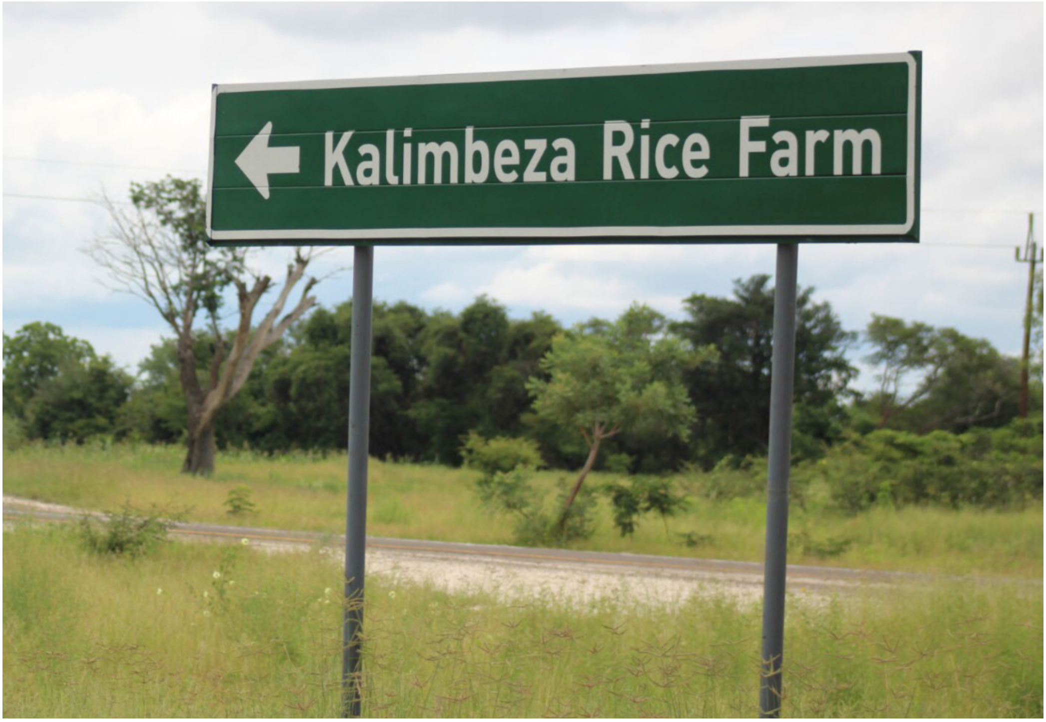
Instalment sale and leasing for corporates grew by 18.5% year-on-year, slightly down from 18.9% previously, as firms continued to invest in vehicles, machinery and production equipment.

Other loans and advances increased to N$239.2 billion from N$203.2 billion, while corporate mortgage lending declined to N$160.8 billion from N$164.7 billion. Overdraft exposure rose to N$120.9 billion from N$97.8 billion, reflecting greater reliance on short-term liquidity earlier in the year.

"Corporate borrowing remains firm but selective. Firms are prioritising balance sheet consolidation and operational investment over speculative expansion," Jansen said.

Overall, household credit growth edged up modestly to 2.7% year-on-year in December 2025, from 2.5% in November, with total household debt now exceeding N$883 billion.

Simonis Storm said the 2025 credit environment reflects a growing divergence, with households carrying a rising debt burden concentrated in essential and asset-backed segments, while corporates adopt more measured borrowing strategies amid stabilising economic conditions.



Kalimbeza Rice Project stalled by funding gaps and equipment failures

The Kalimbeza Rice Project has ground to a halt due to inconsistent funding, broken machinery and operational inefficiencies, despite having significant production potential, a parliamentary committee has heard.

The project covers 229 hectares, of which 150 hectares are suitable for rice production. However, output remains far below capacity as a result of prolonged equipment breakdowns, lack of repair funding and vandalism.

Project Manager Patrick Kompeli told Parliament's standing committee on natural resources that damaged fencing has allowed livestock from surrounding communities to enter the fields and destroy crops.

He said poor water distribution has further undermined production, despite soil levelling work carried out in preparation for irrigation.

"In addition, water distribution has not met expectations, even though the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform appointed a consultant to level the soil in preparation for irrigation scheduled between August and January," the committee said in its report.

"The project plans to harvest short-variety rice between March and April, and long-variety rice between April and May."

The committee reported that in October 2024, the project planted 38 hectares of rice and harvested 180 tonnes of raw produce. However, the rice remains unprocessed because the processing machine has been out of service for several months.

Although funds were allocated in 2024 for the purchase of a new processing machine, procurement has not yet been finalised. The absence of a suitable warehouse has compounded the problem, leaving harvested rice exposed to pests, dust and spoilage, and increasing the risk of rejection by retailers.

The committee was further informed that lengthy and centralised procurement processes, a lack of petty cash and delayed decision-making from Windhoek continue to hinder timely repairs and day-to-day operations. Project management called for the decentralisation of the scheme to allow for independent operational control, warning that the current arrangement threatens its long-term sustainability.

Concerns were also raised about the implementation of the 2021 decision to dissolve AGRIBUZDEV, with the process described as poorly coordinated and economically damaging.

Of the N$18 million budgeted for the Kalimbeza Rice Project, N$8 million was reportedly allocated to consultancy fees, a level of expenditure the committee questioned.

"The implementation of government policy to dissolve AGRIBUZDEV in 2021 has taken a disastrous route," the report said. "While the decision itself is commendable, the implementation lacks strategic direction and has been prolonged. This is frustrating, and the ramifications are leading to economic damage."

The committee said the funding structure and governance arrangements require urgent review if the project is to return to productive operation.

Why organisational learning must deliver results, not attendance

By Leena N. Shimpanda

> **"Equally important is the role of Organisational Learning and Development Officers, who represent the organisation's investment in human capital development.**

Over the years, the field of Organisational Learning and Development (OLD) has gained increasing prominence.

Many organisations now operate dedicated learning and development units, managed by Organisational Learning and Development Officers or Learning and Development Officers, roles formerly referred to as training officers.

In both the public and private sectors, these units are increasingly positioned as standalone functions rather than sub-units of Human Resources, marking a significant shift from past practice.

On Monday, 26 January 2026, the Minister of Information, Communication and Technology (MICT), Hon. Emma Theofelus, posed a thought-provoking question during her ministry's year opening staff engagement when she asked: "What is the point of going to a workshop if you come back the same person?"

While directed at her ministry's staff, the question resonates far beyond a single institution. It speaks to every employee who has attended employer-sponsored training, every supervisor who has approved a training request, and every learning and development practitioner tasked with facilitating these interventions.

When an employee is sent for training, there is an implicit expectation that learning will occur and that newly acquired knowledge or skills will be applied in the workplace.

However, learning cannot be assumed, it requires willingness, engagement, and accountability from the participant.

In practice, training and workshops are sometimes perceived as opportunities for travel allowances or time away from routine duties. While these may be incidental benefits, they were never intended to be the primary objective.

Ideally, such benefits should be secondary outcomes of meaningful learning. Yet, in many cases, skill acquisition becomes the unintended consequence rather than the central purpose.

This situation raises a critical question, who bears responsibility for ensuring that learning translates into performance improvement? Much like the basic education system where responsibility is shared among learners, parents or guardians, teachers, and school administrators, organisational learning also operates within a shared responsibility framework.

First, employees must take ownership of their development by approaching training with genuine intent to learn and actively participating in all learning activities. Second, supervisors play a critical role.

Beyond approving training requests, they are responsible for identifying actual skills gaps in collaboration with OLD practitioners, supporting appropriate training selection, and monitoring post training performance. In this regard, evidence of training effectiveness should be reflected through changes in behaviour, skills application, attitudes, and engagement.

Equally important is the role of Organisational Learning and Development Officers, who represent the organisation's investment in human capital development.

Their responsibilities extend beyond organising training programmes, they include assessing training relevance, ensuring alignment with organisational objectives, and measuring return on investment (RoI). As highlighted by Hon. Theofelus, training is funded from limited budgets.

Measuring RoI is therefore essential to demonstrate that learning has occurred and that it delivers value to both the organisation and the individual.

It is widely acknowledged that during periods of financial constraint, learning and development budgets are often among the first to be reduced. This trend is frequently driven by a lack of visible evidence linking training expenditure to organisational performance.

Without credible data demonstrating impact, management scepticism is understandable. However, when the key stakeholders in the organisational learning ecosystem fulfil their respective roles and provide measurable outcomes, the value of learning investments becomes clearer and more defensible.

The conversation, therefore, should shift from questioning whether training should occur to examining whether stakeholders understand and execute their responsibilities effectively. Organisations must prioritise measuring training outcomes, aligning learning initiatives with strategic goals, and quantifying the financial and operational impact of employee development. Embedding RoI reporting as a standing agenda item at management or executive committee meetings would be a significant step toward accountability and transparency.

As Namibia strives toward Vision 2030 and the development of a knowledge based economy, investment in human capital remains indispensable.

This ambition requires a skilled, educated, and innovative workforce. Neglecting Organisational Learning and Development functions undermines this objective. OLD practitioners must be capacitated not only to identify skills gaps but also to evaluate learning outcomes rigorously.

Ultimately, validating training budgets through evidence-based impact assessment will strengthen management confidence, safeguard learning investments, and ensure that employee development contributes meaningfully to organisational performance and national development. Only then can training be viewed not as a cost, but as a strategic investment with lasting benefits.

Reserves recover post-Eurobond as Namibia's banks maintain adequate liquidity

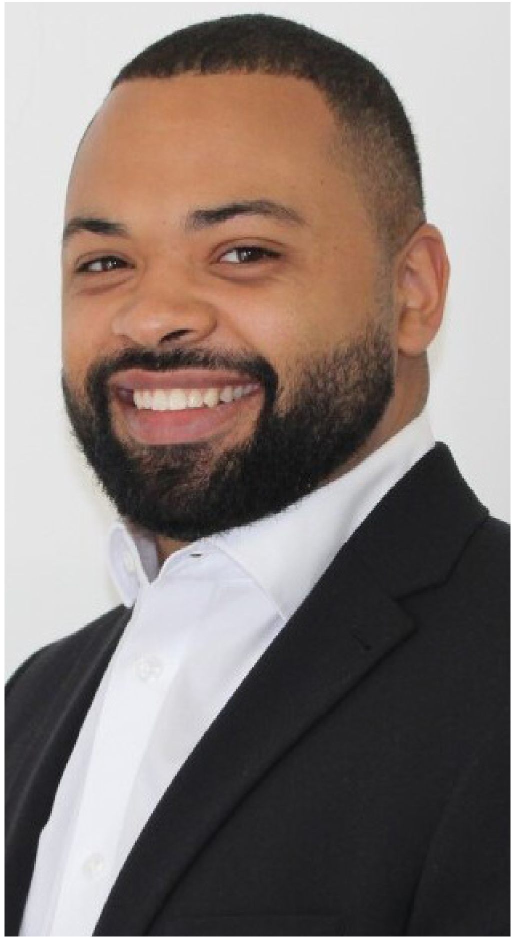
Namibia's banking sector maintained adequate liquidity in December 2025, with conditions continuing to normalise following the Eurobond redemption, despite some month-on-month volatility, according to Simonis Storm.

Simonis Storm economist Almandro Jansen said average commercial bank cash balances eased slightly to N$5.1 billion in December, from N$5.4 billion in November, reflecting softer inflows partly linked to weaker diamond sales.

"Liquidity levels remain broadly adequate, and banks continue to operate with sufficient buffers to support credit extension, settlement activity and normal interbank functioning," Jansen said.

Official international reserves increased to N$51.6 billion in December, representing a 4.9% month-on-month rise. This equates to 3.3 months of import cover, or 3.8 months when oil and gas-related imports are excluded.

"The December reserve outcome reinforces the view that the sharp drawdown recorded in October was anticipated and well managed, in line with Namibia's debt management strategy, rather than indicative of balance-of-payments stress," Jansen said.



> Official international reserves increased to N$51.6 billion in December, representing a 4.9% month-on-month rise.

Growth in the broad money supply (M2) continued to moderate, slowing to 6.5% year-on-year in December from 7.1% in November. Simonis Storm said the trend reflects weaker net foreign asset dynamics and a deceleration in deposit growth.

Longer-term deposit growth eased to 9.4% from 12.3% in November, while currency outside depository corporations declined to 4.2% from 4.6%. In contrast, short-term transferable deposits recorded firmer growth, supported by increased household demand during the festive season.

Domestic claims rose by 16.8% year-on-year, up from 15.9% in November, driven by higher net claims on central government and increased lending to other sectors.

These gains were partly offset by a contraction in net foreign assets, which declined by 8.0% year-on-year, compared to a 3.4% fall in November, reflecting lingering effects from the Eurobond redemption.

Jansen said the tightening in liquidity conditions observed in October was temporary.

"The post-redemption adjustment phase appears largely complete, with liquidity conditions now transitioning towards a more stable, albeit slightly tighter, equilibrium," he said.

Overall, Simonis Storm said the data indicate that Namibia's banking system has absorbed the one-off liquidity shock associated with the Eurobond repayment. Despite slower money supply growth, reserve buffers, deposit levels and liquidity remain sufficient to support ongoing credit activity.

"The banking sector continues to function with resilience, and the combination of adequate reserves and controlled liquidity provides a solid foundation for continued credit extension and economic activity," Jansen said.

Namibia targets market diversification to strengthen trade under AfCFTA

The Ministry of International Relations and Trade (MIRT) says market diversification and the expansion of Namibia's trade mandate will be central to its strategy to strengthen the country's position in African and global trade.

Addressing a general staff meeting, Minister of International Relations and Trade Selma Ashipala-Musavyi said the ministry is prioritising the enhancement of Namibia's trade capabilities to fully realise the potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

She said the strategy will focus on sectors where Namibia has a clear competitive advantage, while expanding access to new markets to reduce vulnerability to external shocks and global logistics disruptions that have recently affected the cost of living and economic stability.

"To fully leverage the potential of the AfCFTA, Namibia must strengthen its trade capabilities through market diversification and a targeted focus on priority sectors where the country enjoys a competitive advantage," Ashipala-Musavyi said.

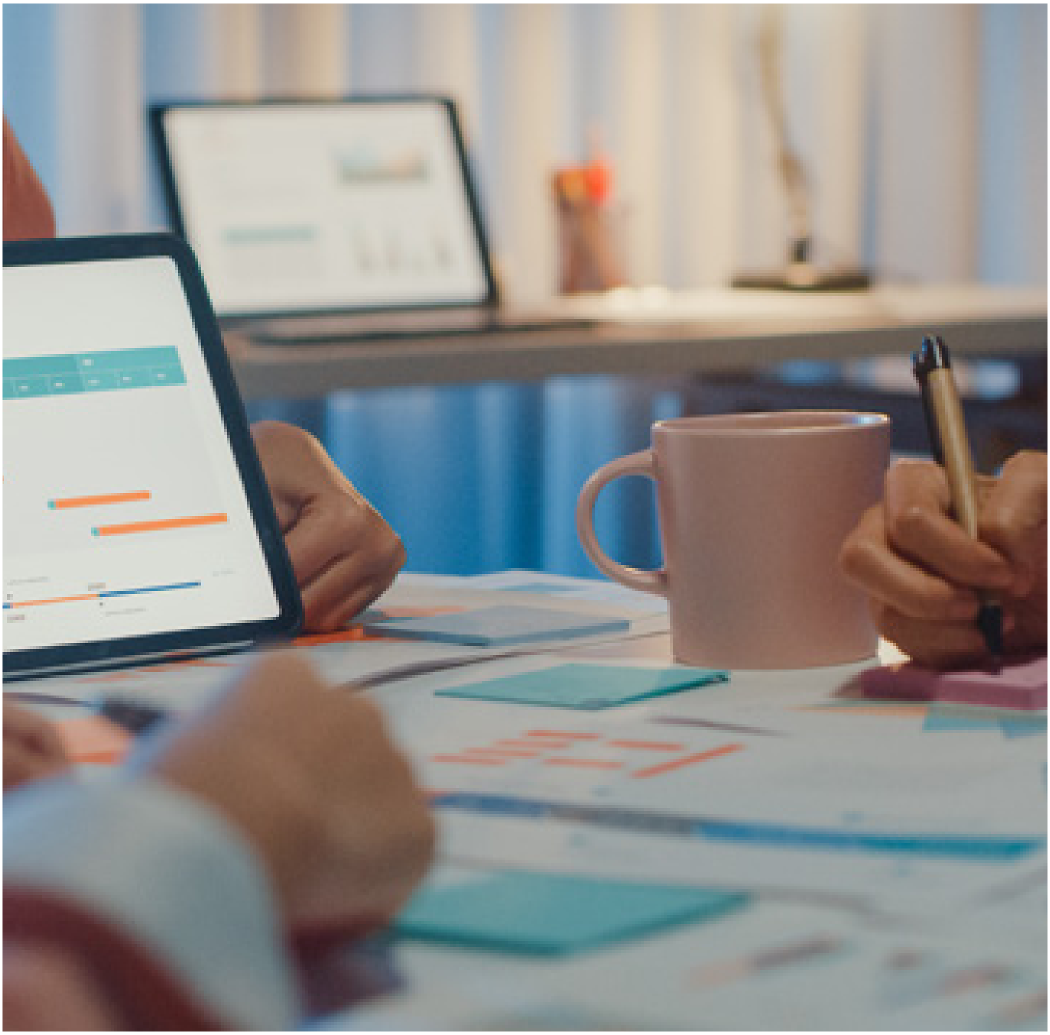
The ministry identified agriculture, mining, renewable energy and logistics as core sectors underpinning the diversification drive. At the same time, it is seeking to expand trade in services, with a focus on tourism, business and financial services, health, transport and communications to enhance overall competitiveness.

Ashipala-Musavyi said the 2026 trade strategy follows the strategic merger of international relations with trade and investment promotion, a decision taken by the President to ensure diplomacy delivers tangible economic outcomes.

She said the ministry has already finalised the Trade Management Bill and completed national consultations on the Investment Promotion and Facilitation Bills, aimed at creating an enabling environment for local entrepreneurs and traders.

"This year, we will finalise and roll out key policy documents that will strengthen efficiency, effectiveness and accountability across the ministry," she said. "Our planning must be clear, our coordination must improve, and our reporting must reflect measurable results. We have to put measures in place to clearly track progress."

The ministry said the reforms are intended to position Namibia as a more resilient and competitive trading partner within Africa and beyond.



How FNB Namibia's 2025 Pricing Strategy Is Redefining People-Centric Banking

In today's fast-evolving financial landscape, one truth remains constant: people want a bank that truly gets them. A bank that meets them where they are, understands their daily realities, and innovates to create a real impact. FNB Namibia has stepped decisively into that space with a bold new pricing structure that signals more than a refresh of fees. It signals a shift in philosophy and takes affordability and accessibility beyond compliance into human-centred innovation.

With its 2025 pricing update, FNB

Namibia has placed one message at the centre of its strategy: Help Changes Everything.

A PRICING STRATEGY PUTS NAMIBIANS FIRST

While the new pricing structure features many new highlights, the key among them is that there will now be zero charges on all local (Namibian) card swipes, a historic first for the Namibian market.

For many Namibians, this isn't a small change. It's meaningful relief amongst rising costs, enabling customers to transact safely and affordably without the hidden costs that often discourage card usage.

" At FNB Namibia, we believe banking should be simple, fair, and in touch with the real lives of the people we serve," says Mbo Luvindao, CEO of FNB Retail Banking. "This pricing update is not just about lower fees — it's about creating real value and building trust with Namibians across every region and walk of life."

LEADING INNOVATION THROUGH CUSTOMER-CENTRICITY

Behind the updated pricing is an extensive strategic review grounded in one principle: solving for the customer. The bank studied how Namibians transact, what barriers they face, and how financial tools could better support their daily decisions.

The result is a model designed to increase ease, reduce costs, improve accessibility and empower customers to embrace digital channels with confidence, from rural entrepreneurs to young professionals navigating digital banking for the first time.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES WITH HEART AND STRATEGY

FNB's customer-centric focus extends beyond individuals. FNB Business Banking is tailoring its support to reflect the realities of Namibia's economic engine, from micro enterprises to corporates shaping national growth.

"Our pricing strategy isn't just about numbers — it's about people," says Philip Chapman, CEO of FNB Namibia Commercial Banking. "We're proud to lead with heart and to offer a banking experience that meets Namibians where they are. We believe that no two businesses are the same, which is why our 2025 pricing is designed to provide real help that drives sustainable growth by reducing cost barriers and supporting businesses where it matters most."

Far from being a routine annual adjustment, the bank's pricing model is part of a long-term commitment to building a globally competitive Namibia by creating a banking environment that enables entrepreneurship, supports financial literacy, and strengthens the foundation for inclusive economic growth.

The reaction from the public has been overwhelmingly positive, with many calling the new pricing a welcome relief in challenging economic times.

With other highlights of the strategy including a reduction in fees through alternative channels such as Cash@Till and Cash Plus, it's clear that the bank's commitment to helping is resonating across both individuals and businesses.

As digital adoption accelerates and consumer expectations evolve, FNB Namibia's approach sets a new standard: truly modern banking is not just technologically advanced, it is empathetic, accessible, and tailored to the lived experience of the people it serves.

For more on FNB's pricing strategy, visit www.fnbnamibia.com.na or any FNB branch near you.

Namibia is at the risk of water bankruptcy

By Reinhold Mangundu

> **"Your bonus represents your hard work, your commitment, your resilience.**

As the world's major powers race to secure oil, gas, and so-called "critical minerals" to fuel energy transitions and advanced technologies, Namibia finds itself standing on dangerous ground.

In the rush to attract investment and position the country as a resource frontier, we are quietly placing our most precious and irreplaceable resource at risk: water.

This is not a distant concern. Namibia is one of the driest countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Our economy, our food systems, our rural livelihoods, and our cities survive on fragile surface water and ancient underground aquifers.

Yet today, as extractive industries expand, from oil and gas exploration to uranium and lithium mining, water protection is being treated as an afterthought. That should alarm every Namibian.

A resource race with hidden costs

Globally, minerals such as lithium, nickel, rare earth elements, and uranium are increasingly framed as "critical" for the clean energy transition. They power batteries, wind turbines, nuclear plants, and digital infrastructure. For powerful economies, securing these resources is a strategic priority.

Namibia is deeply entangled in this global race. Mining already constitutes a central pillar of the national economy, with uranium, copper, and lithium contributing significantly to exports and GDP, while oil is projected to become the largest contributor by 2030. Recent onshore exploration, offshore oil discoveries, and green hydrogen ambitions promise rapid economic growth and increased foreign investment. Yet beneath these promises lies an uncomfortable truth: extractivism is inherently water-intensive, frequently polluting, and fundamentally threatening to water security, particularly in arid environments like Namibia.

Water in a country that cannot afford to lose it

Nearly 80% of Namibia's water supply depends on groundwater, drawn from critical aquifers such as Stampriet, Windhoek, Kuiseb, and the transboundary Okavango Basin. These aquifers sustain agriculture, towns, livestock, ecosystems, and rural livelihoods in a country where rainfall is unpredictable and evaporation rates are among the highest in the world. This water is already under severe strain.

In early 2025, Namibia's total dam storage stood at just over 50%, reflecting recurring droughts and declining inflows. This pattern is not an anomaly, it is the norm. Every year, we watch dam levels fall, restrictions tighten, and communities scramble to cope. When the rains fail, viallages go thirsty, agriculture collapses, tourism suffers, manufacturing slows, and even small informal businesses, like local car washes, are affected. Everything depends on water. Water is life.

And yet, mining, drilling, and exploration activities are increasingly taking place above and around these very aquifers, with limited transparency, weak oversight, and inadequate public consultation.

Climate change is tightening the noose

Climate change is no longer a future threat; it is a present reality. Rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and erratic rainfall are accelerating land degradation and reducing agricultural productivity. In southern Africa, crop yields are projected to decline significantly, increasing food insecurity and dependence on imports.

As surface water becomes more unreliable, Namibia will be forced to rely even more heavily on groundwater, precisely the resource now being placed at risk by extractive activities.

The United Nations has just declared that the world has entered an era of "global water bankruptcy." For a country like Namibia, continuing to gamble with water in pursuit of short-term profits is not development, it is recklessness.

Raising the alarm comes at a cost for Communities

History shows that when communities raise concerns about extractive projects, they are often dismissed, intimidated, or accused of being "anti-development." Grassroots movements are portrayed as obstacles rather than as defenders of public interest.

Yet it is precisely these movements that have exposed environmental violations, demanded accountability, and defended communal land and water rights. From resistance to oil exploration in the Okavango Basin to successful legal challenges against offshore drilling on South Africa's Wild Coast, community action has proven essential.

In Namibia, however, such resistance is frequently met with hostility. Environmental defenders are labelled troublemakers. Investors are prioritised over citizens. Growth is pursued at all costs, even when it contradicts climate commitments and constitutional rights.

We have seen this before. The Goreangab Dam stands as a grim reminder of what happens when environmental safeguards are sacrificed for investment promises. Once polluted, ecosystems do not simply recover. Aquifers, once contaminated, may be lost forever.

Fuel or water? The real question

The argument for continued fossil fuel and mineral extraction rests on economic necessity. But we must ask a harder question: Is fuel more important than water?

As E.F. Schumacher warned, squandering natural capital threatens life itself. No amount of uranium revenue, oil profits, or foreign investment can replace a destroyed aquifer. In southern Namibia, uranium exploration has already been permitted in areas that supply water to tens of thousands of farmers. If that water is polluted, the damage will be irreversible.

What will we do then, drink profits? This is a moment of choice. Namibia can continue down a path where extractivism is prioritised and water protection is sidelined, or it can choose a future grounded in ecological responsibility, social justice, and long-term resilience.

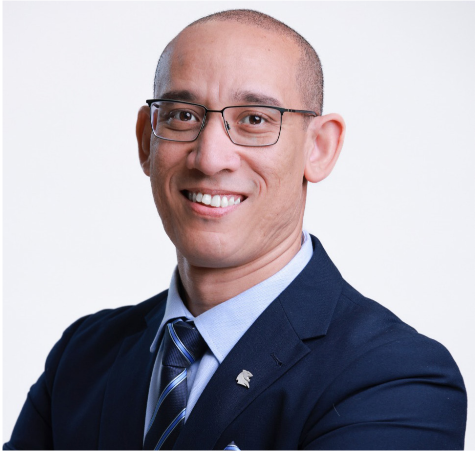
Our economy will never thrive on the ruins of a bankrupt environment. Development that destroys water destroys the nation itself. This is not an anti-development argument. It is a pro-life one.

Reinhold Mangundu is a community development planner, sustainability researcher, and environmental activist passionate about Namibia. He holds a Master of Philosophy in Sustainable Development, Planning, and Management, as well as a postgraduate Diploma in Sustainable Development (Cum Laude) from the University of Stellenbosch . He has an Honours Degree in Regional and Rural Development from the Namibia University of Science and Technology. He holds a Special Development Award from Joseph Jaworski Next Generation Foresight Practitioners, 2021 and the ITPR International Young Visionary Award Winner, 2020. He is the Chairperson of Namibia Environment and Wildlife Society. He is currently a PhD Candidate with the Stellenbosch University's Centre for Sustainability Transitions. His PhD research focuses on the transformative potential of social innovations in fostering transformative African futures.

Namibia's Mining Renaissance:

Building Financial Architecture for Sustainable Growth

Kegan Strydom
Relationship Manager – Mining
RMB Namibia



As delegates gather for Mining Indaba 2026, Namibia stands at an inflection point. The recent oil discoveries off our coast have captured global imagination, but our mining story is far more nuanced. Marked by uranium's resurgence, gold's steady ascent, and diamonds' uncertain future. The question isn't whether we have resources, but whether we can build the financial architecture to navigate this complexity.

At RMB Namibia, we've been financing the mining sector through cycles of boom and uncertainty. We understand that mining excellence isn't just about what lies beneath the ground it's about the capital structures, risk frameworks, and strategic partnerships that turn geological potential into economic reality.

Navigating Sectoral Divergence

Namibia's mining landscape today reflects broader global shifts. Our diamond sector, long the cornerstone of our mining economy, faces headwinds that demand candid assessment. Synthetic diamonds, changing consumer preferences, and market oversupply have compressed prices and margins. Debmarine Namibia and Namdeb's operations that once guaranteed stable returns now require careful portfolio management and operational optimization.

This uncertainty makes robust financial planning essential. Companies must stress-test assumptions, maintain liquidity buffers, and potentially pivot business models.

For financiers, it means more sophisticated risk assessment and flexible covenant structures that acknowledge market realities while protecting stakeholder interests.

Conversely, uranium presents extraordinary opportunity. Global recognition that nuclear power is essential for energy transition has transformed market dynamics. Namibia's position as Africa's largest uranium producer gains strategic significance as countries worldwide recommit to nuclear energy.

This is exemplified by developments at Swakop Uranium and Rossing Uranium. New projects are advancing, and existing operations are expanding all requiring substantial capital deployment. We look forward with great excitement for the developments at Bannerman, Langer Heinrich and Deep Yellow.

Meanwhile, our gold sector demonstrates consistent growth momentum. Rising gold prices, coupled with successful exploration programs like WIA Gold and mine expansions like B2Gold and QKR Navachab, position this sector as an increasingly important contributor to our mining economy. Projects that seemed marginal years ago now attract serious investment interest.

The Financing Challenge

This sectoral divergence creates unique financing challenges. Traditional mining finance models assumed relative homogeneity within commodity classes. Today, we're structuring facilities that account for diamond price volatility while capitalizing on uranium's multi-decade demand visibility. We're supporting gold operators balancing expansion ambitions against operational discipline.

Blended finance structures, ESG-linked facilities, and innovative partnerships between development finance institutions and commercial banks become crucial tools. Our role extends beyond providing capital, we architect solutions aligning investor requirements with project realities, understanding that every deposit and every commodity cycle has unique characteristics requiring bespoke financial engineering.

Sustainability as Competitive Advantage

The global transition to renewable energy has elevated Namibia's strategic importance. Our uranium fuels the baseload power essential for reliable grids. Our emerging critical minerals lithium, rare earths, copper support renewable infrastructure. But this opportunity comes with heightened scrutiny around ESG credentials, transparent governance, and measurable community impact.

Companies demonstrating genuine sustainability commitment access cheaper capital and build social license protecting long-term operations. RMB Namibia has integrated ESG considerations into credit assessment not as obstacles but as indicators of operational excellence and long-term viability.

Infrastructure as Enabler

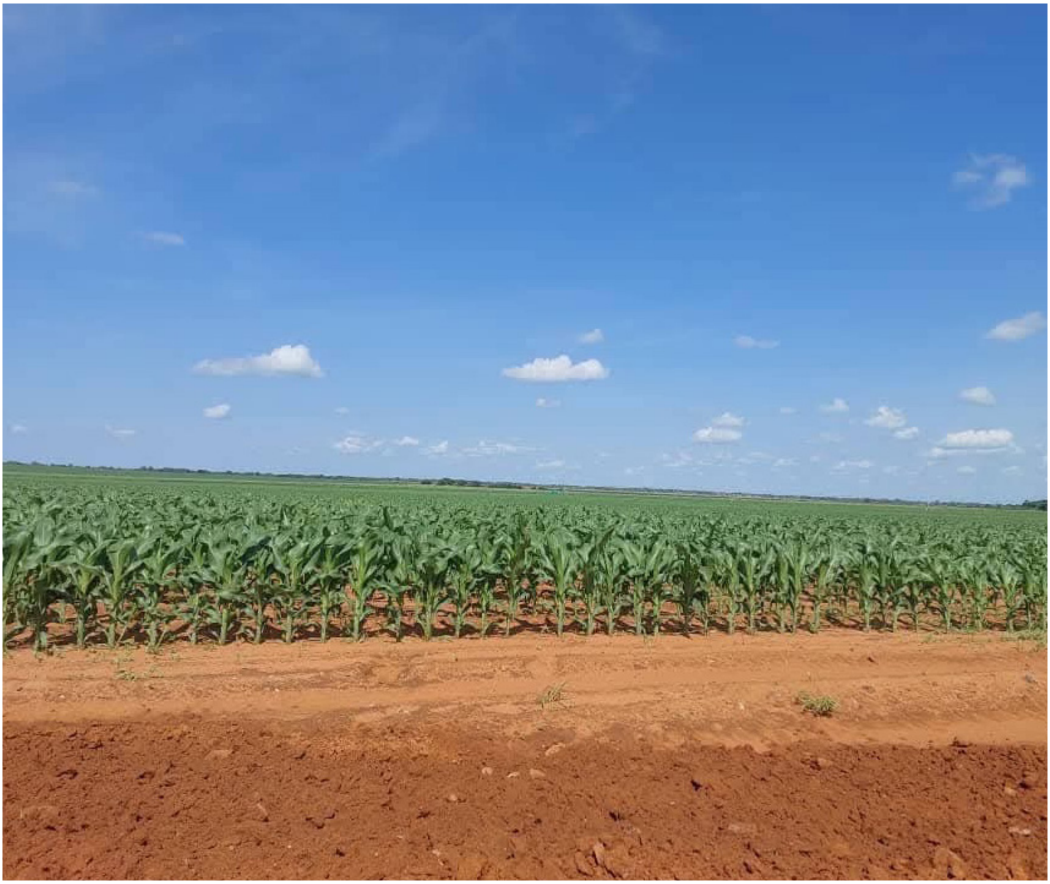
Namibia's mining potential remains constrained by infrastructure gaps port capacity, rail networks, water security, and energy reliability. These aren't insurmountable barriers; they're opportunities for creative public-private collaboration that shares risks and rewards appropriately. Every ton of additional port capacity or megawatt of reliable power multiplies the value of our mineral endowments.

Looking Forward

The next decade will define whether Namibia translates resources into broad-based development. Success requires stronger policies building genuine capability, transparent revenue management ensuring mining proceeds benefit all Namibians, and skills development creating careers.

As financial intermediaries, we bear responsibility for directing capital toward projects exemplifying these principles. Mining Indaba 2026 offers opportunity for honest conversation about challenges ahead. Namibia's mining renaissance won't happen by accident it will be built deal by deal, project by project, partnership by partnership and RMB Namibia will be there with you to make this happen.

RMB Namibia remains committed to this vision: a diversified mining sector that creates wealth, protects environments, empowers communities, and positions Namibia as Africa's mining destination of choice.



Shadikongoro Green Scheme needs N$48m to expand operations

The Shadikongoro Green Scheme Irrigation Project requires an estimated N$48 million investment in new machinery and infrastructure to expand its operations, according to a report by Parliament's standing committee on natural resources.

The committee said the funding is needed to extend irrigation to an additional 183 hectares, which would increase the project's total irrigated area from 390 hectares to 573 hectares.

Of the planned expansion, 102 hectares will be developed for orchards, including mango, avocado and citrus, while 81 hectares will be placed under centre pivot irrigation.

"This expansion will increase the irrigated area from 390 hectares to 573 hectares. Preliminary designs and layouts have already been completed. However, to support expansion and improve efficiency, the project requires new machinery and infrastructure valued at N$48 million," the committee said in its report.

The required equipment includes maize and wheat planters, fertiliser spreaders, tractors, an offset disc, a lime applicator, a combine harvester, and irrigation development for the additional 183 hectares.

The report noted that recent investments at the scheme include the purchase of a crop sprayer and a 132 kW tractor, repairs to existing tractors, replacement of centre pivots, and upgrades to pumps and motors. Since 2023, the ministry has been supplying production inputs to the project.

Further improvements planned for the 2025/2026 financial year include the construction of new security fencing, refurbishment of pump stations, installation of a new centre pivot, upgrades to grain storage facilities, and renovations to housing for small-scale farmers.

The committee said the scheme currently covers a total area of 585.5 hectares, of which 390 hectares are under irrigation. Of the irrigated land, 300 hectares are used for commercial farming, while 90 hectares are allocated to 14 small-scale farmers, evenly split between men and women.

The project employs 25 permanent workers and 10 contract employees, most of whom are drawn from surrounding communities.

Crop production at Shadikongoro has focused mainly on maize and wheat, with limited sunflower cultivation.

During the 2021/2022 winter season, 90 hectares of wheat produced 382 metric tonnes. In the 2022/2023 summer season, 285 hectares of maize yielded 1,611 metric tonnes, while the 2023/2024 season recorded 1,393 metric tonnes from 245 hectares, along with 20 tonnes of sunflower.

Maize and sunflower crops are currently being harvested for the 2024/2025 season, while 130 hectares of wheat have been planted for the 2025 winter season.

The scheme also operates an oil pressing plant for sunflower processing and small-scale milling equipment for maize and wheat sold locally.

However, production has been inconsistent, and a larger wheat milling plant installed during the 2015/2016 period has never been commissioned.

According to the report, a lack of critical machinery, particularly a combine harvester, has forced the scheme to rely on equipment borrowed from neighbouring green schemes, often resulting in delays to harvesting and planting operations.