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THE BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

Namibia to utilise Botswana's unused Norwegian beef export quota

THURSDAY 23 JULY 2026

MAIN STORY

Namibia to utilise Botswana's unused Norwegian beef export quota

Namibia is set to utilise Botswana's unused share of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Norwegian beef export quota after Botswana transferred part of its allocation following foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) restrictions that prevented exports to the premium European market.

Acting Meat Corporation of Namibia (Meatco) Chief Executive Officer Albertus Aochamub said the additional allocation would enable Namibia to meet strong export demand while ensuring the quota remains within SACU.

"The Norwegian quota closes at the end of December. Last year Namibia was able to meet its obligations, while Botswana was not. This year Botswana is unable to utilise its allocation, and they have given Namibia the remainder of their quota to execute on their behalf," Aochamub said during a briefing to Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare at the Meatco abattoir in Windhoek.

He said Namibia expects to fully utilise the additional allocation within the next two months.

The transfer follows continued over-utilisation of Namibia's Norwegian beef quota as export demand exceeds the country's allocated volumes.

As of 8 July 2026, Namibia's quota

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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utilisation reached 122% in June, with exports totalling 1.41 million kilograms, exceeding the monthly allocation by 257,667 kg.

The June figures followed 107% utilisation in May, when exports reached 1.24 million kg, reinforcing industry calls for the Norwegian quota to be renegotiated to better reflect growing demand.

Following an update from the Botswana Meat Commission (BMC), 50% of Botswana's unused quota, equivalent to 459,688 kg, has been transferred to Namibia.

Under the existing quota-sharing arrangement, 75% of the transferred allocation, or 344,766 kg, will be allocated to Meatco, offsetting the company's cumulative over-utilisation of 333,353 kg and leaving a balance of 11,413 kg.

The Norwegian quota is one of Namibia's most valuable premium beef export opportunities, providing duty-preferential access to a high-value European market.

During the visit, Aochamub also briefed the Prime Minister on Meatco's financial position ahead of the company's annual general meeting next week, where management is expected to present its financial performance and operational outlook.

He said Meatco is also advancing implementation of its Northern Communal Areas (NCA) roadmap following a recent board meeting in Rundu.

"We have agreed on a clear roadmap on how to support farmers, but also simultaneously what we need to do technically as a business to run efficiently," Aochamub said.

FirstRand Namibia, Bank Workers Union agree 5.71% wage increase

FirstRand Namibia and the Namibia Bank Workers Union (NABWU) have concluded a wage agreement for employees within the defined bargaining unit, securing an average salary increase of 5.71% for the 2026/27 financial year.

The increase will take effect from 1 August 2026 and will be implemented in line with the company's pay-for-performance principle. The agreement was signed on Thursday by FirstRand Namibia's Chief People Officer, Moses Iinane, and NABWU President, Zocks Nghikundwavali.

FirstRand Namibia said the negotiations were conducted in a professional and cooperative manner and thanked the union for its constructive engagement throughout the process.

The bank said the agreement reflects both parties' commitment to open dialogue, mutual respect and reaching a balanced outcome that recognises employee contributions while supporting the long-term sustainability of the business.

Digging up power for the world, buying it back from neighbors: Namibia's yellowcake (Uranium Oxide) Paradox

By Felix Naanda

> **The story of Namibia's uranium is a tale of overcoming international isolation to become a global powerhouse.**

For about five decades, the sands of the Namib Desert have yielded a resource that powers cities across the globe.

Since the first exports from the Rössing mine in 1976, Namibia has cemented its status as a top-tier uranium producer, now the world's third largest behind Kazakhstan and Canada.

Yet the very nation that fuels the world's nuclear reactors remains dependent on its neighbours for the electricity to keep its own lights on. This is the yellowcake paradox.

The Journey of the Yellowcake

The story of Namibia's uranium is a tale of overcoming international isolation to become a global powerhouse.

The Rössing mine, which began operations in 1976, was the pioneer. Despite a United Nations decree in 1974 banning the export of Namibian uranium during South Africa's illegal occupation, shipments continued, with early contracts signed with entities like the UK Atomic Energy Authority. Today, that controversial start has evolved into a sophisticated industry.

Namibia currently operates three major uranium mines: the pioneering Rössing mine (now majority-owned by China National Uranium Corporation), the Husab mine (owned by China General Nuclear Power and the largest single Chinese investment in Africa), and the recently restarted Langer Heinrich mine (owned by Australia's Paladin Energy).

The Namibian government holds minority stakes in these projects through Epangelo Mining Company.

The value of this resource is staggering. In March 2026 alone, uranium exports earned Namibia N$3.5 billion. That translated to about 1,800 tonnes of uranium oxide shipped out in a single month.

For the full year 2025, uranium ore and concentrates brought in N$28.1 billion. In volume terms, this represented approximately 9,500 tonnes of uranium oxide leaving Namibian shores over the course of the year.

To put that in perspective, that's enough yellowcake to fill roughly 380 standard shipping containers a trainload stretching nearly two kilometres long.

A Personal Awakening: The Obninsk Example

In my travels, I had the privilege of visiting the Obninsk Nuclear Power Plant (APS-1) in Russia, widely recognized as the first Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in the world to connect to an electrical grid.

It began supplying a small amount of electricity, just 5 megawatts, to the Moscow grid on June 27, 1954. Standing in that historic facility, I was struck by a profound realisation: if a nation could generate electricity from nuclear power over 70 years ago with a modest 5 MW reactor, what is stopping Namibia a country that sits on some of the world's largest uranium reserves from doing the same?

Here we are, the world's third-largest uranium producer, digging up and shipping out the very fuel that powers nuclear reactors across the globe, yet we have nothing to show for it in terms of our own electricity generation. We are like a farmer who grows the finest wheat but still buys bread from the neighbours. That visit to Obninsk gave me the firm belief that Namibia could and should at least have a Small Modular Reactor (SMR). If the Soviet Union could achieve this feat in 1954 with technology that now seems primitive by today's standards, surely we can do it in the 21st century with far more advanced and safer reactor designs. The question is no longer about capability; it is about will.

From Exports to Energy: What an SMR Actually Needs

To truly understand Namibia's yellowcake paradox, it helps to understand just how much uranium is needed to power an SMR, the technology that could one day turn Namibiainto an electricity producer.

A typical SMR is far smaller than traditional NPPs. While a large conventional reactor might require 180 to 225 tonnes of uranium per year to sustain operations, an SMR needs considerably less. According to industry data, a standard 300-megawatt SMR requires approximately 200 to 300 tonnes of uranium annually. A larger SMR design, such as the 470-megawatt Rolls-Royce unit, would consume roughly 350 to 500 tonnes per year.

To put these figures in perspective, consider Namibia's monthly uranium exports of roughly 1,800 tonnes, and that single month's shipment contains enough yellowcake to fuel six to nine 300 megawatt SMRs for an entire year. Even Namibia's weekly exports would be enough to power a single SMR for a full year. In simple terms, one week of Namibian uranium exports is enough fuel for 1 SMR for one year.

This is the heart of the paradox: Namibia ships enough uranium overseas every month to power multiple NPPs for an entire year, yet continues to import electricity from its neighbours. The transition from importer to energy-independent nation is not a question of resource availability Namibia has that in abundance, but of political will and strategic investment.

With regulatory groundwork starting now, Namibia could commission a pilot SMR by 2035 and scale to 22-3 units by 2045, aligning with the Vision 2040. Once online, Namibia could not only displace imports but become a net electricity exporter within SAPP and stabilizing the regional grid.

The Numbers Behind the Atom: How a Tonne of Uranium Stacks Up Against Coal, Oil, and Gas

To fully grasp the scale of what Namibia ships out each week, it helps to compare uranium's energy density against the fossil fuels that still dominate the global grid. One single tonne of natural uranium, the kind dug from the sands of Rössing or Husab, contains roughly the same amount of usable energy as 16,000 tonnes of coal, 80,000 barrels of oil, or 3.5 million cubic metres of natural gas. In practical terms, a single shipping container of yellowcake

holds more embedded energy than a lifetime's output from a medium-sized coal mine.

This staggering density is why nuclear power, despite its controversy, remains unmatched for baseload generation. A 300 megawatt SMR burning just 200 to 300 tonnes of uranium annually can produce roughly 2.4 million megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity per year which is enough to power a city of 250,000 homes. To match that output with coal would require over 4 million tonnes of the black rock, shipped, stockpiled, and combusted at enormous environmental cost. With oil, the equivalent would be a continuous supertanker delivery every few days. And with gas, it would mean a permanent pipeline or a fleet of LNG carriers ceaselessly offloading cargo.

For Namibia, this comparison sharpens the paradox into a single, painful point: every week, the country exports enough uranium to power an SMR for a full year, an energy equivalent that dwarfs the total electricity it currently imports (50 - 70%) from its neighbours. That is not a resource problem. That is a missed opportunity, measured in shiploads of coal that never have to be burned and barrels of oil that never have to be drilled.

The Next Wave

Namibia's uranium sector is poised for a transformative leap forward with the emergence of a major new player on the horizon. Bannerman Energy is targeting first production from its flagship Etango Project near Swakopmund in 2028, a development that could dramatically reshape the country's standing in the global uranium production market.

If Bannerman and other exploration projects currently underway come to fruition, Namibia could ascend to become the world's second-largest uranium producer, overtaking Canada and trailing only Kazakhstan. With global demand for nuclear fuel surging as nations pursue clean energy transitions, this would position Namibia as an even more formidable player in the international uranium market, attracting further investment and creating thousands of new jobs in the process.

Based on current projections, global uranium demand could double by 2050, creating a major supply gap as early as 2030, yet Namibia already holds proven, bankable resources that could propel it to become the world's second-largest producer, overtaking Canada, if Bannerman and other advanced projects move forward. But this window won't stay open forever; competitor nations are racing to lock in supply agreements, and the 2050 deficit will be filled with or without Namibia. The country must act decisively now by streamlining permits, accelerating production, and securing investment before the global nuclear renaissance solidifies.

The SMR Solution: Powering a Sovereign Future

The paradox of being a leading uranium exporter while relying on electricity imports from South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe is not lost on policymakers. Namibia's Vision 2040 and National Development Plans envisage a future in which the country derives greater value from its natural resources within its own borders. SMRs present a transformative opportunity to turn that vision into reality.

SMRs could enable Namibia to transition from a raw material exporter to a nation that harnesses its own uranium to generate reliable, low carbon electricity. They would provide dependable baseload power, reducing reliance on costly electricity imports, strengthening the national grid, and enhancing energy security. With current uranium production levels, Namibia already exports enough uranium each year to power its national grid several times over through SMR technology. At the same time, SMRs would provide the reliable, high capacity electricity needed for mining, manufacturing, and desalination, supporting the country's shift from exporting raw materials to adding value domestically. Such a transition would create thousands of skilled jobs, retain billions of dollars in economic value that currently flows overseas, and contribute to global decarbonisation by providing clean electricity with minimal greenhouse gas emissions.

Overcoming the Hurdles

The path to deploying Small Modular Reactors is not without challenges. Public concerns about nuclear safety and radioactive waste will need to be addressed through transparent communication, public education, and meaningful engagement with communities, particularly in the Erongo Region where uranium mining is already well established. Namibia will also need to ensure that SMRs are economically viable by exploring regional partnerships with neighbouring countries to achieve economies of scale, while using revenues from its uranium industry to support investment in nuclear infrastructure. Equally important is the establishment of a robust regulatory framework, including an independent nuclear regulator and modern legislation covering licensing, safety, waste management, and decommissioning. Although these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. With political commitment, sound regulation, regional cooperation, and public confidence, SMRs could provide Namibia with a practical pathway to a secure, low carbon, and value adding energy future.

The Continental Context

Namibia is not alone in its nuclear ambitions. Across Africa, several nations are planning to harness the atom for energy security. South Africa is the only country on the continent with a commercial NPP at Koeberg and is exploring new builds, including SMRs.

The El Dabaa NPP project in Egypt is currently being implemented by Rosatom and includes four advanced VVER-1200 reactors

Meanwhile, countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and Ghana are actively working with the International Atomic Energy Agency to develop the infrastructure for NPPs or SMRs.

They are watching the uranium trade closely, not just for fuel supply, but as a sign of the continent's growing role in the global nuclear energy cycle.

For Namibia, the challenge remains. It is the world's third-largest uranium producer, about 9,500 tonnes out of a global total of roughly 80,000 tonnes. But, until it can convert its yellowcake into megawatts for its own people, it remains a powerhouse serving others.

The question is no longer whether Namibia can lead the world in uranium production, it already does. The question is whether it can finally harness the atom not just for export, but for its own sovereign future. The answer lies in the bold decisions Namibia makes today.

Felix Naanda, Bachelors of Science in Mining Engineering from University of Witwatersrand, JHB, Masters in Mining Geology from National University of Science and Technology MISIS, Moscow, Russia

BoN launches climate data study to strengthen sustainable finance

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has launched a national diagnostic study to assess the availability, quality, consistency and accessibility of climate-related data as it seeks to strengthen climate risk management and accelerate the country's sustainable finance agenda.

The announcement was made by Bank of Namibia Deputy Governor and Namibia Sustainable Finance Alliance (NSFA) Chairperson Leonie Dunn during the Alliance's first Sustainable Finance Workshop, held on 20 July under the theme, "Where the System Is Breaking Down: Gaps and Constraints."

Dunn said the study will identify gaps in Namibia's climate-related data landscape while improving the financial sector's understanding of climate risks across different geographic regions and economic sectors.

She said the initiative will provide financial institutions with a stronger foundation to identify, assess, measure, manage and disclose climate-related risks in a more consistent and transparent manner.

"We have learned from the experience of other economies that our immediate priorities should include improving the measurement and disclosure of climate-related risks, as well as developing a common classification system in the form of a national taxonomy," Dunn said.

The diagnostic study forms part of the central bank's broader efforts to strengthen Namibia's sustainable finance framework and improve the financial sector's preparedness for the economic impacts of

climate change.

The workshop, organised by the NSFA in collaboration with the Bank of Namibia and RMB Namibia, brought together

> The diagnostic study forms part of the central bank's broader efforts to strengthen Namibia's sustainable finance framework and improve the financial sector's preparedness for the economic impacts of climate change.

representatives from banks, non-bank financial institutions, development finance institutions and development partners to identify barriers to mobilising climate and biodiversity finance.

Participants identified fragmented and inadequate climate data, limited technical capacity, uncertainty over sustainable finance classifications, weak project preparation pipelines and insufficient coordination among stakeholders as key constraints to expanding sustainable finance in Namibia.

Despite these challenges, the workshop noted that Namibia remains well positioned to attract greater climate investment, supported by its abundant natural resources, relatively sophisticated financial sector and access to international climate finance mechanisms.

Participants also identified blended finance, adaptation finance, climate risk insurance, carbon finance linked to rangeland restoration and green industries, as well as conservation finance instruments such as payments for ecosystem services and biodiversity credits, as key opportunities to unlock sustainable investment.


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Can Namibia truly industrialise under SACU?

By Gabriel Haulyamayi

The 9th SACU Summit in Cape Town offered ambitious rhetoric about regional industrialisation, but for Namibia, the gap between promise and reality has never been wider.

When President Cyril Ramaphosa declared at the 9th SACU Summit on 26 June 2026 that "we choose industrialisation over dependence," the sentiment resonated across the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Yet for Namibian policymakers, the statement carried sharp irony. How does a nation industrialise within a customs union that structurally reinforces its role as a consumer of finished goods and supplier of raw materials?

The Policy Dilemma: A Union Built for Another Era

From a policy analyst's perspective, SACU remains the world's oldest customs union, established in 1910 to serve colonial interests.

While the 2002 Agreement democratised decision-making, its architecture still privileges South Africa as the industrial core.

The SACU Strategic Plan (2022–2027) identifies regional value chains in agro-processing, textiles and cosmetics as priorities, but the mid-term review presented at this year's Summit offered more process than progress.

Article 26 of the SACU Agreement grants Namibia the right to protect infant industries through additional duties, yet this instrument has been woefully underutilised, invoked only for UHT milk and pasta in over two decades.

"The Bank of Namibia identifies tiles, steel products, leather goods and processed foods as sectors with genuine manufacturing potential, but without aggressive infant industry protection, these remain unrealised possibilities.

The Bank of Namibia identifies tiles, steel products, leather goods and processed foods as sectors with genuine manufacturing potential, but without aggressive infant industry protection, these remain unrealised possibilities.

The Economic Trap: Revenue Dependency vs. Industrial Ambition

The economic data tells a sobering story. SACU receipts contribute approximately 27% of Namibia's total revenue projected at N$24.3 billion in 2026/27.

This fiscal dependency creates a perverse disincentive for industrialisation.

The revenue-sharing formula distributes customs duties based on each country's share of intra-SACU imports.

Paradoxically, the more Namibia imports from South Africa, the larger its SACU revenue share. Industrialising and reducing import dependence would shrink the very revenue pool funding the national budget.

The IMF's 2026 Article IV consultation projects Namibia's fiscal balance excluding SACU receipts at -13.2% of GDP, revealing an economy that cannot sustain itself without customs union transfers.

Meanwhile, manufacturing contracted by 12.2% in Q1 2026, contributing merely 11% of GDP. SACU revenue itself has proven volatile, falling 22.3% from N$28.1 billion in 2024/25 to N$21.8 billion in 2025/26. An industrialisation strategy built on such unpredictable foundations risks fiscal catastrophe.

The Political Calculus: Sovereignty vs. Solidarity

Politically, Ramaphosa's re-imagined SACU agenda, cross-border special economic zones, the Trans-Kalahari Railway, and critical minerals beneficiation sounds transformative.

Namibia's green hydrogen potential, with the 10 billion Hyphen project, offers genuine industrial diversification. Ramaphosa explicitly acknowledged Namibia's "green hydrogen and uranium processing potential" as assets for a "regional industrial ecosystem."

But political commentators must ask: who defines the terms? South Africa administers the Common Revenue Pool, its GDP constitutes roughly 90% of SACU output, and its industrial base dwarfs all four smaller members.

The common external tariff is effectively South Africa's tariff, designed to protect South African manufacturers.

When Ramaphosa declares that SACU must become "the premier platform for regional economic resilience," he speaks from the position of the dominant economy.

For Namibia, resilience may require challenging the terms of a partnership that provides fiscal oxygen while suffocating industrial ambition.

Recommendations: A Three-Pronged Strategy

Namibia must act decisively. First, aggressively invoke Article 26 infant industry protection for strategically selected sectors leather processing, construction materials, and agro-processing rather than continuing the current passive approach.

Second, push for SACU revenue formula reform that decouples fiscal transfers from import volumes, replacing it with a development component tied to industrialisation milestones.

Third, leverage the green hydrogen agenda not merely for export revenue but as an anchor for domestic industrialisation demanding local content requirements, supplier development programmes, and technology transfer agreements that build Namibian manufacturing capability.

The Trans-Kalahari Railway and Walvis Bay port must be positioned as Namibian industrial corridors, not merely transit routes.

The Summit closed with Ramaphosa's call: "Its original purpose was to move goods. Its future purpose must be to create opportunity."

For Namibia, realising that future requires moving beyond SACU revenue dependence and making the difficult sovereign choice to industrialise even if it means demanding more from the union than it has ever given.

Gabriel Haulyamayi, he is a writer, entrepreneur and commentator on socio-economic development and industrial policy.

Chisanga, Madonsela call for ethical leadership to strengthen board governance

Corporate governance leaders have called on African boards to move beyond compliance-driven governance and focus on building resilient institutions, saying long-term stewardship, ethical leadership and institutional integrity are critical to sustainable organisational success.

Speaking at the Namibia Institute of Corporate Governance's (NICG) Leading the Board workshop and masterclass, governance expert Patrick Chisanga said boards should measure their success by the institutions they leave behind rather than short-term achievements.

"Our responsibility is not simply to protect today's institutions before us. Our responsibility is to strengthen the institutions that we are custodians of today for tomorrow. We should be asking how today's decisions will be judged 10 years from now. That strategic vision is the difference between administration and leadership," Chisanga said. He said Africa's strongest boards consistently place institutional interests ahead of personal ambition, confront difficult issues, inspire stakeholder confidence and lead with integrity.

Chisanga argued that governance should evolve from a compliance exercise into a strategic tool for creating sustainable organisations.

"Outstanding boards ask what is best for the institution, not what is best for me. Strong institutions are built when directors place the mission of the organisation above individual ambition. Leadership is tested when someone is willing to ask the difficult questions that everyone else is avoiding. Many governance failures could have been prevented if just one director had chosen courage over comfort," he said.

He urged directors to adopt a stewardship mindset by considering the long-term impact of board decisions, adding that Africa's governance challenges stem less from a lack of governance frameworks than from shortcomings in leadership.

"Africa does not need more governance codes. We have enough. What Africa needs is more courageous governors of integrity and trust. The future of governance in Africa will be determined by the quality of leadership around our board tables and the institutions we leave behind," Chisanga said.

Also addressing the workshop, Professor Thuli Madonsela said board chairpersons play a decisive role in shaping organisational culture and ensuring governance principles are embedded throughout institutions.

She said boards should serve as the conscience of organisations by promoting ethical leadership, accountability and effective oversight.

"If you have a conscience of the board, how you as the chairperson behave instils an ethos in the boardroom and throughout the organisation. We have got to walk the talk. The tone at the top is set not only by what leaders say but also by what they do," Madonsela said.

Madonsela cautioned board chairpersons against becoming involved in operational management, stressing that governance and executive responsibilities must remain distinct.

She said chairpersons should focus on strategic leadership, overseeing board processes, allocating committee responsibilities, evaluating chief executives and ensuring board deliberations remain focused on long-term organisational objectives.

"The chairperson has to balance leadership with oversight. Do not compete with the chief executive. Leadership is about influencing and inspiring people to think and act in ways that achieve the desired goals. Governance is about ensuring the organisation remains aligned with its purpose and values," she said.

Madonsela encouraged boards experiencing governance challenges to resolve disputes through dialogue, governance training and established governance frameworks rather than allowing divisions to weaken institutional performance.

After Vision 2030: What should Namibia's next national blueprint look like?

By Lot Ndamanomhata

> "A national vision is not a technical document; it is a piece of political consensus-building dressed up as planning.

Namibia's National Planning Commission (NPC) has quietly started one of the most consequential exercises in the country's post-independence history: designing what comes after Vision 2030.

The NPC's new Strategic Plan for 2025/26–2029/30 commits the institution to two big deliverables — a successor long-term national vision, and the Seventh National Development Plan (NDP7), which will be the last medium-term plan before 2030 arrives.

Executive Director I-Ben Natangwe Nashandi has framed the plan as the "roadmap" for how Namibia will plan, monitor and finance its development over the next five years, built around strengthening planning, improving oversight of performance, and modernising the NPC itself.

This is a bigger moment than the bureaucratic language suggests. Vision 2030 was Namibia's founding development narrative — the promise, made in the early 2000s, that by 2030 Namibians would enjoy "the quality of life... of their counterparts in the developed world." A quarter-century on, that promise is due for a reckoning, and its replacement will set the terms of Namibian development policy for a generation.

What would replace Vision 2030?

A national vision is not a technical document; it is a piece of political consensus-building dressed up as planning. Malaysia's Vision 2020 and Singapore's early nation-building narratives worked because they fused an economic growth target with a story about identity, unity and shared sacrifice.

Vision 2030 tried to do the same for Namibia, anchoring itself in the ambition to move the country from lower-middle-income to industrialised, high-income status, while resolving what it called the "triple challenges" of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Three broad options are realistically on the table for what follows it:

- A renewed long-horizon vision with a new target year (e.g., "Vision 2050" or "Vision 2063"). This would preserve the basic architecture — a 25–30 year aspirational document translated into successive five-year NDPs — but reset the goalposts using more realistic growth and equity targets, informed by the lessons of NDP1–NDP6. Aligning the horizon with the African Union's Agenda 2063, which the NPC's new strategic plan explicitly references, would also tie Namibia's own planning cycle to continental commitments.

- A narrower, sector-anchored transformation strategy, built around Namibia's genuine comparative advantages — green hydrogen, critical minerals (uranium, lithium, rare earths), offshore oil and gas, and blue economy/fisheries — rather than a broad, all-things-to-all-people vision. This would resemble Botswana's diamond-anchored planning model or the UAE's resource-to-diversification playbook, using windfall sectors deliberately to fund industrialisation and human capital rather than treating growth as a diffuse, all-sector aspiration.
- A developmental-state-style industrial strategy, explicit about the state's role as an active investor and coordinator of structural transformation, not just a regulator and safety-net provider. This is the model discussed in detail below.

In practice, the new vision will probably borrow from all three: a long-horizon aspirational document (likely still framed against 2050 or 2063) that is explicit about resource-driven industrialisation and gives the state a more assertive coordinating role than Vision 2030 did.

What might NDP7 contain?

Judging by the pattern of NDP5 and NDP6 and the priorities flagged in the NPC's own strategic plan, NDP7 (likely covering roughly 2030–2035, the final push toward whatever 2030 target is retired and the opening years of the new vision) is likely to focus on:

- Institutionalising monitoring and evaluation. The NPC has already flagged a digital national M&E system, annual progress reports, and mid-term/end-of-plan evaluations as priorities — a direct response to years of criticism that NDPs were launched with fanfare and reviewed too late or too loosely to correct course.
- Structural transformation beyond the "enclave economy." Analysts reviewing NDP6 have warned that Namibia's growth remains concentrated in capital-intensive, low-employment sectors (mining, large-scale construction, finance) that do not absorb labour, creating what is described as an "enclave" economic structure that entrenches inequality even amid growth.
- Green hydrogen and critical minerals as industrial anchors. With large-scale green hydrogen projects and mineral exploration attracting global investment, NDP7 will almost certainly try to translate resource wealth into local value addition, skills development and fiscal space, rather than raw extraction — the same translation problem that Vision 2030 never fully solved.
- Human capital and skills-jobs mismatch. NDP5's terminal review found shortfalls in employment creation, industrial diversification, education relevance and subnational service delivery — problems NDP6 was designed to address and that NDP7 will need to show tangible progress on.
- Decentralisation and community equity participation, extending the conservancy model (which already generates significant income for communities in the tourism sector) into mining, energy and land reform, addressing critiques that development benefits rarely reach ordinary Namibians directly.
- Fiscal sustainability and development finance mobilisation, given Namibia's 2025 reclassification from upper-middle to lower-middle income status, which the NPC's own leadership has called a "sobering reminder" of how fragile earlier gains were.

Vision 2030 and the NDPs: what was actually achieved, and what wasn't

Namibia's planning record over 30 years is neither a story of failure nor of success — it is a story of macroeconomic stabilisation without structural transformation.

On the credit side

The transition from apartheid-era exclusion built durable multi-party institutions, expanded access to basic services, and produced episodes of solid growth — NDP4 (2012–2017) averaged around 4.2% GDP growth.

Namibia's conservancy-based community tourism model, generating more than US$10 million a year in community income and benefits, is frequently cited as a genuine, home-grown success story in decentralised natural-resource governance.

On the debit side

The pattern across NDP1 through NDP6 is remarkably consistent. NDP2 (2001–2006) targeted cutting the Gini coefficient from 0.67 to below 0.60; NDP3 promised a further reduction alongside 5% growth.

Neither target was met, and as one long-time Namibian economic commentator put it, the country's "yawning inequality gap... is a testimony to our dismal failure to tackle this issue." By the mid-2010s, Gini coefficient estimates still sat around 0.57 — barely moved, and nowhere near the Vision 2030 target of 0.3.

NDP5 (2017–2022) is the starkest case study. The plan coincided with Namibia's worst economic performance since independence — GDP contracted by 8.1% in 2020 alone amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a commodity price collapse, and recurring drought, pushing average growth over the period into negative territory.

The NPC's own terminal review, and independent analysis by Simonis Storm Securities, found shortfalls specifically in employment creation, industrial diversification, education relevance to labour-market needs, and subnational service delivery — and, crucially, found a "structural decoupling" between GDP growth and job creation, because the sectors driving output (mining, construction, finance) are capital-intensive rather than labour-absorbing.

NDP6, launched to make the "final push" toward Vision 2030, has itself been described by commentators as at risk of becoming "another white elephant" unless implementation discipline improves — a direct echo of former NPC Director-General Tom Alweendo's 2017 warning, on launching NDP4, that "we cannot achieve Vision 2030" without "a serious paradigm shift." That warning has effectively been repeated at the launch of nearly every subsequent plan.

By 2025, NPC leadership itself was candid about the scale of the gap: Namibia's reclassification from upper-middle to lower-middle income status was cited by the Commission's own Director-General as evidence that "economic growth has not always translated into inclusive social development," with poverty, unemployment and inequality persisting at "unacceptably high levels."

Independent governance indices (cited in the NPC's Vision 2030 review) have also flagged that anti-corruption institutions exist on paper but underperform in practice, particularly regarding actual prosecutions.

The recurring diagnosis across nearly every independent review is the same: Namibia is good at writing plans and comparatively weak at implementing them — a gap between "rhetoric and delivery" that has persisted for two decades, made worse by heavy dependence on capital-intensive extractive sectors, and by implementation frameworks that remain "predominantly state-centric" even where the plans themselves call for private-sector and community partnership.

Learning from Asia: Malaysia and Singapore's development models

Namibia is not the first resource-rich, ethnically plural, post-colonial state to attempt this kind of long-horizon planning.

Malaysia and Singapore are the two most commonly cited comparators — not because their circumstances are identical to Namibia's (they are not), but because both used deliberate, state-directed, multi-decade plans to escape the "poor commodity exporter" trap, which is precisely where Namibia's own reviews suggest it remains stuck.

Malaysia: redistribution through planned growth

Malaysia's approach began not from a growth target but from a political crisis: the 1969 ethnic riots exposed the risks of leaving wealth distribution to the market.

In response, Malaysia deliberately abandoned a laissez-faire approach for a "developmental state" model — the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1971–1990) — with four explicit objectives: raise the growth rate, reduce poverty, restructure the economy along ethnic lines, and restore national unity.

Crucially, the objectives were social, but the instruments were economic: industrial policy, export promotion and foreign direct investment were used deliberately to fund redistribution, rather than treating growth and equity as separate tracks.

The NEP was succeeded by the National Development Policy (1991) and then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's Vision 2020, launched in 1991, which explicitly bundled economic targets (7% annual GDP growth) with nine social and political "challenges" — national unity, a scientific and progressive society, equitable wealth distribution, and a competitive economy. By 1990, Malaysia had already met the criteria for Newly Industrialised Country status, having built export-oriented manufacturing (electronics, textiles) it did not previously have.

Malaysia's experience is instructive for Namibia precisely because it is not a clean success story. Analysts note the NEP reduced income inequality but never achieved its target of a specific level of Bumiputera corporate ownership, and that the pivot toward privatisation and FDI reliance in the late 1980s brought real costs — "crony capitalism" and heightened vulnerability to global financial shocks.

Nor did its benefits reach everyone evenly: ethnic preference policies were disproportionately captured by urban and already-prosperous Bumiputera, leaving rural poverty entrenched even as national indicators improved.

The lesson for Namibia is less "adopt

an NEP-style plan" than "be explicit that redistribution requires deliberate economic instruments, not GDP growth on its own" — precisely the gap NDP5 and NDP6 reviews have identified.

Singapore: a small, disciplined, capable state

Singapore's model is more centralised still. Often cited as the archetypal East Asian "developmental state" in Chalmers Johnson's original sense — a state whose central purpose is engineering economic transformation through an elite, insulated bureaucracy — Singapore built its growth around a small number of highly capable institutions, chiefly the Economic Development Board, which coordinated foreign investment, industrial targeting and workforce training (for instance, the Vocational and Industrial Training Board, created in 1970 specifically to match worker skills to the economy's changing needs).

Singapore's political economy scholars describe its approach as combining "government-led, foreign-MNC-led and export-led" growth with an unusually cohesive, single-tier government where ministries and agencies work in close coordination, enabling both centralised planning and swift implementation.

The state's control over land (rising from about a quarter of Singapore's territory in 1968 to over 90% today) gave it direct leverage over investment decisions in a way few other governments possess.

International indices consistently rank Singapore highly on corruption control and ease of doing business, and its public service is explicitly meritocratic in recruitment.

The trade-offs are equally well documented in the academic literature: Singapore's model rests on a "political meritocracy" that has also entrenched one-party dominance since 1965, extensive labour discipline that critics describe as constraining independent unions, and a state role in the economy (through land ownership and government-linked companies) that leaves little room for the kind of decentralised, community-owned development that Namibia's own conservancy model represents. Singapore's success, in other words, was bought partly with civil and political trade-offs that a multi-party, more institutionally pluralistic Namibia would need to consider very differently.

Could Namibia become a developmental state — and should it?

The developmental state concept — a state that treats economic transformation as a central, deliberate mission rather than a by-product of macroeconomic stability and market liberalisation — is attractive to Namibian planners for an obvious reason: the alternative, essentially two decades of market-oriented planning within a broadly liberal-democratic constitutional order, has produced stabilisation without structural transformation.

Growth has repeatedly failed to translate into jobs, and inequality has barely moved off levels among the highest recorded anywhere in the world.

But three cautions from the comparative record deserve honest treatment in NDP7 and any successor to Vision 2030:

First, capacity precedes strategy

Both Malaysia's NEP and Singapore's EDB worked because they were paired with genuinely capable, relatively insulated bureaucracies able to design and enforce industrial policy without being captured by short-term political or elite interests.

Namibia's own reviews — including its Vision 2030 assessment — flag governance frameworks that exist on paper but underperform in enforcement, particularly around corruption.

A developmental-state strategy layered onto weak implementation capacity risks reproducing the "white elephant" pattern critics already see in NDP6, only with more centralised power and less accountability.

Second, the democratic trade-off is real and should be named, not assumed away

Singapore's model in particular depended on sustained one-party dominance and constrained civil society space; Malaysia's NEP operated for two decades under a dominant coalition government.

Namibia has been reclassified in some indices as drifting toward "competitive authoritarianism," with administrative failures in the 2024 election and legislative pushback against judicial rulings cited as early warning signs.

Africa-wide research is genuinely mixed on whether authoritarian consolidation improves development outcomes — a small number of cases (Rwanda, historically Ethiopia) combine developmental rhetoric with impressive socioeconomic indicators, while most authoritarian African states combine centralisation with weaker, not stronger, development performance.

A developmental-state turn in Namibia should not be treated as a shortcut around democratic accountability; the comparative evidence does not support that trade-off as reliable.

Third, resource wealth and small population can be an asset if deliberately harnessed, not just extracted

Namibia's mining, hydrogen and offshore energy sectors give it exactly the kind of capital-intensive windfall that, per Malaysia's NEP logic, could fund human capital and diversification — but only if there is a firm political commitment to channel resource rents into labour-absorbing sectors and equity participation for communities, rather than allowing the "enclave economy" pattern that NDP6 reviewers have already flagged to persist unaddressed.

Conclusion

The NPC's decision to formally begin work on a post-Vision 2030 blueprint is a necessary and overdue exercise, not merely a bureaucratic formality. Namibia's own record across NDP1 through NDP6 shows a country capable of producing sophisticated, well-intentioned plans but consistently short on the implementation discipline, labour-absorbing industrial strategy, and enforcement capacity needed to convert growth into shared prosperity.

Malaysia and Singapore offer genuinely useful lessons — that redistribution requires deliberate economic instruments, that capable and insulated institutions matter as much as the plans themselves, and that state coordination can accelerate industrialisation.

But both cases also carry real, undersold costs — crony capitalism in one, entrenched one-party dominance and constrained pluralism in the other — that a text drafting Namibia's next long-term vision would do well to weigh honestly rather than romanticise.

The measure of whether NDP7 and its accompanying national vision succeed where their six predecessors fell short will not be the ambition of the document itself, but whether the NPC's new emphasis on digital monitoring, evaluation and accountability actually closes the gap between what Namibia plans and what it delivers.

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

Nearly 200 MSMEs apply for NIPDB SME Fund

Nearly 200 Namibian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have applied for funding under the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board's (NIPDB) SME Fund, highlighting strong demand for growth capital among local businesses.

The fund, launched under the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises Development in Namibia (ProSME) Project, provides grants of between N$50,000 and N$100,000, together with pitch coaching, business advisory services and access to local and international markets.

The initiative is implemented through a partnership between the National Planning Commission (NPC), the NIPDB and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

NIPDB Acting Executive for Competitiveness and Branding, Catherine Shipushu, said the response since applications opened on 10 June 2026 demonstrates the significant financing gap facing Namibia's small business sector.

"Since applications opened on 10 June 2026, close to 200 applications have been received from entrepreneurs across the country, an indication of the demand for funding among businesses looking to grow beyond their current capacity," Shipushu said.

She said limited access to finance remains one of the biggest obstacles preventing MSMEs from expanding operations, increasing production capacity and creating jobs.

"The SME Fund is designed to close that gap. It provides more than just grant capital. It is also about equipping business owners with the coaching, market access and partnerships they need to compete and grow sustainably," she said.

The fund prioritises youth-owned businesses run by entrepreneurs aged 18 to 34, women-owned enterprises, social enterprises, cooperatives and export-ready businesses operating in strategic sectors of the economy.

Eligible sectors include agriculture and agro-processing, artisanal mining, the blue economy, the circular economy, creative industries, financial services, health and wellness, information and communication technology (ICT), manufacturing, and tourism and hospitality.

The SME Fund forms part of broader efforts to strengthen Namibia's MSME sector by improving access to finance and supporting businesses with high growth, export and investment potential.

MUMI, NIFA launch national investment talent development programme

MUMI Investment Managers and the Namibia Investment & Finance Academy (NIFA) have launched a three-year national programme to strengthen Namibia's pipeline of investment professionals as demand grows for skilled talent in the country's expanding capital markets.

The Namibia Capital Markets Talent Development Programme will be implemented as a three-year pilot, combining industry-focused training, internationally recognised professional certifications and practical workplace experience to prepare future investment professionals.

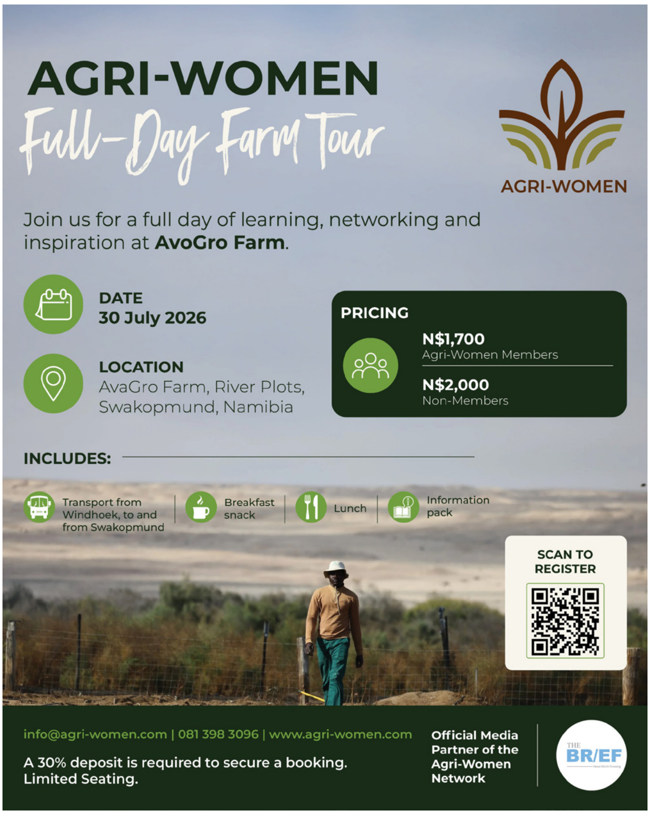
The programme includes structured workshops, Bloomberg terminal training, support for globally recognised qualifications such as the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA), Financial Risk Manager (FRM), Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst (CAIA) and Financial Modelling and Valuation Analyst (FMVA), as well as internship placements from 2027.

NIFA Chief Executive Officer Arinze Okafor said the initiative responds to growing demand for professionals capable of managing Namibia's increasing institutional capital while meeting higher governance and fiduciary standards.

"Namibia has built a substantial pool of institutional capital, but our long-term success depends on developing the professionals capable of managing, allocating and governing that capital. This partnership creates a structured pathway from academic potential to internationally recognised professional qualifications, practical investment experience and industry leadership," Okafor said.

MUMI Investment Managers Executive Director Megameno Shetunyenga said the sector must invest in developing future professionals to ensure the long-term sustainability of Namibia's investment industry.

"Developing Namibia's investment profession requires more than recruiting experienced people; it requires deliberately investing in future talent. Through this partnership, we are helping create a sustainable pipeline of skilled professionals who will strengthen the investment industry," Shetunyenga said.

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