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THE

BRIEF

News Worth Knowing



Govt rejects privatisation of electricity transmission and distribution

THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER 2026

MAIN STORY

Govt rejects privatisation of electricity transmission and distribution

Mines and Energy Minister Modestus Amutse has ruled out privatising Namibia's electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure, saying the government must retain control over the network to regulate tariffs, protect national security and ensure transmission capacity is aligned with electricity generation.

Addressing the National Assembly, Amutse said electricity was a strategic national asset that could become more expensive and difficult to manage if control shifted entirely to private operators.

"We are not going to privatise as I have said and as you have probably read, honourable member, in the media, because we regard electricity as a national security asset," Amutse said.

He said the government needed to retain control over electricity tariffs, which are informed by production costs, warning that private control could make prices more difficult to regulate.

"If it's entirely in the hands of the private players, one can already make out how expensive electricity can become and also become uncontrollable when it comes to deciding on the routes of distribution," he said.

Amutse also stressed the importance of monitoring national transmission infrastructure to ensure that its capacity matched electricity generation.



Crucial Dates

- Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:
 - * 29 October 2026
 - * 10 December 2026

"The carriage capacity have to be aligned with the production of energy," he said.

He maintained that NamPower should continue carrying out its transmission responsibilities under the legislation establishing the utility, arguing that government oversight was necessary to manage the national electricity network.

"As far as government is concerned, ECB is a regulator. They can look at different forms of regulating," Amutse said.

He said the government and the Electricity Control Board (ECB) were still discussing how to accommodate different approaches to electricity generation and supply without compromising the government's position on public control of transmission and distribution.

"Where we cannot meet each other in terms of agreeing to terms, we have to come together and that is where we are now, just to iron out what we definitely have to do together so that we don't dilute the government position," he said.

The comments come as BW Kudu's application to construct and operate its own electricity transmission infrastructure remains on hold while the ECB develops a regulatory framework for private investment in the sector.

BW Kudu has applied for a transmission licence to build a 400-kilovolt power line linking its proposed 420-megawatt Kudu gas-to-power plant near Lüderitz to NamPower's Obib substation. Electricity from the planned plant is expected to supply Namibia and customers in South Africa.

NamPower, which currently holds a monopoly over electricity transmission in Namibia, objected to the application after

it was advertised by the ECB in May 2024. The objection led to a public hearing at which NamPower and BW Kudu presented their positions on the proposed private investment.

ECB Chief Executive Officer Robert Kahimise previously said the board had recommended to the minister that BW Kudu's proposed transmission investment was justified.

However, Amutse determined that the application should remain pending until a regulatory framework governing private participation in electricity transmission was established.

The ECB subsequently began developing an Independent Transmission Company (ITC) regulatory framework and issued a request for proposals for consultancy services in August 2026.

The framework is expected to establish the conditions under which private investors may develop and operate transmission infrastructure, as well as how privately financed networks would connect to NamPower's existing grid.

Kahimise has said the issue has become increasingly important as private investors pursue large electricity generation projects that require substantial transmission capacity.

The BW Kudu application could therefore help determine how future private power projects finance and connect transmission infrastructure in Namibia.

The regulatory process also reflects wider changes in electricity markets, where some countries have separated generation, transmission and distribution functions traditionally managed by a single utility.



Ngurare warns against favouritism in public and private sector recruitment

Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare has urged public and private sector employers to end favouritism and discrimination in recruitment, warning that appointments based on personal

relationships, ethnicity or community ties undermine equal employment opportunities and institutional performance.

Speaking at the 16th Institute of

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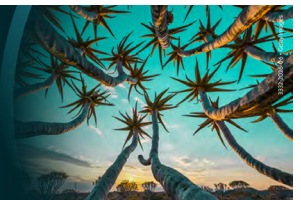
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People Management (IPM) Namibia Annual Conference, Ngurare said recruitment decisions should be based strictly on qualifications, competence and performance rather than personal connections or backgrounds.

“Do not appoint someone simply because they are your friend or come from your village. If another candidate is better qualified and performs well, give that person the opportunity, regardless of their race, language, ethnicity or background,” Ngurare said.

He raised concerns about recruitment practices in the public service, including allegations that some candidates were disadvantaged because of their backgrounds, and called on human resource practitioners to eliminate discriminatory practices.

Ngurare also warned against situations in which government departments or divisions become dominated by employees from particular communities, saying recruitment processes should promote fairness and reflect the country's diversity.

“The public service and private sector must both reflect the diversity of Namibia,” he said.

He said building a professional and effective public service required integrity, accountability and transparent recruitment processes, while human resource practitioners had a responsibility to ensure that employees were recruited,

developed, managed and retained on merit. Ngurare further stressed that Namibia's economic transformation and investment ambitions depended on developing a skilled workforce capable of meeting the demands of emerging industries.

He called for stronger links between education, vocational training, entrepreneurship and employment to improve opportunities for young people and address skills shortages.

The Prime Minister also urged employers to create inclusive and productive working environments, warning that toxic workplace cultures could undermine employee well-





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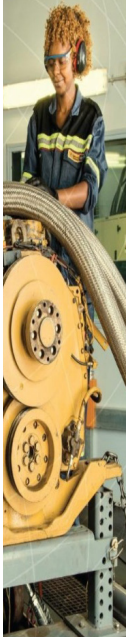
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being and organisational performance.

Turning to technology, Ngurare called for greater investment in locally developed artificial intelligence (AI) and digital solutions, saying Namibia should reduce its dependence on imported technologies and build systems that respond to domestic challenges.

“Artificial intelligence should not mean adopting everything developed in Silicon Valley and simply placing it in our communities. We must also be at the forefront of developing and programming solutions that address our own needs,” he said.

He said universities, students and local technology innovators had the potential to develop software that could improve government administration, reduce paperwork and make public services more accessible.

Ngurare cited the digitisation of

government application processes as an example of how locally developed technology could reduce administrative costs and eliminate the need for citizens to travel long distances to submit documents.

He revealed that the public service had already begun work on digitisation and AI policies, stressing that technology adoption should strengthen national capacity, improve service delivery and safeguard national interests and security.

He urged human resource professionals to prepare employees for technological changes through training and skills development, ensuring that the introduction of digital systems translated into measurable improvements in productivity and service delivery.

“Technology should be used to address challenges such as unemployment rather than simply to communicate with one another,” he said.



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Govt to build two Western Bypass bridges for N\$70m

The government plans to construct two pedestrian bridges along Windhoek's Western Bypass at an estimated cost of N\$70 million, or N\$35 million per bridge, with construction expected to begin between 19 November and 1 December 2026.

Works and Transport Minister Veikko Nekundi confirmed in Parliament that the designs for both bridges had been approved, paving the way for construction

once contractor arrangements are finalised.

However, the government has yet to confirm the appointment of a contractor or provide a completion date for the project.

"The estimated cost of the two bridges is N\$70 million. If anyone can offer a cheaper solution, we welcome it," Nekundi said.

The planned construction follows growing concerns over pedestrian safety along the Western Bypass, where repeated crashes, including fatalities, prompted

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authorities to introduce speed humps as an interim safety measure.

Nekundi defended the speed humps, saying they had helped eliminate pedestrian-related crashes along the affected section since their installation.

He said pedestrian crashes had previously occurred every month before the measures were introduced.

“Since the speed humps were installed as a precautionary measure, we have recorded zero crashes involving pedestrians,” he said.

The Roads Authority (RA), working with the Ministry of Works and Transport and other stakeholders, announced the installation of speed humps in June 2025 following an increase in pedestrian-related crashes along the route.

The intervention focused on the B1 Western Bypass between the Independence Avenue Interchange near Katutura Hospital

and the Lafrenz Interchange, identified as a high-risk section for pedestrians.

Similar measures were also planned along the A1 Road between Prosperita and the Windhoek Country Club Resort.

The speed humps were introduced to reduce vehicle speeds and protect pedestrians while authorities developed permanent crossing infrastructure.

The proposed N\$70 million investment will provide two dedicated pedestrian crossings aimed at reducing the risk of pedestrians being struck by vehicles on the busy highway.

Although the bridge designs have been approved, the project remains subject to contractor arrangements, with the final contract value and construction completion timeline yet to be disclosed.

The bridges are expected to form part of longer-term measures to improve pedestrian safety along the Western Bypass.

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Building a sustainable SME sector

By Freddy Tyapa

Namibia currently faces certain economic challenges, which are attributed to the country creating an environment where jobs are limited while the population is steady growing.

It has been however noted that we always need to look at alternatives for solutions when faced with adversity.

During conversations relating to the issue of resolving unemployment, together the government with the private sector not able to fully create employment opportunities, the conversation turns to how do we change the mindset of longing to be an employee to becoming an employer?

The small medium enterprises (SME) have overtime since 1997 identified as one of the sectors that may create value to help resolve the issue of unemployment.

The micro, small medium enterprises by the ministry of trade outlines the policy objective as - to create an enabling business environment for the MSMEs, allowing businesses to foster sustainable employment creation and income generation through training, improved access to finance, technology and markets, enhanced capacity to innovate and improved entrepreneurial skills.

The objective of the MSME Policy is thus to provide the requisite policy and implementation frameworks to ensure the development of competitive, dynamic and innovative Namibian MSMEs.

According to a report published in March 2025 by FNB Namibia we have about 40,000 SMEs which employ more than 200,000 Namibians, making them vital to the



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country's GDP. Yet, despite their potential, SMEs continue to face significant barriers that limit their growth.

In this article we are going to highlight some of the challenges that the current SMEs are experiencing as challenges for them to fully make an impact towards the economic growth of the state

1. Empowerment - can only arise when SME operators perceive that their presence is recognized in the markets within which they operate. This may be in the form of having access to suppliers who offer the same services to big entities with same level of trust like offering credit lines to procure goods to sell to their customers.

This enables the business to take advantage of other opportunities that are normally out of the reach, as they will be greater decision makers knowing well, they are backed well with capacity.

In most cases SME operator does not feel trusted or face too many hurdles of scrutiny when asking for assistance from organisation



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that are entrusted with giving them a supportive arm.

Lately we have also noticed that SME's proposals are not received with urgency as they are always considered to lack capacity or skills to deliver their proposals. The market requires a top-down approach in which big established institutes play a focal role in ensuring that the smaller entities work closely with them for empowerment purposes and opportunity diversification.

2. Financial inclusivity - enables SME operators to have access to funding when the need arises. SME's just like any other business have potential to grow and expand but one of the major limiting factors is access to capital.

The financial industry currently limits funding to SME as they are classified as untested or rather high risk to experiencing defaults on funding.

The sector needs a complete overhaul on the funding approach to SME as the current models do not align well with the positions where the SMEs are. Funding models should be including mentorship and financial allocation intervals which will ensure the funds are utilized as per requested needs to help build trust between the two parties. Financing of SME's should come with favorable interest rates and repayment plans in accordance with their positions. Banks needs to design products tailored with the SME needs such as support centers, low bank charges or

bundled pricing packages, financial performance analysis/ review and modeling services.

3. Inclusive and sustainable marketplace – often times SME produced products are sometimes classified of being of lower quality and are rejected access to the market place, this often leads to the demise of some operators as their products cannot be sold to larger audiences.

In the service space, the skills of SME operators are undermined and often times corporation would prefer to source these services from foreign entities rather than trusting smaller institutes to implement and execute.

This often leads to local capital that could have utilized locally to be shipped out. This behavior also limits local collaboration between foreign companies and the local SMEs. The skills are often transferred out as foreign company's often to do not hire local for the specialized positions.

Regulating involved in the registration of SMEs should simplify their process to make sure that formalizing a business is not a hurdle and turnaround times need to be short.

4. Fair opportunities for SME operators – SME operators are often overlooked when opportunities that require bidding or tendering are availed. This narrative is derived from SMEs not having the financial or skills capacity. We should establish bodies that are able to

back SMEs when it comes to major projects funding as this will be able to assist them with collaborations through joint ventures and acquire the necessary skill sets and build capacity with that kind of execution approach.

Lack of a structured and regulated Business Development Services (BDS) market: Business consultants have identified the need for Business Development Services in the country and have made use of this opportunity, offering costly trainings and consultancy services targeting MSMEs, these services are not affordable to most start up and therefore a direct funding for such training need to be fully funded through other forms like tax rebates or the National training authority.

There is a need to regulate this market, in order to ensure quality and value for money to the MSMEs making use of such services.

The Namibian Government is strongly committed to foster economic growth and development in order to overcome poverty and unemployment. Vision 2030 describes “A prosperous and industrialized Namibia developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability”.

The Micro, small medium enterprise comprises of formal registered institutes with an employee capacity between 1 – 100 and annual turnover of N\$300 000 – N\$10 000 000.00. The segmentation is in three tiers with the micro, small and medium all within the above ranges.

The major operators in this market are classified as informal traders and this makes it hard to truly weigh their overall contribution to the country's gross domestic product value. The idea is to have all these traders onboarded and assisted to further grow their business and create value with the communities they operate.

Flourishing business add direct benefits to the nation in the form of employment, poverty reduction, improved quality of life and more revenue for the state through annual tax returns.

***Freddy Tyapa - Seasoned banker, Economic and legal analyst.**



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

APPOINTMENT OF A FUND VALUATOR

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PURPOSE OF THE APPOINTMENT

The appointed Valuator will be responsible for providing the independent valuation, review and professional opinions required under the regulatory framework. This includes the independent assessment and verification of the Fund's financial, actuarial and solvency position, and any additional statutory reporting required by NAMFISA.

MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must:

- Meet the eligibility criteria for a valuator under Standard No. PRE.S.1.1 and be eligible for approval by NAMFISA.
- Be fit and proper, and satisfy all statutory independence requirements.
- Demonstrate appropriate training, knowledge and experience within the Namibian financial services sector, specifically in medical aid/ healthcare funding.
- Possess a minimum of five years' relevant

experience working with a similar financial institution/intermediary or with an appointed valuator as contemplated in PRE.S.1.1.

- Disclose all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest, and demonstrate sufficient professional capacity to undertake the assignment.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must include, at minimum:

- Company/individual profile and relevant experience.
- Qualifications, professional memberships and CVs of key personnel.
- Technical approach and methodology for the valuation and statutory reporting.
- Evidence of fit and proper standing, independence and conflict of interest disclosures.
- References and proposed turnaround times.
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ENQUIRIES: po@rhmaf.com.na

Renaissance Health Medical Aid Fund reserves the right not to make an appointment, to request clarification or additional information, and to engage shortlisted bidders before a final recommendation is made. The successful appointment remains subject to NAMFISA's approval requirements.





IPM pushes for law to regulate Namibia's HR profession

The Institute of People Management (IPM) Namibia is calling for legislation to regulate the country's human resources (HR) profession, citing the need for enforceable professional standards, ethical accountability and minimum competency requirements for practitioners responsible for managing employees.

IPM Namibia Chief Executive Officer Lisa Matomola said the absence of a formal legislative framework highlighted the need for a national discussion on professionalising the sector, particularly as

HR practitioners make decisions affecting employment, workplace rights and organisational performance.

Speaking at the 16th IPM Namibia Annual Conference, Matomola said legislation could establish clearer qualification requirements, continuous professional development obligations and ethical standards for practitioners.

“Professionalisation is not about excluding individuals who enter the profession through different career pathways. It is about creating clear pathways for relevant qualifications,

continuous professional development and ethical accountability,” she said.

Matomola said HR professionals were responsible for decisions affecting employees’ livelihoods, careers, dignity and well-being, making professional competence and knowledge of employment legislation critical.

She pointed to Zambia, which has introduced legislation to professionalise its HR sector, as an example Namibia could consider when developing its own regulatory framework.

Matomola said IPM Namibia was prepared to engage the government on possible legislation and practical measures to strengthen professional oversight.

The proposed regulation comes as employers face increasing pressure to adapt to artificial intelligence, automation, digitalisation and changing workforce demands.

Matomola said HR departments needed to move beyond traditional administrative functions and take greater responsibility for organisational performance, workforce development and leadership.

“We cannot build the organisations of tomorrow using yesterday’s practices,” she said.

She also called for stronger cooperation between the government and private sector to address skills shortages, workforce development and the implementation of national employment priorities.

According to Matomola, government policies and national development programmes depend heavily on HR practitioners to translate policy objectives into workplace practices.

She urged organisations to strengthen collaboration and share expertise rather than operate independently when addressing common workforce challenges.

IPM Namibia also called on HR practitioners to join the institute to strengthen its representation in policy discussions and efforts to establish professional standards.

“Our strength as a profession lies in our collective voice. Together, we can advance professional standards, influence policy and shape the future of people management in Namibia and beyond,” Matomola said.

Meanwhile, Mobile Telecommunications Limited (MTC Namibia) Human Capital Centre of Excellence Lead Jessica Moore warned that investment in technology and infrastructure would deliver limited benefits unless businesses made corresponding investments in workforce skills and development.

Moore said the growing adoption of AI and automation required companies to prioritise human capabilities, including creativity, innovation, ethical leadership and adaptability.

“The future of work will not be shaped by technology alone. It will also be shaped by the decisions we make about our people, how we develop them, how we lead them and how we create opportunities for them to succeed in their careers,” she said.

MTC, which sponsored the conference, said a credible and professionally regulated HR sector was important for developing skills, supporting employment opportunities and improving business competitiveness.

Moore also urged organisations to measure progress against commitments made at previous conferences rather than repeatedly discussing the same challenges without implementing solutions.

The two-day conference was held under the theme Reimagining Work in Africa: Agile, Inclusive and Resilient HR for a Disrupted Future.

IPM Namibia Annual Conference 2026 Day 1





One-third of Windhoek residents live in disaster-prone informal housing

One-third of Windhoek's population lives in informal housing, much of it in environmentally fragile areas exposed to flash floods and house fires, as rapid urbanisation continues to increase disaster risks in the capital.

Windhoek Mayor Sakarias Uunona said the growing number of people living in vulnerable settlements was placing additional pressure on the municipality to strengthen urban planning, improve infrastructure and protect households from disasters.

Speaking at the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction commemoration

in Otjomuise on Tuesday, Uunona said Windhoek's population had reached 486,186 in 2023, according to the Population and Housing Census, with an annual growth rate of 3.3%.

He said the city's population was expected to have exceeded 500,000 by 2026, increasing pressure on housing, municipal services and infrastructure.

The mayor cited flash floods in January 2025 that affected approximately 300 households in Otjomuise as an example of the risks facing residents in informal settlements and developing neighbourhoods.

Uunona said the municipality had adopted a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for 2026–2030 to address the growing exposure of communities and infrastructure to natural and human-induced disasters.

The strategy, approved by the Municipal Council in May 2026, seeks to integrate disaster risk management into urban planning, infrastructure investment and municipal governance.

“Please note that the Municipal Council of Windhoek recognises that a reactive emergency response is not sufficient or sustainable. Disasters undermine

municipal investments and delay our developmental aspirations,” Uunona said.

He said the municipality needed to shift its focus from responding to emergencies towards preventing disasters and reducing their impact on households and public infrastructure.

Under the strategy, the city plans to update multi-hazard risk maps, strengthen the enforcement of risk-sensitive zoning regulations and establish an integrated disaster information management system.

The municipality also plans to operationalise a dedicated Disaster Risk Reduction Fund and explore partnerships with private businesses to develop insurance and other risk-transfer products.

Other planned measures include strengthening early warning systems, improving emergency preparedness and conducting disaster awareness campaigns in schools and communities.

The strategy identifies five priorities: improving the understanding of disaster risks, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in community resilience, promoting innovation and knowledge management, and enhancing preparedness and recovery.

Uunona called on the private sector to invest in resilient urban infrastructure and urged residents to take greater responsibility for disaster preparedness and safety at household level.

City of Windhoek Chief Executive Officer Moses



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Unlocking Namibia's Agricultural Value Chains through the collaboration of African University Networks

By Luise Mwanyangapo

If you want to see how you can turn an agricultural frustration into an economic opportunity, pay attention when travelling north from Windhoek towards Otjiwarongo.

The landscape tells a story that may not be immediately obvious to everyone. To the casual traveler, the thick stretches of thornbush may seem like an ordinary part of Namibia's natural vegetation. But for farmers, they are a growing economic problem.

Across vast areas, dense woody vegetation have gradually taken over land where grasses once provided grazing for cattle and other livestock.

This phenomenon, known as bush encroachment, reduces the amount of grass available for livestock, limits the number of animals the land can support and increases the cost of livestock farming.

About 45 million hectares of Namibia is affected by bush encroachment. The Namibia Biomass Industry Group estimates that it costs farmers more than N\$2.7 billion a year in lost beef production. The problem extends beyond livestock farming.

Dense bush can also reduce groundwater recharge, adding pressure to the country's already scarce water resources. Yet this environmental burden also has considerable economic potential.

The same unwanted bush could become a valuable raw material for livestock feed, mushroom production, biochar and other products, opening opportunities for value addition and jobs.

For Namibia, the question now is: How



“

This phenomenon, known as bush encroachment, reduces the amount of grass available for livestock, limits the number of animals the land can support and increases the cost of livestock farming.

do you restore productive grazing land while turning an unwanted bush into a resource that creates jobs, supports new industries and contributes to economic diversification?

That question goes to the heart of the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6, 2025–2030) which calls for transformation, not growth alone, in terms of: more value addition, a larger manufacturing base, less dependence on raw exports and an employment rate of 75% by 2030. With the 2023 Labour Force Survey placing unemployment at 36.9% and four in ten young Namibians neither working nor studying, the country simply cannot wait for jobs to arrive from elsewhere. It has to create them from what it already has.

This places universities at the centre of the response, as they are tasked with cultivating this new level of competency.

Times demand that the return on investment in higher education be measured not solely by the number of graduates produced each year,

but rather by the problems universities help solve, the innovations they commercialise, and the productivity they unlock.

This is where the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) comes in.

RUFORUM was founded in 2004 by ten (10) African university Vice-Chancellors. Since then, the organisation has grown into Africa's leading higher agricultural education network, with a membership of 175 universities across 40 African countries and driving agricultural innovation and human capital development.

It was established on the belief that African universities could work collaboratively to strengthen the continent's capacity to nurture the next generation of African scientific leaders and address Africa's agricultural and development challenges while harnessing emerging opportunities.

The RUFORUM Secretariat, headquartered at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, coordinates the implementation of the network's programmes and initiatives.

Namibia has progressively positioned itself within this network. The University of Namibia (UNAM) joined the RUFORUM network in 2010, followed by the International University of Management (IUM) in 2021 and the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) in 2024. Between them they hold every piece a value chain needs: UNAM's agricultural and natural sciences, NUST's engineering and technology, and IUM's business and management expertise.

According to RUFORUM figures contained in the programme's Namibia portfolio, more than N\$7.39 million has been invested in research grants to Namibian member universities, supporting work in areas that include indigenous legums and climate-resilient agriculture.

A further N\$8.54 million has been invested in human-capital development, including the training of more than 20 scientists at master's and PhD levels, while 1,075 people have received training in specialised scientific and development practices. Two research projects supported through RUFORUM's Community Action Research Programme (CARP) at UNAM illustrate what this investment could mean for the country

Project 1: Enhancing Community Adaptation through Climate Resilient Agriculture: Encroacher bushes value chains initiative in Otjozondjupa Region, Namibia

Under the CARP, UNAM researchers worked with communities and partners to test what harvested bush could become. The answers included livestock feed, a substrate for growing mushrooms, fencing poles and biochar to improve soils.

Each product is the first link in a chain of work. Someone has to harvest the bush and transport it. Someone has to chip and mill it. Feed has to be formulated, bagged and sold.

Mushrooms have to be grown and marketed. Biochar has to be produced and sold to farmers and gardeners. The machines need operators, mechanics and spare parts.

The Namibia Biomass Industry Group estimates that bush thinning alone could create about 10,000 jobs a year in mechanical operations, much of it for semi-skilled rural workers.

Please note it is not implied that, university research invented bush harvesting, Namibia already has a growing biomass industry. What the research added is breadth and value: new products, better processes, tested costs and the skilled people needed to run them. In that way, a problem that farmers pay for becomes a resource that pays them.

Project 2: Characterisation of indigenous legumes and their utilisation as pure stands or for oversowing of natural pastures

Another RUFORUM-supported research studied indigenous forage legumes, including wild cowpea, purple savanna pea and velvet bean, that are adapted to Namibia's heat and low rainfall.

If these plants can be grown reliably and meet the nutritional needs of livestock, they open another local value chain: farmers growing forage, small enterprises multiplying seed, and businesses processing, packaging and selling feed. Every bag grown at home is a bag that does not have to be imported.

Products do not build themselves. Behind every new value chain stands a feed scientist, a process engineer, an agribusiness graduate who can write a credible business plan and a technician who can repair a tractor. That is why RUFORUM's investment in people matters as much as its research grants.

The network also gives Namibia reach. No single university can hold world-class expertise in every emerging field affecting agriculture, be it from biotechnology, artificial intelligence, to climate science, animal health, renewable energy, food processing and digital agriculture at once.

A network can share it. When Windhoek hosted RUFORUM's Triennial Conference in August 2024, UNAM signed agreements with Makerere University, the University of South Africa, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and Chinhoyi University of Technology, opening doors to collaborative research and industry links.

For Namibia's universities, the real value of belonging to an African university network should be measured not simply by the partnerships they establish, but by what those partnerships help the country achieve.

Universities in Namibia should continue to make greater use of these partnerships to contribute to the country's innovation and economic diversification efforts.

This means identifying national agricultural and climate challenges that can be addressed through multidisciplinary research, connecting promising university-developed technologies with industry and investors, strengthening systems to protect and commercialise innovations, and expanding postgraduate training in emerging fields that respond to the evolving demands of the 21st century.

** Luise Mwanyangapo is a Marketing and Communications professional. This article is written in her personal capacity.*

Limited credit data locking Namibian businesses and individuals out of loans

Limited access to reliable credit information continues to prevent small businesses and individuals in Namibia from accessing financing, with industry players calling for the use of alternative financial data to improve lending decisions and expand financial inclusion.

Creditinfo Bureau Namibia Executive Director Karen Jansen van Vuuren said many potential borrowers remained excluded from the formal credit system because financial institutions lacked sufficient information to assess their creditworthiness.

Speaking at the Third Africa Credit and Risk Reporting Conference in Windhoek, Jansen van Vuuren said traditional credit assessment systems often failed to capture the financial activities of individuals and businesses without established borrowing histories.

She said mobile money transactions, utility payments and supplier records could provide lenders with additional information to assess borrowers who would otherwise struggle to qualify for credit.

The use of alternative data could particularly benefit small businesses and individuals operating outside conventional banking systems by allowing lenders to evaluate their financial behaviour beyond traditional loan repayment records.

However, Jansen van Vuuren said improved access to credit information needed to be accompanied by stronger data quality standards, consumer protection and fair pricing to ensure that borrowers benefited from financial innovation.

“As a credit bureau, we believe our role is to help change that, working together with regulators, lenders and fellow credit bureaus.



This means improving business information, incorporating more positive data, strengthening cooperation on data quality and supporting responsible innovation that protects consumers,” she said.

She said cooperation between regulators, lenders and credit bureaus would be essential to developing credit reporting systems capable of supporting more inclusive lending practices.

Kenyan High Commissioner to Namibia Florence Bore said Namibia and Kenya had opportunities to strengthen cooperation in mobile money, digital credit and credit information sharing by exchanging expertise and developing institutional partnerships.

Bore said the growing use of digital

financial services presented opportunities to expand access to financing but also raised concerns over data privacy, cybersecurity and consumer protection.

She cautioned that financial innovation without adequate safeguards could deepen financial exclusion rather than address it.

“Our countries can learn from one another through the exchange of expertise, institutional partnerships and practical collaboration. Neither country needs to have all the answers. Our collective strength lies in sharing experiences and adapting effective solutions to our respective national circumstances,” Bore said.

She added that closer cooperation in financial services could strengthen trade and investment relations between Namibia

and Kenya while creating opportunities for businesses and investors.

Credit Information Sharing Association of Kenya Chief Executive Officer Andrew Njeru said African financial systems needed to move beyond increasing access to banking and credit services towards ensuring that financing supported productive economic activity.

He said effective credit information sharing could improve lenders' ability to assess risks and make informed decisions, particularly when dealing with borrowers whose financial activities were not reflected in conventional credit records.

“The opportunity is expanding as financial activity generates new sources of data. With appropriate consent and safeguards, transaction records, digital payments, sales data and other relevant information may help lenders understand borrowers whose economic activities are not fully reflected in traditional credit records,” Njeru said.

He said artificial intelligence and alternative data could further strengthen credit assessments, provided appropriate safeguards were implemented to protect consumers.

The conference, held under the theme Advancing Africa's Credit and Risk Reporting for Open Finance, brought together regulators, financial institutions, credit bureaus and technology providers to discuss improving credit reporting systems and expanding financial inclusion across Africa.





Bank Windhoek turns to AI, digital banking to drive growth and customer retention

Bank Windhoek is placing digital banking, artificial intelligence and customer retention at the centre of its three-year growth strategy as it seeks to improve operational efficiency and strengthen its position in Namibia's banking sector.

The lender plans to expand digital payment solutions, improve customer service systems and increase the use of technology across its operations, following customer feedback highlighting concerns over platform stability, transaction speeds

and service delays during peak periods.

Bank Windhoek Executive Officer of Marketing and Corporate Communication Services Jacqueline Pack said the strategy was aimed at strengthening customer loyalty and building longer-term banking relationships through improved service delivery.

“Customer experience is no longer only about resolving a query or completing a transaction. It is about earning trust at every touchpoint and turning that trust into stronger, longer-lasting relationships,”

Pack said.

She said the bank was seeking to turn customer experience into a commercial advantage by combining technology, data and simplified processes with its existing relationship-based banking model.

Under the strategy, Bank Windhoek plans to develop a customer service centre supported by customer relationship management technology and artificial intelligence.

The bank also intends to expand payment solutions, accelerate digital banking adoption and improve service delivery across its branch network, self-service facilities and digital platforms.

The planned changes follow customer feedback that identified the need for greater platform stability, faster service during busy periods and more consistent customer support across banking channels.

Although customers highlighted banking security, user-friendly applications, reliable digital access and helpful staff as strengths, the bank acknowledged that improvements were still needed in several areas of service delivery. The strategy builds on investments made under Bank Windhoek's GoBeyond programme, launched in late 2020, which has seen branches across Namibia modernised to improve customer access and banking efficiency.

The programme introduced self-banking hubs, self-service machines and cash-accepting automated teller machines, allowing customers to conduct selected transactions outside normal banking hours.

The bank has also expanded access through multilingual ATM services, offering eight language options: English, Afrikaans, Damara/Nama, German, Otjiherero, Oshiwambo, Rukwangali and Silozi.

In April 2026, Bank Windhoek launched WhatsApp Banking, becoming what it

described as the first bank in Namibia to introduce banking services through the messaging platform.

The service allows customers to check account balances, access mini statements, conduct selected payments and transfers, and obtain basic account assistance.

The bank said the platform was intended to improve banking accessibility, particularly for customers living far from physical branches.

Bank Windhoek has also been improving its website since 2024, focusing on simplifying information and making customer feedback mechanisms more accessible.

As part of efforts to improve service delivery, senior executives joined frontline employees at branches in Windhoek in August 2025 to assess customer interactions and identify areas requiring improvement.

The bank also marked International Customer Experience Day in October 2026 through employee activities across the country.

Pack said the success of the strategy would depend on the bank's ability to translate technology investments into improvements in customers' everyday banking experiences.

"The test of Customer Excellence will be what customers experience every day. We will listen, measure, act and keep improving. By combining local insight and trusted relationships with relevant technology and disciplined execution, we intend to set a higher standard for banking in Namibia," she said.

The bank did not disclose the cost of implementing the strategy, specific customer retention targets or the expected financial returns from its planned technology investments.



MSC Cruises seeks Namibians to fill 130 cruise ship vacancies

MSC Cruises has 130 job vacancies available for Namibians aboard its international cruise ships under a recruitment partnership with the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB). The NIPDB said the

vacancies form part of nearly 200 employment opportunities made available to Namibians this year, with 75 candidates already receiving job offers and four having departed to begin work. The remaining successful candidates are expected to

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take up their positions between November 2026 and March 2027.

NIPDB Acting Executive for Competitiveness and Branding Catherine Shipushu said the recruitment initiative was aimed at connecting Namibians with international employment opportunities while addressing the country's high youth unemployment.

According to the Namibia Statistics Agency's 2023 Labour Force Survey, youth unemployment among people aged 15 to 34 stood at 44.1%.

Shipushu said the partnership, established in mid-2023, provides employment opportunities in hospitality, food and beverage, guest services, entertainment, retail, beauty and wellness aboard MSC cruise ships.

The first recruitment drive, conducted in 2023 and early 2024, attracted more than 8,400 applications, resulting in 42 job offers. However, only 25 candidates took up employment aboard the vessels.

This means fewer than 1% of applicants in the initial recruitment round secured positions aboard the cruise ships.

Shipushu said the latest recruitment drive had expanded the number of opportunities available to Namibians, with 130 positions still open for applications.

"We recognise that Namibia has talented, ambitious young people who are

ready to compete on the global stage, but may not always have access to the right opportunities. Through our partnership with MSC Cruises, the NIPDB is opening doors for our people to gain international work experience, build valuable skills and grow their careers," she said.

Shipushu encouraged eligible Namibians to apply for the remaining positions, saying the initiative would allow successful candidates to gain practical skills and international work experience.

The current vacancies are open to Namibian citizens aged 18 and older who have completed Grade 10, 11 or 12 and are proficient in German.

Under the partnership, the NIPDB facilitates recruitment awareness, stakeholder engagement and connections between eligible applicants and MSC Cruises, while the cruise operator provides the employment opportunities.

The NIPDB said MSC Cruises was selected as a partner partly because of its stated commitment to human rights, fair business practices and a zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking.

Shipushu said the partnership demonstrated how cooperation with international companies could help address unemployment while equipping Namibians with skills and experience for future career development.

The graphic is a light blue background with faint icons of various professions (doctor, teacher, chef, etc.). It features a central QR code with the text "SCAN HERE" in large blue letters to its left. Above the QR code is a blue circle with a white icon of a building and a bar chart, labeled "Finance". Below the QR code is a blue circle with a white icon of a factory and a bar chart, labeled "Business". To the right of the QR code is a blue circle with a white WhatsApp icon, labeled "for Daily Namibian News". In the top right corner, the text "THE BRIEF" is written in large blue letters, with "News Worth Knowing" in smaller text below it. In the bottom right corner, the text "TO FOLLOW OUR WHATSAPP CHANNEL" is written in large blue letters. In the bottom left corner, there is a red Adobe PDF icon with the text "Daily PDF version sent via email" and four social media handles: @thebrieflive, @thebrieflive, @TheBriefLive, and @thebrieflive.

Lack of credit histories shuts individuals, small businesses out of financing

Individuals and small businesses without established credit histories risk being excluded from formal financing as banks continue to rely heavily on traditional credit records to assess borrowers.

Credit risk expert Naeem Siddiqi said financial institutions needed to expand their lending assessments beyond credit bureau records by incorporating alternative data, including mobile phone transactions, rental payments, utility bills and digital business records.

Speaking at the 3rd Africa Credit and Risk Reporting Conference in Windhoek, Siddiqi, Principal at Naeem Siddiqi and Associates, said conventional credit assessment methods often failed to capture the financial activities of people who had never borrowed from formal institutions.

He said alternative data could help lenders assess the repayment capacity of unbanked and underbanked individuals, first-time borrowers and small businesses that lacked formal financial statements.

“Approximately 1.5 billion people globally are underbanked or unbanked. Of these, a significant number have access to mobile phones, and billions have smartphones,” Siddiqi said.

He said mobile phone usage and digital payment records offered opportunities to assess potential borrowers who remained outside traditional credit reporting systems.

Access to financial services across sub-Saharan Africa ranged from approximately 35% to 80%, depending on the market and measurement used, highlighting disparities in financial inclusion.

Siddiqi said information such as prepaid



airtime purchases, utility payment histories and banking transactions could provide additional insights into financial behaviour, particularly where conventional credit records were unavailable.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) could also benefit from broader credit assessments, as many businesses struggled to obtain financing because they lacked audited financial statements or sufficient borrowing histories.

He said digital sales records, supplier transactions and shipping information

could help banks evaluate business activity, cash flow and repayment capacity.

However, Siddiqi warned that alternative data should not automatically be treated as reliable evidence of creditworthiness.

“The idea is that some everyday behaviours may correlate with characteristics associated with financial reliability. Nevertheless, such correlations must be interpreted carefully before they are used in lending decisions,” he said.

He also cautioned against excessive reliance on artificial intelligence in credit assessments, warning that automated systems could produce misleading outcomes if they relied on incomplete or poorly interpreted data.

Some indicators, including social media activity and digital behaviour, could also raise privacy concerns or indirectly reflect sensitive personal characteristics.

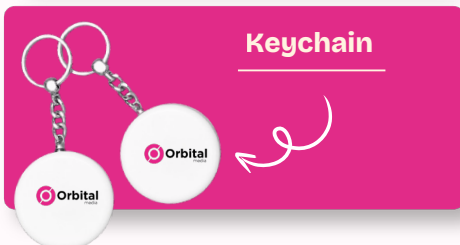
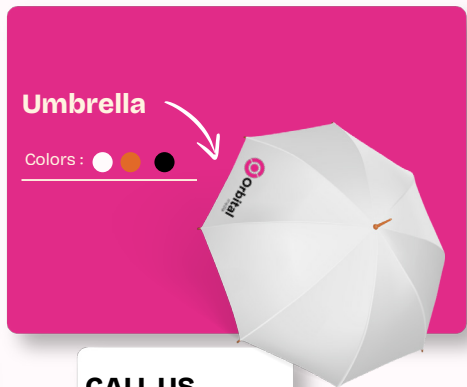
“Much of the data I have discussed is

uncertain, highly localised and context-dependent. You cannot simply put it into a black-box algorithm and accept the results. You need people who can analyse the data, question assumptions and develop sensible strategies for using it,” Siddiqi said.

He said banks would need to invest in digital infrastructure, analytical expertise and stronger data governance systems to incorporate alternative information into lending decisions.

Siddiqi added that existing banking compliance and risk management frameworks could provide a foundation for adopting alternative credit assessment methods while protecting borrowers.

He said combining traditional credit records with alternative data and human judgement could improve lending decisions and expand financing opportunities for individuals and businesses currently underserved by the banking sector.



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