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THE

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News Worth Knowing

TransNamib turns to leased locomotives amid fleet renewal delays



TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2026

MAIN STORY

TransNamib turns to leased locomotives amid fleet renewal delays

TransNamib has resorted to leasing locomotives to sustain freight operations as its planned N\$2.6 billion fleet renewal programme remains subject to procurement approvals and financing requirements.

The national rail operator currently has four leased locomotives in service and is negotiating to secure at least two additional units as it struggles with a shortage of operational locomotives.

TransNamib Chief Executive Officer Desmond van Jaarsveld told The Brief that the company has approximately 16 locomotives operating on its main line, against a requirement of 25 to 26 units to meet freight demand.

“At the moment, I have about 16 locomotives operating on the main line. I need 25 to 26 for operations,” van Jaarsveld said.

The shortage comes as approximately 80% of TransNamib's fleet of 67 locomotives is more than 50 years old, resulting in frequent breakdowns, delivery delays and reduced operational reliability.

Van Jaarsveld said the ageing fleet was undermining the company's ability to meet customer delivery schedules, with mechanical failures disrupting freight movements.

“My old locomotives run at 16% efficiency, and they break down. We tell a customer that we will arrive at 10:00 the next morning, but we arrive at noon because the locomotive has



Crucial Dates

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

broken down,” he said.

To address the operational constraints, TransNamib plans to acquire 15 new locomotives and remanufacture 17 existing units under a revised procurement strategy supported by a N\$2.6 billion loan facility from the Development Bank of Namibia (DBN) and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

Approximately N\$1.9 billion of the financing will be allocated to locomotives, while the remaining N\$700 million is earmarked for wagons and other freight-handling equipment.

However, the revised procurement programme must still meet the requirements of the two development banks and undergo the necessary approvals, including the Central Procurement Board of Namibia process.

Van Jaarsveld said TransNamib was engaging its financiers to ensure the revised strategy aligned with the conditions attached to the loan facility.

“We are meeting with the development banks to share with them the mandate from our shareholder and board on the way forward. Because they are providing a loan, it must be ensured that they are aligned with the process,” he said.

The company faces an estimated 24-month lead time for newly manufactured locomotives, making the leasing of additional units and remanufacturing of existing equipment critical to maintaining operations in the interim.

Under the revised strategy, TransNamib intends to rebuild 17 locomotives at its Windhoek workshop at an estimated cost of between N\$50 million and N\$55 million per unit.

Van Jaarsveld said each remanufactured locomotive would take approximately nine months to complete, significantly less than

the time required to acquire new units.

“Remanufacturing is cheaper, and it takes about nine months to bring a locomotive back into service. It is almost new, because everything apart from the chassis and bogies is replaced,” he said.

Beyond locomotives, TransNamib requires approximately 300 additional wagons, including fuel tankers and container wagons, as well as equipment to facilitate the movement of containers between trains and other transport modes.

The company expects the new locomotives to achieve operating efficiency of approximately 90%, while the combined acquisition and remanufacturing programme is projected to improve overall service delivery efficiency to about 85%.

Until the procurement programme is approved and new or remanufactured locomotives enter service, TransNamib will continue relying on leased units and its ageing fleet to meet freight transport demand.

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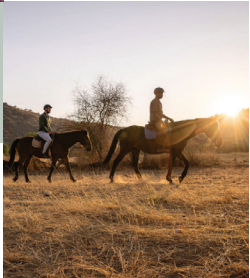
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Youth fund disburses just N\$110m of N\$317m

... govt targets 7,110 jobs

Namibia's National Youth Development Fund has disbursed N\$110.2 million out of its N\$317 million investment pool, with 373 youth-owned projects approved and an estimated 7,110 employment opportunities expected to be created across the country.

Finance Minister Ericah Shafudah disclosed the figures in the FY2026/27 Mid-Year Budget Review Statement, revealing that approximately 35% of the fund's total investment had been disbursed as at 25 September 2026.

The figures leave N\$206.8 million of the fund's investment pool yet to be disbursed, although the government did not specify how much of the remaining amount had already been committed to approved projects.

The 373 approved projects are spread across all 14 regions, with the government projecting that they will collectively generate approximately 7,110 employment opportunities.

The fund's N\$317 million investment comprises N\$258 million appropriated during the 2025/26 financial year, N\$50 million allocated in 2026/27 and contributions from state-owned enterprises and other institutions.

"The National Youth Development Fund has grown to an overall investment of N\$317 million," Shafudah said.

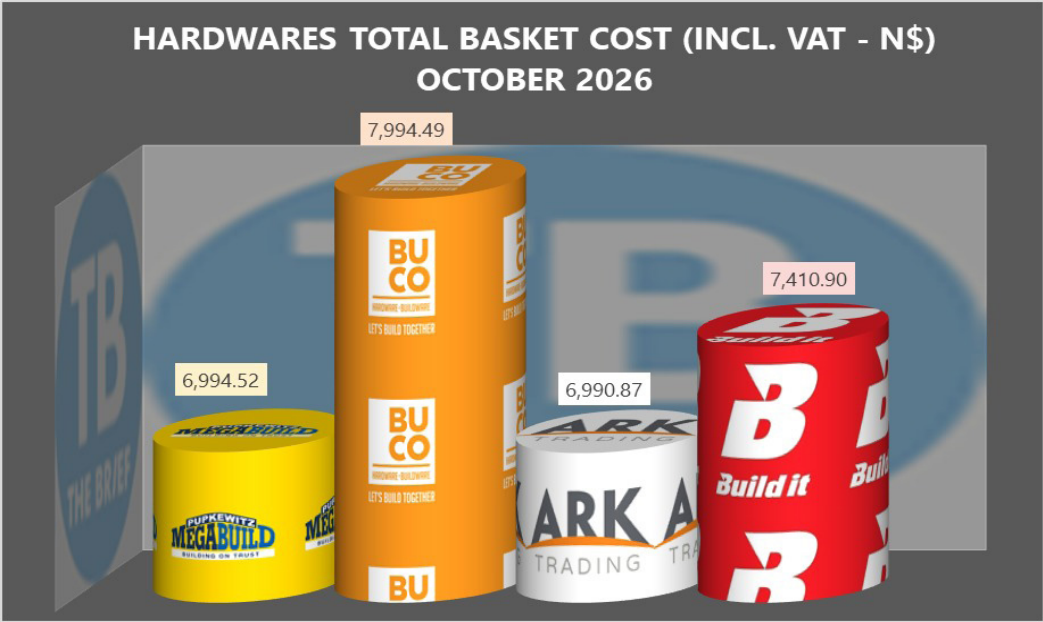
Among the contributing institutions, the Namibian Ports Authority (Namport)



and Namibia Reinsurance Corporation (NamibRe) each committed N\$5 million, while the Namibia Agronomic Board contributed N\$2.5 million.

Funding has been channelled through the Development Bank of Namibia, Agribank and the Environmental Investment Fund.

However, the government did not provide a breakdown of how many of the projected 7,110 jobs have already materialised, leaving the actual employment impact of the approved projects unclear.



October 2026 Hardware price comparison: Ark Trading records lowest basket cost

Ark Trading recorded the lowest overall basket cost in October 2026, with a total basket of N\$6,990.87, narrowly ahead of Pupkewitz Megabuild at N\$6,994.52.

The difference between the two retailers was just N\$3.65, highlighting how closely their overall prices compared across the 17 building materials surveyed.

Build It recorded a total basket cost of N\$7,410.90, while BUCO was the most expensive retailer, at N\$7,994.49.

The gap between the lowest and highest overall basket costs stood at N\$1,003.62, showing that the choice of retailer can make a noticeable difference to the cost of purchasing building materials.

Overall Basket Cost Comparison Key Price Observations

Roofing, bricks and building materials

Build It recorded the lowest price for galvanised IBR roofing at N\$538.33, followed by Ark Trading at N\$583.68 and Pupkewitz Megabuild at N\$584.99. BUCO had the highest listed price at N\$644.13.

Ark Trading offered the lowest price for 7MPA bricks at N\$2.70. It also recorded the lowest prices for both brickforce products, at N\$16.69 for the 150mm roll and N\$16.57 for the 75mm roll.

Pupkewitz Megabuild was the most affordable retailer for all three concrete lintel sizes surveyed. Its 0.9m lintel cost N\$36.95, the 1.2m lintel N\$46.45 and the 1.8m lintel N\$72.90.

Windows, doors and fittings

Pupkewitz Megabuild recorded the lowest prices for the bronze aluminium window at N\$858.99, the steel door frame at N\$534.99, the two-lever lockset at N\$78.99 and the



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interior hardboard door at N\$269.00.

Build It offered the lowest price for a bronze aluminium sliding door at N\$2,541.50. BUCO's price of N\$3,202.19 was N\$660.69 higher, representing the largest price difference among the four retailers for this particular product.

Cement and ceiling boards

Build It offered the lowest prices for both Ohorongo cement grades surveyed, at N\$106.00 for 32.5 cement and N\$114.00 for 42.5 cement.

BUCO recorded the lowest ceiling board price at N\$156.66, marginally below Pupkewitz Megabuild at N\$159.00 and Ark Trading at N\$159.84. Build It had the highest listed price for the product at N\$174.80.

Paint

Ark Trading recorded the lowest paint price at N\$641.96, compared with N\$895.00 at Pupkewitz Megabuild, N\$997.94 at BUCO and N\$1,108.31 at

Build It. The difference between Ark Trading and Build It was N\$466.35, highlighting the substantial variation in the listed prices of some individual building materials.

Conclusion

October's price comparison places Ark Trading marginally ahead of Pupkewitz Megabuild in terms of the overall basket cost. However, Pupkewitz Megabuild recorded the lowest price for eight of the 17 products surveyed, while Ark Trading offered the lowest prices for four products. Build It was cheapest for four products, and BUCO for one.

The findings indicate that the retailer with the lowest overall basket does not necessarily offer the lowest price on every item. Consumers undertaking construction or renovation projects may benefit from comparing individual prices, while also considering product specifications, availability and transport costs.

	Ark Trading	Pupkewitz Megabuild	Build It	BUCO
Roofing Galvanized IBR	583.68	584.99	538.33	644.13
Copper Tube 460 Class 0	709.52	598.99	636.24	638.89
Aluminium Window (Bronze)	894.60	858.99	945.70	957.57
Aluminium Sliding Door (Bronze)	2,659.71	2,599.00	2,541.50	3,202.19
Brick 7MPA	2.70	2.94	3.06	3.05
Brickforce 150MM 15M ROLL	16.69	16.94	17.91	18.32
Brickforce 75MM 15M ROLL	16.57	16.94	17.91	18.30
Lintol concrete 1.2m	50.45	46.45	55.32	55.06
Lintol concrete 1.8m	75.74	72.90	84.73	82.26
Lintol concrete 0.9m	37.09	36.95	52.90	39.20
Ceiling Board	159.84	159.00	174.80	156.66
Door Frame Steel	556.34	534.99	608.06	567.46
Lockset 2 lever	86.25	78.99	103.90	94.90
Door Hardboard Interior	272.44	269.00	302.24	296.79
32.5 Cement Ohorongo	108.32	107.44	106.00	106.74
42.5 Cement Ohorongo	118.99	115.00	114.00	115.03
Paint	641.96	895.00	1,108.31	997.94
Total (N\$)	6,990.87	6,994.52	7,410.90	7,994.49



Institutional investors back N\$1.6bn Diaz Wind Farm

Namibian financial institutions and institutional investors have backed the N\$1.6 billion Diaz Wind Farm near Lüderitz through a N\$1.5 billion debt financing package.

The 50-megawatt (MW) project, developed by InnoVent, was officially inaugurated on 23 October 2026 and is currently generating 32 MW as it progresses towards full production capacity.

Investment firm IJG said it arranged and advised on the financing, which includes N\$320 million in junior debt and N\$1.2 billion in senior debt facilities.

The transaction brought together Standard Bank Namibia, the Government Institutions Pension Fund (GIPF), Old Mutual Namibia

and Tulive, demonstrating the participation of domestic financial institutions in funding large-scale energy infrastructure.

IJG served as lead arranger and facility agent for the junior debt facilities, while the senior debt financing was structured and implemented in partnership with Standard Bank Namibia.

The financing represents approximately 94% of the project's reported N\$1.6 billion investment value, highlighting the scale of debt capital mobilised for the development.

The wind farm is expected to supply up to 50 MW to the national electricity grid once fully operational, increasing Namibia's domestic renewable energy generation capacity and supporting efforts to reduce

reliance on imported electricity.

The facility was officially inaugurated by Deputy Minister of International Relations and Trade Jenelly Matundu and //Kharas Regional Governor David Gertze.

Beyond electricity generation, the investment supported approximately 200 jobs during construction, while local content accounted for about 45% of project activities.

Namibian businesses participated in civil and electrical works, as well as crane installation, providing opportunities for local contractors and service providers.

The Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) played a facilitation role by coordinating engagements between the developer and relevant government institutions.

Its involvement included resolving overlapping interests within the mining

licence area and assisting with visa and employment permit processes for project personnel.

The development aligns with Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6), which identifies renewable energy expansion and energy security as priorities for economic development.

InnoVent acquired the Diaz Wind Farm project in 2022 and commenced construction in 2023. The project expands the company's renewable energy portfolio in Namibia, which also includes the Ombepo Wind Farm near Lüderitz.

With 32 MW already being generated, the Diaz facility is moving towards its full 50 MW capacity, adding to Namibia's domestic power generation infrastructure while demonstrating the potential for institutional capital to finance major energy projects.



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Culture eats strategy for breakfast and why organizational behaviour matters

By Paulina Iiyambo

Peter Drucker's famous observation that "culture eats strategy for breakfast" has endured because it captures a truth that many organisations learn the hard way: the best strategy in the world means little if the behaviours of employees and leaders do not support it.

A business can have a compelling vision, ambitious growth targets and sophisticated systems, but success ultimately depends on how people make decisions, respond to challenges and work together every day.

For years, organisational culture has been discussed in leadership forums and boardrooms as something important yet difficult to measure. Today, that is changing.

The latest Organizational Behavior Topical Requirement introduced by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) recognises organisational behaviour as a critical business risk that deserves the same attention as financial, operational, technology and compliance risks.

This marks an important shift. Culture is no longer simply a "people issue" or a matter reserved for human resources.

It is increasingly recognised as a strategic asset or liability that can directly influence performance, customer outcomes, regulatory compliance and long-term sustainability.

History provides countless examples of



“

For years, organisational culture has been discussed in leadership forums and boardrooms as something important yet difficult to measure.

organisations that had policies, controls and governance frameworks in place, yet still suffered significant failures.

The common thread was often not a lack of processes, but behaviours that undermined them.

Employees may have felt unable to challenge decisions, incentives may have encouraged short-term gains over responsible conduct, or leaders may have sent mixed messages through their actions. In such environments, even well-designed controls can become ineffective.

The IIA's new requirement acknowledges this reality by placing organisational behaviour firmly within the risk management and assurance agenda.

At its core, the framework asks an important question: do an organisation's governance, risk management and control processes encourage the behaviours necessary to achieve its strategic objectives?

This is particularly relevant in today's business environment. Organisations are navigating economic uncertainty, digital transformation, increased regulatory scrutiny and rapidly evolving customer expectations.

In such conditions, culture can either accelerate success or quietly undermine it. Organisations with healthy cultures tend to adapt more effectively, make better decisions and respond more quickly to emerging risks.

Those with unhealthy cultures often find that warning signs go unnoticed until problems become difficult and costly to resolve.

The new framework highlights three critical areas.

First, governance. Boards and executives must clearly define behavioural expectations and create accountability for them.

Culture cannot be delegated or left to chance. Leadership behaviour sets the tone for the entire organisation, and employees are far more likely to follow what leaders do than what policies say.

Second, risk management. Organisations must identify which behaviours are essential for achieving strategic objectives and actively monitor whether those behaviours are being demonstrated in practice.

Understanding behavioural gaps and addressing their root causes can prevent larger issues from emerging later.

Third, controls. This includes everything from performance incentives and recruitment practices to speak-up mechanisms, training programmes and whistleblowing protections.

These are not merely administrative processes. They are powerful tools that either reinforce or weaken the culture an organisation is trying to build.

For business leaders, the message is clear. Values displayed on office walls are not enough.

Organisations must examine whether their reward structures, performance measures and leadership behaviours genuinely support the culture they aspire to

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create. If employees are rewarded for outcomes that contradict stated values, the incentives will win every time.

For boards, this presents an opportunity. Rather than waiting for regulators, customers or the market to identify cultural weaknesses, organisations can proactively assess whether their culture aligns with their strategy and risk appetite.

Understanding the gap between intended culture and actual behaviour can provide valuable insights into future performance and resilience.

And for internal audit, the role is evolving. Internal audit has traditionally focused on evaluating financial controls, compliance frameworks and operational processes.

Increasingly, it is being called upon to provide assurance over the behavioural factors that influence whether those controls work as intended.

This is not about auditing personalities or

judging individuals.

It is about assessing whether organisational systems, incentives and governance structures encourage the right behaviours and support sustainable success.

Ultimately, strategy defines where an organisation wants to go. Culture determines whether it gets there.

The most successful organisations of the future will not be those with the most ambitious strategies alone.

They will be those that create cultures where people consistently make decisions and take actions that bring those strategies to life.

Internal audit's role is to provide independent assurance that the two remain aligned because when culture and strategy move in the same direction, organisations are far better positioned to achieve lasting success.





Conversation with Dennis de Wet,
Founder of Slowtown Coffee Roasters

THE STORY OF SLOWTOWN: 15 YEARS ON



Namibia's airport passenger traffic rises 17.1% to 114,497 in August

Namibia's airports recorded a 17.1% month-on-month increase in passenger movements to 114,497 in August 2026, driven by increased traffic through Hosea Kutako International Airport and Walvis Bay Airport, according to the Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA).

The NSA's August 2026 Passenger Arrivals and Departures report shows that passenger movements increased from 97,796 in July, while year-on-year growth remained modest at 1%, compared with 113,399 movements recorded in August

2025.

"The Passenger Movement Composite Index, covering international, regional and domestic passenger arrivals and departures across all airports, grew by 17.1 percent month-on-month in August 2026, compared to a 7.7 percent increase recorded in July 2026," the NSA said.

Hosea Kutako International Airport dominated passenger traffic, accounting for 85% of all movements during the month, followed by Walvis Bay Airport at 9.1% and Eros Airport at 3.6%. Other airports

collectively contributed 2.2%.

At Hosea Kutako International Airport, passenger arrivals increased marginally by 0.2% year-on-year to 48,232, while departures rose by 2.7% to 49,092.

The airport recorded a significant monthly increase in outbound passenger traffic, with its departures index rising by 30.2% in August, compared with 3.2% in July.

“The Departures Index for Hosea Kutako International Airport grew by 30.2 percent month-on-month in August 2026, following a 3.2 percent increase in July 2026,” the NSA said.

Meanwhile, Walvis Bay Airport recorded stronger annual growth in both arrivals and departures.

Passenger arrivals increased by 15.4% year-on-year to 5,020, while departures rose by 25.3% to 5,450.

The airport’s arrivals index also increased by 24.8% month-on-month, following growth of 1.9% in July.

“The Arrivals Index for Walvis Bay Airport rose by 24.8 percent month-on-month in August 2026, following a 1.9 percent increase in the preceding month,” the NSA said.

In contrast, Eros Airport recorded a decline in passenger traffic compared with August 2025.

Arrivals fell by 16.7% year-on-year to 2,026, while departures decreased by 13.4% to 2,148.

Despite the annual decline, the airport recorded a modest

recovery in monthly arrivals, with its arrivals index increasing by 3.6% in August after contracting by 17.6% in July.

“The Arrivals Index for Eros Airport rose by 3.6 percent month-on-month in August 2026, in contrast to a 17.6 percent decline experienced in July,” the NSA said.

The figures indicate a recovery in monthly passenger movements across Namibia’s airports, although the marginal annual increase points to relatively subdued growth compared with the corresponding period last year.

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03

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04

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05

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06

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07

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AI in education: Are we improving performance or learning?

By Dr Etuna Simon

A student sits in front of a laptop with an assignment due the next morning.

The question is not easy. It requires reading, interpretation and a carefully constructed argument.

A few years ago, that might have meant hours of searching through articles, making notes, deleting weak paragraphs and starting again.

Today, the first instinct may be different.

The student opens an AI tool, types in the assignment question and waits.

Within seconds, an answer appears.

It is structured. It sounds confident. The language is polished. There is an introduction, an argument and even a conclusion.

The assignment suddenly looks much easier.

But imagine what happens next.

The student reads the response, changes a few sentences, adds a reference or two and submits the work. The final product may be stronger than anything the student could have produced alone.

Yet one question remains. What exactly did the student learn? That question is becoming increasingly important for education in Namibia.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is giving learners access to tools that can explain difficult concepts, generate ideas, improve writing and support problem-solving.

Used well, these tools can expand learning in ways that would have been difficult to imagine only a few years ago.



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is giving learners access to tools that can explain difficult concepts, generate ideas, improve writing and support problem-solving.

But the same technology can also remove some of the intellectual struggle through which learning normally takes place. The challenge is therefore no longer simply whether students should use AI. They already are.

The more difficult question is whether our education system can distinguish between better output and deeper learning.

Because an assignment can improve while the learner does not. And that may become one of the most important educational questions of the AI era.

A recent analysis by IJG Securities, the stockbroking and research arm of Namibia's IJG Group, drawing on anonymised data from Anthropic's Economic Index, found that coursework represents the largest share of Claude usage in Namibia and accounts for more than twice the global proportion.

The same analysis suggests that Namibian users are more inclined than the global average to give AI direct instructions and automate tasks rather

than use it collaboratively.

The report is careful to note that Claude users are not representative of the entire Namibian population. Still, the pattern deserves our attention.

If education is becoming one of the main spaces in which Namibians encounter generative AI, then our classrooms and universities may be where the country learns its most important habits about how humans should work with intelligent machines.

Completing a task is not the same as learning

This is where the conversation needs to move beyond whether AI use is “good” or “bad”. The evidence is more complicated.

A 2026 randomised study involving 275 university programming students found that AI support improved task performance and reduced frustration, yet the improvement in completing the task did not translate into significantly better conceptual learning.

Another randomised study published in 2025 found that students using unrestricted ChatGPT as a study aid performed worse on a surprise knowledge-retention test 45 days later than students who had studied using traditional approaches.

But other research has found benefits. A July 2026 randomised experiment found that students given access to generative AI

achieved better immediate knowledge-test results, with gains persisting a week later.

Importantly, the strongest benefits appeared among students who used AI for augmentation asking it to explain concepts and support their thinking rather than simply asking it to generate the work for them.

That distinction may be the most important lesson for education. AI itself is not necessarily the problem. What matters is what intellectual work remains with the learner.



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Namibia’s usage pattern should make us curious

The recent Namibia data becomes particularly interesting when viewed through that lens. If coursework dominates AI use, and if users are leaning more towards direct instruction and automation, what exactly are we automating?

Are learners asking AI to explain something they do not understand? Are they using it to interrogate an argument? Are they comparing its response with their textbooks and lecturers?

Or are we increasingly outsourcing the difficult parts of learning reading, organising ideas, constructing arguments and solving problems?

We do not yet have enough evidence to answer those questions conclusively. That is precisely why universities and schools should start asking them. The wrong response would be panic. The equally wrong response would be to assume that because an assignment looks better, learning must also have improved. AI has made that assumption unsafe.

Our assessment systems were built for another era

For a long time, education could reasonably assume that the person who submitted an essay had done most of the intellectual work behind it. That relationship is weakening.

A polished essay no longer automatically demonstrates that the student can construct an argument. Working computer code does not necessarily demonstrate that the learner understands why it works.

A beautifully structured research proposal may conceal very limited understanding of the methodology it describes.

This does not mean written assignments should disappear. It means assessment must become more interested in the process of thinking, not only the final product. We need more oral defence of submitted work.

More supervised problem-



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Electricity Control Board (ECB) in accordance with Public Procurement Act (Act 15 of 2025). As amended, section 42 hereby invites qualified, competent and registered Suppliers / Service providers to submit bids for the following procurement.

Procurement Reference:	SC/RP/ECB-02/2026/2027
Bid description:	The Review of the Namibia Electricity Supply Industry Distribution Infrastructure Standards
Procurement Category:	Lump - sum consultancy contract Maximum duration 6 months
RFP Issue Date:	Tuesday, 15 September 2026
Clarification Deadline:	Friday, 25 September 2026 at 12:00
Proposal Closing:	Thursday, 05 November 2026 at 11:00
Technical Opening:	Thursday, 05 November 2026 at 11:15
Proposal Validity:	90 calendar days from the closing date
Tender fee / bid security:	None
Bid Documents Availability:	The documents for this bid can be requested on email at procure@ecb.org.na
Two-Envelope Submission:	The Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal must be sealed separately and placed in one sealed outer envelope. The Technical Proposal must contain no price information.

All requests for information of any kind relating to this RFP should be channelled in writing to:
Mrs. Melissa Kahimise procure@ecb.org.na or tel: +264 61 374 300

solving. More drafts that demonstrate how an argument developed. More assessment based on authentic Namibian problems.

And where AI has been used, students should increasingly be expected to explain what they used it for, what they accepted, what they rejected and why. The critical assessment question may no longer be simply, "What did you submit?" It may become: "Can you explain and defend what you submitted without the machine?"

We need AI literacy, not merely AI access

The National Student Research Symposium earlier this month placed artificial intelligence at the centre of discussions about the next generation of Namibian researchers. Education Minister, Hon. Sanet Steenkamp offered a principle that should extend well beyond research: "AI can assist a researcher, but it cannot relieve that researcher of the responsibility to think critically, verify evidence and defend conclusions." That is exactly the kind of AI literacy education needs. Teaching students to write prompts is not enough.

They should understand how to verify AI-generated information, recognise confident but inaccurate responses, protect sensitive information, interrogate sources and know when a human expert is required. Most importantly, learners must recognise when AI is helping them think and when it is quietly thinking instead of them. The difference may not always be obvious.

Perhaps we should measure learning differently

Namibia does not need to choose

between AI and education. We need to become better at designing education for a world in which AI is present.

The new data showing substantial coursework use should therefore not provoke a campaign against students using AI. It should provoke better questions. Are our assignments still testing what we think they are testing? Are students learning how to collaborate with AI rather than merely delegate to it? Are lecturers redesigning assessment? Are teachers being prepared to recognise the difference between polished output and genuine understanding?

And perhaps most importantly, are we teaching learners that productive struggle still has educational value?

Sometimes the difficult paragraph, the problem that takes an hour to solve, or the argument that must be rewritten three times is not wasted effort. That struggle may be where the learning actually happens.

AI can make education faster. It can make it more personalised, accessible and productive. But speed should never become our measure of learning.

As Namibia embraces AI, the question should therefore not be how much coursework the technology can help us complete. The more important question is whether, after the assignment is submitted and the screen is closed, the knowledge still belongs to the learner.

****Dr Etuna Simon is a researcher, strategist and writer with a keen interest in education, innovation, artificial intelligence and national development. The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author. She can be reached at etunasimon@icloud.com***



Namibia's pig slaughter hits four-year low as FMD restrictions disrupt market

... producers face additional pressure from rising feed costs

Namibia's pig slaughter declined to its lowest monthly level in more than four years in September 2026, falling by 34.06% year-on-year to 3,270 pigs as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) movement restrictions disrupted livestock marketing.

According to the Livestock and Livestock Products Board's (LLPB) October 2026 Beef and Pork Market Watch report, slaughter numbers also dropped by 26.35% from August, reaching their lowest level since July 2022.

The decline coincided with restrictions

imposed following the confirmation of an FMD outbreak in the //Karas Region on 23 September 2026.

The restrictions affected the movement of cloven-hoofed animals, including pigs, disrupting livestock marketing during the final eight days of September.

The sharp decline in slaughter numbers resulted in a 29.9% year-on-year reduction in estimated pork production to approximately 306 tonnes.

However, the impact on production was partly offset by an increase in average carcass weight to 93.49 kilogrammes,

compared with 87.90 kilogrammes in September 2025 and 91.66 kilogrammes in August 2026.

Despite the September contraction, cumulative pig marketing increased by 3.48% to 40,544 pigs during the first nine months of 2026, compared with 39,179 during the corresponding period last year.

All pigs marketed during the period were slaughtered locally, with no live exports recorded, compared with 211 pigs exported during the first nine months of 2025.

“Year to date, total pig marketing increased by 3.48% to 40,544 head, from 39,179 head in January–September 2025. All pigs marketed in 2026 were slaughtered locally, as no live pigs were exported, compared with 211 head exported in 2025,” the report stated.

Excluding live exports, slaughter at B&C class abattoirs increased by 4.04% from 38,968 pigs recorded during the corresponding period in 2025.

Meanwhile, the Board-approved pork ceiling price remained unchanged at N\$47.61 per kilogramme in September, following an 8.65% downward adjustment at the beginning of the third quarter.

The calculated pork ceiling price increased by 3.15% month-on-month to N\$39.21 per kilogramme, marking its first monthly increase since March 2026. However, it remained 17.91% below its

September 2025 level.

“The Board-approved PCP was therefore N\$8.40/kg above the calculated price,” the report stated.

The LLPB also highlighted rising feed costs as an additional pressure facing pork producers.

Yellow maize prices increased by 10.93% year-on-year to N\$3,990.15 per tonne, while soybean prices rose by 22.49% to N\$8,823.95 per tonne.

The Board warned that continued increases in the prices of these key feed ingredients could push the calculated pork ceiling price higher, placing further pressure on production costs in the domestic pork industry.

Fighting FMD without losing our livestock industry

By Stephanie M. De Klerk

Namibia's Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak presents a challenge extending well beyond animal health.

It threatens the economic relationships that sustain livestock production, meat processing, rural livelihoods and international trade.

The immediate imperative is disease containment, but the national response must also preserve the productive capacity and commercial networks upon which the industry's recovery depends.

The central policy challenge is to achieve an appropriate balance between veterinary risk management and economic continuity. These are not competing objectives.

Effective disease control protects future market access while carefully managed commercial activity, where permitted, helps prevent temporary restrictions from causing lasting economic damage.

Namibia must avoid emerging from this crisis with the disease contained but its livestock economy structurally weakened.

The economic cost of disrupted market access

Livestock production operates within an interconnected value chain. Producers require predictable market access to meet operating expenses and maintain herds.

Abattoirs depend on throughput and product realisation to cover substantial



“

Namibia must avoid emerging from this crisis with the disease contained but its livestock economy structurally weakened.

fixed costs. Transporters, feed suppliers, processors, retailers and service providers depend on sustained commercial activity.

A prolonged interruption affects each participant differently but ultimately weakens the entire system. For small-scale and communal producers, constrained market access can be particularly damaging, given limited financial reserves and fewer alternative marketing channels.

The consequences extend to employment, household incomes and rural economic activity.

These effects must be considered alongside veterinary imperatives when assessing the broader impact of the outbreak.

Veterinary integrity and managed continuity

Namibia's access to demanding international markets rests on decades of investment in veterinary governance, disease surveillance, traceability and

regulatory credibility. These achievements must not be compromised.

The Directorate of Veterinary Services (DVS), as the Competent Authority, must retain scientific and regulatory leadership over disease containment and the conditions under which livestock movements, slaughter and processing may occur.

However, veterinary controls and economic continuity can be pursued together through risk-based arrangements consistent with applicable protocols.

Meatco's temporary slaughter arrangements involving cattle already owned by the Corporation illustrate the limited commercial activity possible under veterinary supervision. Such operations support domestic supply but do not constitute commercial recovery.

The broader objective should be to

identify safe, legally permissible pathways that maintain producer participation and essential processing capacity without undermining disease containment.

Domestic demand and the economics of processing

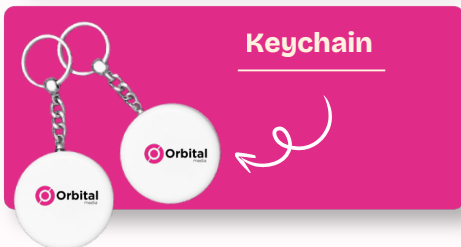
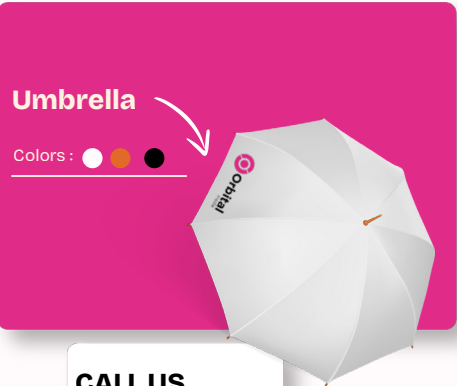
The disruption has reinforced the importance of Namibia's domestic beef market.

Retailers, wholesalers, hospitality operators and public institutions can contribute through greater procurement of locally produced beef.

Structured purchasing arrangements, particularly within public-sector food programmes, could provide more predictable demand during periods of market disruption.

Yet domestic demand cannot simply replace premium export markets.

Prices realised locally are generally



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substantially lower than those achieved in established high-value export destinations. Processing facilities also carry significant fixed costs, making throughput alone an inadequate measure of financial sustainability.

Commercial viability depends on the relationship between livestock procurement costs, processing efficiency, product value and market realisation.

The objective must therefore extend beyond keeping abattoirs operational to ensuring that their activities remain economically sustainable.

Diversifying towards Africa and the Middle East

Namibia's reliance on a relatively concentrated portfolio of premium export markets creates exposure when veterinary restrictions interrupt trade.

Restoring access to established destinations remains essential. Equally important is developing a more diversified commercial presence across Africa and the Middle East.

African markets offer opportunities for regional trade, distribution partnerships and differentiated product offerings. Middle Eastern markets present further potential, particularly where Namibian beef can meet specific consumer preferences, certification standards and importing-country requirements.

However, market diversification requires more than identifying prospective buyers. Veterinary equivalence, import permits, product specifications, logistics, commercial relationships and price competitiveness must align.

FMD restrictions may also affect access to prospective alternative destinations. Market activation must therefore proceed through appropriate veterinary approvals and coordinated commercial diplomacy.

Government and industry should jointly prioritise markets with realistic prospects for regulatory approval and commercially sustainable trade.

Diversification should become a permanent feature of Namibia's red meat strategy rather than an emergency response to lost access elsewhere.

Preserving employment and productive capacity

Employment protection is inseparable from commercial viability.

Producers, processors and associated businesses cannot indefinitely sustain existing cost structures without sufficient revenue. Prolonged disruption may require expenditure restraint, operational adjustments and difficult labour-related decisions.

Such measures should be guided by consultation, proportionality and a commitment to preserving essential productive capacity.

Organised labour has an important role in developing workable arrangements that balance immediate income protection with longer-term employment sustainability.

Government and financial institutions should also consider targeted interventions where temporary support can prevent otherwise viable operations from suffering irreversible damage.

The objective must be to safeguard the greatest possible number of sustainable jobs across the value chain, rather than preserve individual operations at costs that cannot be financed.

A coordinated national response

The current circumstances warrant a coordinated livestock continuity framework alongside the veterinary response.

Such a framework should integrate disease surveillance, risk-based commercial arrangements, domestic procurement,

Retailers, wholesalers, hospitality operators and public institutions can contribute through greater procurement of locally produced beef.

targeted liquidity support and accelerated engagement with eligible African and Middle Eastern markets.

It should also accommodate the distinct circumstances of commercial and communal producers while ensuring that veterinary decisions remain evidence-based and transparent.

No institution can independently resolve a crisis of this complexity. Effective implementation requires cooperation among veterinary authorities, Government, producers, processors, retailers, financial institutions and organised labour.

Namibia cannot predict precisely when normal market access will be restored.

It can, however, make deliberate choices about preserving the industry's capacity to recover.

The measure of our response will not be disease containment alone, but whether we also retain viable producers, functioning processing infrastructure, sustainable employment and credible access to markets.

Protecting animal health and preserving economic livelihoods must remain part of the same national undertaking.

**** Stephanie M. De Klerk is Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the Meat Corporation of Namibia (Meatco) and writes in that capacity.***

The banner is a light blue background with a pattern of faint icons. It features a central QR code. To the left of the QR code is a blue circle with a white icon of a building and a bar chart, labeled 'Finance' above and 'Business' below. To the right of the QR code is a blue circle with a white WhatsApp icon, labeled 'for Daily Namibian News' below. Below the QR code is the text 'TO FOLLOW OUR WHATSAPP CHANNEL'. On the left side, there is a red Adobe PDF icon with the text 'Daily PDF version sent via email' and social media handles: '@thebrieflive' for Facebook, '@thebrieflive' for LinkedIn, '@TheBriefLive' for Twitter, and '@thebrieflive' for Instagram. The text 'SCAN HERE' is written in large blue letters. The logo 'THE BRIEF' is in the top right corner, with the tagline 'News Worth Knowing' below it.

Alexforbes highlights broader coverage, consistent saving and lasting retirement income as priorities

Namibia has achieved an overall score of 57.5 and a C grade in the 2026 Marsh CFA Institute Global Pension Index.

It records the highest overall score among the four African retirement income systems included in this year's assessment, ahead of Botswana, Kenya and South Africa.

The result provides a benchmark for strengthening retirement security while building on Namibia's established retirement fund sector and public old-age support.

The Index assesses retirement systems across adequacy, sustainability and integrity: the income they deliver, their ability to continue delivering it, and the governance and protections that support confidence in the system. Namibia's C grade indicates that its system has valuable features, alongside important gaps that need to be addressed to improve retirement outcomes.

Joleen Mans, MD Alexforbes Financial Services:

"Namibia has an important foundation to build on, with an established retirement fund sector and public old-age support. The opportunity is to help more people save consistently and turn those savings into an income that lasts. The ranking is a useful benchmark, but the real measure of progress is whether more Namibians can enter retirement with greater financial security."

Leading the African systems assessed, with room to improve

Namibia's result should be considered across the three complementary measures used by the Index:



- Adequacy: whether retirement benefits provide meaningful income and support.
- Sustainability: whether coverage, savings and funding can support retirement incomes over the long term.
- Integrity: whether regulation, governance, member protection and communication support a trusted system.

The regional comparison is encouraging, but it does not mean Namibia leads all African retirement systems: only four are included in the Index. Nor does a mature retirement fund sector, on its own, ensure

that everyone has access to sufficient retirement income. Extending participation and strengthening long-term saving remain important considerations.

The Netherlands leads the global results with 85.8, followed by Denmark and Iceland. Singapore, Israel and Australia complete the six A-grade systems. Namibia's score of 57.5 highlights the scope for further progress towards the outcomes achieved by leading systems.

Measuring income throughout retirement

The 2026 Index sharpens its focus on whether retirement income remains adequate as people grow older. Its net pension replacement rate measure now considers income at retirement and at age 80, rather than only at the point of retirement.

The integrity assessment also introduces a measure of pension-plan mobile-app availability and gives greater weight to cybersecurity guidance and data-breach reporting. Certain defined-benefit funding measures receive less emphasis. The overall weightings remain unchanged: 40% for adequacy, 35% for sustainability and 25% for integrity.

These refinements matter when interpreting results: the Index assesses the retirement income system as a whole, not

only private retirement funds. Namibia has an established occupational retirement sector and a universal or near-universal public old-age grant that provides a basic income floor.

This public support should not be confused with comprehensive coverage through contributory retirement saving. Workers outside employer-sponsored arrangements may still have limited opportunities to build an income that meets their needs in retirement.

Many higher-performing systems combine public pensions with broad occupational or mandatory retirement saving. Their results reflect the reach and design of these arrangements, alongside benefit adequacy, sustainable funding and good governance.

Building broader participation and lasting income

For Namibia, the discussion is about building on existing public support and retirement funds to reach more workers. Broader participation, affordable and consistent contributions, and preserving savings for retirement can help strengthen the link between working-life saving and later-life income.

Local industry discussions have identified phased mandatory retirement

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contributions and stronger preservation rules as potential ways to address coverage and sustainability gaps. These are reform considerations, not measures presented here as already implemented. Practical progress will also require attention to affordability, employment conditions and support for members making retirement decisions.

African expertise supports continued participation

Kenya joins the Index for the first time in 2026, expanding African representation alongside Namibia, Botswana and South Africa. Namibia scores 57.5, followed by Botswana at 57.0, Kenya at 53.1 and South Africa at 50.4. All four systems receive a C grade, reinforcing the importance of continuing to strengthen retirement outcomes across the region.

Alexforbes’ teams in South Africa, Namibia

and Botswana, together with its partner Octagon in Kenya, are integral to delivering and maintaining African participation in the survey. Their contribution ensures that African retirement systems remain part of the global benchmarking conversation.

New name, continuing purpose

Previously the Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index, the report now carries the Marsh CFA Institute Global Pension Index name, reflecting the transition to the unified Marsh brand. Its purpose remains unchanged: to provide an independent benchmark that helps identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for pension reform.

The 18th edition is published by Marsh in collaboration with CFA Institute and the Monash Centre for Financial Studies, covering approximately 66% of the world’s population. [rpc.cfainstitute.org]

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