

RISING FUEL

Rising fuel imports push
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THE

BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

Auditor

Namibia faces critical shortage of auditors

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 2026

MAIN STORY



Namibia faces critical shortage of auditors

... only 20 may qualify to audit financial institutions under FIMA

Namibia faces a critical shortage of qualified auditors, with only 46 professionals currently signing audit opinions nationwide and an estimated 20 potentially meeting the experience requirements to audit financial institutions under the Financial Institutions and Markets Act (FIMA).

PwC Namibia Partner and Director Nina Coetzer warned that the limited pool of qualified auditors could undermine the country's ability to meet growing regulatory and financial reporting requirements,

particularly in the financial services sector.

Speaking at the recently held Institute of Chartered Accountants of Namibia (ICAN) National Accounting Summit, Coetzer said the shortage had become a national

Crucial Dates

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

concern requiring urgent intervention from regulators, professional bodies and the private sector.

She revealed that although approximately 102 professionals were registered in public practice with the Public Accountants and Auditors Board (PAAB), only 46 were actively signing audit opinions.

Of these, she estimated that about 20 might meet the experience requirements to audit financial services entities under FIMA, highlighting the limited availability of specialised auditing expertise.

“This is not an audit profession problem anymore. This is a national problem,” Coetzer said.

She warned that the shortage could place additional pressure on audit firms and institutions requiring independent financial audits, particularly as regulatory requirements become more demanding.

Coetzer said Namibia urgently needed to strengthen its auditing capacity to ensure businesses and financial institutions could continue meeting their reporting and compliance obligations.

She cautioned, however, against blaming regulation entirely for the shortage, arguing that effective oversight remained necessary to protect audit quality and maintain confidence in financial reporting.

“There is a real risk in our regulation, but I also think practice reviews need to happen to ensure that everybody is getting the same quality, the same standard,” she said.

Coetzer said regulatory requirements needed to be implemented in a manner that strengthened professional standards without imposing unnecessary administrative burdens on practitioners.

She argued that audit oversight should be integrated into risk-based processes rather than becoming a checklist-driven exercise

that adds compliance costs without necessarily improving audit quality.

The shortage has also raised concerns about Namibia’s ability to attract, train and retain accounting professionals as audit firms compete for a limited pool of graduates and experienced practitioners.

Ernst & Young (EY) Country Managing Partner Jaco Coetzee said the profession needed to rethink how it attracted younger professionals by demonstrating the economic importance of auditing beyond technical compliance requirements.

He said graduates increasingly wanted careers that offered opportunities to make a meaningful impact, while the profession often focused its recruitment messaging on auditing standards, methodologies and regulatory obligations.

Coetzee said auditors played an essential role in maintaining trust in financial information, enabling investors, lenders and other stakeholders to make informed economic decisions.

He warned that developing specialised auditing expertise required sustained investment in training and professional development, making staff retention a critical challenge for firms.

DCS Managing Partner Donovan Pokolo called for a coordinated national approach to developing future auditors, including stronger collaboration between audit firms and their clients.

He said the profession needed more structured training opportunities and a collective strategy to expand the pool of qualified professionals rather than relying on individual firms to address the shortage independently.

Pokolo also stressed the need to balance individual career aspirations with the broader demand for specialised skills across the economy.



Rising fuel imports push Namibia's trade deficit to N\$33.5bn

Namibia's merchandise trade deficit widened sharply to N\$33.5 billion during the first eight months of 2026, nearly double the N\$17.8 billion recorded over the same period last year, as rising fuel imports and higher international energy prices increased the country's import bill.

Bank of Namibia Governor Ebson Uanguta said the trade deficit deteriorated by N\$15.7 billion, representing an increase of approximately 88%, largely driven by higher imports of mineral fuels.

"The trade deficit deteriorated to

thirty-three point five billion during the first eight months of 2026 from N\$17.8 billion recorded in the same period of last year," Uanguta said during the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) October 2026 announcement.

He warned that continued geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and disruptions to global energy supplies could place further pressure on Namibia's trade balance.

"Going forward, the trade deficit will continue to be shaped by energy supply disruption, driven by the geopolitical tension in the Middle East," he said.

Uanguta said international oil prices remained elevated, with Brent crude reaching approximately US\$116 per barrel, its highest level in more than six months.

The increase in global energy prices has raised Namibia's import costs, particularly for fuel, placing additional pressure on the country's external trade position.

As a net importer of petroleum products, Namibia remains exposed to fluctuations in international oil prices, which can increase transport and production costs across the economy.

Uanguta said the global economy was experiencing a prolonged negative supply shock, with higher energy prices contributing to inflationary pressures across several economies.

The widening trade deficit comes as the Bank of Namibia moves to contain inflationary risks and maintain monetary stability.

The MPC increased the repo rate by 25 basis points to 7%, citing the need to safeguard the one-to-one currency peg between the Namibia dollar and the South African rand while limiting the secondary inflationary effects of rising fuel prices.

The central bank said higher fuel prices could feed into the broader economy through increased transport, production and distribution costs.

Despite the deterioration in the trade balance, Namibia's international reserves strengthened to N\$59.3 billion at the end of September 2026,

compared with approximately N\$58 billion at the end of July.

According to the Bank of Namibia, the reserves provided an estimated 3.6 months of import cover, remaining sufficient to support the currency peg and meet the country's international financial obligations.

The widening trade deficit highlights Namibia's continued exposure to external energy price shocks, with further disruptions to global oil supplies posing risks to the country's import bill and broader economic outlook.

JOB PURPOSE

To lead the company's tendering and business development function: identify strategic opportunities, manage competitive bids and build sustainable client relationships, particularly in the government, defence and security sectors.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 01 Identify and track tender and business opportunities in the public and private sectors, including the Central Procurement Board of Namibia, ministries, state-owned enterprises and regional bodies.
- 02 Lead the full bid process: reading and analysing tender documents, preparing technical and financial proposals, ensuring compliance and meeting every submission deadline.
- 03 Manage supplier and partner engagement for quotations, pricing, specifications and local and international partnerships.
- 04 Build and maintain client relationships, and represent the company in meetings, site visits and briefing sessions.
- 05 Keep the tender register, compliance documents and company registrations current, including tax and social security good standing, BIPA and procurement portal registrations.
- 06 Supervise, guide and develop the Principal Dealer.
- 07 Report regularly to the Directors on the pipeline, bids submitted, outcomes and lessons learned.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

- Degree or diploma in Business, Procurement, Supply Chain or Commerce
- 5 years' tender or business development experience, including 2 years in a supervisory role
- Knowledge of the Public Procurement Act, 2015
- Excellent proposal writing and negotiation skills
- Namibian citizen with a valid driver's licence, able to undergo security screening



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Namibia secures N\$1 billion for green hydrogen, industrial projects



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Namibia is set to benefit from US\$56 million (approximately N\$1 billion) in climate financing to support the development and construction of green hydrogen and industrial decarbonisation projects, following the Green Climate Fund's (GCF) approval of a US\$140 million funding package for Southern Africa.

The funding, approved at the GCF's 46th Board meeting in South Korea, will be channelled through the SDG Namibia One Fund, which is supporting major green hydrogen and industrial projects across the country.

Of Namibia's US\$56 million allocation, US\$15 million will finance early-stage project development, while US\$41 million will provide equity financing to support projects through construction.

The allocation forms part of the Southern African Industrial Decarbonisation Facility,



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which aims to mobilise US\$1.2 billion in public and private investment across Namibia and South Africa.

South Africa will receive US\$84 million from the approved financing package.

In Namibia, the SDG Namibia One Fund has already signed development funding agreements with four major projects, including the Hyphen green hydrogen project, HyIron's Oshivela green iron project, the Zhero Molecules Walvis Bay green ammonia project and the Dâures green fertiliser project.

The financing is expected to help these projects overcome development and construction funding constraints, while attracting additional private investment into Namibia's emerging green hydrogen industry.

Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia (EIF) Chief Executive Officer Benedict Libanda said the funding would strengthen Namibia's ability to develop its green hydrogen industry and support job creation.

"Namibia has significant potential to develop green hydrogen and associated industries, but realising that potential requires capital, specialist expertise and meaningful Namibian participation," Libanda said.

"GCF's catalytic financing will help build on this foundation, advancing projects that can create jobs, support industrial development and contribute to Namibia's transition to a low-carbon economy."

The SDG Namibia One Fund is managed by Namibia Energy Transition Fund Managers, a partnership involving Climate Fund Managers, Invest International and the EIF.

The broader financing programme targets between 30 and 40 industrial decarbonisation projects across Namibia and South Africa, with plans to install approximately 1.52 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity and avoid an estimated 24.2 million tonnes of emissions.

GCF Regional Director for Africa Catherine Koffman said the facility was designed to unlock large-scale investment in industries where reducing carbon emissions remains particularly challenging.

"By deploying catalytic first-loss equity where risk is highest, the facility aims to unlock a target USD 1.2 billion programme across South Africa and Namibia, finance 30 to 40 projects, install about 1.52 GW of renewable energy and avoid an estimated 24.2 million tonnes of emissions," she said.

Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) Group Executive for Programmes Phindile Masangane said the financing would help attract private capital into industrial projects while supporting economic growth and employment.

"With USD 84 million allocated to South Africa and USD 56 million allocated to Namibia, the DBSA, with its partners, Climate Fund Managers and the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia, is well placed to channel the GCF funding into development projects where the emissions are hardest to abate and the economic stakes are highest," Masangane said.

The DBSA will oversee the programme on behalf of the GCF, including monitoring and reporting on the use of the financing.

Climate Fund Managers Chief Executive Officer Andrew Johnstone said the funding would help address financing challenges that have constrained industrial decarbonisation projects, particularly during their development and construction phases.

The US\$140 million approval follows earlier commitments of €150 million from Invest International and the European Commission to Climate Investor Three's development financing facility.

Climate Fund Managers said it would continue raising public and private capital towards the US\$1.2 billion target to finance green hydrogen infrastructure, renewable energy generation and low-carbon industrial development across the two countries



Namibia pushes for stronger business ties with Russia to unlock investment

... seeks support for agriculture and livestock disease control

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called for stronger business-to-business partnerships between Namibia and Russia, urging companies from both countries to pursue joint ventures, investment and technology transfer to translate longstanding diplomatic relations into tangible economic benefits.

Speaking at the Third Russia-Africa Summit in Moscow on Thursday, Nandi-Ndaitwah said economic cooperation should move beyond political commitments and focus on commercially viable partnerships that support industrialisation, economic diversification and job creation.

“We must strengthen business-to-business relations, promote joint ventures, facilitate technology transfer, skills development, and diversify our economies,” she said.

The President said Namibia was seeking partnerships that would expand local production capacity, promote value addition and strengthen regional value chains, particularly in agriculture, energy, industry, technology and innovation.

She stressed that historical relations between Namibia and Russia should provide a foundation for deeper economic engagement, with greater emphasis on

practical outcomes.

“Our historical solidarity must continue to serve as a foundation upon which to build stronger and more dynamic partnership, now and for the future,” Nandi-Ndaitwah said.

She identified industrialisation and local value addition as key priorities, calling for cooperation that would enable African economies to develop stronger manufacturing and processing industries.

Nandi-Ndaitwah also called for increased technology transfer and skills development to strengthen domestic industries and improve the competitiveness of African businesses.

She said academic and professional exchanges, joint research and innovation programmes should be expanded, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

In agriculture, the President called for partnerships to introduce modern farming technologies, improve market access and develop climate-resilient agricultural production systems.

She also identified livestock development and the prevention, control and eradication of transboundary animal diseases as areas requiring closer cooperation.

“Enhanced veterinary cooperation, technology transfer and capacity-building are essential,” she said.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said Namibia’s vulnerability to drought, desertification and land degradation highlighted

the need for stronger international partnerships to support climate resilience and sustainable agricultural development.

She called for the implementation of the Namib Declaration, adopted during the 11th Conference of the Parties in Windhoek in 2013, and urged greater efforts to close Africa’s water investment gap.

She said the success of future partnerships should be measured by concrete achievements, particularly investment, technology transfer, industrial development and improvements in people’s livelihoods.



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

The legal, trade and compliance implications of Namibia's FMD outbreak

By Patrick Kauta

Since being confirmed on 23 September 2026, Namibia's foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak has escalated into a major regional livestock trade issue.

The outbreak occurred within the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)-recognised FMD-free zone in the Karasburg State Veterinary District of the Kharas Region, prompting the suspension of Namibia's recognised FMD-free status and halting exports to key markets including South Africa, the European Union, China and the United States.

For Namibian farmers, extended restrictions on animal movement threaten cash flow, breeding programmes, marketing opportunities and livelihoods.

While containing the outbreak must remain the immediate priority, it is equally important that affected producers receive meaningful support and that authorities remain focused on restoring market confidence as quickly as possible.

Navigating compliance during the outbreak

The first and most important obligation for farmers is to report any suspected FMD cases immediately.

As rapid detection and reporting remain the most effective tools available to contain disease outbreaks, any delays in reporting not only increase the risk of spread, but may also expose producers to legal and regulatory consequences if authorities



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For Namibian farmers, extended restrictions on animal movement threaten cash flow, breeding programmes, marketing opportunities and livelihoods.

determine that information was withheld.

Farmers must also comply fully with movement restrictions, quarantine requirements and official instructions issued by authorities.

In addition to the immediate isolation of affected herds, enhanced biosecurity measures should be implemented, including visitor controls, access management, vehicle and equipment disinfection, and strict procedures for contractors and other third parties entering or leaving the farm.

For accurate traceability, farmers should ensure that animal identification records, movement records and farm registers are accurate and up to date.

During an outbreak, authorities rely heavily on this traceability information to identify potential transmission pathways and determine whether the disease remains localised.

Importantly, producers should avoid

taking independent disease-control actions outside the framework established by veterinary authorities.

Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform Minister, Inge Zaamwani, has specifically warned farmers against vaccinating livestock independently of the DVS to ensure that to ensure consistency with Namibia's national response.

Farmers should also maintain comprehensive records of losses resulting from movement restrictions, market disruptions and other outbreak-related impacts.

Depending on how government support mechanisms evolve, such documentation may prove important in future discussions relating to assistance, compensation or industry support measures.

Lessons from Botswana

Namibia can draw valuable lessons from Botswana's risk-based approach in managing recurring FMD outbreaks. Rather

than relying solely on blanket restrictions, Botswana has used surveillance data to determine where disease is present and where commercial activity can safely continue under strict controls.

The emphasis on traceability has been particularly important here. Botswana's animal tracking systems allow authorities to identify potentially affected animals quickly, support surveillance efforts and provide confidence to trading partners that outbreaks can be accurately mapped and contained.

Perhaps the most important lesson, however, is that disease management has become a regional challenge. Botswana and South Africa have already strengthened cross-border cooperation around surveillance, traceability and coordinated disease management.

Considering Namibia's outbreak is unfolding at a time when FMD has continues to affect multiple Southern

EAN Public Discussion

National Skills and Employment Public Discussion

Understanding Employer Skill Needs Across Sectors

The discussion will bring together policymakers, private-sector leaders, vocational training centres, academic institutions and development partners to examine employer skill needs across key sectors of the Namibian economy.

The event will provide a platform to identify priority skills gaps, strengthen dialogue between employers and training institutions, and generate practical recommendations to support employment creation, productivity and human-capital development.



Wednesday
4 November 2026



09h00 - 12h00



Venue:
Hilton Hotel, Windhoek

economic
association
of namibia



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African countries, long-term containment will depend not only on national measures, but also on stronger regional cooperation and information sharing.

Shared responsibility, shared recovery

Encouragingly, authorities have already begun partially lifting certain restrictions after surveillance and tracing indicated that the outbreak remains localised within the Kharas Region. That said, containing the outbreak and restoring market access will require more than veterinary controls alone.

Government has estimated that approximately N\$190.2 million will be required for the containment response, including around N\$47 million earmarked for the construction of 290km of disease-control fencing between Ariamsvlei,

Karasburg and Ai-Ais.

Recent interventions through the FMD Support Fund, which has mobilised more than N\$1.5 million worth of biosecurity products, surveillance kits and field equipment to support veterinary teams operating in the affected areas, illustrate the type of coordinated industry response required.

For farmers facing prolonged movement restrictions and significant commercial losses, meaningful support will be just as critical as compliance if Namibia is to emerge from this crisis with both its livestock sector and international market reputation intact.

***Patrick Kauta, Managing Partner and Director of Dispute Resolution at Cliffe Dekker Hofmeyr (CDH) Namibia**

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Namibia needs export-ready businesses to benefit from China's zero tariffs

Namibia needs businesses with sufficient production capacity, export certification, working capital and reliable logistics to benefit from China's zero-tariff policy, Economic Association of Namibia (EAN) Chairperson Jason Kasuto has said.

Speaking at the China-Africa Cooperation Symposium in Windhoek, Kasuto said the removal of tariffs provides access to China's consumer market, but Namibia must build the capacity to produce goods that meet buyers' requirements and can be delivered consistently at competitive prices.

"A tariff set to zero is an invitation, and an invitation is only as valuable as the guest's ability to accept it," Kasuto said.

He warned that without sufficient export-ready enterprises, the policy could have little impact on Namibia's trade performance despite improved market access.

"If we treat these instruments as diplomatic milestones to be welcomed and then filed, the trade figures will barely move," he said.

Kasuto said Namibia should use its economic partnership with China to secure investment in processing facilities, technical training and long-term industrial development rather than continue relying on raw material exports.

He said the country needed to develop local enterprises capable of supplying international markets, supported by predictable regulations and disciplined public finances to strengthen investor confidence.

Kasuto called for practical strategies with clear implementation timelines, responsible institutions and measurable outcomes, rather than broad commitments that fail to translate into projects.

He said the EAN would compile a policy

brief based on the symposium's discussions within the week and seek to present it to policymakers the following week, with support from the Chinese Embassy and the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board.

Minister of International Relations and Trade Selma Ashipala-Musavyi said China's zero-tariff initiative, effective from 1 May 2026 to 30 April 2028, provides duty-free treatment across all tariff lines to 20 additional African countries, including Namibia. She said the opportunity must be accompanied by efforts to overcome non-tariff barriers, including rules of origin, quality, packaging and phytosanitary standards, while ensuring consistent supply and timely delivery.

Ashipala-Musavyi said Namibia should build on the July 2026 phytosanitary protocol for exporting Namibian table grapes to China by expanding market

access for processed foods, meat and fisheries products.

She also identified light manufacturing, agro-processing and green energy as sectors in which joint ventures with Chinese investors could establish production capacity, transfer skills and create employment.

The minister said the China-Africa Economic Partnership for Shared Development provides a framework for advancing export diversification, investment and technology transfer in line with Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan.

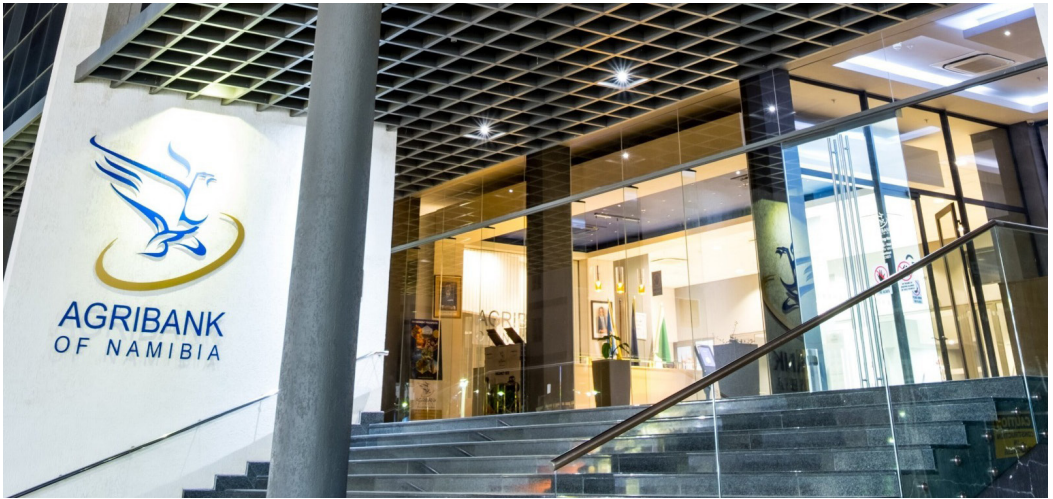
She encouraged businesses to prepare strategically for the opportunities by working with government institutions to meet export standards, complete the necessary documentation, strengthen logistics and establish connections with Chinese buyers.



TB
THE BRIEF

Conversation with Dennis de Wet,
Founder of Slowtown Coffee Roasters

**THE STORY OF
SLOWTOWN: 15 YEARS ON
COMING SOON**



Agribank moves to diversify loan book amid rising agricultural risks

The Agricultural Bank of Namibia (Agribank) is moving to diversify its loan portfolio beyond traditional livestock and land-based farming to reduce its exposure to drought, animal diseases and other environmental risks that continue to affect farmers' ability to repay loans.

Agribank Chief Executive Officer Robert Eiman said the bank was deliberately targeting agricultural projects less dependent on weather conditions, including controlled-environment farming and crop production, as part of efforts to strengthen its financial sustainability and contain the deterioration of its loan book.

"This is why the bank is now deliberately looking at also diversifying its portfolio, to actively go after projects that are not necessarily linked to weather," Eiman said.

He said a significant portion of Agribank's loan portfolio remained concentrated in traditional agricultural activities, exposing the institution to recurring droughts,

livestock diseases and other disruptions affecting agricultural production and farmers' incomes.

The diversification strategy comes as the bank grapples with non-performing loans and repayment arrears, with the ongoing foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak placing additional pressure on livestock farmers.

Eiman said Agribank was assessing the financial impact of the outbreak on its borrowers and considering repayment relief measures, including extending instalment due dates and reviewing penalty interest.

"We are trying to avoid a blanket approach and look at it on a case-by-case basis because people are impacted differently and we don't know the window of the impact," he said.

He said affected farmers could be granted additional time to meet their repayment obligations, depending on the severity of the disruption to their operations.

"We might have to look at pushing those

instalments and make sure that it's not burdened by penalty interests and the likes," Eiman said.

The bank is engaging directly with affected customers to assess their financial circumstances and determine appropriate interventions rather than introducing a uniform repayment relief arrangement.

Eiman acknowledged that Agribank was already facing challenges with non-performing loans and arrears before the FMD outbreak, making it necessary to address the underlying causes of repayment difficulties.

"It's not simply that they don't want to pay. There are other factors as well. And this is trying to understand those factors to see what the remedies are that you can put in place," he said.

He warned that continued deterioration in loan repayments could undermine the bank's ability to provide financing to the agricultural sector.

"We have to put brakes on the deterioration of the loan. The bank can only fulfil its development mandate if the bank is sustainable," Eiman said.

He said the bank's immediate priority was to work with borrowers experiencing financial difficulties to find repayment solutions before considering legal action or the auctioning of assets.

"As a bank, our priority is not auctions and our priority is not taking customers to court. That is the last thing that we want to do," he said. Eiman urged farmers struggling to service their loans to approach Agribank

and engage with the institution on possible repayment arrangements.

"We want to be in a situation where the customer and the bank meet each other halfway, and that is really the message. Let us meet each other halfway," he said.

He said diversifying Agribank's lending portfolio towards agricultural activities less vulnerable to weather-related disruptions would help spread lending risks and improve the bank's overall loan performance.

The strategy is intended to reduce the concentration of lending in traditional farming activities while supporting Agribank's ability to continue financing agricultural development despite recurring environmental and disease-related shocks.

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The silence after “apply”: What opaque recruitment costs Namibia’s job market and mental health

By Asteria Pirola

Every job application ends in one of three ways: a yes, a no, or silence. For too many Namibians, silence is the most common answer, and it is the most damaging.

A yes, brings hope and a no, brings closure, but silence brings neither. It leaves people waiting, doubting themselves and unable to move on, and over weeks and months that uncertainty becomes a mental health burden.

Research from Namibia points to the mental toll. A 2024 University of Namibia study of young adults in Windhoek found higher rates of severe depression among the unemployed (25.5%) than the employed (17.5%), with severe stress at 20% versus 17%.

A 2025 study in Rundu found that young people experienced joblessness as distressing, with a loss of daily structure, financial vulnerability and decaying social relationships.

One jobseeker recently described sending



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A 2025 study in Rundu found that young people experienced joblessness as distressing, with a loss of daily structure, financial vulnerability and decaying social relationships.

30 CVs and meeting “no experience” or “must know someone” as the answer, while watching friends move ahead brought anxiety and self-doubt.

Unemployment has many causes, but the experience of the search is shaped by the people who run recruitment.

The quality of the professionals behind HR decisions determines whether an applicant is treated as a person or as a pile of paper. Let’s take the basics. Acknowledging

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an application is a minimum professional standard, and so is closing a process with a rejection letter sent timeously.

When they are skipped, candidates cannot tell whether they are still in contention. They cannot plan, they hesitate over other offers, and they begin to blame themselves.

My past experiences as a Human Resources Business Partner, I have seen how unpredictability and loss of control wear people down, and how often these gaps come from neglect rather than intent.

An acknowledgement can be an automatic message. What is missing is attention, accountability and professional discipline.

The gap between policy and practice is visible. Applicants to the Electoral Commission of Namibia recently complained of little information on selection criteria and weighting, and no

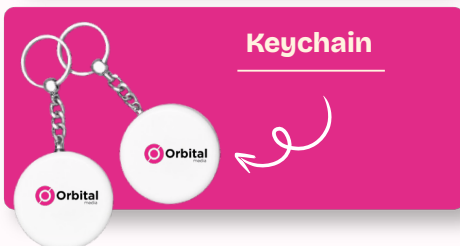
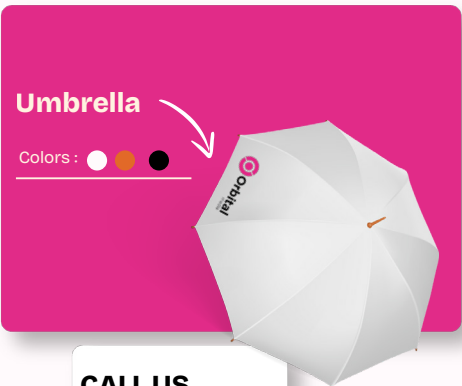
feedback on why they were not chosen.

The commission rejected the allegations and said it followed its procedures. I make no judgment on that case, but the shape of the complaint is familiar.

The Namibian Prime Minister Elijah Ngurare has told public-sector HR practitioners recently that applications must be transparent and accountable, another theme that requires public discourse too.

So, what would better look like? Every applicant receives an acknowledgement, a status update and a closing decision, with a clear reason category for rejection.

Public bodies and large employers publish a simple, anonymised recruitment report each quarter: vacancies advertised, applications received, shortlisted and appointed, days taken to decide, and the



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Software can do this cheaply and consistently, and it can flag patterns where outcomes drift from stated criteria so a human can investigate.

breakdown by region, gender and disability.

An independent body, such as the Public Service Commission, can read those reports and ask questions.

This is where AI can help, if used carefully. Much of the burden is repetitive: sending updates, compiling statistics, spotting posts that have been open far too long.

Software can do this cheaply and consistently, and it can flag patterns where outcomes drift from stated criteria so a human can investigate.

It should not decide who gets hired. The safeguards matter: human decision-makers, explainable criteria, strong protection of applicants' data, and regular bias audits, because AI trained on past hiring can copy past favouritism.

A clear "no" with a reason lets a person adjust and try again. A "not yet" with a date lets them plan and those who are appointed start their

careers knowing how and why they were chosen.

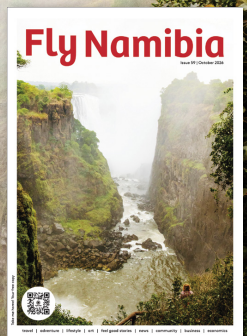
Every acknowledgement sent, every rejection closed on time and every appointment explained signals to prospective applicants that this organisation hires fairly, and people notice how an employer treats strangers.

An HR division that does its basic job without favouritism or nepotism earns trust, and trust becomes brand loyalty, and consequentially a stronger pipeline of talent and a healthier culture on the inside.

**** Dr Asteria Pirola, founder and chief executive of Net-o Network, has worked for more than 15 years in startup ecosystems, workforce development, experimental psychology, neuroscience and African innovation. She can be reached via: info@netzeron.com www.netzeron.com***

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68 Namibian entrepreneurs complete Standard Bank SME support programme

Standard Bank Namibia is intensifying efforts to improve access to finance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with 68 entrepreneurs graduating from its 2026 Blue Growth Series and 27 businesses securing opportunities to pitch for funding and market access.

The programme, implemented in partnership with the Namibia Investment and Finance Academy (NIFA), aims to address financing and business development challenges facing local entrepreneurs by preparing them to meet the requirements of commercial banks and other financial institutions. According to Standard Bank Namibia, five entrepreneurs successfully accessed financing through the programme, while 42 surveyed participants reported increased business income and 16 opened business accounts with the bank.

The programme has expanded from 40 participating enterprises in 2025 to almost 80 in 2026, bringing the total number of businesses supported to nearly 120 over the past two years.

Standard Bank Namibia Executive Officer for Business and Commercial Banking Hellen Amupolo said the bank was focusing on addressing barriers that prevent SMEs from accessing funding and expanding their operations.

"At Standard Bank Namibia, we believe that when entrepreneurs succeed, communities prosper and economies grow. SMEs are the backbone of Namibia's economy, but unlocking their full potential requires more than access to capital. It requires skills, networks, market opportunities and the confidence to scale," Amupolo said.

She said the programme was designed to strengthen entrepreneurs' financial management capabilities while connecting them with potential financiers and commercial opportunities.

"Through the Blue Growth Series, we are helping entrepreneurs strengthen their businesses and preparing them for future growth opportunities. This is part of how we bring our purpose, 'Namibia is our home, we drive her growth', to life by supporting

businesses that create jobs, stimulate local economic activity and contribute to the country's long-term development."

As part of the programme, 27 investment-ready enterprises participated in a Pitch Day, presenting their businesses to development finance institutions, commercial banks, investors and prospective buyers.

The initiative provided participating entrepreneurs with opportunities to engage potential financiers, explore funding arrangements and establish relationships with potential customers.

The programme also offers subsidised management accounts, business advisory services, assistance in preparing funding applications and support in developing business profiles.

These interventions are intended to help SMEs strengthen their financial records and business systems, which are among the requirements considered by financial institutions when assessing funding applications.

NIFA Chief Executive Officer and Founder Arinze Okafor said the programme focused on equipping entrepreneurs with practical skills to improve their competitiveness and ability to attract investment.

"Our objective is to help entrepreneurs build businesses that are resilient, competitive and investment-ready. The Blue Growth Series provides

participants with practical business skills and direct exposure to potential funders and markets, ensuring that learning translates into real opportunities for growth," Okafor said.

"We are encouraged by the progress made by this year's cohort and look forward to supporting graduates as they continue their business development journey."

The 2026 cohort included entrepreneurs from eight regions across Namibia, with women accounting for 54% of participants and young people under the age of 35 representing 53%.

Despite the programme's focus on access to finance, only five businesses were reported to have secured funding. The bank did not disclose the total value of financing obtained or the number of participants who had formally applied for funding.

Standard Bank said graduates would continue receiving mentorship and advisory support over the next three months, focusing on strengthening funding applications, pursuing market opportunities and advancing engagements with potential financiers.

The Blue Growth Series, forms part of Standard Bank Namibia and NIFA's efforts to strengthen SME development and support business growth, employment creation and economic diversification.



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Why organisations don't change, people do

By Frieda Nangolo

Every organisation talks about change. We hear about transformation strategies, restructuring exercises, digitalisation, new policies and ambitious plans to improve performance.

Meetings are held, consultants are engaged and employees are informed about new ways of doing things.

Yet, despite the time, money and effort invested in these initiatives, some organisations eventually find themselves facing the same challenges they were trying to overcome.

Perhaps the problem is not always that organisations are unwilling to change. Perhaps it is that we sometimes misunderstand what meaningful change actually requires.

We often approach organisational transformation as though changing structures, systems and procedures will automatically change how people work.

We introduce new technologies expecting greater efficiency, revise policies hoping for improved accountability and restructure departments believing that collaboration will naturally follow.

While these interventions may be necessary, they do not guarantee that employees will think, behave or work differently.

An organisation may introduce a new performance management system, but if managers continue avoiding difficult conversations, the quality of feedback may remain unchanged.

A company may invest in advanced



Behind every organisational structure are people with established habits, beliefs, experiences and expectations.

communication platforms, but if employees are uncomfortable sharing ideas, those platforms may simply become another place where silence exists.

Similarly, an organisation may develop an impressive leadership framework, but if those in authority continue leading through fear and control, the workplace culture is unlikely to improve.

This is why I believe we need to pay closer attention to the human side of organisational change.

Behind every organisational structure are people with established habits, beliefs, experiences and expectations.

Employees develop familiar ways of performing their duties, interacting with colleagues and responding to leadership.

Over time, these behaviours become part of the organisation's culture. Changing a policy may take a few weeks, but changing behaviours that have developed over several years requires something much deeper than an announcement from management.

It would be unrealistic to suggest that employees do not resist change. Resistance is a reality in many organisations, and it

can certainly delay progress.

Some employees may be reluctant to abandon familiar practices, while others may question whether a new initiative will genuinely improve their work.

However, I believe we sometimes focus so much on those who resist change that we overlook the responsibility of organisations to support and sustain the very changes they introduce.

Consider an organisation introducing a new digital system to improve productivity. Management may view the investment as a positive step towards efficiency, while employees may worry about whether they possess the skills required to use it or how it might affect their responsibilities.

Even after receiving training, some employees may struggle to adjust and gradually return to familiar methods. In such circumstances, it is easy to blame employees for resisting change, but doing so without examining the support and follow-up provided would present an incomplete picture.

Employees also have a responsibility to participate actively in organisational change. When new systems, policies or procedures are introduced, they should make a genuine effort to understand and implement them.

If difficulties arise, seeking clarification, communicating concerns and remaining willing to learn are important parts of the process. Change cannot succeed if employees abandon new practices at the first sign of discomfort without making an effort to adapt.

At the same time, management cannot assume that its responsibility ends once employees have attended training or a new system has been introduced.

Organisational change requires continuous monitoring, feedback

and reinforcement. Leaders must pay attention to how new practices are being implemented, identify obstacles and respond to challenges before they become established problems.

If employees begin returning to old ways of working, management should not only ask why they are resisting but also examine whether the organisation has created the conditions necessary for the change to succeed.

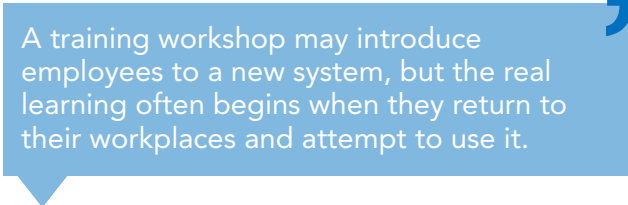
This is where the difference between introducing change and sustaining change becomes important. Introducing a new initiative may demonstrate an organisation's intention to improve, but sustaining it requires consistent effort from everyone involved.

Employees need opportunities to practise unfamiliar skills, receive feedback and gradually develop confidence in new ways of working. Management, in turn, must ensure that expectations remain clear, progress is reviewed and the necessary support is available.

Leadership plays a particularly important role in this process. Leaders cannot expect employees to embrace new behaviours while continuing to demonstrate the very practices the organisation claims to be moving away from.

If an organisation wants greater collaboration, its leaders must collaborate. If it wants accountability, leaders must demonstrate accountability. If it wants innovation, employees must be allowed to question existing practices and contribute ideas without unnecessary fear of embarrassment or punishment. Change becomes more credible when people can see it reflected in everyday leadership behaviour.

From an Organisational Learning and Development perspective, organisational



A training workshop may introduce employees to a new system, but the real learning often begins when they return to their workplaces and attempt to use it.

change should not be treated as a once-off event, but as a continuous learning process. People need time to understand new expectations, develop relevant competencies, apply what they have learned and reflect on their progress.

A training workshop may introduce employees to a new system, but the real learning often begins when they return to their workplaces and attempt to use it. Without guidance, encouragement and opportunities for improvement, the knowledge gained during training may never translate into lasting behavioural change.

There is also an important difference between compliance and commitment. Employees may follow new procedures because management requires them to, but this does not necessarily mean they understand or believe in the purpose of the change.

Genuine commitment develops when people recognise the value of what is being introduced and begin to see how it can improve their work. This is why meaningful communication and employee involvement matter.

People are more likely to contribute

positively to change when they understand its purpose and feel that their experiences and concerns are being taken seriously.

For Namibia, this conversation deserves particular attention as organisations respond to technological developments, changing workforce expectations and broader economic development priorities.

Whether in public institutions, private companies or civil society organisations, transformation requires more than adopting modern systems and ambitious strategies. It requires investing in the people responsible for turning those strategies into everyday practices, while also holding them accountable for their contribution to the process.

We must also recognise that organisational change does not depend on employees alone. Managers, executives and organisational leaders must be willing to examine their own assumptions, leadership styles and established ways of working. Sometimes the greatest obstacle to transformation is not resistance from employees, but an unwillingness among those in authority to change the behaviours that have shaped the organisation's existing culture.

