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THE BRIEF

News Worth Knowing

Vida e Caffè says Shoprite deal will not alter Namibia expansion plans

THURSDAY 03 SEPTEMBER 2026

MAIN STORY

Vida e Caffè says Shoprite deal will not alter Namibia expansion plans

Vida e Caffè says its expansion plans for Namibia remain unchanged following its acquisition by the Shoprite Group, with the coffee chain reaffirming plans to grow its footprint in the country.

The company recently opened its first Namibian outlet at Maerua Mall in Windhoek and has indicated that it is exploring additional locations as it seeks to tap into the country's growing coffee shop market.

Crucial Dates

- **Bank of Namibia Monetary Policy announcement dates:**
  * 29 October 2026
  * 10 December 2026
- **Namibia Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Mukopano**
  03 September 2026 at Windhoek Country Club Resort
- **Namibia Oil and Gas Conference**
  18–21 August 2026 in Windhoek

Vida e Caffè CEO Darren Levy exclusively told The Brief, the company would proceed with its existing expansion plans.

"The acquisition does not change Vida e Caffè's plans for Namibia and we remain committed to our existing development plans for this market," Levy said.

He said further expansion in Namibia would also create additional opportunities for local employment and skills development.

"We are delighted with the support that Vida e Caffè enjoys in Namibia, and as we continue to grow and expand, we will create more opportunities for local employment and skills development," Levy said.

The value of Shoprite's acquisition of Vida e Caffè has not been disclosed, with Levy saying the terms of the transaction remain confidential.

The transaction is also subject to regulatory approval.

Shoprite Group said the acquisition forms part of its strategy to pursue partnerships capable of opening new growth opportunities.

"Strategic partnerships play a key role in our business. That is why we are so excited to join forces with Vida e Caffè, a brand with an established presence and high levels of consumer recognition, to unlock additional growth opportunities for all parties involved," the group said.

The transaction comes as Namibia's coffee shop market attracts increased interest from regional and international brands, with several chains expanding into the country in recent years.

NaCC pushes for clearer rules on tourism deals in conservancies

Namibia's tourism sector could face clearer rules governing agreements between conservancies and private operators as competition authorities and government work to address regulatory uncertainty around exclusive tourism arrangements.

Namibian Competition Commission

(NaCC) spokesperson Dina //Gowases said the Commission is engaging the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) on developing an aligned and predictable regulatory environment for tourism businesses operating in conservancies and national parks.

The discussions follow NaCC's investigation into alleged exclusive-dealing arrangements between conservancies and private tourism operators, which has raised questions about how existing tourism and conservation arrangements interact with Namibia's competition laws.

According to //Gowases, the engagements are aimed at harmonising the legal frameworks governing the sector so that environmental conservation, economic empowerment, investment promotion and competition policy are advanced in a complementary manner.

She said regulatory intervention should recognise the importance of tourism to Namibia's economy, including its contribution to employment, foreign exchange earnings, community development and conservation.

//Gowases said some contractual arrangements may provide the investment certainty required by private tourism operators, but these arrangements must remain consistent with competition legislation.

"Although certain contractual arrangements may promote investment certainty or other policy objectives, they must remain consistent with fair competition and inclusive economic participation," she said.

She said competition law is intended to safeguard market opportunities, broaden consumer choice, encourage innovation and prevent practices that may unduly lessen, distort or restrict competition.

However, //Gowases stressed that NaCC's role is not limited to imposing penalties, but also includes supporting an environment in which industries can grow and contribute to national development while complying with competition laws.

She said NaCC and MEFT are working

towards a regulatory framework for tourism activities in conservancies and national parks that is aligned, predictable and supportive of Namibia's development priorities. The proposed approach is expected to balance conservation objectives, private investment, community benefits and competitive market participation.

According to //Gowases, NaCC will continue engaging government, tourism operators, communities and other affected stakeholders as it works towards greater legal certainty and regulatory coherence in the sector.

Your network is your net worth: The relationships that shape Namibia's opportunities

By Leena N. Shimpanda

> **"There is a quiet truth behind this reality that more Namibians are beginning to appreciate: your network is your net worth.**

In life, we rarely meet people by coincidence. The stranger sitting beside you at a training workshop in Windhoek, the lecturer you greet after class in Ongwediva, or the colleague from another ministry you meet at a professional workshop in Swakopmund may each become significant to your personal or professional journey in ways you cannot immediately anticipate.

There is a quiet truth behind this reality that more Namibians are beginning to appreciate: your network is your net worth.

Networking, however, is not about accumulating hundreds of telephone numbers or connections on LinkedIn.

It is about cultivating meaningful professional relationships, building trust and remaining connected. These relationships can open doors months or even years after an initial meeting.

The meeting that becomes an interview

Consider the experience of Ester, a professional you meet briefly at a capacity-building workshop hosted by the Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management (NIPAM) in 2022. You work for different organisations, exchange contact details and eventually lose touch.

Two years later, you see a vacancy at the Namibia Ports Authority (NAMPORT). You apply, and your name appears on the interview shortlist.

Then you remember Ester.

You contact her and remind her where you met. She remembers you. She shares insights about the organisation, its workplace culture and the competencies that may be important during the interview. She may even provide a professional recommendation.

You walk into the interview better prepared and more confident. You are eventually offered the position.

The connection did not guarantee you the job. Your qualifications and performance still mattered. But the relationship provided information, confidence and access that you might otherwise not have had.

That is the practical value of a professional network.

When the classroom becomes a career network

This principle is particularly evident in postgraduate education.

At institutions such as the University

of Namibia and the Namibia University of Science and Technology, postgraduate students in Public Administration, Education, Business and related disciplines do not simply enter a classroom to obtain a qualification. They enter a professional ecosystem.

A single classroom may bring together a teacher from Rundu, an HR practitioner from Windhoek, an entrepreneur from Katima Mulilo and a project officer from a non-governmental organisation in Keetmanshoop.

Students work together, debate ideas, share professional experiences and assist one another with assignments and research projects.

After graduation, those classmates often become more than former students. They become professional contacts, referees, research collaborators, business partners and sources of information about opportunities.

When a research project requires collaborators, when an organisation seeks a consultant, when a tender becomes available or when a training opportunity emerges, you are not necessarily starting from zero. You are starting from a relationship built on familiarity and trust.

How to build a network that is worth more than money

Building a valuable professional network requires deliberate effort.

First, show up. Attend training programmes, professional conferences, community engagements, seminars, alumni events and industry gatherings. Relationships cannot be developed if you are consistently absent from spaces where people meet.

Second, be genuine. Networking should not be reduced to asking people what they can do for you. Be interested in people, their work and their experiences. Professional relationships are more sustainable when they are based on mutual respect rather than immediate personal gain.

Third, maintain contact. A relationship should not disappear after an event ends. Check in periodically, congratulate colleagues on their achievements, share relevant information and acknowledge important milestones.

Fourth, give before you ask. Share a useful article. Introduce two professionals who could benefit from knowing one another. Offer your expertise where appropriate. A strong network grows when value flows in both directions.

Finally, stay ready. Networking creates opportunities, but opportunities favour preparation. Keep your curriculum vitae updated, maintain a professional portfolio and document your achievements. When an opportunity comes through your network, you should be ready to act.

The next time you attend a meeting and meet someone from another organisation or department, resist the temptation to simply exchange contact details and move on. Take an interest in the person. Learn what they do. Share what you do. Stay connected.

You may not know immediately why the relationship matters. A year from now, that person could provide information about an opportunity. Two years from now, they could introduce you to a potential employer, research collaborator, business partner or client.

Networking is not a substitute for competence, qualifications or hard work. Rather, it complements them by creating access to information, relationships and opportunities.

Your qualifications may get you through the door. But the relationships you build can influence how far you go once you are inside. Your network, in that sense, really is your net worth.

CSI assessment identifies jobs, poverty, basic services as key regional challenges

Poverty, unemployment and limited access to basic services have emerged as some of the most pressing social challenges facing communities across Namibia, according to a regional assessment by the Namibia Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Mukopano.

Presenting the findings at the inaugural CSI Mukopano, Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC) Chief Brand, Marketing, Communications and Sustainability Officer Tim Ekandjo said communities identified limited economic opportunities, particularly for young people, and inadequate access to essential services and infrastructure as major concerns.

The assessment identified housing, healthcare, education, sanitation, water supply and transport infrastructure among the recurring challenges across the regions.

"The first is economic opportunities. The second is access to basic social services and infrastructure," Ekandjo said.

He said livestock marketing constraints, substance abuse, violence, mental health challenges, malnutrition and school dropouts were also identified as social issues requiring intervention.

In some regions, poor roads, inadequate bridges and limited communication infrastructure continue to restrict access to essential services and constrain economic participation.

The assessment also found disparities in access to healthcare, with some communities travelling long distances to reach health facilities. Poor road infrastructure further restricts access in areas affected by flooding.

Education emerged as another major concern, with communities highlighting school dropouts, teenage pregnancies, classroom shortages and inadequate education infrastructure.

Ekandjo said communities also called for increased investment in vocational education, skills development and training to improve employment prospects, particularly among young people.

Agriculture-dependent communities identified limited market access, shortages of agricultural inputs, inadequate water infrastructure and insufficient extension services among the constraints affecting livelihoods. The assessment also highlighted the need for greater support for local businesses, entrepreneurs and community-based enterprises to create employment and strengthen regional economies.

“Communities also identified poor roads, inadequate transport infrastructure and limited economic opportunities for young people as major challenges,” Ekandjo said.

He said that although some regions are heavily dependent on agriculture, only a small proportion of residents are formally employed in the sector, leaving young people with limited employment and income-generating opportunities.

“Water access, infrastructure and education were also raised as areas requiring greater attention,” he said.

According to Ekandjo, the findings strengthen the case for corporate social investment to move beyond general sponsorships and target specific development challenges identified by communities.

The assessment recommends greater coordination between government, businesses, communities and development partners to pool resources, reduce duplication and direct investment towards interventions capable of delivering measurable and sustainable impact.

Namibians added N$438.7m more debt in July to buy houses and cars

Namibian households added N$438.7 million in debt in July, driven largely by increased borrowing for houses and vehicles, as household credit continued its strongest run of annual growth in nearly three years.

Total credit extended to individuals increased by 0.6% month-on-month to N$72.74 billion, while annual household credit growth accelerated to 4.6% from 4.5% in June, according to IJG Securities.

Mortgage lending accounted for the largest share of the additional borrowing, with household mortgage balances rising by N$238.5 million, or 0.5%, during the month to N$47.12 billion.

Annual mortgage credit growth accelerated to 2.4%, its fastest pace since December 2023, pointing to increased borrowing for residential property.

Vehicle and asset finance also increased, with instalment sale and leasing credit rising by N$88.2 million, or 0.9%, to N$9.69 billion.

Annual growth in the category remained elevated at 14.6%, despite easing slightly from 14.8% in June, with IJG saying the figures continued to indicate resilient demand for vehicle and asset finance.

"Household credit growth accelerated further to 4.6% YoY from 4.5% YoY in June, extending the strongest run of annual expansion since August 2023," IJG said.

Households also took on an additional N$108.1 million in other loans and advances, pushing the total to N$13.39 billion. Annual growth in the category increased to 5% from 4.9% in June.

Overdraft balances increased marginally by N$4 million, or 0.2%, to N$2.54 billion, although annual growth slowed sharply to 8.9% from 12.5% in June.

The increase in household borrowing contrasted with weaker demand for credit from businesses. Corporate credit declined by N$778.7 million, or 1.5%, during July to N$52.41 billion, with annual growth slowing to 3.7% from 4.5% in June.

IJG, citing the Bank of Namibia, said the slowdown reflected lower credit uptake and net repayments by businesses in manufacturing, fishing, agriculture, wholesale and retail trade, financial services, and the energy, oil and petroleum sectors.

Corporate other loans and advances fell by N$1.79 billion, or 8.5%, to N$19.25 billion, while overdraft balances declined by N$212.4 million, or 2%, to N$10.24 billion.

Corporate mortgage lending bucked the trend, increasing by N$1.20 billion, or 9.2%, to N$14.23 billion. Annual growth accelerated to 6.5%, the strongest pace since September 2022.

The decline in corporate borrowing outweighed increased household credit uptake, resulting in overall private sector credit extension growth slowing to 4.2% year-on-year in July from 4.5% in June.

Total claims on the private sector declined by N$340 million, or 0.3%, to N$125.14 billion, marking the first monthly contraction since October 2025.

You only ever deserved a Styrofoam Cup On perks, titles, and the day the ceramic cup goes to someone else

By Paulo Coelho

There's a story Simon Sinek tells in Leaders Eat Last that I just can't shake.

A former Under Secretary of Defense gets invited to speak at a big conference.

Halfway through his speech, he pauses, takes a sip of coffee from the Styrofoam cup he carried on stage, looks down at it, and smiles. Then he goes completely off script.

"You know, I spoke at this exact conference last year. But last year, I was still the Under Secretary. They flew me in business class. Someone was waiting for me at the airport. I was driven to my hotel, already checked in.

The next morning, someone was in the lobby to bring me to this very venue. I was walked through the back entrance, into the green room, and handed coffee in a beautiful ceramic cup.

"This year? Economy. I took a taxi. I found my own way backstage. And when I asked for coffee, someone pointed me to the machine in the corner, where I poured myself this styrofoam cup."

And then he dropped the line that should be framed in every corner office:

"The ceramic cup was never meant for me. It was meant for the position I held. I deserve a styrofoam cup."

The Perks Are Rented, Not Owned

Let's be honest with ourselves for a minute. The business-class seat, the reserved parking bay, the "Sir" and "Ma'am," the calls that get returned within the hour, the doors that swing open before you even touch them. None of it is yours.

> **"Harvard Business Review has written about how tying yourself too tightly to your career sets you up for a proper identity crisis the moment you burn out, get retrenched, or retire.**

It's all on loan. Issued to the position, not the person. The day you vacate that seat, the whole package gets handed to whoever replaces you, ceramic cup and all. They won't even wash it first.

We know this in our heads. But somewhere along the way, our hearts forget.

We start believing the deference is about us. That people laugh at our jokes because we're hilarious, and not because we sign their leave forms. And that belief is a slow poison, because it welds our identity to something we never actually owned.

Psychologists even have a word for it:

enmeshment. It's what happens when the line between who you are and what you do disappears completely.

Harvard Business Review has written about how tying yourself too tightly to your career sets you up for a proper identity crisis the moment you burn out, get retrenched, or retire.

And research on executives who lose their roles shows that people whose identity was built on title and authority struggle far more than those whose identity was built on contribution and purpose. Rebuilding a sense of self after that kind of loss can take up to two years of hard inner work.

Two years. To recover from losing something that was never yours in the first place. Sit with that one.

For Those of Us Climbing

Now, don't get me wrong. Enjoy the perks. Properly. Drink from the ceramic cup while it's in your hand. Pretending the nice hotel isn't nice is just false modesty, and nobody's buying it.

Just don't confuse the treatment for love, or the access for friendship. Keep a quiet little inventory of what's actually yours: your skills, your character, your relationships, how you treat people, the work itself. Those travel with you wherever you go. The parking bay stays behind.

Here's a simple test. If the title vanished tomorrow, what would be left standing? If that question makes you shift in your seat, that's not a career problem. That's homework.

For Those of Us Managing

And this is where it gets spicy for leaders, because the ceramic cup test cuts both ways.

Watch how your organisation treats people without titles. The intern. The contractor. The retired colleague who pops in to say hello. The executive who was just "restructured." That right there is your actual culture. Not the values poster in reception. Not the fancy vision statement.

The styrofoam cup moments are where an organisation tells the truth about itself, whether it wants to or not.

Think about it. The former Under Secretary was the same man both years.

Same experience, same insight, same speech. Only the title changed, and with it, the entire quality of his welcome.

If your respect for someone evaporates the moment their signature loses its power, then it was never respect. It was a transaction wearing respect's jacket.

Leaders who truly get this treat the cleaner and the chairman with the same basic dignity. Not just because it's noble, though it is.

But because they understand the cups get reassigned. Everyone in the building is one reshuffle away from styrofoam. Yes, including you. Especially you.

The Freedom in the Styrofoam

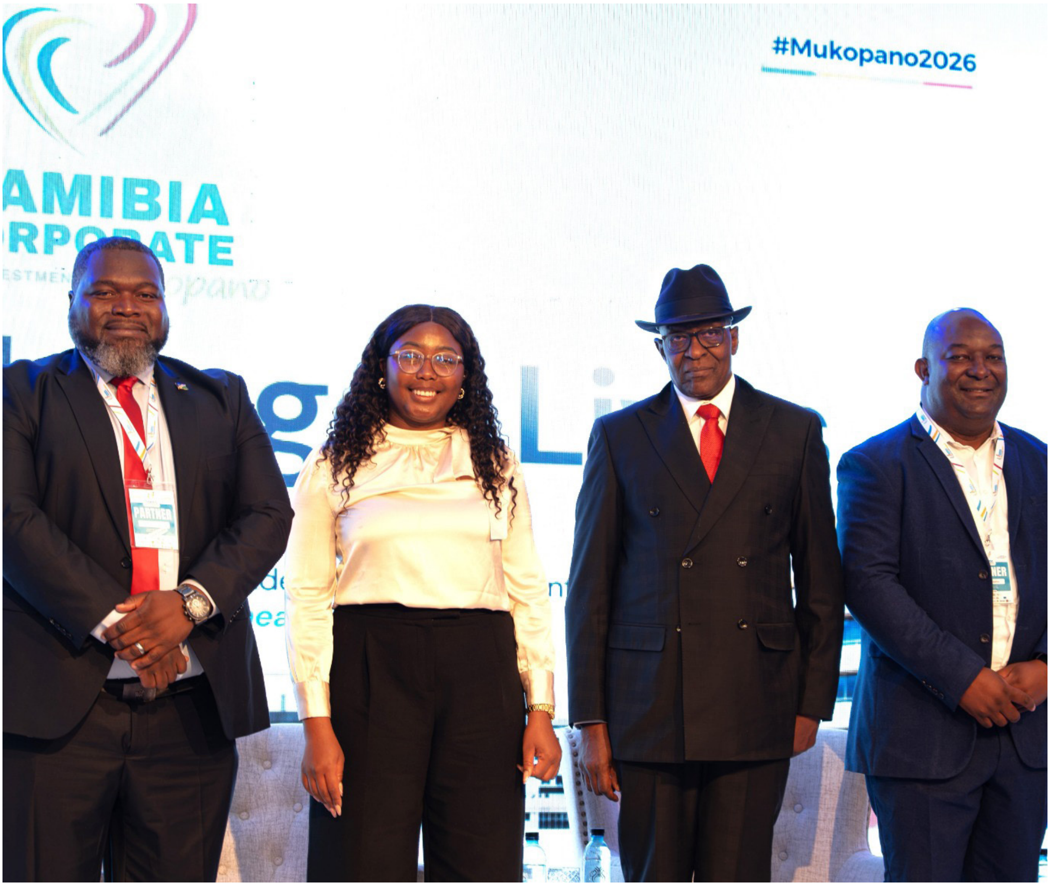
And here's the part nobody tells you: accepting that you only ever deserved a styrofoam cup isn't humiliating. It's liberating.

When your worth isn't rented from your title, nobody can repossess it. No restructure can retrench it. No successor can inherit it. You're free to do the work because the work matters, to treat people well because that's simply who you are, and to walk out of any building, front door or back, as exactly the same person who walked in.

The ceramic cup will come, and the ceramic cup will go.

Just make sure the hand holding it stays steady either way.

Inspired by Simon Sinek’s "Leaders Eat Last."



Nandi-Ndaitwah urges companies to shift CSI from donations to development

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has called on Namibian companies to move beyond symbolic donations and use Corporate Social Investment (CSI) as a tool to address unemployment, poverty, skills shortages and other development challenges. Speaking through National Planning Commission Director General Kaire Mbuende at the inaugural Namibia CSI Mukopano in Windhoek, Nandi-Ndaitwah said corporate investment should be measured by its long-term impact on communities rather than the size of donations or the publicity they generate.

"Corporate Namibia must ensure that CSI goes beyond symbolic contributions and becomes a meaningful driver of social and economic transformation," she said.

The President said profitable and well-managed businesses remain critical to economic growth and employment creation, but companies also have a responsibility towards the communities that contribute to their success.

"CSI should not be viewed as a public relations exercise or simply a compliance requirement, but rather as a genuine investment in society," Nandi-Ndaitwah said.

She said effective corporate investment should improve education and healthcare, empower young people, strengthen families and create opportunities for communities to become more self-reliant.

Nandi-Ndaitwah called for CSI and Corporate Social Responsibility programmes to be aligned with Namibia's broader development priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 and national development plans.

She also called for stronger partnerships between government, businesses and communities to expand economic and social opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

The President acknowledged existing private-sector investments but said companies should deepen their contribution to national development to ensure economic progress reaches more Namibians.

Speaking on behalf of the CSI Mukopano partners, MTC Chief Brand, Marketing, Communications and Sustainability Officer Tim Ekandjo said seven national priority areas had been identified for coordinated corporate investment.

These are youth employment and skills development, education and learner support, water, sanitation and basic services, health and social wellbeing, food security and agriculture, enterprise and local economic development, and infrastructure and connectivity.

"We have identified seven national CSI priority areas for greater impact," Ekandjo said.

He said the initiative will now develop a national CSI Response Action Plan, identify priority projects, mobilise funding, expand corporate participation, implement projects and report annually on their impact.

The inaugural Namibia CSI Mukopano brings together government, the private sector, civil society, development partners and social impact organisations to coordinate corporate investment towards national development priorities.

The initiative is targeting challenges including income inequality, youth unemployment, skills mismatches, regional poverty, gender disparities, climate vulnerability and water scarcity.

Nedbank launches 30-person funeral cover including extended family, domestic workers

Nedbank Insurance Namibia has launched a funeral insurance product that allows a single policyholder to cover up to 30 people, including immediate and extended family members as well as domestic workers.

The new MyCover Funeral product extends cover beyond the traditional nuclear family to relatives such as cousins, aunts and uncles, as the insurer targets broader family structures common in Namibia.

Nedbank Insurance Executive Biniam Ghirmatsion said the product was developed specifically for the Namibian market following input from clients, advisers and business partners.

"MyCover Funeral provides greater flexibility and broader family coverage than many traditional funeral products. The objective is to provide comprehensive, relevant and affordable funeral cover that meets the realities of modern Namibian families," Ghirmatsion said.

Policyholders can select different benefit structures and payment options based on their circumstances, while the product also provides for potential premium-free months and an optional cashback benefit.

It also offers flexibility around missed premium payments, subject to applicable policy terms.

Nedbank Insurance Namibia Head of Client Solutions Allan Johnson said the product responds to demand for insurance solutions that better reflect the composition of Namibian households.

"MyCover Funeral reflects our desire to make insurance simpler, more accessible and more responsive to the needs of the

> Policyholders can select different benefit structures and payment options based on their circumstances, while the product also provides for potential premium-free months and an optional cashback benefit.

families and communities we serve," Johnson said.

The product is the first to be rolled out through Nedbank Insurance Namibia's new policy administration platform, developed as part of a business transformation programme that started in 2024.

Nedbank Insurance Chairperson Koos du Toit said the company invested in the new policy administration system and digital capabilities to improve operations and support the development of new insurance products.

"We recognised that to compete effectively in a rapidly changing environment, we needed modern infrastructure that supports innovation, scalability and efficiency," Du Toit said.

The launch also coincides with the insurance business adopting Nedbank Insurance Namibia as its new trading name.

Ghirmatsion said the new platform will allow the insurer to improve policy servicing and communication with clients and advisers while providing greater flexibility to develop new products.

"The system gives us capabilities we have not had before. It enables faster service experiences and gives us greater flexibility in product development," he said.

Nedbank Insurance Namibia plans to use the platform to expand its insurance offering in response to changing customer needs and market conditions.

Beyond 6th Grain: Namibia Has Alternatives for AI-Driven Agriculture

By Oswald Siku Mughongora

Namibia's termination of the approximately US$2.4 million agreement with American technology company 6th Grain Corporation should not be interpreted as a retreat from artificial intelligence, satellite technology or the digitalisation of agriculture.

Rather, it presents Namibia with an opportunity to ask a more important question: must the country import an expensive, fully packaged agricultural intelligence system when more affordable, farmer-centred alternatives can be introduced, tested and adapted locally?

The terminated agreement was intended to use artificial intelligence, satellite imagery and remote sensing to monitor Namibia's major food crops. It envisaged cultivation maps, yield predictions, drought-risk assessments, geo-tagged farmer surveys and skills transfer to the Ministry responsible for agriculture.

These capabilities remain important. The contract may have been terminated, but the need it sought to address has not disappeared. Namibia still needs reliable information on what is being planted, where production is taking place, how crops are performing, what yields can be expected and where drought and other production risks are emerging.

But government is not the only user who needs agricultural intelligence. The farmer needs it too.

This is where the conversation about alternatives becomes important.

> "A farmer does not necessarily need to understand remote-sensing algorithms or vegetation indices.

SAT2FARM: bringing satellite intelligence to the farmer

One emerging alternative is SAT2FARM, a satellite-powered digital farming technology introduced and currently being piloted in Namibia by M&M Integrated Agribusiness in partnership with an international technology company.

Its approach is fundamentally farmer-centred.

Instead of beginning with the question of how government can observe agriculture from above, SAT2FARM begins with the farmer and asks: what information does a farmer need to make a better production decision today?

Through the technology, participating farmers can digitally map their production areas and access services such as crop-health monitoring, soil-health assessment, soil-moisture monitoring, pest and disease forewarning, weather forecasts and alerts, irrigation advisory, crop calendars and image-based agricultural advice.

This translates sophisticated satellite and digital information into practical farming questions.

Does my crop need water? Is part of the field under stress? Is there an emerging pest or disease risk? What does the weather forecast mean for my production activities? When should I irrigate?

A farmer does not necessarily need to understand remote-sensing algorithms or vegetation indices. The farmer needs to know what the information means and what action to take. That is where digital agriculture becomes useful.

A cheaper, more accessible model

The economics deserve equal attention.

One lesson Namibia should take from the 6th Grain experience is the need to distinguish between paying for satellite data and paying for the capability to turn that data into useful agricultural intelligence.

Large quantities of Earth-observation data are already accessible through global and African infrastructure. The European Union's Copernicus programme, for example, provides Sentinel satellite data, while Digital Earth Africa provides analysis-ready Earth-observation information across the continent.

Namibia therefore does not need to own satellites or necessarily procure expensive proprietary systems to benefit from satellite agriculture.

SAT2FARM demonstrates a potentially cheaper and more accessible model: utilise existing satellite and digital infrastructure, convert the resulting intelligence into practical agricultural services and deliver it directly to the farmer.

Affordability matters because it determines scalability.

A sophisticated agricultural intelligence system that exists primarily at central-government level has value. But a comparatively affordable technology that can progressively reach irrigation schemes, smallholders, cooperatives and commercially driven farmers creates another pathway—one in which agricultural digitalisation can expand farm by farm.

Technology must be accompanied by knowledge

SAT2FARM is also not simply an application placed in the hands of a farmer. The pilot combines the technology with farmer onboarding, training, interpretation of satellite-derived reports and recommendations, and continuing technical and agricultural support.

This distinction is important.

A soil-moisture indicator has little value if the farmer cannot interpret it. A satellite observation showing declining crop health has limited value if nobody can translate that observation into an appropriate response. An early warning becomes valuable only when it enables earlier action.

The real transfer of technology occurs when data becomes information, information becomes knowledge, and knowledge changes a farming decision.

Namibia should therefore measure agricultural digitalisation not by how sophisticated a platform appears, but by whether farmers use the information to reduce risks, improve productivity and ultimately improve farm profitability.

From farmer intelligence to national intelligence

The SAT2FARM approach also presents a longer-term opportunity.

Imagine hundreds and eventually thousands of farms digitally mapped across Namibia. Satellites provide information from above. Farmers provide observations from the ground. Crop health and soil moisture are monitored. Weather information supports planning, while field observations and images help verify what satellite systems are detecting.

At individual level, this produces

intelligence for the farmer. But appropriately anonymised and aggregated, information across participating farms could potentially contribute to a broader understanding of agricultural conditions at regional and national level. Agricultural intelligence could therefore develop simultaneously in two directions:

Satellite → Farmer → Better Decisions

A+nd

Farm Data → Aggregated Intelligence → Better Agricultural Planning

This is particularly important because satellites cannot tell us everything.

A satellite may detect declining crop health, but determining whether the cause is water stress, disease, pests, nutrient deficiency or another production problem often requires information from the ground. The farmer therefore becomes more than a recipient of agricultural intelligence. The farmer becomes part of the intelligence system.

An opportunity for Namibia's irrigation schemes

The technology could be particularly relevant to Namibia's government-owned irrigation schemes.

Irrigated agriculture involves significant public investment in land, water, infrastructure, equipment and production. Improving the efficiency with which these assets are managed should therefore be a national priority.

Satellite-supported soil-moisture information and irrigation advisory can potentially contribute to better water-management decisions. Crop-health monitoring can help identify areas requiring attention earlier. Weather intelligence can improve operational planning, while digital mapping provides another layer through which production performance can be observed.

The same applies to commercially driven private farmers, where small improvements in irrigation efficiency, early detection of crop stress or better timing of interventions can translate directly into reduced costs, avoided losses and improved profitability.

The value proposition is therefore straightforward: better information should lead to better decisions, and better decisions should ultimately lead to better agricultural performance.

Data sovereignty still matters

The controversy surrounding the terminated 6th Grain agreement also raised an important issue that should apply equally to local and international technology providers: agricultural data sovereignty. Information about where food is produced, what crops are planted, expected production, drought vulnerability and the condition of agricultural land has strategic economic and food-security value.

Namibia therefore needs clear rules governing who owns farmer data, where it is stored, who can access it, how aggregated information can be used and what happens to information when a farmer leaves a digital platform.

Local participation creates an opportunity for greater national control, but local involvement alone does not guarantee data sovereignty. Data sovereignty must be designed into the system.

Pilot, validate and scale

The termination of the 6th Grain agreement provides Namibia with an opportunity to consider a different approach to agricultural technology investment: pilot, validate and scale.

SAT2FARM is already being piloted by M&M Integrated Agribusiness with its international technology partner. The immediate opportunity is therefore not to make grand claims about what the technology could achieve nationally, but to generate evidence under actual Namibian farming conditions.

Does soil-moisture monitoring improve irrigation decisions? Does crop-health monitoring identify problems earlier? Do pest and disease warnings reduce losses? Does digital advisory improve decision-making? Is the technology affordable? And, ultimately, does it improve productivity, resilience and profitability?

If the evidence demonstrates value, deployment can progressively expand. This approach is potentially less risky and more cost-effective than beginning with another multimillion-dollar national technology procurement.

Build capability, not another dependency

Namibia should resist the temptation to view the termination of the 6th Grain agreement simply as a procurement problem requiring another foreign technology provider.

The bigger opportunity is to build an agricultural intelligence ecosystem.

Government can establish standards and data-governance rules. Universities and researchers can contribute independent validation and research. International and African infrastructure can provide Earth-observation data. Extension officers can contribute agricultural expertise. Farmers can provide ground-level observations. Namibian agribusinesses can introduce, adapt and support technologies in partnership with international technology companies where specialised capabilities are required.

SAT2FARM does not have to replace everything envisaged under the 6th Grain agreement. Its significance is that it demonstrates another model: international technology, locally introduced and piloted, comparatively cheaper, and centred on the farmer.

Namibia does not need technological isolation, nor should it accept technological dependency. It needs technological capability.

The question following the termination of the US$2.4 million agreement should therefore not simply be which company should replace 6th Grain?

It should be: what can Namibia build differently?

SAT2FARM suggests that part of the answer may already be taking shape—using global technology, building local capability and putting agricultural intelligence where it can have the greatest immediate impact: in the hands of the Namibian farmer.

Call to action: Put SAT2FARM to the test

M&M Integrated Agribusiness is inviting government-owned irrigation schemes and commercially driven private farmers in Namibia to participate in the testing and piloting of SAT2FARM under real production conditions.

If you operate or manage an irrigation scheme or commercial farming enterprise and are interested in testing how satellite-powered crop monitoring, soil-moisture intelligence, irrigation advisory, weather information and early-warning capabilities can support your production decisions, contact M&M Integrated Agribusiness at Info@mmagribusiness.com.

The technology is available. Let us test it on Namibian farms, measure the results, and allow the evidence to determine its potential.

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CSI Mukopano draws 80 requests for 28 presentation slots

The inaugural Namibia Corporate Social Investment (CSI) Mukopano attracted requests from 80 organisations seeking to showcase their social investment programmes, more than double the 28 presentations organisers were able to accommodate.

Swakop Uranium Executive Vice President Irvinne Simataa said the level of interest highlights growing corporate and institutional participation in social investment, but also points to the need for greater coordination to avoid duplication and fragmented interventions.

“It is important to announce that we received 80 requests from organisations wishing to showcase their products and initiatives at today's gathering. However, owing to time constraints, we were only able to accommodate 28 presentations,” Simataa said.

“The level of interest demonstrates the importance of this event and the commitment that exists among stakeholders to contribute to social development in Namibia.”

The CSI Mukopano brings together businesses, foundations, government, non-governmental organisations, civil society and development partners to coordinate social investment and develop partnerships around Namibia's development priorities.

Simataa said Namibia has no shortage

Our ambition is to align social investment programmes more deliberately with Namibia's national development priorities, particularly the ambitions of the National Development Plans.

of organisations investing in communities, but many initiatives remain isolated, limiting their potential impact.

He said the platform aims to shift corporate social investment towards coordinated programmes aligned with Namibia's National Development Plans, particularly priorities around poverty reduction, employment and wealth creation, inequality, human development, resilience, environmental protection, governance and service delivery.

"Our ambition is to align social investment programmes more deliberately with Namibia's national development priorities, particularly the ambitions of the National Development Plans," he said. Simataa said the initiative also wants to increase the number of organisations contributing to CSI while ensuring investments are sustainable and deliver long-term benefits.

He called on companies to move beyond scholarships and short-term interventions towards programmes that develop skills, create sustainable livelihoods and produce measurable improvements in communities.

"Every investment should empower people, build capabilities, create sustainable livelihoods, provide young people with the necessary skills and deliver measurable improvements in people's lives," he said.

Simataa said businesses can contribute more than funding, including technology, infrastructure, networks, market access, technical skills and management expertise.

"When these capabilities are combined with financial resources, they can produce a much greater impact in communities and address their needs more effectively," he said.

He said the effectiveness of CSI programmes should ultimately be measured by outcomes rather than expenditure, including improved access to education and essential services, stronger livelihoods, greater community resilience and expanded economic opportunities.


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