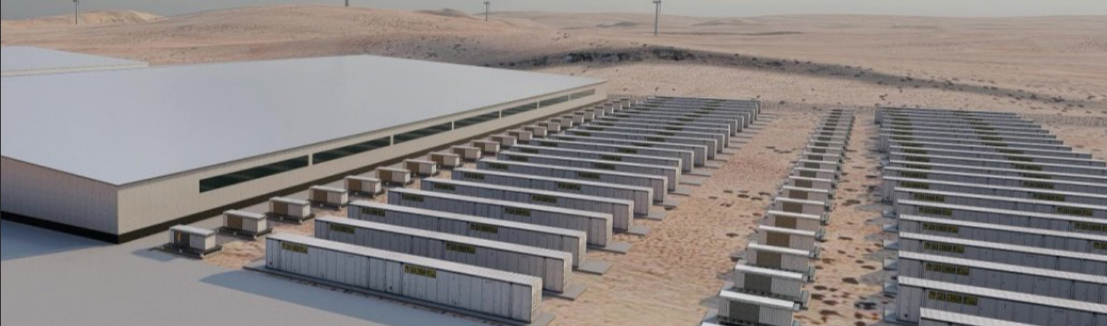


Green Hydrogen Programme struggles to pay salaries amid funding crisis



• TIRI MASAWI
The Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme is struggling to pay its staff as severe funding challenges threaten its future.
 Since its launch in 2023, the programme has primarily relied on grants from development partners, including N\$800 million (around €40 million) from Germany's Federal Ministry of Education and Research, and additional support from the Dutch Government through Invest International. These funds supported pilot plants, schol-

The president calls the situation "unfortunate"



arships, Namibia's first green hydrogen bus, and the development of a national green hydrogen strategy.
 Now, as the initial German grant lapses and no government funding has been committed, the programme is struggling to cover operational costs, including salaries, leaving staff and operations in a precarious position.
 Presidential Press Secretary Jonas Mbambo told the *Namibia Business Review* that the government has not yet decided how-or-if it will fund the programme beyond its initial grant.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2



N\$200b Trans-Kalahari railway project finally on track after 16 years



• IMELDAAMBONDO
For more than a decade, the Trans-Kalahari Railway project has been a dream on paper, discussed at summits, debated in meetings, and mapped out on PowerPoints.
 Now, after 16 years, the 1 690-kilometre railway linking Botswana's Mmamabula coalfields to Namibia's Port of Walvis Bay appears to be shifting from plan to reality. The project is estimated to be worth about N\$200 billion (US\$11 billion).
 Documents from the third Financial Summit in Luanda, Ango-

la, held from 28 to 31 October 2025, and from the Railway Meetings in Windhoek from 15 to 17 September 2025, show that both the Namibia and Botswana governments say the long-delayed mega project is on time and on budget.
 Trans-Kalahari Railway Project Coordinator Cynthia Haimbodi last month said that in terms of the approved roadmap, the development phase is scheduled for May 2027.
 "The railway will mark a new chapter in southern Africa's infrastructure story and give Botswana a long-sought gateway to the sea," she said.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2



JINGLE BELLS



Windhoek residents are already feeling the festive mood as shopping malls display Christmas trees. At Wernhill shopping mall, shops are already dressing their goods with Christmas lights in anticipation of a bumper shopping season ahead of Christmas.
 A gigantic christmas tree has already been erected in front of the Model shop in the popular shopping mall.

INSIDE THIS WEEK:

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Learners urged to pursue fields in high labour-market demand

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Dangote ignites intra Africa trade growth with Walvis-Harare pipeline

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Green Hydrogen Programme struggles to pay salaries amid funding crisis



> Jonas Mbambo

"Her Excellency the President is aware of the situation, and it is indeed very unfortunate.

At this stage, no decision has been taken on whether the government will take over the funding of the programme," he said. Mbambo said the government is currently managing several competing priorities across different sectors.

"But this does not in any way diminish the importance of the Green Hydrogen Programme to our national development agenda," he said.

The programme currently employs nine senior staff, following the departures of its former green hydrogen commissioner James Mnyupe, and Legal Manager Services Roswitha Gomachas earlier this month, along with six additional non-managerial staff.

Mbambo said "The President will consult the relevant stakeholders to determine the most appropriate way forward. We appreciate your patience and understanding as these discussions progress."

When asked whether the treasury might step in, Ministry of Finance Executive Director Michael Humavindu referred questions to the programme itself.

POWER POLITICS AT PLAY

A source close to the programme said political support has waned under the new administration.

"Since the new administration came in there has not been enough political will to support the programme. It is also worsened by the fact that most of the people that are supposed to be prioritising the programme are not big fans of green hydrogen," the source said.

"Some of the Executive Directors have been reluctant to understand how the programme operates and have not been welcoming to learn about the green hydrogen industry. This has been a challenge because they are not willing to brief the president properly on the benefits of the programme, the industry. They are also not keen to know more about the industry," the source added.

Programme spokesperson Jona Musheko could neither confirm nor deny the financial struggles but emphasised the initiative's importance:

"The programme was established by the government to support the development of the green hydrogen industry. Through this mandate, the programme engages all stakeholders in the hydrogen industry and plays a facilitation role," he said,

Given the significance and critical role the sector plays in socioeconomic development, Musheko said the role and sustainability of the programme is central to the industry's potential.

"Therefore, the programme cannot be seen independently of the sector it serves. Since 2023, operations have been primarily funded through development partners, including the Dutch Government via Invest International," he said.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Martha Haiping, a governance practitioner with the United Nations in Zambia and PhD candidate at the University of Namibia, warned that the programme's lack of formal integration into Namibia's governance framework leaves it vulnerable.

Writing in a column in The Namibia Business Review Haiping whose interest focuses on public-sector governance and institutional reform said the green hydrogen programme sits at the intersection of energy, investment, environment, and diplomacy, yet, somehow, belonged completely to none.

"When an initiative floats between ministries without a legally defined home, clear budget line, or dedicated implementing agency, its continuity depends on personalities. Once those personalities move on, coordination stalls. That is not a failure of talent/skills; it is a failure of structure," she said

She said if processes were done right, a well-institutionalised green hydrogen programme would have a statutory or cabinet-approved framework setting out mandates and accountability lines, technical and policy units nested in relevant ministries and integration into national planning instruments and budget processes.

"The absence of that would expose any programme to political transitions no matter how visionary. This is what we are currently witnessing.

"The suggestion that no senior leader has matched the departing head's fluency in finance, policy, or global diplomacy is not only speculative, but it also risks insulting a capable nation. Namibia has produced leaders, scientists, and negotiators who have represented it competently across sectors both national and at global stage. To imply that one individual's exit equates to the loss of national intellect is to understate our institutional potential," she said. **NBR**

N\$200b Trans-Kalahari railway project finally on track after 16 years



The path to this point has been long and bureaucratic. The first pre-feasibility study, led by Canada's CPCS Transcom Limited, ran from 2009 to 2011. It was followed by a Memorandum of Understanding in 2010, a Bilateral Agreement in 2014, and the creation of a Project Management Office later that year.

Momentum returned in February 2025, when officials met in Swakopmund to approve a new roadmap. A month later, CPCS signed a N\$29.6 million (US\$1.65 million) contract for the full feasibility study. Work began in April 2025 and is set to wrap up in April 2026.

Two key milestones have already been reached: the Inception Report in June and the Needs and Solutions Report in August 2025. Two design options are being considered: Standard Gauge and Cape Gauge. Officials say Cape Gauge allows for the re-use of 1 100 kilometres of existing track, cutting construction costs by about 7% and ensuring regional compatibility. Documents presented by the Trans-Kalahari Railway Project Management Office at the Luanda Infrastructure Summit in October 2025 state, "Cape Gauge keeps us connected to SADC and lowers long-term risk."

The documents further say once the feasibility study concludes in April 2026, the next phase will be a Request for Proposals from April to September 2026, followed by evaluation and contract awards through April 2027. Construction is expected to begin in May 2027 under a Public-Private Partnership.

Coal production will anchor the railway's early traffic. Namibia's Dordabis Mine exports four million tonnes annually, while Jindal Africa's Khomas Project, expected to start production in the third quarter of 2025, will add another seven million tonnes per year. Botswana's idle Ikongwe Mine could also reopen once the railway lowers logistics costs.

The two governments expect the line to carry fuel, cement, and container cargo through Walvis Bay, cutting transport times and reducing the region's dependence on South Africa's congested corridors. The project also includes a port upgrade, dredging, and a new conveyor-belt terminal.

Spending remains within the N\$29.6 million (USD 1.65 million) feasibility budget. Both governments say construction and long-term operations will be financed by private investors, backed by

state guarantees. If the timeline holds, the feasibility report will be complete by April 2026, a developer will be selected by April 2027, and the first tracks will be laid by May 2027.

MORE THAN JUST A RAILWAY

Speaking at the project's joint ministerial committee meeting in Maun in October, Namibia's Minister of Works and Transport Veikko Nekundi, said the project is a strategic instrument that will unlock regional trade, create jobs, and stimulate investment across Namibia, Botswana and beyond.

The Namibian minister confirmed that feasibility studies are progressing and the bilateral cooperation remains strong.

He said joint committees are meeting regularly, key deliverables achieved timely, while environmental concerns are central to planning.

"Our practical implementation phase must be structured to have minimal environmental damage, if any at all. Let us remain committed to delivering this project through a transparent Public-Private Partnership that brings value to our nations," Nekundi said.

Speaking at the same event, Botswana's Transport and Infrastructure Minister, Noah Salakae, said the broader significance of the project promises more than a railway line. "It promises faster, more efficient trade. It promises new jobs and new skills," he said.

He added that "We must explore innovative financing, blending public, private, and development capital to bring TKR to life."

Salakae said the TKR should be used to develop "new towns, industrial clusters, agro-processing hubs, and service centres" along the route. Salakae added that the vision includes the potential creation of a Kalahari City, which could "anchor development, attract investment, and become a symbol of what Botswana and Namibia can achieve when we dream boldly and act decisively."

Both countries stressed the importance of harmonising the TKR with the existing Trans Kalahari Corridor (road) to create a unified multimodal transport network. Salakae described this integration as essential to "offering traders and investors a seamless logistics platform.

The two ministers emphasised the need for innovative funding models. "We must explore innovative financing, blending public, private, and development capital to bring TKR to life," Salakae said. **NBR**

• IMELDAAMBONDO

The acting Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy Frans Kapofi, is expected to make a decision on whether to lift or continue the moratorium on issuing of new renewable energy export licences.

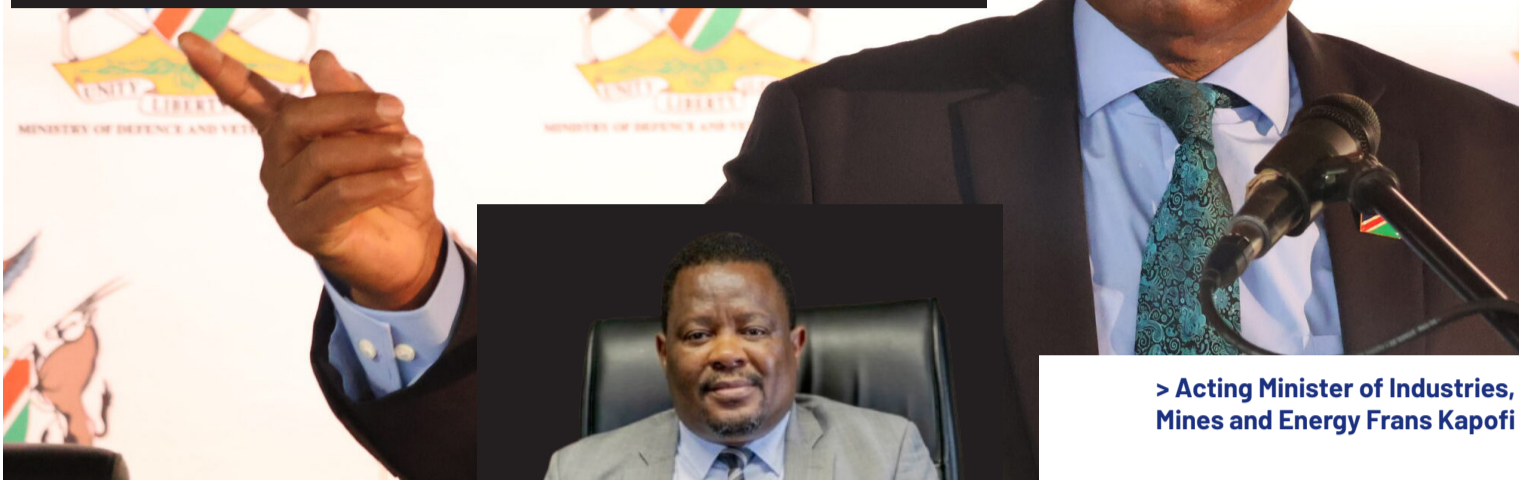
The Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy suspended the issuance of new independent power generation meant for export to improve domestic electricity supply in March.

Electricity Control Board (ECB) Chief Executive Officer Robert Kahimise told *Namibia Business Review* last week that they have written to the minister recommending the continuation of the moratorium.

The suspension was put in place because of limited transmission capacity in Namibia and on interconnectors to neighbouring countries.

Kahimise said the moratorium, which came into effect on 5 March, was set for 18 months while NamPower conducts

Kapofi holds the power switch on renewable licenses



> Acting Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy Frans Kapofi

Currently, licensed exporters working with reduced capacity are actively implementing their existing export projects"

> Robert Kahimise



studies and engages other national utilities to address the transmission constraints.

"The Electricity Control Board has reduced the licensed export capacity for renewable energy exporters to a combined total capacity of 112MW because of transmission limitations beyond Namibia's borders," said Kahimise.

Kahimise said this reduction has informed the Minister of Industries, Mines, and Energy's decision to impose a moratorium on issuing licenses for new intermittent renewable energy projects which ended on 4 September 2025.

"A subsequent recommendation to extend (the moratorium) was made to the minister due to the same constraints. The ECB awaits the minister's decision to this effect," Kahimise said.

According to Kahimise, while the general pause affects intermittent renewable energy export, exporters with battery storage may still be considered for licensing.

"Currently, licensed exporters working with reduced capacity are actively implementing their existing export projects," he said.

He also said that licensed exporters, operating with reduced capacity, are actively implementing their existing export projects.

Earlier in the year, the ECB mentioned the limited capacity on the interconnectors connecting Namibia with Zambia and South Africa as the key reason for the moratorium.

In March, The Namibian reported that the ECB expected Namibia to meet local demand through the National Integrated Resource Plan .

Namibia also adopted the Modified Single Buyer (MSB) model that allows transmission connected customers in Namibia, such as mines and regional electricity distributors. This is to obtain up to 30% of their energy requirements from independent power producers (IPPs) licensed in Namibia. This reduces the reliance on NamPower and limits imports accordingly.

Kahimise said IPPs are licensed to generate and export 1 262.82 MW, of which 586 MW will be generated by a thermal plant.

Questions sent to the Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy Kapofi were not responded to. **NBR**



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Ballotti calls for PayPal to boost income for creators

• IMELDAAMBONDO

Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, Dino Ballotti has encouraged the Bank of Namibia to work towards enabling digital payment systems such as PayPal and Apple Pay to allow Namibian creatives to monetise their work globally.

He said Namibia is witnessing a renewed focus on creativity and sport as two engines for youth empowerment and economic growth.

“When we get this component right, we will see a generation of self-employed young Namibians creating, exporting, and contributing to GDP,” Ballotti said.

He was speaking at two major events last week including the Bank of Namibia Annual Symposium on Creative Industries and the AUSC Region 5 Board of Ad-

visors Meeting in Windhoek.

“We resource what we prioritise. We are witnessing a focus as never seen before, championed by our President, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, who has long advocated for the creative industries,” Ballotti said.

He said the newly launched Namibia Arts, Culture and Heritage Policy 2025-2030 links arts and culture directly to economic and social goals, while new legislation, including the revised National Arts Fund Bill and Copyright and Related Rights Bill – aims to protect creators and enhance access to funding.

At the AUSC Region 5 Board of Advisors meeting, Ballotti echoed a similar message of empowerment through sport.

“Sport builds nations, unites communities and ignites economic opportunities, Namibia has elevated sport to the second-highest national priority,” Ballotti said.

He urged the regional board to strengthen systems that position sport as a pillar of the regional economy. “There is serious money in sport, and we must



> Deputy Minister of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture, Dino Ballotti

double efforts to claim our share of the sports economy,” he said.

Congratulating the 15 women from Region 5 named among Africa’s Top 50 Most Influential Women in Sport, Ballotti said the recognition highlights progress toward gender equity.

“The future is not female, female is now,” he said.

Ballotti reaffirmed Namibia’s commitment to the AUSC Region 5 vision and the African Union’s Agenda 2063, saying both culture and sport are vital to youth development, integration, and national pride.

In March, the Minister of Information

and Communication Technology (MICT), Emma Theofelus, said the government was working hard to introduce YouTube monetisation and digital payment solutions such as PayPal and Apple Pay in the country.

“We are actively working to ensure that Namibians can seamlessly participate in the global digital economy.

Platforms such as YouTube and PayPal are essential tools for digital entrepreneurs, and we want to make sure they are accessible to everyone, no matter their location,” she was quoted in the New Era newspaper. **NBR**

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• EINO VATILENI

Speaker of the National Assembly Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila on Friday urged learners to focus on areas that are in demand in the labour market.

According to a 2018 report, there were 67 000 unemployed graduates in Namibia.

The speaker told the learners to shun all the voices that distract them from learning such as alcohol abuse, drugs and teenage pregnancies.

She made these remarks on Friday while addressing learners and community members of Nangombe Secondary School at Okahao in the Omusati region.

"It is, therefore, important that our youth take full advantage of the opportunities available to acquire education, so that you have the necessary skills and qualifications to get gainful employment.

So that you escape the cycle of poverty in which our communities have been entrapped for years, as well as to drive the development of our country," she said.

'WORRISOME'

According to Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, the current situation where some of the youth struggle to get employment even after graduating is worrisome.

According to the 2023 Labour Force Survey (by the Namibia Statistics Agency), the youth unemployment rate is



Learners urged to pursue fields in high labour-market demand



According to a 2018 report, there were 67 000 unemployed graduates in Namibia"

< Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila

44.4% "Our government is committed to ensure that our education system ensures access to quality education for all our youth and that our youth are empowered to make sound choices of study fields," she said.

She said the government is committed to ensure that graduates are supported to practice their professions through a range of programs that support increasing employment opportunities for them, support for research and development and support to those who opt to venture into business.

"In this regard, the government calls upon our communities and corporate entities to partner with it to ensure that education is available to all our youth as a right, to enable them to prosper as individuals and to ensure that the country can optimize their potential to advance our country's development," Kuugongelwa-Amadhila said.

She reaffirmed government commitment to ensuring that the schools are resourced adequately to be able to provide the required education.

"As communities, we are also called upon to continue to support the education of our children, be it by encouraging our children to study or through provision of material support," she added.

Eino Vatileni is an Information Officer at the National Assembly. **NBR**



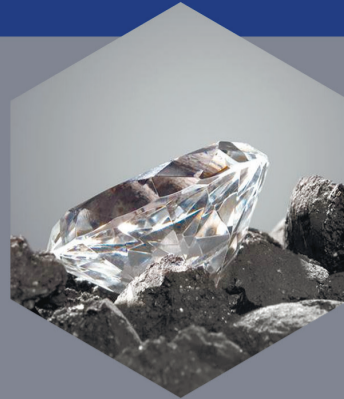
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Dangote ignites intra Africa trade growth with Walvis Bay-Harare pipeline

• TIRI MASAWI

Nigerian billionaire, Aliko Dangote has confirmed plans to build a fuel pipeline from Walvis Bay to land-locked Zimbabwe- igniting anticipation for improved intra Africa trade and investments.

The Business tycoon met Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa last week and signed a global memorandum of understanding with the government of that country laying the foundation for potential future investments.

"I have just signed various agreements between Zimbabwe and the Dangote group to deal with various sectors, some of which in mining, some which in cement and some of it in oil.

"As you know I have the largest refinery in the world in Nigeria. We want to bring it to Walvis Bay. There are a couple other investments that we are looking at. These investments count at hundreds of millions of dollars or billions we will tell you when we finish. But it is probably a billion because of the pipeline," Dangote told the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corpo-



> Zimbabwean president Emmerson Mnangagwa

ration.

Dangote is not new to Zimbabwe. His Dangote group was involved in an unsuccessful campaign in Zimbabwe then under President Robert Mugabe between 2015 and 2018.

His decision comes after his company announced in July that it planned to construct a petroleum refinery in Namibia to hold at least 1.6 million barrels of fuel and diesel to supply refined fuel to southern Africa.

The Walvis Bay refinery will be used to

distribute fuel to Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Dangote is also considering supplying fuel to the southern Democratic Republic of Congo, Agencies reported earlier.

Commenting on the meeting on his official facebook page Zimbabwean president Emmerson Mnangagwa said, "I received a Nigerian businessman and investor, Mr Aliko Dangote, who is in Zimbabwe to explore investment opportunities across key sectors. Following our discussions, Zimbabwe and the Dangote

Group signed a global agreement focusing on energy, cement, fertiliser, and infrastructure development. This partnership reflects growing investor confidence in Zimbabwe's economic transformation agenda.

"A major highlight is the regional oil refinery and pipeline project originating from Walvis Bay, Namibia, which will traverse several SADC countries, including Zimbabwe. The pipeline will enhance regional energy security and support industrial growth." **NBR**



< Aliko Dangote



> Zebra Kasete

• STAFF WRITER

Veteran mining executive Zebra Kasete will take over as managing director of Deep Yellow's Tumas Project in January 2026, calling it a privilege to lead the greenfields uranium development in his home country.

His tenure begins on 5 January 2026.

"I feel privileged to return in this role to where my professional career began, mining uranium in Namibia.

"Tumas is a very important development for both Deep Yellow and Namibia.

For me personally, the opportunity to lead and grow a greenfields uranium project, including building the team that will operate the project, is an exciting one that I'm very much looking forward to," Kasete said

The company announced in a statement that Kasete, a veteran executive with 35 years experience in the mining industry covering different stints in Namibia, Zimbabwe, Australia and the United States will be in charge of the company's local operations.

"Deep Yellow is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Zebra Kasete as Managing Director - Namibia, effective 5 January 2026. In this role Mr. Kasete, who will report to the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Deep Yellow, will support the construction of the Tumas Project and be accountable for running the Namibian operations post-construction of Tumas," the statement said.

Deep Yellow's Chief Financial Officer

and Acting Chief Executive Officer, Craig Barnes, welcomed Kasete to the role.

"Zebra's credentials to be the leader of Tumas are outstanding.

We are very pleased to have secured someone with his depth of experience and local knowledge which will be invaluable during the construction of Tumas and into operations.

"His appointment is another important milestone as we put the pieces in place ahead of a final investment decision for Tumas and work toward establishing our flagship project as the fourth uranium mine in Namibia," he said

The statement by the Australian based company said Kasete will also serve as Deep Yellow's country head for Namibia and be based in Swakopmund, Namibia.

Kasete is a Namibian mining executive with more than 35 years' experience, having held senior roles in diverse commodities, including uranium, diamonds, copper and gold, the company said.

Kasete's most recent role was Executive Vice President of Sinomine Tsumeb Smelter Pty Ltd (formerly Dundee Precious Metals Tsumeb Pty Ltd of which he was Managing Director) in Namibia (2016 to 2025).

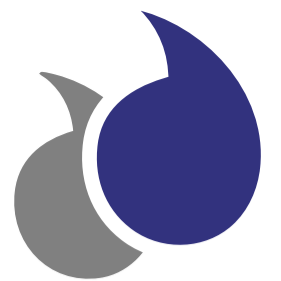
He previously served as Managing Director of Murowa Diamond Private Limited in Zimbabwe. Prior to moving to Zimbabwe.

Kasete spent 25 years at Rio Tinto where he joined as a cadet metallurgist at Rössing Uranium Limited (Rössing). During his tenure with Rössing and the wider Rio Tinto Group.

He has also held senior roles in operations, technical, procurement, human resources, business development and external relations.

He is past president of the Chamber of Mines of Namibia and holds a MBA in General and Strategic Management from the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands. **NBR**

Kasete to steer Tumas Project into the future



Is Dangote the spark that was needed to light up intra-African trade?

For years, Africa has preached the gospel of intra-African trade, yet the sermon has rarely translated into action. Beyond the fanfare of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), signed with great optimism by 44 countries in March 2018 and later ratified by 48 as of August 2024, the movement of goods within the continent has remained sluggish.

The AfCFTA was hailed as a game changer: a single continental market for goods and services, powered by a combined GDP of US\$3.4 trillion and backed by long-term ambitions of a unified customs union and a single currency. Trading officially began on 1 January 2021, and

Namibia proudly made one of its first AfCFTA shipments last year, exporting salt to Nigeria. Yet the continent continues to stumble over familiar hurdles. Many African economies still produce similar commodities, raising questions about who will buy what from whom. Non-tariff barriers persist. Protectionist policies linger. Liberalising services is moving at a pace far slower than promised. The dream is there but the fuel is missing.

And then comes a spark. This week, Nigerian billionaire Aliko Dangote signalled what bold African-led trade could look like when he inked a global investment agreement with the Zimbabwean government. His plans include major

ventures in mining, energy and fuel distribution. From there, he reasserted his foothold in Zambia, where his cement plant already stands strong. And in Namibia, he announced intentions to build a multibillion-dollar oil refinery at Walvis Bay, to be followed by a 2 300km fuel pipeline linking Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe – with the Democratic Republic of Congo also in his sights.

If realised, this will firmly anchor Dangote Industries across southern Africa. Already operating in 17 African countries, the conglomerate is proving that Africans can indeed build cross-border business empires without waiting for bureaucrats in Addis Ababa to turn political promises

into trade reality.

Of course, the continent now watches with bated breath to see whether these plans materialise. But even as intentions, they offer something Africa desperately needs: belief. The belief that intra-African trade is not a distant dream but a practical, profitable path. Could Dangote be the spark Africa needed – the catalyst that turns the AfCFTA from conference rhetoric into lived reality? A spark that convinces African businesses and governments alike to step out of their comfort zones and seize the opportunities lying just beyond their borders? Time will tell. And the future, for once, feels closer than ever.

Namibia’s Green Hydrogen Vision: Why Institutions Matter More Than Individuals



• Martha Haipinge

The other day, I came across an article on LinkedIn from The Extractor Magazine (13 October 2025), detailing the state of Namibia’s green-hydrogen programme following the departure of its founding head.

The commentary raised useful concerns, but it also drew conclusions that, in my view, miss the heart of the issue. While I cannot speak to the allegations of xenophobia alluded to by the commentary, I can speak to issues of systems and institutions. And from that lens, for me, the challenge facing Namibia’s green hydrogen agenda is not a “leadership void,” it is a “systems void.” This is to say, the real test for our green-hydrogen dream is not whether one man remains at the helm, but whether the vision has been embedded within our national institutions strongly enough to stand on its own.

Personalising Policy Is a Structural Risk

Describing a national development agenda as having “lost its brain and heart” is not only dramatic, but it also reveals a deeper problem. When the success of a state priority becomes synonymous with one individual, that is not strength; that is structural fragility. To credit the green-hydrogen programme solely to a single figure is to overlook an entire ecosystem of profes-

sionals, engineers, economists, financiers, planners, and negotiators, who continue to work behind the scenes. Namibia does not lack the technical depth to advance its green-hydrogen ambitions; what has been missing is an institutional framework that organises and sustains that expertise within a coherent national system.

So, this is not about personalities. It is about institutionalisation, the process through which ideas, roles, and procedures are embedded so that programmes survive political or personnel changes. Political scientist Samuel Huntington called it the hallmark of political development. Without it, momentum becomes personal property rather than public capital.

What Went Wrong?

The truth about the fragility of Namibia’s green hydrogen program is simpler and less sensational. The green-hydrogen initiative has not been fully mainstreamed into Namibia’s broader governance machinery. It sat at the intersection of energy, investment, environment, and diplomacy, yet, somehow, belonged completely to none. When an initiative floats between ministries without a legally defined home, clear budget line, or dedicated implementing agency, its continuity depends on personalities. Once those personalities move on, coordination stalls. That is not a failure of talent/skills; it is a failure of structure. If things were done right, a well-institutionalised green hydrogen programme would have:

- a statutory or cabinet-approved framework setting out mandates and accountability lines.
- technical and policy units nested in relevant ministries.
- integration into national planning instruments and budget processes; and

- systematic capacity-building to expand the bench of expertise.
- The absence of that would expose any programme to political transitions no matter how visionary. This is what we are currently witnessing.

On Technical Depth

The suggestion that no senior leader has matched the departing head’s fluency in finance, policy, or global diplomacy is not only speculative, but it also risks insulting a capable nation. Namibia has produced leaders, scientists, and negotiators who have represented it competently across sectors both national and at global stage. To imply that one individual’s exit equates to the loss of national intellect is to understate our institutional potential.

The real question we need to dwell on is not who will replace him, but what will replace the vacuum, what institutional arrangement will ensure that knowledge, coordination, and strategic drive are shared, taught, and sustained? Development cannot hinge on individual brilliance; it must rely on reproducible systems.

Re-Thinking the Institutional Design

The task at hand is, if green hydrogen is to fulfil its promise, Namibia needs to re-engineer the governance model around it by:

- Mainstreaming the agenda within national energy and industrialisation strategies, tied to the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and Vision 2030 goals.
- Clarifying institutional ownership, whether through a specialised agency or a hybrid of existing ministries and assign clear authority, reporting lines, and accountability.
- Investing in institutional capacity, constituting teams that blend policy, finance, engineering, and diplomacy, while ensuring institutional memory

and technical resilience.

- Strengthening political buy-in through engagement with parliamentary and cabinet committees, as well as ensuring that regional structures treat green hydrogen not as a project, but as part of Namibia’s economic transition plan.
- Only with these foundations can we ensure that leadership changes become routine, and not crises.

Broder Lessons

Namibia’s green-hydrogen experience offers a cautionary tale for development planning especially across Africa and that is, when innovation outpaces institutional design, even the most promising ventures risk stalling. However, when systems are built to carry the load through law, capacity, and coordination, vision can mature into legacy. The issue, therefore, is not that Namibia has lost its “hydrogen brain.” It is that the country has yet to build the institutional body capable of carrying that brain’s ideas forward.

In closing, we can all agree that green hydrogen holds immense potential for Namibia. To unlock it, we must look beyond personalities and fix the governance machinery itself. Systems, not individuals, guarantee continuity. Institutions, not charisma, translate dreams into durable progress. If we take that to heart, the hydrogen agenda will not “flicker”; it will be grounded and strengthened, turning vision into something that lasts.

* About the Author

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Women dominate informal employment in Namibia

• IMELDA AMBONDO

United Nations' Resident Coordinator Hopolang Phororo said Namibian women dominate the country's informal workforce.

"Nearly six in ten workers operate outside the formal system, women make up 53% of the informal workforce, while youth often find their first entrepreneurial opportunities in the sector," Phororo said at the launch of a report titled Diagnostic of Informality in Namibia.

The report was launched on 11 November at the Bank of Namibia's offices in Windhoek.

The report revealed that 57.7% of Namibia's employed population works in the informal market.

The report is a result of a partnership between the Bank of Namibia, in partnership with the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy, the Ministry of Justice and Labour Relations, as well as the United Nations.

Some of the key findings of the report are that 31.6% of the employed population in Namibia are in vulnerable employment. The majority of these (65.1%) live in rural areas.

At the sectoral level, informal work is concentrated in agriculture, forestry, and fishing, which collectively employ more than 146 000 people, as well as among subsistence and communal farmers (94 001) and unpaid family workers (17 040). These are predominantly rural occupations. By contrast, domestic workers (65 674) and those in wholesale, retail, and food services form the bulk of urban informal workers.

Speaking at the event Phororo reaffirmed the United Nations' commitment to supporting Namibia's informal economy, describing it as the "heartbeat" of the nation's development.

Phororo said the newly unveiled diagnostic report highlights that informality "is not a marginal phenomenon in Namibia, it is central to our economic and social fabric."

She commended the Bank of Namibia, the Ministry of International Relations and Trade, and the National Working Group on Informality for their leadership, noting that "today, we affirm a collective vision, a Namibia where every worker is visible, valued and protected."

She added that the work aligns with global efforts such as the UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, recognising Namibia as a "pathfinding country."

Executive Director in the Ministry of Finance, Michael Humavindu described the report as "the culmination of a profound journey" that has reshaped how policymakers view the informal sector.

"For too long, the conversation about the informal economy has been one of silence. This sector is not a side economy; it is a pillar of our national life," he said.

He revealed that the informal economy contributes about 26.5% of Namibia's GDP in 2025, representing roughly US\$13 billion, underscoring its vital role in livelihoods and national growth.

It highlights deep inequalities between rural and urban livelihoods, with informal work far more common in the countryside.

"The share of workers in informal employment is close to two times higher in rural areas (78.9 %) compared to urban areas (41.8 %)," the report said.

"Informality in Namibia is characterised by a significant portion of the population working in informal employment and engaging in informal economic activities, particularly adult women and youth with secondary education and less," the report noted.

According to the report, urban informality is most visible at transport nodes and open markets, where traders sell fresh produce, cooked food, clothing, and hairdressing services. It said attempts by local authorities to formalise these areas through regulated trading bays and open markets remain contentious.

"The location and formalisation of open markets and permitted trading areas are a highly contested issue where traders feel that they are not consulted," the report said, adding that "with participatory planning and governance, these spatial interventions can facilitate a transition to the formal economy and promote decent working conditions."

The report also noted that working conditions in the informal sector remain poor, with limited social protection.

"Most of these workers find themselves in poor working conditions... including long working hours without requisite compensation, poor hygiene, and unsafe places of work," the report highlighted.

It also said union representation in the informal economy is minimal. While only one-fifth of all employees in Namibia are unionised, just 7% of informal workers belong to associations such as the Bus and Taxi Associations, leaving the majority vulnerable to exploitation.

Despite economic growth of 4.2% in 2023, driven by mining and oil exploration, the report warned that Namibia's job market remains fragile.

It said the informal economy contributes 24.7% to GDP, yet most workers in this sector have little job security or benefits.

"Further research at a sectoral level is required to examine opportunities to implement spatially targeted interventions to reduce decent work deficits and prevent the informalisation of formal economy jobs," the report recommends. **NBR**

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Ohangwena II Wellfield Water Supply System to supply 10m Litres daily

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring access to clean and safe water for all Namibians, highlighting the benefits for communities in northern Namibia.

Speaking at the inauguration of the Ohangwena II Wellfield Water Supply System, Nandi-Ndaitwah said the project will deliver 10 million litres of water per day, serving households between Omafo, Eenhana, Omakango, and Onambutu.

The N\$250 million project forms part of the Namibia Water Sector Support Programme and will meet the region's water demand until 2037, ensuring reliable access for over 40,000 people.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said the initiative is part of broader efforts to strengthen water security nationwide, with related projects such as purification plants in Oshakati and Rundu already underway.

The President also outlined the upcoming Water Sector Support Programme Phase II, which will include: The Omundaungilo-Omutsegwonime Bulk Water Pipeline 15 Water Treatment Package Plants for immediate potable water access The Ohangwena Aquifer Climate Resilient Project, expanding groundwater infrastructure and introducing solar-powered treatment systems.

She urged residents to protect the infrastructure and pay for water services, stressing that affordability and sustainability must go hand in hand.



Nandi-Ndaitwah takes the first shovel for Opuwo-Otjivize-Okangwati-Omaseratundu road upgrade

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah has launched the upgrading of the Opuwo-Otjivize-Okangwati-Omaseratundu road to bitumen standard.

She said the road is a major infrastructure project expected to create about 300 jobs and boost economic activity in the Kunene Region.

Speaking at the ceremony in Opuwo on Wednesday, Nandi-Ndaitwah said the N\$991 million project, fully funded by the government, will open up opportunities for local businesses and improve access to key services.

The 280-kilometre road will link Opuwo to the Baynes Hydro Power Project site and Epupa, improving access for communities and supporting tourism, agriculture, and trade in the region.

Nandi-Ndaitwah said the project, to be completed in 28 months, is part of the government's broader goal to connect all regions through modern infrastructure.



Amendment of Procurement Bill to improve transparency in public tenders

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) says the implementation of the Access to Information Act and the amending of the Public Procurement Amendment Bill of 2025 will improve transparency in the public tendering system.

The appointment of the first Information Commissioner is expected soon, marking a major step in enforcing the ATI law.

IPPR said the Act will give the public, journalists, and civil society stronger legal grounds to demand government information.

According to IPPR research associate expert Frederico Links, "The ATI Act and the Procurement Amendment Bill together can transform how information is shared and accessed. But enforcement is what will determine whether this transparency becomes real or remains on paper."

The amendment bill aims to create a Public Procurement Regulatory Authority to replace the weak Procurement Policy Unit, improve compliance, and introduce penalties for violations. It also proposes new oversight bodies such as a procurement court and an administrative review committee.

Links said the reforms "appear to expand and strengthen transparency mechanisms, but without proper funding and staffing, they will fall short."

If passed by 2026, these frameworks could finally close long-standing loopholes in Namibia's procurement system, ensuring public entities publish, disclose, and respond to information requests within clear deadlines, a step Links says would mark "a turning point for accountability."



Bank Windhoek introduces Wallet-to-Wallet instant payment transfers

Bank Windhoek has launched its EasyWallet On-Send feature, allowing customers to send money instantly from one EasyWallet to another.

The EasyWallet On-Send capability represents a first in the Namibian banking industry, enabling users to transfer funds seamlessly between wallets, even to individuals who do not hold a bank account.

The bank said the service is currently available to MTC mobile users, and will soon extend to TN Mobile customers.

Bank Windhoek Managing Director, James Chapman, described the launch as a defining moment in the Bank's digital journey. "This launch marks a significant step forward in our commitment to financial inclusion, digital innovation, and secure, convenient payments."

With EasyWallet On-Send, users can perform multiple transactions daily, up to a limit of N\$2 000 per day, a threshold that will be reviewed as customer needs evolve.