

NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

EDITION 19 | VOLUME 19 | 09 - 16 FEBRUARY 2026



Who will control Namibia's oil after Nandi-Ndaitwah?

• STAFF WRITER

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah's decision to put Namibia's oil and gas sector under her direct control is facing criticism, with analysts warning that the bigger risk may come after she leaves office, when the same strong powers will be passed to future presidents.

A cross-section of Namibian society has raised alarm over this move, noting that the upstream oil sector is still in its formative stages. Nandi-Ndaitwah said last year that placing the sector under the Presidency "will curb corruption and allow the country to learn from the new sector."

However, analysts told *Namibia Business Review* this week that concentrating control of a strategic national resource in a single office could weaken institutional oversight and undermine long-term governance safeguards.

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"It's risky to trust future presidents with oil and gas sector" - analysts

Amutse to rule on TotalEnergies-Galp multi-billion oil block deal

• TIRI MASAWI

The fate of a deal between TotalEnergies and Galp Energy to take control of some of Namibia's largest oil blocks now rests with the Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy, Modestus Amutse.

The agreement, announced last week, would see French giants TotalEnergies take a 40% operating stake in Petroleum Exploration Licence (PEL) 83, which holds the Mopane discovery, while Por-

"The Namibian government was not notified about these developments, as required by law."

tugal-based Galp Energy would acquire a 10% participating interest in PEL 56, home to the Venus discovery.

The two offshore discoveries are among the most significant oil finds along Namibia's coastline in recent

years.

The deal comes as the ministry was blindsided, only learning of the transaction at the eleventh hour.

The Presidency said on Monday that the transaction is not final and will only be

recognised once the minister has made a determination in line with the law.

Presidential spokesperson Jonas Mbambo told *Namibia Business Review* that the reported deal cannot be regarded as concluded at this stage.

"At this stage, the reported deal cannot be regarded as concluded.

The final determination rests with the competent authorities once all legal and regulatory requirements have been satisfied," Mbambo said.

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POWER GRAB OR REFORM?

Concerns have intensified following the introduction of the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Amendment Bill of 2025. The Bill proposes transferring full authority over Namibia's oil and gas sector from the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy to the Office of the President.

"There might be a high degree of trust in the current office bearer, but it creates a structure which will also be inherited by successors. Such a personalised structure erodes and undermines institutional oversight," said political analyst Henning Melber.

Melber is among those warning that stripping the ministry of the oil and gas portfolio could weaken institutional checks and balances.

Under a conventional ministerial arrangement, the President, Prime Minister and a parliamentary committee would have direct access to information and exercise oversight if there were suspicions of abuse of authority for personal enrichment.

Melber argues these accountability mechanisms would not exist if the sector is placed under the exclusive authority of the Office of the President, as proposed in the Bill currently under debate in the National Assembly.

He also warned that President Nandi-Ndaitwah would be directly exposed should problems arise.

"What if, despite her best intentions to enhance control and reduce corruption, loopholes benefit illegal practices? She would have the sole blame to accept," Melber said.

"It therefore seems not in her own interest to acquire ultimate decision-making power beyond any further control mechanisms. The current suspicions articulated in the public should be seen as a warning signal."

Melber suggested the President should instead introduce clear ministerial provi-

sions and laws with Cabinet oversight. He added that, as President, she is already entitled to receive detailed internal audits and reports to ensure best practices.

"Believing that she has the time and competence to do all of this when the sector is under the responsibility and discretion of the State House seems to be a misjudgment of her competences and capacity," he said.

"With all the executive powers the President has, governing should also rely on trustworthy and reliable officials operating in accessible and transparent structures subject to regular control. The Bill is, at this moment, a step in the wrong direction and will not strengthen confidence among potential investors."

He further suggested Namibia should join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), since transparency and accountability are cited as reasons for the new Bill.

HIGH STAKES: COULD THIS BACKFIRE POLITICALLY

Prominent lawyer Richard Metcalfe also weighed in, noting that the President, as head of the Executive Branch, already presides over Cabinet and is constitutionally permitted to assume responsibility for any executive function.

However, he cautioned that the move carries significant political risk.

Metcalfe warned that if corruption, nepotism or institutional failure were to emerge, comparable to the Fishrot scandal, the President could suffer a loss of public and electoral support, similar to former president Hage Geingob.

"It is a gamble by the President because if corruption, nepotism and collapse prevail, a la the Fishrot debacle, she risks loss of electoral support a la Geingob," Metcalfe said.

Independent Patriots for Change (IPC) shadow international relations and trade minister Rodney Cloete said Mines and Energy Minister Modestus Amutse's defence of the Bill – by comparing Namibia to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Brunei, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Suriname – is flawed.

He said that the UAE is an absolute monarchy, while Brunei is a sultanate where the monarch simultaneously serves as prime minister, defence minister and finance minister.

Nigeria, he added, is "an even stranger choice," noting that Nigerian petroleum governance has for decades been associated with corruption, opacity and institutional failure.

"Our entire governance architecture, separation of powers, ministerial accountability to Parliament and independent regulatory oversight, was designed precisely to prevent the concentration of resource decisions in a single office," Cloete said.

He also criticised the Bill's disclosure provisions. The proposed law requires the Director-General and Deputy Director-General of the new Upstream Petroleum Unit to disclose their assets and interests to the President.

"This is presented as a safeguard, while it clearly is not," Cloete said.

"Transparency means disclosure to Parliament and to the public. It means independent verification mechanisms that do not depend on the goodwill of the person

who appointed you."

"Disclosure to the President is accountable to one person, the person who appointed the Director-General, who controls the Unit and who now exercises licensing authority. This is a closed loop."

Cloete further said that petroleum licensing is fundamentally different from development planning.

"The financial stakes, the corruption risks, the geopolitical implications and the irreversibility of licensing decisions bear no resemblance to planning coordination," he said.

"Comparing the two is like comparing a neighbourhood watch to a central bank. Both serve useful functions, but they are not interchangeable governance models."

He added that Fishrot "is not ancient history."

"The last time Namibia centralised natural resource decisions with inadequate institutional oversight, it produced Fishrot, Africa's largest corruption scandal."

Cloete acknowledged that the 1991 Act needs updating, but said modernisation should strengthen oversight, not dismantle it.

"A serious petroleum governance framework would include parliamentary ratification of all major petroleum agreements," he said.

"It would establish an independent regulatory authority, not housed in any ministry or the Presidency, with its own budget and legal personality. It would mandate proactive publication of all contracts, fiscal terms and production data within 30 days."

TIMELY

Energy lawyer Shakwa Nyambe offered a contrasting view, describing the proposed amendments as timely and indispensable.

He said the amendments establish a governance framework capable of managing Namibia's transition from an exploration frontier to a significant petroleum-producing nation, ensuring sustainable benefits for the country and its people.

"The creation of an Upstream Petroleum Unit under the Office of the President, with a clearly defined Director-General and Deputy Director-General, stands at the core of these reforms," Nyambe said.

He described it as a structural innovation designed to expedite decisions, strengthen oversight and coordinate the petroleum sector at the highest level of government without politicising technical operations.

Nyambe said the National Assembly to consider the Bill without delay, noting that multiple multi-billion-dollar projects are on the horizon.

"A delay in passing this proposed amendment is likely to delay the Final Investment Decision (FID) on the Venus discovery by TotalEnergies and its partners, since oil companies are hesitant to take decisions while there are pending amendments to the laws that apply to them," Nyambe said.

Presidential spokesperson Jonas Mbambo said that with the Bill actively being debated in Parliament, the Office of the President will not comment on the concerns raised.

"Doing so could create the impression that the Executive is attempting to influence the outcome of a process that properly belongs to the legislative domain," Mbambo said. **NBR**

AMUTSE FROM PAGE 1

He said the minister will decide whether the agreement meets licence requirements, regulatory approvals and industry expectations.

"Any transaction involving the transfer, assignment or acquisition of participating interests in a petroleum licence is subject to the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act, 1991, as well as applicable licence conditions," he said.

TotalEnergies last week announced the conclusion of the agreement with Galp to enter as operator in the prolific PEL 83 licence, including the Mopane discovery.

In its statement, the company said the transaction positions TotalEnergies as operator of the two largest oil discoveries in Namibia and opens the way for the development of a major producing hub aimed at generating long-term value for the country and its partners.

However, Mbambo said Namibian authorities must first determine whether the proposed transaction complies with local laws.

"The role of the authorities, as regulator and custodian of Namibia's natural resources, is to assess any such application in accordance with the law, licence obligations, and the national interest. Only after this process has been duly followed can a decision be made on whether to approve, conditionally approve, or decline the transaction," he said.

He emphasised that amendments to petroleum licences require written approval from the minister. Until a formal application is submitted and the prescribed statutory process is completed, no transaction can be recognised or considered valid.

INSIDE THE DEAL

TotalEnergies chairperson and chief executive officer Patrick Pouyanné said the company is eager to continue building in collaboration with the Namibian authorities to deliver both developments.

"We are very happy to have been selected by Galp as their partner and operator for the prolific PEL 83 licence, including the Mopane discovery in Namibia.

This is a strong recognition of the exploration and deepwater competences of TotalEnergies teams," Pouyanné said.

He added that the transaction demonstrates TotalEnergies' confidence in Namibia as a future oil-producing country and that the company will leverage its operatorship track record to progress towards profitable and sustainable developments of both the Venus and Mopane discoveries.

According to Pouyanné, the aim is to achieve synergies that will create long-term value for Namibia and stakeholders.

Under the agreement, TotalEnergies will carry 50% of Galp's capital expenditure for the exploration and appraisal of the Mopane discovery and the first development on PEL 83.

The carry will be repaid through 50% of Galp's future cash flows from the project. The two companies have agreed to launch an exploration and appraisal campaign, including three wells over the next two years, with the first well planned for 2026.

The programme is intended to further derisk resources and advance the development of the Mopane discovery, according to TotalEnergies.

After completion of the transaction, TotalEnergies will hold a 40% operated interest in PEL 83 alongside Galp (40%), Namcor (10%) and Custos (10%). It will also hold a 35.25% operated interest in PEL 56 alongside QatarEnergy (35.25%), Galp (10%), Namcor (10%) and Impact (9.5%), and a 33.085% operated interest in PEL 91 alongside QatarEnergy (33.025%), Namcor (15%), Galp (9.39%) and Impact (9.5%).

MINISTRY RAISES CONCERN

In a statement released on Friday, the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy said it had noted the deal with concern.

"The ministry wishes to clarify that the Namibian government was not notified about these developments, as required by law. Indeed, the ministry was informed of the planned press release a few minutes prior to its release by the aforementioned parties," the ministry said.

The ministry said that, in accordance with the law, any transfer, assignment or acquisition of participating interests in petroleum licences in Namibia must obtain prior approval of the minister.

"The ministry remains steadfast in its commitment to regulatory compliance, transparency, and the responsible development of Namibia's petroleum resources," the statement said. **NBR**

Katutura residents sell dry grass at B1 to earn a living



< Rinaani Musutua

• IMELDA AMBONDO

Namibia's unemployment crisis is not just reflected in statistics, it is visible on the roadside.

In Windhoek alongside the B1 road enroute to Okahandja, women spend their days selling bundles of dry grass to feed their children and keep their households afloat.

Every morning at 08:00, Theopolina Mekubali (57) walks from Okahandja Park to the B1 highway. With no formal job, she survives by cutting grass along the bushes, leaving it to dry before tying it into bundles. She sells them to people who use the grass to feed livestock and build houses.

She spends the whole day under the open sky, facing the burning sun and hoping passing cars will stop to buy a bundle or two.

"We are suffering, we come here and spend the whole afternoon and custom-

ers don't even come and buy our grass," she said.

On a good day, Mekubali earns between N\$50 and N\$200.

On some days, she goes home with nothing. To survive, she collects empty cans and sells them at the scrapyards to add to whatever little she makes from the grass.

Despite being chased away by authorities for selling in a prohibited area, she keeps returning.

"It's the only way we can get something to eat, and provide for our families," she said.

Nearby, Anna Mupenda (61) arrives after a 30-minute walk from Okahandja Park. From 08:00 to 17:00, she waits by the

highway with her grass bundles. At the end of the month, she makes between N\$800 and N\$1300.

"The money is not enough to support myself, three children, and four other family members who rely on me. The money is little, things like macaroni, rice, sugar, and maize meal are expensive," Mupenda said.

Because of the shortage, her children often go without basic school necessities. Still, she stands there daily, hoping for a buyer, knowing the day may end without one.

For Given Haufiku (48), the journey begins even further away. She walks from Oshitenda location to the highway, cuts grass and sells it for N\$5 per bundle. On a good day, she makes about N\$150.

She provides for her six children, aged between three and 18 years. What she earns is not enough to feed them all.

"I would like to ask for any assistance that people can provide for me and my family, food, money or anything," she pleads.

Their daily struggle mirrors the broader national picture. According to the Namibia Statistics Agency's 2023 Census Labour Force Report released on 29

January 2025, the official unemployment rate stands at 36.9%. When discouraged job seekers are included, the rate rises to 54.8%. Youth unemployment is particularly high at 44.4%.

The high rate of unemployment in Namibia has pushed many people into informal trading, settling for anything that can bring food to their homes.

Rinaani Musutua of the Basic Income Grant Coalition of Namibia says the country's socio-economic situation shows a direct link between poverty and societal chaos.

She points to Namibia's 50% unemployment rate, the highest in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which leaves many without formal employment.

She describes this as a failed economy "forcing individuals to engage in street vending at unsolicited locations as a desperate means of survival."

Musutua says this creates what she calls "survival anxiety." To ease the pressure, she proposes a Universal Basic Income Grant of N\$500 per person per month for all Namibians aged 0-59, saying it would help subsidise basic necessities and reduce daily struggles. **NBR**



On a good day, Mekubali earns between N\$50 and N\$200"



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• IMELDAAMBONDO

Namibia's Green Scheme Programme is struggling due to a lack of funding, weak management systems and delayed procurement, a new parliamentary oversight report has found.

The report says these challenges are slowing production and hurting overall performance.

The report follows recent visits by parliamentarians to four green scheme projects – Kalimbeza, Shadikongoro, Ndonga Linena and Uvhungu-Vhungu – to assess their performance, challenges and future prospects.

According to the report, the schemes are important for national development as they provide “direct and indirect jobs, seasonal income for communities, and affordable food supplies that reduce dependence on imports.”

The committee said that the projects also stimulate local economies and contribute to broader socio-economic development beyond agriculture.

However, the report raises concern that most projects face persistent challenges, including inadequate and inconsistent funding, outdated and broken equipment, high electricity costs, and



This, in the long run, may kill the green scheme entirely; signs are already showing

limited access to reliable markets.

“One of the major obstacles identified is the centralised procurement system based in Windhoek, which the committee says causes delays in repairing machinery, acquiring inputs and maintaining infrastructure. These delays undermine productivity and sustainability,” the report said.

Despite the challenges, the committee observed positive developments at Ndonga Linena, where the introduction of precision farming technologies has improved productivity and efficiency. The report describes this as a potential model for replication across other regions.

The oversight committee further highlights long-standing governance failures

following the creation of the Agricultural Business Development Agency (Agribusdev), which was established to manage the green scheme programme.

“Agribusdev did not achieve the intended results, leading to significant challenges, including severe governance, financial issues, operational deficiencies, and institutional problems, which ultimately led to its dissolution and integration into the Ministry of Agriculture in 2021,” the report said.

The report warns that four years later, the integration process remains incomplete, with operations still centralised in Windhoek instead of being fully decentralised. “This, in the long run, may kill the green scheme entirely; signs are already showing,” the report states.

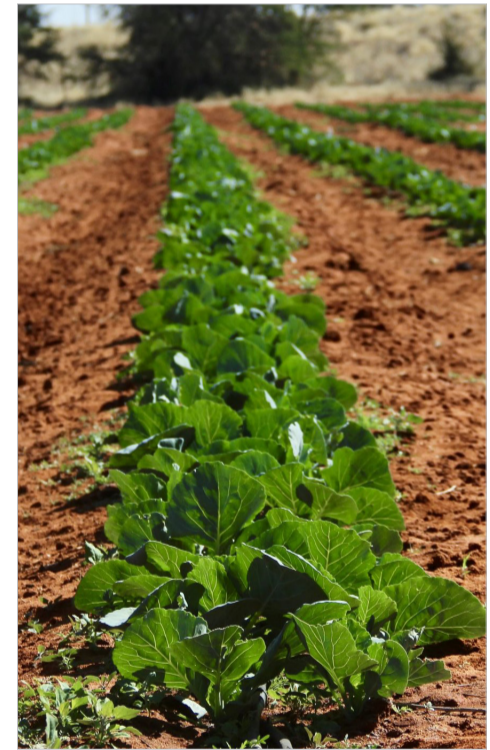
Infrastructure decay was another major concern, with vandalised fences, lack of storage facilities and idle processing equipment reported at several sites.

Small-scale farmers were also found to be struggling with “unaffordable input costs, restrictive loan repayment terms, inadequate consultation, and limited progression opportunities to medium-scale farming.”

The committee further criticised the absence of an inter-ministerial coordination framework to supply green schemes in order to produce to institutions such as schools, hospitals and correctional facilities, describing this as a missed opportunity to secure stable markets.

In its recommendations, the committee calls for an urgent turnaround strategy, stating that “the green scheme programme has strong potential for national impact. “but achieving this requires urgent reform in management systems, decentralisation of procurement, stronger coordination with the private sector, and investment in modern technology and infrastructure.”

The report says that with improved management, targeted investment and strengthened policy support, the green scheme projects “have the potential to serve as models for sustainable agriculture across Namibia.” **NBR**



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NEWS

Construction starts on 100 low-cost homes at Eenhana

• STAFF WRITER

The National Housing Enterprise (NHE) on Monday officially handed over the construction site for 100 low-cost houses at Eenhana, a project expected to cost N\$7.4 million upon completion.

NHE's Manager for Infrastructure Development, Indileni Set-Sam lipinge, said the project responds directly to the housing needs of low-income earners and aligns with the government's broader development agenda. "This initiative is not just another project on our books. It is a direct response to the housing demand for low-income earners, the very citizens who need affordable shelter the most," he said.

He added that the development will consist of one-bedroom houses of 30.1 square meters, two-bedroom houses of

42.7 square meters, and three-bedroom houses of 53.6 square meters, bringing the total to 100 homes.

The first phase of construction is scheduled to start on 16 February 2026 and run for five calendar months, excluding the builders' holiday. "By the end of June, we expect to have created approximately 100 jobs, providing income and skills development opportunities to local residents. Job creation remains a key pillar of our work," lipinge said.

He also highlighted the significance of the project, noting that it comes nearly 10 years after NHE's last major initiative in Eenhana in 2015, when the company serviced land and built 284 houses at a cost of N\$80 million. "Today, more than a decade later, we return to continue that legacy and to reaffirm NHE's presence and commitment in the Ohangwena Region. Let us focus on completing the project on time, within budget, and to the highest standards," he said. **NBR**



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Namibia pushes Africa to speak with one diamond voice



> Minister of Industries Mines and Energy Modestus Amutse says Namibia

• STAFF WRITER

Minister of Industries Mines and Energy Modestus Amutse says Namibia is in support of harmonising regional policies to foster fair markets, shared prosperity, and innovation across the diamond value chain.

Speaking on the sidelines of the ongoing mining indaba in Cape Town on Monday Amutse said Namibia places importance central to the push of harmonisation through ethical sourcing, traceability, and transparency in the industry.

He said these are essential elements to maintaining consumer confidence and global competitiveness.

"The diamond industry is not merely an economic engine; it is a powerful catalyst for social development, innovation, and national pride across our continent.

Africa is the world's leading producer of natural diamonds, accounting for the majority of global production by value and volume," Amutse said.

He said African position confers both great responsibility and opportunity-placing the continent at the heart of the global diamond value chain and underscoring the imperative for the continent to lead in shaping the future of the industry.

The minister said it is important to include how natural diamonds are marketed, valued and perceived globally.

"The Namibian government reaffirms its unwavering commitment to working in close partnership with fellow African diamond-producing nations, our Joint Venture Partner De Beers, the global Diamond Centres, and the Natural Diamond Council," he said.

Amutse said partners in De Beers will address the evolving challenges facing the industry and advance strategies that protect and enhance the value, integrity, and reputation of natural diamonds globally.

"Namibia strongly supports the development of a unified African strategy for promoting natural diamonds through the

Luanda Accord. We must move beyond fragmented messaging and present a credible, compelling narrative, one that connects consumers to the tangible social and economic impact of natural diamonds on African communities," he said.

He said Namibia remains resolute in championing natural diamonds as a source of national pride and sustainable development.

"Our diamond industry operates within rigorous legal and regulatory frameworks and adheres to the highest international standards, ensuring that Namibian gem-quality diamonds are ethically sourced, responsibly produced and fully compliant with global best practices," he said.

According to Amutse Namibia is fully aligned with the urgent call for united African action in response to market disruptions since 2022.

"These challenges demand coordinated, forward-looking solutions—not isolated or fragmented approaches. The time has come for African diamond-producing nations to speak with a single, powerful voice. Africa must lead in shaping a global narrative that truthfully reflects the developmental, social, and economic value of our resources," he said. **NBR**





The two faces of green hydrogen

• BEATRICE PRINS

Namibia's green hydrogen industry is attracting both excitement and concern in Lüderitz, a small southern town set to host some of the country's biggest projects.

At the center is the Hyphen Hydrogen Energy initiative, a US\$10 billion (around N\$160 billion) project planned for the Tsau//Khaeb National Park. Namibia owns 24% of the project, worth €720 million (about N\$14.4 billion), backed by €23 million (N\$460 million) from the Sustainable Development Goals Namibia One Fund.

The plant, the country's first integrated green hydrogen facility, aims to produce 350 000 tons of green ammonia annually by 2029 and create thousands of jobs. It could turn the //Kharas Region into a global green energy hub.

Yet for many locals, high unemployment and economic inequality mean the promised opportunities feel distant. Some are hopeful, while others remain skeptical.

High Hopes, Big Concerns

Even with these promises, residents say local people are not yet included in jobs or training.

"I cannot endorse hydrogen projects because they are a 'fake' game in our community," says Reinhold Nuuyoma, a political party leader. He said that money like Namibia's €720 million (N\$14.4 billion) stake mainly benefits foreign shareholders. Locals, he says, continue to struggle with port bottlenecks and skills gaps.

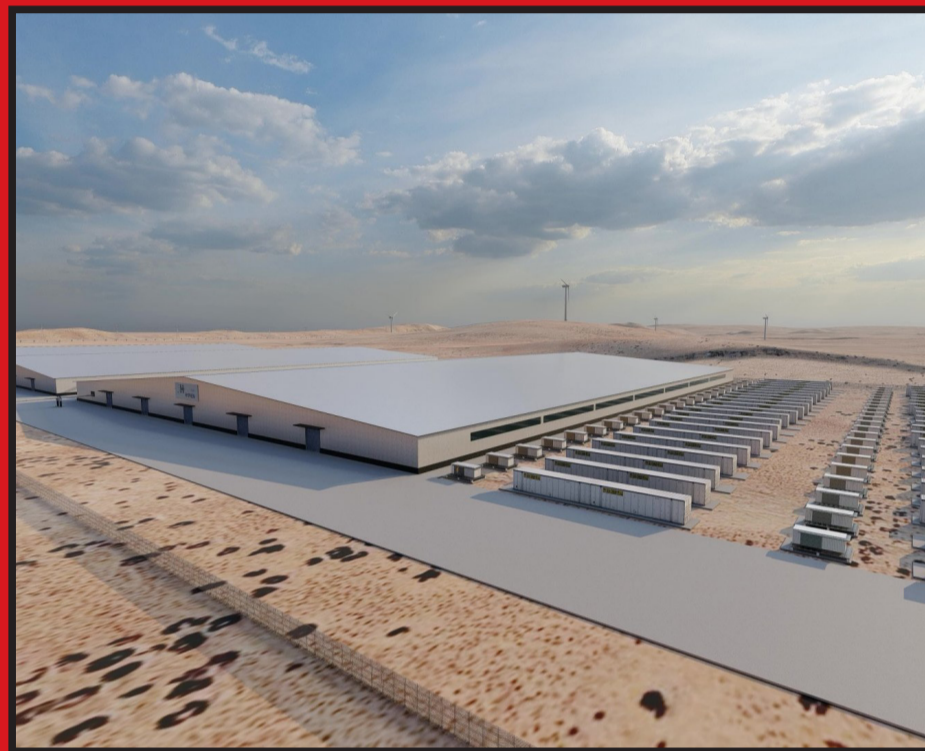
Nuuyoma adds that hydrogen initiatives have failed to benefit Africa. Instead, they serve the interests of the western world. "As a political party leader, I refuse to sell out my nation and its resources to foreign countries," he says.

He also claims that western governments impose laws in Africa under Roman-Dutch legal frameworks that do not benefit Namibians. According to him, these laws drive political agendas for the benefit of hydrogen project shareholders, such as ruling party members.

Local youth want clearer pathways into the industry. McAllen Cloete, a member of the youth council at Lüderitz, says, "We hear about the opportunities but many learners don't know the exact subjects to focus on or what careers exist. They are unsure of the steps after school. It feels like development is happening around us, but pupils are not yet fully prepared or guided."

Cloete suggests establishing local

» Lüderitz residents share hope and doubts



training centers, improving school career guidance, and forming partnerships with industry. "Companies should offer workshops, mentorship, and job shadowing," he says. "Otherwise, youth risk exclusion from town-built opportunities," he said.

Youth advocate Jisreel !Naruseb also highlights the skills gap. "There are qualified artisans in different trades, but up-skilling is needed to equip young people for the main line of the hydrogen system," he said.

He adds that, in his personal capacity, he has not applied to the project programs, but as a youth leader, he has engaged those who have. A few young people have attended workshops or training sessions.

!Naruseb points out a lack of local representation among hydrogen ambassadors. Even though two ambassadors are from the //Kharas region, none are from Lüderitz. "That's sad," he said. "Selection criteria are decided internally by the organisation. To widen the playing field for Lüderitz youth, project criteria should reflect entry-level opportunities for the majority," he added.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Despite these concerns, there are concrete initiatives to help Lüderitz youth prepare for the industry. The Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme (NGH2P) is offering Youth for Green Hydrogen (Y4H2) scholarships for young people aged 18–35 from the //Kharas and Hardap regions. These fully funded scholarships cover

tuition, registration fees, toolkits, and a monthly stipend. Areas of study include solar and wind energy systems, electrical engineering, welding, plumbing, and other related trades.

So far, about 183 scholarships have been awarded to Namibian youth in vocational and tertiary-level programs aligned with the green hydrogen sector. These initiatives aim to give young people the skills needed to compete for jobs and internships in upcoming projects.

A GLIMMER OF HOPE

Not everyone is doubtful.

Ockert Theron, director of iLogistics at Lüderitz, said the demand for project cargo has grown, mainly at planning and early-work stages. "Large-scale cargo volumes have not yet fully materialised," he said, "but enquiry levels, feasibility movements, and preparatory logistics activity have grown significantly compared to previous years."

Challenges remain.

Theron says port space and specialised equipment are the main bottlenecks. Labour skills are a secondary constraint, and customs processes work but need streamlining for higher volumes. Local content policies exist, but enforcement is inconsistent. Foreign firms handle high-risk segments, while local small medium enterprises (SMEs) manage support services.

Theron adds that the hardest skills to source locally include heavy-lift planning specialists, project cargo engineers,

health and safety professionals with megaproject experience, and advanced port logistics planners. Namibia lacks sector-specific options. Cash-flow pressures also affect SMEs due to long payment cycles, despite careful planning and banking ties. Delays threaten early investors with idle assets, making clear timelines and transitional work vital.

"For Lüderitz to handle full hydrogen logistics in 12 months, priorities include port upgrades, firm schedules, skills acceleration, government-industry coordination, and SME finance support," Theron said.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

Lüderitz mayor Brigitte Fredericks says the town council welcomes scrutiny to ensure local benefits. "At present, the green hydrogen programme remains in feasibility and early development," she said.

Fredericks said "direct impacts like permanent jobs, SME contracts, or municipal revenue are still limited."

Early wins include SME engagement in studies, assessments, and short-term environmental jobs.

The council pushes Hyphen for local content, skills development, and SME requirements. Fredericks also notes hurdles such as land zoning, housing, and bulk services. Fredericks said the council is updating spatial plans, partnering on infrastructure, aligning port logistics, and mapping skills with institutions.

"The municipality remains committed to ensuring the green hydrogen transition delivers real, inclusive, lasting benefits for local communities, while working responsibly within the realities of project timelines and development phases," she said.

STILL EARLY DAYS

Namibia Green Hydrogen Programme spokesperson Jona Musheko said that construction for Hyphen has not yet begun. "However, when everything proceeds according to plan, Hyphen has local content commitments, particularly in procurement," he says. He encourages communities across the region to prepare to participate.

Musheko notes that tangible benefits such as jobs and procurement opportunities will only materialise in the //Kharas region once construction follows the feasibility study and the investors' Final Investment Decision. "We will continue to engage communities through various platforms," he says. "We encourage residents to keep attending information-sharing sessions in preparation for the project's potential implementation."

NBR



Laws and institutions must outlive individuals

Last week, Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy, Modestus Amutse, tabled the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Amendment Bill, which seeks to transfer certain powers from the Minister to the President.

If passed, the Bill will effectively give President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah firm control of the upstream petroleum industry. This would be in addition to the authority she already exercises as Head of State, with executive powers over ministries through delegation.

Among other provisions, the Bill proposes transferring powers from the Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy to the Director-General of the Upstream Petroleum Unit in the Office of the President. It also seeks to shift powers from the Commissioner for Petroleum Affairs to the Deputy Director-General of the same Unit.

In essence, the Bill amends the Petroleum (Exploration and Production) Act of 1991 and introduces several significant changes. One of the major proposals is to formalise the establishment of the Upstream Petroleum Unit as a regulatory authority housed in the Office of the President. The Unit will be led by a Director-General and Deputy Director-General, who will oversee all upstream petroleum operations in the country.

Despite the motivations advanced by Amutse, some critical voices in Namibia are concerned that the proposed amendments could weaken parliamentary oversight and accountability over the executive, particularly in such a strategic and lucrative sector.

On the surface, the reasons given by both President Nandi-Ndaitwah and Amutse appear well-intentioned. The stated aim is to ensure that when oil revenues begin to flow, all Namibians benefit from the country's natural wealth. That is a noble objective.

However, a closer reading of the pro-

posed legislation raises an important question: are we shaping laws to suit individuals rather than strengthening institutions?

This is not the path Namibia should take.

Laws and institutions must outlive individuals. They must be designed to serve the greater good – not only for today, but for generations to come.

While the current President may act in good faith, constitutions and legal frameworks are not drafted for one leader. No one can predict how future presidents may exercise such concentrated powers over a highly lucrative industry.

The African continent offers cautionary tales. In Equatorial Guinea, long-serving President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and his family have maintained tight control over oil resources, a system widely criticised for patronage and the exclusion of ordinary citizens. Obiang has amassed immense personal wealth in the process.

Closer to home, Angola experienced significant hemorrhaging of national resources during the tenure of Eduardo dos Santos, with billions flowing to cronies and family members through the oil sector.

Namibia has built a reputation as a shining example of constitutionalism. It possesses one of the strongest constitutions on the continent. That framework already provides the necessary checks, balances and governance mechanisms to ensure natural resources are managed responsibly.

President Nandi-Ndaitwah does not need extraordinary centralisation of power to realise her vision of shared prosperity. Effective delegation, strong institutions and robust parliamentary oversight are sufficient safeguards to ensure that Namibia's oil wealth benefits all its people.

In matters of national resources, prudence must prevail over personality.

When a Personal Loan makes sense

Personal loans often get a reputation they do not deserve. They are blamed for overspending, financial stress and long repayment cycles. The truth is simpler. A personal loan is a tool, and like any tool, it only causes harm when it is used for the wrong job.

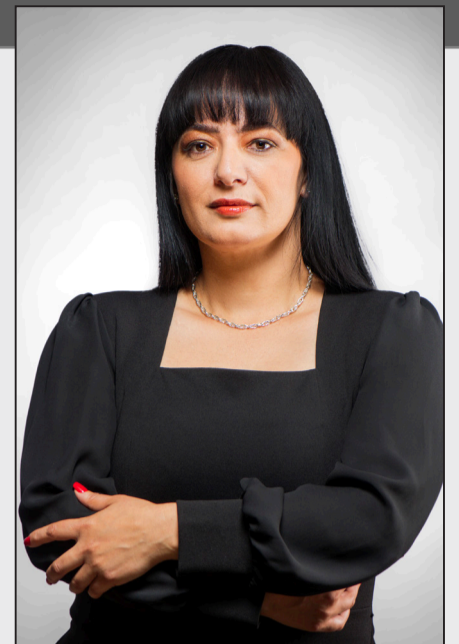
There are moments when a well-priced, well-managed loan can protect your stability, create opportunities and save you money over the long term. The key is to pause before signing and ask the right questions.

The first question is about purpose. Is this a need, a want or an emergency. Needs are the essential parts of life that keep everything else moving. A car repair that gets you safely to work. A medical gap that cannot wait for payday.

A fridge that stops working when you have a family to feed. Emergencies are the surprises that cannot be postponed.

Wants are the nice-to-have items that can be saved for. Loans are made for needs and emergencies; they are rarely the answer for wants. When you use debt for a want, you pay a premium that steals from your future self.

The second question is about cost. A loan should never be taken in isolation. Compare the interest rate, fees and repayment term to your other options.



< **Natasha Winkler, Managing Director Old Mutual Finance, Old Mutual Namibia**

If the loan replaces more expensive forms of debt, overdrafts, store accounts, revolving credit, you may end up paying far less overall. Consolidating costly debt into one structured loan with a fixed term can create a clear finish line and reduce the pressure of scattered repayments. The aim is not just affordability today but efficiency over time.

The third question is about impact. A good loan should make your life better, safer or more stable. Repairing a leaking roof before the rainy season can prevent thousands in damage later.

Funding a short course that boosts your earning power can change your income path. Settling an overdue bill that could escalate into legal action is not indulgence; it is protection. When a loan strengthens your position rather than weakening it, it becomes part of a healthy financial strategy.

The final question is discipline. Borrowing is a commitment you make to your future self. Only take on an amount you can repay comfortably. Set the debit order for the day your salary arrives. Do not pair the loan with new spending that cancels out the benefit. If the numbers feel tight, the solution is not a bigger loan; it is a smaller plan.

The loan should create breathing room, not pressure. Honesty in this step is what separates smart borrowing from stressful borrowing.

A personal loan is not a life raft or a lifestyle upgrade. It is a bridge: a temporary structure to help you cross a difficult patch or reach an opportunity you cannot access on your own. Used with intention and discipline, it strengthens your financial footing. Used carelessly, it becomes the very hole you were trying to escape.

The difference is not the product; it is the purpose. Keep your future self in the conversation and choose the path that brings you closer to stability, not further from it.

Laws and institutions must outlive individuals. They must be designed to serve the greater good – not only for today, but for generations to come.

Standard Bank introduces business training academy



< Gerhard Mukuahima

meaningfully to Namibia's nationally determined contributions."

The Academy provides practical insights and training across priority sustainability areas including, understanding sustainability and environmental, social, and governance principles. The Academy analyses how the above affect competitiveness, renewable energy options suitable for Namibian conditions, climate-smart agriculture and resource-efficient farming practices, water and wastewater management solutions and understanding and leveraging carbon markets.

Strategic account director at Microsoft, Terisha Maharaj said they are excited to work with Standard Bank on this transformative initiative

• STAFF WRITER

Standard Bank Namibia has introduced the Standard Bank Sustainability Academy to the Namibian market.

The online learning platform is designed to address the sustainability knowledge gap and equip businesses with practical and actionable sustainability solutions.

Head of Agribusiness at Standard Bank Namibia, Gerhard Mukuahima said while many local businesses recognise the importance of sustainability, the challenge

remains converting this awareness into real, implementable strategies.

"As Namibia experiences rapid transformation across key sectors such as agriculture, energy, mining and logistics, sustainability is no longer optional, it is an economic imperative," he said.

Mukuahima said the Sustainability Academy is a timely and practical resource that empowers Namibian enterprises to future-proof their operations, reduce risk and seize new opportunities in a climate-conscious global economy.

Mukuahima added that, "by providing this free learning resource, not only to our clients but to all Namibian businesses, we aim to equip users with the knowledge they need to grow sustainably, operate more efficiently and contribute



"Our training platform is designed to democratise access to learning, and this collaboration perfectly exemplifies how technology can drive meaningful change across Africa"

"Our training platform is designed to democratise access to learning, and this collaboration perfectly exemplifies how technology can drive meaningful change across Africa," she said.

She added that "by providing Standard Bank's clients with accessible, scalable sustainability education, we're helping to build a more sustainable future for the continent while empowering businesses to thrive in the evolving global economy."

The Academy recently completed a successful pilot across several African markets, with strong uptake among Business and Commercial Banking clients. Learnings and feedback from the pilot phase were used to refine the content now available to Namibian businesses.

Standardbank said the Academy also aligns with Namibia's broader national aspirations including the green industrialisation agenda, the energy transition, agricultural climate resilience and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. **NBR**



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