

NAMIBIA BUSINESS REVIEW

Where Business meets ideas

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Namibia wants to co-own airline with Botswana

Just as we lay steel across the Kalahari Desert, we will also lay flight paths across African skies, together"



- TIRI MASAWI and
- VERIPUAMI KANGUMINE

Namibia is in discussions with Botswana over a proposal to jointly establish and co-own a national airline.

The Ministry of Works and Transport says the initiative remains at a negotiation and consultation stage, with no timelines set for final decisions.

Ministry of Works and Transport Executive Director Jonas Sheelongo told *Namibia Business Review* on Monday that discussions between the two governments are ongoing and still open-ended.

"We are definitely consulting with our Botswana counterparts and the consultations have been on for some time and might take time but we have not set deadlines on when we can complete these because this is a negotiation and these take time," he said.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 2

Namibian content creators turn to foreign accounts for income

- VERIPUAMI KANGUMINE

Namibian content creators are now finding creative methods of being paid for their work. These include creating social media accounts such as TikTok, Facebook and YouTube abroad in order to earn a living.

Historically, Namibia has struggled to monetise TikTok,

Meta and YouTube content due to a lack of local payment integration, specifically missing support for platforms like PayPal, Stripe and Apple Pay.

Worsening the situation is the reality that major technology companies often exclude Namibia due to a perceived lack of a business case, small market size and missing regulatory frameworks

— an issue the government says it is actively engaging in negotiations on as of 2025/2026 to open these revenue streams.

Canada-based Namibian digital content creator Sophie Tjilepo, who has been creating content for over a decade, says many creators are opting to open their accounts in Canada, the United States (US) or Europe in order to

be monetised.

"Facebook pays content creators once they have a professional account and have submitted an invitation to Meta to be monetised, while YouTube pays when you have over 1 000 subscribers," she said.

Tjilepo explained that while she earns money through paid partnerships and collaborations with

small businesses on TikTok, the platform has also not been monetised in Canada due to security concerns.

The US acquired a majority stake in TikTok from its Chinese parent company, ByteDance, in 2025 after threatening to ban the platform due to national security concerns.

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He added that Namibia is also exploring how best to structure and manage a possible airline, including engagement with experienced carriers on the continent.

"When it comes to the issue of speaking to other experienced airlines I would suggest that you give us time to brief the nation when we are ready to talk on that issue," Sheelongo said.

Sources familiar with the matter indicated that Namibia is also considering lessons from established airlines such as Ethiopian Airlines and Kenya Airways to guide future management and avoid past mistakes in state-owned airlines.

Sheelongo confirmed that no decision has been made yet on the operational structure of the proposed airline, nor has a name been agreed upon.

He said consultations remain wide-ranging, including discussions on airline management models.

To date, the government has allocated N\$20 million for feasibility studies, while a technical committee has been established to guide the process.

ERONGO SHOWDOWN TALKS

The discussions were intensified last week by Namibia's Minister of works and transport Veikko Nekundi and Botswana's Minister of transport and infrastructure Noah Salake, following a meeting between the two countries' ministers and technical teams in the Erongo Region.

The meeting was held alongside dis-

cussions on progress of the N\$16 billion Trans-Kalahari Railway (TKR) project.

At the meeting, Nekundi said Namibia's intention is to proceed with the airline plan in partnership with Botswana.

"Let me announce here, in this joint meeting, that Namibia intends to establish a national airline jointly with Botswana, backed by a strategic partner, as pronounced by our Heads of State, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia and Duma Gideon Boko, President of the Republic of Botswana, during the Namibia-Botswana Bi-National Commission," Nekundi said.

He said the airline would strengthen transport relations between the two countries and improve regional connectivity.

The proposed airline is expected to replace Air Namibia, which was liquidated in March 2021 after decades of financial difficulties.

The Windhoek High Court finalised the liquidation process, leaving more than 600 employees jobless and the airline with debts of nearly N\$5.4 billion against assets of about N\$1.04 billion.

Air Namibia had accumulated over N\$5 billion in debt, while government support to the airline exceeded N\$8 billion over the years.

The carrier struggled with sustainability, operating with a large workforce of about 600 to 700 employees and relying heavily on state bailouts while maintaining limited profitable routes.

Nekundi said the new airline would deepen bilateral relations and improve travel convenience.

"Just as we lay steel across the Kalahari Desert, we will also lay flight paths across African skies, together. As Government,

we pledge that community consultations will take place throughout the project life-cycle," he said.

On the broader transport corridor, Nekundi stressed urgency in implementation.

"It is a project that will happen with and for our people. Have we not deliberated long enough? We have studied, we have reviewed, and have we assessed? The time for action is now, and history will not be kind to those who delay when destiny is calling," he said.

Botswana's Salake also confirmed readiness to proceed with both the airline and railway initiatives.

"The airline will cement our relationship in the transport sector - connecting Windhoek and Gaborone directly to each other and to key regional and international destinations. Just as we lay rail across the Kalahari Desert, we will also lay flight paths across African skies together," he said.

PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS AND TECHNICAL PLANNING

Namibia is expected to engage further with experienced international carriers as part of planning.

Officials confirmed that the operational structure and branding of the proposed airline are still under discussion.

A technical committee has been appointed to oversee preparations, while feasibility studies continue under the allocated N\$20 million budget.

The Namibian reported last year that 16 Namibian companies had expressed interest in contributing to the airline project.

CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL AVIATION

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) representative César Velarde said the aviation industry remains financially challenging worldwide.

He was speaking at a workshop organised by the Namibia Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) in partnership with the Swiss government on sustainable aviation fuel held in Windhoek last month.

Velarde noted that global airline profit margins remain thin and are expected to stabilise at around 3.9% in 2025 and 2026, based on International Air Transport Association and ICAO-aligned data.

FORMER AIR NAMIBIA STAFF SEEK RETURN

Former Air Namibia employee spokesperson Renier Bougard said ex-staff are hopeful they could be reintegrated into the new airline if it is established.

He said their contracts provided for priority re-employment if the national carrier is reinstated.

"When we met with the minister we informed him that our contract stated that once the airline was back we would get the first call back," he said.

Bougard also questioned why former employees should not be reinstated if the new airline continues under the same branding structure.

He said the 630 former employees have struggled financially since the airline's liquidation in 2021.

The former employees are set to appear in the Supreme Court on 3 July in an appeal related to severance payments ordered by the High Court.

"We miss our regular income and the benefits of not having to survive hand outs, from hand to mouth," he said. **NBR**

CONTENT CREATORS FROM PAGE 1

However, this has not stopped content creators from creating their accounts in Canada to benefit from TikTok LIVE monetisation, gifts, brand sponsorships, affiliate marketing and selling digital products.

"I work with small businesses and get paid through partnerships for advertising their business to my followers because TikTok is not monetised in Canada. Canada has a few issues just like back home in Namibia," she said.

Tjilepo explained that Facebook and YouTube accounts are monetised in Canada but require authentication and approval from Meta, which can take a long time.

Meta owns social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Messenger and Threads, which require authentication of national identity documents to verify accounts.

She warned local content creators to verify the credibility of businesses they collaborate with and to avoid working with entities that do not have credible organisational email addresses.

Local digital content creator Wellem Kapenda says he is aware of Namibian creators using foreign accounts to access TikTok's creator funds, ad revenue or subscription features.

"I've seen some creators use foreign accounts just to access those features, and while it works for some, it also shows that there's a bigger gap that still needs to be addressed when it comes to Africa as a whole," he said.

Kapenda says content creators should look beyond views and likes and instead approach content creation as a business venture by working with brands and executing campaigns rather than relying on platform monetisation alone.

"Going forward, I believe it will be a combination of things: brands investing more in local creators, creators building stronger

personal brands, and hopefully platforms opening up more monetisation opportunities for African markets," he said.

SOCIAL MEDIA STAR WITH EMPTY POCKETS

Unemployed education graduate Sophia Nangula (27), known as Gab Taxii on TikTok, is one of many young Namibian content creators who continue to create content but cannot earn from their work.

Nangula mostly creates content on TikTok, and her most popular video generated over 4.1 million views.

However, her dream seems far-fetched as each day presents a new challenge in supporting herself financially, as she has been unemployed since graduating from the University of Namibia three years ago.

"As a Namibian unemployed graduate, this has emotionally drained me. I even had to make a video about it. Hitting 4.1 million views was so unexpected because it was just a thought that ran through my mind. Little did I know it would go viral," she said.

She says being popular and creating content that does not pay the bills is very frustrating.

"This one really hurt me. I even had to Google how much I would have made from it. Lack of monetisation can be discouraging to unemployed youth. You end up asking yourself if you are wasting your time," she said.

Nangula explained that she began creating content as a hobby while battling depression due to unemployment despite having a degree.

However, when her video went viral, she discovered the Creators Reward Program that pays creatives for their content.

She says she cannot wait to earn money from TikTok's Creators Reward Program when Namibia joins other African countries.

As of March, Rwanda became the first African country to monetise TikTok so that

creators can earn directly through the Creators Rewards Program.

The programme, which also enables monetary gifts and brand partnerships, has been available to creators in South Africa, Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria.

Another TikTok content creator, Justin Moya, whose videos have garnered over 1 138 353 views, says the lack of monetisation has also limited his ability to earn from the creator fund.

Moya, known as Cheetah Kingdom, works part-time as a cheetah keeper at the Cheetah Conservation Fund.

He went viral on three occasions after videos of animals such as a black mamba, cheetah and puff adder received over 40.8 million, 9.5 million and 3.5 million views respectively.

"I have over 1.1 million total views across my TikTok videos, with a follower count in the hundreds of thousands, including 201.7 thousand followers.

"The lack of monetisation on TikTok has limited my ability to earn direct revenue from my videos, despite having over a million views and one video reaching 48 million views," he said.

President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah last week announced that the creative industry created 1 240 temporary jobs in catering, transportation, hospitality, crew, cast and production, with local hires earning about N\$18.86 million.

Local and foreign productions reportedly contributed approximately N\$47 million to the Namibian economy.

"Overall, both foreign and local film productions contributed an estimated N\$47 million to the Namibian economy.

To further bolster the industry's growth, the Namibia Film Commission invests N\$200 000 each year in skills development programmes through a three-year partnership with the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST)," she said.

NATIONAL PAYMENT SYSTEM

The Bank of Namibia (BoN) has adopted a National Payment System (NPS) framework which allows international payment platforms such as PayPal and Apple Pay, as well as social media platforms, to participate in domestic, regional and continental payment projects.

Ministry of Information and Communication Technology executive director Linda Aipinge-Nakale says the country has a regulatory framework in place to ensure the safe operation of income generated through social media platforms.

"Namibia currently has adequate laws governing cross-border digital earnings, particularly income generated through social media and online content creation.

"Section 2 of the Payment System Management Act, 2023 mandates the Bank of Namibia to ensure the safe, secure, efficient and effective operation of the national payment system," she said.

According to Aipinge-Nakale, the system governs cross-border electronic funds transfers (EFTs) to ensure risks are identified, monitored, reported and properly managed.

She added that the BoN has amended user fees, charges and Cross-border Common Monetary Area (CMA) low-value transaction standards to reduce costs and processing times.

A THRIVING VENTURE

Khaby Lame is the top African TikToker, with over 162 million followers, and rose to global fame for his silent comedic reactions to life-hack videos.

Peace Anpee, a Nigerian creator known for dance and comedic content, is among the most followed African TikTokers with about 18 million followers.

Endurance Dedzo from Ghana ranks among the top creators, with over 13 million followers. **NBR**

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• TIRI MASAWI

The Social Security Commission (SSC) is developing an online system that will allow communities, schools and organisations to apply for funding of up to N\$100 000.

Namibians to access up to N\$100 000 Social Security grants online

This information was revealed in a video screened at the Cinema at Maerua Mall during the launching of SSC products.

The Commission's Communications Officer, Anthea Olivier said the new platform forms part of their efforts to make it easier for communities to access support through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme.

"Our new CSR portal will allow individuals, schools and organisations to apply online for funding from N\$10 000 up to N\$100 000," she said on Friday.

In 2025, the Commission paid out nearly N\$1 million through that process. The system is expected to go live within two months. The policy targets individuals and institutions that can contribute to the Commission's objectives and Namibia's broader development goals. Its CSR programme focuses on education and skills development, youth and sports, disaster mitigation, health and safety, upgrades to public health facilities, support for vulnerable and marginalised communities such as the San, Ovazemba, Topnar and Ovatwa, as well as environmental conservation, arts and culture, and other urgent social responsibility needs.

Olivier said the online system will replace the current manual application process used to distribute funds.

"Once in place, the online system is expected to make applications quicker, simpler and accessible from anywhere.

Now, everything will be done online quick, simple, and accessible from anywhere," she said. Anthea said the Commission believes the move will improve efficiency and widen access to funding, especially for communities in remote areas.

Nearly N\$1 million paid out in 2025



> Social Security Commission (SSC) CEO, Milka Mungunda and Anthea Olivier.

"Support is now at your fingertips," Anthea said. Speaking at the launch, minister of justice and labour relations Fillemon Wise Immanuel said SSC is a trendsetter in digital innovation within the public sector.

"Digital channels will ensure faster, more accessible and equitable services while contributing to socio-economic development, strengthening social protection and improving access to justice," he said.

Immanuel urged institutions across Namibia to embrace digital innovation as a catalyst for socio economic development.

INTERNAL TEAM SAVES SSC N\$5 MILLION

The SSC says its internal information and communication technology team has developed digital services that are saving the organisation more than N\$5 million.

The Commission has introduced a 24-hour online portal called mySSC, a Self-Service Point (SSP) machine that functions like an ATM, and Thuso, a chatbot that allows members of the public to ask questions and receive responses at any time of the day.

The development was revealed last week by SSC general manager for information and communication technology, Tersia Gowases, during the launch of the Commission's digital services.

"The systems were developed internally and save the company about N\$5 million a year compared to if this was done by an external company," Gowases said.

She said the achievement reflects the organisation's growing internal capacity and focus on building solutions tailored to its operational needs.

"What makes this journey especially meaningful is that it has been driven by our own people.

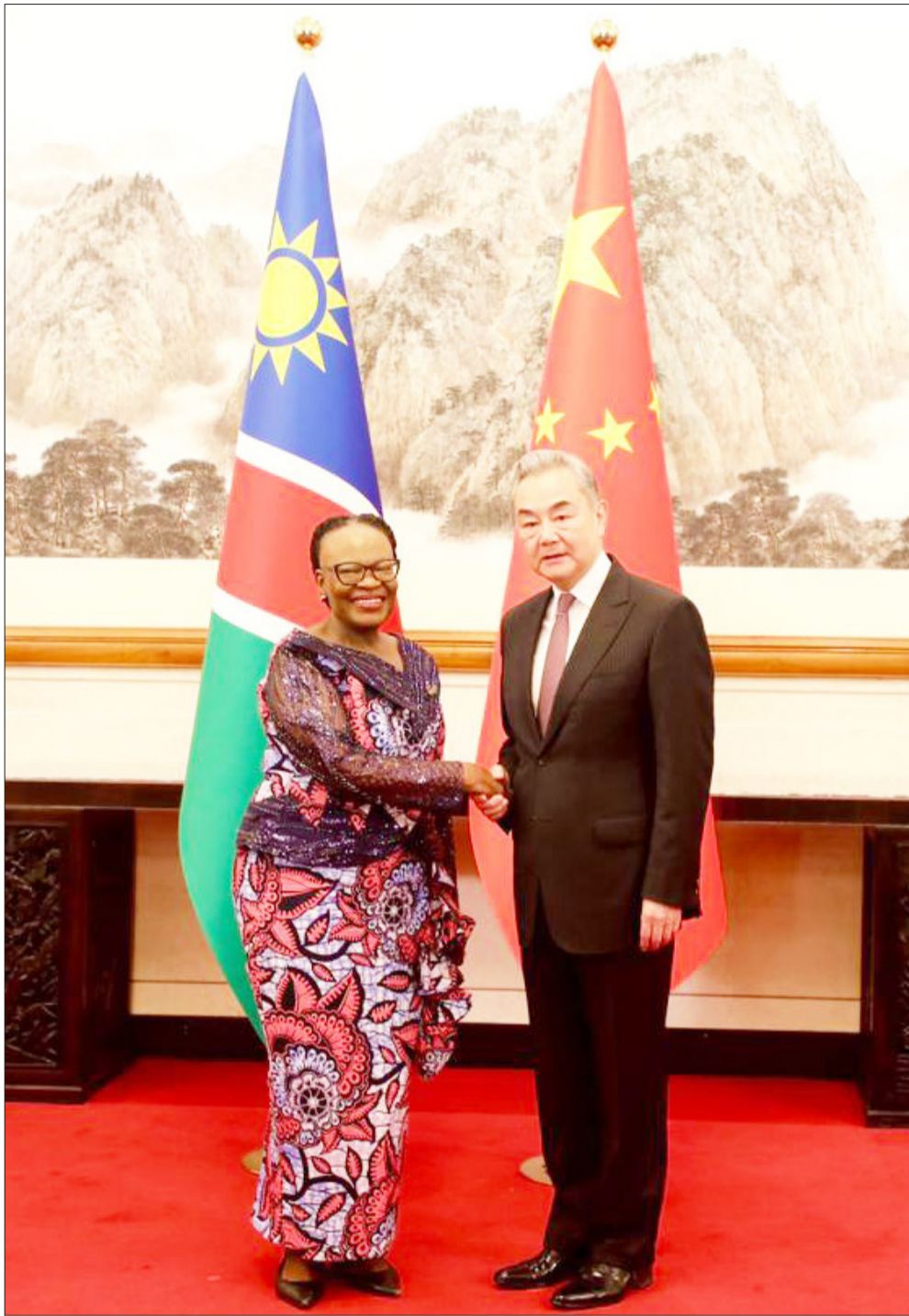
We have grown internal capability, built solutions around our real operational needs, and created systems that belong to SSC," she said.

Gowases added that in-house innovation strengthens ownership and long-term sustainability.

"It allows us to move smarter, save strategically, and keep building for the future with confidence," she said. **NBR**



Namibia pushes China on mineral value addition drive



> Minister of international relations and trade Selma Ashipala-Musavyi and China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi.

• STAFF WRITER

Namibia has raised the need for greater value addition of its natural resources during high-level talks with China, as the country seeks to expand local processing and industrialisation of its minerals.

This is contained in a joint communiqué released by both countries following International Relations and Trade Minister Selma Ashipala-Musavyi's official visit to China from 11 to 18 April.

During the visit, Ashipala-Musavyi met China's Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, who is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China and the Central Committee.

According to the communiqué, Namibia emphasised the importance of cooperation to increase the added value of natural resources, including critical minerals such as uranium.

"This is to be achieved by promoting processing, conversion and related downstream cooperation, thereby extending the value chain for local benefits," the communiqué said.

The two countries said the goal is to support industrialisation, strengthen local processing capacity, create jobs, and deepen Namibia's integration into global industrial chains.

Namibia's broader value addition push also covers key sectors such as green hydrogen, tourism, mining, oil and gas.

China, in turn, reaffirmed its support for Namibia's economic and social development, particularly its industrialisation and agricultural modernisation efforts. It also expressed readiness to assist Namibia in implementing the Sixth National Development Plan and achieving Vision 2030. Namibia welcomed China's economic cooperation initiatives, including its announcement of zero-tariff measures.

The communiqué further stated that Namibia continues to view China as a strategic economic partner and welcomes Chinese companies to invest and operate in the country, including participation in major economic cooperation projects.

Both countries also committed to strengthening cultural and youth exchanges through the 2026 China-Africa Year of People-to-People Exchanges.

On global governance, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism and international cooperation, stressing that global challenges should be addressed collectively through inclusive dialogue rather than unilateral action.

They also pledged to deepen cooperation in multilateral platforms to amplify the voice of developing countries and promote South-South cooperation.

China commended Namibia's support for multilateralism, fair international governance, free trade, and Africa's continental integration. Both sides also reflected on the long-standing friendship between the two countries, noting continued progress in bilateral relations and practical cooperation. **NBR**



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Bank Windhoek launches WhatsApp banking channel

• STAFF WRITER

Bank Windhoek has launched its WhatsApp Banking channel, a digital service they said is designed to make everyday banking simpler, more accessible and convenient.

The channel was launched yesterday in Windhoek.

They became the first in Namibia to introduce WhatsApp Banking, building on a track record of digital innovation that includes the country's first cell phone banking launch in 2006.

Bank Windhoek managing director James Chapman said the launch is a milestone for the financial institution and for the continued evolution of banking and digital payments in Namibia.

"Digital transformation is about making banking simpler and more accessible. By leveraging WhatsApp, we are bringing banking into the daily conversations of our customers and placing it where they already communicate and connect," Chapman said.

Chapman said the institution's WhatsApp Banking responds to this shift by enabling customers to bank through a



< Minister of information and communication technology Emma Theofelus

channel many already use daily, making support more immediate and mobile.

He said the launch forms part of the bank's strategy to build digital ecosystems centred on convenience and accessibility, reducing reliance on physical proximity to branches and helping address distance-related barriers for customers across the country.

"In banking, trust is our currency, and we have designed this channel with that responsibility at its core," Chapman said.

Minister of information and communication technology Emma Theofelus, in a speech delivered on her behalf by executive director Linda Aipinge-Nakale said the launch reflects the growing convergence of banking.

She said the launch also reflects a growing communication and digital technology, which is reshaping how people access services and manage their finances.

Aipinge-Nakale said digital progress must be pursued responsibly, noting that as banking and communication converge, cybersecurity, data protection and digital trust become even more important.

"Greater convenience must never come at the expense of safety," she said. Aipinge-Nakale said that the government and regulators will continue working with industry to support innovation while safeguarding consumers and the integrity of the digital ecosystem.

She congratulated the bank's board, management and project teams on the launch.

In a statement, Bank Windhoek urged customers to remain vigilant and never share sensitive information such as PINs or one-time passwords with anyone, including people claiming to represent the bank.

Through WhatsApp Banking, customers can securely interact with the Bank Windhoek via a familiar messaging interface after saving the number, +264 81 140 2950. **NBR**



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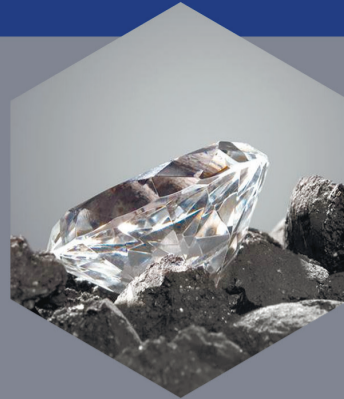
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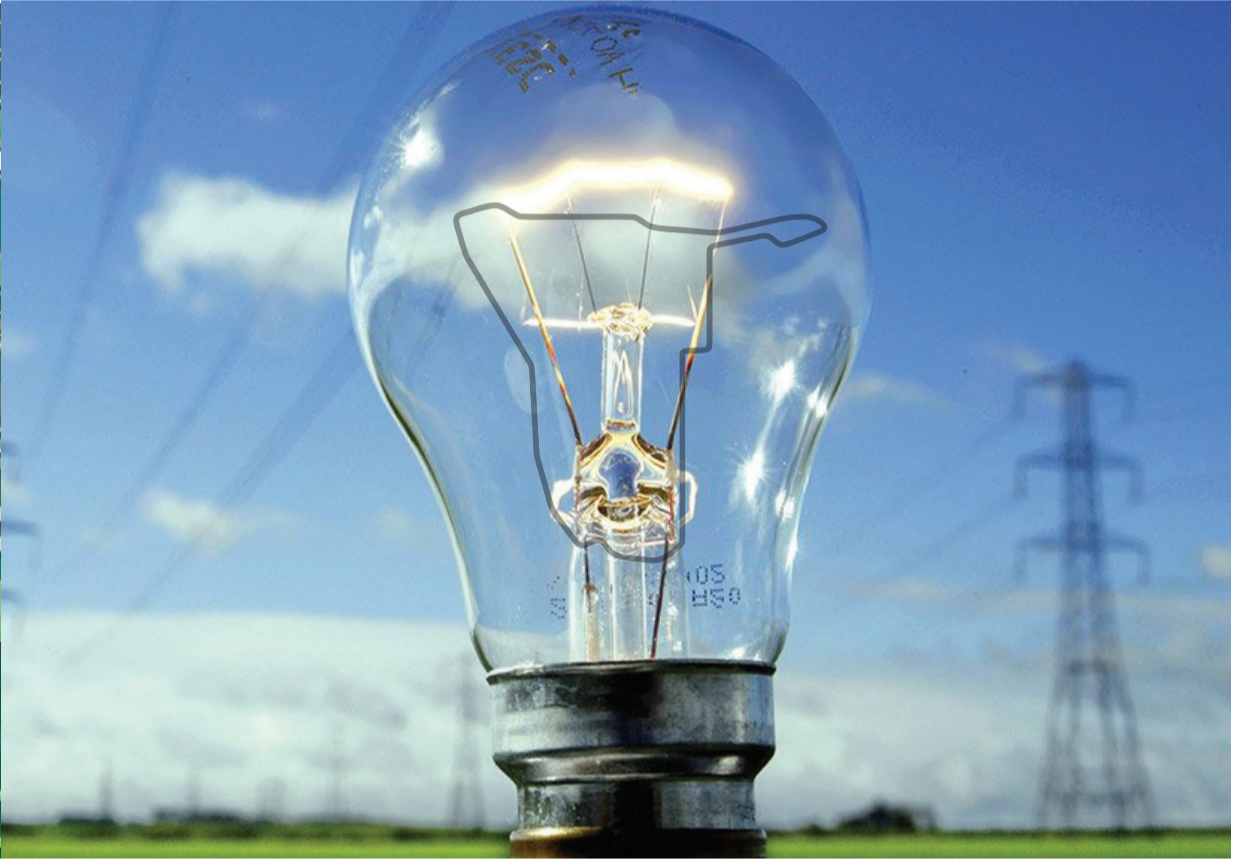
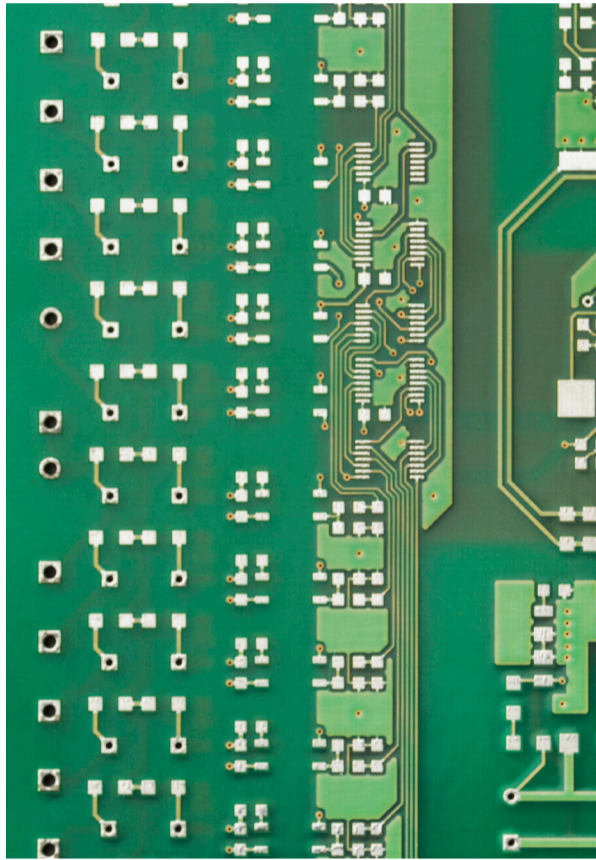
In banking, trust is our currency, and we have designed this channel with that responsibility at its core"



“Despite this progress, about 432 000 households remain unconnected to the electricity grid



ECB to spend N\$23m to reshape Namibia’s power sector over five years



• TIRI MASAWI

The Electricity Control Board (ECB) will spend about N\$23 million over the next five years to implement its Integrated Strategic Business Plan (ISBP), aimed at strengthening Namibia’s energy sector through innovation, sustainability and inclusive growth.

ECB head of strategy and projects, Lydia Mlunga told *Namibia Business Review* last week that the plan is anchored on six strategic themes and reflects the regulator’s commitment to a secure, affordable and sustainable energy future for all Namibians.

She said the themes focus on strengthening energy regulation, improving regulatory impact, enhancing regional integration, adapting to evolving markets, improving stakeholder management, and ensuring organisational sustainability.

“The ECB is enhancing its oversight of cost structures across the electricity value chain to ensure that tariffs remain fair and reflective of efficient operations. The ECB has

completed the development of the Performance-Based Multi-Year Pricing Tariff methodology.

This revised tariff setting approach incorporates performance efficiency indicators, enabling the industry to anticipate tariffs over the short to medium term,” she said.

Her remarks come at a time when the ECB’s annual report for the 2024/25 financial year shows that about 1 956 households were electrified through a government intervention programme at a cost of N\$75.5 million.

Despite this progress, about 432 000 households remain unconnected to the electricity grid.

Mlunga said the ECB is committed to fully implementing the strategic plan to execute its mandate effectively. She added that the regulatory framework will be finalised with full stakeholder buy-in, particularly from both conventional power producers and independent power producers driving renewable energy.

She said efforts to improve generation capacity and reduce electricity imports have already resulted in several projects with a combined capacity of about 250 megawatts being implemented.

These include the 40MW Otjikoto biomass project, the 10MW Otjikoto solar power project, and the Erongo Battery Storage System, which is expected to generate between 52MW and 75MW.

“On energy security, we are intensifying supply-security monitoring and supporting the implementation of the National Integrated Resource Plan. This includes enabling increased local generation and diversifying our energy mix to include base load power generation. The ECB will continue strengthening compliance by industry players to ensure reliability of electricity supply,” she said.

Mlunga said the ECB is also working with government, regional electricity distributors and other stakeholders to expand access to electricity in a balanced and sustainable way. This includes the implementation of the Namibia Energy Compact under Mission 300, which aims to increase electricity access from 60% to 70% by 2030.

She said the ECB is also developing off-grid regulations and requiring licensees to contribute to electrification through licence conditions to ensure underserved and rural communities are not left behind.

“We are also promoting equitable access through the development of off-grid regulations and mandating licensees to contribute towards access via licence conditions.

Through these measures, we aim to ensure that underserved and rural communities are not left behind, while maintaining the quality, reliability, and safety of electricity supply,” she said.

Mlunga further said the ECB will introduce more structured stakeholder engagement platforms, including consultative forums, public participation processes and improved communication channels in line with its Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

She said digitalisation will be central to improving transparency and responsiveness.

“By leveraging modern ICT systems, we will enhance transparency, improve access to regulatory information, and ensure more responsive engagement with stakeholders.

This approach reinforces accountability and ensures that regulatory decisions are informed by diverse stakeholder inputs,” she said.

On the energy transition, Mlunga said the shift to renewable energy is essential for Namibia.

She said the ECB is developing regulatory frameworks to support the national energy mix, strengthening grid codes, improving system planning and supporting investments in technologies that enhance grid flexibility.

“At the same time, we ensure that tariff impacts are carefully managed so that the transition remains just and inclusive for all consumers.

Our approach is to balance sustainability with reliability and cost-effectiveness,” she said. **NBR**



EDITORIAL

Necessity is the mother of invention

In this world, human beings never stop trying. The old adage reminds us that we begin to die the moment we stop learning. And so, learn we must.

No matter how tough circumstances become, how severely the economy tests us, or how often life knocks us down, the only real option is to keep trying. That persistence is part of what makes youthful exuberance such a powerful and exciting phase. It is in this spirit that young people stretch the limits of their abilities, test their resilience, and explore every possible avenue to survive and succeed.

In this regard, Namibia's local content creators deserve recognition. Faced with the harsh reality of being "poor celebrities," producing relevant, engaging content yet earning little from it, they continue to push forward. And push forward they do.

This week offers a glimpse into how many have begun finding innovative ways to monetise their work. Not through conventional routes, and certainly not by waiting for government support, which has yet to fully materialise.

Instead, young Namibians are leveraging global platforms: TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, and X to showcase their creativity and keep the world connected to Namibia. But to earn from these platforms, many are forced to register accounts outside the country, in places like the United Kingdom, South Africa, and the United States.

That is the level of ingenuity at play. It is a necessity, quite literally, driving invention.

But what has pushed young people to such lengths to seek opportunity beyond Namibia's borders, even in the digital space? The answer is simple: Namibia is not yet positioned to adequately reward their efforts.

Recently, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah highlighted the potential of the creative

industry, noting that it has generated around 1 240 temporary jobs across sectors such as catering, transport, hospitality, and production. These opportunities reportedly translated into about N\$18.86 million in local earnings, while combined local and foreign productions contributed roughly N\$47 million to the economy.

These figures point to a clear reality: content creation is not just culturally valuable, it is economically significant. With the right systems in place, it could provide meaningful income for many young Namibians.

However, structural barriers remain. Namibia has long struggled to monetise content on platforms like TikTok, Meta, and YouTube, largely due to the absence of local payment integration systems. The lack of support for services such as PayPal, Stripe, and Apple Pay continues to limit creators' ability to earn directly.

Compounding this is the perception among major technology companies that Namibia presents a small market with limited business incentives, alongside gaps in regulatory frameworks. The government has indicated that it is engaging these platforms to unlock revenue streams, but progress has been slow.

This situation calls for urgency. The government must fast-track its engagements with global content platforms and payment providers to remove these barriers and unlock opportunities for young people. While recent efforts are a step in the right direction, they risk being seen as too little, too late. Still, progress, however gradual must be encouraged.

We therefore urge the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to intensify its efforts. Namibia's young creators are already proving their resilience and innovation. What they need now is an enabling environment that allows them to turn creativity into sustainable livelihoods.



Content creation is not just culturally valuable, it is economically

Red meat diplomacy: Why Namibia must treat cattle like crops



• ALBERTUS AOCHAMUB

In her 2026 State of the Nation Address, President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah reaffirmed the centrality of value addition to Namibia's economic future.

The livestock sector:

- Supports around 70% of livelihoods
- Sustains over 57,000 jobs across the value chain
- Contributes up to 6.2% of GDP when processing is included

This is not a marginal sector; it is a national economic backbone.

Yet, despite this, Namibia continues to export significant volumes of cattle on the hoof. Each animal exported live represents lost domestic processing, lost jobs, and lost foreign exchange.

We are exporting value we should be capturing at home.

As a country, Namibia has already proven that smart agricultural policy can shape markets, protect producers, and build local industry. The model exists. It works. And it is time we apply it where it matters most, the red meat sector.

Through the Namibia Agronomic Board (NAB), Namibia has successfully implemented a simple but powerful principle: *when local supply is sufficient, imports are restricted to protect domestic production and value addition.*

This approach has strengthened horticulture, supported farmers, and encouraged agro-processing. It is not ideological protectionism; it is pragmatic economic policy.

The question now is unavoidable: Why do we not apply the same logic to cattle?

The Policy Contradiction

Namibia protects its vegetable farmers when local supply is adequate but allows its cattle to leave the country unprocessed, even when local abattoirs have capacity.

This is not a market failure. It is a policy gap. If we are serious about "Growth at Home," then red meat must move from production-led thinking to value-chain discipline.

From NAB to Red Meat: A Practical Policy Roadmap

Namibia does not need to reinvent policy; it needs to adapt what already works.

A Livestock Value Retention Scheme could provide that bridge.

1. Threshold-Based Export Controls

Introduce a clear, rules-based system:

- When local abattoirs have unused capacity limit > **live exports**
- When genuine surplus exists > **allow controlled exports**

This mirrors the NAB approach: protect local value when it is at risk.

2. A Minimum Value-Retention Threshold

A practical extension of this approach would be the introduction of a minimum value-retention threshold for livestock exports. Under such a framework, cattle below a defined live weight, representing unfinished animals with significant remaining value, would not be eligible for export. These are precisely the animals that should be feedlotted, finished, and processed locally, where Namibia captures the full economic benefit.

Rather than a blunt restriction, a tiered system could be introduced:

- Lower-weight animals: retained for domestic value addition
- Transitional weights: exported under controlled conditions or levies
- Fully finished cattle: eligible for export in simple terms: Namibia should not export cattle before it exports value.

3. Seasonal Flexibility

Livestock markets are not static. Policy must reflect that.

- Allow exports during drought-induced offloading

- Restrict exports when local processors are under-supplied

This ensures the system is responsive, not rigid.

4. Incentivise Local Slaughter

Restrictions alone are not enough. Farmers respond to price signals.

Policy must include:

- Competitive pricing frameworks
- Transport support into formal markets
- Targeted support for communal producers

The objective is simple: Make local value addition the most attractive economic option.

5. Export Levy for Industry Development

Where live exports do occur, Namibia should still capture value.

A modest levy on live exports could fund:

- Feedlot expansion
- Cold chain infrastructure
- Northern communal area integration

This ensures that even exported cattle contribute to domestic industry growth.

6. Align with Biosecurity and Market Access

The SONA rightly emphasised the importance of protecting Namibia's animal health status, including measures against Foot and Mouth Disease.

A value retention approach strengthens this position:

- Better traceability
- Stronger quality control
- Enhanced export credibility

This is not just agricultural policy; it is trade diplomacy.

Red Meat as Economic Diplomacy

Namibia's beef is globally respected because of:

- Its disease-free status
- Its traceability systems
- Its processing standards

But exporting cattle on the hoof undermines this positioning. It shifts Namibia from a premium exporter of processed beef to a supplier of raw livestock.

No country builds a strong export brand by exporting its value chain.

A Moment for Policy Coherence

The direction from the government is clear: value addition, industrialisation, and economic resilience.

The NAB has shown that Namibia can:

- Use policy to shape markets
- Protect domestic production
- Build local industry

The red meat sector now requires the same clarity.

This is not about banning exports. It is about disciplining them in the national interest.

Conclusion: From Cattle to Strategy

Namibia must decide whether cattle are:

- A commodity to be exported at the earliest opportunity, or
- A strategic asset to be processed, branded, and leveraged globally

The difference is policy.

If vegetables deserve protection when Namibia can supply itself, then surely cattle, our most strategic agricultural asset, deserve the same level of policy intelligence.

In that context, Namibia has already shown that smart borders can build strong industries. The next step is clear: treat cattle like crops and turn red meat into a pillar of economic diplomacy.

* Albertus Aochamub is the interim Chief Executive Officer of Meatco.



Malaysia deepens Africa engagement with Namibia trade and energy talks



• SEGUN ADEYEMI

Malaysia is seeking to strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with Namibia as the country's Minister of International Relations and Trade, Selma Ashipala-Musavyi, begins a two-day working visit to Malaysia from 20 to 21 April, Writes Business Insider Africa.

Ashipala-Musavyi is expected to meet Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Mohamad Hasan, for discussions centred on expanding cooperation across sectors, including energy, trade, education, health-care and capacity building. Both sides are also set to exchange views on global developments, with particular attention to ongoing tensions in the Middle East.

The visit reflects a broader push by Malaysia to diversify its economic partnerships beyond traditional markets, while

Namibia is looking to strengthen trade and investment links with Asian economies.

Trade between the two countries remains relatively modest but shows signs of potential growth. In 2025, total bilateral trade reached \$92.4 million, with Malaysia importing goods worth \$85.1 million and exporting \$7.2 million. The trade balance heavily favours Namibia, driven largely by Malaysian demand for raw materials.

Diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Namibia were established in 1990, and cooperation has since expanded through bilateral engagements and multilateral platforms. However, analysts note that economic ties have yet to match the political goodwill between the two nations.

While no major agreements have been formally announced ahead of the visit, officials say the talks are expected to lay the groundwork for deeper collaboration, particularly in the energy and trade sectors, which are seen as key to both countries' long-term growth strategies.



> Malaysia's Foreign Minister, Mohamad Hasana

REGULATORY REFORMS AND MINING EXPLORATION

In another development, recent data shows Namibia has received more than 800 new exploration licence applications, underscoring growing international competition to secure access to strategic resources such as lithium, uranium and rare metals.

Authorities are also overhauling regulatory systems, introducing digital platforms to speed up approvals and reduce administrative backlogs.

The country is seeking to expand beyond its traditional strengths in uranium and diamonds into a broader critical min-

erals ecosystem, positioning itself as a key supplier in global supply chains linked to the energy transition.

Analysts say this shift could reshape Namibia's external partnerships, making Asian economies such as Malaysia increasingly important as sources of investment, technology and downstream processing capacity.

While no major agreements have been announced, the visit is expected to lay the groundwork for deeper cooperation, particularly in the energy and mining sectors, now central to Namibia's economic strategy and global relevance.

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