



BUSINESS INNOVATION NAMIBIA

*Showcasing innovation in Namibia's Business
& Financial Sectors*



2024 - 2025





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Editor's Note

Welcome to the latest edition of Business Innovation Namibia, where we celebrate the spirit of creativity and ingenuity in our vibrant business and financial sectors. As we align our publication with the release of the 2024 Global Innovation Index (GII) by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), it is crucial to reflect on our current standing—ranked 102 out of 133 economies. While this ranking provides us with valuable insights, it also serves as a clarion call for increased innovation in Namibia.

In a world characterized by rapid technological advancements and evolving market dynamics, the need for innovation has never been more pressing. Businesses that embrace change and harness new technologies are not only better positioned to thrive but also contribute significantly to the economic development of our nation. As we navigate through challenges and opportunities, it is essential for Namibian enterprises to cultivate a culture of innovation—one that encourages creative thinking, collaboration, and adaptability.

This issue highlights remarkable stories of local companies that are leading the charge in innovative practices, showcasing how they are redefining traditional business models and embracing new technologies. From sustainable practices to digital transformation, these pioneers are not just responding to global trends; they are setting the stage for Namibia's future.

As we delve into these narratives, let us remember that innovation is not merely a buzzword; it is a necessity for growth and resilience. Together, we can foster an environment where ideas flourish, and our economy can thrive on the global stage. Here's to a future filled with innovation and success!

Warm regards,

Editor, Business Innovation Namibia



Global Innovation Index 2024 rankings

GII rank	Economy	Score	Income group rank	Region rank	GII rank	Economy	Score	Income group rank	Region rank
1	Switzerland	67.5	1	1	68	Republic of Moldova	28.7	17	36
2	Sweden	64.5	2	2	69	South Africa	28.3	18	2
3	United States of America	62.4	3	1	70	Costa Rica	28.3	18	6
4	Singapore	61.2	4	1	71	Kuwait	28.1	45	10
5	United Kingdom	61.0	5	3	72	Bahrain	27.6	46	11
6	Republic of Korea	60.9	6	2	73	Jordan	27.5	8	12
7	Finland	59.4	7	4	74	Oman	27.1	47	13
8	Netherlands (Kingdom of the)	58.8	8	5	75	Peru	26.7	20	7
9	Germany	58.1	9	6	76	Argentina	26.4	21	8
10	Denmark	57.1	10	7	77	Barbados	26.1	48	9
11	China	56.3	1	3	78	Kazakhstan	25.7	22	3
12	France	55.4	11	8	79	Jamaica	25.7	22	10
13	Japan	54.1	12	4	80	Bosnia and Herzegovina	25.5	24	37
14	Canada	52.9	13	2	81	Tunisia	25.4	9	14
15	Israel	52.7	14	1	82	Panama	24.7	49	11
16	Estonia	52.3	15	9	83	Uzbekistan	24.7	10	4
17	Austria	50.3	16	10	84	Albania	24.5	25	38
18	Hong Kong, China	50.1	17	5	85	Belarus	24.2	26	39
19	Ireland	50.0	18	11	86	Egypt	23.7	11	15
20	Luxembourg	49.1	19	12	87	Botswana	23.1	27	3
21	Norway	49.1	19	12	88	Brunei Darussalam	22.8	50	14
22	Iceland	48.5	21	14	89	Sri Lanka	22.6	12	5
23	Australia	48.1	22	6	90	Cabo Verde	22.3	13	4
24	Belgium	47.7	23	15	91	Pakistan	22.0	14	6
25	New Zealand	45.9	24	7	92	Senegal	22.0	14	5
26	Italy	45.3	25	16	93	Paraguay	21.9	28	12
27	Cyprus	45.1	26	2	94	Lebanon	21.5	16	16
28	Spain	44.9	27	17	95	Azerbaijan	21.3	29	17
29	Malta	44.8	28	18	96	Kenya	21.0	17	6
30	Czech Republic	44.0	29	19	97	Dominican Republic	20.8	30	13
31	Portugal	43.7	30	20	98	El Salvador	20.6	31	14
32	United Arab Emirates	42.8	31	3	99	Kyrgyzstan	20.4	18	7
33	Malaysia	40.5	2	8	100	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	20.2	19	15
34	Slovenia	40.2	32	21	101	Ghana	20.0	20	7
35	Lithuania	40.1	33	22	102	Namibia	20.0	32	7
36	Hungary	39.6	34	23	103	Cambodia	19.9	21	15
37	Türkiye	39.0	3	4	104	Rwanda	19.7	1	9
38	Bulgaria	38.5	4	24	105	Ecuador	19.3	33	16
39	India	38.3	1	1	106	Bangladesh	19.1	22	8
40	Poland	37.0	35	25	107	Tajikistan	18.6	23	9
41	Thailand	36.9	5	9	108	Trinidad and Tobago	18.4	51	17
42	Latvia	36.4	36	26	109	Nepal	18.1	24	10
43	Croatia	36.3	37	27	110	Madagascar	17.9	2	10
44	Viet Nam	36.2	2	10	111	Lao People's Democratic Republic	17.8	25	16
45	Greece	36.2	38	28	112	Côte d'Ivoire	17.5	26	11
46	Slovakia	34.3	39	29	113	Nigeria	17.1	27	12
47	Saudi Arabia	33.9	40	5	114	Honduras	16.7	28	18
48	Romania	33.4	41	30	115	Algeria	16.2	29	18
49	Qatar	32.9	42	6	116	Zambia	15.7	30	13
50	Brazil	32.7	6	1	117	Togo	15.6	3	14
51	Chile	32.6	43	2	118	Zimbabwe	15.6	31	14
52	Serbia	32.3	7	31	119	Benin	15.4	32	16
53	Philippines	31.1	3	11	120	United Republic of Tanzania	15.3	33	17
54	Indonesia	30.6	8	12	121	Uganda	14.9	4	18
55	Mauritius	30.6	8	1	122	Guatemala	14.6	34	19
56	Mexico	30.4	10	3	123	Cameroon	14.4	34	19
57	Georgia	30.4	10	7	124	Nicaragua	14.0	35	20
58	North Macedonia	29.9	12	32	125	Myanmar	13.8	36	17
59	Russian Federation	29.7	13	33	126	Mauritania	13.2	37	20
60	Ukraine	29.5	4	34	127	Burundi	13.2	5	20
61	Colombia	29.2	14	4	128	Mozambique	13.1	6	22
62	Uruguay	29.1	44	5	129	Burkina Faso	12.8	7	23
63	Armenia	29.0	15	8	130	Ethiopia	12.3	8	24
64	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	28.9	5	2	131	Mali	11.8	9	25
65	Montenegro	28.9	16	35	132	Niger	11.2	10	26
66	Morocco	28.8	6	9	133	Angola	10.2	38	27
67	Mongolia	28.7	7	13					

■ High-income ■ Lower middle-income ■ Europe
■ Upper middle-income ■ Low-income ■ Northern America
■ Latin America and the Caribbean ■ South East Asia, East Asia, and Oceania ■ Sub-Saharan Africa
■ Northern Africa and Western Asia ■ Central and Southern Asia

Namibia

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Output rank	Input rank	Income	Region	Population (mn)	GDP, PPP\$ (bn)	GDP per capita, PPP\$	
109	87	Upper middle	SSA	3.0	30.7	11,603	
		Score/Value	Rank			Score/Value	Rank
		50.6	56			21.7	92
1.1 Institutional environment		53.8	66	5.1 Knowledge workers		18.9	106 ◇
1.1.1	Operational stability for businesses*	62.7	65	5.1.1	Knowledge-intensive employment, %	⊖ 18.1	84
1.1.2	Government effectiveness*	45.0	65	5.1.2	Firms offering formal training, %	⊖ 25.4	66
1.2 Regulatory environment		48.4	56	5.1.3	GERD performed by business, % GDP	⊖ 0.0	76
1.2.1	Regulatory quality*	41.4	73	5.1.4	GERD financed by business, %	⊖ 11.1	75
1.2.2	Rule of law*	55.4	47 ◆◆	5.1.5	Females employed w/advanced degrees, %	⊖ 7.4	90 ◇
1.3 Business environment		49.5	[60]	5.2 Innovation linkages		26.0	57
1.3.1	Policy stability for doing business†	⊖ 49.5	64	5.2.1	Public research–industry co-publications, %	2.4	32 ●
1.3.2	Entrepreneurship policies and culture†	n/a	n/a	5.2.2	University–industry R&D collaboration†	⊖ 46.2	61
		25.2	91	5.2.3	State of cluster development†	⊖ 42.3	77
2.1 Education		65.5	[13]	5.2.4	Joint venture/strategic alliance deals/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.0	33 ◆◆
2.1.1	Expenditure on education, % GDP	9.0	1 ◆◆	5.2.5	Patent families/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.1	55
2.1.2	Government funding/pupil, secondary, % GDP/cap	n/a	n/a	5.3 Knowledge absorption		20.3	94
2.1.3	School life expectancy, years	n/a	n/a	5.3.1	Intellectual property payments, % total trade	0.1	102 ◇
2.1.4	PISA scales in reading, maths and science	n/a	n/a	5.3.2	High-tech imports, % total trade	7.4	81
2.1.5	Pupil–teacher ratio, secondary	32.0	123 ○◇	5.3.3	ICT services imports, % total trade	1.5	51 ●
2.2 Tertiary education		8.3	114 ◇	5.3.4	FDI net inflows, % GDP	3.8	38 ●
2.2.1	Tertiary enrolment, % gross	⊖ 28.4	92 ◇	5.3.5	Research talent, % in businesses	⊖ 6.9	67
2.2.2	Graduates in science and engineering, %	⊖ 8.9	113 ○◇			9.4	122 ◇
2.2.3	Tertiary inbound mobility, %	⊖ 3.2	62	6.1 Knowledge creation		8.9	87
2.3 Research and development (R&D)		1.8	93	6.1.1	Patents by origin/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.6	72
2.3.1	Researchers, FTE/mn pop.	⊖ 152.8	88	6.1.2	PCT patents by origin/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.2	44 ●
2.3.2	Gross expenditure on R&D, % GDP	⊖ 0.3	68	6.1.3	Utility models by origin/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.1	48
2.3.3	Global corporate R&D investors, top 3, mn USD\$	0.0	41 ○◇	6.1.4	Scientific and technical articles/bn PPP\$ GDP	10.1	72
2.3.4	QS university ranking, top 3*	0.0	75 ○◇	6.1.5	Citable documents H-index	4.3	109
		25.1	113 ◇	6.2 Knowledge impact		11.0	127 ○◇
3.1 Information and communication technologies (ICTs)		45.1	107 ◇	6.2.1	Labor productivity growth, %	-1.5	124 ○◇
3.1.1	ICT access*	64.5	99 ◇	6.2.2	Unicorn valuation, % GDP	0.0	49 ○◇
3.1.2	ICT use*	55.3	102 ◇	6.2.3	Software spending, % GDP	0.1	95
3.1.3	Government's online service*	37.2	113 ◇	6.2.4	High-tech manufacturing, %	3.4	104 ○◇
3.1.4	E-participation*	23.3	116 ◇	6.3 Knowledge diffusion		8.2	102 ◇
3.2 General infrastructure		12.9	119 ◇	6.3.1	Intellectual property receipts, % total trade	0.0	76
3.2.1	Electricity output, GWh/mn pop.	514.2	110 ◇	6.3.2	Production and export complexity	28.4	93
3.2.2	Logistics performance*	36.4	65	6.3.3	High-tech exports, % total trade	1.0	78
3.2.3	Gross capital formation, % GDP	14.1	126 ○◇	6.3.4	ICT services exports, % total trade	0.4	109
3.3 Ecological sustainability		17.5	78	6.3.5	ISO 9001 quality/bn PPP\$ GDP	1.8	97
3.3.1	GDP/unit of energy use	12.0	50 ●			12.0	105 ◇
3.3.2	Low-carbon energy use, %	18.0	64	7.1 Intangible assets		7.0	107 ◇
3.3.3	ISO 14001 environment/bn PPP\$ GDP	0.8	82	7.1.1	Intangible asset intensity, top 15, %	n/a	n/a
		23.5	[93]	7.1.2	Trademarks by origin/bn PPP\$ GDP	13.2	102 ◇
4.1 Credit		20.0	[87]	7.1.3	Global brand value, top 5,000, % GDP	0.0	75 ○◇
4.1.1	Finance for startups and scaleups†	n/a	n/a	7.1.4	Industrial designs by origin/bn PPP\$ GDP	1.3	50 ●
4.1.2	Domestic credit to private sector, % GDP	59.4	53	7.2 Creative goods and services		8.5	[80]
4.1.3	Loans from microfinance institutions, % GDP	n/a	n/a	7.2.1	Cultural and creative services exports, % total trade	0.6	50
4.2 Investment		6.1	[71]	7.2.2	National feature films/mn pop. 15–69	n/a	n/a
4.2.1	Market capitalization, % GDP	17.8	66	7.2.3	Entertainment and media market/th pop. 15–69	n/a	n/a
4.2.2	Venture capital (VC) investors, deals/bn PPP\$ GDP	n/a	n/a	7.2.4	Creative goods exports, % total trade	0.1	91
4.2.3	VC recipients, deals/bn PPP\$ GDP	n/a	n/a	7.3 Online creativity		25.3	65
4.2.4	VC received, value, % GDP	n/a	n/a	7.3.1	Top-level domains (TLDs)/th pop. 15–69	3.6	64
4.3 Trade, diversification and market scale		44.6	91	7.3.2	GitHub commits/mn pop. 15–69	2.3	100
4.3.1	Applied tariff rate, weighted avg., %	2.3	69	7.3.3	Mobile app creation/bn PPP\$ GDP	70.2	50 ●
4.3.2	Domestic industry diversification	51.4	101 ◇				
4.3.3	Domestic market scale, bn PPP\$	30.7	127 ○				

NOTES: ● indicates a strength; ○ a weakness; ◆ an income group strength; ◇ an income group weakness; * an index; † a survey question; ⊖ indicates that the economy's data is outdated. Square brackets [] indicate that the data minimum coverage (DMC) requirements were not met at the sub-pillar or pillar level; n/a represents missing values; a dash - indicates an indicator which is not relevant to this economy and thus not considered for DMC thresholds.

Global leaders in innovation, 2024

Top three innovation economies by region

Latin America and the Caribbean

- 1 Brazil
- 2 Chile
- 3 Mexico

Sub-Saharan Africa*

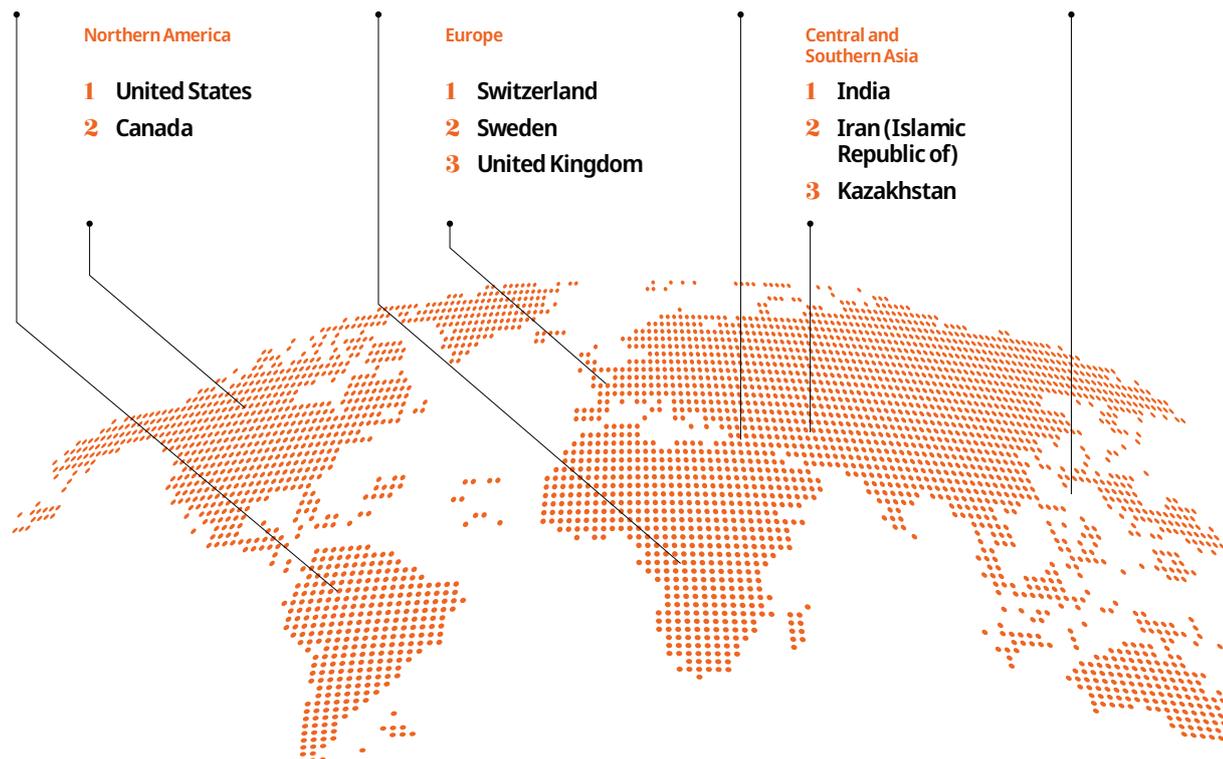
- 1 South Africa
- 2 Botswana
- 3 Senegal

Northern Africa and Western Asia†

- 1 Israel
- 2 United Arab Emirates
- 3 Türkiye

South East Asia, East Asia, and Oceania

- 1 Singapore
- 2 Republic of Korea
- 3 China



Top three innovation economies by income group

High-income

- 1 Switzerland
- 2 Sweden
- 3 United States

Upper middle-income

- 1 China
- 2 Malaysia
- 3 Türkiye ☆

Lower middle-income

- 1 India
- 2 Viet Nam
- 3 Philippines ☆

Low-income ^

- 1 Rwanda
- 2 Togo
- 3 Uganda ☆

☆ Indicates a new entrant into the top three in 2024.

* Top three in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) – excluding island economies. The top five in the region, including all economies, comprise Mauritius (1st), South Africa (2nd), Botswana (3rd), Cabo Verde (4th) and Senegal (5th).

† Top three in Northern Africa and Western Asia (NAWA) – excluding island economies. The top four in the region, including all economies, are as follows: Israel (1st), Cyprus (2nd), United Arab Emirates (3rd) and Türkiye (4th).

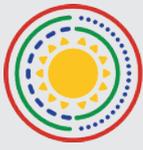
^ Top three in the Low-income group – excluding island economies. The top four in the low-income group, including all economies are as follows: Rwanda (1st), Madagascar (2nd), Togo (3rd) and Uganda (4th).

Notes: World Bank Income Group Classification (July 2023). Year-on-year changes in GII rank are influenced by performance and methodological considerations (see Appendix I).

Source: Global Innovation Index Database, WIPO, 2024.

Innovation performance at different income levels, 2024

	High-income group	Upper middle-income group	Lower middle-income group	Low-income group
Performance above expectation for level of development	Switzerland Sweden United States of America Singapore United Kingdom Republic of Korea Finland Netherlands (Kingdom of the) Germany Denmark France Japan Canada Israel Estonia	China Thailand Brazil Indonesia Republic of Moldova South Africa Jamaica	India Viet Nam Philippines Ukraine Morocco Mongolia Jordan Uzbekistan Pakistan Senegal	Rwanda Madagascar Burundi
Performance in line with level of development	Austria Hong Kong, China Norway Iceland Australia Belgium New Zealand Italy Cyprus Spain Malta Czech Republic Portugal Slovenia Lithuania Hungary Latvia Greece Chile Barbados	Malaysia Türkiye Bulgaria Serbia Mauritius Mexico Georgia North Macedonia Colombia Armenia Peru Bosnia and Herzegovina Albania El Salvador	Iran (Islamic Republic of) Tunisia Egypt Sri Lanka Cabo Verde Lebanon Kenya Kyrgyzstan Bolivia (Plurinational State of) Ghana Cambodia Bangladesh Tajikistan Nepal Nigeria Zambia Zimbabwe United Republic of Tanzania	Togo Uganda Mozambique
All other economies	Ireland Luxembourg United Arab Emirates Poland Croatia Slovakia Saudi Arabia Romania Qatar Uruguay Kuwait Bahrain Oman Panama Brunei Darussalam Trinidad and Tobago	Russian Federation Montenegro Costa Rica Argentina Kazakhstan Belarus Botswana Paraguay Azerbaijan Dominican Republic Namibia Ecuador Guatemala	Lao People's Democratic Republic Côte d'Ivoire Honduras Algeria Benin Cameroon Nicaragua Myanmar Mauritania Angola	Burkina Faso Ethiopia Mali Niger



Fly Namibia



Andre Compion
Managing Director

FlyNamibia: Innovating to Connect Namibia to the World

Innovation at FlyNamibia is more than just a buzzword. It's a commitment to positive change and renewal that underpins the airline's growth and sustainability. According to the airline's Managing Director, André Compion, innovation is about continuously adapting to customer preferences and aligning services to meet expectations. This customer-centric approach ensures FlyNamibia not only survives but thrives in a competitive aviation landscape.

The company places customer engagement at the heart of its innovation strategy. "By engaging with our customers, we gain insight into the market's requirements and can tailor our offerings accordingly," says Compion. This direct connection to passengers has shaped significant operational changes in 2024, including the adaptation of FlyNamibia's route network and flight schedules.

A key achievement has been optimising connectivity through partnerships with international carriers and code-share partners. FlyNamibia's amended route network now seamlessly connects passengers arriving on long-haul international flights at Hosea Kutako International Airport to domestic and regional destinations. These enhancements have significantly improved many travellers' experiences, making them more convenient and enjoyable for passengers while also positioning Namibia as a more accessible travel destination.

“

The company places customer engagement at the heart of its innovation strategy. "By engaging with our customers, we gain insight into the market's requirements and can tailor our offerings accordingly,"

Andre Compion

”





Looking ahead to 2025, FlyNamibia is gearing up for an exciting phase of growth driven by strategic partnerships. The airline plans to expand its focus on the tourism sector by offering affordable holiday packages across southern Africa. This initiative, developed in collaboration with international airline partners and Namibia's local tourism market, aims to boost both inbound and regional travel.

"Our goal is to become a major feeder airline in the region," Compion explains, "with a specific focus on the development of Namibia's tourism and business travel sectors." This vision aligns with FlyNamibia's long-term strategy of strengthening the country's connectivity, promoting economic growth, and supporting the tourism industry – a cornerstone of Namibia's economy.

FlyNamibia's innovative approach demonstrates how thoughtful adaptation and customer-first strategies can drive both business success and broader economic impact. By evolving its services and forging meaningful partnerships, the airline is paving the way for a future where Namibia is more connected, competitive, and poised for growth.

In an era where innovation defines success, FlyNamibia is not just keeping up with change – it's leading it.



Fly Namibia



Kehad Snyderel

Business Intelligence is a game-changer

• BY KEHAD SNYDEWEL

In the modern world, the pursuit of money has, to many, become an obsessive activity. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as it's done with a certain goal in mind. This topic recently came up and led to quite a discussion. It got me thinking. We are consumed by the need to acquire things, material things, and as much money as possible. It is not just a Namibian obsession; all around the world, it seems people are pursuing the same goal. Having money to buy nice things, a nice house, a nice car and nice holidays is great. Having stacks of money just to have it makes no sense. The same can be said about information and data as an organization; it's what you do with it that matters. Using the information and the data at your disposal can be a game-changer for an organization and, ultimately, for your stakeholders.

Companies, Governments, and Institutions are constantly collecting and producing data. Through their websites and, apps customer surveys, every time you scan a barcode or a QR code, more data and information are collected. Everything is measured and stored, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The harvested and stored data has become known as

Big Data. This information is collated, analyzed, and used to make decisions. Using it makes your business more intelligent, agile, and flexible. It allows for near-instant reaction to outside influences and makes organizations more proactive.

In Government, it is used to plan the direction and development of the country, the recent Census is a good example of this. The ministries will use the census information collected for Namibia's future socio-economic development. Some companies have built their whole business model on analyzing data and information. Facebook, Google, or large online retailers that sift through your purchasing patterns and suggest other possible purchases. Anything to keep you buying stuff.

Information, data, and business intelligence give an enterprise a competitive advantage. Some say it gives you 'the edge'. Information and data are an invaluable asset if you use it correctly, just like money. Companies and governments harvest data and store petabytes of it but don't always leverage it as effectively as possible.





If you have money that you don't know what to do with, you call upon a financial advisor. In the same vein, experts can assist organizations in harnessing all this information and making it work to perfect service delivery, create efficiencies, or increase productivity. Data Analytics (DA) and Business Intelligence (BI) software are used worldwide.

Namibian industries like banking, insurance, and retail, as well as (local) Government, can leverage DA and BI, discover patterns of behavior, and figure out what products or services are popular. The hospitality industry could use all the data on tourists coming to our beautiful country to grow the industry and cater to the needs of travelers.

Recent innovations and developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools mean you can now detect inconsistencies in your information and data in real time. For example, if your data or analytics results are out of sync with expectations, an AI chatbot can help investigate why this might be the case. It can assist in cleansing your data, leading to major savings and improvements in processes and making an organization more efficient and agile. Ultimately it translates into better customer service.

Just imagine using the data to implement and execute; faster reporting, analysis, or planning, make

better predictions and business decisions, improve workflow, cut costs, tailor customer interactions, or improve your competitive advantage. These are just a few of the things that DA and BI implementation allows you to do. By capturing and utilizing the information and data that is swirling around in the organization, you can make your organization more competitive or streamline processes.

Information must be used intelligently; it must also be stored securely and according to international regulations. Most countries have strict laws regarding safe data storage, which usually cover privacy guidelines as well. If you have this in place as a business or as an institution, you can leverage it to improve your business, your organization, or Government services. If you are unsure of how to do this, just as you would get a financial advisor, engage a Business Intelligence consultant. Namibia has data analytics and business intelligence specialists and hiring them will take your organization to the next level, no matter the size of your organization. It will be a game-changer, and the impact will be almost instantaneous.

Kehad Snyderwel is the Managing Director at Green Enterprise Solutions

“
Information, data, and business intelligence give an enterprise a competitive advantage. Some say it gives you 'the edge'. Information and data are an invaluable asset if you use it correctly, just like money.
”
Kehad Snyderwel



SUSTAINABILITY IN DIAMOND TRADING: BUILDING A RESPONSIBLE FUTURE

The diamond industry has long been synonymous with luxury and elegance, symbolising the height of human achievement and craftsmanship. In the 21st century, however, the industry is also embracing principles of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), with a strong focus on sustainability. From mining to trading and retail, every facet of the diamond value chain is evolving to ensure economic viability, while making positive contributions to environmental preservation, social development and robust governance standards.

Ethical Sourcing and Responsible Mining

Sustainable practices in diamond trading start at the source: the mines. Ethical sourcing ensures that diamonds are mined in ways that respect both human rights and the environment. This includes implementing safety measures to protect workers, such as providing proper equipment, safe working conditions and minimising exposure to harmful substances. Promoting fair labour practices includes offering fair wages, prohibiting child and forced labour and respecting workers' rights to organise. On an environmental level, sustainable mining practices are designed to reduce the ecological footprint by minimising land disruption, managing waste responsibly, reducing water usage and restoring ecosystems post-mining.

Namibia plays a crucial role in supporting these values as part of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), a global initiative established in 2003 to reduce the flow of conflict diamonds. The KPCS has been instrumental in certifying 99.8% of diamonds entering the market as conflict-free, aligning with the Governance (G) component of ESG by ensuring transparency and ethical compliance in diamond supply chains.

Namibian mining leaders, Namdeb and Debmarmine Namibia have pioneered responsible mining practices, setting high standards in environmental protection. Namdeb has made significant strides in land rehabilitation efforts, with over 1,300 hectares of land restored in 2023. This land is being rehabilitated for community use, helping to support local biodiversity. The company's commitment to sustainability also includes conserving water resources, minimising environmental impact, and ensuring that its activities result in a net positive contribution to biodiversity.

Specialising in offshore diamond mining, Debmarmine Namibia employs advanced technologies to recover diamonds with minimal environmental impact. In 2023, the company produced around 1.4 million carats, contributing significantly to Namibia's diamond output. The company uses innovative seabed recovery techniques that ensure minimal disruption to the marine ecosystem. Approximately 99% of the sediment it discharges is returned to the ocean floor, where it settles back naturally.

Debmarmine's commitment to sustainability is evident in its use of advanced technologies, which not only recover diamonds efficiently but also preserve the marine environment. This, coupled with its local empowerment efforts and substantial investments

in Namibia's economy, strengthens its position as a key player in the country's diamond mining sector. These initiatives reflect the Environmental (E) aspect of ESG, demonstrating the industry's commitment to preserving natural resources.

Transparency in the Supply Chain

Transparency is critical to fostering trust in the diamond trade, as today's consumers increasingly seek assurance about the origins of their purchases. A 2022 Bain & Company report highlighted that over 60% of diamond buyers in the U.S. and Europe consider ethical sourcing essential when choosing a diamond.

Blockchain technology has become a game-changer for the diamond industry, providing an unalterable record of a diamond's journey. De Beers Group's Tracr blockchain platform for instance, launched in 2019, offers verifiable provenance for diamonds each year. For Namibia, adopting blockchain will further reinforce its commitment to responsible sourcing, aligning with Governance (G) standards under ESG by enhancing transparency and accountability across the supply chain.

Environmental Stewardship

The diamond industry is intensifying its commitment to environmental sustainability, with companies like Debmarmine Namibia and Namdeb leading initiatives aimed at reducing ecological impacts and promoting responsible resource management. At Debmarmine Namibia, environmental functions are guided by the principles of reuse, reduction and recycling, which are critical to minimising operational impacts. In diamond extraction processes, Debmarmine Namibia uses seawater to treat diamond-bearing gravel, while desalinated water is employed exclusively for the crew's domestic needs on board their vessels. Each vessel is equipped with one or two desalination plants powered by the engines' heat, allowing them to generate approximately 2,500 tons of potable water per month, sufficient to meet crew needs and ensure self-sufficiency.

Namdeb, operating on land, has also taken steps toward environmental stewardship, with a comprehensive rehabilitation program addressing over a century of mining activities in the Tsau// Khaeb (Sperrgebiet) National Park. Since 2008, when the Namibian government approved Namdeb's Rehabilitation Plan, the company has removed more than 126,000 tons of scrap from its mining license areas. This ongoing program is restoring ecosystems and preparing the land for future community use, reflecting Namdeb's commitment to reversing environmental impacts through thoughtful, long-term planning.

Both companies' efforts underscore the importance of environmental stewardship in diamond mining and align with global ESG principles, setting standards for sustainability within the industry.

Social Responsibility and DIAMAN's Contributions

Beyond mining, Namibia's diamond industry also plays a central role in uplifting communities, aligning

with the Social (S) component of ESG. The Diamond Manufacturer's Association of Namibia (DIAMAN) is actively engaged in sectors that address critical needs, from healthcare and public safety to education and youth development. DIAMAN's focus on these essential areas reflects the diamond industry's commitment to social development, creating a positive impact that reaches beyond economic contributions.

Through its investments in healthcare, DIAMAN supports improved access to medical services, particularly in underserved areas. In education, the association funds programs designed to expand opportunities for students, including vocational training initiatives that equip young Namibians with essential skills. DIAMAN's community engagement extends to cultural preservation and local events, nurturing a sense of national pride while contributing to economic resilience. This multi-faceted approach highlights DIAMAN's role in creating a more inclusive society where the benefits of diamond trading are shared with communities.

The NAMDIA Foundation has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to social responsibility, investing over N\$40 million in initiatives spanning education, healthcare and sports development since 2019. Likewise, the Namdeb-Debmarmine Foundation contributed over N\$15 million in 2023 toward scholarships, healthcare programs and other projects that create broad-based social impact.

The Future of Sustainable Diamond Trading

Looking ahead, sustainable practices aligned with ESG are not merely a trend; they are essential to ensuring the diamond industry's future. By embracing technological advancements, adhering to ethical standards and committing to environmental and social responsibility, the diamond industry can remain resilient and respected in an evolving global landscape.

For Namibia, championing sustainability and adhering to standards such as the Kimberley Process are key to securing a competitive advantage. By capitalising on this demand and leveraging technologies in providing provenance, Namibia can ensure that every diamond it trades reflects its commitment to ESG values. Every diamond, after all, represents more than beauty or value, it is a promise fulfilled, embodying both Namibia's dedication to sustainable practices and its vision for a better future.

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NAMPOWER'S 40 MW OTJIKOTO BIOMASS PROJECT: KEY MILESTONE IN NAMIBIA'S RENEWABLE ENERGY LANDSCAPE



NamPower has officially broken ground on the 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station Project, marking a significant milestone in Namibia's renewable energy landscape. NamPower plans to develop this pioneering initiative, the first of its kind in the country, near the Otjikoto Substation, just outside Tsumeb. The power station will generate electricity using biomass wood chips made from encroacher bush as fuel.

A new era in energy generation

The 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station aims to revolutionise electricity generation in Namibia by leveraging indigenous resources sourced from local farmers and contractors. This project promises to generate base-load electricity cost-effectively and aims to bolster the Namibian economy. NamPower approved a budget of N\$2.3 billion for the development of the project.

NamPower's Managing Director, Kahenge Haulofu, emphasised the broader ambitions of the project during the groundbreaking ceremony.

"The Otjikoto Biomass Power Station will generate 40 MW of baseload electricity, which will be a huge achievement for NamPower, as it will demonstrate

our determination and commitment towards ensuring security of power supply. Our vision for this power station, however, is not only about producing electricity. It is about bringing growth and prosperity to the Oshikoto region, Otjozondjupa region, and surrounding communities."

"The power plant for which we are breaking ground today will create jobs, bring in new skills, and activate fresh opportunities for local businesses, thereby allowing them to thrive. For the local business community, the project will open doors for growth, partnerships, as well as new beginnings. We thus encourage you to ready yourselves to embrace the change and the business opportunities that will present themselves with and through this project," he said.

Economic growth and job creation

The 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station is poised to create numerous job opportunities, fostering new skills and providing local businesses with fresh avenues for growth. Haulofu highlighted the potential for partnerships within the local business community.

This initiative is especially crucial for the farming and agricultural sectors, as Namibia faces significant challenges from bush encroachment affecting over





26 million hectares of farmland, leading to billions in economic losses. By utilising biomass resources, the project will generate energy and address environmental concerns, positively impacting local farmers.

Affirming the importance of the project, The Minister of Mines and Energy, Hon. Tom Alweendo, said the project will have several macro and microeconomic benefits.

“The project will have several macro- and micro-economic benefits, which include, among others, better livestock carrying capacity through improved rangelands and agricultural productivity and increased groundwater absorption within the harvested areas. It will also contribute to community growth through direct and indirect job creation throughout the fuel supply chain and the operation of the power station.”

“At a macro level, the project will have a positive impact on the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the meeting of national targets as set out in the Harambee Prosperity Plan and NDP5—the need for additional generation projects,” Alweendo said.

Commitment to renewable energy

The 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station exemplifies NamPower’s commitment to transforming the electricity supply industry through renewable energy sources.

The commercial operation date for the power station is projected for the first quarter of 2027, setting the stage for a sustainable energy future in Namibia.

As the 40 MW Otjikoto Biomass Power Station begins its journey, it symbolises hope for a greener, more sustainable energy landscape in Namibia. With a focus on local resources and community development, this project will empower communities and foster economic resilience in the face of environmental challenges.

The project is being executed by NamPower and is funded by the French Development Agency, the Mitigation Action Facility, and the Government of Namibia.

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Namibia Wildlife Resorts: Transforming Gross Barmen into a Wellness Retreat

In a bold move aligning with the Public Enterprise's drive for innovative approaches to hospitality, Namibia Wildlife Resorts (NWR) is set to remodel and repurpose Gross Barmen Hot Springs into a premier wellness-focused center. This initiative reflects a growing recognition of the importance of health and healing in our fast-paced world, where wellness is increasingly seen as integral to high-level performance.

A Serene escape

Nestled just 100 kilometers from Windhoek and 24 kilometers east of Okahandja, Gross Barmen offers a convenient escape for those seeking a rejuvenating break from city life. Renowned for its natural thermal hot springs, which reach temperatures of 65 degrees Celsius before being cooled to a soothing 40 degrees for the indoor thermal pool, the resort has been a cherished destination since its inception in 1968. Visitors are greeted by the sight of graceful springbok herds, enhancing the serene atmosphere that defines this unique locale.

Over the years, Gross Barmen has maintained its appeal through the preservation of its diverse ecosystem, the ruins

of the historic Neo Barmen mission house, and the inclusion of modern amenities such as an outdoor pool, conference facilities, camping bungalows, a restaurant, kiosk, and shop. This blend of nature and comfort has made it a hotspot for local visitors seeking relaxation and recreation.

Embracing wellness

The upcoming renovations are poised to elevate Gross Barmen's status as a wellness destination. With parts of the repurposing already underway, including the completion of scenic hiking trails, NWR plans to introduce a fully-fledged massage spa, functional Jacuzzis, and a state-of-the-art gym. These enhancements aim to provide guests with a comprehensive wellness experience, allowing them to indulge in pampering and relaxation amidst the tranquil surroundings. NWR's commitment to maintaining affordability is noteworthy. Despite the significant upgrades, there are no plans to increase prices for the current financial year. This decision underscores NWR's dedication to ensuring that Namibians can enjoy the benefits of the new facilities without financial

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Looking ahead

As Gross Barmen transitions into a wellness-focused retreat, the vision is clear: to create a sanctuary where health and relaxation converge. This transformation not only aligns with contemporary trends in hospitality but also reinforces NWR's commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

The anticipated completion of the wellness center within the next year marks an exciting chapter for Gross Barmen. As visitors embrace the new offerings, they will find a rejuvenating escape that honors the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Namibia. With its rich history and promising future, Gross Barmen is poised to become a beacon of wellness in the heart of the country.

In conclusion, the remodel of Gross Barmen Hot Springs stands as a testament to Namibia Wildlife Resorts' innovative spirit and dedication to enhancing the hospitality experience for all. As the resort evolves, it remains a vital part of Namibia's landscape, offering a tranquil retreat that nurtures both body and soul.



Public relations as a key driver of innovation and growth in Namibia



Ilke Platt
Poiyah Media Founder

“
Through thoughtful storytelling, PR builds trust between businesses and their audiences, creating strong connections that are essential for long-term success.
”



Petrina Mbadhi
Poiyah Media Public Relations Officer

• **By Ilke Platt and Petrina Mbadhi**

“Its PR that needs to be creative. Its PR that needs to be new and different. Its PR that needs to be original. The best way to establish a brand is to create a new category and creating a new category requires thinking of the highest order” famously remarked by Al & Laura Ries.

As digital transformation takes center stage, the public relations (PR) sector continues to evolve, responding to numerous advancements and ever-changing demands. Players in this sector constantly see the need to upgrade and keep up with the times in order to stay relevant and exceed client expectations. Within the Namibian context, public relations is not just a complementary tool for

businesses, it is essential for driving innovation and fostering sustainable growth.

Through thoughtful storytelling, PR builds trust between businesses and their audiences, creating strong connections that are essential for long-term success. It helps industries adapt to changing market conditions, navigate challenges, and seize new opportunities. In a world where effective communication can make or break a business, PR has become a vital part of helping Namibian industries grow and thrive in a competitive and evolving global environment.



The public relations industry is one key player in the business innovation, through this sector business owners are able to explore innovative ways in which to communicate their goals and objectives with their consumers and the target market. Through strategic messaging, storytelling, and the use of modern communication tools, PR helps businesses stand out, build trust, and strengthen relationships with their audience.

As industries such as green hydrogen take root in Namibia, PR practitioners are at the front stage, crafting and disseminating messages that educate and engage the public while maintaining the core objectives of these new sectors. They work to make sure that the ideas and goals of these new sectors are explained clearly, helping people understand and support them. By doing this, they ensure the focus stays on the key objectives of these industries while building strong connections with the community.

With the growth of such industries, comes a need for innovative communicative methods in order to educate and engage with the public whilst maintaining the core message. These strategies ensure that the public is well-informed and involved in discussions around these emerging sectors. The power of PR lies in its ability to shape and curate narratives, ensuring information is not only disseminated but also resonates with diverse audiences.

The PR practitioners keep on their toes constantly studying market changes, in order to ensure that the strategies used are up to par with the market demands. Prioritizing what would be considered the most effective method to educate and keep everyone in the conversation of growing industries in Namibia. Ensuring that the information is consumable from all people from diverse backgrounds.

Public relations holds the power to craft and control the narrative of information shared with the public. By carefully shaping and curating messages, the practitioners ensure they resonate with the intended audience, using the most suitable styles and approaches to fit the situation or context of the information being communicated. In addition to improving communication, the public relations industry also helps build a strong brand reputation. PR professionals carefully manage how a business is seen by the public, helping it become a leader in its field.

Through activities like media relations, handling crises, and creating content, PR ensures the brand's message matches its values and connects with its audience. This boosts the brand's trustworthiness and encourages customer loyalty, therefore leading to long-term success and growth. With the rise of digital tools, the way information is shared has transformed dramatically. Practitioners must leverage platforms like social media and explore the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance their creativity and efficiency. This innovative approach is vital in a landscape where brand management is often perceived as something individuals can do themselves, thanks to accessible apps and platforms.

With the notion that everyone can manage their own brand as we all have access to the apps, information and platforms it's becoming increasingly important to show that brand positioning goes beyond just creating visually appealing content. It also involves making sure that every aspect of your role in the industry is clearly understood by everyone, ensuring your brand communicates its value and purpose effectively to all audiences. The effectiveness of public relations goes beyond aesthetically pleasing content.

It involves deep strategic thinking to position brands effectively within their industries. PR ensures that every aspect of a business's role is understood, from its objectives to its societal impact. By doing so, it helps businesses establish themselves as thought leaders, driving conversations that matter. As industries grow, PR practitioners must remain versatile, adapting their approaches to reflect the needs of their audiences. This includes crafting consumable, impactful messages that engage people from diverse backgrounds. It's a constant challenge, but one that showcases the unique value of PR in fostering innovation.

Public relations is a vital driver of business innovation and sustainable growth in Namibia. As businesses navigate a rapidly evolving landscape, strategic communication becomes indispensable. By prioritizing PR, businesses can reach maximum effectiveness, ensuring that Namibia not only keeps pace with global trends but sets new standards of innovation.

Ilke Platt is Poiyah Media Founder and Petrina Mbadhi is Poiyah Media Public Relations Officer

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Strategic communication as a stimulus for positioning Namibia's businesses for sustainable growth in a competitive global economy



Albertina
Kashuupulwa-Malwa

• BY ALBERTINA KASHUUPULWA-MALWA

In an ever-evolving global landscape, the concept of business innovation has transitioned from being a competitive edge to a critical survival strategy for businesses. For Namibia, innovation represents the gateway to sustainable economic growth and global relevance. As a communications specialist it is of importance to highlight that effective communication also plays a crucial role in fostering and sustaining business innovation. Therefore, an emphasis needs to be placed on factors that could drive Namibia to better standards through highlighting the importance that communications play.

Innovation begins with ideas, but those ideas only thrive in environments where collaboration, transparency, and shared purpose exist. Communication acts as the enabler, bridging gaps between visionaries, stakeholders, and

implementers. Whether it's internal communication within organizations or broader engagement with communities and policy-makers, the ability to articulate ideas, gather feedback, and inspire action is pivotal.

Namibia's business sector, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), holds significant potential for innovation. However, challenges such as inadequate communication and a lack of awareness often prevent businesses from securing funding, forming partnerships, or successfully marketing their solutions. To foster business innovation, it is essential to tackle obstacles like limited access to capital, low levels of digital literacy, and the need for enhanced collaboration among stakeholders.



There are a number of key communication strategies to drive innovation that businesses should explore in their day-to-day activities. This ranges from the art of storytelling to inspire, where I would like to emphasize that every innovative idea has a story. Whether it's a renewable energy solution or a tech-driven agricultural project, the story of "why" it matters creates emotional resonance. Businesses in Namibia must learn to craft narratives or messaging that not only explain their solutions but also connect with stakeholders or clients on a personal level.

In addition, building ecosystems through stakeholder engagement is another important strategy to drive innovation. Let us understand that innovation is rarely a solo journey. Collaboration with government, academia, and private sector players is essential. Effective communication strategies, such as public forums, digital platforms, and targeted campaigns, can bring these diverse stakeholders together, fostering ecosystems where innovation thrives, and this is where innovation will stem from. These are all in addition to the other equally important strategies for innovation, such as research and innovation, customer-centric innovation, monitoring industry trends, or leadership commitment, just to mention but a few.

Furthermore, we live in a world where technology evolves all the time; a while ago we were so eager to know what the 4th industrial revolution would bring, and today, here we are, in the midst of this revolution, which is more associated with megatrends such as expanding digital presence, establishments of robots, the Internet of Things (IOT), and so forth. Today, individuals who use technology expect to have access to everything all the time from any device anywhere in the world for all kinds of purposes. Therefore, people's persistence on being connected is altering their individual lives. In addition, consumers' behavior, such as looking for information and advice through digital devices and social networks before making an acquisition, implies that customers are 'always on'; businesses can network with consumers at any period.

Therefore, in a digital-first era, Namibian businesses need to embrace online communication tools to amplify their reach effectively. We consistently advocate for the use of tools such as social media, webinars, and blogs, which provide cost-effective

platforms to share innovative ideas, attract investment, and engage with customers. However, it is essential to also consider the barriers that limit access to these tools.

From a Namibian perspective, these challenges include the digital divide, marked by unequal access to technology between urban and rural areas, the lack of adequate infrastructure, such as stable internet connectivity and affordable devices, and limited digital literacy, which affects individuals' ability to navigate and utilize these tools effectively. Addressing some of these barriers requires concerted efforts from both the public and private sectors through investments in infrastructure, targeted digital literacy campaigns, and policies aimed at making digital tools more accessible and affordable for all Namibians. Additionally, tackling these challenges can help businesses unlock the full potential of online communication tools to drive innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable growth in the digital age.

The key to enhancing strategic communications lies in crafting consistent, impactful messages that resonate with diverse audiences. In addition, transparent communication builds trust, which is a vital ingredient for innovation. Again, open feedback mechanisms allow businesses to refine their ideas and products based on stakeholder input, ensuring that innovations are market-ready and impactful.

A Call to Action for Namibian Businesses

Namibia is at a pivotal moment in its economic development journey. As global markets shift toward sustainability, technology, and inclusivity, our businesses must adapt by embracing innovation not only in their products and services but also in how they communicate. Business innovation in Namibia is not just an economic imperative—it is a narrative waiting to be told. As we move forward in 2025 and beyond, let us use communication to position Namibia as a beacon of progress and creativity on the global stage.

Albertina Kashiupulwa-Malwa is a communications expert with extensive experience in public relations, corporate strategy, and stakeholder engagement.



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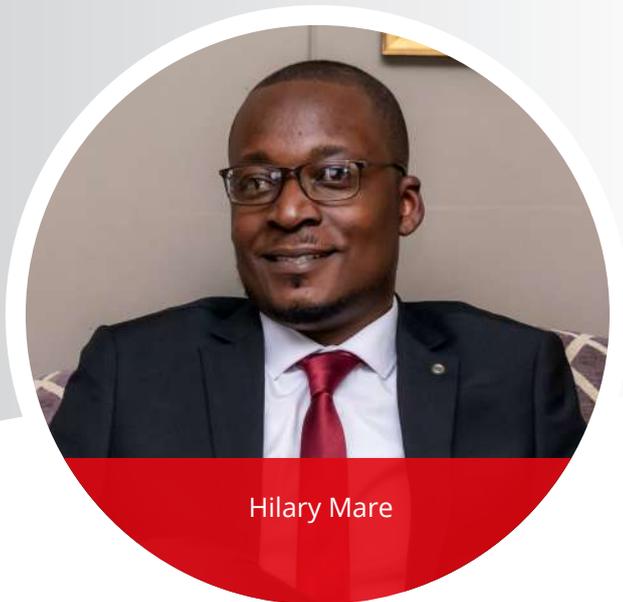
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CGS

Credit Guarantee Scheme



Building blocks for robust and technology neutral AI regulation in Namibia



Hilary Mare



Prof Admire Mare

• BY HILARY MARE AND PROF ADMIRE MARE

The proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its mass adoption in all spheres of life including journalism has prompted questions on whether African countries should exercise their data sovereignty.

While the push for national policies that prioritise data sovereignty—which refers to the fact that data is subject to the laws and governance structures of the nation where they are collected—cannot be dismissed at face value, it is important understand some of the key pillars of a robust and technology-neutral AI regulation.

Calls to regulate digital platforms and its latest cousin AI has grown louder in scholarly and policy circles. Whereas the European Union has led in the domain with its risk-based approach to AI, in recent years Africa has adopted the Continental AI Strategy

which calls for unified national approaches among AU Member States to navigate the complexities of AI-driven change, aiming to strengthen regional and global cooperation and position Africa as a leader in inclusive and responsible AI development.

Very few African countries have adopted AI national strategies. These include Benin, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritius, Rwanda, Senegal, and Tunisia. In these countries, no formal regulation has been implemented.

Without doubt, AI is one of the most revolutionary technologies of our time. While it is often framed as a technology with the potential to supplant human labour; it can also be seen as a complementary to human productivity. Thus, instead of seeing AI as a job replacement tool, we can view it as an ally with the potential to reshape and reboot industries, creator of employment and a beneficent enhancement tool.

Just like any other progressive continent, Africa must not lag behind in seizing the economic development prospects presented by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Cloud and digital technologies, including quantum computing, machine learning, and AI tools and systems, possess significant potential to enhance the production and transportation of abundant raw resources in Africa and to revitalise agro-based and services industries on the continent.

But of course, the regulation question remains the elephant in the room. The question is what comes first? Regulating data or AI? Or both? This is an egg and hen situation. These are complex questions with diverse responses.

Partly because of catchphrases like “data is the new oil”, it has become crucial to deal with the major ingredient in the AI ecosystem. Since data plays a fundamental role in AI development and deployment, it is advisable that African states like Namibia focus on data regulation before rushing to enact AI legislation.

The current climate seems to be more favourable to the view that African states should put more emphasis on strengthening data management standards rather than enacting new laws pertaining to AI. There is realisation that adequate data governance provides a viable pathway toward regulating AI, facilitating its responsible utilisation and development.

The first and most important step towards better regulation of AI is the effective implementation and enforcement of data protection regulations. Biometrics, profiling, and automated processing are all parts of personal data that must adhere to the rules laid down by data protection legislation, which also specifies the scope of such activities and the rights of persons. Necessary and proportionate data protection laws are urgently required to safeguard the acquisition, processing and archiving of personal data by private and public agencies.

A crucial framework for regulating elements of AI, especially the automated processing of personal data, is the Malabo Convention, which is the African Union (AU) Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection. This soft law provides some of the most relevant touch points on what AU member states can do to protect personal data and prevent cybercrime.

Yet despite the ratification of the Malabo Convention, close to twenty African countries have not yet passed data protection laws. These countries include Namibia, which has experienced false starts in its

effort to come up with data protection legislation. Since 2013, different drafts of the proposed law have been floated in the public domain without any meaningful progress. The proposed data protection law in Namibia must deal with data quality, privacy, responsible data sharing, compliance, transparency, and labour protections for data workers.

Following the examples set by the Information Regulator in South Africa and the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) in Kenya, Namibia should make the establishment of a robust data regulator with enforcement authority a top priority. The Data protection regulator should be less susceptible to economic and political pressure and intimidation.

Although many experts call for formal AI regulation, our argument is that the governance AI should strike a balance between promotion innovation and addressing structural harms embedded in the design and development of AI tools and systems. The wait-and-see technique, which may be more lucrative, involves integrating AI technology into regulated environments, such as AI regulatory sandboxes, where these technologies are assessed in relation to existing regulations.

While this is not an easy process, Namibia must collaborate and exchange knowledge and experience regarding data governance within the African ecosystem. Insights can be gleaned from Mauritius, and Rwanda, which have been engaged in comprehending AI within their respective national settings. The European Union (EU) provides insights through its AI Act.

African countries such as Namibia can benefit from initiatives such as the EU's Global Gateway strategy and a UNESCO-EU partnership on AI. Namibia should not fall for the temptation to cut and paste from the West without careful domestication and localisation to address felt needs, interests and challenges. We recommend that in providing financial support, international partners must respect the sovereignty of African states and avoid imposing or influencing their approaches to AI regulation.

African countries including Namibia should develop AI strategies, laws and policies that meet their unique needs while promoting human rights in line with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Namibia should develop culturally aligned and feasible data and digital governance solutions that puts its interests and national development aspirations at the centre of its policy formulation.





Building on the findings of the Presidential Task Force on the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the government of Namibia can also follow the South African route. For instance, the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies (DCDT) in South Africa has established the AI Institute of South Africa (AISA) to examine and address the legislative and regulatory dimensions of AI from an African perspective.

In the same vein, Namibia should work towards reinforcing data regulation along with building the human capital necessary to sustain AI ecosystems. This entails setting up centres of excellence on AI at the Namibia University of Science and Technology and University of Namibia. The government must also harness the capabilities of Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to support the development of data and AI legislation. While it is easy to be spectators from the global gallery as the United States of America and China fight for domination in the AI race, Namibia and many other African countries cannot afford to remain disinterested bystanders. The government should not be the only actor shaping data and AI policy in Namibia.

There is need for a multisectoral approach—whereby advocacy groups, academia, policymakers, start-ups and tech companies have an equal say in shaping the policy direction of the country.

In this regard, the government of Namibia through the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology should provide opportunities for local stakeholders to shape data and AI regulation by serving on advisory bodies and expert groups.

These advisory bodies should be adequately resourced and staffed with highly qualified personnel. Meaningful participation of local stakeholders has the potential to enhance data stewardship and oversight of AI systems but also increase policy ownership.

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A third of mobile users in sub-Saharan Africa will be on 5G by 2030 – Ericsson

• BY PAULA GILBERT

Ericsson forecasts that 5G will make up 33% of total mobile subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa by the end of the decade.

That's according to the November 2024 edition of the Ericsson Mobility Report which predicted that overall mobile subscriptions in sub-Saharan Africa will grow at an annual rate of 4%, increasing from 950 million in 2023 to 1.2 billion by 2030.

The strongest growth will come from 5G subscriptions, which are forecasted to rise from 11 million in 2023 to 420 million by the end of 2030, a growth rate of 59% annually.

This is a big jump from the November 2023 edition of the report, which forecast around 180 million 5G subscriptions in the region by 2029, or 16% of total mobile subscriptions.

It's also much higher than recent forecasts from the GSMA, which predicted that 5G will reach 17% of total connections in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030. Ericsson said that by 2030, 4G subscriptions will account for 35% of total mobile subscriptions, with

2G and 3G subscriptions expected to decline as the shift to 4G and 5G networks continues.

"Driven by a young and dynamic population, the increasing affordability of smartphones, and the growing demand for mobile data and advanced services, the November 2024 edition of the Ericsson Mobility Report highlights the significant growth potential of mobile subscriptions in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030," Ante Mihovilovic, VP and head of networks at Ericsson Middle East and Africa, said in a statement about the findings.

Ericsson said the mobile growth was due to handset evolution and network rollouts in urban areas. Mihovilovic also predicted that the region will make notable strides in connectivity and digital transformation, continuing the diversification into financial technology – particularly mobile money services – and fixed wireless access (FWA).

Ericsson believes that as Africa's broadband demands increase, FWA will serve as a pivotal technology for connecting the continent.



Smartphone adoption to grow

The number of smartphones in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to rise from 540 million in 2024 to 880 million by 2030, further driving demand for data-intensive services.

"While opportunities in the sector are substantial, significant infrastructure investments and supportive regulatory frameworks will be necessary for the telecom industry to play a central role in the region's digital transformation by 2030," the report said.

The researchers also highlighted that mobile data traffic per active smartphone is projected to grow from 5.4GB per month in 2024 to 17GB per month in 2030 in the region, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 21%.

Globally, mobile network data traffic is projected to grow almost 200% between 2024 and the end of 2030.

Additionally, 6.3 billion global 5G subscriptions are forecast by the end of 2030, with 60% expected to be 5G standalone (SA) subscriptions.

5G SA and 5G Advanced are expected to be key focuses for CSPs for the remainder of the decade as they deploy new capabilities to create offerings centered on value delivery rather than data volume, Ericsson added.

Middle East & North Africa forecasts

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 2G and 3G subscriptions are expected to decline significantly

by 2030, as service providers look into sunsetting these networks to reallocate spectrum for 4G and 5G.

By 2030, 4G will account for 37% of total subscriptions, while 5G will see the most significant growth and account for 60% of the total in MENA.

"The region's telecom industry continues to be resilient, despite broader economic headwinds. While geopolitical risks persist, and some currencies continue to face devaluation, ongoing economic diversification efforts are contributing to greater stability," the report found.

Mobile subscriptions in MENA are projected to grow 2% annually from 2024 to 2030, to total 830 million. Smartphone penetration is increasing at 5% annually, largely driven by device affordability and network expansion.

"This trend is reshaping the region's digital landscape as more consumers gain access to advanced services such as mobile financial solutions and e-health. 5G FWA will complement fixed broadband with diverse use cases, expanding home and enterprise access options," Ericsson concluded.

Paula has been the Editor of Connecting Africa since June 2019 and has been reporting on key developments in Africa's telecoms and ICT sectors for most of her journalistic career.



Alweendo encourages tech innovation in Namibia's energy sectors



Tom Alweendo

Mines and Energy Minister Tom Alweendo has said that Namibia needs to embrace technology and innovation across all stages of development in both oil and gas and green hydrogen industry value chains.

Alweendo further stated that digital technologies like automation, artificial intelligence, and data analytics can help optimise production, reduce costs, and minimise environmental impacts.

"We must therefore aim to be at the forefront of technological advancements, ensuring that our industries are not only competitive but are also built to last," Alweendo said.

He further said that the government is working with both international and local investors, local businesses, and research institutions to build a robust ecosystem that fosters innovation and sustainable practices.

"Our approach to developing this sector is holistic, while emphasising technological innovation. Technological innovation is key, where not only are we adopting existing technologies but also fostering homegrown innovations that make green hydrogen production more efficient, cost-effective, and locally driven," he said.

Namibia's recent oil and gas discoveries have drawn the attention of global markets, positioning the country as a rising energy player. The potential revenues from these resources could fuel

infrastructure development, healthcare, education, and much-needed social programs. These new industries have opened up a credible pathway for Namibia to meaningfully address historical structural challenges of high unemployment, high poverty, and high income inequalities.

"However, there is an important caveat to this happening—we must approach these opportunities with foresight and care. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that we cannot afford to squander; something that we must make sure propels us to prosperity and makes us proud Namibians. We thus need to approach this opportunity judiciously, always emphasising the ethos of, among others, meritocracy, pragmatism, integrity, honesty, and accountability.

"As we tap into these resources, let us commit to responsible extraction practices that prioritise environmental preservation. We have seen the lessons from countries around the world where poorly regulated oil and gas activities led to ecological degradation and harm to communities. We cannot and must not repeat such mistakes. Our approach must be centered on smart regulation, transparency, inclusiveness, and environmental stewardship," said Alweendo, adding that there is a need to ensure that the oil and gas sector is not just about short-term profits but must also serve as a bridge to a diversified economy.



“Revenues should be reinvested in innovation, social services, and industries that will sustain Namibia long after the oil has run out. The government is implementing strict regulations to ensure sustainable exploration and production. Environmental responsibility is at the forefront of our energy strategy, and we are working to ensure that all projects align with global best practices. For local businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), this sector offers numerous opportunities.

“From supply chain local sourcing services to logistics and environmental consultancy, there are various ways SMEs can contribute and benefit. Now is the time to innovate, upskill, and position yourselves to take advantage of these opportunities. The Erongo Region, in particular, is well positioned to provide strategic goods and services to the oil and gas industry, including vessel repair facilities, lodging, base resupply capabilities, and fuel bunkering, amongst many others,” the minister said.

He went on to explain that it is the government's number one priority to ensure that they introduce inclusive policy tools that promote local participation and employment. This will be achieved by requiring a certain percentage of goods and services to be sourced from domestic suppliers, especially those owned by historically disadvantaged Namibians, and a certain percentage of jobs to be filled by local people, thus maximising the local content in these strategic bet industries. The policy also motivates international oil companies to share knowledge and expertise with local firms and encourages investment in local infrastructure and skills development.

“While oil and gas present new economic prospects, our green hydrogen initiative is a cornerstone of our leadership in the global energy transition. Green hydrogen, produced using renewable energy, is crucial in reducing carbon emissions and decarbonising industries such as mining, transportation, and manufacturing.”

Alweendo also went on to state that the government's ambition is to produce green hydrogen on a scale that meets both domestic and international demand and use the molecules as cornerstones of establishing new industries in Namibia. Globally, there is a concerted effort to reduce carbon emissions across all industries. Namibia is poised to reap increasing benefits from this excess global demand.

“In some industries, one can electrify them with clean electricity, while in others, commonly referred to as hard-to-abate sectors, one will need green hydrogen and its derivatives. So, if we can competitively produce this clean fuel locally, it presents Namibia and the Erongo Region with a plethora of new industries, which include green iron production, green shipping fuel bunkering, and even green fertiliser manufacturing. This effort not only creates a cleaner energy future but also drives sustainable economic growth and productive diversification opportunities. The potential for job creation, local enterprise participation, and export revenue is immense,” he said.

Conclusively, Alweendo called on stakeholders to work together with the government towards building a thriving energy sector.

“As I conclude, I am convinced that Namibia's future is bright, and we stand at a critical juncture in our national development and social transformation. The potential for growth in our oil, gas, and green hydrogen sectors is unprecedented. However, with this opportunity comes the responsibility to ensure that the development is sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial for all. As we look to the future, I call on all stakeholders—businesses, investors, innovators, and community leaders—to embrace this challenge. “Let us work together to build an energy sector that is not only economically robust but also environmentally responsible. Let us ensure that Namibia becomes a leader in sustainable growth, not just in Africa but globally. Erongo Region is at the epicenter of this transformation journey, being a central pillar of our logistics hub agenda,” Alweendo said.

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Affordable and
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Karambua speaks innovation in staffing Namibia's key energy sectors



Julien Karambua

A leader in the recruitment, staffing, and outsourcing sectors, Workforce Staffing Namibia is operating within key industries such as oil and gas, mining, renewable energy, and clean energy sectors like green hydrogen and solar PV. As Namibia advances into these areas, the company is seeking to occupy a space where they provide workforce solutions that are flexible and scalable, in alignment with the fluctuating demands of these industries. Business Innovation (BI) spoke to Julien Karambua (JK), Country Manager for Workforce Staffing Namibia to how the company seeks to ensure that companies have access to the right talent pool, while also contributing to local skills development and employment within Namibia.

(BI): What inspired the founding of Workforce Staffing Namibia, especially in the context of the oil and gas sector?

(JK): The founding of Workforce Staffing Namibia was inspired by the significant strides the Namibian government has made in advancing sectors that are also growing globally, such as renewable energy, oil and gas, and green hydrogen, as well as the mining industry. We recognised an opportunity to offer our flexible

and turnkey employment services in Namibia, while also ensuring that all employment-related matters are regulated and compliant within the country.

(BI): What are the key challenges facing the oil and gas industry in terms of human capital?

(JK): One of the primary challenges in the industry is the shortage of local skills, particularly in highly technical roles that are in demand. However, many companies, including service providers, offshore logistic supply companies, international oil companies, and drilling companies, have invested significantly in training local Namibians to help close the skills gap. This includes making sure they are employable and have the necessary certifications to work offshore, though much of this investment has been focused on lower-skilled positions. The challenge remains in finding high-level technical expertise, which often requires bringing in foreign specialists to manage these more complex operations.





Additionally, many Namibians have taken the initiative to cross borders, particularly to South Africa, to invest in their own training. This included certifications like OPITO (Oil & Petroleum Industry Training Organization), rope access training, and BOSIET (Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training), along with UK medical qualifications for offshore work. By doing this, they have upskilled themselves to be able to enter and compete for positions in the sector.

(BI): What specific staffing solutions does Workforce Staffing Namibia provide to the oil and gas sector?

(JK): We provide tailored workforce solutions across the full spectrum of staffing needs, from highly skilled engineers and safety officers, to support roles such as head chefs, cooks, roughnecks, and motormen. While we don't offer specialised training for the oil and gas sector, we do provide leadership and health and safety training in other industries. Our staffing services help companies manage fluctuating workforce demands, ensuring long-term operational commitments and offering employees opportunities to work in various sectors during industry downtimes.

We also focus on upskilling and reskilling Namibians to be employable in other industries when there are lulls in the oil and gas market. Our services include mobilisation and demobilisation of local workers, expat management, including visa and immigration services, and full payrolling solutions, taking care of taxes and statutory obligations.

(BI): How do you ensure that your candidates meet the specific needs of this industry?

(JK): We ensure that candidates meet the specific requirements of the industry by adhering to key certifications and safety standards. For example, certifications like BOSIET and UK medical qualifications are basic requirements for offshore work. Additionally, there are other industry-specific certifications, such as STCW, (Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping), that candidates must meet. We focus on ensuring compliance with international safety standards and provide access to industry-specific training through established partnerships to guarantee that our candidates are well-prepared for their roles.

(BI): How does your company plan to contribute to local employment and skills development in Namibia?

(JK): Workforce Staffing Namibia are committed to creating sustainable employment opportunities for Namibians through our temporary employment

services model, which focuses on upskilling workers with the technical expertise needed for the oil and gas industry, as well as sectors like mining, logistics, green hydrogen, solar PV, and infrastructure. By ensuring candidates have the right certifications and discipline, we help them remain employable, even during periods of volatility in any sector. Additionally, we facilitate skills transfer from expats to local workers, enabling them to acquire the necessary expertise for future roles.

(BI): How do you envision the future of the oil and gas sector in Namibia, and what role will your company play in it?

(JK): We envision the oil and gas sector playing a critical role in Namibia's GDP, and Workforce Staffing Namibia will be critical in providing the flexible, skilled workforce needed to sustain it. Our broader focus is to ensure that Namibians are not only prepared for the sector but also equipped with transferable skills, enabling them to work across multiple industries, especially during periods of volatility.

As we navigate potential downturns, it's important to emphasise that our commitment extends beyond just the oil and gas industry. We recognise that the world is transitioning to clean energy, and while oil and gas will eventually phase out, resources like LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) will serve as transitional fuels. Namibia possesses abundant LNG resources, and there is significant focus on extracting these during the transition phase to bolster GDP and economic growth.

Our goal is to maximise current resources to benefit all Namibians while gradually ramping up renewable energy solutions as part of a decarbonisation strategy. The oil and gas sector will provide foundational training and experience for workers, preparing them for future opportunities in clean energy.

(BI): How does Workforce Staffing Namibia engage with local communities and stakeholders?

(JK): We engage with local communities and stakeholders through a comprehensive stakeholder management plan tailored to specific projects. This ensures that local communities benefit from initiatives in their area. Our team comprises Namibians who possess a deep understanding of the diverse cultures and histories of the various tribes across the country, enabling effective communication and engagement.



We conduct meetings in local languages, facilitating negotiations that lead to project labour agreements, which outline terms of employment, benefits, and wage rates aligned with industry standards. We prioritise fair treatment for all Namibians, ensuring that even unskilled labourers are paid on time and accurately, while also complying with statutory obligations and making necessary contributions to social services.

This grassroots approach sets us apart, as we can manage workforce needs at all levels—from unskilled labour to highly skilled positions. Our local expertise provides foreign entities with a significant advantage, allowing them to navigate the complexities of community engagement and project execution effectively.

(BI): Are there any initiatives in place to support diversity and inclusion within the workforce?

(JK): We are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion within our workforce by advocating for opportunities not only for women but also for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and those living with disabilities. We believe in taking a holistic approach to inclusion.

To support this, we collaborate with other private companies to unlock opportunities for underrepresented groups, helping them obtain essential accreditations relevant to sectors like oil and gas. This initiative is a key focus for us as we work to create a more inclusive workforce.

(BI): What advice would you give to individuals looking to enter the oil and gas sector in Namibia?

(JK): My advice would be to focus on gaining the right technical skills and certifications that are in high demand. When you have the opportunity to go offshore, seize that chance to learn and upskill yourself continually. Always look for ways to elevate your career to the next level.

It's also essential to develop a flexible and adaptable mindset, especially given the sector's volatility. Don't limit your focus solely to the oil and gas industry; explore adjacent industries such as green hydrogen and solar PV, which are rapidly growing in Namibia.

Solar energy is becoming increasingly significant, with more solar panels being installed and green hydrogen initiatives emerging.

Most importantly, remember that a career is a journey that unfolds step by step. Avoid pouring all your energy and limited resources into oil and gas alone; consider the bigger picture. The energy landscape is transitioning, and it's crucial to think about where your career will be in 15 to 20 years. Investing in broader certifications or qualifications that will remain relevant in the future is vital. Treat oil and gas as a stepping stone toward greater opportunities in the evolving energy sector.

(BI): Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers about Workforce Staffing Namibia or the oil and gas sector in Namibia?

(JK): Workforce Staffing Namibia is more than just a staffing provider; we are a strategic partner and a catalyst for workforce development. The oil and gas sector offers significant opportunities, but its volatility means workers must be ready to transition across sectors. We are committed to helping Namibians upskill and remain employable, regardless of industry changes.

It's crucial for job seekers to partner with a reputable organisation and never pay to secure a job. Workforce Staffing Namibia does not charge employees to apply or secure employment; our services are tailored to meet client needs.

We encourage individuals to view their careers as a journey that can transition from oil and gas into renewable energy and other sectors. Patience is also key—it's important to prepare for periods when drilling activities may not be ongoing. Upskilling can facilitate transitions into more stable sectors, such as construction and mining.

Lastly, we urge Namibians to research and understand the industry thoroughly. Many people overlook the complexities involved in securing employment in this field. By educating themselves, they can better navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. Owos-Oab', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. Eliphas !Owos-Ôab
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Alan Shannon

Embracing core competencies over soft skills: Key foundations for future entrepreneurial triumph

• BY ALAN SHANNON

To succeed in the future, entrepreneurs must embrace technology, social imperatives, and adaptability. With advancements in artificial intelligence, sustainability and decentralised finance, the business landscape is shifting rapidly.

With this, entrepreneurs need to integrate cutting-edge technologies and adopt ethical and sustainable practices. Digital transformation and changing regulations have redefined traditional business operations, making geographical locations less important. This future requires a new breed of entrepreneurs who are lifelong learners, tech-savvy, and adaptable to change.

There are practical skills that business owners need for growth, regardless of the business landscape. In the early stages, entrepreneurs should focus on market research, financial and business planning, networking, as well as sales and marketing.

As the business grows, skills should shift towards team management, scaling operations, advanced financial and customer relationship management, and product development. In the mature stage, strategic planning, crisis management, sustainability, and succession planning become crucial. However, the modern business landscape calls for a much wider range of skills than this. Interestingly,

many of the skills that are vital to business success today were considered 'soft skills' not too long ago. But given that no entrepreneur can feasibly master every new technology or innovation that comes along, these soft skills are arguably the most vital for sustainable success today.

These skills are also not confined to one industry or any particular stage of a business – they are foundational qualities that need to be honed and harnessed constantly throughout an entrepreneur's journey.

The first of these crucial entrepreneurial skills is adaptability. Given that today's changing business landscape is often marked by disruptive technologies and global crises like pandemics, entrepreneurs must demonstrate exceptional flexibility.

But being adaptable goes beyond the ability to react to changing circumstances; it also entails embracing new concepts, learning from setbacks, and being willing to adjust your business strategy as necessary. An ability, and willingness, to collaborate is another essential quality for the success of entrepreneurs in the future. In fact, the ability of a leader to build a diverse team that brings different perspectives to the table is crucial for the overall strength and lasting success of a business.





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As the business grows, skills should shift towards team management, scaling operations, advanced financial and customer relationship management, and product development.

Alan Shannon

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In today's business landscape individual brilliance is not enough; collective action and teamwork are crucial. A leader's ability to build a diverse team with different perspectives is vital for long-term success.

Collaboration extends beyond the business itself, as strategic partnerships with other businesses, even competitors, can open new markets, share insights, and inspire innovative solutions that wouldn't be possible alone.

No less important is curiosity. An entrepreneur's drive to explore the 'whys,' 'whats,' and 'hows' of their business environment distinguishes them from mere business owners. This intellectual restlessness propels them to question the status quo, dig deep into their industry norms, and consistently seek innovative approaches to solve customer problems. In addition, problem-solving is an essential skill for entrepreneurs. This capability enhances creativity and strengthens critical thinking abilities, enabling entrepreneurs to tackle various business

challenges. Communication is also a critical skill for entrepreneurs to ensure that they are articulating ideas clearly and engaging in meaningful dialogue with team members, stakeholders and customers. Then, of course, a commitment to lifelong learning is also crucial. The modern world is evolving at a dizzying pace, making constant education indispensable. It's not just about keeping up with the latest technologies; it's also about honing the higher-order skills of continually learning how to learn and figuring out how to practically apply what you have learned for the benefit of your business. In the future, entrepreneurial success will not depend on mastering a single skill or trade. Rather, sustainable success will rely on entrepreneurs becoming well-rounded individuals with a broad skill set and adaptable characteristics to navigate the complex and ever-changing business landscape. Alan Shannon is a banking executive with 20 years' experience in commercial banking, strategy and solutions for sustainable business growth.



Inside Manica Group Namibia's new sleek and modern logo



To mark its centennial milestone, Manica Group Namibia has unveiled a sleek, modern logo, signalling a new chapter for the logistics giant. The brand reveal took place last week during its 100th anniversary celebrations, where customers, suppliers, and staff were introduced to the company's refreshed look.

The logo symbol represents the company's various service pillars and embodies its commitment to its environmental, governance and social targets. By ensuring that it operates as an ethical corporate citizen, Manica lowers its impact on the environment and uplifts its people through skills training and growth opportunities.

According to Ralph Ruiters, managing director of Manica, the rebranding marks the beginning of an exciting phase in the logistics industry. "It was time," said Ruiters.

"Reaching 100 years in business is an immense achievement, and what better time to renew and re-energise the company for the next 100 years by modernising our brand."

The updated logo represents not just a change in appearance but a shift towards embracing the future of logistics while staying rooted in the values that have made Manica a trusted name for a century.

"Even with a new brand and logo, one thing will remain the same – our unwavering commitment to customer service, solving logistics challenges, and simplifying the way we move cargo," said Ruiters. The new brand design comes as Manica enters a dynamic period of growth, cementing its role as a leader in Namibia's logistics sector while preparing for the next century of success.



Solar energy is becoming a catalyst in driving Namibia's mining agenda

The recent growing emphasis on the use of renewable energy has allowed Namibia to benefit more from its mining sector as large-scale solar undertakings are in the works. Orano, a French uranium mining company, and Rossing Uranium Company, two of the main players in the Erongo region, have both launched solar photovoltaic (PV) projects to enhance their activities.

Orano Mining Namibia (OMN) is the Namibian subsidiary of the French uranium miner Orano. The company has very recently commenced the construction of another solar PV project, the Sorex Solar PV Project. This construction aims to supply power to the Erongo Desalination Plant (EDP), which is located 35 kilometers to the north of Swakopmund. The first phase of this initiative focuses on addressing the energy needs of the desalination plant more efficiently and in an eco-friendly manner through the minimization of the use of non-renewable sources of energy in this water-scarce region.

The Sorex project is planning additional phases that could help meet Namibia's primary and secondary sectors' energy needs. This renewable energy model is growth-oriented and designed to support Namibia's vision of incorporating renewables into their energy mix.

It is without a doubt that all these factors minimize dependence on fossil fuels. Among these factors, the Sorex project by OMN stands out for its efforts to transform the energy that drives industrial activities in Namibia.

The Rossing Uranium Mine in Erongo has simultaneously launched a solar PV project, demonstrating the benefits of clean energy investment in the mining sector. This ground-mounted solar project, which has a capacity of 18 MW, is scheduled to begin construction in 2024 and is expected to go live in 2025.

Rossing Uranium fully owns this project, which aims to enhance the mine's energy self-sufficiency and mitigate the negative impacts of uranium mining.

We predict that China National Nuclear Corporation, with its experience in developing energy projects, will assist in the engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) works of the Rossing solar project. Moreover, the company will offer two years of operations and maintenance support to guarantee the provision of steady and reliable energy. This alliance epitomizes the melding of foreign know-how with Namibia's ambitions toward renewable energy and serves as a fine example for other projects in the mining sector in the region.

The transition toward renewable energy in the mining sector of Namibia denotes a multitude of advantages. For instance, solar PV projects at Sorex and Rossing Uranium Mine reduce operational expenditures, enhance sustainability ratings, and agree with global trends of decarbonization.

As a result, these practices reduce the consumption of fossil fuels, thereby reducing carbon emissions, which is a positive step towards Namibia's environmental goals. Additionally, the use of solar energy in mining boosts productivity as it provides a reliable energy source that is not susceptible to fluctuations in the prices of conventional fuels.

Thanks to beneficial geographical features, including high solar irradiation, Namibia stands out as the perfect site for solar photovoltaic installations, which facilitates sustaining the mining operations on a reliable and endless source of energy. Such projects as Sorex and Rossing demonstrate that sustainable mining is indeed possible and can be economically profitable for the mining industry in Namibia.

The introduction of solar energy in Namibia's mining sector is commendable and suggests developments to come. The implementation of solar PV projects at the Sorex and Rossing Uranium Mine serves as evidence of this. As these projects seem poised for realization, they will likely accelerate the integration of more renewable energy for industrial and community purposes, contributing to Namibia's quest for ecological sustainability.

Namibia to benefit from Liquid C2's enhanced partnership with Cloudflare



Liquid C2, a business unit of Cassava Technologies has further solidified its strategic partnership with Cloudflare. The latter has appointed Liquid C2 as the first distributor of their new range of cyber security products in South Africa, a testament to Liquid C2 expertise and trustworthiness in the industry. In addition to South Africa, the company will make the solutions available to its partners in Namibia, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

With the new offering, Liquid C2 is set to deliver application services that provide security and performance solutions for web applications, network services that secure enterprise networking and zero trust services. The 2023 Cyber Security report from Interpol revealed a 23% year-on-year increase in the average number of weekly cyberattacks per organisation in Africa, underscoring the pressing need for cost-effective integrated cybersecurity services for businesses in the mid-market segment. Oswald Jumira, CEO of Liquid C2, reassures, "Through this partnership, we will enable our channel partner ecosystem through Cloudmania to expand their cyber security solution offering to their customers. Modern businesses need robust, scalable, and secure solutions to support hybrid work environments, protect against network and application-level threats, and ensure reliable connectivity. This offering, which combines the reach of Liquid C2 and Cloudmania and Cloudflare's

expertise, is a testament to our commitment to enabling businesses to thrive in the growing African digital economy".

Graham Turnbull, Cloudflare said, "Cloudflare is excited to announce an expanded partnership with Liquid C2 to launch a Managed Services Programme aimed at delivering advanced security and performance solutions to businesses of all sizes across Africa. As long-standing partners, Cloudflare and Liquid C2 are committed to empowering organisations with scalable, resilient digital infrastructure. This collaboration brings together Cloudflare's world-class technology with Liquid C2's extensive network, supporting the continent's digital growth and security needs".

Additionally, Cloudflare's zero trust services provide a security model that requires strict identity verification for every individual and device trying to access resources on a private network. This solution is critical for any organisation that has moved to a hybrid and remote work model. In today's ever-evolving cyber threat landscape, businesses need to secure access to applications and data from any location, ensuring that only authorised users and devices can connect. This milestone enables African companies to level the playing field against their international counterparts, making Africa an attractive investment destination.

Urgent need to integrate AI in newsroom workflows and operations



• BY HILARY MARE AND PROF ADMIRE MARE

The latest technology to disrupt newsroom operations is arguably artificial intelligence (AI). Taking the form of generative AI, this technology has allowed machines to literally create, act and process prompts and information like human beings.

Because of its ability to do tasks autonomously like human beings, there is deep seated fear that this technology will replace human beings (and by extension journalists). While this fear cannot be ignored at face value, it is important to note that AI is here to stay, and newsrooms need to be more proactive and strategic in how they harness its opportunities while putting guardrails on how to mitigate its threats.

Newsrooms cannot afford to bury their heads in the sand like ostriches. This is time for learning and unlearning as the latest digital transformation permeate the news making ecosystem.

A recent report by the Namibia Media Trust (NMT) reveals how the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Namibian newsrooms has become more rampant, albeit in an individualised and non-strategic manner. With its main focus on Namibia, the study shows that a striking 73% of journalists in the country are utilising AI chatbots for various aspects of their work, including text editing, transcription, news gathering, and content generation.

This trend underscores the urgent need for media organisations not just in Namibia but across the Southern African region to strategically adopt AI in their newsroom workflows and operations. This also means adopting responsible and ethical guidelines on how to integrate AI into their news production, distribution, monetisation, consumption and measurement processes.

In recent times, we have seen how the ad hoc adoption of generative AI tools such as DALL-E and Midjourney and Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT and Bard have reshaped how news is created, packaged, consumed and monetised.

In May 2023, WAN-IFRA conducted a survey which found that 49% of the respondents had already used generative AI tools. Salesforce, which owns the popular workplace tool Slack, also conducted a survey with 14,000 workers in 14 countries and discovered that 28% of employees use generative AI in their workplaces, with more than half doing so without official endorsement from their employers. For media practitioners, AI like other technologies before it is double-edged. It has both positive and negative attributes. It depends largely on how it is adopted and adapted to the newsroom context.



This is with consideration of the fact that, in an age where information travels at lightning speed and the demand for timely, accurate reporting has never been greater, the integration of AI into journalistic practices is no longer a futuristic concept but a pressing necessity.

Southern Africa's media industry faces numerous challenges, including dwindling resources, the proliferation of misinformation, and a rapidly changing digital environment. Traditional methods of news gathering and reporting are increasingly inadequate for meeting the needs of a tech-savvy audience that expects real-time updates and personalised content. Newsrooms must, thus, adapt or risk obsolescence.

AI technologies can significantly enhance the efficiency and productivity of media organizations. By automating routine tasks such as transcription, translation, and text editing, journalists and editors can devote more time to in-depth reporting and investigative journalism. This not only improves the quality of content but also allows for a more thorough exploration of pressing issues facing society.

While the potential benefits of AI are many and varied, the unskilled use of these technologies poses significant risks to journalistic integrity. Media organisations need to strategically adopt AI, training their staff on the ethical implications and potential pitfalls of its use. This includes understanding how to discern credible information from dis- and misinformation, maintaining transparency in AI-generated content, and safeguarding against biases that may arise from relying too heavily on AI tools and systems.

By imparting relevant skills through on and off the job training programmes, news organizations can empower journalists to use AI responsibly, securely and safely, upholding the standards of accuracy and fairness that are foundational to the profession.

Some of these recommendations have already started. For instance, last year, Namibia's Ministry of Higher Education, Training, and Innovation, in collaboration with UNESCO, gathered over 80 professionals from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector in Windhoek for a stakeholder engagement on the implementation of UNESCO's recommendation on the ethics of AI.

These recommendations on AI's ethics emphasise the need for transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the development and use of AI. It also calls for the protection of human rights and the promotion of gender equality and diversity in AI development.

The engagement followed the September hosting of the Southern Africa Regional Forum on Artificial

Intelligence (SARFAI) in Windhoek. The forum served as a unique opportunity for deliberation among Southern African countries on how to leverage synergies and shape a shared agenda for the development and use of AI for the common good, with strong and clear ethical and human-rights-based foundations in line with the 2021 UNESCO Recommendation on Ethics of AI.

In order to implement these recommendations, a readiness assessment methodology (RAM) needs to be created to help Member States, and their stakeholders figure out what frameworks, capacities, and competencies are in place at the country level to support the responsible use and growth of AI.

Notwithstanding these efforts, strategic adoption of AI also involves fostering a culture of continuous learning within media organisations. As AI technologies evolve, so too must the skill set of the journalists who use them. Investing in training programmes that focus on both the technical aspects of AI and its ethical considerations will prepare journalists to navigate the complexities of digital and AI-enhanced reporting.

This proactive approach not only enhances individual capabilities but also strengthens the overall integrity and credibility of the media landscape in Namibia. The integration of AI into Southern Africa's media organisations is not just a trend; it is a necessity for media sustainability and survival in the digital age. By adopting AI strategically, media outlets can enhance their efficiency, support robust news gathering, and uphold journalistic integrity.

As the landscape continues to evolve, it is imperative that news organisations invest in the hard and soft skills necessary to responsibly harness AI's potential. This also means news organisations should invest in locally designed AI tools and systems which can support their digital public infrastructures.

Doing so will improve their workflows and operations in an environment where journalism is increasingly practiced online. Embracing AI thoughtfully will ensure that the region's media remains a trusted source of information in the years to come. Time to do the right thing is now. Rome was not built in a day.

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Innovation in the automobile sector: A case for electric vehicles in Africa



In sub-Saharan Africa, high levels of particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution from vehicle tailpipe emissions cause poor health, developmental stunting, and even death. Vehicle emissions also contribute to global warming.

Electric vehicles could help solve these problems but they've been slow to take off in the region. Its biggest economy, South Africa, had only about 1,000 electric vehicles by 2022.

We are specialist transport engineers whose research has focused on electric vehicles and road freight transport in sub-Saharan Africa. In our work we look at how electric vehicles could contribute to reducing emissions in the region, and what is standing in the way of electrifying transport. One of the reasons for low uptake is the high cost of electric vehicles. They also have limited range and their batteries are slow to charge: a problem for long distance or frequent driving.

The inability of countries to generate and distribute enough clean electricity is also a barrier to electrifying vehicles. Just over half of all electricity in the region comes from burning fossil fuels. Powering electric vehicles with electricity generated by burning fossil fuels wouldn't necessarily reduce carbon emissions. However, the rollout of electric motorcycles and small public transport vehicles has already begun. If all vehicles could be made locally, using clean energy, there would be tremendous economic benefits for

the region.

Electric mobility is some way off

Transitioning to electric mobility requires clean energy provision, which means investing in electricity infrastructure. Electric vehicle charging stations can be installed fast: South Africa already has a very high electric vehicle ratio of one charger for every five cars, compared to the UK at 1:20. But these charging stations must be able to deliver electricity when vehicles need it. They need reliable, renewable energy stored in large battery systems to do so - and these large battery systems are still being developed.

In sub-Saharan Africa informal public transport moves about 72% of the region's passengers. Freight moves goods in the absence of adequate rail. Electrifying these sectors needs careful planning. Informal "paratransit" or "popular transportation" is made up of minibuses (matatu, ndiaga ndiaye, danfo, trotro), three-wheelers (tuk-tuk) and motorbikes (boda boda, moto).

Planning for the eventual electrification of informal taxis is complicated by the sector's unscheduled, decentralised, often chaotic and demand-driven nature.



Freight transport is a leading indicator for economic growth, and for economies to grow, freight transport must grow. This means that national and local governments must plan and invest in high powered, fast charging stations along transport routes. These must be able to charge different sizes and kinds of trucks. The freight industry cannot absorb these costs alone.

Need for rapid change

The transport sector must make the transition to electric mobility faster than the breakneck speed at which smartphones were adopted if it is to meet Net Zero – an end to carbon emissions – by 2050. Costly electrical and civil infrastructure (roads, minibus termini, truck stops, electricity distribution networks) will be needed – and soon.

However, our results show that fleets will have to contain a mix of electric and combustion-based engines if countries want to continue to transport the same amount of goods and people they are currently transporting. This is because electric vehicles charge slowly. While a diesel minibus taxi takes only one minute to fill up with enough diesel to travel 750 kilometres, the fastest currently available electric minibus recharges at a mere 2km per minute with DC and 0.3km per minute with AC. The electric taxi's range is also only 21% of the diesel equivalent. Filling stations in the region generally store the equivalent of up to 225,000km worth of fuel for a diesel minibus. The same size of stationary electric battery storage will store a mere 16,000km for an electric equivalent minibus. Range-extending and potentially swappable battery storage can be used (where a trailer acts as a mobile battery bank to the vehicle, and is charged from a solar charging station to reduce emissions). But this will increase the cost so much that it may not be financially viable for the freight industry at all.

Building a local electric vehicle industry

Except for South Africa, the region has been a dumping ground for second hand vehicles from developed countries. The comparatively simple designs of electric vehicles provide an opportunity for sub-Saharan Africa to move away from accepting second hand vehicles and towards a new local electric vehicle industry.

Workers in hundreds of thousands of jobs making combustion engines could be reskilled to make electric vehicles. Africa already has the skills to design and produce the powertrain components,

such as batteries and electric motors. Setting up local industries would also spare sub-Saharan Africa from being flooded by cheap electric vehicle imports that don't contribute to local employment.

Ethiopia has recently banned the import of combustion vehicles. Africa's first all-electric mass rapid transit was set up in Dakar, Senegal in 2023. The Golden Arrow bus company in South Africa purchased 120 electric buses this year. Heavy haul electric trucks are also entering the South African market space.

Africa has already produced tens of thousands of electric two- and three-wheelers used for public transport and last-mile delivery. These include Ampersand in Rwanda, Roam Electric in Kenya, and Spiro in Benin. Batteries are usually provided through swapping and payment by mobile phone. In South Africa, Mellowvans produce a last-mile three-wheeler.

A Roam Air electric motorbike recently completed the 6000km journey from Nairobi to Stellenbosch using only the region's abundant solar power. In Kenya, BasiGO assembled buses locally and now provides finance for electric buses. Roam Electric makes locally designed electric buses (and motorbikes). Meanwhile, a project owned by the South African National Energy Development Institute at Stellenbosch University in South Africa has converted a petrol minibus taxi and a 65-seater diesel bus to electric.

Electrification is inevitable

The shift to electric vehicles is inevitable. These steps are needed first:

- Review transport policy related to freight vehicles, such as axle weight and vehicle length, to ensure that imported electric vehicles can operate on African road networks.
- Ensure paratransit is safe, efficient and equitable.
- Carefully consider import duties and incentives. Rwanda scrapped customs tax on electric vehicles to make them cheaper, but this led to an influx of old hybrid vehicles with depleted batteries. South Africa has vehicle import duties to protect local production, but an additional luxury tax on electric vehicles makes these expensive to buy.
- Rethink the taxation model. In South Africa, for example, fuel levies make up a chunk of national revenue.

To make the most of the electric mobility revolution, sub-Saharan African countries need policies and incentives to localise production and invest in green energy, lest they miss the bus.

Namibia pushes for inclusive digital **identity systems** through legal identity governance



Namibia is advancing digital inclusion by working closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish legal identity systems, for all its citizens to have verifiable identities. These initiatives come as Namibia tackles identity verification challenges that leave rural and marginalized communities underserved, a gap that digital identity technologies aim to bridge.

The initiative follows extensive collaboration between UNDP Namibia and local stakeholders, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, to address gaps in the country's identity governance framework. According to a recent UNDP blog, the collaborative approach seeks to ensure that Namibia's legal identity governance system is not only comprehensive but also accessible across socio-economic divides.

For many Namibians, particularly those in remote areas, accessing essential services is hindered by the lack of verifiable identification. The partnership seeks to equip underserved communities with the legal means to access healthcare, education, and social benefits by providing them with a secure digital identity. UNDP Namibia emphasizes that this approach will align with the principles of Sustainable Development Goal 16.9, which advocates for legal identity for all by 2030.

Bridging the digital divide through community-centric models

UNDP Namibia has emphasized the importance of tailoring systems to Namibia's unique social and geographic landscapes. Part of the strategy includes exploring community-centered models that focus on inclusivity, ensuring that women, children, and rural populations are prioritized in the rollout of digital ID services. These community-centric approaches reflect UNDP's efforts to build resilient legal identity

frameworks that address local needs, promoting digital inclusion through contemplative governance. In 2021, the Accelerator Lab identified a need to support the most underserved communities, focusing on addressing the lack of legal identity documentation among residents in Groot Aub. A UN report uncovered that without recognized identification, many individuals were left on the margins of society, unable to access essential services or fully engage in socio-economic opportunities.

Pilot projects have been launched to test these digital identity tools and fine-tune them for Namibia's distinct contexts. During these pilots, various methods for documenting legal identities are being evaluated, aiming to identify the most efficient and accessible practices for wider implementation.

A model for digital identity governance in Africa

With digital transformation rising across the continent, Namibia's focus on digital inclusion and legal identity governance serves as a model for other African nations facing similar challenges. Namibia, like many countries globally, faces challenges with fragmented service delivery and limited interoperability between separate databases and systems. To address these issues, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, in collaboration with the ICT System Architect from the Office of the Prime Minister, has been actively working to overcome these barriers, according to reports from another UN blog post.

By providing Namibian communities with accessible legal identities, the UNDP-led initiative aims to reduce the risks associated with identity exclusion, such as restricted access to essential services and economic opportunities.

- Biometric update

OPINION:



Authenticity in a digital world

At the forefront of the challenges and opportunities emerging in the digital media space is the critical need for innovative metrics that reflect the true value and impact of navigating new frontiers.

Digital media, an exciting, adventurous industry, is characterised by constant change and disruption. The rise of digital platforms has empowered content creators and transformed how we consume media, forcing industry players to adapt or fall behind. It's an exciting time, but it's also complex. The pressure to deliver instant results often overshadows the importance of building lasting relationships with audiences – and we risk losing sight of what truly matters: storytelling and the human connection.

Advertising, once focused on reaching and engaging the masses, must now prioritise storytelling as emotional experiences, as authenticity is what consumers crave. While the industry possesses the talent and resources to create impactful campaigns, the pressure to deliver immediate results has sometimes overshadowed the pursuit of creativity. A common response to this is that either we are overworked or lacking in innovative approaches – but this is where we need to remember why we do media, what it means to truly change a brand

into a household name, and the purpose of media: to inform, entertain, inspire and engage. We are seeing a major shift in every step of the process of the way things have always been done – but how do we ensure efficacy and what does this mean for us within this thrilling industry?

We need to reimagine our approach to navigating the complexity of this industry. By combining data-driven insights with a deep understanding of human behaviour, we create campaigns that truly resonate. This involves moving beyond traditional metrics and focusing on building authentic experiences with audiences. It is important that we understand that how your brand makes your customer feel is what matters most in retaining their loyalty.

Namibia is a unique country, and we often lose the nuances that would drive massive conversation because brands don't fully understand how their products are being used in different communities or regions. With the extensive technology, data and tools available to us, we can do better to interact and reach our customers authentically. This naturally increases affinity, engagement, and delivers on objectives.

Africa: Stronger maritime industry drives resilient, sustainable trade



The latest Review of Maritime Transport released on 22 October highlights several bright spots across Africa's shipping sector.

Between the first half of 2018 and the first half of 2023, port calls by container ships rose by 20% in Africa, while tanker calls grew by 38% -- both record-breaking increases for the continent.

On vessel registration, Liberia in 2022 became the world's largest ship register in terms of deadweight tonnage, surpassing Panama which had been in the lead for three decades.

The African nation continued to top the list in 2023, posting a 17.3% share of global fleet compared to Panama's 16.1%.

Other African top performers included Cameroon at 27th place in terms of deadweight tonnage and vessel number, while Nigeria ranked 33rd, after expanding 16.2% in registered deadweight.

More broadly, South-South waterways connecting Sub-Saharan Africa to other parts of the developing world, logged the highest increase (9%) in its volume of globalized container trade in 2023.

Red Sea crisis: Stakes high for Africa

Attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea, which began in November 2023, prompted large numbers of vessels to navigate away from the Suez Canal and around the Cape of Good Hope.

The rerouting, having increased congestion in South African ports, created opportunities for countries like Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia or Tanzania, which are strategically located on maritime routes connecting Asia with Europe.

Several East African countries, whose foreign trade is highly dependent on the Suez Canal – by volume, that's approximately 31% and 34% respectively for Djibouti and the Sudan – are therefore subject to the disruptions.

For example, East Africa has seen a shortage of perishable goods and standard containers due to longer cargo delivery times, impacting avocado, tea and coffee supply chains.





Moreover, the impact on empty containers, driven by carriers prioritizing shipments to high-paying markets such as Europe and the United States, came at the expense of regions like Africa – reminiscent of the pattern seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Africa seizing opportunities in renewable energy supply chain

The global transition to renewable energy sources also holds promise for Africa.

Some African countries are already tapping into green hydrogen to meet their energy needs, while others look to become port hubs for green hydrogen production, storage and transport.

The African Hydrogen Partnership has identified Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Africa as potential landing zones or hubs for storing and distributing green hydrogen.

Africa in action to ease trade, enhance resilience.

Amid geopolitical uncertainties and climate risks, Africa is taking steps to enhance shipping capacity and trade connectivity.

Mauritius, for instance, has been building resilience to a range of threats by strengthening national development policies and cooperation with partners in and beyond Africa to bolster maritime security.

Its various initiatives include capacity building, regional training and information sharing to combat pirate risks and guarantee the safety of maritime lanes, along with measures to increase resilience through port reforms focusing on connectivity and sustainability.

The continent also shores up trade facilitation to cut transit times and costs, through initiatives such as the East African Community's Single Customs Territory and one-stop border posts.

UNAM Chancellor's Innovation Fund (CIF) continues **to transform creative ideas into entrepreneurship**



• BY LYDIA SAGEUS

The University of Namibia (UNAM) has positioned itself as a beacon of excellence in responding to national high-level developmental initiatives as contained in Vision 2030, and National Development Plan Five (NDP5). This can be achieved through forging partnerships with key stakeholders like Telecom Namibia Limited to advance research, innovation, and entrepreneurship development.

The University's Vice-Chancellor Prof. Kenneth Matengu is a big advocate for innovation and industrialisation. This collaboration was initiated to develop capacity, nurture local talent, and promote entrepreneurial innovation with the potential to turn societal challenges into business opportunities. The purpose of CIF is to provide an opportunity to UNAM staff and students to present and implement their innovative business ideas.

In line with UNAM's mandate of producing entrepreneurs, CIF is currently nurturing an additional 12 incubated projects, comprising UNAM staff and students. CIF is set to empower the project teams with training, mentorship, coaching, and funding. These projects could result in commercially viable products or services with a focus on technology-based disruptive innovations, utilising Telecom Namibia's infrastructure.

The current incubation programme runs from 01st September 2023 until 30th August 2024 and comprised of progressive ideas such as:

- Online intelligence platforms
- Farming technology
- Digital applications, and
- Online educational platforms

According to Mr. Leonard Imene, who is overseeing CIF activities of this nature, and is a Coordinator of Innovation and Business Development at UNAM, stated that "CIF is playing an integral role in preparation and supporting innovative ideas. These business ideas have the potential of developing into actual businesses capable of contributing to national employment, economy-boosting and improving the country's innovation and global competitiveness".

Telecom and UNAM: Empowering Namibia's brightest minds

The collaboration between UNAM and Telecom Namibia Limited represents a shared vision to create job opportunities, stimulating trade and economy through innovative products and services.

Telecom Namibia has provided a 3-year grant to support and develop this initiative. Recognizing the importance of giving back to the community that sustains its operations, this collaboration is dedicated to enabling more people to become innovators and entrepreneurs. CIF is not only transforming ideas into reality, but it is igniting a powerful force for innovation and entrepreneurship.



Dr Annemarie Lombard

Time to cut down on digital fatigue?

This is how you can do it

The post-COVID-19 'new normal' is radically different to life as we once knew it... your working environment has expanded beyond just the computer screen and office and it is possible to work virtually from anywhere as per the hybrid model. But there is a price to pay for this hybrid existence.

Your eyes are in another kind of lockdown on your screen, particularly when you are in digital meetings. And your ears are trying to contest with the distractions of your screaming toddler, a hungry teenager (in my case), a barking dog, an irritable spouse, etc.

This is happening while you are seated for much longer times than usual and your body is just not moving as much as it used to. This results in fatigue, headaches, joint strains and other physical ailments, including stress, irritation, mental pressure and anxiety...

An unfortunate fact

Our bodies are taking physical strain and our minds are taking mental strain. That is an unfortunate fact. As sensory beings, we interact through our seven senses in a dynamic way with our world. This constant navigation helps us to obtain a modulated response in how we focus, behave and emotionally respond. We need the ebb and flow of daily living through varied sensory stimulation to be our best. With this in mind, we have applied our specialist

knowledge of neuroscience and sensory processing to list practical steps to help you reduce stress and continue to be at your best.

Lower your expectations

Lower your expectations and don't try to be the best at everything. We are all trying to juggle homework, managing our kids in a whole new way, home-schooling (and we are parents, not teachers), living in restricted and limited environments all while trying to keep ourselves and our families together in one piece.

We are experiencing information and technology overload

Listen to your body and be mindful of the signals it is sending you. Are you feeling dizzy, lethargic, or tired? Do you have a headache? Are you feeling anxious? Your body will provide you with signals to show you if something is wrong.

Make a note, write down how you are feeling, the time of day and what you were busy doing before it happened. It helps to be more in tune with what is going on, to read your own signals and making the necessary adjustments before things make a turn for the worse.





How to maximise your auditory processing and reduce auditory overload:

- For meetings, use a headset or earphones, particularly when you don't have a quiet, designated workspace. It will reduce distractions for you as well as your online colleagues or audience. Sounds get amplified in online meetings and you might be conveying a different message than what you intended.
- Test your microphone and sound prior to meetings. Set a volume that is comfortable for you. Navigate between sound muted or unmuted where necessary. Mute your microphone particularly when there is an increase in background noise and if you are sneezing, coughing or drinking water. And obviously don't eat anything when on a call. Not even gum... it looks and sounds dreadful.
- Disable any sound notifications to reduce noise levels. It is extremely irritating to hear another person's constant ping. And although intended to be background noise, the sound will be amplified for the others on the call. It will help everyone to be more focused and less distracted. Have designated times when you check your email and messages to avoid constant interference while on calls or working on a task.
- You can also revert to using the chat box instead of speaking when your microphone isn't working, if there are too many distractions or if you just don't trust your voice at any given time. Although it does interfere with the level of human interaction, it will reduce auditory overload.

How to maximise your visual processing and reduce visual overload:

- Check your positioning in the room for maximum use of light. Be mindful that the light should not be from behind as it will be difficult for others to see you clearly. It is ideal to have incoming light from your front, i.e. sit in front of an open window. An alternative is to have a side lamp on your desk shining on your face. Light will help you work better but also make you more visible and easier to see for your colleagues and improve human interaction.
- Make sure your desktop and screen(s) are cleaned up and tidy. Clean your screen, reduce your icons and/or group them. Work with as little on-screen clutter as possible. Limit the number of tabs you have open. Set bookmarks for quick and easy access to your most-used apps or websites.
- Set your screen brightness and type of background to your liking. An image that provides joy and calmness is ideal. Some people prefer to have a single colour as a desktop background.
- Having meetings without video is very impersonal and reduces human interaction. If Wi-Fi connectivity is an issue then videos can be disabled, but it's a shame and it is always preferable to have it enabled. We have to work much harder to be "human" and digital channels

can help – and this includes showing off your face and your voice... so make sure you are dressed and groomed properly. No pyjamas, no bedhead, no beach clothing...

How to maximise movement and self-regulate your body:

- Movement breaks will be your number one priority to save your energy and reduce your fatigue. The brain is designed to tap into movement brain breaks in order to function and focus optimally. A water bottle next to you helps to hydrate you and then increases the need for bathroom breaks. The best and most effective self-regulation tool!
- Having movement breaks between meetings is non-negotiable. If you attend meeting after meeting you will begin to make less sense as fatigue sets in. Even a quick leg stretch (2-5 minutes) can help. You can always negotiate with your meeting members to all have a quick stretch in longer meetings and return at a designated time.
- Don't have a movement break while you are on a call and move around excessively. You will make the other people seasick, particularly if they are visually sensitive and in sensory overload. You can shift your body or move your position but don't walk around with your phone or laptop while talking. If you do need to display anything to your group, make sure to keep your phone or laptop as steady as possible.

Digital schedule

Scheduling and time management for online working will depend on the amount of control you have over your schedule.

Where possible keep 1-1 online meetings to a maximum of 30 minutes, group meetings to a maximum of 60 minutes and webinars or training to a maximum of 90 minutes. When the group is bigger, there will be less focus on one particular individual which makes it easier to go for longer periods of time.

If you can negotiate schedules with your work colleagues, family and children, that is ideal. Sticking to a routine for home-schooling your children will make everyone's life a lot easier

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." – Alan Watts

This article was contributed by Dr Annemarie Lombard | Founder | Thought Leader | Workshop Facilitator | Author | Sensory Intelligence®



Where Commitment Matters and Quality Prevails.



Namibia Institute of Pathology Limited

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NIP advances Namibia's healthcare through commitment to quality

In the evolving landscape of healthcare, the Namibia Institute of Pathology Limited (NIP) stands out as a beacon of quality and reliability. With a resolute commitment to delivering world-class pathology services, NIP has made significant strides under its Za Tuka Integrated Strategic Business Plan which is now in its second year of implementation.

The recent SADCAS recommendation for accreditation of NIP Katima Mulilo, Rundu Regional, Otjiwarongo, Oshakati, Ongwediva Medipark, Outapi, Keetmashoop, Windhoek Central Reference, Onandjokwe and Engela laboratories exemplifies its dedication to quality. After SADCAS assessments in June, August and November 2024, the aforementioned NIP laboratories were recommended for maintenance of accreditation under the new ISO 15189:2022, confirming their adherence to stringent international benchmarks. This transition from the ISO 15189:2012 to the ISO 15189:2022 standard was a timely move that has ensured that NIP pathology tests are not only reliable but also accurate and consistent.

For medical professionals, the implications of this accreditation are profound. Accurate laboratory results serve as the foundation for proper diagnosis and treatment planning. By maintaining the highest standards, NIP reinforces the trust that healthcare providers and patients place in Namibia's healthcare industry. For the public, visiting an accredited NIP laboratory means receiving tests that meet the latest advancements in laboratory standards, ensuring safety and reliability in their medical journey.

The ISO 15189:2022 standard introduces enhanced guidelines that emphasise risk to patient care for both technical and managerial requirements. This comprehensive approach ensures robust quality controls and a patient-centered service model. Key areas of focus within the new standard include:

Risk management: The 2022 standard places a significant emphasis on risk-based thinking to safeguard patient safety. Laboratories are now required to proactively identify and mitigate potential risks that could compromise the quality of results or patient safety. This proactive approach is essential in fostering an environment where quality is paramount.

Patient and laboratory staff safety: Strengthening safety protocols for both patients and laboratory personnel is a crucial component of the new standard. By prioritizing safety, NIP creates a secure environment that protects all individuals involved in the diagnostic process.



Information management: The updated standard includes detailed requirements for managing patient information and data security. In an era where digital health is becoming increasingly important, robust information management systems are vital for maintaining confidentiality and trust.

The new standard further reinforces the competency of laboratory personnel. NIP is committed to providing ongoing training and development opportunities, ensuring that staff meet the highest technical standards in their field. By embracing these enhanced guidelines, NIP is not only improving the operational efficiency of its accredited laboratories but also aligning with global trends in healthcare quality management.

“This alignment translates into more reliable diagnostic results for healthcare providers and greater assurance for patients regarding the quality of tests conducted.”

Participation in the Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA) and Stepwise Laboratory Quality Improvement Process Towards Accreditation (SLIPTA) programs further underscores NIP's journey towards quality improvement. NIP, committed to empowering laboratory managers to implement immediate quality improvement measures, has enrolled 34 laboratories in these initiatives. We tailor these programs for resource-limited settings, making them particularly relevant for developing countries like Namibia.



Additionally, NIP has achieved international recognition for its quality improvements through the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM). Currently, 14 NIP laboratories hold accreditation from the Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS), aligning with the prestigious ISO 15189 standard. This recognition not only highlights NIP's commitment to excellence but also positions it among the elite in laboratory services across the region.

When NIP launched the 2022-2027 Za Tuka, one of its core strategic ideals enhancing laboratory services through a hub-spoke-node model. To aid the delivery of this objective which bodes well with our appetite for quality, we are in the process of establishing six centers of excellence which are central to this plan with a focus on customer-centricity and innovation.

As NIP continues its journey towards maintaining and expanding its accreditation, we remain steadfast in our commitment to quality pathology services. The successful transition to ISO 15189:2022 is not merely a milestone; it is a testament to NIP's unwavering dedication to enhancing healthcare delivery in Namibia. Withstanding this, the ongoing efforts to implement quality management systems across all laboratories will further bolster NIP's reputation as a leader in diagnostic services. Our commitment to upholding the highest standards in all laboratories positions us to significantly influence public health and cultivate trust and confidence among both medical professionals and patients.

Conclusively, the Namibia Institute of Pathology's commitment to quality and excellence is evident in its strategic initiatives and successful accreditation transitions. While we move forward, we will continue to prioritize patient safety, operational efficiency, and the highest standards of diagnostic service, ultimately leading to a healthier Namibia.

The journey is far from over, but with each step, NIP is paving the way for a brighter future in healthcare.

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ZA TUKA



Cayley Jones

EXPRESS INSIGHTS: AI - My unexpected ally

• BY CAYLEY JONES

When OpenAI's GPT models burst onto the scene a few years ago, fueling the enduring AI frenzy, I was apprehensive to say the least. While most people I knew were eagerly jumping on to the LLM-powered bandwagon, I couldn't help but wonder whether us writers would inevitably be replaced by the very technology we were working with. And for a while, I was convinced that if I relied on the likes of ChatGPT, I'd be compromising my credibility as a writer. Fast forward to today - where third and fourth iterations of LLMs exist - and not only is my job as a UX writer still safe, but I'm avidly leveraging AI-powered tools in my role almost every day.

So, what changed my mind?

After accepting that Generative AI and its LLMs were here to stay, it became obvious that if I didn't start to embrace AI - and embrace it quickly - I'd get left behind. Confronted by AI's staggering capabilities in my role at Helm every day, I became eager to find out what I could do as a writer, with AI on my side.

Having decided to team up with AI, I sought to find the perfect LLM-powered sidekick - one that would actually make my job, and ultimately my life,

easier. The offerings out there are endless, and it was overwhelming at first knowing which intelligent product to turn to. (In fact, even while researching this piece, I fell into a Gen AI rabbit hole - lured in by countless free trials promising to 'revolutionise my workflow...').

I started experimenting with OpenAI's renowned ChatGPT models. And though these models were great for sparking ideas (in seconds) when inspiration ran dry, their responses often left me somewhat underwhelmed.

But the AI models weren't the only ones to blame for their lacklustre performance. They were simply responding to my poorly crafted prompts. It's as though I was giving a chef a poorly written recipe, with vague instructions, and expecting them to whip up a culinary masterpiece. No matter how skilled the chef, without clear instructions, they'd struggle to produce exactly what I wanted. And it's the same with AI. Even the most advanced language models need clear, detailed prompts to generate exceptional results.



I quickly realised that it wasn't enough to just use these AI tools. To truly harness their potential, I had to understand how to get the most out of them. Recognising my role in the process, I delved into the art of prompt-writing. By experimenting with different prompts and styles, and crafting concise, refined inputs – I really began to see the potential of AI-generated content.

Armed with my newfound prompt-writing prowess, I was determined to find an AI tool that truly resonated with me and could generate high quality outputs, based on my vastly improved inputs. The penny dropped a few months ago when I tried Google AI's large language model, Gemini, for the first time. With effective prompts, I've been using Gemini to enhance my workflow and streamline some of my writing process – from content optimisation, generation and ideation, to high-level desktop research, and even persona development. And while Gemini's current capabilities meet my current needs, I'm aware that this may not be the case a few months, or even weeks, from now.

I've been pleasantly surprised by the increasingly impressive results produced by these LLM-powered tools, and their ability to inspire plenty of great

ideas. Yet, there are still many instances where they veer off course – ignoring my instructions entirely and producing mediocre outputs that don't help me at all. Interestingly, even then, the simple act of framing my thoughts into an articulate, focused prompt has often led me to insights that surpass the machine's outputs.

Given the dynamic nature of Generative AI, a field still in its infancy, it'll be essential for me to keep exploring its emerging tools and products, while remaining discerning about their output. But I've seen that, when adopted efficiently (and responsibly), AI-powered tools can be valuable assets to us writers, instead of threats.

That being said, I have never relied (nor do I plan to rely) solely on AI to do my job. As revolutionary as these tools are, I believe they should be used mindfully, and merely aid us in our writing process – not replace us as writers. I know that I could do my job just as well without AI, certain processes would just take longer. So, as I navigate my future in this AI-driven world, I'll continue to harness the power of these machines, but never at the expense of losing what makes my writing inherently human.

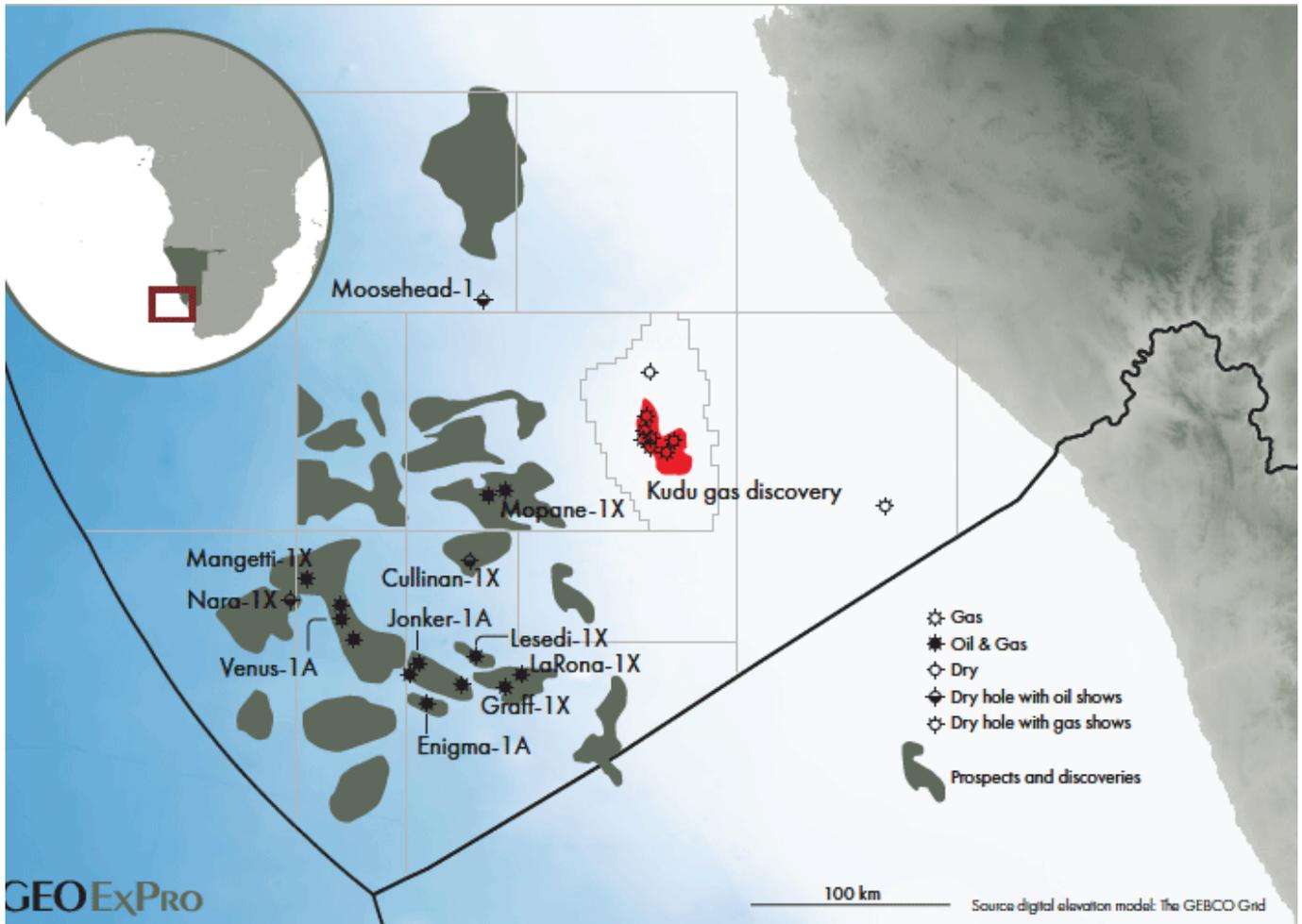
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AI-driven world, I'll continue to harness the power of these machines, but never at the expense of losing what makes my writing inherently human.

Cayley Jones

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Factors of concern to developing Namibia's deep-water finds



• BY HENK KOMBRINK

"People don't dream anymore", said Marcio Mello when he started his talk about Namibia's deep-water petroleum plays at the IMAGE conference in Houston in August 2024, referring to the dreaming that is required to come up with new exploration ideas.

I had never heard from Marcio Mello before, but he made sure that his talk was delivered in such a way that it became an event to remember. It was a show, something I had not experienced before at a conference. Most people present were standing behind a lectern; some went a bit further and walked across the stage, but Marcio walked towards the audience, and he looked people straight in the eye. He was on a mission.

In 2010, credited as the geological mastermind behind Brazil's pre-salt success, he and his company, HRT, acquired three licenses offshore Namibia, primarily to explore for similar pre-salt resources.

"It is all very simple", he continued his talk. Yet, he resigned from HRT in 2013 before it even spudded the first of three dry or uncommercial wells. Were the three unsuccessful HRT wells drilled in Namibian waters the reason for stopping dreaming? Of course not, as we will see a little further down this article.

And now we are where we are today, with eight sizeable discoveries made in the Orange Basin. There is no need to spell them all out because everybody is aware of these major finds.

But, there is a but. As Graeme Bagley from Westwood Global Energy Group put it in an interview with us the other day: "If the Namibian discoveries were on the same timeline as the Liza discovery in the Stabroek licence offshore Guyana, the Venus and Graff discoveries would have received FID already".



Tako Koning wrote in his long but very readable overview of the state of play in deep-water Namibia for the Africa Oil and Gas Report; “both Shell and TotalEnergies are distinguished by their lack of information on the quantities of oil and gas to date.” What is going on? That’s what this article is about. Not because we claim to have the answers, but to explore what is supposed to be the issue a little more. We will approach it in three different ways. First, we held a poll amongst our readers and put the question to them: What do you think the future for Namibia holds? Then, we look in a bit more detail at one of the issues that has been rumoured to be a key problem – chlorite cementation. We talked to Professor Richard Worden from Liverpool University to learn about chlorite. Finally, we briefly touch on another aspect that may prevent a quick FID, which is the supposedly high gas content of the discoveries. All of this is illustrated by a new diagram by Marcos Asensio from Argentina, who shows the main elements of the Namibian petroleum system as they have been unearthed over the past few years. Neil Hodgson from Searcher, who also likes to dream as he writes his epic foldout articles, greatly helped put all the elements shown in the diagram in place.

The poll

“ExxonMobil withdraws from race to buy a stake in Namibia oil block from Galp”, wrote Namibia Mining and Energy recently. “It may not be long before one of the majors pull out of Namibia”, someone with knowledge on the matter told me the other day. It paints a picture, combined with what we wrote in the introduction, of a situation that is not as booming as it was two years ago.

What is the reason why the discoveries offshore Africa are not advancing to FID yet? The answer may be in subsurface complexities, as Wael Sawan, Shell’s CEO, recently hinted. Combined with an earlier insight that permeabilities may be problematic due to a diagenetic mineral – probably chlorite, we put up a poll to ask the readership about their point of view.

The question was: “Is deep-water Namibia a balloon on the brink of bursting?” People were able to vote for “No, volumes are there”, “Yes, because of permeability”, and “Here for the results.”

The outcome of the poll, for which 97 people cast their vote, was interesting. It ended in an almost 50/50 split when it comes to people believing in the future of deep-water Namibia and those who are still holding their breath. However, the poll also attracted lots of people keen to see what their peers voted, as the number of “viewers” turned out to

be almost 50 % of those interacting with the poll. Probably the highest percentage of the polls we have organised so far. Amongst the “No” voters, it is interesting to note that there were people from Shell and TotalEnergies, so people who may have some insight on the matter. We did approach some voters for comments, but it is always a challenge to get people to elaborate.

A pointless poll

Some people were not impressed with the way the poll was worded. Mike Hubbard argued that there are many more factors at play that could prevent the Namibian discoveries from becoming a success story, such as low reservoir pressure or high viscosity oil, which led him to conclude the poll was pointless. Of course, he is right in saying that there are other factors at play, but the spirit of the poll was intended to test the thinking of people around the future of the basin, added by the fact that we had heard a mineral is the factor that is causing reservoir issues.

Where is the extended well test?

An interesting conversation we had after the poll was around testing the discoveries. One petroleum geologist mentioned that extended well testing has not yet been performed because of the costs being prohibitive. Alan Foum, however, commented on the lack of an extended well test, as it is seen as a way to have a better understanding of well behaviour. Nick Madden replied to that, saying that the reservoirs should be world-class, so why would you bother? Maybe we should bother, in the light of Sawan’s comments.

Chlorite

There have been hints in the public domain that chlorite cementation has had a detrimental effect on the reservoir properties of the deep-water finds in Namibian waters. Is that a surprise?

For many working in oil and gas, the presence of chlorite may initially sound as good news, given the well-reported phenomenon of chlorite coatings forming around quartz minerals and the resulting quartz growth inhibition.

But can chlorite be detrimental to reservoirs as well? “Very much so”, said Professor Richard Worden from Liverpool University in England, who has studied chlorite formation in sedimentary systems for many years.



"We are looking at a sliding scale", Richard explains. "No chlorite in a deeply buried reservoir usually means terrible porosity / permeability because of quartz cementation. At the other extreme, too much chlorite means the same thing, but now the pore-filling agent is chlorite itself. We need just the right amount, between 3 and 13 %, to be in the sweet spot, or what I would call the Goldilocks zone."

That's not to say that a particular sandstone is in one of the there above-mentioned categories. "It is quite common to see all three cases because chlorite or its precursor minerals are never evenly distributed across the sandstone to start with", Richard adds.

What are the most common sandstones to chlorite in? "If someone comes to me saying that they have a chlorite-cemented sandstone, my first guess would be that this person has an estuarine or shallow marine sandstone. A deep marine sandstone, such as the reservoirs in Namibia, would not be my first call", says Richard. "Saying that, there are other marine fan sandstone examples containing chlorite, for instance the Forties reservoir in the North Sea. There are bits of reports and hints in the literature that suggest this is the case. The big difference between Forties sandstones and the Namibian equivalents is that the former are not really benefitting from the presence of chlorite yet because they haven't been buried deeply enough, and quartz overgrowth has not really been an issue."

How does chlorite form? Chlorite, an iron / magnesium phyllosilicate or clay mineral, is mostly made up of iron, aluminum and silicon, with a little bit of magnesium, oxygen and hydrogen. "Magnesium is very mobile in the subsurface, so we don't worry about that one", says Richard. "But aluminum, iron and silicon are not, meaning that they tend to stay where they were deposited initially. And of those three, aluminum (feldspars) and silicon (quartz) are generally not the limiting factor; that is the role iron tends to play."

"In the Namibia case", concludes Richard, "where we are probably dealing with well-sorted deep-water sandstones, the "best" way to introduce the elements needed for the formation of chlorite are rock fragments, and in this case probably volcanic rock fragments. It may not have been chlorite when it was deposited; it could have hornblende or pyroxene at the time of deposition, but the building blocks were there, and all you need is some cooking."

Bubble point

Besides chlorite being a potential issue in the Namibian deep-water discoveries, there are also reports that a high gas content is a problem. Why is that? The risk is that the reservoirs are close to the bubble point, which means that as soon as production starts and pressure drops, gas will come out of the solution and make its way into the wellbore, inhibiting the production of oil.

Dealing with this right from the start is a big difference, for instance, compared to Guyana, where oil could be produced first before a gas solution is now being worked on. The same holds for Baleine in Côte d'Ivoire, where the GOR is supposedly low, enabling the operator to first focus on oil production. This may be one of the reasons, in addition to the chlorite problem, that has thus far prevented companies from giving the go-ahead because the engineering solution is more costly, especially given that this is deep water.

In fact, the presence of chlorite could be an intricate part of the bubble point problem because it may have resulted in a reservoir that is characterised by sections that are completely clogged up, in combination with intervals that still have good reservoir potential. These high-permeability streaks will be the "highways" along which gas will enter the wellbore once pressure starts dropping.

Why would the oil be gas-rich? Looking at the cross-section, it is not so hard to imagine why this is the case – the Venus reservoir is thought to be directly sitting on top of the source rock. For Graff and equivalent finds, the gas problem may be a bit less serious, as these are a little further away from the source rock.

The way forward

Namibia and the E&P companies trying to firm up the juicy deep-water resource base seem to have woken up from a dream. In the present day, it is more likely that engineers and geoscientists are hard at work coming up with practical solutions to make their discoveries work. For the explorationists, the next frontier already looms. Marcio Mello dreamt when he brought his ideas across from Brazil to Namibia in the early 2010s.

Massey Ferguson celebrates over 40 years of service to Namibian farmers

Nestled in the heart of Namibia, Otjiwarongo Motors and Tractors (OMT) has become a cornerstone of the agricultural community. Founded in 1983, this family-owned business has dedicated itself to providing high-quality parts, spares, and exceptional service, ensuring the seamless operation of agricultural machinery for the region's farmers.

OMT offers a comprehensive range of agricultural equipment, from tractors to various implements, recognising the critical role reliable machinery plays in the agricultural industry. As a proud supplier of Massey Ferguson tractors and spares, OMT has established itself as an indispensable partner for farmers throughout Namibia.

Four decades of commitment

Over the past 40 years, OMT has grown significantly, becoming a trusted ally for the Namibian agricultural sector. The challenging farming conditions in Namibia, characterised by vast distances between farms and towns, necessitate a reliable and trustworthy supplier. OMT has consistently risen to the occasion, providing unwavering support when it is needed most.

The Kopp family: Born to farm

Erni Kopp, the owner and founder of OMT, reflects on the early days: "Looking back at where everything started, I explored the country and asked myself what I wanted to achieve here, whereafter we decided to establish ourselves in Otjiwarongo."

Erni, along with his sons Thorsten and Gero, and supported by his wife Heidi, has driven the business forward over the past four decades. Heidi reminisces: "I clearly remember when Erni came home with the idea of starting our own business. It was a wonderful idea, and we were committed to making it happen."

The journey was not without its challenges. Initially, there was no irrigation, and farmers primarily relied on dryland farming. Despite the tough conditions, the Kopp family persevered. Erni recalls: "We pushed through, and we have made it."

Thorsten, who has been part of the business since the beginning of his career, shares his passion: "The

agricultural industry and farming equipment have always been my true passion. Since I can remember, Massey Ferguson has been the tractor for me. There is no other tractor like a Massey!"

Ensuring reliable service

Given Namibia's vast distances, providing reliable service is paramount. OMT ensures the availability of parts and maintains well-equipped fleet of service teams to minimise downtime for their customers. Thorsten explains: "You do not want to drive to the same client over 300 km two or three times. You ensure that when you deliver service, you have the right parts with you or in your workshop."

Gero adds: "Our company caters to all types of clients, from emerging farmers to large commercial operations. We strive to find the best possible solutions and supply equipment perfectly suited to their needs."

Building trust through honesty

Erni attributes the success of OMT's 40-year legacy to building trust through honesty. "A farmer is looking for a trustworthy partner. The farmer who buys a tractor from us should be assured that he can still get parts from us for at least the next decade. When asked if we have parts available for an old tractor, I can proudly say: 'Yes, we do!'"

Erni concludes: "This is how we have built trust over the years. Customers return because they know we provide peace of mind."

There is a reason why the company is celebrating its 40th anniversary. Gero adds: "Our parents started out right, and we continue to build on that foundation without making radical changes. We adapt and use new methods while honouring past practices."

Serving all of Namibia

Gero emphasises: "If you are looking for any agricultural equipment or a tractor, get in touch with us. We service the whole of Namibia, from the Orange River to the Okavango, the Zambezi region, and everything in between. We will ensure you get the right equipment." ProAgri



Shakwa Nyambe

Shakwa Nyambe ranked as a highly regarded lawyer for oil and gas in Namibia by IFLR1000

Shakwa Nyambe, the Managing Partner of SNC Incorporated, has been ranked as a highly regarded lawyer for oil and gas in Namibia by the IFLR1000 rankings of 2024. He is specifically recognised for his exceptional work in the practice area of Projects: Energy, with a focus on the Oil and Gas industry, further cementing his reputation as a world-renowned Energy, Oil and Gas, Natural Resource and Commercial Lawyer.

IFLR1000 is an internationally esteemed guide that ranks leading lawyers and firms based on their expertise and impact across practice areas. Being ranked as a Leading Lawyer for Oil and Gas by this global institution places Shakwa among the most influential individuals in Namibia's Oil and Gas sector and highlights his invaluable contributions to the field.

Shakwa Nyambe's recognition is a reflection of his understanding of the complexities of the Oil and Gas industry and his ability to provide innovative solutions to clients navigating the challenges of this sector. As the Managing Partner of SNC Incorporated, a full-service energy, natural resources, corporate & commercial law and dispute resolution law firm, Shakwa has built a legacy of excellence in the legal and commercial sectors. His expertise and strategic guidance have made him the go-to advisor for international oil companies, energy companies, mining companies, multinational corporations and local entities engaged in Namibia's energy development.

This acknowledgment comes at a critical moment for Namibia, as the country is emerging as a significant player in the global energy market, driven by transformative discoveries in the Orange Basin by major international companies. Shakwa's legal and strategic leadership has been instrumental in helping stakeholders capitalize on these opportunities while ensuring compliance with Namibia's regulatory landscape.

Commenting on the rankings, Shakwa Nyambe stated, "To be acknowledged as a Highly Regarded Lawyer by IFLR1000 in Namibia for my work in Energy and Oil & Gas is a profound honour. It reflects not just my efforts but the dedication of the team at SNC Incorporated and the trust of our clients. This motivates me to continue raising the bar for legal and business excellence in Namibia's oil and gas sector."

As a globally recognized thought leader, he frequently engages in high-level dialogues on energy, corporate and resource law, sharing insights that shape policy and practice in Namibia and internationally.

As Namibia continues its rise as a frontier oil and gas producer, Shakwa Nyambe exemplifies excellence, driving the sector forward with vision, expertise and an unwavering commitment to his clients.

Tech lightens the load of high-risk road transport



• BY KAMAL PATEL

Trade across the African continent encompasses a broad range of primary and manufactured goods. Among these are high-value commodities, such as mineral fuels, machinery, vehicles as well as iron ore, copper and steel, that must make it safely from one destination to the next.

Afreximbank's 2024 African Trade Report shows that intra-African trade remains strong. In fact, South Africa maintained its rank as the foremost trading nation in the region, recording a total intra-African trade value of \$39.9bn in 2023, with almost 30% of its total exports finding their way to African markets. However, road transport across the continent still presents numerous operational challenges. Infrastructure inefficiencies, such as poor road maintenance and limited digital trade facilitation, for example, often impede the smooth movement of goods. This can place drivers, their vehicles and high-value cargo at risk.

Security awareness starts here

Commodities that are easy to move, or in high demand, are often prime targets for theft. Even cheaper commodities, like coal, are valued at around R140,000 a truckload. Multiply that by the number of trucks on the road, add the cost of lost or stolen vehicles, and the financial risk is significant.

To address this, security measures should start in the loading dock. Trojan trucks may be entering sites, either by bribing security or by appearing to be validated. In these scenarios, it's easy to think that goods are on a 'safe' truck, when in fact it is being operated by criminals.

It gets more complicated when loads are subcontracted to third parties. This is a particular concern for mining operations that typically outsource the transport of their commodities.





Lack of visibility is a key problem for fleet managers. Short of laboriously calling each driver, or logging into myriad different telematics apps, there has been little that managers at a head office could do to improve their overall view of where, exactly, their loads are on the road.

This is where a platform that integrates with all the main telematics solutions can make a huge difference. For instance, tracking all vehicles in real-time optimises operations, cargo environments and even tyre life, which all save money.

Go down the right route

Beyond the value of the load itself, the routes that a truck travels can increase or decrease its vulnerability to loss or damage. Road works, dwell times (how long trucks have to wait in line at borders or stop behind an accident), and social unrest all increase the risk of the load being lost.

Many variables associated with transport planning, such as traffic and road conditions or the weather, change frequently. These are significant factors that can result in penalties for delayed or deferred deliveries or lost goods.

Companies can, however, take preemptive measures if they know the exact movements and location of their fleet. A fleet management technology platform that incorporates geofencing capabilities, for instance, can provide the necessary visibility into any vehicle's whereabouts.

These software solutions can raise an alert when a truck enters a zone it shouldn't be in, or leaves a route unexpectedly. Office-bound managers can also use dynamically generated location-based information to notify other drivers in the convoy of a major accident scene, which may have temporarily closed a highway.

Use it or lose it

Companies can use the data collected via these platforms, including usage statistics on individual trucks, driver behaviour as well as when or where holdups occur, to not only circumvent obstacles but also optimise costs and efficiencies.

This information can prompt proactive measures, such as driver training or improved planning, that can reduce the costs and risks associated with freight transport. Any early warning of potential anomalies can even save lives. Knowing the condition of tyres at any given time, for example, provides an effective means to help prevent blowouts, punctures and breakdowns in real-time.

The transport of high-value freight demands granular, real-time visibility into where goods are and when they will arrive at their destination. Fleet owners shouldn't underestimate the value of capabilities that allow them to make adjustments on the fly and remain informed about ETAs or delays. This level of detailed planning can improve the overall performance of logistics management and control. This becomes even more important when it comes to the transport of high-value goods.



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