

**DATA
GOVERNANCE
IN AFRICA**



Digital Social Innovation

Namibia Pocket Guide

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Digital Social Innovation

Namibia Pocket Guide

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FOREWORD



Namibia, with its vast natural resources and forward-thinking policies, is emerging as a key player in digital transformation and sustainable growth in the region. As the country seeks to diversify beyond traditional sectors like mining and agriculture, new opportunities in digital infrastructure, renewable energy, and e-governance are taking center stage. This pocket guide provides key insights into Namibia's investment landscape, focusing on how digital solutions can drive development and economic resilience.

The Pocket Guide is developed under the [Data Governance in Africa Initiative](#), Digital Social Innovation (DSI) 'Think Like an Investor'



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program, led by HAUS ([Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd](#)) and ESTDEV ([Estonian Centre for International Development](#)). Through 'Think Like an Investor' program, the private sector is encouraged to leverage data in creating new services and products that can add societal value while promoting digital and economic transformation across borders in Namibia. The Data Governance in Africa is a 3.5-year AU-EU partnership Initiative designed to foster human-centric data economy that supports sustainable growth across the continent. The Initiative supports the African Union (AU) and its member states to form development-oriented and human-centric data regulation, data use and data infrastructure at continental, regional and member states levels. The project is co-funded

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Implemented by





**Namibia offers a
stable environment,
fostering digital
innovation and
promising prospects
in E-Health, Fintech,
and Renewable
Energy.**



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01

INTRODUCTION

Namibia is emerging as a promising destination for early-stage tech investors, offering a stable political environment, a young and growing population, and a strong commitment to digital innovation. For European and African investors, Namibia presents exciting opportunities in sectors such as **E-Health**, **Fintech**, and **Renewable Energy**.

Key Features

Economy Type

DATA-CENTRIC

Political Security

STABLE

Governance

ROBUST

Why Namibia?

Namibia's political stability and robust governance make it an ideal environment for long-term investment. Traditionally known for its wealth in natural resources, Namibia is now shifting towards a knowledge-based economy as part of its Vision 2030 strategy. This shift includes policies like the National Digital Strategy for digital innovation, the National Broadband Policy to expand digital infrastructure, and the Cybersecurity Strategy to ensure secure digital growth. These initiatives foster a tech-friendly landscape, driving innovation across sectors like health, finance, and sustainability, and showcasing Namibia's commitment to digital transformation and economic diversification.

Government policies foster digital innovation, boosting growth in health, finance and sustainability sectors.

1

Opportunities in Digital Social Innovation

The government policy actively supports **digital social innovation** to address key societal challenges. In **E-Health**, for example, telemedicine platforms and mobile health apps provide crucial medical access to rural communities. **Fintech** innovations, such as mobile banking and micro-lending, are promoting financial inclusion and empowering underserved populations. Additionally, **renewable energy** solutions, like solar power systems, are helping Namibia move toward energy independence.

2

A Young, Connected Market

Though Namibia has a population of just over 3 million (70% of the population is below 35 years), its high mobile phone penetration (80% of the population) and growing internet penetration (62% of the population) make it a fertile market for scalable tech solutions. Government initiatives like the **Broadband Policy Implementation Plan** aim to achieve universal broadband access by 2030, laying the groundwork for future tech investments.



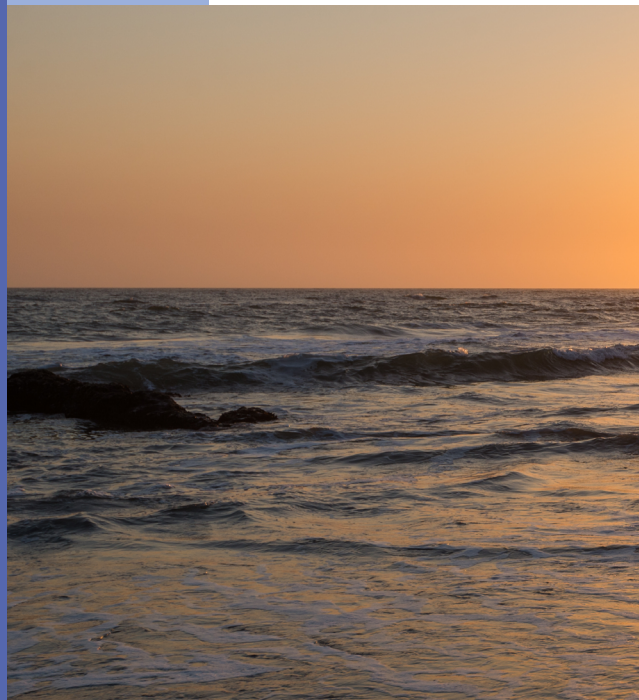
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Investor-Friendly Environment

Namibia's government offers **tax incentives**, **duty exemptions**, and access to **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)**, providing a favorable environment for tech businesses. Entrepreneurship support organizations like **Basecamp Business Incubator** foster local entrepreneurship, while **public-private partnerships** create additional opportunities for foreign investors.

In a Nutshell

With its commitment to **digital transformation**, Namibia is an attractive destination for tech investors looking to make both financial returns and social impact. By focusing on high-growth sectors like **E-Health**, **Fintech**, and **Renewable Energy**, investors can tap into one of Africa's most promising emerging markets.



“The Namibian government aims for universal broadband coverage by 2030, enhancing connectivity, economic growth and digital inclusion nationwide.



02

NAMIBIA AT A GLANCE

Namibia, a stable country in southern Africa, presents a unique opportunity for tech investors. The nation offers a strategic location and a young, growing market (on average growing annually at 1.4%) that is increasingly embracing digital solutions.

Key Features

Strategic Location

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Democracy Index

57th GLOBALLY

Market Growth

1.4%

1 Geography and Strategic Location

Bordered by Angola, Zambia, Botswana, South Africa, and the Atlantic Ocean, Namibia serves as a **gateway to Southern Africa**. Its well-developed infrastructure and trade links with Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries make it an ideal base for regional expansion.



2 Political Stability and Governance

Namibia is renowned for its **political stability** and democratic governance, consistently ranking as one of the most peaceful nations in Africa. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) ranked Namibia 57th worldwide and fifth in Africa in the 2023 Democracy Index. The country's respect for the rule of law and commitment to good governance provides a solid foundation for foreign direct investment (FDI). With its diverse media landscape, Namibia has consistently been recognised as one of Africa's beacons in freedom of the press, topping the African countries list in the Reporters without Borders Index in 2023.



3 Economy and Demographics

Namibia's economy, while traditionally reliant on **mining (23%)**, **services - including financial services (22%)** and **fisheries & agriculture (12%)**, is diversifying into sectors like **renewable energy**, **ICT**, and **digital services**. The government's long-term strategy, **Vision 2030**, aims to transform Namibia into a knowledge-based economy.





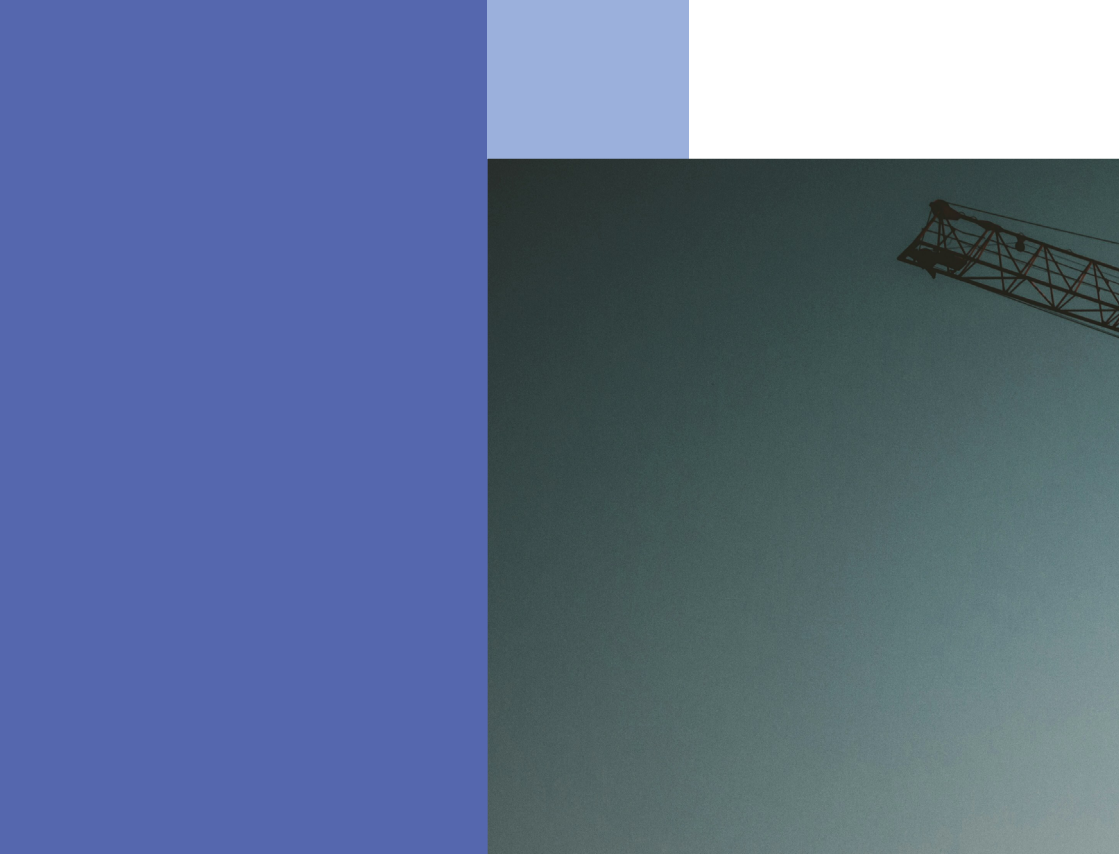
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Digital Infrastructure

Namibia's digital infrastructure is improving, with the government's **Broadband Policy Implementation Plan** aiming for **universal broadband coverage by 2030**. This opens up significant opportunities for investors in tech sectors like **connectivity solutions** and **digital inclusion**.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's combination of political stability, strategic location, and government support for economic diversification makes it an attractive market for early-stage tech investors. The country's focus on digital transformation and its expanding digital infrastructure offer promising **opportunities in ICT, renewable energy, and digital services**.



“The government is encouraging growth in tech and innovation-driven sectors to reduce reliance on raw materials.”



Photo by Vladislav Iakunichev on Unsplash

03

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Namibia's economy is small but diverse, traditionally driven by mining, agriculture, and services sectors. The government is focused on transitioning to a more knowledge-based economy, with sectors like renewable energy, ICT, and digital services gaining prominence.

Key Facts

GDP Growth Rate (2023)

4.2%

Smart Mining Technologies

SOLAR ENERGY

Emerging Industry

FINTECH

GDP Growth and Economic Performance

Namibia has experienced modest GDP growth (the economy grew by 5.35% in 2022 and 4.2% in 2023) in recent years, with fluctuations linked to the global commodity market. While mining remains a significant contributor to the economy, the government is encouraging growth in tech and innovation-driven sectors to reduce reliance on raw materials. Renewable energy and fintech are among the emerging industries that are playing a key role in the country's economic transformation.



Agriculture

Agriculture is critical for Namibia's rural population, but it faces challenges related to climate change. **Agri-tech solutions** such as precision farming and water management technologies can help improve productivity and resilience.



Financial Services

Namibia's financial services is highly profitable, driven by banking, insurance, and microfinance. Innovations like **mobile banking** and **digital platforms** have enhanced accessibility, promoting growth in financial inclusion and investment.

Key Sectors



Mining

Namibia is one of the world's largest producers of diamonds and uranium, and mining continues to be a pillar of the economy. However, there is a growing focus on **smart mining technologies** to improve efficiency and sustainability. Examples include the use of **XRT sorting** and **solar energy**, to enhance sustainability and reduce environmental impact in extraction.



Renewable Energy

Namibia's abundant solar and wind resources are driving the country's renewable energy transition. Investment in **off-grid solar solutions** and **energy management systems** is key to supporting rural electrification and sustainability goals.



Tourism

Namibia's vast landscapes and wildlife make it a popular destination for **eco-tourism**. Digital tools like e-tourism platforms and **AR (Augmented Reality) experiences** offer growth opportunities in this sector.

Digital Economy

Namibia's government has committed to expanding the digital economy, with initiatives focused on increasing internet penetration and improving digital literacy. The **Broadband Policy Implementation Plan** seeks to provide universal broadband access by 2030, paving the way for further growth in **e-commerce**, **fintech**, and **e-health**.



Future Economic Projections

Namibia's long-term strategy, Vision 2030, emphasizes diversification and sustainability. The country's focus on growing sectors like **renewable energy**, **ICT**, and **agritech** is expected to drive future GDP growth and attract tech investment. Government-backed programs and tax incentives will continue to support economic development and innovation.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's economy is evolving, with a focus on digital innovation and diversification. Investors can tap into opportunities in **renewable energy**, **fintech**, and **agritech**, while benefiting from government initiatives that promote economic growth and sustainability.



Foreign investors are allowed to fully own businesses in most sectors, although some industries may require partnerships with local equity holders.



04

INVESTMENT CLIMATE

Namibia's **investment climate** is supportive of foreign direct investment (FDI), with a regulatory framework designed to encourage growth in priority sectors such as **technology, renewable energy, and agriculture**. The government has implemented various initiatives to attract investors, including **tax incentives, duty exemptions, and investment protection**.

Key Features

Economy Type

DATA-CENTRIC

Political Security

STABLE

Governance

ROBUST

Regulatory Framework

Namibia's legal framework is investor-friendly, ensuring a stable and predictable environment for business. The **Foreign Investment Act** which is expected to be replaced by the **Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Act** in 2025 (The promulgation date may be delayed if additional cabinet or parliamentary consultations are required), secures protection for foreign investors, ensuring that investments are safeguarded under local law. This act provides clarity on ownership rules, profit repatriation, and access to government support programs.

(SEZs) to offer favorable conditions for companies wishing to manufacture and export products. Companies investing in **SEZs** or priority sectors like ICT, renewable energy, and manufacturing may be eligible for **reduced tax rates**.

Duty Exemptions:

Imports of capital goods and raw materials for businesses in SEZs may qualify for duty exemptions.

Accelerated Depreciation:

Investors in sectors like renewable energy and infrastructure can benefit from **accelerated depreciation**, allowing them to write off their investments more quickly and reduce taxable income.

Foreign Ownership:

Foreign investors are allowed to fully own businesses in most sectors, although some industries (such as telecommunications and energy) may require partnerships with local equity holders.

Repatriation of Profits:

Investors are free to repatriate profits, dividends, and capital, subject to **exchange control regulations** administered by the **Bank of Namibia**.

Government Incentives

The Namibian government aims to offer several incentives to encourage investment in high-priority sectors, including:

Tax Incentives:

Namibia is in the process of finalizing legislation for **Special Economic Zones**

Infrastructure and Connectivity

While Namibia has well-developed infrastructure in urban areas, **rural connectivity** and **energy access** remain challenges. However, this presents opportunities for investors in **connectivity solutions**, **off-grid energy systems**, and **telecommunications**. Government programs like the **Broadband Policy Implementation Plan** are focused on expanding internet access and improving infrastructure, which will facilitate growth in sectors such as **e-commerce** and **e-health**.



Challenges and Opportunities

Small Market Size:

Namibia's population is relatively small, which can limit immediate market growth. However, this also offers a **manageable test market** for scalable solutions that can later be expanded regionally.

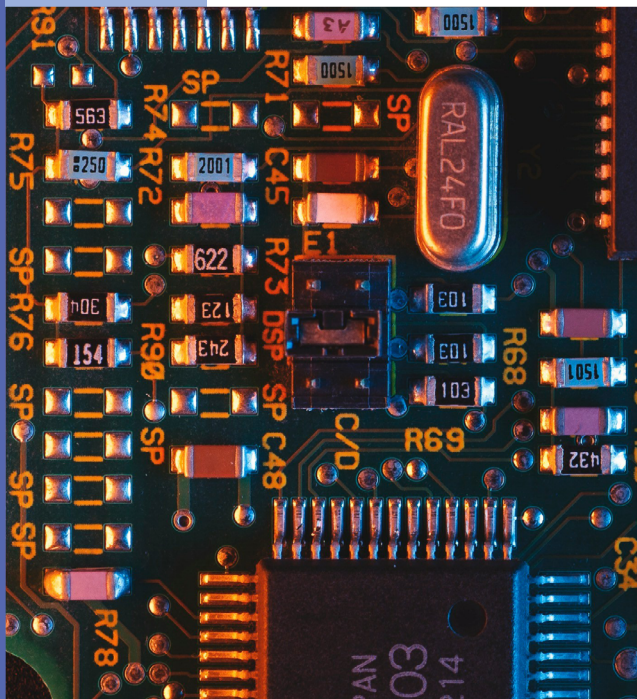
Regulatory Challenges:

Investors in sectors like renewable energy and infrastructure can benefit from **accelerated depreciation**, allowing them

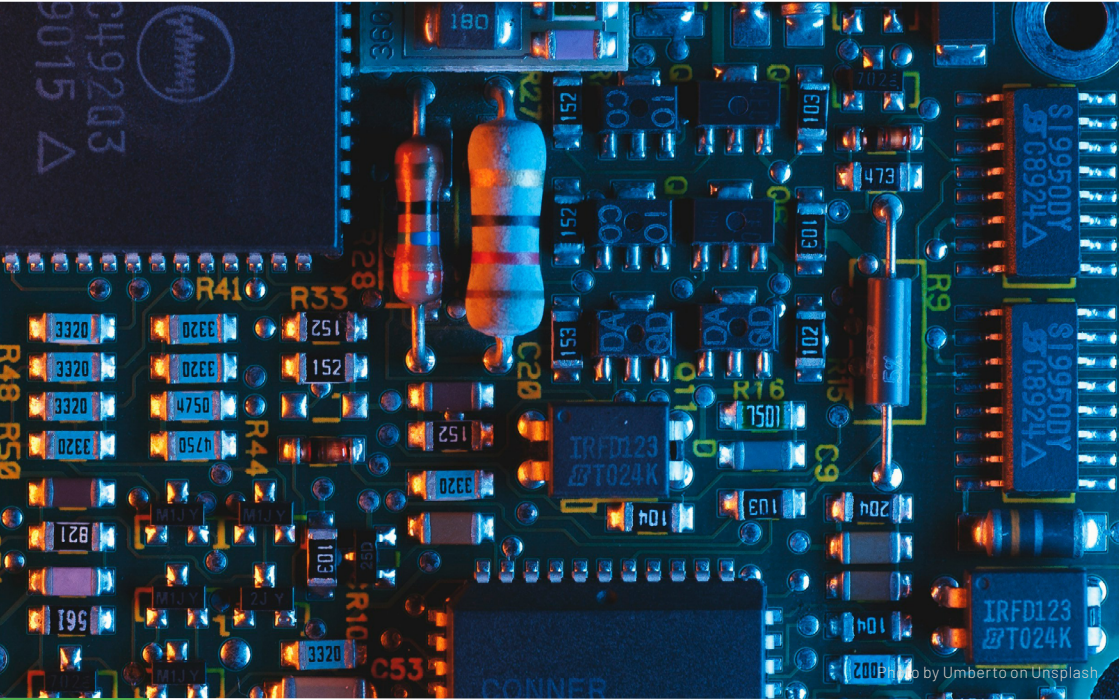
to write off their investments more quickly and reduce taxable income.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's **investment climate** is favourable, with government support, tax incentives, and a clear regulatory framework that protects investors. Opportunities exist in sectors like **ICT**, **renewable energy**, and **digital services**, particularly for those seeking to innovate in infrastructure development and improving scalability.



“**Namibia’s digital social innovation focuses on scalable investments in E-Health, Fintech, Agritech and GovTech for economic inclusion.**”



05

FOCUS AREAS OF DIGITAL SOCIAL INNOVATION

Namibia's government is focusing on **digital social innovation** to address key challenges and improve access to services across various sectors. For investors, this presents opportunities to support scalable tech-driven solutions in areas like **E-Health, Digital Inclusion, Climate Tech, Financial Inclusion, and Governance Enhancement**.

01 E-Health



In a country with a dispersed population, access to healthcare is limited, especially in rural areas where **50%** of the Namibian population lives. **E-Health** innovations are helping bridge this gap by providing digital solutions for medical care:

- **Telemedicine** platforms and **mobile health apps** enable patients in remote regions to access medical consultations, diagnostics, and follow-up care without the need to travel to healthcare facilities.
- Investors can support the development of digital health infrastructure, as well as startups that provide **affordable healthcare services** to underserved populations.

02 Digital Inclusion



Namibia's digital divide presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Many rural areas still lack reliable internet access, but government initiatives aim to change this.

- The **Broadband Policy Implementation Plan** is set to expand internet coverage across the country by 2030, creating demand for **connectivity solutions** like **low-cost internet access** (Namibia currently has the 50th most expensive internet cost globally) and **satellite-based communication services**.
- **Digital literacy programs** offer opportunities to invest in education platforms that empower citizens to participate in the digital economy, fostering entrepreneurship and job creation.

03 Climate Tech



Namibia's arid climate and reliance on agriculture make it vulnerable to climate change. **Agritech** (Around **70%** of the country's population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for their income and livelihood) and **water management solutions** are key to ensuring food security and sustainable agriculture.

- **Precision agriculture technologies** help farmers monitor soil conditions, optimize irrigation, and improve crop yields. These innovations reduce resource wastage and make farming more sustainable.
- Investment in **renewable energy** (Namibia currently imports more than **60%** of its energy), particularly **solar** and **wind power**, is critical to supporting Namibia's rural electrification goals and reducing reliance on fossil fuels.

Around 70% of the country's population depends directly or indirectly on agriculture for their income and livelihood.



Photo by Andrew Liu on Unsplash

04 Financial Inclusion



A significant portion of Namibia's population remains unbanked or underbanked, with **22%** of Namibians still financially excluded, still financially excluded and many relying on cash for income and transactions. However, Namibia's financial inclusion has seen a significant increase, rising from **51%** to **78%** over the past decade. **Fintech solutions** are critical to expanding access to financial services and promoting economic inclusion.

- **Mobile banking** platforms and **micro-lending services** provide underserved communities with access to savings, credit, and payment services. These platforms can support small businesses and foster economic growth in rural areas.
- Investors in fintech can tap into the growing demand for **blockchain-based remittance services** and **mobile payment platforms**, which are key to reducing transaction costs and improving financial access.



05 Government Enhancement



GovTech solutions are helping improve the efficiency and transparency of Namibia's public sector. Namibia's **e-Governance Policy** seeks to leverage ICT to improve public service delivery, with ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. By digitizing government processes, the country can reduce bureaucracy and improve service delivery.

- **E-government platforms** enable citizens to access services like tax filing, healthcare, and voting through digital interfaces, reducing the need for in-person interactions.
- **Digital identity solutions** present a promising investment opportunity in Namibia, enabling secure, streamlined access to services, enhancing data integrity, and supporting growth in tech infrastructure, ultimately driving digital transformation and inclusion.
- Investments in **public financial management systems** and **digital identity verification** can help Namibia improve governance, enhance security, and streamline public services.



Photo by Emmanuel Ikwuegbu on Unsplash

In a Nutshell

Namibia's economy is evolving, with a focus on digital innovation and diversification. Investors can tap into opportunities in **renewable energy, fintech, and agritech**, while benefiting from government initiatives that promote economic growth and sustainability.



While challenges exist, Namibia's digital business ecosystem is gaining momentum, offering opportunities for innovation and regional growth.



Photo by Bill Wegener on Unsplash

06

DIGITAL INNOVATION OPPORTUNITIES (CASE STUDIES)

Namibia's tech ecosystem is growing, with several startups leading the way in **digital innovation**. These case studies illustrate the country's potential and highlight key investment opportunities for early-stage tech investors.



Photo by Karsten Wurth on Unsplash

“**Namibia’s push for renewable energy offers lucrative opportunities for investors in solar power and other clean energy technologies.**



Macquarie Medical (Dr MacQ) (E-Health)

Overview

Dr MacQ, by Macquarie Medical, is a telemedicine platform improving healthcare accessibility in Namibia, targeting isolated communities. Through telemedicine consultations, on-site medication delivery, and AI-powered health solutions, it addresses access, affordability, and quality, now expanding into sectors like tourism, mining, and aiming for regional growth in Botswana and South Africa.

Key Success Factors:

Dr MacQ's **integrated telemedicine services**, sector adaptability, and regional expansion readiness contribute to its success as a scalable healthcare solution for underserved areas across Southern Africa.

Investor Takeaway:

Investing in Dr MacQ offers potential in telemedicine with scalable impact, sector versatility, and planned **Southern Africa expansion**, meeting essential healthcare needs in emerging markets.

Lights Systems Namibia (Renewable Energy)



Overview

Lights Systems Namibia is a renewable energy company that provides affordable solar power systems for homes and businesses. The company is helping Namibia transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources.

Key Success Factors:

Government-backed incentives for renewable energy projects and the increasing demand for **off-grid solar solutions** in rural areas have fueled Lights Systems Namibia's growth.

Investor Takeaway:

Namibia's push for **renewable energy** offers lucrative opportunities for investors in **solar power** and other clean energy technologies. Light Systems Namibia can expand into other African markets by leveraging renewable initiatives, incentives, and growing demand for solar solutions.



IDToday (Digital Identity Solutions)

Overview

IDToday specializes in digital identity verification (KYC), enabling businesses to verify the identities of individuals and companies securely and efficiently. Their solutions are crucial for expanding access to services, particularly in remote areas.

Key Success Factors:

The platform's focus on **compliance** with international standards has made it a trusted partner for accountable and reportable institutions.

Investor Takeaway:

Investing in **digital identity solutions** can expand access to digital and financial services, while addressing a critical need for secure identification. IDToday's secure identity verification can expand beyond Namibia, addressing Africa's demand for accessible, compliant digital identification.



Flying Labs (Drones & AI)

Overview

Flying Labs uses drone technology and AI to tackle challenges in wildlife conservation, agriculture, and disaster response. The company is part of a global network that leverages emerging technologies for social good.

Key Success Factors:

Flying Labs' drones provide critical data for **wildlife monitoring**, **crop health**, and **damage assessment** after natural disasters, making it a valuable partner for both the private and public sectors.

Investor Takeaway:

Investing in **drone technology** and **AI** for conservation and agriculture can lead to high-impact, scalable solutions in Namibia's growing tech ecosystem. Flying Labs' has the potential to expand into Southern Africa, leveraging regional demand, partnerships, and scalable tech for conservation and agriculture.



Pulsar (Big Data & IoT)

Overview

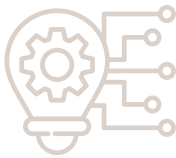
Pulsar provides big data and **IoT solutions** for utilities management. The company empowers individuals and businesses to optimize energy usage while providing reliable Wi-Fi connectivity with their advanced hardware.

Key Success Factors:

Pulsar's **data-driven insights** are instrumental in helping to monitor energy consumption, predict trends, and optimize resource management.



Photo by Carl Heyerdahl on Unsplash



Investor Takeaway:

Investing in **IoT technology** and data solutions for energy efficiency and digital inclusion can drive sustainable, cost-effective solutions in the expanding tech landscape. Pulsar's technologies can leverage the growing demand for energy optimization and foster digital inclusion.

In a Nutshell

These case studies highlight the range of opportunities for tech investors in Namibia, from **e-health** and **renewable energy** to **AI** and **Big Data**. Each success story demonstrates the potential for scalable solutions that address local challenges while delivering impactful returns.



I N V E

// **Government efforts are focused on integrating digital initiatives into the national agenda, bridging infrastructure gaps and promoting inclusivity.**



Photo by Precondo Ca on Unsplash

07

ECOSYSTEM INSIGHTS

A survey conducted among entrepreneurs, investors, support organizations, and government representatives revealed an encouraging outlook for Namibia's digital business ecosystem, with stakeholders recognizing both current challenges and exciting opportunities. While still in its early stages, the ecosystem has potential for growth, innovation, and meaningful social impact.

Entrepreneurs

(Business Owners/Founders)

Namibian entrepreneurs are positive about the possibilities within the digital space, displaying increasing familiarity with digital businesses. While the ecosystem is still evolving, the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, with many founders actively developing solutions in critical sectors like healthcare, education, and financial inclusion. Entrepreneurs identified networking, mentorship, and agility as key drivers of success—factors that reflect their adaptability and readiness to navigate the challenges ahead. Greater support and education, along with improved access to capital and technology, are essential to unlocking the full potential of entrepreneurs.

Investors

The investors expressed a strong interest in Namibia's Digital Social Innovation landscape, acknowledging the significant opportunities for growth but also identifying key challenges. They were particularly optimistic about the entrepreneurial potential within the ecosystem, noting the energy and ambition of local businesses. However, there were shared concerns about the scalability of Namibian startups and their ability to access critical resources such as financing, infrastructure, and skilled labour. The investors identified strategic sectors like healthcare, education, and financial inclusion as particularly promising for DSI investment, as these sectors align well with Namibia's development goals and offer considerable impact potential.

Entrepreneurship Support Organizations

(Hubs, Incubators, Accelerators)

Entrepreneurship support organizations play an important role in fostering digital entrepreneurship in Namibia. Their active involvement reflects a shared commitment to developing a stronger digital ecosystem. While challenges remain, these organizations remain positive about the future, highlighting resilience, creativity, and collaboration as key elements for business success. As the ecosystem continues to grow, there is increasing focus on improving support structures and building partnerships. These efforts aim to create an inclusive environment where digital businesses can develop and explore opportunities for regional expansion.

Government Institutions

Government representatives recognise the growing importance of digital innovation for Namibia's economic future. Efforts are underway to incorporate digital initiatives into the national agenda, focusing on bridging infrastructure gaps and promoting more inclusive opportunities in both rural and urban areas. There is optimism about driving development through strategic collaborations and public-private partnerships. Highlighting local success stories is seen as a way to inspire further innovation and entrepreneurship, contributing to a supportive environment for technology-driven solutions.



Photo by LinkedIn Sales Solutions on Unsplash



Ecosystem Challenges

Namibia's startup ecosystem faces a number of challenges, notably in accessing capital and bridging digital skills gaps. Entrepreneurs often encounter difficulties securing funding due to a nascent venture capital landscape and limited investor networks, hindering the growth of innovative enterprises. Additionally, a shortage of digital skills impedes the development and scalability of tech-driven startups.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's digital business ecosystem, though still developing, is gaining momentum with significant room for growth and innovation. Across all stakeholders, there is a shared belief in the power of digital solutions to drive economic transformation and social impact. The challenges identified—such as access to capital, infrastructure, and regulatory complexity—are opportunities for collaboration and targeted interventions. With increased support, mentorship, and investment, Namibia's DSI ecosystem is well-positioned to become a hub for innovation, creating scalable solutions that contribute to sustainable development and regional growth.



Namibia's regulatory framework protects foreign investors, ensuring compliance with local laws and offering equal rights to businesses.



Photo by Cytonn Photography on Unsplash

08

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Namibia's regulatory environment is designed to promote foreign direct investment (FDI) while ensuring compliance with local laws. For early-stage tech investors, understanding the country's business laws and regulatory landscape is essential for navigating the market effectively.

Key Features

Regulatory Compliance

LOCAL LAWS

Licensing

SECTOR-SPECIFIC

Data Protection

**COMPLIANCE
REQUIRED**

Business Laws and Investment Protection

Namibia's legal framework provides strong protections for foreign investors, ensuring that their investments are safeguarded under local law. The Foreign Investment Act will soon be replaced by the Namibia Investment Promotion and Facilitation Act, both legislations guarantee that foreign investors have the same rights as local businesses, including the right to own property, repatriate profits, and participate in government programs.

Repatriation of Profits: Investors are allowed to repatriate profits, dividends, and capital, subject to **exchange control regulations** overseen by the **Bank of Namibia**. These regulations ensure that funds are transferred in compliance with Namibian law, but investors should be aware of the potential impact of currency fluctuations.

Foreign Ownership: Most sectors allow for **100% foreign ownership**, although some industries—such as **mining, telecommunications and energy**—may require local equity partnerships. Investors should carefully evaluate these requirements, particularly when entering regulated sectors.

Licenses and Permits

Depending on the sector, businesses may need to obtain specific licenses and permits. For example:

Telecommunications companies must comply with regulations set by the **Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)**.

Renewable energy projects may require approvals from the **Electricity Control Board (ECB)**.

Working with local legal experts is advisable to ensure compliance with all necessary regulations, especially for tech ventures operating in highly regulated sectors.

Local Ownership Requirements

Certain industries in Namibia require **local ownership** or participation. For instance, investors in sectors like **mining, telecoms, or renewable energy** may need to form joint ventures with Namibian stakeholders to meet these requirements. These partnerships can offer valuable market insights and help navigate the regulatory environment more effectively.

Intellectual Property Protection

Intellectual Property (IP) enforcement in Namibia is improving, with government working on expertise development, and strengthening legal frameworks to enhance effective IP protection efforts.

To address the current shortcomings in IP protection in Namibia, the Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)



Photo by Imagine Buddy on Unsplash

has implemented various initiatives to support IP management:

IP Registration and Administration:

BIPA serves as Namibia's national IP office, overseeing the registration and administration of trademarks, patents, industrial designs, and other IP rights.

Public Education and Awareness:

BIPA actively educates the public on the value and importance of IP rights, particularly focusing on trademarks, to foster an IP-conscious society.

Legal Framework Development:

BIPA contributes to the development and improvement of IP legal frameworks at national, regional, and international levels, ensuring that Namibia's IP laws are robust and up-to-date.



IP Tribunal Establishment: To expedite the resolution of IP disputes, BIPA has established an IP Tribunal, providing a specialized forum for adjudicating IP-related cases.

Compliance with Data Protection and Cybersecurity Laws

With the rise of digital innovation, Namibia has introduced regulations to enhance cybersecurity and safeguard data. While a dedicated Data Protection Act is not yet in effect, it is in advanced stages of development. Once enacted, this law will establish clear guidelines for businesses handling personal data, ensuring the responsible collection, processing, and protection of sensitive information. In the meantime, businesses are expected to align with emerging standards to foster trust and transparency. Additionally, Namibia has implemented cybersecurity regulations to mitigate risks, with particular focus on high-risk sectors such as fintech and e-commerce, helping to protect against data breaches and ensure digital resilience.

Investors should anticipate the following key requirements from the Data Protection Act:

Data Protection Supervisory Authority:

The establishment of an independent authority responsible for overseeing compliance and enforcing data protection laws.

Data Subject Rights: Individuals will have rights to access, correct, and delete their personal data, as well as to object to its processing.

Data Breach Notification: Obligations to promptly inform the supervisory authority and affected individuals in the event of data breaches.

Cross-Border Data Transfers: Restrictions on transferring personal data outside Namibia, requiring adequate safeguards or specific conditions to be met.

Penalties for Non-Compliance: Administrative fines and sanctions for entities that fail to adhere to data protection obligations.

Investors should prepare by implementing data protection policies, training staff, and ensuring compliance with these anticipated requirements to mitigate risks and foster trust in the Namibian market.

Namibia's emerging data protection regulations require businesses to ensure compliance with personal data handling and cybersecurity measures.

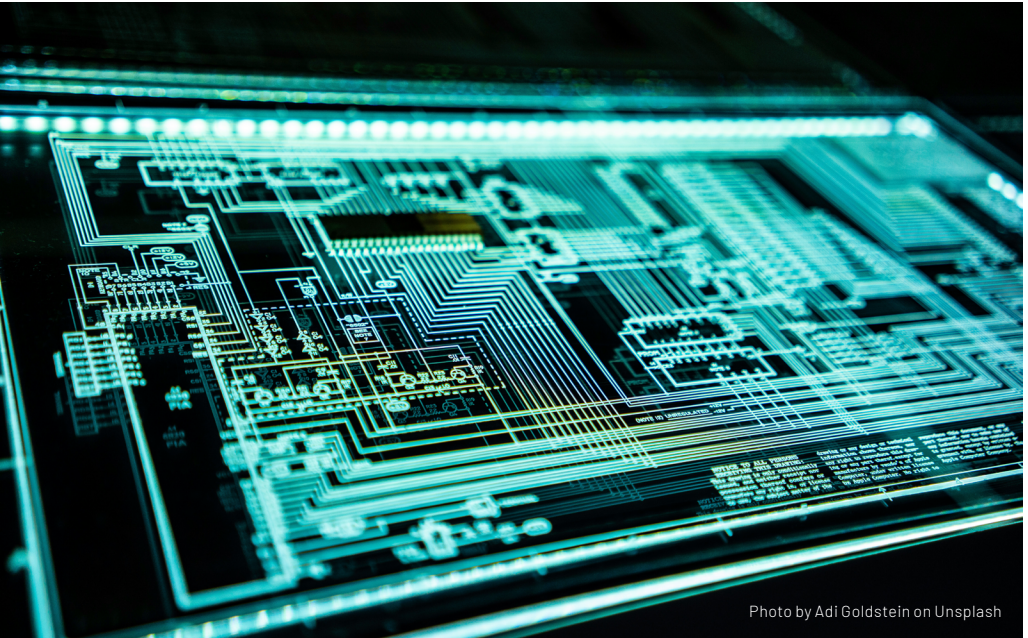


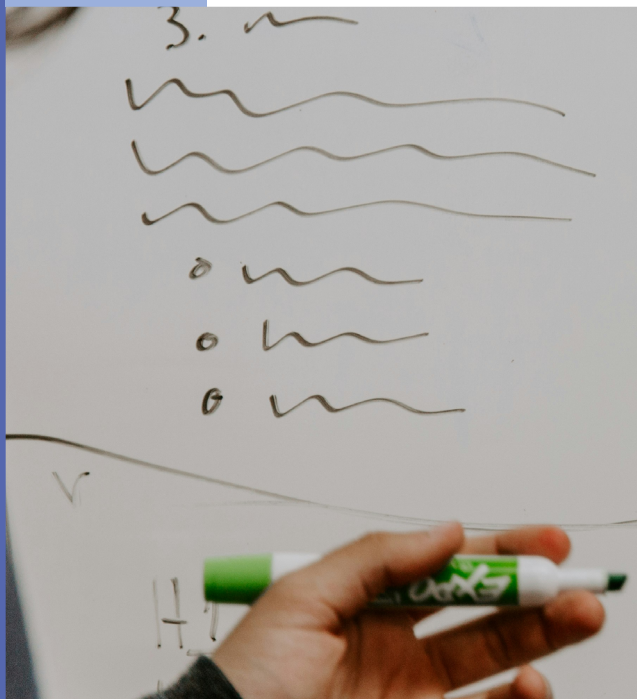
Photo by Adi Goldstein on Unsplash



Investors must comply with Namibia's data protection laws, including breach notifications, data rights, and cross-border restrictions.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's regulatory framework is investor-friendly, offering protections for foreign businesses while requiring compliance with local laws. For tech investors, navigating the regulatory environment—particularly in sectors like **telecommunications, energy, and data protection**—requires a clear understanding of the rules and collaboration with local partners where necessary. The Foreign Investment Act and **exchange control regulations** ensure that investors can operate securely while enjoying the benefits of repatriating profits.



**Investors must
navigate risks related
to regulation, market
size, infrastructure,
and talent shortages
to succeed in
Namibia.**

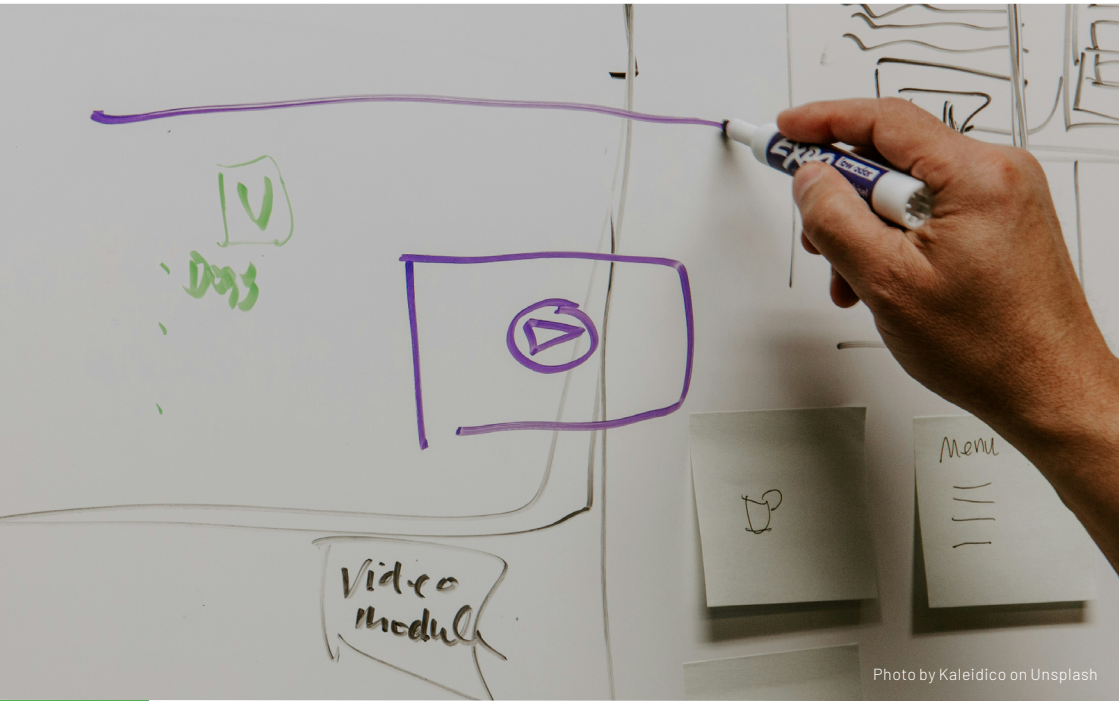


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09

RISK ASSESSMENT

Successfully navigating Namibia's business landscape requires an understanding of its cultural norms and business etiquette. Building relationships and trust is a critical part of doing business in Namibia, especially for foreign investors.

Key Features

Networking

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Government Relations

NIPDB

Business Interactions

FORMAL

1 Regulatory and Political Risks

Regulatory Changes:

Although Namibia is politically stable, investors should stay informed about changes in regulations, particularly in emerging sectors like **fintech**, **telecommunications**, and **renewable energy**. These industries may see shifts in regulatory frameworks as technology evolves.

Local Ownership Requirements:

Some sectors, like **telecoms** and **mining**, require local partnerships. Investors need to ensure compliance with local ownership laws, which may impact business structure and control.

2 Economic Risks

Small Market Size:

With a population of just over 3 million, Namibia's market size is limited. Investors may face growth constraints within the country, making **regional expansion** necessary to scale effectively. Namibia's strategic location offers access to neighboring markets in the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)**, providing a pathway for growth beyond its borders.

Commodity Price Dependency:

Namibia's economy is still somewhat reliant on **mining and agriculture**, making it vulnerable to global commodity price

fluctuations. Investors in these sectors should consider the economic impact of price volatility.

3 Infrastructure and Connectivity Risks

Infrastructure Gaps

While urban areas are well-connected, rural regions still face challenges related to internet access and energy infrastructure. Investors in **connectivity solutions** and **off-grid energy systems** can help address these gaps, but they should be aware of the difficulties in scaling across underserved areas

Energy Reliability

Namibia's drive toward **renewable energy** presents opportunities, but investors must be prepared to navigate the challenges of energy infrastructure in remote regions.

4 Skills Gap

Limited Skilled Tech Talent:

Namibia's labor market has a shortage of specialized tech professionals in areas like **software development**, **cybersecurity**, and **data science**. Investors may need to invest in **capacity-building** or **outsource** key roles to regional markets, such as South Africa.



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Risk Mitigation Strategies

Commodity Export Dependence

Namibia is actively pursuing initiatives to reduce its dependence on commodity exports by diversifying into technology and green sectors. Key strategies include:

Green Hydrogen Development: Namibia is capitalising on its abundant solar and wind resources to produce green hydrogen, aiming to become a leading exporter. The government has launched the Namibia Green Hydrogen and Derivatives Strategy, outlining plans to develop a green hydrogen industry that could generate significant employment and economic growth.

Renewable Energy Expansion: The country is investing in renewable energy projects to enhance energy security and support sustainable development. In 2024, The World Bank approved a \$138.5 million loan to help Namibia bolster its transmission network and integrate renewable energy projects into the grid, reducing reliance on electricity imports.

Digital Transformation and Tech Innovation: Namibia is focusing on technological advancement to drive economic diversification. Initiatives include the development of digital identity solutions and e-governance platforms to improve public service delivery and foster a tech-driven economy.

Economic Complexity and Diversification Roadmap: The government is implementing strategies to enhance economic complexity

by identifying industries with high potential for productive diversification. This approach aims to build capabilities in sectors beyond traditional commodities, fostering sustainable economic growth.

These initiatives reflect Namibia's commitment to building a resilient and diversified economy, reducing reliance on commodities, and embracing sustainable and technological sectors for future prosperity.

Closing the Digital Skills Gap

The Namibian government is actively implementing strategies to bridge the technology skills gap and foster a digitally proficient workforce. Key initiatives include:

National Digital Strategy Development: The Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) is spearheading the creation of a comprehensive National Digital Strategy and Action Plan. A pivotal aspect of the strategy is building capacity and nurturing widespread digital skills in Namibia.

Academia: Namibian universities are advancing digital skills through specialized programs in computer science, partnerships with industry leaders like Huawei, and initiatives like **Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) Bachelor of Computer Science Program** and Data



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Science Master's and University of Namibia's (UNAM) Computer Science and IT degrees.

Collaborative Efforts: The government collaborates with international partners such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the UNDP Accelerator Lab. These partnerships aim to upskill Namibians to harness the potential of digital technologies.

Through these concerted efforts, Namibia is committed to closing the tech skills gap, fostering a digitally literate society, and positioning itself as a competitive player in the global digital economy.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's investment landscape is promising, but investors must navigate risks related to regulation, market size, infrastructure, and talent shortages. Developing a comprehensive risk mitigation strategy—focused on compliance, partnerships, and regional expansion—can help investors capitalize on Namibia's growing tech ecosystem while minimizing potential challenges.



Building strong local relationships and trust, with respect and patience, is key to success for investors in Namibia.



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10

CULTURAL AND BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS FOR TECH INVESTORS

Successfully navigating Namibia's business landscape requires an understanding of its cultural norms and business etiquette. Building relationships and trust is a critical part of doing business in Namibia, especially for foreign investors.

Key Features

Networking

INDUSTRY EVENTS

Government Relations

NIPDB

Business Interactions

FORMAL

1 Building Relationships and Trust

Long-Term Commitment

Namibians value **long-term relationships** over quick deals. It's important for investors to demonstrate their commitment to the country and its development. Building rapport through **in-person meetings** and regular engagement is key to establishing trust.

Networking

Attend **business forums** and **industry events** to network with local entrepreneurs, government officials, and business leaders. Face-to-face interactions are highly valued in Namibia, and developing a strong local network can help investors navigate the market more effectively.

2 Business Etiquette

Formal Communication

Business interactions in Namibia tend to be formal and polite. Investors should approach meetings with **respect** and **patience**, as decision-making can be slower and more consultative than in Western markets. Active listening and understanding the local context before offering opinions are important.

Time Management

While punctuality is expected, there is often a degree of flexibility in informal settings. Investors should remain respectful of others'

time while being prepared for meetings that may not always run on schedule.

3 Local Partnerships

Government Relations

Establishing good relationships with government authorities, such as the **Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB)** and relevant ministries, can help investors navigate regulatory requirements more smoothly. Government support is critical for investment success, particularly in **regulated industries** like energy and telecommunications.

3 Government and Regulatory Engagement

Strategic Collaborations

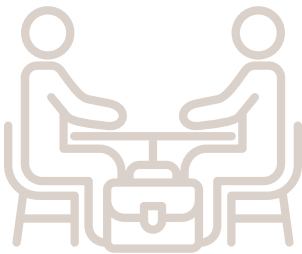
Forming partnerships with **local businesses** or **entrepreneurs** is crucial for navigating Namibia's regulatory landscape. Local partners bring valuable market knowledge and can help investors understand the intricacies of compliance, permits, and local ownership requirements in sectors like **telecommunications** and **mining**.



Investors should attend meetings with patience and respect, as decisions may be slower and more collaborative, fostering better partnerships.



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In a Nutshell

Understanding Namibia's business culture and forming strong local relationships are key to success for tech investors. Investors who approach the market with respect, patience, and a long-term perspective will find a stable environment that values trust and collaboration.



**Key incubators
like Basecamp and
CcHUB foster local
startups, driving
economic growth and
innovation.**



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GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE INITIATIVES SUPPORTING TECH VENTURES

Namibia's government, in collaboration with the private sector and international organizations, has implemented a range of initiatives to foster innovation and support tech ventures. These initiatives are designed to provide funding, mentorship, and infrastructure to help early-stage startups thrive.

Key Features

Government Support

SEED FUNDING

Long-term Plan

VISION 2030

Local Support

INNOVATION HUBS

1 Government-Led Programs

SDG Impact Investment Facility

This government-backed program supports early-stage startups by offering access to **seed funding, mentorship, and incubation**. The initiative focuses on sectors like **ICT, renewable energy, and agriculture**, providing a platform for local entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. This initiative is in line with the government's Vision 2030 and NDP 5.

Vision 2030 and National Development Plan (NDP5)

Namibia's long-term development strategies emphasize the transition to a **knowledge-based economy**. These plans prioritize investment in sectors like **digital services, renewable energy, and fintech**, creating opportunities for investors who are looking to enter high-growth sectors.

Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board

The NIPDB fosters digital startups by offering **capacity-building programs, market access initiatives, and investment facilitation**, helping entrepreneurs scale their innovations and attract global partnerships.

2 Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Renewable Energy Projects

Namibia has successfully implemented **public-private partnerships** in renewable energy, particularly in solar and wind power. Investors can participate in PPPs to drive growth in **off-grid energy solutions** and **smart energy management systems**.

GovTech Collaborations

The government is working with private companies to digitize public services, offering investors opportunities in **e-government** platforms, digital identity systems, and online service delivery.

The SDG Impact Investment Facility offers seed funding, mentorship, and incubation in ICT, renewable energy, and agriculture.





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3 Innovation Hubs and Incubators

Basecamp Business Incubator (Basecamp)

Basecamp is a key business incubator and innovation hub located in Windhoek. It offers incubation, mentorship, and resources to early-stage startups, particularly in the tech sector. Entrepreneurs benefit from networking opportunities, workshops, and access to funding. Basecamp supports growth in sectors like ICT, fintech, and renewable energy, helping startups scale and contribute to Namibia's economic development.

Impact Tank

Impact Tank is a Namibian social impact innovation firm focused on improving livelihoods across Africa. It aims to create economic opportunities by aligning projects with community needs and addressing key social and environmental challenges. Through research, advisory services, and practical implementation, Impact Tank supports sustainable, community-focused solutions that contribute to long-term development and resilience.



CcHUB Namibia

CcHUB Namibia is an innovation center committed to harnessing social capital and technology to promote economic growth. It aims to accelerate the development of the local startup ecosystem by fostering entrepreneurship and driving innovation. Through collaboration, mentorship, and resource support, CcHUB Namibia empowers startups to create impactful, sustainable solutions.

In a Nutshell

Namibia's combination of government initiatives, private sector collaboration, and international support creates a favorable environment for tech ventures. Investors can leverage these initiatives to tap into funding, infrastructure, and partnership opportunities in Namibia's growing tech ecosystem.



Investors must have a solid understanding of Namibia's legal, tax, and operational frameworks to successfully enter and grow in the tech sector.



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PRACTICAL INFORMATION FOR INVESTORS

Investing in Namibia requires a solid understanding of the country's **legal, tax, and operational frameworks**. Below is an overview of the key considerations for investors looking to enter Namibia's tech sector.

Key Features

Economy Type

DATA-CENTRIC

Political Security

STABLE

Governance

ROBUST

1 Business Registration and Setup

Foreign investors must register their businesses with the **Business and Intellectual Property Authority (BIPA)**. Most tech startups choose to establish a **Private Limited Company (Pty Ltd)**, which offers limited liability and flexibility in raising capital.

Permits and Licenses

Depending on the sector, specific permits or licenses may be required, particularly in regulated industries like **telecommunications, mining, and energy**. Legal advice is recommended to ensure compliance with local regulations. Permits and licenses are issued by ministries and government agencies responsible for regulating the sector in which an organisation plans to operate.

Below are examples of the government agencies that issue permits and licenses:



Telecommunications: Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)



Mining and Energy: Ministry of Mines and Energy



2 Taxation and Incentives

Namibia offers a **corporate tax rate of 32%**, but businesses in **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** or priority sectors like ICT and renewable energy may in the future qualify for tax rebates and exemptions.

Value-Added Tax (VAT)

Set at **15%**, VAT applies to most goods and services. However, certain sectors, such as renewable energy and telecommunications, may be eligible for VAT exemptions.

Depreciation

Investors in priority sectors can benefit from **accelerated depreciation** on capital investments, reducing taxable income and encouraging capital-intensive projects.

32% Corporate Tax Rate

3 Repatriation of Profits

Namibia allows for the **repatriation of profits**, dividends, and capital, subject to compliance with **Bank of Namibia's exchange control regulations**. While foreign investors can transfer funds abroad, they must ensure that transactions meet local documentation and reporting requirements.

4 Navigating the Labor Market

Namibia offers a **corporate tax rate** of **32%**, but businesses in **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** or Investors must comply with Namibia's **Labor Act of 2007**, which regulates minimum wages, working conditions, and employee rights. Work permits are required for foreign workers, and while the process can take several weeks, skilled professionals in sectors like **ICT**, **renewable energy**, and **engineering** are generally prioritized.

Skills Gap

The local talent pool is limited in certain tech sectors, particularly **software development** and **data science**. Investors may need to invest in **training programs** or seek talent from regional hubs like South Africa.

5 Currency Risk

Investors should be aware that the Namibian dollar (NAD) has experienced exchange rate volatility against the euro (EUR). The Namibian dollar is tied to the South African rand (ZAR), making it subject to exchange rate volatility, particularly against stronger currencies like the euro (EUR). This volatility can affect investment returns, requiring careful currency risk management for investors to mitigate potential impacts on profits and capital stability.

6 Intellectual Property (IP) Protection

Intellectual property (IP) protection is essential for tech startups. Namibia's IP laws are administered by BIPA. Investors should ensure that trademarks, patents, and copyrights are registered locally to protect their intellectual property rights.

- **Enforcement:** While Namibia's IP laws are in place, enforcement can be slow. Investors are encouraged to include **arbitration clauses** in their contracts to expedite dispute resolution.

7 Banking and Financing Options

Namibia's banking sector is well-developed, with major banks like **First National Bank Namibia** and **Bank Windhoek** offering corporate banking services. Investors can access local financing options, including loans and trade finance, or seek co-investment opportunities through **venture capital firms** like **Eos Capital** and **Bellatrix Investment Managers**, which focus on early-stage ventures in sectors like fintech and renewable energy.

In a Nutshell

Namibia offers a supportive business environment with clear regulations and a growing digital economy. Through an understanding of the local legal and operational requirements, investors can take advantage of Namibia's friendly investment environment and position their ventures for success in the country's expanding tech sector.

DATA GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA



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MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS



SUOMI
FINLAND



MINISTÈRE
DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES
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