

## **Annexure - Key National Achievements Directly Associated with NIPDB's Interventions**

### **NIPDB Spotlight Stories – Demonstrating Impact**

This report serves to illustrate some examples of tangible contributions of the NIPDB to Namibia's economic and investment landscape. Each story reflects not only a key intervention but also the value-creation derived from strategic facilitation, inter-agency collaboration, and investor support. The narratives herein will help inform the Presidency, Cabinet, and other national stakeholders of the institution's real-world contributions from problem-solving and policy innovation to measurable socio-economic returns such as job creation, foreign direct investment, and national competitiveness.

#### **1. Resolving Investor-Borne Land Access Challenges – The Osino Graves Case**

##### **Background and Challenge**

Osino Resources, a Canadian gold exploration company which has been operating in the Karibib area since 2019, identified ancestral graves at the site of its gold project just as it prepared to transition to full-scale mining. This discovery raised cultural, legal, and operational concerns, placing the future of a N\$3.8 billion investment and approximately 1,000 anticipated jobs at risk.

##### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Namibia aims to attract high-value, long-term investment while ensuring that its legal and cultural frameworks are respected. The presence of graves triggered legal obligations under the Burial Places Ordinance of 1966 and demanded careful coordination with affected families, traditional authorities, and various state organs. Failing to resolve the issue could have resulted in reputational risk and investor flight.

##### **NIPDB's intervention**

NIPDB coordinated inter-agency and stakeholder engagement, including the Office of the President, the Attorney General, MURD and Karibib Town Council. It facilitated dialogue between Osino and the affected families, guided communication strategies, and supported the investor in navigating both administrative and community-related procedures for grave relocation.

#### **Outcome**

This process was not easy and took 12 months to obtain necessary approvals including a no-objection letter from MURD, and local council authorisation allowing the arrangements for respectful relocation of the graves. The engagement enabled Osino to proceed with its project and paved the way for its successful acquisition by Yintai Gold for USD 287 million, demonstrating Namibia's ability to resolve investor concerns while upholding national values.

## **2. Streamlining Immigration for Strategic Sectors – The Oil & Gas Visa Facilitation Engagements**

### **Background and Challenge**

Namibia's oil and gas discoveries have sparked enormous investor interest, but that also brought pressure on the immigration system both before and after the discoveries. Within a few months after its establishment, NIPDB learned that companies like TotalEnergies, Shell, and their subcontractors who needed to bring in engineers, geoscientists, and technicians from around the world, often at short notice and at different stages of the exploratory work, were finding it challenging to procure these permits timely. This meant that exploration work which costs in the region of NAD1 million per day was being delayed. Many of these roles are highly specialised, and delays in securing permits were affecting operational timelines and costs as well as delaying the timeline for Namibia to benefit from the outcomes of the exploration.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Oil and gas are high-stakes, time-sensitive sectors with transformative economic potential for Namibia. Delays in onboarding technical specialists not only threatened the timely progress of billion-dollar projects but also risked sending negative signals to investors about Namibia's readiness to support frontier industries. These disruptions could impact local procurement, job creation, and overall investor confidence.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

The NIPDB's One Stop Centre team recognised the issue and partnered with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (MHAISS) to address it head-on. Initially, MHAISS was one of the first OMAs to fully staff the OSC and allow the applicable staff member the relevant access required for execution. This resulted in NIPDB facilitating most of the work visa applications for some of the oil majors.

Furthermore, the two institutions co-hosted a consultative meeting with oil and gas operators and their subcontractors in September 2024. The meeting created space for both government and industry to explain their challenges, clarify expectations, and work toward realistic solutions.

MHAISS used the session to explain key provisions under Section 27 of the Immigration Control Act, which requires employers to demonstrate that no local talent is available before a foreign national is employed. They also walked participants through the difference between short-term work visas and long-term employment permits, and reminded industry of the risks of misusing short-term entries.

### **Outcome**

The session resulted in a shared understanding between public and private sectors, with both sides committing to improved collaboration. The Ministry agreed to expedite permit processing for critical skills while industry committed to submitting more structured applications, including localisation and training plans. NIPDB has since collaborated with MHAISS and the oil and gas industry to compile current and future skills data required by energy companies. This intervention has now become a blueprint for immigration facilitation in other strategic sectors and identifies pathways for Namibia to develop the missing skills, to reduce future inward immigration by ensuring Namibians have the required skills to do the work.

## **3. Supporting the Government to Effectively Implement National Policy – Shaping a New Entry Experience – The Visa on Arrival Reform**

### **Background and Challenge**

Around April 2024,, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (MHAISS) announced that Namibia would introduce visa requirements for countries that had not reciprocated Namibia's visa exemptions. The announcement caused immediate concern in the tourism and investment sectors. Operators, foreign missions, and investors feared this would make Namibia less accessible and reduce tourist numbers.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Without a targeted communication strategy and effective facilitation of entry, these changes posed some significant problems with potential reduction in tourist arrivals, deterred potential investors, and damaged Namibia's image as a

welcoming destination. Any potential poor user experiences including long lines and unclear processes at entry points could undermine national competitiveness and hurt economic recovery and growth. The tourism sector is the third-largest contributor to GDP.

#### **NIPDB's Intervention**

Following the announcement, the MHAISS and NIPDB partnered NIPDB to co-design and roll out a more investor- and tourist-friendly visa-on-arrival regime. The partnership focused on replacing outdated paper forms, eliminating the departure form, and rolling out an integrated e-visa platform. More than 60 countries became eligible for visa-on-arrival. NIPDB also spearheaded communications efforts, working with NAC, NTB, airlines, and embassies to ensure public understanding. The team helped prepare over 20 designated ports of entry through signage updates, officer training, logistics simulations, and stakeholder walkthroughs.

Finally, NIPDB worked with the then MIRT and MHAISS to facilitate a dialogue with the diplomatic corps with focus on impacted countries so that they can address any questions and provide clarity.

#### **Outcome**

The new visa-on-arrival system was successfully launched on 1 April 2025 and has since processed over 70,000 travellers, generating approximately N\$100 million in revenue. Cruise ship visitors, children under six, and others now benefit from streamlined or reduced fees. The system contributed to restoring Namibia's reputation for ease of access. NIPDB's support remains ongoing: our IT team assessed systems at Hosea Kutako Airport and recommended further improvements, and the Investor Experience team is working with MHAISS to deploy interns to assist with queue management and improve the arrival experience for travellers.

## **4. Stakeholder Intelligence – Monthly Economic and Policy Briefings**

#### **Background and Challenge**

Namibia's foreign missions lacked access to timely economic data, policy updates, investment project updates, and strategic messaging. There was no structured process for updating Heads of Mission on Namibia's investment climate, which limited their ability to act as effective promoters of Namibia abroad.

#### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Foreign missions serve as the frontline for Namibia's diplomatic and investment outreach. Without reliable and current information, they risk delivering inconsistent or outdated messaging to prospective investors. This could lead to lost investment opportunities, diplomatic misalignment, and reduced credibility on international platforms.

#### **NIPDB's Intervention**

The Ministry of International Relations and Trade (MIRT) and NIPDB initiated monthly economic and policy briefings. These monthly virtual sessions were structured to provide real-time updates on Namibia's economic outlook, investment policies, priority sectors, and specific reforms such as the Investment Promotion Act, the Data Protection Bill, NEEEB, and income tax amendments, amongst others. The briefings also covered flagship investor projects, sectoral opportunities (e.g., tourism, green hydrogen, oil and gas), and key promotional campaigns. Updated visual materials, sector-specific talking points, and briefing packs were shared with all attendees. Missions were given a platform to raise queries and share insights from their host countries.

#### **Outcome**

The briefings have significantly enhanced the ability of missions to represent Namibia with clarity and consistency. Heads of Mission feel more connected to domestic developments and are better able to prepare for investor engagements and international negotiations. The initiative contributed to the successful attraction of major MICE events, including the Namibia International Energy Conference, the 6th Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit, the African Insurance Organisation (AIO) Conference, Aviadev, the Africa Hospitality Investment Forum (AHIF), the Namibia Oil and Gas Conference, the Global African Hydrogen Summit, and the AU MSME event, among others. It is now standard practice for NIPDB to coordinate with missions and honorary consuls ahead of outbound investment promotion missions to ensure alignment and maximise impact.

## **5. Business Rescue, Retention and Growth**

### **i) The Otjimbele Agriculture Case**

#### **Background and Challenge**

Otjimbele Agriculture, initially established as a high-value asparagus farming venture in the Etunda Green Scheme, faced major operational setbacks. Pest infestations, particularly an invasive fly species, and climatic mismatches led to declining yields and mounting financial losses. The investor indicated intent to

exit, which posed risks to jobs, infrastructure, and confidence in Namibia's agri-investment environment.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

This project had already injected over N\$120 million in infrastructure and created up to 700 seasonal jobs at its peak. Abandonment would have meant a loss of sunk investment, weakened investor sentiment, and a blow to the local economy in Oshifo and surrounding communities. Saving the project meant preserving infrastructure, retaining jobs, and upholding Namibia's image as a resilient, solutions-driven investment destination.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

Following engagement and support of the Prime Minister, the Spanish Ambassador in Namibia and Namibia's Ambassador to Spain, a multi-agency task force was formed. NIPDB chaired the technical committee and coordinated scenario assessments ranging from closure to project relocation. Together with the project manager and Namibia Ambassador to Spain, the NIPDB met the exiting investors in Spain and convinced them to stay for one more year while we work on a plan. The three parties were then able to timely identify and attract a new investor and connect that investor with local equity partners who together agreed to and implemented a recovery plan N\$107 million reinvestment package that included heat-tolerant grape varieties, sweet potatoes, asparagus for fresh markets, and other short-cycle crops.

Finally, once introduced, NIPDB facilitated negotiations between the investor, the local authority, and the project initiators, including support in formalising agreements, reviewing documentation, and engaging MAWLR to confirm no objection to the change in shareholding, resulting in the shareholding structure ensuring that 10% of the 49% local share was reserved for previously disadvantaged Namibians.

### **Outcome**

The project, still operating under the name Otjimbele Agriculture, planted its first table grapes in September 2023 and harvested in October 2024, marking the first commercial grape operation north of Namibia's Veterinary Cordon Fence. Permanent employment rebounded to 120 permanent staff with projected seasonal employment of 1,200. The site is now being converted into Namibia's first modular cold chain fresh produce centre. Crops like maize, butternut, and watermelon are reaching regional and national markets.

For the first time, grapes are now also grown north of Namibia's Veterinary Cordon Fence. This geographic shift means that more people can harvest closer to where they live, reducing their dependency on long-distance seasonal contracts and expanding the base of agricultural workers who participate in a more permanent and dignified manner. This case is now referenced as a national example of investor aftercare and agricultural transformation.

## **(ii) Local Company Holdings (LCH) Turnaround Support**

### **Background and Challenge**

LCH Fresh Produce was a locally owned agri-enterprise based in the Oshikoto region, specialising in horticulture and short-cycle crops. Prior to facing operational constraints, LCH had invested over N\$25 million in greenhouses, irrigation systems, and packaging infrastructure. At its peak, it employed more than 100 workers, mostly women and youth from surrounding communities.

LCH, a Namibian-owned agri-business, faced financial distress after years of operational strain due to market volatility, high input costs, and inconsistent supply chains. Once a promising player in the horticulture and agro-processing space, the company had developed infrastructure and distribution channels but began to struggle with liquidity and working capital constraints, risking closure and job losses.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

The collapse of LCH would have resulted in job losses, loss of local processing capacity, and a missed opportunity to scale domestic agro-value chains. More broadly, it risked discouraging future MSME investment in manufacturing and agribusiness, particularly among local entrepreneurs. NIPDB saw the case as an opportunity to intervene and demonstrate how targeted support could lead to meaningful turnaround.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

Through its MSME function, NIPDB facilitated working capital support, provided tailored business mentorship, and helped LCH renegotiate terms with creditors. It also connected the company to platforms such as the Namibia Trade Forum to explore regional market linkages and packaging solutions. In parallel, NIPDB ensured the company met food safety compliance standards to qualify for expanded distribution.

### **Outcome**

While LCH is still navigating recovery, the early support helped avoid liquidation, preserved local employment, and laid the groundwork for a more viable business model. This case highlighted the need for flexible, responsive investment aftercare not just for large multinationals, but for homegrown businesses with regional impact. The intervention preserved part of the facility, retained some jobs, and paved the way for new partnerships to revitalise the area's productive potential. LCH story underscores the importance of tailored support for community-based agribusiness and the potential for local innovation when institutions take time to listen and act.

### **iii) Connecting an ailing local company to investors**

#### **Background and Challenge**

A company owned by a previously disadvantaged Namibian with an investment in Walvis Bay was facing severe financial distress and was at risk of losing a strategically located property due to loan arrears. The property was scheduled to be auctioned by Bank Windhoek, and without urgent intervention, the company risked liquidation and job losses, while the property's investment potential would be lost.

#### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

The property, situated in a key economic hub, held untapped value for tourism and hospitality-related infrastructure. Its loss would not only impact the local business and employment but also miss an opportunity for urban revitalisation in Walvis Bay. This case presented an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of business rescue and strategic investor matchmaking in supporting local enterprises and unlocking economic potential.

#### **NIPDB's Intervention**

The NIPDB responded to the promoter's request by identifying and facilitating an introduction to a potential investor. In addition, NIPDB played a central role in convening and moderating negotiations between the local entrepreneur and key creditors, namely, Bank Windhoek, the Walvis Bay Municipality, and the involved engineering teams. These engagements led to mutually agreed-upon settlement frameworks that avoided auction, preserved the asset and provided much needed additional liquidity to the Namibian company.

#### **Outcome**



The intervention was successful. The distressed company avoided liquidation, and the investor has committed to invest approximately N\$150 million to develop the property further, catering primarily to the tourism and hospitality industry. The partnership illustrates how timely government facilitation can rescue viable businesses, maintain local ownership, and channel private capital into critical sectors.

## **6. Regulatory Mediation in Agriculture – The Bee Industry Conflict**

### **Background and Challenge**

Although the crop sector plays a critical role in Namibia's economy, it lacks a key enabler, bees. Bees are essential for pollination, a process vital to crop productivity. For the 2025 pollination season, Namibia Berries required approximately 700 beehives. However, the local beekeeping community was only able to provide fewer than 200 hives, covering just 28.57% of the total requirement.

As a result, Namibia Berries approached the NIPDB to facilitate the importation of bees from South Africa to meet the shortfall. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform (MAFWLR) issued an import permit in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines and the provisions under animal health regulations.

However, local beekeepers expressed strong opposition to importing bees from South Africa due to concerns about *Apis mellifera capensis*. While not a disease, this genetic variant of the honeybee can cause significant harm to local colonies and pose a serious threat to Namibia's beekeeping industry.

In light of these challenges, a meeting was held between the Namibian beekeepers, relevant stakeholders and the NIPDB to discuss strategies for developing the domestic beekeeping sector. It was concluded that a key obstacle is the lack of a comprehensive legislative framework to govern the aspect of production in the beekeeping sector. While the sector is partially regulated under the Forest Act No. 12 of 2001 (Section 25) and the Animal Health Act No. 1 of 2011, there is currently no legislation specifically addressing bee production. This legislative gap continues to hinder the formal establishment and growth of the sector especially as the local bee industry seem not to identify the competent authority with whom they can collaborate to develop strategies aimed at resolving the challenges faced in growing the industry. Both MAFWLR and MEFT only address a portion of the mandate.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

The dispute revealed two main challenges which are i) a broader regulatory gap in the apiculture sector hindering the growth of this critical sector; and ii) the risk of reputational damage as well as loss of investment and jobs if investor challenges were not managed. Pollination services are critical for horticultural productivity and food security. Failure to address the issue constructively risked slowing agricultural innovation and creating legal disputes and the ultimate halt of further production, resulting in reduction or potential loss of jobs. Without resolving this challenge in the long term, the government's aspirations for a flourishing agricultural sector, creating mass sustainable jobs, reducing imports and providing food security will be frustrated.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

The NIPDB arranged a meeting to mediate between BBN, Namibia Beekeepers Association, MEFT and MAFWLR. At the meeting each party explained their needs and requirements. The meeting helped explain the legal context that bees cannot be imported from South Africa due to failure for them to track migration and disease of bees. At this NIPDB-hosted a multi-stakeholder dialogue, the parties further explored the long-term development for apiculture and the need for Namibia to grow a sustainable industry as it is done by other countries in Africa. It also used public awareness campaigns during World Bee Day to highlight the role of bees and stimulate local hive production. Finally, NIPDB made a public call for local bee hive producers to supply the urgently needed hives to BBN if any. Consequently, in the short term, Namibia Berries initiated discussions with Israel as an alternative source for bee supply.

### **Outcome**

The open and transparent dialogue helped the investor understand the national interest behind the decision to place conditions on importing bees which South Africa could not meet. The investor appreciated the transparency and clarity provided. Although they did not obtain the import permit for South Africa and now have to import from a more expensive source, the investor acknowledged the fairness of the process and the professionalism shown by the regulators. This helped avoid what could have easily escalated into a legal dispute.

This broader stakeholder engagement further laid the foundation for the longer-term development of Namibia's apiculture sector. BBN has since committed to working within local constraints while supporting skills transfer and other required support to develop and grow the apiculture industry, in the long run. The NIPDB, together with BBN, issued a public call for expressions of interest from local beekeepers to collaborate on pollination supply, skills transfer, and hive management initiatives. To resolve short term challenges, the call specifically invites Namibian beekeepers with five or more active hives to lease their hives

during the upcoming pollination season at the Divundu-based project in Kavango East. In fact a significant business opportunity now exists for MSMEs who can respond to this call as the demand for bees will continue to grow over the next few years.

## **7. Overcoming Infrastructure Barriers – Namibia Berries and the Divundu Electricity Rerouting Case**

### **Background and Challenge**

In addition to the case under point 6 above, BBN, a flagship horticulture project in Divundu, Kavango East, encountered a critical infrastructure conflict in 2024. A government-funded electricity line intended to power a local school was mistakenly routed through the investor's production area. The line physically obstructed farm operations, posed safety hazards, and risked delaying the N\$180 million Phase 2 expansion.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Namibia Berries currently employs over 300 people and is expected to create over 1,000 permanent and 5,000 seasonal jobs over the next 4 years, many of which will be filled by local unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Delays in resolving the power line issue would have undermined food production, employment, and investor confidence. It also highlighted how, in the absence of coordination and effective communication, a strategic social infrastructure rollout can inadvertently clash with strategic investments.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

BBN contacted NIPDB, who immediately coordinated a multi-stakeholder response with the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME), the Divundu Village Council, and the project's engineers. With significant support and hosting of the MME, NIPDB facilitated meetings, ensured technical assessments were fast-tracked, and helped stakeholders agree on rerouting the power line. It also facilitated discussions around shared costs and timelines.

### **Outcome**

A solution was reached within weeks. MME committed to fund the rerouting, and temporary prefab classrooms were arranged to maintain school electricity access. Construction avoided delays, crop productivity was safeguarded, and the farm's expansion proceeded as planned.

*Testimonial from Founder and CEO of Namibia Berries, Michael Rodenburg*  
"Namibia Berries is proud to develop a cutting-edge blueberry facility in Divundu. Starting with 50 hectares and 200,000 plants in 2023, we have expanded with an on-site cold room in 2024, with our first fruit on its way to Europe this month. We plan a further development of 200 ha. Our project has significantly impacted local communities through job creation and skills transfer. Supported by local, regional and central government, as well as the community, our ethical and sustainable business model is set to boost the Southern African economy. The Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) has been instrumental in assisting us, especially in accessing various key stakeholders for the success of the project. The NIPDB's support has been crucial in navigating the development process, and we applaud their efforts in making Namibia a destination for ventures that benefit local communities and foster economic growth. Our farm exemplifies how responsible initiatives can drive economic prosperity and improve livelihoods, and we look forward to continuing our work with the NIPDB as we expand our operations in Namibia."

## **8. Facilitating Market Access – Grapes and Blue Berries to China, Beef to Qatar**

### **Background and Challenge**

Namibia had long aspired to expand its agricultural export base beyond traditional markets. However, barriers such as phytosanitary requirements, lack of coordinated bilateral protocols, and logistical hurdles made it difficult to penetrate new high-value markets like China and the Middle East. Namibia further has a specific challenge relating to the beef industry where the production on the southern side of the cordon fence cannot meet the demand of accessible markets while the other side of the cordon fence which has a majority of Namibia's beef production suffer from limited market access and low prices.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

New market access creates export diversification, improves foreign exchange earnings, and supports the expansion of Namibia's agribusiness sector. Without such access, local producers remain overly reliant on saturated local and/or regional markets, limiting their growth and revenue potential.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

At the direction of CCTED/CCT and with the support of the Ministry of Finance and Public Enterprises, the NIPDB is facilitating productivity task forces (PTF). PTF are time-bound, sector-specific public-private platforms designed to address productivity constraints to identified sectors and foster collaboration within key

## **NIPDB Activities and Impact Since Establishment**

### NAMIBIA INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD

sectors of the Namibian economy. Each PTF operates through working groups led by the respective sector's Minister, while the NIPDB serves as the Secretariat and Facilitator. The ultimate goal of PTFs is to increase production outcome and employment opportunities.

Currently, there are four PTFs: two focused on Agriculture, one on Energy (electricity generation and transmission), and one on the Culture and Creatives industry. During these dialogue, the private sector identified a need for additional market access of products under the respective PTFs. The NIPDB worked with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Agriculture, Meat Board of Namibia, and agribusiness exporters to unblock bottlenecks and accelerate approvals for bilateral protocols. For table grapes, Namibia has long been a competitive producer, but until recently, it had limited access to Asian markets. The NIPDB supported the Namibian Grape Growers Association and export producers by engaging with the Chinese Embassy and coordinating efforts between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Land Reform (MAFWLR), the Namibia Standards Institution (NSI), and the Namibian Agronomic Board. The aim was to meet China's stringent phytosanitary and quality assurance requirements. The request for Namibia to get market access for the blueberries has been shared with the Chinese authorities.

Similarly, for beef exports, the NIPDB played on liaising with Qatari authorities and later facilitating a visit by the MAFWLR, MEATCO and other parties. Despite challenges related to animal health zone classification, NIPDB collaborated with Meatco, MAWLR, and the Namibian Livestock Producers' Organisation to define a compliant supply chain that would satisfy Qatar's health and import requirements. Bilateral trade diplomacy, support in documentation, and a push for finalising export permits helped bring the first shipments to market.

## **Outcome**

Namibia is nearing the completion of an agreement to access China's grape market, which comprises 1.3 billion consumers. This development is projected to generate approximately US\$10.5 million seasonally from this market. Currently, Namibia's grape sector contributes around US\$68.4 million. The protocols for blue berries are under consideration by the Chinese authority.

The engagements with Qatari Authorities resulted in MAFWLR attaining market access for meat from the north side of the cordon fence. The other challenge was halaal certification which has finally been secured in May 2025. The next challenge is to assist farmers on the northern side of the cordon fence to consistently produce high quality beef to meet the needs and demands of this new market.

The work continues, as the NIPDB remains active in supporting producers and identifying new markets with focus on Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

## **9. Implementing Namibia's Green Industrialisation and Mineral Beneficiation – Hylron**

### **Background and Challenge**

Namibia's ambition to become a global player in green industrialisation required more than policy; it needed real demonstration projects to show that clean technology investment was viable and scalable in-country. Yet, few examples existed of successful green metallurgy projects in Africa. Investors were concerned about permitting timelines, inter-agency coordination, and infrastructure availability. Furthermore, it has been Africa and Namibia's long term dream to see our minerals being refined, processed and added value locally.

### **Benefits or potential negative consequences to Namibia**

Hylron's project in Arandis represents a pioneering step for green pig iron production using renewable hydrogen, aligning with Namibia's energy transition and industrialisation agenda. If successfully implemented, it would generate foreign direct investment, technology transfer, and skilled employment while placing Namibia on the map as a green metals hub. Without this project, Namibia risked losing first-mover advantage in the competitive green hydrogen race.

### **NIPDB's Intervention**

NIPDB, through its strategic investment facilitation function, engaged Hylron early to provide multi-agency coordination. We supported site selection processes, helped resolve land tenure and permitting issues, and worked with MIME and MEFT to fast-track regulatory approvals. We also secured the Hylron project's inclusion in branding and communication strategies at major global platforms, such as GH2, to help raise their international profile.

### **Outcome**

Hylron successfully launched the first green pig iron production phase in April 2025 at its Walvis Bay site. The demonstration plant created 50 jobs during the pilot phase and established the proof of concept for green metallurgy in Namibia. The company is now preparing for commercial scale-up, with Phase 2 aiming to produce hydrogen-derived ammonia and further expand Namibia's green industrial base. The project has attracted attention from international investors and policymakers alike. Hylron is now regarded as one of the flagship green

hydrogen-linked investments in the country, providing confidence for future project developers and reinforcing the effectiveness of Namibia's facilitation approach.

## 10. From Policy to Practice – Internship Programme and Skills Reform

### 10.1 National International Programme

#### Background and Challenge

For years, Namibia lacked a clear national framework to guide internship placements, which resulted in high graduate unemployment.

#### What did NIPDB do

NIPDB led a full reform process from the concept note and legal recommendations to Cabinet endorsement and rollout. To encourage employers to hire more interns and provide youth with professional and industrial experience for their entry into the workforce, Namibia provided support to the Ministry of Finance, resulting in the revision of the 2024 Tax Act to include a Youth Tax allowance.

#### Outcome

To date, over 1496 paid internships have been created through the programme. It's been called "the most impactful employability intervention of the decade" by the Namibia Employers Federation and continues to evolve with input from stakeholders across sectors.

### 10.2 Global Employment opportunities

#### Background and challenge

Namibia faces a significant challenge with youth unemployment at 46%, primarily due to a sluggish economy and a mismatch between available skills and labor market demands. Additionally, access to global job opportunities is hindered by language barriers, specifically in foreign languages, and limited funding.

#### What did NIPDB do

In September 2023, the NIPDB, in partnership with the Goethe-Institut Namibia, launched the German Apprentice Connect Programme in pursuit of apprenticeship and employment opportunities in Germany. A talent scouting exercise in the Namibian labour market was embarked upon by advertising some of these opportunities.

Namibia, being part of the global village, NIPDB has identified and is collaborating to open employment opportunities for our youth, with MSC Cruises, a leading cruise company that seeks to employ approximately 9,000 young people worldwide each year. Across all these opportunities, critical success factors have been identified, including language proficiency in Chinese, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish.

#### **Outcomes**

A total of 7,404 applications were received and only 8 candidates were suitable due to the German language proficiency requirement at a B2 level. This requirement is mandatory for the acquisition of a visa for Germany. The substantial youth interest in opportunities is evident; however, language barriers and funding limitations for foreign language acquisition pose significant obstacles to accessing these opportunities.

A joint recruitment initiative by NIPDB and MSC resulted in 8,144 applications. From these, 2,449 candidates were shortlisted. Ultimately, 42 Namibian individuals were successfully matched with potential employment opportunities. It's important to note that language proficiency continues to be a significant obstacle to securing global employment opportunities.

## **11. National Development Support**

The NIPDB has since 2021 provided advisory, technical and facilitation support to key national projects and programmes. To date, NIPDB has facilitated and/or participated in various initiatives with significant impact on the national economic development. Some of these include:

**Attracting a Private Sector Partner for NamPort's New Container Terminal (NCT):** One of the first assignments of NIPDB was to support the government's plan to attract investors into various infrastructure projects from the UAE. NIPDB pushed for the inclusion of the NCT in the project catalogue. Eventually, in 2022, NIPDB facilitated Expression of Interest for the NCT through the Walvis Bay Industrial Development Initiative (WIDI) project. The shortlisting from that exercise resulted in NamPort engaging the top identified companies and eventually appointing the current operator. In addition to the increase in container volumes handled at the port, the operator plans to make an additional investment in excess of N\$3 billion and create many new direct and indirect jobs. Furthermore, this has resulted in a new Cruise industry that is employing Namibians onshore the cruises as well as indirectly through growing the tourism industry arising from cruise season visits to Namibia.



**Building and Growing Namibia's Green Economy:** NIPDB has to date made significant contributions to the journey of Namibia's green economy by initial engagement with investors since October 2020 including coordinating the sourcing of the private sector player identified to partner with the government on the first large-scale project. This led to the establishment of Namibia's Green Hydrogen industry. While this nascent industry is yet to bring in large investments, it has resulted in the creation of a number of jobs, has seen Namibia form strategic partnership with developed and fellow African countries and has significantly contributed to profiling Namibia as a preferred investment destination.

**Economic Diversification:** NIPDB is leading Namibia's economic diversification aspirations. Through our various efforts, the country has attracted investments in new sectors of growth including innovative investments such as Hylron, Kelp Blue, Biochar, Your Kitchen and a new Salmon industry set to kick off in Luderitz.

**Enhancing Namibia's Connectivity:** When NIPDB was established in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, connectivity was a challenge. A meeting between our team and the management of Lufthansa in Frankfurt helped obtain an understanding of challenges being experienced in kicking off new planned routes by Lufthansa. With our facilitation and the support of the Germany embassy in Namibia, the air transport agreement between the two countries was finalised. This has resulted in Discover using Namibia as their center in Southern Africa with increasing flight now also serviced from Munich. In addition, Lufthansa has set up a service center (employing about 200 professions and kicking off the Business Process Outsourcing, another new sector) in Namibia serving not only Lufthansa and Namibian clients but also providing outsourcing services to a number of German-based clients. We continue to serve on the Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASA) committee, collaborated with Namibia Airports Company (NAC) to host Namibia's first Connectivity and Aviation Forum in 2023 and continue to work with Namibia Airports Company to engage airlines such as Turkish Airline, Air Mauritius, Air France, Edelweiss with some good progress being made to introduce routes by some of these airlines.