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The Extractor
Mapping Namibia's Mineral Resources

- Cleanergy moves to scale pilot plant into 100MW
- Namibia adds copper, gold riches to uranium
- Constitutional governance of petroleum regulator
- Blue hydrogen market to hit $85 billion by 2034

VOLUME 04 | Edition 36 WEDNESDAY, 08 APRIL 2026

Kokoseb targets 656 jobs, 710-bed village

The workforce will operate on a 24-hour, three-shift system to sustain continuous production

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Askari sets 2026 for Uis drilling

The next six to 12 months will be pivotal as Askari Metals moves from surface exploration into drilling, to prove up a maiden resource and position the Uis Project within Namibia's rapidly expanding critical minerals landscape.

A LOOK AHEAD TO 2026 IN NAMIBIA – RECONAFRICA

As our work with the communities and authorities of Namibia continues into 2026, we are pleased to share a number of successes and developments around our exploration activities under PEL 073, as well as a look to the year ahead.

KEY SUCCESSES OF 2025

In 2025, ReconAfrica progressed key priorities by drilling our second exploration well in the Damara Fold Belt. The results showed indications of oil and gas over eight separate intervals in the Kavango West 1X well. A total of 64 metres (210 feet) of the sections contained confirmed hydrocarbons, with additional promising signs deeper in the well within the limestone reservoir. These findings suggest that the Damara Fold Belt has real potential for future energy development.

Following these positive results, PEL 073 partners ReconAfrica (operator), NAMCOR, and BW Energy met with Her Excellency President Nandi-Ndaitwah to discuss the oil and gas findings and explore how the partnership could support onshore development and help strengthen Namibia's long-term energy future.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN KAVANGO EAST AND KAVANGO WEST

ReconAfrica continues to invest in and work with local communities and is proud to have an industry-leading Environmental, Social and Governance programme in Namibia.

To date, ReconAfrica has:

- Locally hired and contracted over 2,700 short and long term positions, and worked with over 550 local, regional and national service and supply companies
- Supported 10 STEAM and 7 SAN Nursing students from the Kavango East and Kavango West regions with scholarships
- Installed 36 solar-powered community water wells in remote areas
- Completed more than 2,600 community engagement sessions
- Provided N$19 million in funding for medical services, equipment, training and wellness programmes
- Provided funding for environmental and social projects in various communities

WHAT IS NEXT FOR RECONAFRICA IN NAMIBIA?

Preparations are underway for a production test of the Kavango West 1X well this year. The team is currently procuring the necessary equipment and has applied for permits required for production testing in order to evaluate the zones of interest. This will be the first production test for hydrocarbons in Namibia and could result in the first flow of hydrocarbons to surface for the Country. We expect to conclude this testing by the third quarter of 2026.

In all aspects of our operations, ReconAfrica is committed to minimal disturbance of habitat in line with international standards and implementing environmental and social best practices in our project areas.

We remain grateful to the people of Namibia for your partnership in exploring the potential for long-term energy development in the area and look forward to providing further updates throughout 2026.

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COVER STORY

Kokoseb targets 656 jobs, 710-bed village

Kokoseb will operate as a large-scale, round-the-clock open-pit gold mine, built on continuous drilling, blasting, hauling and on-site processing, with gold doré bars produced on site and flown out every two weeks from a dedicated helipad located near the processing plant for final refining.

At full operation, the project is expected to employ approximately 656 people, comprising both staff and contractors across mining, processing and administrative functions.

Most of these jobs are expected to be filled by Namibians, with only a limited number of expatriate specialists required for technical and management roles. The workforce will operate on a 24-hour, three-shift system to sustain continuous production, with the majority accommodated on site in a 710-bed village under fly-in/fly-out and drive-in/drive-out arrangements, while some employees from nearby towns such as Uis and Omaruru will be transported daily to the

Figure 34 - Abandoned historic settlement associated with the early mining activities in the area (Source: Nankela, 2025)

site.

Beyond direct employment, the project is also expected to generate additional economic activity through procurement, services and supply chains linked to the mine.

That operational model sits at the centre of what is shaping up to be one of Namibia's most significant new gold developments. The Kokoseb Gold Project, being advanced by WIA Gold Limited in partnership with Epangelo Mining Company through the Mandarin Investments joint venture, is located on mining licence 274 within EPL 4818 in the Erongo Region, about 15 kilometres from Okombahe and 30 kilometres from Uis.

> **A large-scale open-pit operation built on continuous drilling, blasting and processing.**

The mine is designed as a conventional open-pit operation with a main pit and a satellite pit, supported by a 5.25 million tonnes per annum processing plant. Over an estimated 12-year life of mine, Kokoseb is expected to extract about 58.9 million tonnes of ore and 369 million tonnes of waste, translating into a strip ratio of roughly 6.3 to 1. The operation is targeting total gold recovery of approximately 1.65 million ounces, placing it firmly in the category of Namibia's emerging mid- to large-scale gold producers.

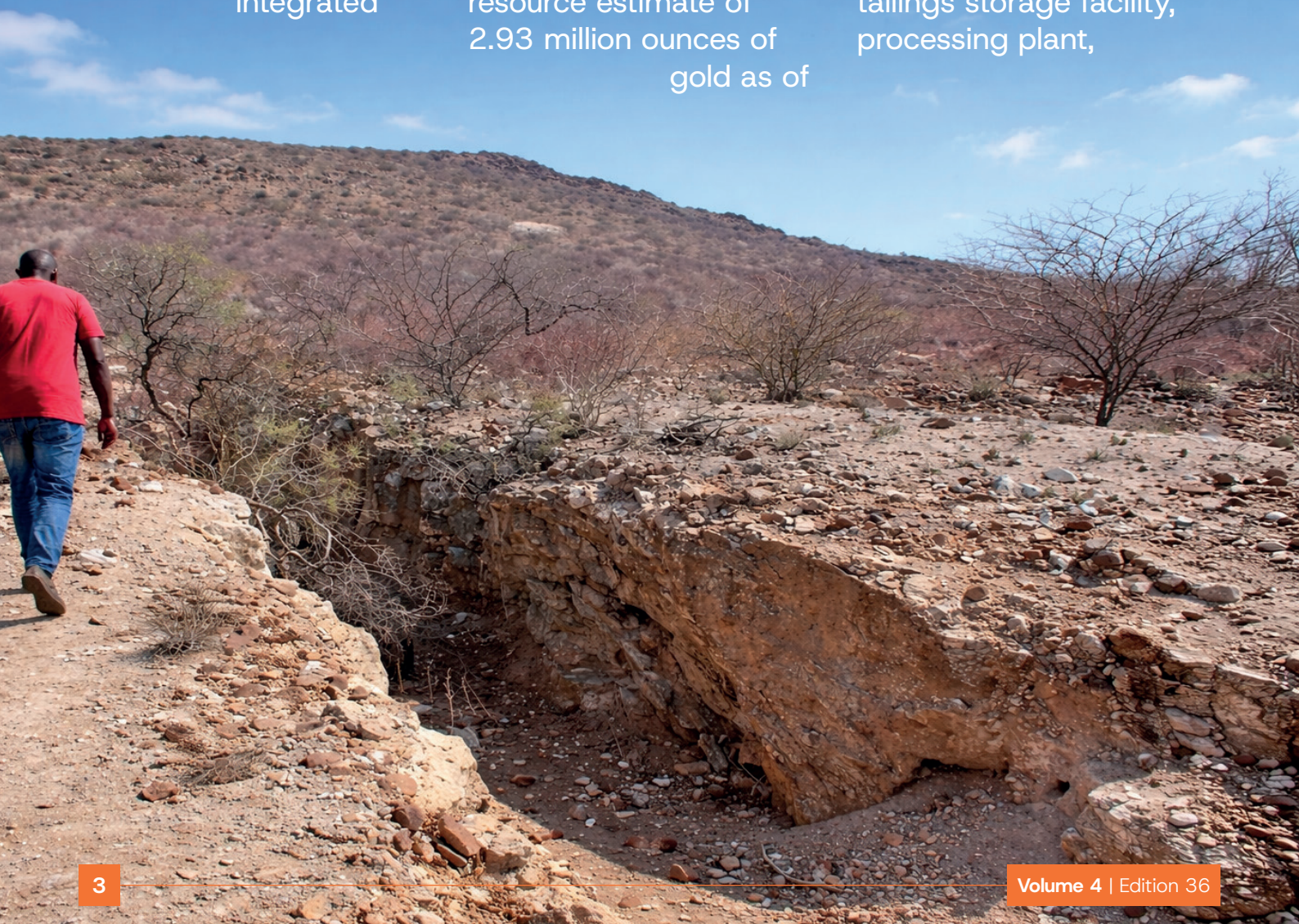
Mining will follow a standard but intensive cycle. Ore and waste will be drilled and blasted using ammonium nitrate fuel oil explosives, then loaded by excavators onto large haul trucks. High-grade ore will be fed directly into the processing plant, while lower-grade material will be stockpiled and treated later, allowing the operation to optimise

recovery over the full life of mine.

At the processing plant, ore will pass through a SAG and ball mill crushing circuit before undergoing gravity recovery and carbon-in-leach processing. The plant will also incorporate Anglo American Research Laboratories elution technology and electrowinning to produce gold doré bars on site. This integrated processing route is designed to maximise recovery efficiency from a deposit averaging about 1.0 gram per tonne, with higher-grade zones reaching around 1.4 grams per tonne.

What strengthens the project's fundamentals is the scale and growth of the resource. Since exploration began in late 2021, Kokoseb has expanded rapidly, reaching a mineral resource estimate of 2.93 million ounces of gold as of June 2025, including a high-grade component of over 2 million ounces. The deposit remains open along strike and at depth, suggesting that the current mine plan may not be the final limit of the resource.

Infrastructure is being built to support a self-contained mining operation in a relatively remote area. The project will include three waste rock dumps, a dry-stack tailings storage facility, processing plant,



explosives storage, workshops, fuel facilities and a dedicated helipad integrated into the gold handling system, alongside an accommodation village capable of housing 710 workers.

Environmental controls are central to the project design. Tailings will undergo cyanide destruction before being filtered and stacked dry, reducing water usage and long-term contamination risks. Waste rock and topsoil will be handled separately to enable progressive rehabilitation during operations rather than waiting until closure. The mine layout itself has been adjusted to avoid sensitive ecological areas and minimise disturbance to key landscape features within the licence area.

The project's footprint, however, intersects with existing infrastructure and community land. A section of the D3714 district road currently runs across the orebody and will need to be diverted to allow mining to proceed safely. The licence area also borders the Tsiseb and Ohungu conservancies within the Okombahe Reserve, placing the project within a landscape where mining, conservation and community interests will need to coexist.

Kokoseb remains at a regulatory stage. An application for mining licence 274 was submitted to the Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy in October 2025 and is still under review. Once approved, construction is expected to take about two years before the mine moves into full production.

What emerges from the project design is a clear picture of how Kokoseb will function: a high-throughput, mechanically driven gold operation employing hundreds of people continuously, with infrastructure, logistics and environmental safeguards scaled to match its size. At the same time, its long-term success will depend not only on production performance, but also on how effectively it navigates regulatory approvals, land-use pressures, and community expectations in one of Namibia's more sensitive regions.

POLYMETALLIC

Askari sets 2026 for Uis drilling

Askari Metals says it is preparing to move into reverse circulation (RC) drilling in the second half of 2026, as it seeks to define a maiden mineral resource at its Uis Project in Namibia following encouraging trenching results across multiple critical minerals.

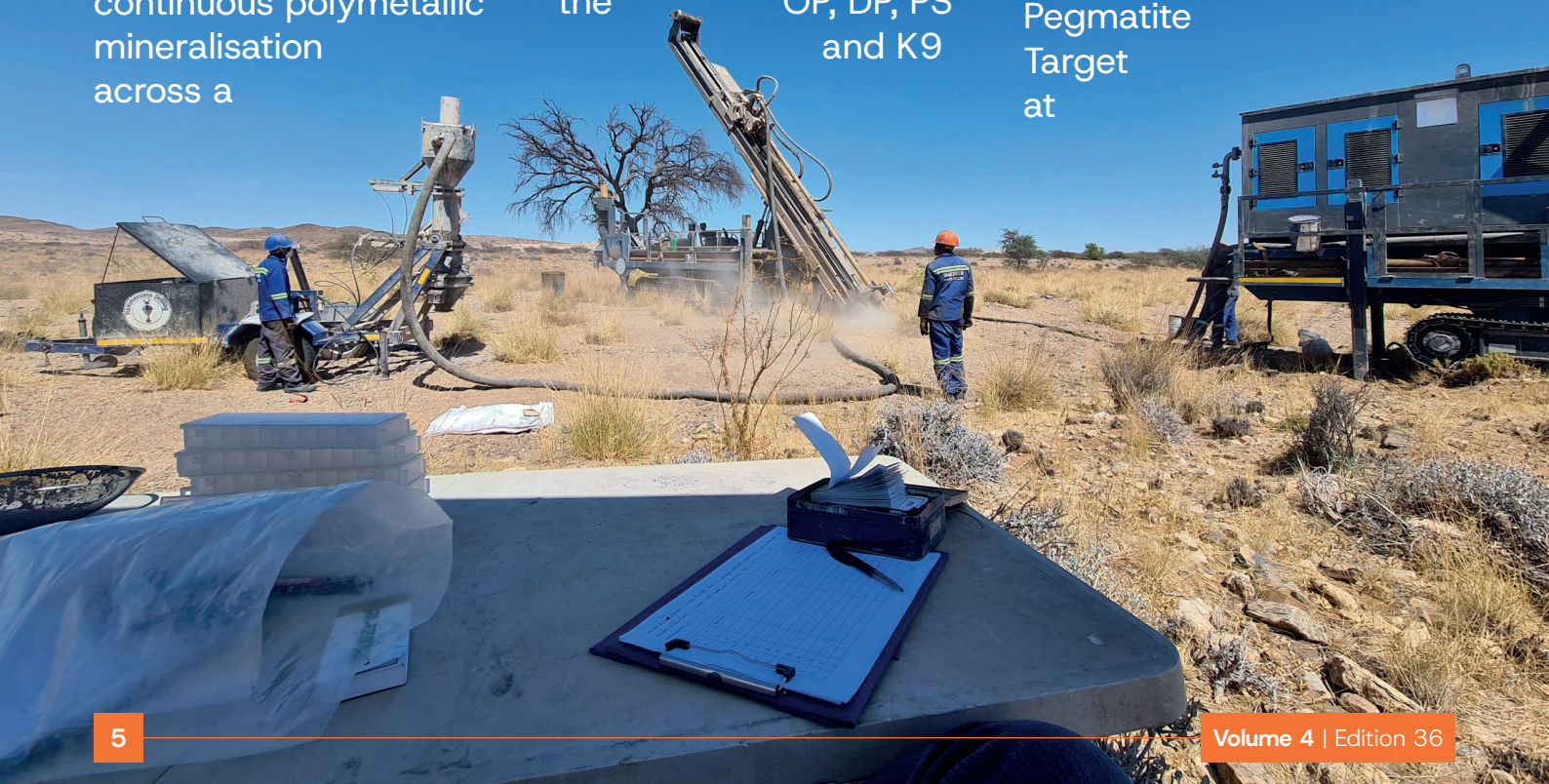
The ASX-listed Askari Metals Limited is advancing plans for drilling at the OP pegmatite target after completing a Phase I trenching campaign that has confirmed continuous polymetallic mineralisation across a large strike system. The company says the next phase will focus on testing the true thickness and extent of the pegmatites at depth, alongside additional trenching, mapping and sampling across its EPL 7345 licence.

The planned work programme includes assessing the full trenching dataset, extending exploration across newly identified targets, and mobilising for a second trenching phase before drilling begins across the OP, DP, PS and K9 pegmatite targets.

The developments position the Uis Project, located adjacent to the operating Uis Tin Mine owned by Andrada Mining Limited, as an emerging polymetallic asset with exposure to lithium, tin, tantalum, rubidium and caesium.

Executive Director Gino D'Anna said the results had materially strengthened the company's confidence as it moves toward resource definition.

"Phase I trenching was completed at the OP Pegmatite Target at



40m spacing along its strike length confirming continuous mineralisation of lithium, tin, tantalum and rubidium. Mineralisation occurs along the entire pegmatite length and across width with varying concentrations exhibiting results up to 8,340 ppm Sn, 0.57% Li2O, 299 ppm Ta, 2,380 ppm Rb and 354 ppm Cs. We are encouraged by the findings and are actively planning for a follow-on drill program to build on the success of both the recently completed trenching and previously completed reconnaissance drilling," he said.

He added that the results support the company's ambition to define a maiden resource later this year.

"Importantly, these results complement the assays received at the DP Target and provide a strong indication of a significantly mineralised system warranting further exploration as we target a maiden resource at our Uis Project later this year," D'Anna said.

The Uis Project sits within a well-established mining corridor and is less than 230 kilometres from the Walvis Bay Deepwater Port, offering logistical advantages for future development.

The Phase I trenching programme covered four priority pegmatite targets—OP, PS, DP and K9—within a defined corridor of interest on EPL 7345. A total of 135 trenches covering 7,269 metres were completed, with 2,098 channel samples collected.

At the OP target alone, 46 trenches covering 5,451 metres confirmed a mineralised pegmatite system extending approximately 2.2 kilometres in strike length, with widths typically ranging between 15 metres and 30 metres.

Results confirmed a polymetallic system, with high-grade intercepts recorded across multiple commodities. Tin assays reached up to 8,340 ppm, while lithium values peaked at 0.57% Li2O. Tantalum values reached 299 ppm, alongside significant rubidium and caesium mineralisation.

Importantly, mineralisation was observed consistently along the entire pegmatite length and across its width, including extensions into southwestern splays, suggesting a robust and laterally extensive system.

Tin and lithium underpin project economics

Tin results across the OP pegmatite showed extensive mineralised corridors, with multiple intercepts exceeding the historic 0.05% Sn cut-off used at the neighbouring Uis operation.

The company noted that these grades compare favourably with the nearby V1/V2 deposit at the Uis Tin Mine, which has an average grade of 0.15% Sn, reinforcing the project's potential as a tin contributor.

Lithium results also returned strong values, with several intercepts exceeding 0.3% Li2O—above commonly adopted cut-off grades for low-grade spodumene pegmatites.

Askari said the near-surface samples may underestimate true lithium grades due to weathering and leaching effects, suggesting that drilling into fresh rock could yield higher grades.

Tantalum mineralisation was found to be continuous along the entire 2.2-kilometre strike, with values ranging from 80 ppm to 299 ppm—comparable to or exceeding grades at the adjacent Uis operation.

Rubidium results averaged around 0.1% Rb2O, with some intercepts exceeding 0.2%, placing the project in line with comparable global deposits such as Mt Edon in Australia.

Caesium mineralisation, though lower at the surface due to weathering, showed encouraging values and is expected to improve at depth during drilling.

The presence of all five commodities—lithium, tin, tantalum, rubidium and caesium—positions the Uis Project as a polymetallic system aligned with growing global demand for critical minerals used in electronics, energy storage, defence and advanced technologies.

Strategic location and underexplored potential

D'Anna said the project's proximity to the Uis Tin Mine and shared geology enhances its development potential.

"Despite sharing the same geology as the nearby Uis Tin Mine, the potential of the Uis Project to host significant tin and tantalum mineralisation was never a focus in previous exploration or analysis. The contribution of these metals significantly enhances the economic attractiveness of the Uis Project and will be

an area of close focus for the Company going forward," he said.

He described the project as "a valuable polymetallic project offering significant economic upside" that remains underexplored.

With trenching confirming surface continuity, the company's immediate focus is to transition into drilling to test subsurface geometry, thickness and continuity of the pegmatites.

Askari said pegmatites can vary significantly in thickness and extent at depth, making drilling critical to understanding the true scale of mineralisation.

The company expects a steady flow of additional assay results from other targets, alongside geochemical programmes, which will help refine drill targeting and accelerate resource definition.

"In an environment where the tin price is hovering around US$46,000 per ton and has been as high as US$57,000 per ton, the Company looks forward to updating shareholders as exploration continues," D'Anna said.

The next six to twelve months will therefore be pivotal as Askari Metals moves from surface exploration into drilling, with the aim of proving up a maiden resource and positioning the Uis Project within Namibia's rapidly expanding critical minerals landscape.

GREEN ENERGY

Cleanergy moves to scale pilot hydrogen plant into 100MW industrial project

The Green Hydrogen Demonstration Plant (GHDP) developed by Cleanergy Solutions Namibia (Pty) Ltd is emerging as one of Namibia's earliest operational test cases for green hydrogen production, now transitioning from a pilot facility into a proposed industrial-scale operation.

Originally designed as a demonstration project, the GHDP was established to test and refine green hydrogen production under Namibian conditions using renewable energy.

The plant currently operates with a 5 megawatt-peak (MWp) solar installation supported by 5.9 megawatt-hours (MWh) of battery storage, allowing it to manage solar intermittency and sustain a stable power supply for hydrogen-related processes.

The project has not been positioned as a full-scale export operation at this stage, but rather as a controlled platform to test key components of the hydrogen value chain, while building technical experience, environmental compliance systems and local capacity within Namibia's emerging green hydrogen sector.

From inception, the GHDP has been developed within Namibia's environmental

regulatory framework.

It operates under the Environmental Management Act and is initially guided by a 2022 Environmental Management Plan (EMP), which governed construction and early operations.

As part of its current transition, this has been updated to a 2026 Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP), which will become legally binding upon approval and the renewal of the project's environmental clearance certificate.

The ESMP sets out detailed requirements for managing environmental and social risks associated with the project.

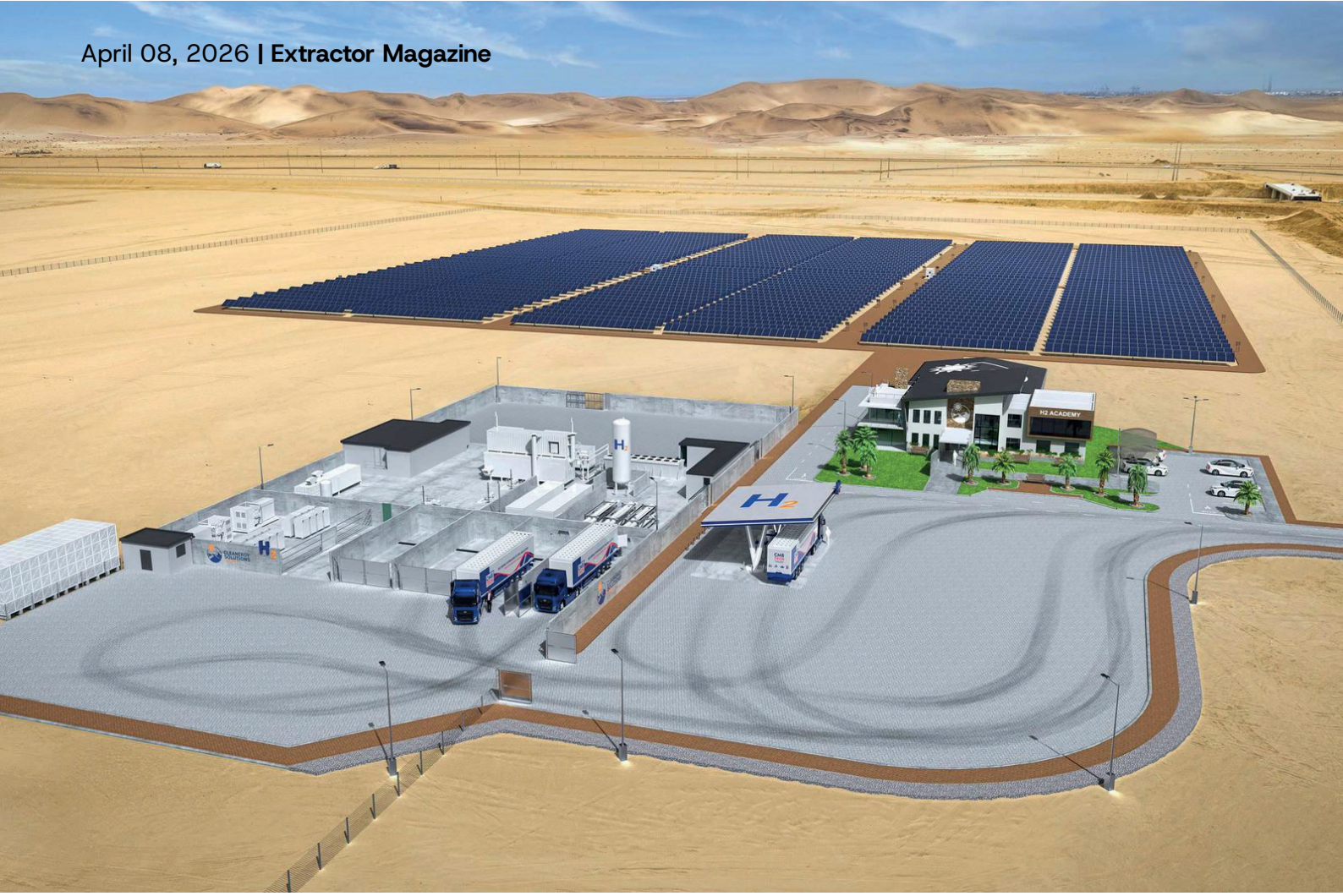
> **The project is transitioning from a demonstration facility into a proposed industrial-scale operation.**

These include procedures to identify and mitigate potential environmental impacts, enforce site rules, manage contractors and ensure responsible use of natural resources.

It also establishes monitoring and auditing systems, including provisions for independent third-party environmental audits, and commits to full site rehabilitation at closure.

A compliance audit conducted as part of the renewal process found no instances of environmental non-compliance during the review period, indicating that the project has adhered to its regulatory obligations to date.

On the ground, the project has already



incorporated local economic participation.

Construction of the GHDP was undertaken by Namibian contractor Hefer Projects Namibia CC, with support from subcontractors including SCE Consulting Engineers and Rautenbach Enssle Quantity Surveyors.

These companies were responsible for key aspects of design, engineering and implementation, highlighting the project's role in developing local expertise in a new industrial sector.

Operational practices at the plant reflect a compliance-driven and safety-focused approach. Systems for waste segregation, hazardous material handling, fuel and lubricant storage, emergency response and occupational safety have been implemented.

Site infrastructure includes controlled waste management systems, safety signage, protective equipment protocols and incident recording procedures, forming part of a structured environmental and safety management regime.

The project is now at a critical inflexion point, with Cleanergy seeking approval to expand its capacity significantly.

The proposed upgrades represent a step change in scale. Solar generation is planned to increase from 5 MWp to 100 MWp, while battery storage capacity would rise from 5.9 MWh to

230 MWh, enabling a more consistent, higher-volume energy supply.

In addition to power expansion, the project proposes installing a 5 MW alkaline electrolyser to produce hydrogen from renewable electricity.

This would be complemented by the construction of a small-scale ammonia plant with a capacity of four tonnes per day, signalling a move towards downstream processing and product conversion.

Ammonia is widely considered a more practical medium for transporting hydrogen, particularly for export markets.

The expansion will also introduce critical supporting infrastructure required for industrial-scale hydrogen and ammonia operations.

These include a flare system, a nitrogen generation unit, a water treatment plant, and a cooling water system, all of which are essential for process safety, efficiency, and environmental management.

At the same time, the ESMP reinforces strict environmental safeguards. The plan emphasises minimising vegetation clearing, protecting local flora and fauna, preventing pollution incidents and ensuring efficient use of water and other natural resources.

It also outlines monitoring programmes to track environmental performance and ensure compliance throughout the life of the project.

Importantly, the expansion remains subject to regulatory approval. The renewal of the environmental clearance certificate, together with approval of the updated ESMP, will determine whether the project can proceed into this next phase of development.

What is unfolding at the GHDP is a shift from proof-of-concept to early-stage industrialisation.

While still modest compared to Namibia's planned large-scale green hydrogen projects, the Cleanergy plant represents a functioning model that is already generating operational data, testing regulatory systems and building local participation.

If approved, the proposed expansion would reposition the GHDP from a demonstration facility into a significantly larger operation, capable of higher output and closer alignment with the country's long-term ambitions to develop a green hydrogen industry.

COPPER GOLD, & URANIUM

Namibia adds copper, gold riches to uranium prowess

MARION RAE

Uranium powerhouse Namibia is emerging as a critical minerals player with a copper explorer focused on the jurisdiction heading for the ASX. Pic: Getty Images

Australia's junior miners are hunting "copper elephants" as well as uranium as geopolitical tailwinds drive Namibia's push to be the next diversified powerhouse.

Soon-to-list on the ASX, Kaoko Metals has closed what it says was a "very well supported" IPO to raise to $6.5 million as it tries an under-appreciated belt of copper on for size.

"Namibia is a mature region that is favourable and friendly, I just don't think people realise how friendly," Kaoko MD and CEO Gerard O'Donovan told Stockhead.

"It just doesn't seem to carry the same political uncertainty and sovereign risk as other African nations."

Diamonds and uranium remain

the shining lights of Namibia. But there's also been success for the Navachab gold mine, an open pit which has run continuously since 1989, and Osino's Twin Hills gold project in the Damara belt.

Over on the ASX, investors would be more familiar with the success story of WIA Gold and its well-endowed Kokoseb gold project, the latest in a line of discoveries across the commodity spectrum, which suggests the resource-rich nation is starting to boom again.

"Notably our Karibib gold-copper-tungsten project is in the same gold region as these groups," O'Donovan said.

"Also, what people don't realise, is there is a huge oil and gas presence in and around the Orange Basin with Shell, Total Energies etc. all there."

The so-called Kaoko Belt stretches 400 km (some say up to 700 km) along the coast from southern Angola to central Namibia, while the Orange Basin is an energy exploration hotspot straddling the border with South Africa.

'Underexplored upside'

Mining has long been a cornerstone of Namibia's economy as a leading uranium producer – behind Kazakhstan and Canada but ahead of Australia in the world's top four – and a premier source of diamonds in partnership with De Beers.

Now the Southern African jurisdiction is positioning itself to take advantage of the energy transition, playing all sides as a non-aligned nation, with emerging resources including copper, lithium, gold, and rare earths. All customers are welcome.

"Interest in Namibia is material, accelerating, and structurally underpinned, rather than cyclical," Honorary Consul General Antonio Gelonesi told Stockhead.

Australian junior miners alone have deployed around A$147 million across 2024-25, making Namibia one of their primary African investment destinations.

"The jurisdiction benefits from regulatory clarity, established infrastructure, and a long mining history, which reduces sovereign and execution risk," Gelonesi said.

In copper and base metals, there is growing exploration interest linked to electrification and government support for new entrants, Gelonesi said.

Rare earth elements are "early-stage but strategically significant", while industrial minerals and polymetallic systems have "underexplored upside".

"Geopolitics is now a decisive accelerant," Gelonesi said, with the global pivot toward energy security and decarbonisation elevating nuclear energy, driving uranium demand and investment flows.

Supply disruptions in traditional resource regions such as parts of West Africa and Eastern Europe have increased the premium on stable, rule-of-law jurisdictions.

"Namibia's positioning as a non-aligned, politically stable African democracy gives it a strategic advantage in securing Western, Asian and multinational capital," Gelonesi said.

"This convergence has effectively repositioned Namibia from a 'known jurisdiction' to a strategic jurisdiction within global supply chains.

"Namibia today represents a rare convergence of geology, geopolitics, and governance."

The energy play

Uranium has been a gateway commodity, drawing in Australian-listed explorers and underpinning investment flows.

Elevate Uranium has large strategic holdings, including a JORC uranium resource of 66.1Mlb U_3O_8 at 192ppm at its 100%-owned Koppies, and a uranium resource of 40.2Mlb U_3O_8 at 185ppm at Marenica, in which it has 75% ownership, both in the globally recognised Erongo uranium region.

EL8's U-pgrade pilot plant is up and running, with steady state operations achieved during the first quarter of calendar 2026.

The locales of the long-running Rossing uranium mine and the Paladin Energy Langer Heinrich mine in Namibia are now evolving into a multi-commodity growth story.

Mining Review Africa recently ranked Namibia first in the 10 emerging mining countries in Africa, citing "world-class uranium, lithium, rare earth elements and copper resources".

One of Africa's "most stable and mining-friendly jurisdictions", Namibia was also described as underpinned by strict rule of law, transparent licensing, and established infrastructure.

Emerging lithium and rare earth developments

in the Erongo region are also positioning the country as a key supplier of critical minerals.

And while Zambia may be central to Africa's copper growth story, Namibia can play that card too as prices remain at historically high levels of US$12,359/t.

"Yes, the energy transition contributes but copper has so many applications as a functional metal," Kaoko's O'Donovan said. Copper's structural deficit is growing, he believes.

"We are focused on discovery, hopefully large scale, and if you want to find an elephant, go to under-explored elephant country, and that's what the Kaoko Belt is.

"Look at the recent success of Midas Minerals – ~17m at 7% Cu and the production of Tsumeb (1.7Mt of contained copper at 4.3%) – all only ~100 to 200km from our Chalkos project.

"I've met with the mining commissioner of the Kunene region, and the appetite for investment, particularly foreign investment, is so encouraging.

"For us … as an early stage explorer, our focus is building a project that attracts that investment and interest."

Policy wobbles

Namibia's ranking as a mining investment destination slumped in the latest Fraser Institute survey after the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy, Natangwe Ithete, was sacked, boldly proposing a policy of 51% local ownership in all new mining ventures.

"We believe that local empowerment is not only a matter of social justice, but also a cornerstone for long-term stability and sustainability in the sector," he told a mining expo in Windhoek.

The Ministry of Mines and Energy and the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board were also said to be cracking down on the hoarding of mineral rights, and there were concerns about environmental and water regulations.

"Namibia's decline in the Investment Attractiveness Index signals that investor perceptions of our mining policy and regulatory environment have weakened," Chamber of Mines of Namibia president George Botshiwe said.

"This is particularly concerning at a time when strong mineral commodity prices are driving significant global investment into high-risk exploration. If Namibia is not considered competitive and predictable, we risk missing out on exploration capital critical to discovering the mines of the future.

But the National Planning Commission of Namibia has since clarified that greater local ownership and empowerment are policy goals – not rigid or enforceable targets.

"Namibia's attractiveness is not purely geological – it is institutional and operational," Gelonesi said, with government support for mining as a core economic pillar.

In the previous year's survey, under policy settings in place today, Namibia was ranked behind only Morocco, Botswana and Zambia for investment attractiveness in Africa.

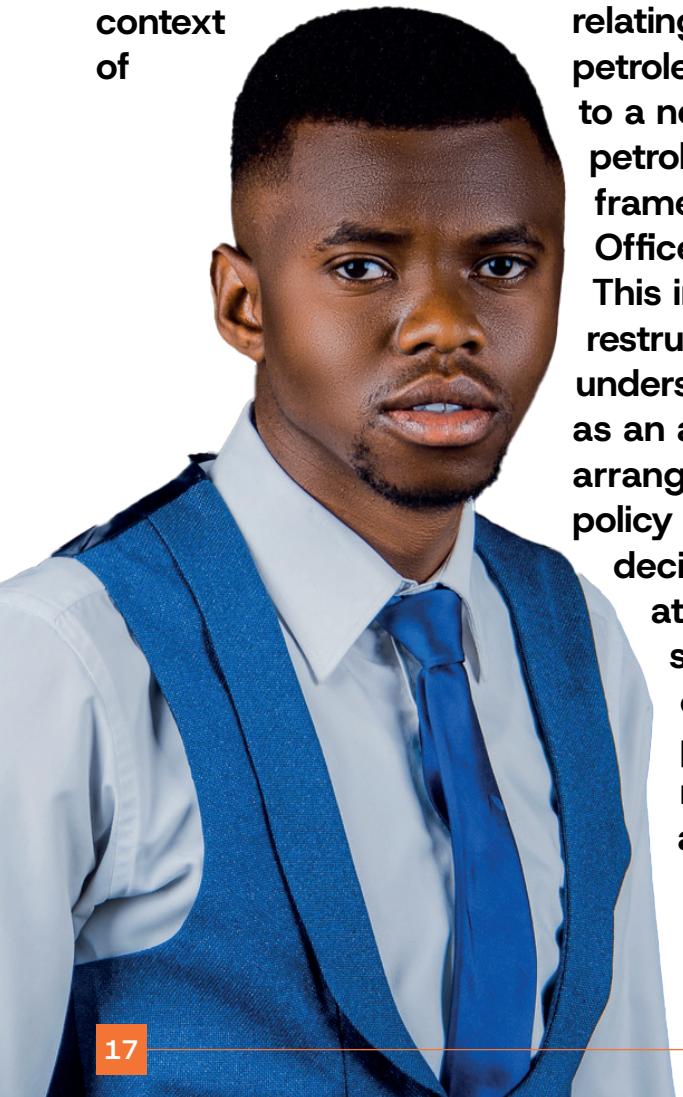
*Source: Stockhead

COLUMN

Constitutional governance of Namibia's petroleum regulator

JUAN SIMSON KAULUMA

In the 2025 State of the Nation Address, Her Excellency Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah stated that Namibia cannot proceed with "business as usual", a conviction which must be understood in the broader context of Namibia's transition into a petroleum-producing nation and the need to adopt an appropriate governance framework for the upstream petroleum sector. Following her assumption of office, the President transitioned the powers relating to upstream petroleum regulation to a newly established petroleum regulatory framework under the Office of the President. This institutional restructuring must be understood not merely as an administrative arrangement, but as a policy and governance decision aimed at centralising strategic oversight of Namibia's petroleum resources, which are regarded as a strategic national asset with significant implications for national development, revenue management, and economic policy.



While criticism has arisen, largely centred on governance concerns, constitutionality, the risk of corruption, and the perceived centralisation of power within the Presidency, such criticism is in many respects narrow in scope and fails to fully appreciate the constitutional architecture of the Republic of Namibia and the democratic framework within which executive power is exercised. Namibia operates under a constitutional democracy founded on the principles of the rule of law, separation of powers, and checks and balances among the Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary, as established by the Constitution.

Despite criticism of the institutional placement or relocation of the upstream petroleum regulatory function, the 8th Administration, under the leadership of Her Excellency Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, did not seek to exercise such authority outside the constitutional framework. Instead, the Administration tabled a Bill before Parliament, the constitutionally mandated legislative body vested with law-making powers, for the establishment and formal recognition of a Petroleum Unit. This step is significant from a constitutional and governance perspective, as it demonstrates that although the Petroleum Unit is to operate under the auspices of the Presidency, the Administration nevertheless sought Parliament's approval, oversight, and legislative authority to formally establish, regulate, and define the institution's powers and functions.

Addressing concerns

It should always be remembered that the men and women who fought to liberate this country from the flagrant and wanton lawlessness that characterised pre-independent Namibia were propelled by the vision of establishing a Republic founded upon the rule of law, constitutionalism, and democratic governance. That vision ultimately found expression in the adoption of the Constitution of Namibia, which established a constitutional democracy grounded in the separation of powers, the rule of law, and the accountability of all organs of State. It is within this constitutional framework that all governance decisions, institutional arrangements, and policy choices must be appraised, including the placement of the upstream petroleum regulator under the Office of the President. The Constitution did not establish a system based on distrust of public institutions, but rather one based on structured accountability, oversight, and the lawful exercise of public power. It is through these mechanisms that any concerns relating to governance, transparency, or the centralisation of authority must be addressed.

Therefore, it matters little whether upstream regulation (Petroleum Unit) is placed under the auspices of the Presidency or under the Ministry of Mines and Energy, without first appreciating the constitutional framework within which all public institutions in Namibia operate. The real question is not the Unit's physical or administrative location, but whether the institution operates within the law, remains accountable to Parliament and the public at large, is subject to judicial review, and exercises its powers in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of administrative justice. In a constitutional democracy such as Namibia's, no public body, regardless of its institutional location, operates outside the law or beyond oversight. All public power is subject to legality, rationality, and procedural fairness, and all institutions remain

accountable through public oversight, and the courts. The debate should therefore not be narrowly framed around institutional placement, but rather around governance safeguards, transparency mechanisms, and accountability structures that ensure the proper management of Namibia's petroleum resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

Indeed, this position finds further support in the jurisprudence of the courts, which have consistently affirmed that no organ of State is beyond constitutional scrutiny. A pertinent example arises from the conduct of the Head of the Namibian Central Intelligence Service, a statutory body established to safeguard national security, who advanced the position that the institution was effectively immune from public and judicial oversight under the guise of national security. This contention was decisively rejected by the Supreme Court of Namibia, which, in emphatic terms, reaffirmed the principle of judicial independence and held that claims of national security do not place executive action beyond curial scrutiny. The Court made it clear that the notion that the Executive may invoke secrecy to render itself immune from judicial oversight is incompatible with the values of an open and democratic society founded upon the rule of law and legality.

While recognising that secrecy may, in appropriate circumstances, be justified, the Court stressed that such justification remains subject to judicial determination. This authority powerfully illustrates that even in the most sensitive domains of State function, constitutional control, accountability, and the supervisory jurisdiction of the courts remain paramount, thereby reinforcing the principle that the placement of any regulatory body, however strategically located, does not exempt it from the discipline of the law.

The way forward

In light of the debates and criticism surrounding the placement or relocation thereof, of the upstream petroleum regulator under the Presidency, the way forward should not be framed as a contest between institutional locations, but rather as a constructive process of strengthening governance, transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the management of Namibia's petroleum resources. The focus must shift from where the regulator is located to how it is to be governed, supervised, and held accountable within the constitutional framework.

First, the Petroleum Unit or upstream regulator must be firmly established through legislation passed by Parliament in accordance with the Constitution, clearly defining its powers, functions, reporting obligations, and oversight mechanisms. The legislation should ensure that the regulator operates independently in its technical and licensing decisions, even if it falls under the Presidency administratively. Independence in decision-making is more important than administrative location.

Secondly, both

Parliament and the public must play a strong oversight role. The regulator should be required to submit annual reports, financial statements, and licensing reports not only to Parliament but also to make key information transparently accessible to the public. This dual oversight ensures democratic accountability, strengthens public confidence, and promotes transparency in the management of petroleum resources, which are national assets belonging to all Namibians.

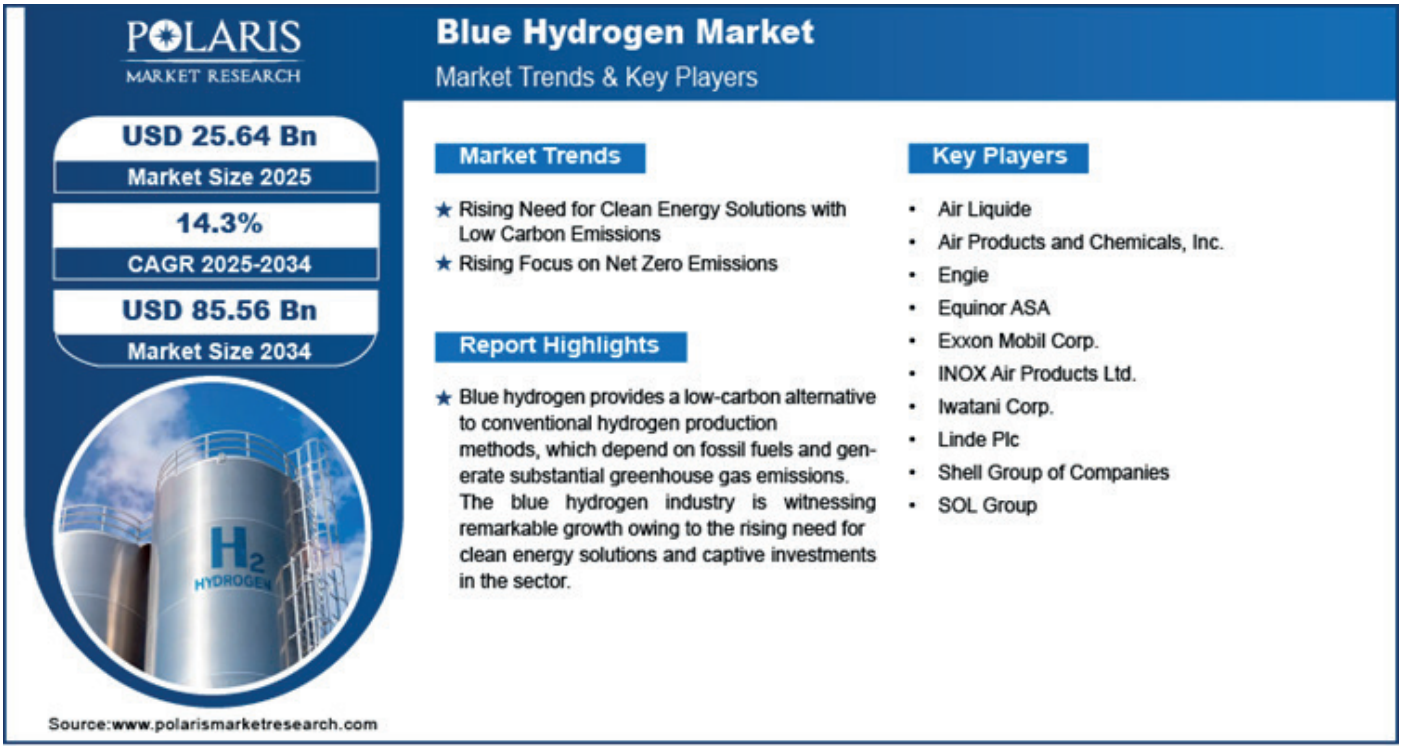
Thirdly, transparency mechanisms should be strengthened, particularly regarding petroleum licensing, contracts, and revenue management. Clear procedures for licensing rounds, publication of petroleum agreements where appropriate, and compliance with international best practices in resource governance will go a long way in addressing concerns about corruption and lack of transparency.

Fourthly, there must be strong institutional checks and balances through existing oversight bodies such as the Auditor-General, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the courts. As already demonstrated, no organ of State is immune from judicial review, and all administrative decisions remain subject to legality, reasonableness, and procedural fairness.

Finally, Namibia may consider a long-term institutional development path whereby, as the petroleum sector matures and institutional capacity develops, the upstream regulator could evolve into a fully independent statutory authority. Many petroleum-producing countries followed a similar path, beginning with strong executive coordination in the early stages of the industry and gradually transitioning to more independent regulatory institutions as the sector stabilised.

Therefore, when the President stated that it is not "business as usual," this should be understood not as a departure from constitutionalism, but as a recognition that the discovery and development of petroleum resources places the country in a new economic and governance era, necessitating new institutional arrangements, stronger coordination, and enhanced public scrutiny. While the sector requires a distinct governance approach due to its strategic importance, it must nevertheless operate within the Constitution, the rule of law, and the system of checks and balances that define Namibia's constitutional democracy. In this sense, it is not business as usual, not only in terms of governance and resource management, but also in translating the ideals of constitutional supremacy, legality, accountability, and the rule of law into practical, functioning mechanisms. If these governance pillars are firmly in place, the placement of the upstream petroleum regulator under the Office of the President will not undermine its constitutional democracy. Still, it can instead operate effectively within a framework of accountability, legality, and oversight that underpins the Namibian constitutional order.

BLUE HYDROGEN



Blue hydrogen market to hit $85 billion by 2034

BY PRAJWAL AGALE

The global blue hydrogen market is projected to surge to $85.56 billion by 2034, up from $22.79 billion in 2024, as demand for low-carbon energy accelerates across key industries, according to a new report by Polaris Market Research.

The growth represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14.3%, reflecting a structural shift in how energy is produced and consumed globally.

Blue hydrogen, produced from natural gas using steam methane reforming combined with carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS), is emerging as a critical bridge in the transition to cleaner energy systems.

Unlike green hydrogen, which remains dependent on large-scale renewable buildout, blue hydrogen can be deployed using existing industrial infrastructure.

The report highlights that the push toward net-zero emissions is the primary driver of demand.

Under global decarbonisation

scenarios, hydrogen production could reach 200 million tonnes by 2030 and scale to 500 million tonnes by 2050, with a growing share coming from low-carbon sources.

Hydrogen is expected to play a central role in reducing emissions in sectors that are difficult to decarbonise, including heavy industry, aviation and shipping. Estimates from the International Renewable Energy Agency suggest hydrogen could help avoid up to 60 gigatonnes of carbon emissions by 2050.

Demand is also being driven by the rise of fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs), particularly in heavy-duty transport, where hydrogen offers longer range and faster refuelling compared to battery-electric alternatives.

Policy support is accelerating investment globally.

The European Union is targeting a 55% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, while the United States and other major economies are rolling out large-scale hydrogen and ammonia projects to build production capacity.

Major energy and industrial players are already placing large-scale bets on the sector.

Companies such as Linde plc, ExxonMobil, Equinor and Shell are investing heavily

in production and infrastructure. Linde alone has committed about $1.8 billion to a blue hydrogen facility on the Texas Gulf Coast.

At the same time, Saudi Aramco has taken a 50% stake in a blue hydrogen industrial gases venture to scale up low-carbon fuel production.

From a technology perspective, steam methane reforming (SMR) remains dominant due to its cost efficiency and established infrastructure. Power generation currently accounts for the largest share of demand, although the refinery sector is expected to grow fastest as oil and gas companies shift toward lower-carbon inputs.

Regionally, North America leads the market, supported by abundant natural gas resources and supportive policy frameworks.

Europe is expected to record the fastest growth, driven by climate targets, energy security concerns and investment in carbon capture infrastructure.

However, the rapid growth of blue hydrogen is not without criticism.

Analysts and environmental groups have raised concerns about methane leakage in natural gas supply chains, which could offset emissions gains, as well as the energy losses associated with hydrogen production and transport.

The long-term viability of blue hydrogen also depends heavily on the success and cost of large-scale carbon capture systems.

In Africa, and particularly in Namibia, the hydrogen debate is taking on a distinct shape.

The country is positioning itself as a future exporter of green hydrogen through large-scale renewable projects, including developments along its southern corridor. However, the emergence of blue hydrogen globally—anchored in natural gas—raises strategic questions about how African producers balance cost, deployment speed, and long-term sustainability in competing energy markets.

Namibia, which is also advancing oil and gas exploration in the Orange Basin, could see blue hydrogen as a complementary pathway, leveraging future gas resources alongside its green hydrogen ambitions.

This places the country at the intersection of two competing hydrogen models—one driven by renewables, the other by fossil fuels with carbon capture.

Despite these competing pathways, the report concludes that blue hydrogen is already moving beyond the conceptual stage and into commercial deployment, positioning it as a key component of the global energy transition over the next decade.

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