



**T H E  
E N E R G Y  
N E X U S**

**The Road to First Oil & Beyond**

**PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENT GROWTH**



**NAMIBIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENERGY  
CONFERENCE  
2026™**

**14-16  
APRIL  
2026**  
**WINDHOEK  
NAMIBIA**

7th Edition

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 1	Strategic Note
Page 2	Engaging Leadership: Shaping the Next Chapter of Namibia's Energy Sector
Page 3	TotalEnergies and Galp Reaffirm Commitment to Namibia's Offshore Development Rhino Resources Reports Strong Test Results from Volans Discovery
Page 4	From Farm-ins to First Oil: Collaboration Driving Namibia's Upstream Momentum Namibia Reaffirms Energy Transition Commitment at IRENA Assembly
Page 5	Chevron Partners with Government on Emergency Food Support Programme
Page 6	Cabinet Approves Angola–Namibia Transmission Interconnector Namibia Advances Preparations for Nuclear Energy Development
Page 7	Namibia and Russia Explore Expanded Cooperation in Energy and Mining Sintana Energy Marks London Listing Milestone
Page 8	Chevron Namibia Appoints Namibian Deputy Country Manager
Page 9	EIA Spotlight: Socio-Economic Highlights from the Venus Development Project
Page 10	NIEC2026: Charting Namibia's Path to First Oil and Beyond
Page 11	Future Energy Leaders Legacy Initiative
Page 12	Discovery Is the Easy Part: Why Frontier Offshore Projects Fail After They Succeed By Fernando Sylvester

## Strategic Note

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of purpose that I welcome you to the 7th Edition of The EnergyNexus.

This edition arrives at a truly defining moment for Namibia's energy sector. On **25 February**, I had the distinct honour of meeting with **Her Excellency Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, President of the Republic of Namibia, to discuss the path ahead for our energy sector and the preparations for the 8th Namibia International Energy Conference. That engagement reinforced what many of us already know — that Namibia's energy future is not a distant aspiration. It is being built right now, through **deliberate partnerships, courageous investment decisions**, and a **shared commitment** to ensuring that our resources deliver lasting prosperity for our people.

The momentum reflected in this edition is remarkable. From **TotalEnergies** and **Galp** reaffirming their commitment to the **Orange Basin**, to **Rhino Resources** reporting strong test results from the **Volans discovery**, to **Cabinet** approvals advancing both the **Angola–Namibia transmission interconnector** and **Namibia's nuclear energy regulatory framework** — the signals are clear and consistent: Namibia is open, ready, and moving.

Yet this edition also challenges us to think critically. Discovery is only the beginning. The discipline with which we make decisions in the post-discovery phase will ultimately determine whether Namibia's resources are transformed into a developable, wealth-generating legacy. That is the conversation we must continue to lead — and it is precisely the conversation that NIEC 2026 is designed to advance.



Under the theme "The Road to First Oil & Beyond: Partnership. Investment. Growth.", the 8th edition of the conference will convene ministers, CEOs, investors, and innovators in Windhoek from 14–16 April 2026. I look forward to welcoming you there.

To the next generation of energy leaders — I encourage you to apply for the **Future Energy Leaders Legacy Initiative**. Your voice and vision are essential to this journey.

This edition also highlights leadership and perspectives shaping the sector. We feature an interview with Chevron's Deputy Country Manager and Local Content Manager, Mwanyengwa Ndapewoshali Shapwanale, as well as a thought leadership contribution by Fernando Sylvester, "Discovery Is the Easy Part: Why Frontier Offshore Projects Fail After They Succeed," which offers timely insight into the discipline required in the post-discovery phase.

Thank you for reading, for engaging, and for being part of Namibia's energy story.

*Ndapwilapo Selma  
Shimutwikeneni*

*Chief Executive Officer, RichAfrica Consultancy*

## Engaging Leadership: Shaping the Next Chapter of Namibia's Energy Sector



On 25 February, RichAfrica CEO, Ms. Ndapwilapo Selma Shimutwiken, paid a courtesy visit to H.E. Dr. Netumbo **Nandi-Ndaitwah, President of the Republic of Namibia**, to discuss collaboration in the energy sector and preparations for the 8th Namibia International Energy Conference, scheduled to take place from 14–16 April 2026 in Windhoek.

The engagement highlighted the importance of **sustained public–private collaboration** as Namibia advances its position as a leading energy investment destination. During the discussion, Her Excellency emphasised the strategic role of the energy sector as a critical enabler of Namibia's economic transformation and underscored the importance of strong alignment between government and the private sector.

Convened by RichAfrica Consultancy, the **Namibia International Energy Conference** is a proudly **Namibian and woman-led initiative** that for more than fourteen years has brought together government leadership, industry leaders, investors, and stakeholders across the energy value chain. The upcoming 8th edition will take place under the theme **“The Road to First Oil & Beyond: Partnership. Investment. Growth.”**

During the meeting, Ms. Shimutwiken also highlighted the Future **Energy Leaders legacy initiative** and the **conference internship programme**, both aimed at empowering the next generation to participate in shaping Namibia's energy future.

As Namibia advances toward first oil, strong partnerships between government and industry will be critical in ensuring that the country's energy resources deliver lasting economic transformation, create value for the investment community, and build a meaningful legacy for future generations.

## TotalEnergies and Galp Reaffirm Commitment to Namibia’s Offshore Development

On **30 January 2026**, **Patrick Pouyanné**, Chairman and CEO of **TotalEnergies**, and **Paula Amorim**, Chairman of **Galp**, met with **President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah** in Windhoek to reaffirm their long-term commitment to Namibia and provide an update on their strategic partnership across offshore licences in the **Orange Basin**.

The meeting followed an agreement under which **TotalEnergies will assume operatorship of PEL 83 (Mopane)**, while **Galp will enter PEL 56 and PEL 91**, strengthening collaboration around both **Mopane and Venus**.



Partners confirmed that a **Final Investment Decision (FID) for the Venus project remains targeted for 2026**, while a **three-well appraisal campaign at Mopane** is planned this year.

**Patrick Pouyanné, Chairman and CEO of TotalEnergies:**

“Our partnership with Galp marks an important milestone as Namibia prepares to become an important energy-producing nation. The collaboration lays the foundation for a new energy hub in the region—one that combines operational excellence, local development and shared prosperity.”

**Strategic Insight:** The strengthened partnership between TotalEnergies and Galp signals growing momentum toward project development in the Orange Basin as Namibia advances toward first oil.

## Rhino Resources Reports Strong Test Results from Volans Discovery



**Rhino Resources Namibia Ltd** recently announced successful **drill stem testing results from the Volans-1X discovery** on **PEL 85** in the Orange Basin.

Following the declaration of Volans as a **high liquid-yield gas condensate discovery in October 2025**, the joint venture returned to the well in early January 2026 to conduct testing operations. The well was perforated across **29.7 metres of reservoir**, demonstrating strong deliverability with flow rates of **33 million standard cubic feet per day (Mmscfd) of gas** and approximately **5,300 barrels of condensate per day**.

Rhino operates **PEL 85 with a 42.5% working interest**, alongside **Azule Energy (42.5%)**, **NAMCOR (10%)**, and

**Korres Investments (5%)**.

Commenting on the results, **Travis Smithard, CEO of Rhino Resources**, said the test validated the company’s pre-drill expectations, indicating a geologically contiguous reservoir system and supporting ongoing development planning. The results also provide useful calibration with the **Capricornus discovery**, helping to further de-risk exploration across the block.

**Strategic Insight:** The successful testing of the Volans discovery further reinforces the Orange Basin’s growing potential as a major hydrocarbons province and strengthens confidence in continued exploration and development activity.

## From Farm-ins to First Oil: Collaboration Driving Namibia’s Upstream Momentum



As Namibia advances toward first oil, collaboration is proving to be one of the defining forces shaping the country’s upstream sector.

Deepwater exploration requires significant capital, advanced technical expertise and long development timelines, making partnerships essential. Across Namibia’s offshore blocks, international oil companies, independents and national partners are combining strengths to unlock the country’s resource potential.

The **Venus development** illustrates how collaboration is accelerating progress. Operated by TotalEnergies in partnership with QatarEnergy, NAMCOR and Impact, the

project is moving toward a final investment decision expected in 2026, with first oil targeted around 2029–2030.

At the same time, ongoing farm-ins and portfolio acquisitions across the Orange, Walvis and Lüderitz basins highlight growing international confidence in Namibia as a frontier oil province.

As these partnerships evolve, platforms such as the **Namibia International Energy Conference (NIEC)** play an important role in bringing together operators, investors and policymakers to advance the deals and collaborations shaping the country’s upstream future.

## Namibia Reaffirms Energy Transition Commitment at IRENA Assembly

**Hon. Modestus Amutse**, Minister of Industries, Mines and Energy, participated in the **International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Assembly** held in the United Arab Emirates in January.

In his remarks, the Minister highlighted the role of IRENA’s evidence-based analysis, policy support, and investment facilitation in helping countries translate ambition into action.

He noted that Namibia’s energy transition is focused on delivering tangible impact through job creation, industrial growth, and expanded energy access. The country is targeting **70% renewable energy in its electricity mix by 2030**, supported by policy reform and its world-class solar and wind resources.

Namibia is also advancing **large-scale renewable energy initiatives** aimed at strengthening energy security, supporting industrial development, and unlocking opportunities across emerging energy value chains.

The intervention reaffirmed Namibia’s commitment to a **just and inclusive energy transition**, aligned with industrialisation and long-term resilience.

**Strategic Insight:** Namibia’s engagement at the **IRENA Assembly** underscores the country’s commitment to advancing renewable energy while positioning itself to attract investment and support long-term industrial growth.





**NAMIBIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENERGY  
CONFERENCE  
2026™**

**14-16  
APRIL  
2026**  
**WINDHOEK  
NAMIBIA**

**R E G I S T E R N O W**

[www.nieconference.com](http://www.nieconference.com)



# The Road to First Oil & Beyond

**PARTNERSHIP INVESTMENT GROWTH**



CONVENOR



PATRON



STRATEGIC PARTNER



## Chevron Partners with Government on Emergency Food Support Programme



The Government of Namibia, in partnership with **Chevron's subsidiary Harmattan Energy Ltd.** and **Palms for Life Fund**, officially launched a two-year **Emergency Food Support Programme** in the Oshikoto Region on 6 March 2026

The initiative, which builds on a soft activation in September 2025, will provide nutritious food assistance to **3,150 vulnerable households**, benefiting an estimated **15,750 people annually**. The programme leverages eight Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres previously funded through the partnership, strengthening local infrastructure while addressing acute food insecurity.

"We commend Chevron and Palms for Life for demonstrating that public-private partnerships are indispensable to national progress and to our shared journey to deliver social support aligned with national

priorities to communities in need," said **Honourable Sacky Kathindi**, Governor of the Oshikoto Region, speaking on behalf of Vice President H.E. Lucia Witbooi.

Chevron reaffirmed its long-term commitment to the communities in which it operates. "This programme reflects Chevron's commitment to supporting the communities where we operate through strong public-private partnerships and ensuring our focus on doing things right—what we call the Chevron Way—is reflected in everything we do," said **Beatrice Bienvenu**, Chevron Namibia and West Africa Country Manager.

In addition to food distribution, the programme includes **household gardening initiatives and parental training**, aimed at strengthening nutrition practices and building long-term food security resilience.



## Cabinet Approves Angola–Namibia Transmission Interconnector

Namibia’s Cabinet has approved the development of the **Angola–Namibia (ANNA) Transmission Interconnector Project**, marking an important step toward strengthening **regional energy security** and addressing power supply constraints in southern Africa.

The project will be implemented by the **Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy through NamPower** and forms part of broader planning under the **Southern African Power Pool (SAPP)** to expand cross-border transmission capacity and support electricity supply in southern Angola.

Cabinet authorised the Ministry to enter into an **Inter-Governmental Memorandum of Understanding with Angola’s Ministry of Energy**, while **NamPower**, under ministerial oversight and in consultation with the **Attorney-General**, will conclude the required **Power Purchase Agreement and Project Development Agreement**.

The project includes the construction of a **400kV transmission line spanning approximately 362 kilometres**, connecting the **Kunene substation in Namibia** to the **Lubango substation in Angola**. Approximately **331 kilometres of the line will be located in Angola and operated by Rede Nacional de Transporte**.

Cabinet also approved the mobilisation of **concessional financing through the National Energy Fund** to support Namibia’s share of the capital costs. The project has been endorsed as a **flagship regional initiative** and will be presented at the upcoming **SADC Energy Subcommittee meeting**.

**Strategic Insight:** The ANNA interconnector strengthens regional grid integration and positions Namibia as an important contributor to Southern Africa’s long-term electricity stability.



## Namibia Advances Preparations for Nuclear Energy Development

The **Ministry of Industries, Mines and Energy** has confirmed that Namibia is taking steps toward developing a **nuclear energy industry**, following recent Cabinet approvals.

Cabinet has authorised the development of nuclear energy infrastructure and a review of the **Nuclear Radiation Act**, currently administered by the **Ministry of Health and Social Services**. The review aims to modernise Namibia’s regulatory framework in line with international best practices to ensure public safety and readiness for future deployment.

In June 2025, Namibia submitted an application to join an **international nuclear convention**, marking an important step toward global cooperation on nuclear safety and standards. These frameworks provide guidance on **waste management, radiation protection, emergency response, and licensing systems**.

The Ministry noted that nuclear energy spans several sectors, including **energy, healthcare, and industrial development**, and forms part of Namibia’s broader efforts to strengthen **energy diversification and security**.

**Strategic Insight:** Namibia’s move to strengthen its regulatory framework signals early-stage preparation for nuclear energy as part of a diversified long-term energy strategy.

## Namibia and Russia Explore Expanded Cooperation in Energy and Mining



Namibia and Russia have reaffirmed their long-standing bilateral ties, identifying **energy, uranium, and mining** as key sectors for expanded cooperation following high-level talks held in Moscow in January.

At a joint press conference, **Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov** highlighted opportunities in **geological exploration** and the extraction and processing of mineral resources, including uranium. Energy, agriculture, and fisheries were also identified as priority sectors for cooperation.

Lavrov also underscored Russia's continued support for **education and skills development**, noting that thousands of Namibians have studied in Russia and the former Soviet Union.

**Namibian Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Selma Ashipala-Musavyi**, described the relationship as both historical and strategic, pointing to untapped potential for deeper collaboration across key industries.

The discussions signal renewed momentum to strengthen **Namibia-Russia economic engagement**, particularly in resource development and long-term partnership.

**Strategic Insight:** Strengthened Namibia-Russia engagement reflects growing international interest in Namibia's resource sectors and highlights opportunities for expanded cooperation in energy, mining, and skills development.

## Sintana Energy Marks London Listing Milestone

**Sintana Energy Inc.** marked a significant corporate milestone with a bell-ringing ceremony at the **London Stock Exchange**, celebrating its admission to the Alternative Investment Market (AIM). The ceremony, which signals the formal opening of trading, underscores the company's expanding international presence and growing investor base.

Sintana maintains a meaningful footprint in Namibia's oil and gas sector through strategic partnerships with operators including **Chevron (PEL 82), Galp, and TotalEnergies**, alongside local partners such as **InterOil, Custos Energy, and Giraffe Energy**. Namibian businessman **Knowledge Katti** participated in the ceremony, reflecting the company's local engagement.

**Sintana Energy Inc.** marked a corporate milestone with a **bell-ringing ceremony at the London Stock Exchange**, celebrating its admission to the **Alternative Investment Market (AIM)**. The event, which signals the formal opening of trading, reflects the company's expanding international presence and growing investor base.

Sintana maintains a presence in **Namibia's oil and gas sector** through strategic partnerships with operators including **Chevron (PEL 82), Galp, and TotalEnergies**, alongside local partners such as **InterOil, Custos Energy, and Giraffe Energy**. Namibian businessman **Knowledge Katti** participated in the ceremony, highlighting the company's local engagement in Namibia's upstream landscape.



### Robert Bose, CEO of Sintana Energy Inc.:

"Sintana Energy's admission to the Alternative Investment Market of the London Stock Exchange is a significant development for our company. With listings and high-impact assets on both sides of the Atlantic, Sintana Energy is well positioned for significant value growth over the coming years."

**Strategic Insight:** The listing reflects continued international capital market interest in companies active in Namibia's offshore exploration as the Orange Basin advances toward development.

## Chevron Namibia Appoints Namibian Deputy Country Manager

In an interview with *The EnergyNexus*, Chevron's newly-appointed Deputy Country Manager and Local Content Manager Mwanyengwa Ndapewoshali Shapwanale discusses her professional journey, her role in the company and what it means to be the company's first female Namibian national in the role.

**Q. Congratulations on your new role. Tell us a little about yourself—your background, education, and career path leading to Chevron.**

Thank you! It is a privilege to assume this role. I was born in Lubango, Angola, and raised in Keetmanshoop, a town in southern Namibia. At 18, I relocated to Windhoek to pursue a bachelor's in jurisprudence.

I come from a blended family of eight siblings, and my professional journey has been diverse. Before entering the oil and gas industry, I worked as a journalist for seven years in both print and radio. I have worked in the energy sector for over 5 years, having started at the oil and gas company ReconAfrica as its Deputy Country Manager.

My journey with Chevron began in January 2025 as Manager for Local Content and Vendor Assurance. Since then, Chevron's leadership, spearheaded by Chevron Country Manager Beatrice Bienvenu, has been intentional about investing in my development and supporting my growth, with trainings conducted in Houston, Texas and Washington DC.

**Q. Your academic background is in law. How did you transition into the oil and gas industry?**

Although my formal studies were in law, my entry into the industry was through corporate affairs consulting, with a focus on government affairs and strategic communication. Over time, I have continued to enhance my expertise in compliance, governance, and political science, concentrating on stakeholder engagement.

**Q. What attracted you to Chevron, and what has your career journey been since joining the company?**

There are many factors that compelled me to join Chevron. For starters, the unique opportunity to have a career and grow my capabilities in a global organization that has been producing energy for over a century. Joining Chevron offered me the chance to work and learn from a dynamic global team while contributing to the growth of Namibia's oil and gas industry and supporting broader efforts to address much-needed energy supply across Africa.

Equally important was the ability to make a meaningful impact within the company. Chevron values innovation and actively incorporates diverse perspectives into decision-making, which creates an environment where contributions are respected and recognized. I also strongly identify with Chevron's values and the way the company conducts business.



This promotion reflects the company's commitment to building Namibian talent and ensuring that local professionals take up impactful leadership roles within the organization.

**Q. As a Namibian, what does it mean to you to become the company's first female Namibian Deputy Country Manager?**

I feel honored and deeply grateful. Working with a global team has provided invaluable exposure to knowledge and skills that I can apply to strengthen local content and contribute to the growth of Namibia's oil and gas industry.

I am proud to be part of an exceptional Chevron Namibia team, united by the goal of advancing the country's energy sector. I look forward to continuing this journey of learning and contributing to meaningful progress for Namibia.





## EIA Spotlight: Socio-Economic Highlights from the Venus Development Project

As Namibia moves closer to first oil, the **Socioeconomic Impact Assessment** for the Venus Development Project provides insight into the potential economic opportunities associated with offshore oil production.

One of the key findings is the **potential for significant employment creation**. Project-linked jobs could match or even exceed the size of the existing fishing sector in **Lüderitz**, with impacts expected to last throughout the project's **25–35 year operational life**. This highlights the importance of **workforce development and skills training** to prepare Namibians for participation in the sector.

The assessment also points to **local procurement opportunities**, particularly in sectors such as logistics, catering, cleaning, and accommodation. These areas present **early entry points for Namibian SMEs** to participate in the upstream supply chain.



With **youth unemployment remaining high**, the report emphasises the need for a **strong local content strategy**, training programmes, and skills development initiatives to ensure inclusive participation in the industry.

Coastal towns such as **Lüderitz and Walvis Bay** are expected to play an important role in supporting offshore operations, creating opportunities for **local businesses, service providers, and workforce development**.

## NIEC2026: Charting Namibia's Path to First Oil and Beyond

The **8th edition of the Namibia International Energy Conference (NIEC)** will once again convene an influential line-up of high-level speakers from across the public and private sectors, offering diverse perspectives on Namibia's evolving energy landscape.

Under the theme **"The Road to First Oil and Beyond: Partnership. Investment. Growth."**, NIEC 2026 will bring together ministers, CEOs, regulators, financiers, and innovators shaping the global energy sector and contributing to Namibia's emergence as an energy-producing nation.

Some of the confirmed speakers include:



**Hon. Modestus Amutse**  
Ministry of Industries, Mines & Energy,  
Republic of Namibia



**Carlo McLeod**  
Special Advisor & Deputy Head,  
Upstream Petroleum Unit  
in the Presidency



**Mtundeni Ndafyaalako**  
Interim Managing Director  
of NAMCOR



**Travis Smithard**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Rhino Resources Ltd.



**NJ Ayuk**  
Executive Chairman,  
African Energy Chamber



**Erwin Tjipuka**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Standard Bank Namibia



**Joe Murphy**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Azule Energy



**Kornelia Shilunga**  
Special Advisor & Head,  
Upstream Petroleum Unit  
in the Presidency



**Maggy Shino**  
Petroleum Commissioner,  
Ministry of Industries, Mines & Energy



**Beatrice Bienvenu**  
Country Manager,  
West Africa Frontier Exploration,  
Chevron



**Nillian Mulemi**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Petroleum Training and Education  
Fund (Petrofund)



**Eduardo Rodriguez**  
Country Chair,  
Shell Namibia



**Conrad Dempsey**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
FirstRand Namibia



**Christophe Dieumegard**  
Senior Vice President,  
Subsea Commercial, TechnipFMC

Additional speakers from international energy companies, financial institutions, regulatory bodies, and academia will be announced in the lead-up to the conference.

The conference agenda will explore the critical priorities shaping Namibia's energy journey as the country advances toward first oil and long-term sector growth.



#### Agenda at a Glance

- **The Road to First Oil:** exploration progress and readiness for development
- **Strategic Partnerships:** collaboration shaping Namibia's energy future
- **Investment & Financing:** unlocking capital and structuring energy deals
- **Infrastructure Readiness:** enabling offshore development at scale
- **Local Content in Action:** skills development, enterprise growth, and industry participation
- **Natural Gas Opportunities:** infrastructure, markets, and strategic value
- **Technology & Innovation:** advancing smart and efficient energy solutions
- **Policy, Governance & Regulation:** strengthening the investment environment

As Namibia advances toward first oil, NIEC 2026 will continue to serve as a key platform for dialogue, partnership, and strategic engagement across the energy value chain.

## Future Energy Leaders Legacy Initiative

RichAfrica Consultancy is pleased to present the third edition of the **Future Energy Leaders Legacy Initiative**, proudly sponsored by **Subsea7**. The initiative is designed to empower the next generation of Namibia's energy leaders.

Through the programme, **12** outstanding young professionals and students will gain access to the **Namibia International Energy Conference 2026**, where they will engage with industry leaders, expand their networks and gain valuable insights into the evolving energy landscape.

The initiative supports emerging talent by creating opportunities for learning, mentorship and meaningful participation in the conversations shaping Namibia's energy future.

The application deadline was **13 March 2026**, and we are grateful for the strong interest received. The selected cohort of Future Energy Leaders will be announced soon.



## Discovery Is the Easy Part: Why Frontier Offshore Projects Fail After They Succeed

*By Fernando Sylvester*

Frontier offshore discoveries create instant momentum. Markets react. Governments issue statements. Partners congratulate one another. Value appears to be created overnight. Then, quietly, it begins to disappear.

Not because the geology was wrong. The hydrocarbons remain exactly where they were found. Value is lost because what follows discovery is mishandled. Decisions are made too early, in the wrong order, or on assumptions that tend to collapse when exposed to real-world constraints.

Yes, a discovery proves oil exists, but it does not prove that the project can be developed.

That distinction is where most frontier offshore value is destroyed.

The industry often treats discovery as confirmation that the hardest work is complete. In reality, discovery marks the beginning of the most fragile phase of a project's life. Technical success generates momentum, attention, and competitive pressure. That momentum creates a powerful illusion: that development will naturally follow, but it often does not.

Optimism accelerates commitment. Development concepts are selected before infrastructure constraints are understood. Capital is deployed before partner incentives are aligned. Regulatory and local participation requirements are deferred as downstream issues.

Within a few years, projects once considered inevitable become delayed, marginal, or stranded. The paradox is simple: discovery success undermines the discipline required to convert a resource into a developable asset.

When frontier offshore projects fail, the cause is rarely the subsurface. Value erosion stems from a small set of recurring post-discovery errors.

The first is premature commitment to development concepts. Projects converge early on solutions such as FPSOs without validating things like water-depth compatibility, port draft limits, integration capacity, or local fabrication feasibility. Years and tens of millions of dollars later, the concept is abandoned. The resource remains proven. The capital is gone. Timelines reset.

The second is misaligned partner incentives. Discovery brings together technical partners seeking reserve growth, financial partners focused on capital preservation, and governments pursuing visible progress aligned with political cycles. Without a shared decision framework, every appraisal well becomes a negotiation. Projects drift into prolonged alignment discussions and stall before final investment decision.



The third is delayed integration of regulatory and local requirements. When regulatory timelines, skills-transfer obligations, and local participation frameworks are treated as compliance hurdles rather than design inputs, development plans stall or are rejected. Revisions erode investor confidence. Financing terms deteriorate. Technically viable projects become commercially marginal.

In every case, the geology was sound. The decisions were not. The common failure is a lack of capital discipline.

Capital discipline is often mistaken for austerity or cost control. It is neither. Capital discipline is an organisational capability: the ability to make high-quality decisions under uncertainty.

Disciplined operators ask a defining question before committing capital: Which decisions can safely be deferred until uncertainty is materially reduced?

Early spending is treated as the purchase of information, not proof of progress. An appraisal well is not momentum; it is a test of a specific assumption. If that assumption fails, the value lies in the capital not spent pursuing a flawed path.

Disciplined projects are structured to work economically at each stage on a standalone basis. Expansion is preserved as an option to be earned, not an assumption required to justify initial spend. Therefore, practicing restraint is not hesitation, it is competence.



Many projects fail not because teams fail to integrate, but because decisions are made in the wrong order. Subsurface teams optimise for reserves. Commercial teams optimise for net present value. Regulatory teams are engaged too late. Integration occurs, but it aligns teams around assumptions that have not been tested.

Disciplined projects invert this logic. They confirm regulatory feasibility before committing appraisal capital. They validate infrastructure and local content constraints before selecting development concepts. They align partner incentives and governance frameworks before entering detailed engineering. Only then do they drill.

Sequencing preserves optionality. Integration without sequencing accelerates failure.

For operators, investors, and governments entering emerging offshore provinces, the central question is no longer whether resources exist. Discovery has already answered that. The real question is whether decisions are being made in a way that preserves capital, credibility, and choice.

Disciplined entrants are defined by what they refuse to assume. They model delay risk as rigorously as drilling risk. They assume misalignment and design governance accordingly. They treat local content as a constraint to design around, not a burden to manage later.

They understand the difference between a discovery and a developable asset.

Discovery attracts capital. Judgment preserves it.

Discovery is the easy part. Everything after requires discipline.



**RICHAFRICA**  
Consultancy



**NAMIBIA  
INTERNATIONAL  
ENERGY CONFERENCE  
2026™**



## **Driving the Energy Conversation since 2012**

With a targeted reach of over 20,000 industry professionals, investors, and decision-makers, this newsletter offers high-impact visibility for contributors and advertisers alike.

We currently offer free access to this publication as part of our commitment to inclusive dialogue across the energy value chain. In future, access will be subscription-based and we encourage stakeholders to take advantage of the current open distribution.

If you'd like to contribute insights, share updates, or place a paid advertisement in the next edition, we invite you to get in touch. Together, let's continue to drive the energy conversation and shape Africa's energy future.

**Contact us at: [info@richafricaco.com](mailto:info@richafricaco.com) +264 (81) 300-6617 [www.richafricaco.com](http://www.richafricaco.com) [www.nieconference.com](http://www.nieconference.com)**