

Transforming Urban Transport – The Role of Political Leadership
TUT-POL Sub-Saharan Africa
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Case Note: Windhoek, Namibia

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WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

NAMIBIA	
Population: 2,533,224 (as of July 2018)	
Population Growth Rate: 1.91% (2018)	
Median Age: 21.4	
GDP: USD\$29.6 billion (2017 est.)	
GDP Per Capita: USD\$11,200 (2017 est.)	
City of Intervention: Windhoek	
Urban Population: 50% of total population (2018)	
Urbanization Rate: 4.2% annual rate of change (2015-2020 est.)	
Land Area: 910,768 sq km	
Total Roadways: 48,327 km (2014)	
<i>Source: CIA Factbook</i>	

I. POLITICS & GOVERNANCE

A. Multi-Scalar Governance

Following a 25-year war, Namibia gained independence from South Africa in 1990 under the rule of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Since then, SWAPO has held the presidency, prime minister's office, the national assembly, and most local and regional councils by a large majority. While opposition parties are active (there are over ten groups), they remain weak and fragmented, with most significant political differences negotiated within SWAPO.

The constitution and other legislation dating to the early 1990s emphasize the role of regional and local councils – and since 1998, the government has been engaged in efforts to support decentralization of power.¹ However, all levels are connected by SWAPO (through common membership), so power remains effectively centralized. Planning agencies remain closely linked across government levels. While local authority councils (municipal level) have autonomous powers, they can only exercise these powers if the Minister of Urban and Rural Development allows them to. The development of the Sustainable Urban Transport Master Plan for Windhoek, outlined below, involved both the municipal government and the Ministry of Works and Transport, highlighting the integration of local and national planning.

¹ The Regional Councils Act 22 of 1992 and the Local Authorities Act 23 of 1992 further regulate the establishment, powers, duties, and functions of the councils. The management and development role and functions of RCs are stipulated in section 28 of the Regional Councils Act. These include regional development planning in cooperation with the National Planning Commission; the establishment, management and control of settlement areas; and assisting Local Authority Councils in the exercise of their functions. All LAs (municipal, town, and village) are given certain automatic powers, but villages may exercise these powers only if the Minister of Urban and Rural Development considers them ready to do so. Central government can step in to help towns and villages that are having trouble providing adequate services to residents. The lack of development in most towns undermines the town councils' authority and ability to raise revenue from tax, and thus could jeopardize their political legitimacy.

B. Urban Policy

Plans and policies that govern urban development and transport planning across Namibia include:

- *Vision 2030*
- *5th National Development Plan*
- *Urban and Regional Planning Bill 2017*
- *New Transport Policy 2016*
- *Sustainable Urban Transport Master Plan 2016-2021*
- *Medium to Long Term Road Master Plan*
- *Roads Authority Strategic Plan 2012-2015*
- *Road Traffic and Transportation Act*

Vision 2030 outlines the challenges Namibia faces with transportation and the strategies to address those challenges such as revising relevant legislation (i.e. 1987 National Transportation Corporation Act), ministerial restructuring, user charging, standardizing building design, and staffing.² The **Medium to Long Term Road Master Plan** guides the Road Authority on the construction and maintenance of the national road network. The **2017 Urban and Regional Planning Bill** was passed to enable town planners, who are still working under rules from the apartheid era, to shift to a modern approach, including more public participation and faster decisions.³ The EUR€12.5 million **Sustainable Urban Transport Master Plan 2016-2021**⁴ also called “Move Windhoek” supports the Ministry of Works and Transport and other transport institutions in their efforts to efficiently plan, monitor, and regulate the transport sector. Several initiatives outlined in the plan include: (1) development of public and non-motorized transport systems such as MoveWindhoek, which implements a new bus network and non-motorized transport infrastructure and services; (2) set up of an implementation unit for development of Windhoek as international logistics hub; and (3) development of a pipeline of civil engineers through a partnership between GIZ, the University of Namibia, and the Namibia University of Science and Technology. To date, the SUTP has led to the creation of a new transport policy, procurement of 24 public buses, initial development of a non-motorized transport strategy, enrollment of more than 500 students in civil engineering courses, and establishment of Namibia’s first master’s and PhD degree programs in civil engineering.⁵

C. Climate Change/Sustainability

Namibia’s national climate change policy covers a comprehensive range of climate adaptation and mitigation issues, including climate proofing infrastructure and transportation. Namibia’s National Renewable Energy Policy seeks to boost access and investments in renewable energy projects and recommends the government consider a subsidy framework. The MoveWindhoek plan seeks to address climate change and adaptation through sustainable urban transport and infrastructure initiatives such as increasing public transport to reduce reliance on cars, greening buses through hybrid and solar pilots, and rainwater harvesting.

² https://www.npc.gov.na/?wpfb_dl=31

³ <https://laws.parliament.na/annotated-laws-regulations/law-regulation.php?id=509>

⁴ https://www.globaldeliveryinitiative.org/sites/default/files/gdi_day_2_delivery_lab_1_ursula_hein_presentation.pdf

⁵ https://www.sutp.org/files/contents/documents/resources/J_Others/Factsheet-Namibia_October-2016.pdf

II. INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORT

A. Existing Infrastructure

Namibia's transport system links several Southern African countries including landlocked Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia. Namibia serves as a key trade route for moving goods from ports throughout Southern Africa. Its main regional corridors include Trans Cunene, Trans Caprivi, Trans Kalahari, and Trans Oranje.⁶

Air/Ports: Namibia has eight airports and two ports (Port of Walvis Bay and Port of Lüderitz).⁷ Hosea Kutako International Airport outside Windhoek is Namibia's main international airport. Based on the White Paper on Transport Policy, the government implemented a review of parastatal transport, leading to the establishment of Air Namibia as a separate company.

Rail: Namibia's railway operations began in 1902 and suffered years of under-investment until 2015, when five refurbished diesel locomotives were introduced.⁸ The locomotives were refurbished by South Africa's Transnet Engineering firm in a USD\$5.9 million deal. Today, the railway operations consist of roughly 70 locomotives and is regulated by TransNamib.

Roads/Highways: Namibia's roadway network is considered the best in Africa and among the world.⁹ The network includes critical transport corridors that link Namibia with Zambia, Zimbabwe, the DRC, Botswana, South Africa, and Angola, making Namibia a critical transportation and logistics hub within Southern Africa. Much of this infrastructure was inherited from South African rule prior to independence (and had been laid down as part of South African political and economic initiatives in Namibia) but has been maintained through deliberate policy since independence.

B. Existing Transportation

Current modes of passenger travel are split between taxis (34 percent), private cars (28 percent), walking (26 percent), car share (seven percent), buses (four percent), and cycling (one percent).¹⁰ Challenges facing the transportation sector include low funding, lack of affordability (i.e. the poor spend up to 25 percent of income on transport),¹¹ peak traffic flows, limited full day bus services, lack of interchanges connecting different routes, and poor route planning.¹²

Bus: Over 75 public buses are operated by the City of Windhoek's Public Transport Division (with no private partner) on 13 lines and various routes. The public transport bus market is expected to grow in demand by an average 226 percent from 2015 to 2022 (Green Climate Fund). Previously, the bus service operated with only tokens and cash. In 2011, smart card technology was introduced.

⁶<http://www.ra.org.na/Documents/Development%20of%20a%20Road%20Transport%20Sustainability%20Plan%20for%20Namibia.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.airports.com.na/airports/>

⁸ https://www.railjournal.com/in_depth/transnamib-back-from-the-brink

⁹ http://reports.weforum.org/pdf/gci-2017-2018-scorecard/WEF_GCI_2017_2018_Scorecard_EOSQ057.pdf

¹⁰ https://www.greenclimate.fund/documents/20182/893456/19910_-_Low-Carbon_Public_Transport_in_Windhoek.pdf/811cb516-f82f-9ead-c89d-14613a405e0d

¹¹ https://www.globaldeliveryinitiative.org/sites/default/files/gdi_day_2_delivery_lab_1_ursula_hein_presentation.pdf

¹² <https://www.sutp.org/en/projects/namibia-move-windhoek-sustainable-trban-transport.html>

During a three-month implementation period, smart cards were provided for free. Since then, tokens, cash, and smart cards are all being used.

Taxis: The size of Windhoek's registered taxi fleet is registered at 6,815 taxis (or 190 taxis for every 10,000 inhabitants). A taxi-hailing app called *Lefa* was launched in 2018. That said, MoveWindhoek seeks to reduce reliance on cars and taxis.

C. Infrastructure Stakeholders

Government: Most agencies responsible for urban transportation are state-owned, including the Namibian Port Authority and TransNamib.¹³ Roadways are managed by three related state-owned enterprises that were founded in 2000: the Road Funding Administration which collects revenues from vehicles that use Namibian roads; the Roads Authority to manage and plan/coordinate maintenance for the road network; and the Roads Contractor Company, which implements maintenance. Until 1995, roads were regulated by the Road Transportation Act of 1977, which allowed the market to be dominated by few operators. The government published a white paper in 1995, recommending changes to this system including the adoption of labor-based road construction and maintenance.

International: Many global actors are involved in the planning and funding of transportation and infrastructure development across Namibia. GIZ is a lead partner in the development of MoveWindhoek, while the TTI is supporting the creation of a Road Transport Sustainability Plan.¹⁴

D. Interventions/Projects

Commuter Rail Expansion¹⁵: In 2014, the Ministry of Works and Transport commissioned four pre-feasibility studies to investigate the viability of transporting commuters by rail between Windhoek Central and Hosea Kutako Airport, Okahandja, Rehoboth, and Central Katutura.

Walvis Bay Port Expansion¹⁶: Namibia aims to become a regional logistics hub by expanding container terminals at the Port of Walvis Bay on 40 hectares of reclaimed land with the support of the African Development Bank, which is currently developing a National Logistics Master Plan.

¹³ https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-050715-091748/unrestricted/TransNamib_Final_IQP_Report.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.ra.org.na/Documents/Development%20of%20a%20Road%20Transport%20Sustainability%20Plan%20for%20Namibia.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.mwt.gov.na/commuter-train-projects>

¹⁶ <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/namibia-walvis-bay-port-expansion-well-under-way-18550>