

# Media Release

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## Namibia and Estonia establish Strategic Partnership to empower MSMEs

According to the 2022 Digital Financing for Sustainable Development: An Assessment and Strategy for Namibia commissioned by Government of the Republic of Namibia, with support from the United Nations (UN) in Namibia under the technical assistance of the UN Development Programme, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Namibia, though crucial, grapple with the need for digital adaptation, sustainable innovation and consistent growth. In light of these challenges, the Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB) has entered into a strategic partnership with the Estonian Centre for International Development (EstDev), a government-funded foundation responsible for managing and implementing Estonia's international development cooperation and humanitarian assistance projects. The partnership will, amongst others, culminate in the development of a digital capacity and skills development strategy for Namibian MSMEs, which will define and outline support measures for their benefit.

"We are very pleased to embark on our collaboration with the NIPDB. EstDev and NIPDB share the same motivation to deliver change. We also share the same vision to support Namibian MSMEs and start-up ecosystems. For Estonia, Namibia has a special meaning. We both gained independence at the same time, we are both small and agile, and share similar values on human rights and democratic governance. Thus, it is no wonder that Namibia is one of the African countries Estonia has prioritised for its development cooperation" Ms. Nelli Timm, Regional Advisor for Africa for EstDev.

With a combined investment of EUR 146,000 (close to N\$3 million), the partnership between NIPDB and EstDev is a determined step to enhance and elevate the capabilities of the MSME sector in Namibia in areas such as online banking and eCommerce, the use of

mobile apps to streamline their activities and online market research.

The partnership, which has its roots in strategic meetings held between EstDev and NIPDB in Estonia in May 2023, will materialise in three key projects, the first of which will kick off in November 2023, in Swakopmund:

1. **Tallinn University of Technology** – This initiative aims to introduce Estonian methodologies and online tools to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in Namibia, with an emphasis on sustainable growth through green technology and a circular economy.
2. **BCS Digital Skills Academy** – This initiative, led by the NIPDB, will respond to the demand for digital proficiency in Namibia, outlining strategies for the forthcoming 3-5 years, encompassing action points and an introductory training segment.
3. **Foundation Tallinn Science Park TEHNOPOL** – Aiming to consolidate economic relationships between Estonia and Namibia, this endeavour will focus on building a sustainable start-up environment, prioritising green technology, elevating entrepreneurial awareness and underpinning environmental advancement.

Speaking during the official announcement of the partnership, Executive Director: MSME Development, Innovation and Acceleration from NIPDB, Mr Dino Ballotti remarked, “The NIPDB’s mission to Estonia earlier this year offered a comprehensive view of a dynamic tech and innovation ecosystem. The insights gained and connections forged during this visit are now yielding positive results as we’ll see Namibian MSMEs benefiting from Estonia’s experiences and learnings.”

The rationale for this alliance is further strengthened by EstDev’s ongoing work to assist nations in realising their developmental targets. Their African Regional Strategy 2020-2030 positions Namibia as a key collaborator for Estonia. Moreover, Estonia’s investment in pioneering a digital transformation and fostering entrepreneurship resonates with Namibia’s strategic vision, especially when considered alongside the European Union’s green hydrogen initiative.



A call for application will be issued to invite Namibian MSMEs to take advantage of this opportunity.

Should you have any questions about the above, please do not hesitate to contact:

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