



# Namibia

## 1 Which bioeconomy-related policy strategies exist?

Namibia adopted a first national policy on Research, Science and Technology in 1999 and enacted in 2004 the Research Science and Technology Act, which defines that once in every three years, the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) must prepare a national program for research, science and technology. In 2015, the Cabinet adopted the first such “National

**Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation”** for the period of 2014/15–2016/17. The program defines several bioeconomy-related priority areas for (public and private) investment in research and innovation, as well as an implementation program in accordance with the fourth National Development Plan.

## 2 Is the term “bioeconomy” or “biobased economy” used in the strategy documents?

Yes No



## 3 Who is the author of the strategies?

The program has been drafted by the National Commission on Research, Science & Technology after consultation with multiple stakeholders in-

cluding ministries, the private sector, civil society, NGO’s, research institutions, universities and development agencies.

## 4 What are the key goals of the strategies?

The innovation strategy was developed within the broader context of Namibia's Vision 2030, which sets out to become "a prosperous and industrialized Namibia, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability"<sup>7</sup>. Overall, research and technological innovation is seen key to achieving socio-economic development

and to developing a knowledge-based economy. The document specifically highlights expected improvements in health, living standards, skills levels, economic value-added, food and water security and ecosystem management.

<sup>7</sup> Republic of Namibia. NCRST, 2015, p.7.

## 5 What are the priority areas of the strategies?

In terms of thematic priorities, the innovation strategy defines sixteen intervention areas, of which the following can be considered directly related to bioeconomy development: health (biomedical research and engineering, natural products medicines); agriculture; fisheries; energy (biomass is mentioned); indigenous knowledge systems; biotechnology.

In the health sector, investment in biomedical research and engineering, drug discovery and natural products medicines is encouraged. Agri-technologies and agricultural biotechnologies are considered an important driver of productivity, product innovation and sustainable rural development. The improvement of value-chains and the reduction of pre- and post-harvest losses are also among the proposed initiatives. In the area of fisheries, the strategy balances initiatives fostering more sustainable ecosystems and innovation, e.g. inland aquaculture. With reference to energy security, the program foresees the development of an R&D program fostering renewable energies, including biomass.

The importance of documenting, protecting and utilizing indigenous knowledge for innovation is stressed throughout the program. A council for indigenous knowledge is established and a repository should be created. The strategy highlights that biotechnology does not equal genetically modified organisms, but encompasses a much wider range of useful techniques. Biotechnology research and development is promoted with a focus on water and food security. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research combining biotechnology with materials science, drug discovery, micro-electronics or laser technology is considered especially promising.

The "National Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation" seeks to address several challenges in the national innovation system. It aims at increasing science and technology financing; building research capacities and technical skills; strengthening research and development infrastructure; creating an enabling policy and regulatory environment; promoting public understanding of science and technology as well as establishing and strengthening national, regional and international cooperation.

### REFERENCES

Republic of Namibia. National Commission on Research, Science & Technology. (2015). The National Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncrst.na/downloads/>