

Season's Harvest

10
Issue



NAMIBIAN
AGRONOMIC BOARD

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Dear Readers,

As we step into another season of growth and innovation, we are pleased to bring you the latest edition of Season's Harvest, highlighting the strides made in Namibia's crop sector.

In this issue, we showcase NAB's ongoing efforts to strengthen collaboration, empower farmers, and enhance agricultural productivity. From strategic partnerships in the Iikharas and Omaheke regions to advancing banana production with AvaGro, our initiatives continue to create opportunities for local farmers and agribusinesses.

The growing demand for bananas has opened doors for local production, and our research is paving the way for Namibia's self-sufficiency in this essential crop.

We also highlight the impact of farmer training programs, equipping surplus mahangu, maize, and mango growers with essential skills to improve yields and explore value-addition techniques.

These initiatives are not only bolstering food security but also fostering economic resilience in the sector. Moreover, NAB's latest Stakeholder Perception Survey results reflect the growing trust and confidence in our work, reinforcing our commitment to delivering excellence in industry regulation, support, and market facilitation.



As we navigate the ever-evolving agricultural landscape, we remain committed to driving progress, innovation, and sustainability. We invite you to engage with this edition and continue being part of Namibia's journey toward a thriving agronomic future.

Happy reading!

Liseli Mwilima
Public Relations Officer



CEO's Corner

At the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB), we believe that stakeholder engagement is essential for a successful agronomic and horticultural sector. As a service provider for regulatory

and market facilitation, we focus on fostering collaboration at all levels, from high-level policy discussions to grassroots empowerment.

Recently, our Board and executive leadership have engaged key stakeholders to ensure alignment between the upcoming Integrated Strategic Business Plan (ISBP) and Namibia's Crop Value Chain Development Strategy.

This alignment is vital for addressing sector challenges and refining policies and strategic reforms that will guide the sector for the next five years.

Through government collaboration, sector consultations, and policy discussions, we aim to create an environment that supports crop growth.

NAB also plays a critical role in facilitating the production, processing, storage, and marketing of controlled crops, which is key to promoting local sustainability in agronomy and horticulture. Our involvement in high-level discussions ensures that crop sector policies are integrated into national strategies, strengthening the sector's role in economic development.

On the ground, NAB's capacity-building programs, such as those training surplus mahangu, maize, and mango growers, enhance production efficiency and open up new market opportunities.

Our partnerships in the //Kharas and Omaheke regions further promote crop growth and inclusivity as well as enablers for our team to focus on the implementation of the mandate.

NAB's commitment to research drives decision-making and optimizes production systems tailored to Namibia's agricultural landscape.

Initiatives like the Banana Trial Project show promising potential for local banana production, reducing reliance on imports and improving food security.

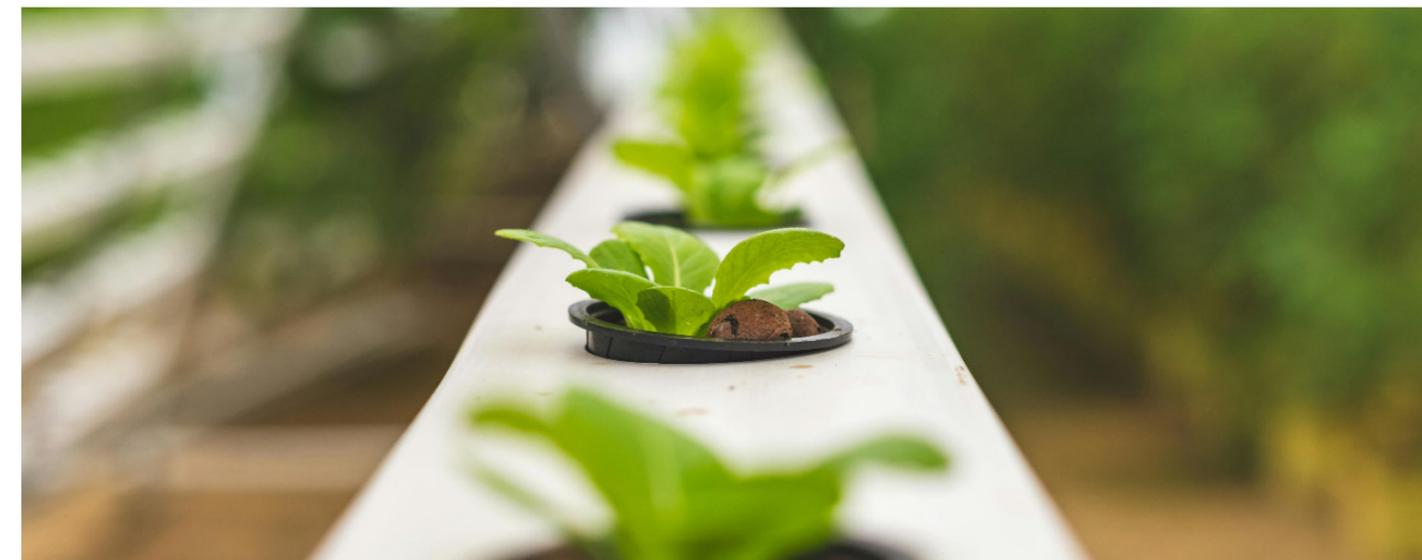
Additionally, our research on soil and crop assessments helps farmers adopt sustainable practices suited to our diverse climate. Looking ahead, NAB will continue strengthening stakeholder engagement at all levels to ensure the sector remains resilient, competitive, and sustainable.

"Through agriculture, we learn that every challenge is an opportunity to grow, and every effort sows the seeds of a brighter tomorrow."

Our mission is clear: to facilitate a thriving agronomic and horticultural sector that benefits all stakeholders across the value chain.

We extend our gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and farmers for their continued collaboration and trust.

Dr. Fidelis N. Mwazi (PhD)
Chief Executive Officer



NAB Strengthens Crop Sector Collaboration in the ǀKharas Region



NAB Board members and Executive team during a courtesy visit to Honourable Aletha Frederick, Governor of the ǀKharas Region.

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) Board members and Executive team paid a courtesy visit to Honourable Aletha Frederick, Governor of the ǀKharas Region, to enhance collaboration and unlock the region's crop sector potential. This engagement aligns with NAB's strategic efforts to drive sustainable crop sector growth and support local farmers.

During the visit, NAB shared insights into key initiatives aimed at boosting crop production, improving food security, and creating economic opportunities for farmers. Some of the main discussion points included:

Crop Value Chain Strategy:

NAB unveiled exciting plans to strengthen the crop value chain through strategic partnerships. These initiatives aim to increase crop yields, enhance productivity, and create sustainable market linkages for local producers.

Soil and Crop Insights:

NAB inspectors provided updates on ongoing soil and crop assessments, ensuring quality and safety for crop exports. They also explored new crop opportunities that align with the region's climate and soil conditions.



Empowering Farmers:

Recognizing the importance of compliance with international crop sector standards, NAB announced upcoming programs to support small-scale farmers in meeting LocalGAP and GlobalGAP requirements. These initiatives will enhance market access for local produce and improve farming practices across the region.

Honourable Frederick commended NAB's contributions to regional crop sector development and emphasized the need to focus on farmworker wellness, crop expansion, and innovative research initiatives. She highlighted pilot projects such as vegetable cultivation and rice research in partnership with the University of Namibia (UNAM) as key drivers of crop sector advancement in the ǀKharas Region.

In response, NAB reaffirmed its dedication to empowering farmers, fostering adherence to quality standards, and deepening community engagement. By working closely with local authorities, research institutions, and farmers, NAB aims to drive crop sector growth, ensure food security, and promote sustainability in the ǀKharas Region.

Through this strengthened partnership, the NAB and the ǀKharas Regional leadership are set to transform the crop sector landscape, paving the way for increased productivity and economic prosperity for farmers and agribusinesses in the region.

NAB and Omaheke Regional Council Partner to Provide Housing for Border-Based Employees



From left: Dr Fidelis Mwazi, NAB CEO and Omaheke Regional Council the representative of the Mr. Mundia Changa during the signing ceremony.

In a significant move toward sustainable development and enhanced employee welfare, the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) and the Omaheke Regional Council (ORC) have officially signed a lease agreement to construct housing for NAB staff at the Trans-Kalahari One Stop Border Post. This landmark initiative underscores NAB's commitment to improving the living conditions of its border-based employees while fostering community stability and regional development.

Following the signing ceremony, representatives from both organizations visited the construction site to assess the progress of the project firsthand. The visit provided an opportunity to witness the tangible advancements being made and reinforced the shared vision of NAB and ORC in ensuring a conducive living environment for staff stationed at this crucial border facility.

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NAB Executive members and staff during a tour of the housing construction site.

Through this partnership, NAB and the Omaheke Regional Council reaffirm their dedication to fostering sustainable growth and development within the region. The collaboration not only addresses immediate housing needs but also sets the foundation for future projects aimed at uplifting local communities and strengthening institutional ties.

As NAB and ORC continue to work together, this initiative serves as a testament to the power of strategic partnerships in driving meaningful progress. By investing in infrastructure that supports employees, the two entities are building more than just houses—they are laying the groundwork for a brighter and more sustainable future for all.



NAB Executive members and staff at the housing construction site.

NAB and AvaGro Successfully Advance Banana Production in Namibia



Participants that attended the NAB banana production training session at Vuluzi Mango Farm, Singalamwe.

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB), in collaboration with AvaGro, hosted a successful banana production training session at Vuluzi Mango Farm, Singalamwe. The session provided crucial insights into the progress of the Banana Trial Project, which began in February 2024 to evaluate the adaptability of banana plants to Namibia's soil and climatic conditions.

The Banana Trial Project aimed to assess the feasibility of large-scale banana production in Namibia, considering factors such as soil fertility, water requirements, and climate adaptability. The initial trial showed promising results, indicating the potential for Namibia to cultivate bananas at a commercial scale. This development presents significant opportunities for local farmers and agribusinesses looking to diversify their production.

Building on the positive outcomes of the initial phase, the NAB and AvaGro expanded the project by introducing additional banana plantations at the Etunda Green Scheme Irrigation Project in Ruacana. This strategic expansion provided further data on optimal growing conditions and enhanced Namibia's capacity to develop a sustainable banana industry.

The training sessions served as a platform for knowledge-sharing and hands-on learning, equipping farmers with essential skills in banana production, crop management, and climate resilience techniques. The final banana information session took place at Oshivelo Farm on 5 February 2025, where stakeholders had the opportunity to engage with industry experts and gain practical insights into banana cultivation.

Horticulture value chain actors, including farmers, agronomists, and agricultural investors, benefited greatly from these sessions, staying informed about the latest advancements in banana production.

This initiative aligned with Namibia's broader goals of enhancing food security, promoting agricultural sustainability, and supporting economic growth through diversified crop production. As the Banana Trial Project continues to expand, it holds immense potential to contribute to the country's agricultural development and open new market opportunities for Namibian farmers.



Current Situation: The banana project at Mango Vuluzi Farm in the Singalamwe area of the Zambezi region.

Namibia's Growing Demand for Bananas: A Call for Local Production

Bananas are one of the most widely consumed fruits globally and are the most traded fruit in the world. Despite the increasing demand for bananas in Namibia, the country remains heavily reliant on imports, as local production is virtually non-existent. The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) has conducted a market intelligence study to assess banana consumption trends, import dependence, and the potential for local production.

Global and Regional Trends

Globally, banana production has been on the rise, with an annual average increase of 3.6% from 2018 to 2022. Major producers such as India, China, and Nigeria dominate the market, while Africa collectively contributes a significant portion, harvesting around 31 million tons in 2022. However, Southern Africa continues to be a net importer of bananas, with Namibia relying heavily on South African imports.

Namibia's Current Market Situation

According to NAB data, Namibia imported 6,394 tons of bananas in 2022/23, amounting to approximately N\$57 million. Imports have steadily increased from 5,084 tons in 2018/19, signaling a growing domestic demand. South Africa remains the primary supplier, accounting for 99% of Namibia's banana imports, with occasional contributions from Angola and Mozambique. Despite this high demand, there is currently no structured local banana industry.

The Potential for Local Production

Namibia possesses favorable climatic conditions in regions such as Kavango, Zambezi, and North-Central zones, making banana cultivation a viable option. Studies suggest that with proper farming techniques, irrigation systems, and high-yield banana varieties, Namibia could significantly reduce its dependency on imports. By investing in improved cultivars and modern agricultural practices, local farmers could produce high-quality bananas for the domestic market.

Economic Benefits and Trade Potential

The rising cost of banana imports, fluctuating between N\$8,959 and N\$10,552 per ton, highlights an economic opportunity for local growers. Developing a local banana industry would not only reduce reliance on imports but also create job opportunities in the agricultural sector. Additionally, if Namibia can achieve self-sufficiency in banana production and meet international trade standards, there is potential to explore export markets in the future.

Conclusion

Namibia has the opportunity to shift from being a banana importer to a self-sustaining producer. With the right policies, investments, and research, local banana farming could become a reality. The NAB encourages farmers, investors, and policymakers to explore the potential of establishing a sustainable banana industry in Namibia.

Enhancing Crop Industry Productivity: NAB Facilitates Training for Surplus Mahangu and Small-Scale Farmers



Victor Kamwi from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform presents to participants.

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) facilitated a series of training sessions focused on grain crop production, targeting surplus mahangu farmers in the North Central region and small-scale farmers operating within the Green Scheme Irrigation Projects in the Kavango and North Central Production Zones. These capacity-building initiatives form part of NAB's broader efforts to enhance crop industry productivity, strengthen food security, and contribute to the sustainable development of Namibia's crop sector.

The training sessions were designed to equip farmers with technical knowledge and best practices in grain crop production, covering essential topics such as soil fertility management, pest and disease control, improved irrigation techniques, and post-harvest handling. By imparting these critical skills, the NAB seeks to empower farmers to maximize their yields, increase profitability, and contribute meaningfully to Namibia's crop economy.



Participants during the Training for Surplus Mahangu and Small-Scale Farmers.

The sessions provided an interactive learning platform where farmers could engage with experts, share experiences, and explore innovative techniques that enhance sustainable farming. By addressing key challenges faced by small-scale and surplus producers, the training aligns with national objectives to bolster local food production and reduce reliance on imports.

The NAB extends its sincere gratitude to all participants and stakeholders who contributed to the success of these training sessions. Their commitment to advancing sustainable farming practices underscores a collective dedication to strengthening Namibia's food security and ensuring a resilient crop industry.

As the NAB continues to support the crop sector, farmers are encouraged to implement the knowledge gained, collaborate with industry stakeholders, and adopt innovative farming methods that promote sustainability and productivity. Through such initiatives, Namibia moves closer to achieving a self-sufficient and thriving crop industry.

NAB Empowers Farmers with Essential Crop Management Skills



Participants actively engage in a crop management training session, gaining vital skills to boost productivity and sustainability.

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) recently embarked on a strategic initiative to boost national grain production by providing crop management training to surplus mahangu and white maize farmers in Namibia's key agricultural regions. These training sessions, held from December 8–21, 2024, and continuing from January 20–31, 2025, are taking place in the Zambezi, Kavango, and North Central regions.

With over 1,000 farmers participating, the training focuses on equipping them with sustainable farming practices, soil testing techniques, pest control strategies, and climate-resilient methods. These critical skills are aimed at enhancing crop yields and ensuring a stable and robust grain supply for the nation.



Participants interacting during the crop management training session.

This capacity-building initiative is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the Ministry of Agriculture, Water, and Land Reform (MAWLR), and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The partnership exemplifies the NAB's commitment to fostering growth and resilience within Namibia's agricultural sector, contributing significantly to food security and economic stability.



Participants during a presentation on sustainable farming techniques during the NAB's crop management training.

By empowering farmers with practical knowledge and modern agricultural techniques, the NAB continues to drive positive change, reinforcing Namibia's position as a key player in regional grain production.

Empowering Small-Scale in Zambezi Mango Growers



Participants of the Practical Value-Addition Training in the Zambezi Production Zone proudly showcase their freshly processed mango juice.



Participants produced their own mango jam, turning fresh produce into market-ready products.

Post-harvest losses remain a significant challenge for small-scale mango farmers in the Zambezi region. Without proper handling and processing knowledge, a large percentage of mango produce goes to waste, negatively affecting farmers' income and market supply. By implementing these newly acquired skills, farmers can extend the shelf life of their produce, improve quality, and create market-ready products with greater demand. The training was structured over four days, with Group A attending on 17 December 2024, Group B on 18 December 2024, Group C on 19 December 2024, and Group D on 20 December 2024.

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Hands-on learning in action.

NAB and its partners provided free meals and training to the participants. However, farmers were responsible for their own accommodation and transport costs. This initiative is part of NAB's ongoing efforts to support and empower local farmers by enhancing their agronomic skills and market competitiveness. The collaboration with UNAM, ZAMAFA, and the EU-EPA underscores the commitment to fostering sustainable agricultural development and economic growth in Namibia's horticultural sector.

The success of this training highlights the need for continued investment in farmer education and skill development to strengthen Namibia's agronomic landscape. As mango farmers in Zambezi apply these new techniques, the region is expected to see a boost in value-added mango products, opening up new opportunities for both local and international markets.

The initiative brought together 60 enthusiastic mango farmers, divided into four interactive groups to ensure active participation and learning. The training focused on innovative techniques to reduce post-harvest losses, enhance product value, and improve farm income. Participants were introduced to various value-addition methods, including mango drying, pulp processing, and alternative market strategies to increase profitability and sustainability.

Vegetables to Grow in Summer in Namibia

 <p>Tomato (40–90 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunlight: 6+ hours daily • Soil: Well-drained, avoid waterlogging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–March Harvest: October–June ◦ Karst: October–November Harvest: February–March or Year-round ◦ Other Regions: Year-round (varies) 	 <p>Sweet Potato (90–120 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Well-drained, avoid flooding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: October–January Harvest: July–September ◦ Other Regions: July–March (varies) 	 <p>Potato (110–150 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Well-drained, ventilated, avoid clay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: January–February Harvest: May–July ◦ Karst: July–August & December–February Harvest: April–December
 <p>Beetroot (55–70 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Prefers cooler temperatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: October–May Harvest: May–June ◦ Other Regions: Year-round (varies) 	 <p>Green Pepper (70–80 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Well-prepared, watered, and mulched <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–March Harvest: Year-round ◦ Other Regions: Year-round (varies) 	 <p>Gem Squash (50–80 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Well-drained sandy loam, organic matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–March Harvest: October–May ◦ Other Regions: Varies
 <p>Pumpkin (130–160 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Deep, well-drained, high organic matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–March Harvest: October–May ◦ Other Regions: Varies 	 <p>Watermelon (85–90 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Sandy loam, well-drained, high organic content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–February Harvest: September–May ◦ Other Regions: Varies 	 <p>Sweet Melon (70–85 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Well-drained sandy loam, organic matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: July–February Harvest: July–September ◦ Other Regions: Varies
 <p>Field Cucumbers (50–60 days)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil: Needs climbing support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Planting & Harvesting: Central: August–November Harvest: November–March 	<p>Key Growing Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start seedlings early for a strong crop. • Mulch to retain moisture and reduce weeds. • Monitor and control pests promptly. • Stagger planting every 3–4 days for continuous harvests. • Test soil to assess nutrient needs.  <p>NAMIBIAN AGRONOMIC BOARD</p>	

The Importance of Fruit Tree Cultivar Selection

Fruit tree cultivar selection is one of the most important decisions to make in fruit tree production. A fruit tree commercial cultivar is a cloned woody plant grown from a natural cross between a rootstock and a scion. Each cultivar may vary in yield, fruit quality, shelf life, environmental growth requirements, disease and susceptibility to pests. The characteristics of early, mid, mid-late and late season are inherently determined by the cultivar selected by the fruit producer.

It is crucial to always source cultivars from reputable nurseries or certified fruit tree seedling suppliers that adhere to basic good nursery practices. Thus, helps to avoid planting materials that are inferior in quality, diseased, unknown origin and or not demanded by the market.

Factors Influencing Cultivar Selection

Choosing the most suitable fruit tree cultivar for a specific area or region is a complex process. Several factors influence both the appropriateness of a cultivar for a given area and the viability of cultivating a specific fruit tree species in that location.

Selecting a fruit tree cultivar involves careful consideration of the cultivar's genetic characteristics, the agro-ecological conditions of the cultivation area, the intended objectives of the plantation, target market, preferences and production techniques.

Below are a few factors to consider when selecting a fruit tree cultivar for commercial fruit production:

Market Value: If you plan to sell your fruits, it is essential to consider the market demand for different cultivars.

Fruit Quality: Cultivars differ in fruit characteristics like size, shape, color, taste, and texture. Choose cultivars that meet your preferences and the expectations of your target market.

Disease and Pest Resistance: Some cultivars have natural resistance to common diseases and pests. Opting for such varieties can save significant time and resources.

Climate and Soil Suitability: Not all cultivars thrive in every climate or soil type. Choosing cultivars that are well-suited to your local conditions is crucial and will ease the selected cultivar to express its full genetic potential.

Yield Potential: While some cultivars are known for their high yields, others may be better suited to smaller-scale production or lower volumes.

Pollination Requirements: Certain cultivars require cross-pollination, meaning they need pollen from a different cultivar to bear fruit. Ensuring pollination compatibility and the presence of pollinators, especially for insect-pollinated cultivars is critical.

Ripening Time and Harvest Duration: Different cultivars ripen at different times. Selecting a mix of cultivars with varying harvest periods can ensure a continuous fruit supply.

Tree Size and Vigour: Growth habits and tree size differ among cultivars. Choose cultivars that align with your space and management style.

Aspiring and existing fruit producers are encouraged to contact the NAB to familiarize themselves with the list of recommended commercial fruit tree cultivars, based on the top six (6) most consumed and in-demand fruits in Namibia.

For more information contact Mr. Tangeni Hangula, Fruit Development Officer at the Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) via email at:

Tangeni.Hangula@nab.com.na.

NAB's Stakeholder Perception Survey Reflects Growing Trust and Excellence

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) continues to build strong relationships with its stakeholders, as reflected in the latest bi-annual Stakeholder Perception Survey results. The 2023 survey recorded an impressive **84% overall satisfaction score**, marking a significant increase from 78% in 2021.

Stakeholders commended NAB staff for their **approachability, professionalism, and respectful service**, reinforcing the organization's commitment to excellence in the agronomic and horticulture sectors.

This achievement highlights the collective effort of the NAB team in ensuring effective industry regulation, engagement, and support for Namibia's crop industry.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all stakeholders for their **trust and collaboration**. Together, we remain dedicated to advancing a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector in Namibia.



Our Services

- Border Control & Inland Inspections
- Permit Issuance: Transit, Import & Export
- Registration of Producers, Transitors, Traders & Processors
- Production & Market Facilitation for Controlled Crops
- Value Addition & Storage Facilitation
- Farms & Facilities Inspections
- Food Safety & Quality Inspections
- Crop Value Chain Research
- Information Advisory Services

CONTACT US

Windhoek Head Office

+264 (61) 379 500

PRO@nab.com.na

BORDER OFFICES



INLAND OFFICES

