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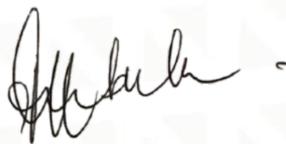
## **SME ECONOMIC RECOVERY LOAN SCHEME DISBURSES N\$ 85,9 MILLION WORTH OF LOANS**

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1. The SME Economic Recovery Loan Scheme is starting to play a significant role in supporting the growth and sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Namibia, with over N\$ 85,9 million disbursed to 80 (eighty) SMEs across the country, allowing them to continue operating while providing further impetus to the revival of the economy.
2. The scheme was re-launched in response to the economic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lingering effects and is now instrumental in providing affordable financing to businesses in various sectors. By providing much-needed capital, these SMEs are given a shot in the arm and have created employment opportunities for Namibians who would have otherwise been jobless in the aftermath of the pandemic and geopolitical storms, which gave rise to inflationary pressures.
3. Since its relaunch, the scheme has garnered a significant response, with more than 200 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) nationwide submitting loan applications through regional bank branches of participating commercial banks. The Development Bank of Namibia is the latest institution to offer the Scheme for its existing clients.
4. The loan scheme is designed to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to promote economic recovery. It involves the allocation of N\$500 million to eligible SMEs. As per the guidelines, SMEs can seek loans from N\$ 50 000 to N\$ 10 million. The loans are disbursed at a rate equivalent to the current prime lending rate, with a reduction of 50 basis points and less stringent conditions. The loans aim to assist businesses in paying for operational expenses such as salaries, rent and lease agreements, and contracts with suppliers.

5. Currently, 200 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have submitted applications for the loan scheme. Out of this number, 80 SMEs, with a total value of N\$85,9 million, have been granted the loan, while the remaining 120 applications are presently undergoing review. The SMES hail from wide-ranging sectors, including hospitality, retail, import and export, and oil and gas.
  
6. Said the Governor of the Bank of Namibia, Mr Johannes !Gawaxab: “The positive reception of the SME Economic Recovery Loan Scheme is a source of encouragement. It underscores the pressing demand for such assistance for small and medium-sized enterprises in Namibia. We are convinced that the provision of loans will significantly contribute to the revival of businesses. We are steadfast in our dedication to ensuring the scheme’s accessibility to eligible small and medium-sized enterprises nationwide.”
  
7. SMEs are encouraged to contact their respective commercial banks and the Development Bank of Namibia for further consultation and application procedures.

Issued by:



**Mr. Kazembire Zemburuka**  
**Director: Strategic Communications and International Relations International**  
**Relations, Bank of Namibia**

**Tel: (061) 283 5114, Fax: (061) 283 5546 or email: [info@bon.com.na](mailto:info@bon.com.na)**