

UNIQUE POSSIBILITIES

ORANJEMUND OPENS TO THE WORLD

Hidden away in the most south-western corner of Namibia exists a gem of a town unknown to most Oranjemund. Here, our timeless desert sands, ancient beaches, river terraces and the cold Atlantic Ocean tell the story that begins with the discovery of alluvial diamonds.

Oranjemund owes its existence to the diamond mining activities along the coast and on the banks of the Orange River. It was established as a mining town in 1936, after the initial diamond rush at Kolmanskop close to Lüderitzbucht. Oranjemund started with just a few buildings and developed over time to house more than 10,000 residents at its peak. Until recently, the town's infrastructure and services were run solely by Namdeb Diamond Corporation. Our exclusive and mysterious town was mostly restricted to employees and relatives. If you were not a resident or invited, you were denied access. But not anymore.

In 2011 Oranjemund was proclaimed as a town. A year later the very first local authority was elected and the Oranjemund Town Council was formed. A new tarred road connecting Oranjemund with Rosh Pinah, the //Kharas region and the rest of Namibia was completed in 2017 and at the end of 2017 permits were no longer a pre-requisite. Access to this forbidden town has changed as Oranjemund has opened its gates...you are invited!

ORANJEMUND 2030 TAKES SHAPE

In order to decouple the town from the mine, a town transformation journey has begun.

There are many complexities involved in such a process. A rare collaboration has emerged between the public sector, the mine and local citizens that has resulted in the co-creation of OMD 2030. A common vision and set of principles were agreed upon, which govern the choices and the decisions of OMD 2030.

DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

In order to implement the vision of OMD 2030, a strategic and structured plan was needed, bearing in mind that it takes approximately 10-15 years to transform a town.

A governance framework involving all the stakeholders (Government, Mine, Business community and Citizens) was developed. Three complimentary components drove the delivery of the programme. This fully inclusive strategy encourages active citizenry among community members who wish to participate in the design and implementation of the programme.

TRANSFERRING THE TOWN

The first step to becoming a normal town is to transfer our town's public services, infrastructure and property from the mine to the Town Council.

There is a clear desire amongst young and old citizens for a place to belong. Private property ownership is pivotal to providing a sense of belonging and to prevent the ongoing loss of valuable community members forced to leave when they resign or retire from the mine. With good accommodation options, to rent or buy, quality education and health facilities, a variety of leisure activities and a sociable, supportive and proud community, residential and business property sales will stimulate further development by the private sector.

The inevitable social and environmental changes stemming from the town transformation process brings about a range of emotions amongst citizens. From fear for personal and community security, loss of identity as a mining town, mourning of a past glory to cautious optimism of future prospects. The OMD 2030 program aims to support and ready citizens and the community to embrace these changes.

A SEAMLESS TRANSITION

Until today all social service responsibilities were carried by the mine. Although this is typical of a mining town, it needs to change so that we can rebalance the socio-economic service provision in town. Innovative and sustainable reallocation solutions are required for education, healthcare, strategic water management, safety and security.

A seamless transition of non-core mining activities from the mine to the town will liberate both Oranjemund & Namdeb to pursue their best futures. This is an exciting opportunity to build a new model town on existing, solid foundations and to create a source of pride for the //Kharas region and Namibia.

The mobilisation of a seamless transition is strongly dependent on active citizenry.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has” ~ Margaret Mead

TRANSFORMING AND DIVERSIFYING THE ECONOMY

Oranjemund has survived solely on the extraction of diamonds for over 80 years. Ours is a community of privilege that must now choose between lingering in the shadows of its heyday or moving towards a more diversified and sustainable economy.

A number of key economic diversification activities have been identified.

Think of it like a jar with one big stone in it. We are to eventually replace that one big stone (Namdeb) with numerous smaller and medium sized pebbles to include tourism, manufacturing and agriculture. We are starting now, growing these enterprises organically to become independent of the mining operations, so that the enterprises and the town can be sustainable beyond mining.

THE ORANGE RIVER BRIDGES A NEW THRIVING ECONOMY

The opening of town creates a new economic zone approximately 300km around Oranjemund, on both sides of the Orange River. Springbok and Keetmanshoop, Rosh Pinah and Port Nolloth will benefit from Oranjemund as a key connector for tourism, trade and education.

Further benefits would result from extending the Ai-Ais/Richtersveld Transfrontier Park to the Tsau //Khaeb National Park.

This tourism network could be expanded via shared marketing opportunities that accelerate industrialization and job creation.

Promoting investment in tourism, agribusiness, renewable energy, as well as other labour and skills intensive sectors, will ensure the town's long-term future.

MOVING FORWARD

The past 80 years of Oranjemund's life tell the story of the sparkling allure of diamonds. The next chapter is now in the process of unfolding.

We as citizens, partners, sponsors and investors are both the authors and the characters of this unique story. It will narrate a new era of innovative and economic transformation for Oranjemund, forming a new identity delinked from diamond mining. It will serve as a shining example of how a mine's socio-economic impact can be redesigned to enable a town that thrives on modern principles of sustainability.

This is perfectly aligned to the principles of the National Development Plan. President Hage Geingob often quotes Joseph E. Stiglitz: “The only true and sustainable prosperity is shared prosperity”. The First Lady Monica Geingos, who grew up in Oranjemund is a strong public supporter of social and economic change that narrows the gap between the first and second economy in Namibia. Yet she speaks encouragingly of economic prosperity through talent capitalisation, unique marketing opportunities, hard work and perseverance. Oranjemund offers such an opportunity.

We are moving forward...this is your chance to join the journey.

