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Namibian AG Finalises PPP Advisor Agreement for Trans-Zambezi Railway Extension

Namibia's Attorney General has finalised the drafting of an agreement for the transaction advisor for the public-private partnership (PPP) development of the proposed Trans-Zambezi Railway extension linking Namibia and Zambia.

Studies on the project in the past have looked at possible economic benefits, poverty reduction, affordability, employment creation, social and economic impact, as well as trade facilitation between Namibia and neighbouring countries.

Minister of Works and Transport, Veikko Nekundi, confirmed that government has procured the services of a transaction advisor and that the method of engagement of the consultant has been finalised. The draft agreement has also been submitted to the African Development Bank for consideration.

The project is regarded as important for Namibia, which is positioning itself as a gateway to the sea for its landlocked neighbouring countries.

Nekundi revealed that an initial study found that the level of success of the project depends on the participation of Namibia's neighbours.

According to Nekundi, if the project is undertaken by Namibia alone, its viability stands at 60%. A joint Namibia and Zambia project has a viability of 70%, while a project involving Namibia, Zambia and Botswana has a viability ratio of 90%. He said all three scenarios have confirmed

the viability of the project. The extension in Namibia is planned as a roughly 760 km to 772 km railway line.

The proposed Trans-Zambezi Railway extension is expected to extend the railway line from Grootfontein to Katima Mulilo to connect Namibia, Zambia and Botswana, through Ngoma up to Kasane, and link up with Zimbabwe and Zambia, up to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The cross-border rail project aims to link new mines and mining activities to the railway network along the Walvis Bay – Ndola – Lubumbashi Development Corridor to enable transportation of minerals from the Copperbelt to Walvis Bay.

The government has commenced with a feasibility study to help determine the viability of developing and extending the Trans-Zambezi railway to link Namibia with other member countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Namibia has stated that the key motivation for the extension of the Trans-Zambezi railway is to attract business to the Port of Walvis Bay, with a specific focus on bringing additional freight mainly from and to Zambia, Zimbabwe, the southern Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola.