

Authors Response

Manuscript Title: Between expertise and engagement: A qualitative study of Namibian geoscientists' views, attitudes, motivations, and objectives regarding public engagement with science

Authors: Josephine Uushona and Marina Joubert

Dear Zihms,

We would like to sincerely thank you for the valuable and thoughtful feedback on our manuscript. We truly appreciate the time and effort taken to review our work. We carefully considered and addressed each comment, and we believe the revisions have greatly improved the manuscript. For ease of reference, all changes made in the revised version have been highlighted in red, because of the track changes done in word.

5. Comment: Expand the introduction to outline the social, historical, political, and cultural context of Namibia relevant to geoscientists — including the relationship between extractive industries, public trust, and academia

- **Author Response:** Under the section in the Introduction titled "The Namibian context". This section outlines the history of Namibian geology within a colonial extractivist framework and explains how historical expeditions often ignored Indigenous knowledge, creating a legacy of mistrust that persists today in some areas.

6. Comment: Properly explain the Stampriet community case, which is currently mentioned but not elaborated Reviewer

- **Author Response:** We have provided additional context, explaining that the Stampriet community raised concerns regarding uranium exploration and drilling near a major groundwater supply. This example is now used to illustrate why community involvement in mining operation or extractive industry is vital.

7. Comment: Survey science communication efforts from contexts outside the US and Europe

- **Author Response:** Done (additional references have been inserted in red).

8. Comment: Reframe the novelty claim at Lines 498–499 — scope it to Namibia, Southern Africa, or Africa rather than LMICs broadly

- **Author Response:** We have accepted this recommendation. The text now specifies that the study offers one of the first empirically grounded analyses of how geoscientists in Africa perceive and practise engagement, rather than generalizing for all LMICs.

9. **Comment:** Address the political dimension apparent in some respondent quotes (e.g. GS02 on presenting "both sides of the story") — consider what these reveals about trust and historical extraction

Dialogic Engagement — What Would It Look Like?

- **Author Response:** This is answered in different sections throughout the paper. "The Namibian context," which explicitly describes how Namibian geology was developed within a colonial extractivist framework. It notes that Indigenous peoples were historically "regarded either as collaborators to be controlled or exploited" and that this legacy continues to influence current relationships between scientific institutions and local communities.
Context of Trust: The paper connects this history to current mistrust, stating that the colonial history and post-independence inequalities have shaped mistrust of state institutions and technocratic knowledge, especially in communities affected by extractive industries.
The Discussion section acknowledges that geoscientists work in a "socio-political context where suspicion toward extractive activities can be high, making trust-building an essential component of engagement.

10. **Comment:** Discuss what meaningful public engagement would realistically look like in the Namibian context, given linguistic barriers, cultural dynamics, and the legacy of extraction

- **Author Response:** Under the "Clarifying the goals of communication and engagement," explores how "meaningful" engagement in this context must move from transactional information-sharing toward building trust in communities. We recommended using local languages and community radio stations to bridge linguistic and cultural barriers. Furthermore, we highlight citizen science (e.g., community-based groundwater monitoring) as a participatory ideal that leverages embedded local knowledge.

11. **Comment:** Offer recommendations — even aspirational ones — as milestones for improving engagement practice.

- **Author Response:** We addressed this in section 8, the establishment of a formal public engagement award or recognition scheme by the Geological Survey of Namibia and the NCRST to signal institutional value. Linking research funding to a "top-up" scheme specifically allocated for communication and engagement activities. Creation of a context-sensitive science communication course for students and researchers, co-developed with local geoscientists and community leaders.

12. **Comment:** Identify institutional actors or structural incentives in Namibia that could support this shift

Broader Questions to Address

- **Author Response:** We have identified several key partners in the discussion, including the Geological Survey of Namibia, the NCRST, and NGOs working on environmental justice. We also suggest that mining companies use their existing corporate social responsibility (CSR) infrastructure to support geoscientists in community relations.

13. **Comment:** Engage with any existing research on Namibian public perceptions of science and situate this study in relation to it

- **Author Response:**

14. **Comment:** Clarify the intended end goals of improved geoscience communication (e.g. public trust, policy influence, citizen science)

Line-Level Edits

- **Author Response:** We have added a section "Clarifying the goals of communication and engagement". This section categorizes engagement goals into operational trust, policy influence, and the co-production of knowledge.

15. **Comment:** Line 534: Remove "National Commission on Research, Science and Technology" and brackets — NCRST is already spelled out at Lines 81–82

- **Author Response:** Done.

We hope that these revisions satisfy the requirements for publication in *Geoscience Communication*. We thank the reviewers again for their time and insights.

Sincerely,

Josephine Uushona and Marina Joubert