

ZARU press release

3 February 2026

Now Open to Qualifying Participants

Launch of New Digital Currency 'ZARU' to Bring the South African Rand to the Global Internet Economy

- A Rand-backed stablecoin called ZARU is launching through a collaboration by Luno, Sanlam Specialised Asset Management (Pty) Ltd, EasyEquities and Lesaka
- *Every ZARU issued will be backed by high quality liquid assets denominated in Rand managed by Sanlam Specialised Asset Management (Pty) Ltd, a licensed financial services provider*
- ZARU's banker will be Standard Bank with reserves audited by Moore Johannesburg on a monthly basis
- Because stablecoins operate on a blockchain, they allow for 24/7 global trade and instant payment
- While ZARU may be traded abroad, the underlying Rand denominated assets will remain within the South African financial system, driving demand for rand denominated assets globally

Cape Town - 3 February 2026 - Today marks the launch of ZAR Universal (ZARU), a new institutional-grade stablecoin pegged to the value of the South African Rand (ZAR). ZARU is designed to modernize payment and financial infrastructure, enabling both retail and institutional users to transact at the speed of the internet while bolstering the local financial system.

Historically, payments, cross-border trade and remittances involving the Rand have been slowed by traditional banking hours and fees. ZARU solves this by operating on a blockchain, providing a trusted, fully Rand-backed digital currency that enables instant, 24/7 settlement and connects South African markets directly to the global digital economy.

Every ZARU digital coin issued is fully backed by high quality liquid assets denominated in Rand such as cash, bank deposits, and South African government bonds. These assets are independently audited monthly by Moore Johannesburg, ensuring transparency and

stability. Furthermore, by keeping the underlying Rand denominated assets in the South African financial system, ZARU drives demand for Rand-denominated assets globally. The assets are managed by Sanlam Specialised Asset Management (Pty) Ltd in accordance with an asset liability management agreement.

Jacques Le Roux, CEO of Sanlam Financial Markets said, "we are excited to provide asset liability management services through Sanlam Specialised Asset Management (Pty) Ltd to enable this initiative given its potential to significantly contribute to financial inclusion. We're connecting traditional financial markets to the world of blockchain to enable cheaper, faster payments."

ZARU is launching through a collaboration between some of South Africa's most reputable and forward-thinking financial institutions, including Luno, Sanlam, EasyEquities, and Lesaka, combining trusted financial infrastructure with blockchain innovation to enable real-world utility and drive meaningful adoption of a Rand-backed digital asset.

"We are delighted to collaborate with trusted institutions to launch a Rand-backed stablecoin with meaningful real-world applications," said James Lanigan, CEO of Luno. "ZARU is a crucial milestone for South Africa's digital economy. It's designed to make everyday payments and money transfers faster and cheaper, while fully supported by secure reserves that help strengthen the local financial system."

"Our mission has always been to make investing easy and accessible," said Charles Savage, CEO of EasyEquities. "We're providing South Africans with a fast, trusted, and low-cost way to seamlessly participate in the future of finance while keeping the Rand at the center of it."

Ali Mazanderani, Executive Chairman of Lesaka said, "We are delighted to support the evolution of South Africa's payments infrastructure through this partnership. We believe ZARU is exceptionally well positioned to accelerate the speed and reduce the cost of rand payments, benefitting consumers, businesses and society as a whole."

From today, ZARU is available exclusively to qualified institutional investors via the Luno and EasyEquities trading desks. At this stage, ZARU is not available to retail investors. Both platforms intend to make ZARU accessible to their broader user bases in a phased rollout in the near future. More information about ZARU is available at <https://zaru.network/>, where institutional participants can register their interest.