

Biomass research advanced

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NUST receives support - biomass export to Hamburg discussed

With the support of the BCBU project, the Namibian University of Science and Technology (NUST) can expand its laboratory capacities in the field of research and analysis of Bush biomass. Meanwhile, the import of Namibian biomass to Hamburg is being discussed in Germany.



At the symbolic handover of the facility, Johannes Laufs, team leader of the BCBU project, Dr. Andrew Niikondo acting NUST Vice Rector, Joseph Hailwa Director of the Forestry Department in the Ministry of the Environment and Gerlinde Sauer, Advisor for Economic Cooperation and Development at the German Embassy in Windhoek.
Photo: GIZ

By Steffi Balzar, Windhoek

The Namibian University of Science and Technology (NUST) recently received funding of \$ 600,000 to develop laboratory capacity for research and analysis of Bush Biomass through the Bush Control and Biomass Project Utilization Project, BCBU). The Society

for International Cooperation (GIZ) announced this last week. In addition, the BCBU project, carried out by GIZ and the Ministry of the Environment, donated equipment worth 1.3 million Namibian dollars to equip the laboratory accordingly, it said.

According to GIZ, the equipment includes a Kjeldahl nitrogen analyzer for determining the nitrogen and protein content in bush samples, a laboratory oven for the routine preparation of samples, as well as a universal testing machine and a plastic identification unit for research purposes. "The laboratory equipment will enable the university to provide students with deeper insight into bush-related topics and to advance their research in this area," the statement said. In addition, the NUST can now offer the public and the Namibian biomass industry physical and chemical analysis services in the field of biomass.

"Research and development are of particular importance - not only to provide scientifically sound facts, but also to develop innovations that will enable the Bush biomass sector in Namibia to continue to flourish," said Gerlinde Sauer, consultant for economic cooperation and development at the German Embassy Windhoek. In the past, bush samples were often sent to South Africa, Germany or France for analysis due to a lack of on-site laboratory capacity. "This is why German development cooperation supports NUST in testing innovative, climate-friendly technologies for bush control," said Sauer.

Since 2018, German development cooperation has been supporting Namibia in developing sustainable approaches to bush control in order to establish a value chain that offers employment opportunities. "We are therefore pleased to see that the use of Busch biomass has developed into a dynamic sector over the past ten years, which today provides over 11,000 jobs and allows landowners to diversify their income," said Sauer. According to Sauer, there are also completely new opportunities in this area for the private sector, especially for newly founded and small companies.

Meanwhile, the German magazine GEO reported on the project of the city of Hamburg to burn biomass from Namibia in the city's power plants and thus improve the climate balance of these. Among others, Gretchen Kohrs from the organization Earth Life in Windhoek is quoted, who would rather see the wood on site for the production of school furniture. According to the article, Kohrs sees the use of the wood in a power plant that is already planned in Namibia better, and numerous jobs in local charcoal production are potentially endangered by export.