

NUST receives N\$1.3 million lab equipment

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The Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) received four different pieces of laboratory equipment for the analysis of bush-biomass and the development of wood-plastic composites with a procurement value of N\$1.3 million. When receiving the equipment on Friday last week, NUST also launched its much-anticipated bush biomass laboratory to specifically assist the growing sector with research and development.

The Bush Control and Biomass Utilisation (BCBU) Project, implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT), supported NUST within its wider collaboration on bush harvesting and utilisation in building laboratory capacity on research and analysis of bush biomass with an overall value of N\$1.9 million including laboratory apparatus worth N\$1.3 million.

According to Asellah David, the Knowledge Management Advisor of the BCBU project, the laboratory equipment will allow NUST firstly to conduct more in-depth research and training for students on bush-related questions – and secondly, to offer physical and chemical biomass analysis services to the public and the Namibian biomass industry at large.

Counsellor for Development Cooperation for the German Embassy Gerlinde Sauer said, since 2018, the German Development Cooperation supported Namibia in developing sustainable approaches for bush control and associated value chains that provide market and employment opportunities.

The GIZ BCBU project is implemented in a multi-stakeholder approach in cooperation with relevant stakeholders from government, universities as well as the private sector and their business associations.

“Therefore, we are happy to see that during recent years, bush-biomass utilisation has grown into a dynamic sector, today employing over 11 000 Namibians, allowing land owners not only to diversify their income but also offering new opportunities for the private sector, specifically Start-ups and SMEs,” said Sauer.

Meanwhile, Acting Vice Chancellor of NUST Andrew Niikondo noted his institution will identify, develop and adopt appropriate technology solutions that provide sustainable and innovative solutions through co-creation and collaboration in line with national priorities and the specific needs of Namibians.

“Through such help, NUST will develop or apply – as much as possible – technologies that maximise the use of local materials to ensure efficiency and affordability, and technologies that reduce a negative impact on the environment,” explained Niikondo.

He further stressed that Namibia needs a sustainable and robust bio-economy that enhances economic growth, energy security and environmental quality by maximising sustainable use of the nation’s domestic biomass resources.

“To guarantee the effectiveness of the bio-economy, we must strive to use biomass within the function (food, animal feed, materials and energy) that create the greatest societal and economic value,” Nikondo concluded.

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