

Henties leads bio-fuel research initiative

• STAFF REPORTER

THE Sam Nujoma Marine & Coastal Resources Research Centre (SANUMARC) in Henties Bay, and its international partners, have recently been awarded funding from the European Union for a project titled "Capacity building in South Africa, Namibia and Ghana to create sustainable, non-food bio-oil supply chains".

"Basically, we need to first understand the bio-fuel related activities and statutory framework surrounding bio-fuel crop cultivation, bio-fuel production and alternative power generation in Namibia, South Africa and Ghana. We need to find out who the stakeholders are, what they are producing, what their needs are, and who else is interested," explained Dr Larry Oellermann, SANUMARC's representative for the project. "Then we need to link people wishing to produce non-food bio-fuel crops to end users such as the power generation industry."

According to Oellermann, the project has focused on Combined Heat & Power (CHP) engines, which are very efficient at producing power from bio-fuels and could be scaled in size to supply electricity to small villages or large cities.

"But we are certainly not limiting the scope of the project to any particular power generation system or bio-fuel crop," Oellermann emphasizes. "SANUMARC's interest in the project is the bio-fuel potential of the marine micro-algae occurring along the Namibian coast, but the project is more about facilitating the development of each country's bio-fuel and alternative energy industries, and linking these industries across countries and regions."

The centre's first role in the project will be to organize and facilitate a workshop in Henties Bay, where the project's international partners, the University of Greenwich and Marine Biological Association from the United Kingdom; CoRiSSIA from Italy; Jatropha Africa and the University of Ghana from Ghana; and Turner & Townshend and Goldex from South Africa will meet with stakeholders and role players from the Namibian bio-fuel industry and associated organizations.

"We are busy planning the workshop at the moment", Oellermann noted, "I'd really appreciate it if those people currently involved in the Namibian bio-fuel industry could contact me as soon as possible via email".

Dr Oellermann's email address is loellermann@unam.na.