

## Addressing bush encroachment through Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID)

United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in partnership with the Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and SME Development (MITSMED), with the financial support from the Government of Finland, conducted a validation workshop last year to launch the inception phase of a project that “promotes sustainable bush-processing value chains in Namibia”. The project is in line with Namibia’s Fifth National Development Plan (NDP 5), and through Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) contributes directly to **SDG 9 ‘Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure’**.

The inception phase of the project proposed the development and testing of an industrial scale production plant for conversion of encroacher bush to animal feed and charcoal. Cleaner technology would be used in an integrated manner for a zero waste and a circular economy approach.

The Embassy of Finland remarked on the transformative nature of the project and its potential for significant social impact. Mr. Khaled El Mekwad, the UNIDO Regional Representative for Southern Africa, added that the project is developing an Agro-Industrial Public-Private Partnership (PPP) that forms part of the UN Partnership Framework (UNPAF 2019-2023) and complies with Agenda 2030. Reference to similar PPPs implemented by UNIDO in the SADC region was made.

As an economist and development finance specialist involved in constructing the first National Resource Accounts for Namibia, Dr. Michael Humavindu, Deputy Permanent Secretary of MITSMED, recognised the project as a key intervention to achieve the objectives of the “Growth at Home” Strategy. He added that a draft “National Strategy for the Optimisation of Rangeland Management and Encroacher Bush Utilisation”, once approved, would create the enabling environment.

In February 2018, during a National Stakeholder Validation Workshop, the project team presented the results of the inception phase and the workplan for the demonstration or pilot phase. The demonstration phase entails the setting up of an industrial scale animal feed and charcoal production plant and testing of the actual viability. The discussions during the workshop reflected an active engagement by the stakeholders and strong sense of national ownership.

As Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) is reducing globally, the UN and other development partners recognise increasingly the important role of the private sector in funding development projects. UNIDO and the Finnish Government, strongly support the participation by the private sector in supporting Inclusive Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) to ensure commercial viability for the creation of sustainable decent jobs and incomes. The participation and co-financing by a private local investment partner, Baobab Capital (Pty) Ltd., was acknowledged by MITSMED and reflected in the discussions as an approach that can ensure business viability and sustainability.

The demonstration phase will run over a total of 30 months and will involve local stakeholders for capacity development, exposure to cleaner technology and an efficient production system and to generate interest from entrepreneurs for future investment.

