

Research on ponds launched

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Outapi

A three-year wastewater pond research project, the Enhancement of Ponds in Namibia (EPoNa), was launched at Outapi in the Omusati Region on Wednesday.

The project is aimed at upgrading wastewater stabilisation pond systems for the water to be used in the irrigation systems of animal fodder production.

Head of the Wastewater Engineering Research Group at the Technical University Darmstadt in Germany, Professor Susanne Lackner told attendees at the launch that the initiative will investigate the viability of combining two wastewater treatments: an anaerobic biological process of decomposition and a mechanical micro-strainer.

She said walls in the ponds will be used to ensure better wastewater flow control, while an affluent filter will be used to improve the water quality with regard to solids, algae and hygiene.

The project is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and is supported by the University of Namibia (Unam) and Olushandja Sub Basin Management Committee.

Lackner said the project aims to develop an approach for the rehabilitation and the extension of existing wastewater ponds for irrigation purpose, as well as to consider wastewater not as a waste but as a resource funded to the tune of almost 2.6 million euro.

Lackner said the project is about finding a simple way to upgrade existing ponds so that wastewater can be used to irrigate fodder crops and that it would bring together the scientific and technical expertise of six project partners from different fields.

Outapi was chosen because of the well-established cooperation and the existence of laboratory facilities as an outcome of the former Namibian – German CuveWater project.

Outapi Town Council has been collaborating with the Technical University of Darmstadt, as well as with ISOE – Institute for Social-Ecological Research since 2012, in the research project CuveWaters.

The EPONA joint research project will run until the end of August 2019 and is expected that the design and upgrading will be completed in summer 2017 when the plant will start operation.

“Aspects of plant engineering and economic operation will be taken into consideration, as will irrigation techniques, socio-ecological approaches or the question of which crops are suitable for cultivation with the aid of treated process,” she said.

She noted the impact on livestock and living conditions of the people is also included in the considerations.

TU Darmstadt is coordinating the project and is also focusing directly on matters of water analysis and quality assurance. Additionally the project will generate students and act as a practical example of teaching.

– Additional reporting: Nampa

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