

O&L GENERATES 4MW OF ENERGY FROM THE INVADER BUSH IN NAMIBIA



Bush encroachment in large areas of Namibia has a significant negative affect on agricultural activity and water availability. The EEP funded project Invader Bush to Energy is concerned with transforming invader bush into a heating fuel for the hot water generating boilers within our group. The project is implemented by the Ohlthaver & List Group (O&L), a Namibian company based in Windhoek.

The operation involves the selective harvesting of invader bush and processing of the biomass into a suitable fuel form. A harvesting method suitable to Namibian terrain is being developed. The harvesting is to take place on cattle carrying rangeland that is negatively impacted by bush encroachment. The chipping is planned to be done by a suitable industrial chipper in the field. An efficient logistical concept has been devised to optimise the supply chain. The invader bush fuel is to replace the utilisation of (fossil) heavy fuel oil.

The project was completed successfully in June 2016. The thermal biofuel boiler is generating approximately 4MW of energy (5MW nominal thermal capacity) and since May 2016 is generating energy with an automatic feed-in mode of 32,000MWh/annum.

The main success factors O&L identified throughout the process were technically to find a suitable location (not too far from the end customer), mobility of the field operations and choosing a right balance of moisture level for the wood chips that were used as a feedstock. From the organizational/financing point of view, to succeed a project needs to have an adequate financial plan, have a sustainable business concept that considers all stakeholders around the project as well as find a balance in the product pricing. During the project, O&L was also able to demonstrate that their method for supply chain (harvesting, processing, delivery) is an effective and robust, which increases the sustainability of the project. The end customer has also made significant own investments into the project which shows their commitment to the continuous cooperation.

Hence, the sustainability factors were one of the key successes of the project. The abundance of the resource (encroacher bush) on the one hand, but being a substantial problem for effective utilisation of agricultural land will continue to drive the necessity to find similar applications. A strong working reference project such as the current one is likely to act as a catalyser. The O&L is also happy to see that the government policy is now increasingly supporting initiatives to combat encroacher bush due to the negative effects of agricultural activity. For this specific project, both the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry (MAWF) and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) gave their support and endorsed the Invader Bush To Energy -project.

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