

Italian firm inks deal to set up fertiliser plant in Kenya

World's first industrial-scale plant powered by renewable energy to produce low carbon intensity nitrates

by Nicholas Waitathu
@PeopleDailyKe

Italian consortium Maire Tecnimont SPA plans to set up a fertiliser production plant in Kenya in a move expected to greatly reduce the import bill for fertiliser.

The consortium intends to establish a first State-of-the-art, commercial-scale renewable power-to-fertiliser plant in Kenya in partnership with the Naivasha-based Oserian Development Company (ODC).

The investment is expected to reduce dependence on imports, increase affordability and ensure availability of the synthetic manure at the right time during planting seasons.

Pierroberto Flogiero, Tecnimont SPA chief executive disclosed that the company's subsidiaries - MET Development and Stamicarbon and NextChem signed an agreement with ODC yesterday morning.

Exciting project

"We are very pleased to announce the start of this exciting project thanks to the collaboration with a pioneering player such as Oserian Development Company. With this strategic initiative we aim to unlock the potential of decarbonising the fertiliser industry using renewable energy as a feedstock," he said in a statement.

Kenya, Flogiero added, has a unique potential to provide renewable energy, making it an ideal location for local green power-to-fertiliser production, replacing import of nitrogen fertiliser.

He added: "With this first very promising initiative we confirm our expertise in project development in green energy, by acting as an end-to-

Investment

Employment

The project will utilise about 70 MW of renewable power, will create the starting point for locally produced fertiliser and is expected to directly generate over one hundred jobs in the region, while supporting the broader economy and its farmers

Carbon

The Italian firm says renewable power-to-fertiliser plant will support Kenya's low carbon and inclusive growth, its agricultural output and its smallholder farmers and communities

Solar

The plant will be located near the largest geothermal energy basin and will be partly powered by solar energy sources produced on-site - displacing the need for fossil fuels - and eliminating carbon from the production



end developer and technological integrator capable of connecting the key factors which are necessary to industrialise the green economy globally."

To be located near the largest geothermal energy basin in Naivasha, Flogiero said that once complete the company intends to produce 550 tonnes per day of Calcium Ammonium Nitrate (CAN) and Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (NPK fertilisers).

"MET Development has signed an agreement with Oserian Development Company for the development of the plant at the Oserian Two lakes Industrial Park located on the southern banks of Lake Naivasha, 100 km North of Nairobi," he said.

Agriculture principal secretary Hamadi Boga, said Kenya uses the 800,000 tonnes which is the highest amount of fertiliser in the East Africa region.

According to Fertiliser Association of Kenya chair Eustace Muriuki the country has seven fertiliser blenders and one chemical production facility - Thika-based Kero Chemicals with annual production of 5,000 tonnes. He identified the seven fertiliser blending companies as Yala, Elgon, Mea Lim-

ited, Maisha, Toyota Tsusho East Africa, Export Trading Company and Chiromo which initially was supplying Mavuno fertiliser.

The Italian company is a consortium of 50 operating companies in the engineering, technology and energy sectors. Flogiero explained the new investment fits well in the group's roadmap to industrialise sustainable fertiliser production with the launch of Stamicarbon's Green Ammonia technology.

The CEO confirmed that the MET Development is currently engaging with local and international partners to set up the development consortium.

Engineering works

He added, the project has started preliminary engineering works and NextChem aims to start the Front-End Engineering Design (FEED) by the end of 2021.

The goal is to start commercial operation of the plant in 2025, which will be dedicated to local Kenyan agri-business. The fertilizer product is predominantly produced as CAN and will have the flexibility to produce NPK fertilizers in addition to meet the demand of local agricultural requirements.