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DEG promotes jatropha research in East Africa

- **466,000 euros from special funds of the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development provided**
- **Which types produce the best yields under which conditions?**
- **Contribution to climate protection by promotion of environmentally friendly fuel**

Energy demand is increasing all over the world. Meeting this demand requires the development of alternative energy sources. One possibility is the utilisation of the jatropha plant. However, comprehensive know-how on suitable cultivation methods is still missing. Therefore DEG – Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH, is supporting the setup of eleven test plantations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The coordinator of this project is the Kenyan project finance advisory and consulting firm Pipal Ltd. (Pipal), complemented by eleven East African agribusiness companies, which will contribute their experience of cultivation, processing, storage and transport of agricultural products. Scientific assistance is furnished by internationally recognised jatropha experts and local research institutes. The private partners contribute 536,000 euros to the project, an amount which DEG complements with 466,000 euros from the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Programme of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Jatropha is a tropical plant whose non-edible oil fruits are used for the production of alternative fuels. The plant can grow on dry soils, which may be otherwise unsuitable for the cultivation of food crops. The experience of growing jatropha as a commercial crop is very limited.

This is where the project comes in: Jatropha plants will be cultivated on test plantations of ten hectares each at different locations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Over a period of three years it is intended to identify seed provenances which produce the best oil yields under varying conditions, such as soil conditions, water and nutrient content, and type of cultivation (mixed or monocultivation). Information on oil extraction from the seed and processing for commercial use will also be analysed. This data will be collected and scientifically evaluated with the aim of assessing the commercial viability of the production of jatropha in East Africa. The benefits of the project include: potential usage of land otherwise unsuitable for cultivation; development of optimum cultivation and production processes for jatropha; the promotion of a low-emission fuel which may contribute to mitigation of climate change.

In India, DEG has already supported a jatropha project. In cooperation with Daimler AG, tests on the cultivation of jatropha were run in different climate zones of the country. The test results have already revealed the potential of the plant as a supplier of environmentally friendly energy. DEG hopes that the research in East Africa will tie in with these positive results.



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