



KNOWLEDGE HUB FOR  
ORGANIC AGRICULTURE  
IN SOUTHERN AFRICA



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NAMIBIA LAUNCH

### **Namibian Organic Association and Namibian Nature Foundation launch programme to boost organic agriculture in Namibia**

*Subtitle: Programme activities will be delivered through the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa*

#### **[WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA, 01 February 2021]**

The Namibian Organic Association (NOA) and the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) launched country activities for the Knowledge Hub for Organic Agriculture in Southern Africa (KH SA) that aims to promote the adoption and scaling-up of organic agriculture in the region.

Mareike Aufderheide-Voigts, Namibian Project Manager, who holds a degree in B.Sc Organic Agriculture and M.Sc. Sustainable International Agriculture from the University of Kassel, Witzenhausen, Germany, notes that “introducing organic agriculture practises to Namibia’s agricultural system will help the country combat climate change, rejuvenate agricultural soils, reduce agricultural water usage and produce nutrient-dense food.”

KH SA is a collaborative country-led partnership funded by the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is one of five Knowledge Hubs for Organic Agriculture, under the Knowledge Centre for Organic Agriculture in Africa programme, pursuing the goal of disseminating knowledge and shaping a network on national, regional and continental levels. The other four Knowledge Hubs for Organic Agriculture are implemented by GIZ in North, West and Eastern and Central Africa. KH SA is operating in Zambia, Namibia and South Africa with plans to extend the project to Malawi in 2021. The South African-based Sustainability Institute provides support for the regional project. NOA and NNF lead project activities in Namibia.

KH SA aims to close the knowledge gaps that limits the sharing of organic agriculture production methods in Southern Africa. Namibian project activities aim to grow the number of organic growers and volume of organic food produced in the country. The project will further be supported by the development of an online platform to disseminate context-specific knowledge about organic farming in Africa.

“Organic agriculture in the Namibian context refers to an inclusive approach to certified and non-certified organic agriculture production systems such as conservation agriculture; regenerative, biodynamic, biological and ecological farming; permaculture, agro-ecology and agroforestry systems, as well as climate smart and climate resilient production systems,” states NOA Chairperson Eckhart Foertsch.

Organic food production is increasingly viewed by international organisations such as the United Nations as a strategic way to address challenges of rural poverty, malnutrition, biodiversity loss, particularly in a time of climate change. The United Nations Children's Fund notes that 25% of children under five years of age in Namibia are stunted and that malnutrition is widespread in the country. Organic agriculture can be a pathway to addressing not only hunger and malnutrition but also other challenges including poverty, water use, climate change, and unsustainable production and consumption.

“Organic agriculture is knowledge-intensive, and putting it into practice requires an in-depth understanding of soil fertility, natural cycles and interactions between soil, microorganisms, plants and livestock” says Aufderheide-Voigts. The KH SA project will help by gathering and sharing information with Namibian farmers to allow them to benefit from practices that are environmentally friendly and sustainable.

This collaborative partnership is important for long term sustainable socioeconomic development in Namibia, which depends to a great extent on the use of sustainable organic agricultural practices, both now and in the face of climate change. NNF and NOA are able to make significant contributions to such development through partnerships in education, training, research and extension activities.

"If you are passionate about nature then first and foremost you need to respect people. And in Namibia, for a large part of the population that means also respecting agriculture in rural areas and what we aim to do is strive for more productive landscapes that produce food and natural resources and at the same time maximise on the ecosystem services that benefit wider society. This collaboration between the NNF and NOA is a stride our organizations are profoundly proud of. The Namibian agricultural landscape continues to develop at an amazing rate and an initiative like this that equips farmers with the skills to practice more sustainable agriculture is of utmost importance. I am optimistic we will see more practices and methods used in farming with and not against nature,” Angus Middleton, Executive Director of the Namibia Nature Foundation.

The next step in the project is to engage stakeholders and ensure that their recommendations are considered in project implementation. Engagements will take place online and face-to-face, COVID-19 regulations permitting. Aufderheide-Voigts notes that “we look forward to active participation in order to really grasp the needs of the sector here in Namibia.”

For more information about the Namibian implementation of KH SA contact: Mareike Aufderheide-Voigts, Country Project Manager, Tel: 081 722 5378, Email: [noa@nnf.org.na](mailto:noa@nnf.org.na).

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**Notes to editor:**

Photograph: \*attached

Caption: Mareike Aufderheide-Voigts presenting the KH SA objectives and highlighting the key activities for the project.

People (from left to right): Mareike Aufderheide-Voigts, Michael Iyambo, Emelie Abraham

**GIZ** is a global service provider in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development and international education work with over 50 years of experience in a wide variety of areas, including economic development and employment, energy and the environment, and peace and security. As a public-benefit federal enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government – in particular the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) – and many public and private sector clients in around 120 countries in achieving their objectives in international cooperation. With this aim, GIZ works together with its partners to develop effective solutions that offer people better prospects and sustainably improve their living conditions.

The **Sustainability Institute** is a non-profit Trust with an independent Board of Trustees. Established in 1999, it is an international living and learning centre that offers early childhood development schooling, vocational training through a Further Education and Training college, and delivers under- and post-graduate degrees in sustainable development in partnership with Stellenbosch University.

The **Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF)** is a registered non-governmental organisation founded in 1987. It is a charitable and funding institution with an independent board of trustees. The foundation initiates, supports and promotes activities that conserve the environment, protect biodiversity and foster the sustainable and ethical use of natural resources. [www.nnf.org.na](http://www.nnf.org.na)

The **Namibian Organic Association (NOA)** is the representative body for the organic agriculture sector in Namibia working with all industry stakeholders and government to develop a localised, sustainable organic agriculture sector. NOA promotes access to safe, healthy, nutritious food free from harmful chemicals, which is produced in a way that respects animal welfare which supports and regenerates Namibia's fragile eco-system. NOA advocates for the combination of traditional, innovative, and scientific organic agriculture practices to improve on-farm productivity and increase resilience against climate change. [www.noa.org.na](http://www.noa.org.na)