

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

Date: 08th March 2024

NAB AND AVAGRO SUCCESSFULLY PLANT BANANA SEEDLINGS AT THE FIRST FIELD TRIAL SITE IN THE ZAMBEZI PRODUCTION ZONE



From Left, Peter McCubbin (Banana Expert from Pasture Valley Eswatini), Calicious Simone (Farmer) and Patrick Lubanda (Horticulture Development Officer, NAB).

The Namibian Agronomic Board (NAB) and AvaGro are pleased to announce a significant milestone achieved in the Banana Project. On the 27th of February 2024, the project successfully planted 2,222 tissue culture banana seedlings of two varieties during its first field trial on a one-hectare (1ha) plot at Mango Vuluzi farm in the Singalamwe area, in the Zambezi production zone.

The Banana Project stems from a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the two organizations in October 2023, which is aimed at developing Namibia's banana industry through research and development.

Together, the organizations aim to assess and identify various banana varieties that demonstrate superior performance across different agroecological zones of Namibia. This initiative also seeks to promote the commercialization of banana production by addressing a key obstacle in the country: the scarcity of high-quality, disease-free banana seedlings that are adaptable to Namibia's soil and climatic conditions. This initiative also stems from the fact that banana is the number two most consumed fruit in Namibia and the country currently relies on 100% imports to fill the domestic demand gap.

Mr. Calicious Somme the recipient of the first project field trial in Mango Vulizi expressed gratitude to the two organizations for being selected and provided with the opportunity to participate in the banana field trials.. The planted tissue culture plants consisted of 2,000 Grand Naine and 222 Williams banana varieties, all obtained from Pasture Valley, a fully registered company and horticultural supplier from Eswatini. The supplier also renders technical support to the Banana Project task team consisting of NAB and AvaGro technical staff, and the participating farmers.

The Banana Project plans to increase the number of field trial sites to cover various agro-ecological zones across the country in the next 12 months. To facilitate this expansion, soil and water samples have been collected from potential sites to undergo testing in order to assess the land suitability for banana cultivation by participating farmers.

The NAB and AvaGro remain steadfast in providing relevant and comprehensive crop value-chain research in the agronomic and horticulture industry.

About the Namibian Agronomic Board

The NAB is a public entity governed by the Agronomic Industry Act, 20 of 1992 and is mandated to promote the agronomic industry and facilitate the production, processing, storage and marketing of controlled products in Namibia.

About AvaGro Sustainable Agricultural Solutions (Pty) Ltd

A company incorporated by the laws of Namibia under registration number: 2019/0265 with a registered address at 178 River Plots, Swakopmund PO 8857. AvaGro is an agricultural solutions provider, borne out of the intent to contribute to the shift from traditional farming to precision agriculture. We grow flowers and vegetables on a commercial basis, and we operate a tissue culture laboratory for the production of high-quality and disease-free seedlings.

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