

Major boost for wild silk project



Some of the products from the wild silk project

The wild silk project in Ganyesa received a major boost after it was announced as a United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) pilot project within the SADC Region. A committee has been established to fast track the success of the project, with members thereof being representatives from (UNIDO), Department of Trade and Industry, Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). Other members include representatives from Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the Dr Ruth Segomotso Mompoti District and the Kagisano Local Municipalities as well as the Northern Cape's Department of Economic Affairs and the Kgalagadi District Municipality.

The initiative is an intervention to alleviate poverty amongst the local community (Ganyesa and the neighbouring villages) by way of creating employment opportunities in the form of cocoon harvesting; cocoon cleaning and sorting; degumming; spinning and weaving.

The current activity at Ganyesa is the construction of the Wild Silk Plant at a total sum of R8.5 million. The construction started in July 2007 and it is expected to be completed end of March 2009. The project has a labour force of 40 community members from Ganyesa and the surrounding areas responsible for the construction and they have been registered with

Department of Labour.

Approximately R5 million was transferred to Kagisano during the 2004/2005 financial year; R1m was approved as an additional budget towards the construction of the factory during 2006 /2007 financial year.

A project document to commercialize the project and to elevate it to include other African countries has been compiled with the assistance from UNIDO. The DTI has approved R 2 m for the 2008/2009 financial year for the project which will be used to support the first phase of the project including refurbishment of machinery that is in Port Elizabeth and other initial costs for production. It is expected that other stakeholders will budget for the project during the next financial year.



Construction is ongoing at the project site

The activities planned for the next financial year include construction and completion of the office and processing complex at Ganyesa, refurbishment and superficial repairs of silk processing machineries by the CSIR (Port Elizabeth Campus), recruitment and selection of personnel who will run the plant as well as training of the recruits on all aspect of fiber processing.