

ULTIMATE UP-CYCLING; SOUTH AFRICAN PLANT PLANNED TO PRODUCE ZELFO SELF BINDING COMPOSITES.

September 2013



Richard Hurding, CEO of Zelfo Technology GmbH, sitting on the first iconic Zelfo product the 'Peanut Chair' (designed in Austria in 2000 by Fürst/Bartosch) made from hemp cellulose. In his hands are the latest up-cycled waste natural fibre products produced in 2013 especially for the

South African project. Photo : Zelfo Technology GmbH

Global Natural Fibre Forum (GNFF) partners Zelfo Technology (Germany) and House of Hemp (South Africa) have formed a manufacturing alliance to up-cycle cellulose based waste to produce chemical free binder-less, formaldehyde free products for the building industry in South Africa.

Johannesburg based House of Hemp have secured seed funding to set up a pilot plant in South Africa with a view to rapid expansion further afield in the African continent. The plant will produce a range of building products to serve the burgeoning house building market in South Africa and will bring greater employment and resource efficiencies to both the manufacturing and agricultural sectors.

With this exciting project Zelfo Technology intends to roll out its first pilot plant in Africa. The impact of their unique cellulose fibre engineering system, which is intended to be an industry standard bio-materials process in the not too distant future, could be highly significant for a continent like Africa. With bio-resources on a massive scale, fundamentally speaking fibre resources are set to be Africa's 'Oil'.

Essentially all the key parts are in place for Zelfo products in Africa, A growing population, a demand for housing, significant fibre resources and a 'plug in' low resource and energy manufacturing system that works at every scale – from a rural community plant to a multi million square metre producing board forming company.

Dr. Thandeka Kunene, CEO of House of Hemp and Region co-ordinator of the GNFF has championed the cause of natural fibre utilisation in Africa and through this has marshalled vast resources of a spectrum of fibre waste for use in the planned manufacturing plant and the plants which will be part of the Zelfo roll-out program.

In preparation for entry into the market, Zelfo Technology has already tried many of the fibre sources in pilot products at their Pilot Plant in Germany. Significant success has been seen over a number of pure and mixed fibre products which have utilised agricultural and industrial waste such as Kenaf, Bamboo, Sisal, Cotton, Hemp, Flax and recycled paper to make panel and board products with a multitude of uses in building construction. This technical work has been backed up on the business side as market research already carried out by Dr. Kunene and her team suggests a 'how soon can we have it' situation.

"On a national and international level, we expect nothing less than a deluge of interest in the products made in Africa using Zelfo system", commented

Dr. Kunene, “it is a perfect fit;- a leading edge solution coming from a rapidly rising continent.”

Originating from Austria in Europe, the value of the Zelfo fibre-engineering system has already brought both fame and commercial interest from many different quarters. In 2011, Zelfo won two ‘Rushlight’ awards in London and ‘Bio-material of the Year 2011’ at the renowned Nova Institute bio-materials conference in Cologne, Germany. Following this in 2012 Niche Snowboards won the ISPO Eco Award for Sustainable Innovation and Eco-Responsibility using Hemp based stringers made from Zelfo. On the grander scale Zelfo Technology recently entered into a technology transfer and support agreement with BASF and are currently working with them to introduce Zelfo fibre as a bio-additive into pulp and packaging materials.

Mr. Grégoire de Vilmorin, New Business Director of Zelfo Technology remarked, “The processing system that Zelfo Technology and its partners have developed over the past 7 years was made for situations like Africa. From a commercial, social and ecological standpoint, with this project Africa will demonstrate to the world how resources could be used in the 21st century.”

CONTACT:

Zelfo Technology:

Grégoire de Vilmorin. (New Business Director)

Email:- gregoire.devilmorin@zelfo-technology.com

Tel:- +33 (0)6 23 06 08 60

Web:- www.zelfo-technology.com

House of Hemp:

Dr. Thandeka Kunene (CEO)

thandeka@houseofhemp.co.za

Tel:- +27(0)16 362 1022

Web:- www.houseofhemp.co.za