

Botswana citrus project yields positive results

The Selibe Phikwe Citrus Project (SPC) in Botswana, a private sector initiative has made strides in citrus production on a 1500 hectare plot owned by the Mmadinare Multi-purpose Cooperative Society. Initiated in 2020, the project has reached 27 percent of its projected production, contributing to diversification efforts away from mining dependency. Citrus, part of the horticulture sector with a demand of 112 tonnes, along with vegetables, are key focuses, with citrus contributing 29,000 tonnes to the production figures.

Botswana, traditionally reliant on imports, particularly from South Africa, has seen its citrus import bill fluctuate, with imports peaking at P44.1 million in 2021. The project, having developed 1200 hectares and planted over 800,000 trees including lemons and oranges, aims for both local consumption and export, with identified markets in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Europe.

The project is expected to stimulate various business opportunities within the value chain, including juice manufacturing and logistics. Currently employing 400 individuals, with the potential to employ over 1000 upon full operational capacity, the initiative supports over 172 citrus growers in Botswana, the majority of whom are small-scale farmers.

Source: thevoicebw.com (<https://thevoicebw.com>)

Publication date: Thu 28 Mar 2024

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