

PLASTICS, PACKAGING & PRINTING

Support for sustainable alternatives received

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), which promotes a circular economy and resource efficiency in industry, supports African countries in meeting the challenges of dealing with plastic waste leaking to the environment, said the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in a press release earlier this month.

With funding from Japan, UNIDO will implement the project 'Support for transitioning from conventional plastics to more environmentally sustainable alternatives' in partnership with the CSIR.

The funding from Japan follows the G20 Osaka Summit which was held on June 28 to 29, 2019 at the International Exhibition Center in Osaka.

During the summit, it was announced that Japan will support developing countries' efforts, in for instance their capacity building and infrastructure development in the area of waste management including plastic waste.

The project consists of two components: first is the support for the identification and implementation of opportunities for sustainable alternative materials, including biodegradable plastics.

The second supports the plastic and packaging industry in its recycling efforts by strengthening capacity and through the integration of the informal waste sector.

The focus is on the implementation of capacity building activities, including procurement of necessary equipment, training

to enhance the capabilities and capacity of informal collectors for waste separation and recycling.

Accordingly, the purpose of the project is to support South Africa's transition to more environmentally sustainable alternatives from conventional plastics. This will be achieved through the development of an Action Plan to strengthen the local bio (and biodegradable) plastics and sustainable alternative material industry and building up capacities for plastics recycling.

"As a result, the project would not only have the potential to reduce plastic leakage to the environment but also to unlock new economic opportunities – both of which are urgently needed for South Africa. The main goal eventually is the reduction of marine plastic litter from South Africa."

In the press release CSIR Sustainability, Economics and Waste principal researcher **Suzan Oelofse** added that the CSIR will be the executing partner of UNIDO, coordinating the project activities in South Africa through a subcontract arrangement, with UNIDO leading technical and international coordination.

"The CSIR will take a leading role in conducting the research activities to determine the most appropriate approach to reduce petrochemicals-based plastic use and waste; to encourage shifts to more environment-friendly alternatives."

The company will prepare an action plan by working closely with the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition and producer responsibility organisations and non-governmental organisations.

For Output 1, CSIR will collaborate with the South African Bioplastic Forum, an initiative under plastic industry body Plastics SA, to ensure stakeholder participation.

In order to make use of Japanese technical expertise on the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle), as stated in the project document, the project will consider partnering with Japanese organisations such as Japan National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology, and/or Japanese industry associations such as Japan Bioplastic Association, Japan Clean Ocean Material Alliance, as well as those in the Japanese private sector that have the relevant technology.

Oelofse noted in the press release that appropriate technologies identified during the project could be demonstrated to ensure sustainability in the context of South Africa.

Additionally, for Output 2, the CSIR will partner with University of the Witwatersrand where there has been work done on the development of a Guideline on Waste Picker Integration for South Africa. The university has been partnering with informal waste sector organisations including the African Reclaimer's Organisation, South Africa Waste Pickers Association, Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising, and groundWork.

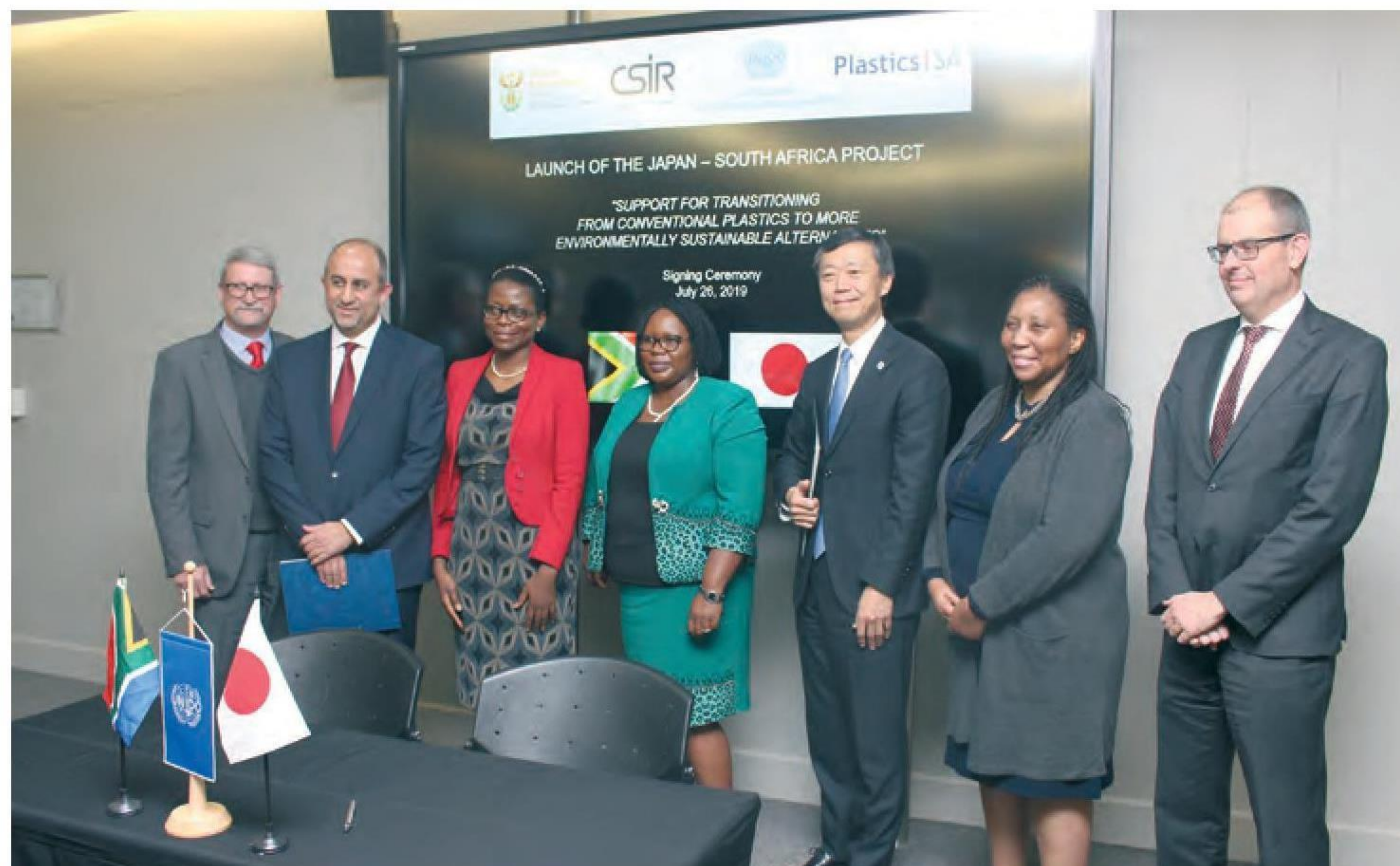
The focus is on the implementation of capacity building activities, including procurement of necessary equipment, and training to enhance the capabilities and capacity of the sector to integrate informal collectors. The partnership will also focus on increasing the capacity of informal collectors for waste separation and recycling.

"The implementation activities will be informed by a thorough understanding of the current status in terms of systems, facilities, and needs, including training requirements."

This will be followed by the design of capacity building interventions, purchasing of key equipment, training systems, curricula and training of trainers.

The implementation and impact from the resultant outreach to both male and female informal collectors will be key measures of success for this output. ■

COUPON ON PAGE 27 E576464



BETTER ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of the project is to support South Africa's transition to more environmentally sustainable alternatives from conventional plastics