

## **Business News**

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Mon Aug 26, 2013

### MTC sets aside \$20m to boost tea, energy in Ruvuma Region



Mufindi Tea and Coffee Company (MTC) plans to inject USD20m into developing a 1,000 ha fully irrigated tea plantation on Ndolela Farm, in Ruvuma Region which is expected to replace the several hundred ha of mixed seasonal and plantation crops currently grown on the farm.

Speaking in an exclusive interview in Dar es Salaam at the weekend, Rift Valley Energy Tanzania (RVET) official Michael Gratwicke said the ambitious USD20m project will be the single largest agricultural investment in the region, and is actually the first phase of a two stage tea development plan.

Gratwicke noted that the project is expected to increase Tanzania's tea production by more than 5 percent as well as improve the lives of the small scale tea farmers and also stimulate the country's economic growth.

"The development of this very significant tea project is now being made possible with the expected arrival in 2015 of the main grid through the Makambako-Songea 220 kV power line project, which brings with it a very extensive network of rural electrification that will actually pass through the farm, and provide the needed power for this large scale development to operate," he said.

He pointed that the tea development phase of the project is expected to employ close to 2,000 worker over the five year development phase, and will ultimately create 600 post development jobs which will obviously have a significant impact on the development of the surrounding communities.

"Additionally, the project will lead to the development of the necessary supply chains within the surrounding communities that are necessary for such a large scale operation to take place, which in turn creates more indirect jobs, and promote significant and permanent community development," he explained.

He added: "The project will generate very significant tax revenue for the government through normal corporate and company taxes, as well as provide reliable income stream to the district and surrounding community through normal tea cess collections."

As part of the usual corporate and social responsibility duties that are typically associated with tea plantation

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developments, support is planned to be given to the development of community facilities such as schools, dispensaries, meeting halls and roads – often in conjunction with organisations such as fair trade and rain forest alliance.

“Outgrowers are actively encouraged by MTC, and currently provide approximately 20 percent of the green leaf that is processed by the current MTC tea factories. This also creates significant developmental effects within the surrounding communities in which MTC operates,” he said.

He insisted that this development is exactly in line with both the Kilimo Kwanza and the SAGCOT initiatives, and is expected to form a significant commercial hub or nucleus - complete with a variety of improved, modern services like energy, roads, irrigation, storage facilities, agricultural supply chains, access to markets and extension services - upon which further development can be built”.

Furthermore, he said that the energy produced at the site will provide a reliable and environmentally friendly energy source for the associated tea project, the surrounding community, the region and the National Grid.

Rift Valley Corporation is one of the largest agricultural investors in Southern and Eastern Africa of which Mufindi Tea and Coffee Company (MTC), Kibena Tea Limited (KTL), Ikanga Tea Company Ltd (ITCL), Rift Valley Tea Solutions (RVTS), Mwenga Hydro Limited (MHL) and Rift Valley Energy Tanzania (RVET) are the main Rift Valley Corporation form in Tanzania.

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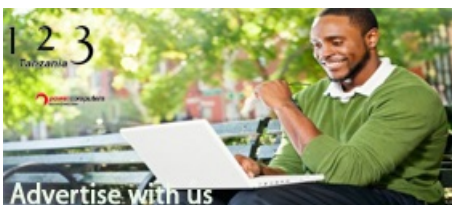
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