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Economic Areas

The Special Economic Zone of Nkok, a public-private partnership with OLAM



Le Quorum magazine interview with Gagan Gupta, Director General of Olam Gabon.

Le Quorum: What is the Nkok special economic zone?

Gagan Gupta: The Nkok special economic zone (SEZ) is a partnership between the Republic of Gabon and Olam Singapore. Olam holds 60% of the capital and Gabon 40%. The signing ceremony took place on 14 August 2010; this partnership has therefore been in place for 16 months. The project will be conducted in three phases. The first phase comprises a surface area of 393 ha. If we add the second phase, the total area will be 732 ha. The first phase, inaugurated in September 2011, is divided into two principal zones: an industrial zone, assembling 75% of operations (the location of the main industries, service units and other infrastructure), and the remaining 25%, which represents the non-industrial zone, comprising the residential district, the commercial sector and the leisure area. We are developing the sawmill sector there. A local company called CDG will also develop a plant for transforming scrap metal. There are other activities on the site: a company is positioned in cement production, another in timber (Shainago), petrol distribution with Petro Gabon, the commercial sector with M2H, real estate with SCI Sapa, accommodation for the people employed on the site with SCI Nayah, and paper pulp with Ellora Papermills.

LQ: What is the estimated value of these investments?

GG: In relation to the figures put forward by the various investors, annual investments are estimated at \$900 million over the next three years.

LQ: Is all of the production of the SEZ destined for export?

GG: The law on the SEZ promulgated this year stipulates that 75% of the production will be exported, and that the remainder will be commercialised domestically.



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Picture of the week



Caretaker President of the Central African Republic (CAR), Michel Djotodia, met with President Ali Bongo Ondimba

LQ: What are the advantages granted to investors?

GG: All the investors who commit to the transformation of natural resources of the country will enjoy tax and customs advantages . On the tax level, they will be eligible for full exemption from companies' tax for the first ten years, then, during the following five years, they will pay 10% tax. They are also fully exempt from customs fees and duties on imported goods and equipment and on the export of manufactured products, and will benefit from a reduction in the price of electricity of around 50% compared to the prices in force in Libreville. Lastly, they will have the assistance of the State to facilitate the transfer of certain administrative documents through the setting up of a "one-stop shop".

LQ: Are the facilities for the accompanying logistics in place?

GG: We are confident. The infrastructure requirements of the sites will be met. We made sure that the choice of the site took into account its accessibility. As you can see, the road is 700 metres from here; the SEZ is located 12 km from the main trunk road, 14 km from the railway station and less than 1 km from Jkoy-Komo, the waterway. Regarding electricity, the needs of the Nkok SEZ are estimated at 220 MW. This production exceeds that of Gabon. For this purpose, there are several projects to make the required power available. In the area around Libreville, there is a 75 MW electrical power station already available, which will supply the zone with electricity. On the site, we will develop a plant with a production capacity of 15 MW, which will use waste materials from the timber sector as a raw material. There is another electricity project in the zone of Fugamon, which will generate hydraulic electricity.

LQ: How many investors have already expressed an interest?

GG: 45 investors have acquired land. They come from six different countries. Globally, we think 150 companies will establish themselves in the zone.

LQ: What is the price of the square metre in the zone?

GG: It is not expensive. Between 30,000 and 40,000 CFA FRANCS, unlike other areas of Libreville where the square metre is sold for between 100,000 and 150,000 CFA FRANCS.

LQ: How much did it cost to produce the Nkok zone?


GG: The overall cost was 250 billion CFA francs; the SEZ should attract almost 500 billion francs in investments and create 3,000 jobs.

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