

## **SkyNRG, Sunchem SA, Boeing and South African Airways officially Launch Project Solaris to develop Sustainable jet fuel from energy-rich tobacco crop**

**MARBLE HALL, South Africa, December 9, 2014 – SkyNRG, Sunchem SA, Boeing and SAA today officially launched Project Solaris, an effort to develop sustainable jet fuel from the nicotine-free tobacco plant variety, called Solaris. The plant's first harvest will occur this month, and oil from Solaris seeds may be converted into sustainable jet fuel as early as next year. SAA plans to conduct a test flight with the fuel as soon as practicable.**

In Limpopo province, industry stakeholders visited commercial and community farms where 50 hectares of the crop have been planted. The farm visits followed the announcement in August that the partners were collaborating to make sustainable jet fuel from the Solaris plant, which is developed and patented by the Italian company Sunchem Holding. If test farming in Marble Hall is successful, the project will be expanded in South Africa and potentially to other countries.

The project is intended to support South African Airways' environmental goals as well as national objectives for economic and rural development. Solaris based jet fuel will meet the Roundtable of Sustainable Biomaterial's CO<sub>2</sub> life cycle reduction threshold of 50% as a minimum. When produced in an optimized supply chain set up savings are expected to reach up to 75%, compared to fossil jet fuel.

More information is available at the new Project Solaris website: [www.projectsolaris.co.za](http://www.projectsolaris.co.za)

Maarten van Dijk, Chief Technology Officer of SkyNRG said: *"The official launch of Project Solaris is an important milestone for SkyNRG as it marks the start of our first operational feedstock project. Commitment of all partners in the supply chain is crucial to realize our joint ambition and make this project a success. That's why we're proud to work together with Sunchem SA, Boeing and SAA. We also want to thank the Dutch government for their strong support in this project, and for the development of sustainable jet fuel in general."*

Joost van Lier, Managing Director of Sunchem SA, stated: *"After two years of proving Solaris' potential in the small scale trials, we're very excited to see all parts falling into place and start with the next phase of the project. We strongly believe that by joining forces with our project partners SkyNRG, Boeing & SAA, we will be able to turn this project into a great opportunity for both the commercial and community farmers."*

*"Boeing strongly believes that our aviation biofuel collaboration with South African Airways, SkyNRG and Sunchem SA will benefit the environment and public health while providing new economic opportunities for South Africa's small farmers. This project also positions our valued airline customer to gain a long-term, viable domestic fuel supply and improve South Africa's national balance of payments."* Said J. Miguel Santos, Boeing International managing director for Africa

*"SAA continues to work towards becoming the most environmentally sustainable airline in the world and is committed to a better way of conducting business. The impact that the biofuel program will have on South Africans is astounding: job creation, mostly in rural areas, new skills and technology, energy security and stability and macro-economic benefits to South Africa."* Said Ian Cruickshank, SAA Group Environmental Affairs.

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Picture: tobacco farm workers in Marble Hall, South Africa, carry Solaris seedlings from a nursery to the field. (Photo credit: Sunchem SA).

### **About SkyNRG**

It's SkyNRG's mission to create sustainable fuels for those transport segments that have no other green alternative in the foreseeable future: aviation, marine and heavy trucking. Short term, the company is executing this mission via co-funded green routes and long term via developing BioPorts. Bioports are regional supply chains that offer a real sustainable and affordable alternative to fossil fuels. SkyNRG is supported by its leading global sustainability and technology board. SkyNRG is the world's market leader for bio jet fuel, supplying more than 20 airlines worldwide. Learn more about SkyNRG at [www.skynrg.com](http://www.skynrg.com)

### **About Sunchem South Africa**

Sunchem Biofuel Development South Africa (Pty) Ltd ("Sunchem SA") is a joint venture between Sunchem Holding and an international group of investors/entrepreneur, seasoned in developing alternative energy initiatives in Southern Africa. In cooperation with local partners, Sunchem SA has been conducting cultivation trials with Solaris in the North Eastern corner of the Limpopo province. In 2013, 11 hectares of Solaris have been cultivated with very solid results (per Ha: 3 tons of oil, 6 tons of press cake/ animal feed and 45 tons of fresh biomass). The trials have developed strong ties with the commercial farming community and the regional small holder farming coops. These parties are very interested to further engage and expand activities based on their experiences with Solaris.

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