

SUCCESSFUL 1ST BLUE DEAL WEBINAR ON COMBATING THE WATER HYACINTH

As part of the Blue Deal Blesbokspruit Project an international webinar was organised on 9th September 2020 together with the Water Research Commission on the water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*). The main item was the integrated approach to manage the problem with physical, chemical and biological techniques. Several speakers from the Blue Deal South Africa partners spoke about the possibilities to combat the water hyacinth including physical removal, the application of herbicides, the release of biocontrol agents and the repurposing of water hyacinth to produce new products, like fertilizer.

After a short presentation by ms. Mariska van Rijswijk on the Blue Deal Blesbokspruit Project, ms. Debbie Muir elaborated on the South African perspective on Water Hyacinth. Dr. Julie Coetzee continued with the scientific approach to control the growth and ms. Tsholofelo Sephoti explained the legal aspects.

Next, mr. Gilead Mtegha from Hya Matla, ms. Tumi Mphahlele and ms. Lerato Tloubatla from Ardhi, presented some possibilities of repurposing water hyacinth into new products. Mr. Michiel Verhofstad explained some of the Dutch experiences in handling the excessive growth of invasive species.

After the presentations an interactive panel discussion was held, led by mr. Philip Ivey. The input of the audience of 115 – 120 people from all over South Africa, the Netherlands and other parts of the world was exchanged by the chat-function of the Webinar. A lively discussion and exchange of experiences, data and contacts made this first Blue Deal webinar a very successful event.

The next Blue Deal Webinar will be held in November 2020. More information will follow

