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Rare-earth elements refining plant at Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY

On June 4th 2021, an agreement was signed between Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY, represented by Andrzej Skwarek and Jacek Janiszek, members of the company's Management Board, and Jarosław Pączek, Head of MKango Polska, a branch of Canada's Mkango Resources Ltd, for lease of a plot of land where a rare-earth elements refining plant will be built.

The rare-earth metal refinery will use a technology based on nitric acid to process purified rare-earth concentrate, supplied from Songwe Hill Rare Earths in Malawi and other potential sources. The refining process will produce neodymium oxides and praseodymium oxides, as well as enriched concentrate of heavy rare-earth metals and lanthanum and cerium products.

"The project will be fully compatible with Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY's business. We will supply the refining plant both with raw materials for the refining process and with energy. On the other hand, the 60% ammonium nitrate solution which is a by-products of the refining process may be used at our units if the technical, technological and quality conditions are met," said Andrzej Skwarek, member of the Management Board of Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY.

Rare-earth elements, including technical metals, have applications in the automotive, defence, renewable, telecommunications, refining, ceramics, and metallurgical industries. They are used in the production of automotive catalysts, permanent magnets for electric motors, wind turbines and optical filters, liquid-crystal displays, lasers and luminophores. They are also found in polishing powders, fertilizers, and dyes.

"It is a very exciting development for Poland at a time when Europe focuses on streamlining the supply chains of critical materials indispensable for the transition to an environmentally friendly economy. I am looking forward to cooperation between Mkango and Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY on this breakthrough project for Poland and Europe," said Jarosław Pączek, Head of Mkango Polska.

"At Grupa Azoty Puławy, we focus on the development of new technologies and innovations fuelled by research, especially when they support circular economy technologies, and rare-earth elements are used on a large scale in electric vehicle batteries. Please be assured that this will not be the only renewables project we mean to pursue in the near term," commented Jacek Janiszek, member of Grupa Azoty PUŁAWY Management Board.

