German Chancellor Olaf Scholz explores Kenya's geothermal potential with CRM-geothermal project partner

Press release I Potsdam I May 2023

On May 5th, the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Kenya as part of his tour of Africa. During his visit, he met with Lydia Olaka, a CRM-geothermal project partner from the University of Nairobi. Lydia Olaka had the opportunity to explain how the geology of the East African Rift influences the geothermal potential of Kenya and how the EU-funded CRM-geothermal project is developing an innovative technology solution to combine the extraction of critical raw materials and energy from geothermal fluids.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz follows Lydia Olaka's explanations on the geology of Kenya. Photo: Jesco Denzel

According to IRENA's Renewable Capacity Statistics 2023, Kenya currently has an installed geothermal capacity of 950 megawatt (MW), with an estimated untapped potential of 10,000 MW spread out across two dozen sites in its Rift Valley region.

The University of Nairobi is an important partner in the CRM-geothermal project. Lydia Olaka and her team are sampling and analysing geothermal fluids and mineral precipitations from the East African Rift with a focus on Kenya. They will investigate host rocks of the geothermal reservoirs to understand the processes that are involved in the enrichment of critical raw materials in the geothermal fluids. The geothermal fluids in the East African Rift are of particular interest, as they are expected to contain significant amounts of critical raw materials such as rare earth elements, yttrium, and scandium.

Lydia Olaka from the University of Nairobi said, *"The East African Rift is an important feature in Africa which is under-explored. The CRM-geothermal project offers opportunities for mutual benefits of collaboration between researchers from Europe and East Africa. It allows to develop stronger research infrastructure, mentoring, and training opportunities in East Africa. In addition, the strong industry and academic cooperation will increase exploration of geothermal resources for economic development."*

By applying the research methods to multiple geological settings in Europe and Africa, CRM-geothermal will develop a better understanding of the drivers and key factors of element enrichment in different systems. For the East African Rift, the European researchers strongly rely on the geological expertise of the Kenyan partners, their previous research on the chemistry of geothermal fluids in the region and their in-depth understanding of selected geothermal systems in Kenya. On the other hand, partners from the Constructor University Bremen are specialised in the analysis of Rare Earth

Funded by the European Union

elements in fluids, and partners from GFZ Potsdam have specialised equipment for the analysis of minerals in host rocks, such as a microprobe.

As reports Deutsche Welle, during his visit to Kenya the German Chancellor Scholz also discussed with President William Ruto how the country is joining the Climate Club, a G7 initiative for nations that pursue ambitious climate policies, and visited the Olkaria geothermal power plant south of Lake Naivasha.

The CRM-geothermal project is contributing to the fulfilment of the EU's Green Deal objectives and could help reduce Europe's dependency on imported critical raw materials while promoting sustainable development in East Africa.

About CRM-geothermal:

CRM-geothermal is a research project funded by the European Union to develop an innovative technology solution that will combine the extraction of mineral raw materials and geothermal energy in a single process.

Follow us:

Website: https://crm-geothermal.eu/
Mailing list: https://bit.ly/3RLQyi1
LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/crm-geothermal/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/CrmGeothermal
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/crmgeothermal/

Contact:

Katrin Kieling (Project manager): katrin.kieling@gfz-potsdam.de Simona Regenspurg (Scientific coordinator): regens@gfz-potsdam.de **Helmholtz Zentrum Potsdam** Deutsches Geoforschungszentrum (GFZ) Telegrafenberg 14473 Potsdam (Germany)	Anita Stein (Communication manager): anita.stein@eurogeologists.eu **European Federation of Geologists** Rue Jenner 13 1000 Brussels (Belgium)

Funded by the European Union