HIGH STANDARDS
SAA has been accepted as a full member of the Round Table on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB)

Above: The tobacco project transforms tobacco oil to jet fuel. Right: RSB Executive Director Rolf Hogan and RSB board member Maarten van Dijk at Solaris Sunchem field.

SAA has been accepted as a full member of the Round Table on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB), an international, multi-stakeholder initiative that brings together farmers, companies, governmental and non-governmental organisations, experts and inter-governmental agencies concerned with ensuring the sustainability of biomass and biomaterial production and processing. Earlier this year, SAA also became one of only two global carriers to achieve Stage 2 status of the IATA Environmental Assessment Programme (IEnva).

“Membership of the RSB not only serves as recognition of SAA’s African biofuels programme, but provides us with a further networking platform to engage with NGOs and leaders in the biomaterials field,” says Bezuidenhout. The airline has taken a long-term view of the project. “Innovation across all areas of our business will set the pace of growth at SAA and, along with full implementation of the Long-Term Turnaround Strategy, the dual objectives of environmental benefit and future commercial impetus will serve the airline and the country well.”

Launched last year, SAA’s African biofuels project, which aims to transform tobacco oil to jet fuel, involves sector role-players such as Boeing, Sunchem and SkyNRG. The initiative achieved Stage 2 IEnva accreditation in record time.

It was followed by the introduction of new fuel-efficient navigation approaches (RNP-AR: Required Navigational Performance, Authorisation Required). Within SAA, there is also an ongoing drive to embed a culture of environmental sustainability against set targets, with a view to leading the field in ultimate emission reduction in both continental and global aviation.

SAA plans to operate a series of flights using biofuel, produced at the pilot tobacco plant in Limpopo, later this year.