



Marula Certification in Swaziland

In recent years, the Natural Products industry has grown exponentially in Southern Africa. During this time, opportunities and incomes have increased throughout the supply chain - from primary producers and processing companies to community-based enterprises. A major contributor to the increase in revenues to natural product enterprises has come through the realisation of (Organic and Fair Trade) certification.

Swazi Indigenous Products was established in 2004 as a not for profit company set up to create opportunities for and empower rural women from Swaziland. Swazi Indigenous Products facilitates sustainable and ethical commercialisation of products from wild harvested Marula kernels, an indigenous tree that grows abundantly in the area. The company produces a range of products from the oil produced from the Marula kernels including massage oil, soap, shampoo, shower gel and lip balm.

In 2006, the **Natural Futures Programme**, jointly implemented by the **World Conservation Union (IUCN)** and **PhytoTrade Africa**, the Southern African Natural Products Trade Association, provided support to Swazi Indigenous Products for the development of systems to produce organically certified Marula oil. Organic certification allows the company to secure a 50% price premium on bulk oil sales to Europe. This premium is passed down to harvesters who are paid a percentage over and above that paid for conventional kernels for their organically produced kernels. For harvesters to qualify as organic suppliers, they must have attended the company's organic training programme and learned to comply with the new systems and organic supply requirements. The impact of the organic certification process has been seen both amongst Swazi Indigenous Products staff and local communities.

In 2005, seizing an opportunity in the newly established Swazi Indigenous Products, local women like **Khelina Hluphekile Magagula** began sourcing and supplying Marula from wild trees in the communal lands of rural Swaziland. She was familiar with the trees and fruits because of her experience in the local production and sale of Marula beer from the fruit's flesh. Now, her involvement in the supply chain would involve accessing the kernel inside the fruit's nut for its production into a cosmetic oil.

My name is Khelina and I am 49 years old. I am divorced and have seven children and two grandchildren that I look after. I use the income earned from Marula kernels 'iyasiwondla lokusisiza kakhulu'

(to take care of us in many ways). From this income I buy the maize-meal to feed my family and other basics like laundry soap, sugar and salt and to pay the school fees for my grandchildren. I also use the money to buy ingredients for food I make and sell in the community during the Marula off-season.

I am very happy to now be involved in supplying organic Marula. I have benefited from being a member of Swazi Indigenous Products through training and workshops on organic kernel production and now earn almost 10%¹ more for organic kernels than for the conventional kernels.

I have noticed that the income from kernels has also given married women the ability to make their own decisions about how to use the money from Marula kernels. Before getting income from kernels, these married women depended entirely on their husbands who would make decisions on how to use money from livestock and crop sales.

Khelina now earns 20% more than she did working as a mat weaver. More importantly however, the collection and cracking of Marula kernels does not require as much time away from home as the mat weaving did, which included a week's travel for reed harvesting each month. Through the organic certification training programme, Khelina now has the information she needs on the right areas to collect the

fruits, ways to avoid contamination, how to grade the kernels and ensure the maintenance of high quality products. Now Khelina and her peers keep thorough records of the trees harvested to ensure products are in line with international traceability requirements.

In Khelina's village, the rise in value of Marula has resulted in a renewed interest in organic farming, sustainable use and the stewardship of Marula trees called for in customary and local regulations. Residents have also started a market that coincides with Marula kernel procurement days to take advantage of the increased cash income in the community.

Khelina says that she could not imagine how her family and other community members could have managed without income from natural products, especially in recent periods of drought. She now qualifies as a member of credit and savings schemes that offer loans to community members, has greater independence to spend her cash income and ability to both provide for and spend time with her loved ones.

¹ This percentage is expected to increase in future years with the full integration of organic systems into the supply chain and increased market demand.



For more information

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