

Southern African Natural Products Trade Association (SANProTA)

Information Update Newsletter

November 2002

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What have we been up to?

It's been a while, but just to update you:

Research and Development

The Call for R&D Grant Applications went out in August. With a budget of US\$40 000 to spend on the most immediate work needed to bring some of our products to market-readiness, we have awarded grants to 6 different institutions. There will be more grants to be made over the next few months, to fill some of the remaining gaps, and we will be spending a further US\$20 000 on various other pieces of commissioned research before the end of the year. Next year's R&D budget will rise to the fairly substantial total of US\$180 000.

Thus far, our research has given us some interesting results on the fatty acid composition of the mongongo (manketti) oil, as well as the nutritional value of locally available baobab fruit pulp. It appears that there may be a lucrative new opportunity opening up for the mongongo oil, based on these results, which is encouraging for those of us working in areas where this tree is common.

We are also engaged in collaborative research partnerships with a number of commercial R&D institutions. The intention here is to work from the outset on developing new products with those companies that will eventually become the buyers of these products, thus ensuring a seamless transition from research to production and sales.

Marketing

The Body Shop is already selling a product featuring the oil of the Tsamma (or Kalahari) melon seed, which is currently sourced from a community group in Namibia. SANProTA is in discussions with several companies interested in sourcing this oil (and others produced by our members), and we hope to develop significant market opportunities for more of our members during the next year. The Body Shop recently also launched a range of colour cosmetics using marula

oil as an ingredient (for its moisturising properties). Three SANProTA members are presently producers of marula oil, and additional markets and products are being developed.

As well as having exhibited at the trade fairs of each of our member countries, our participation in two major international fairs in Europe over the last few months has generated a considerable amount of interest from potential buyers. The result is that our market pipeline is now healthily full. We just need to finish our current R&D work before we can go into serious production.

Who's Who, and Who's New

At the recent Management Board meeting, two **new members** were approved:

- ?? Nyae-Nyae Conservancy, Namibia, Full Member
- ?? Binga Trees Trust, Zimbabwe, Full Member

Our **Management Board** remains unchanged, but our staffing levels have risen considerably. With most of the administrative support staff in place, we are now advertising three new professional posts, for an Information and Liaison Officer, a Natural Products (NP) Business Development Advisor, and a NP Technical Development Advisor.

Meanwhile, Cyril Lombard continues to provide part-time R&D and marketing services, while Pierre du Plessis has been hired to provide various interim Trade Development services. Tara Gujadhur, who was with us for a while as an interim Information Officer, has sadly left.

Did you know that....

Baobab fruit pulp, recently tested by the South African Bureau of Standards for SANProTA, is rich in Vitamin C (200-400 mg/100g), calcium (300-400 mg/100g) and magnesium (100-200 mg/100g). All are essential nutrients, especially during times of drought. The pulp has an energy value of nearly 500kj/100g, is 28% carbohydrate (the rest being fibre), and contains iron, phosphorous, zinc, and Vitamins B₁, B₂ and B₃. It is also delicious!