African Magic Mixed with Cutting Edge Green Technology

by Pierre Charlier de Chily  ●  Chief Executive Officer, Aldivia

Elizabeth Dlamini, herbalist and skincare adviser to a whole generation of local women, has skin that glows. She beams as she explains why “here in the Royal Kingdom of Swaziland we are proud of our plants that we use in our traditional beauty regimes. Our grandmother taught us how to prepare cosmetics from the oil of the Marula nut.” Now, Ubuntu Natural is bringing Swaziland’s best kept beauty secret to the international cosmetics market.

The Ubuntu Natural range, launched by Aldivia®, a French company specialising in plant cosmetic ingredients, introduces the exceptional natural properties of Baobab, Marula, Ximenia, Mongongo, Kalahari Melon, and Mafura to the cosmetic industry. More importantly, because respect for local producers and the environment is at the core of the project, Ubuntu Natural is also an important step towards protecting these plants and their ecosystems, as well as improving the livelihoods of local communities.

The natural African oils such as those coming from Elizabeth Dlamini’s community in Swaziland are exclusively sourced through ethical supply chains. In addition, through the Ubuntu Charter, Aldivia® guarantees that Ubuntu Natural lipids have been produced using indigenous plant materials that have been sustainably wild-harvested by the primary producers, thus actively protecting biodiversity.

MARKET REQUIREMENTS
“Much research and development was necessary to meet Northern market requirements,” explains Pierre Charlier de Chily, CEO of Aldivia®. “The Ubuntu Natural range, thanks to green technology developments, offers virgin oils of excellent quality, perfectly safe on the microbiological and toxicological sides.”

Additional research also focused on developing brand new water-dispersible derivatives, 100% of natural origin, that bring forth the useful properties of co-surfactants and preserve the natural actives of the Ubuntu oils. These developments allow the introduction of African oils in a range of products, from shampoos, shower gels, lotions, bath oils to anti-aging and emollient milks and creams.

New technical developments have allowed Aldivia® to launch a new generation of organic-certified chemically processed agro-ingredients. These innovations will be at the core of tomorrow’s cosmetics ingredients. Based on organic raw materials, processed applying green chemistry principles to offer healthy and efficient alternatives to synthetic ingredients.

Thanks to the organic certification of the supply chains, Aldivia® can now apply such cutting-edge technologies to organic raw materials stemming from biodiversity. In addition, as a member of the Union for Ethical Bio Trade (UEBT), Aldivia® is committed to the sourcing with respect of native natural ingredients, advancing the conservation of biodiversity while ensuring that all contributors along the supply chain are paid fair prices and receiving an equitable share of the benefits. Indeed, after several years of work on issues from sourcing to technical developments, Aldivia® now associates these breakthroughs to the needs of tomorrow’s natural cosmetics.

“Our clients in the cosmetics industry can be confident about the quality and efficiency of these products and about the contribution they are making to local livelihoods through purchasing products that contain our oils,” states Mr. Charlier de Chily. “By creating new markets for African raw materials, Aldivia® and our customers add value at the local level, preserve traditional culture, and are safe in the knowledge that indigenous trees will be conserved for generations to come.”

African Legend ‘Tree of Life’ Fruit Helps People and the Planet

by Lucy Welford  ●  Marketing and Communications, PhytoTrade Africa

Baobab, the exotic fruit from Southern Africa with three times the vitamin C of an orange, twice as much calcium as milk and twice as many antioxidants as goji berries, is now available in Europe. It is set to be the health food of 2010 as it packs a powerful nutritional punch that outweighs other foods almost every level.

Following European Union Novel Foods approval facilitated by PhytoTrade Africa, baobab has the green light to supply the fruit powder into Europe. It is now directly available to the public and food manufacturers who are starting to produce products containing the super fruit.

The growing trade in baobab (a “keystone” species in the savannah eco-regions of Southern Africa) has been heralded as a win-win for both improving people’s lives in Africa and biodiversity by PhytoTrade Africa, the organisation that facilitated the decision and represents producers. “According to a report by UN’s Natural Resources Institute, more than 3 million of the poorest families in southern Africa could earn a life changing income by sustainably harvesting wild Baobab,” said Gus Le Breton, CEO of PhytoTrade Africa.

PhytoTrade Africa is the Southern African Natural Products Trade Association dedicated to helping low-income, rural communities in Southern Africa by developing ethical and sustainable trade in natural products. It represents baobab producers across eight Southern African countries. As a founding member of the UEBT, PhytoTrade Africa has its own internal Ethical BioTrade Charter to which all of its 50+ members, including baobab producers, are committed.

The white, powdery baobab fruit pulp looks like sherbet and can be blended with anything, and it is better suited as an ingredient rather than eaten on its own. The fruit powder has a unique tangy taste described a ‘caramel pear with subtle tones of grapefruit’. It is an easy and adaptable fruit to cook with and instantly boosts the nutritional value of any dish. In addition to its extraordinarily high levels of key nutrients, it acts as a flavour enhancer and yet another benefit of the baobab fruit for the health-conscious, is that less sugar can be used in cooking.

“The availability of baobab is timely with attention on South Africa with the World Cup taking place” Le Breton continues. “Consumers can now get hold of it directly for the first time and we expect food manufacturers to roll out their own baobab lines from smoothies to cereal bars and confectionery as they take advantage of the booming market in healthy, ethically traded, biodiversity friendly foods.”

A number of products containing baobab are already starting to hit shop shelves across Europe. Early products include, Yozuna Fairtrade African Baobab Fruit Jam, Baobab and chocolate spread, Baobab banana spread and Baobab lemonade. In addition, baobab fruit powder can be purchased for use in cooking at home.

For more information: www.yozuna.com

KEY NUTRIENTS IN BAOBAB INCLUDE...

- **Vitamin C**: three times as much vitamin C as an orange. Vitamin C aids the bodily uptake of iron and calcium.
- **Calcium**: it is rare for calcium to be found in large quantities in fruit and vegetables which is why in some regions it is used as a milk substitute for babies. It has twice as much calcium as milk and 5x per cent more calcium than spinach.
- **Iron**: it is a rich source of iron containing more than red meat, spinach, sardines or lentils.
- **Antioxidants**: twice as many antioxidants as goji berries and more than six times that of blueberries, cranberries and blackberries and over ten times more than oranges.
- **Potassium**: six times higher levels than bananas, dried apricots, spinach and avocados.
- **Magnesium**: it has more magnesium than spinach.