

# KAITE - Case Story



## Harvesting herbs for essential oils in Zimbabwe

KAITE is a company based in Zimbabwe, Africa, founded to realize the vision of sustainable, integrated economic, social and cultural development of the individual, society and environment. KAITE's model of work is socially responsible entrepreneurship. In the Shona language of Zimbabwe, "KAITE" means 'a task to be conscientiously fulfilled'. Hence KAITE's core social investments in primary health care, HIV and AIDS prevention and care, schooling and orphan care for the farming communities it works with. In line with this vision, KAITE became a member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) in 2010.

This document explores how KAITE is currently organizing the harvest of naturally occurring essential oil plants *Tagetes minuta* (khaki weed) and *Tarhonanthus camphorates* (camphor bush) in different regions of Zimbabwe and producing organic essential oils, using mobile stills especially engineered locally.



## Community Trading Grants

In 2010 KAITE was awarded a Community Trading Grant from UEBT and donor organisation the Doen Foundation, to help commercialise the harvesting and extraction of *Tagetes* and *Tarhonanthus* essential oils in Zimbabwe. The aim of the Community Trading Grants is to accelerate the implementation of the Ethical BioTrade Principles within local communities. KAITE is working towards meeting the UEBT requirements and will be conducting baseline studies in the areas where collections are done. Furthermore, there will be training of collectors on procedures of harvesting and conservation as well as on the rights of the communities and on Access and Benefit Sharing. With the help of KAITE and the Community Trading Grant, farmers can now earn an income through the collection and processing of plants that had no value in the past.

*Tarhonanthus camphorates*, the Camphor Bush, belongs to the Asteraceae (daisy) family. The camphor bush is widespread in Southern and tropical Africa. It grows in thickets of bushveld, grassland, forest and semi-desert.

*Tagetes minuta*, also called khakhi weed or stinking roger (for its strong scent), is found growing throughout Zimbabwe. It grows on fallow land and has traditionally at best been used as a sweeping broom or removed from the fields and discarded as a nuisance to the farmer. KAITE collects this plant from various parts of Zimbabwe.

## Use of the Plants

Collectors are trained to collect at most 50% of heads, flowers or leaves of the plants. The remainder is left in the field to allow for reseedling. In this way, the plants are not destroyed and remain intact after harvesting. In case of fire damage, seeds are scattered over the area to enable reseedling.

The oils that KAITE produces are used in the cosmetic industry (for perfumes) as well as in the pharmaceutical industries in Europe, the US as well as Asia, Middle East and South Africa. The oil is produced by means of steam distillation, which does not have negative effects on the environment or the people who are working at the processing unit. The distillation unit is mobile and is moved from area to area where the distillation is done on site. This helps reduce costs for and also makes the processing unit more accessible for collectors.

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## Ethical BioTrade Standard

Membership to UEBT means the organisation commits to putting in practice the principles of the Ethical BioTrade Standard (see table below). This means ensuring that its practices promote the sustainable use of natural ingredients while making sure that all contributors along the supply chain are paid equitable prices and share the benefits derived from the use of biodiversity. In this way the Ethical BioTrade Standard aim to further the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which are the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use, and the equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the use of genetic resources contained in biodiversity.

All UEBT members work to gradually implement the Ethical BioTrade Standard in their operations and along their supply chains involving natural ingredients. Regular third party audits are performed to track progress. Working towards the Ethical BioTrade Standard allows members to identify areas in their sourcing policies and practices that could be improved and provides third party verification to claims about ethical sourcing. Companies use their membership to UEBT as a way of underlining their commitment to biodiversity, as well as continuously improving their sourcing of natural ingredients.

Ethical BioTrade Principles and Criteria	
Biodiversity conservation	Preserving ecosystems and promoting practices that contribute to conservation plans and strategies.
Sustainable use	Sourcing practices promote the long-term ability of an ecosystem to function.
Fair and equitable benefit sharing	Use of biodiversity and traditional knowledge occurs on the basis of prior informed consent and the equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits.
Socio-economic sustainability	Adopting quality management and financial practices that are sustainable and socially acceptable.
Legal compliance	Respecting all relevant international, national and local regulations.
Respect for the rights of actors	Taking into account human rights and working conditions of indigenous and local communities.
Clarity about land tenure	Respecting land tenure and rights over natural resources.

## Ecological Impact

Traditionally, *Tagetes minuta* and *Tarhonianthus camphorates* were considered weeds and burnt. As they are now income generating plants for the communities where they are growing, these communities have a vested interest in preserving the plants, collecting sustainably and facilitating the reseeded and re-growth for the following year's harvest and thus the following year's income.

The Community Trading Grant is used to train collectors to discourage fires and to encourage the conservation of biodiversity. Also, preservation of seeds of the two varieties by collecting from the wild and commercially propagating under an organic environment, and thus facilitating natural interactions with other organisms will be promoted.

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## Social Impact

KAITE's vision is to improve the socio economic living standards of wild collectors and the communities they work with. One way to achieve this is the production of high value essential oils. Collectors are trained and communities themselves, in cooperation with KAITE team members, manage collection. Processing of the essential oil, conducted by KAITE team members, takes place in the communities.

Volumes utilized are increasing and, thus, are the benefits for the communities. The overall volume of the collected raw material is expected to go up from 300 tons of Tagete heads in the first year to 700 tons in year three. Similarly, the volume of Tarchonanthus leaves and flowers collected is planned to rise from 150 tons to 350 tons within the first three years of the project. Depending on the harvest rate, the oil extraction, the quality of the plants and other factors, the earnings per kg of distilled oil for a community are between 15 and 35 US\$/kg. In addition, in accordance with the Ethical BioTrade requirements on fair and equitable benefit sharing, prices are periodically reviewed. This income has resulted in a large improvement in the living standard of the communities.

To further empower the communities it is working with, KAITE is preparing a policy document that identifies and explains the range of community rights on land and natural resources in its areas of operation, as well as the measures taken to ensure that these rights are not affected or infringed upon. KAITE will provide training for the communities on these rights, included those related to land tenure and fair and equitable benefit sharing. In addition, KAITE is working to identify sites of cultural, ecological, economic and religious importance within the communities in which it is doing wild plant collections in order to be able to preserve these sites. This information and specific measures to be taken will be included in the policy document.

## Conclusion

In a politically strained environment, KAITE operates based on mutual trust and understanding which has cemented the relationships with the communities. KAITE is very pleased with the outcome so far and, given local enthusiasm for the partnership, expect to grow, together with the communities in which they are operating as the members of the communities have also been enthusiastic about the partnership.



**KAITE**  
UEBT membership since 2010  
Auditing Company - Afrisco Ecocert  
CTG Support - 20,023 Euros

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The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) is a non-profit association that promotes the 'Sourcing with Respect' of ingredients that come from biodiversity. Members commit to gradually ensuring that their sourcing practices promote the conservation of biodiversity, respect traditional knowledge and assure the equitable sharing of benefits all along the supply chain.

The DOEN Foundation's ambition is to help build a sustainable world in which everyone can participate. DOEN promotes sustainable, social and cultural pioneers among others†with the revenues of the Dutch Postcode Lottery. DOEN promotes people and enterprises that take the lead in the field of sustainable, cultural and social innovation. DOEN seeks out these innovators, supports and inspires them and brings them together.