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# The b-TAF Project

## botanicals Trusted and Authenticated Fingerprinting

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*b-TAF seeks to fill the gap of baseline data to standardise the commercial use of marula and baobab oil respectively.*

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The b-TAF project stands for the Botanicals Trusted and Authenticated Fingerprinting project which aims at Building a database of properties of indigenous oils to create sustainable biotrade, with a focus on economic impact in the marula and baobab value chain. This pilot project runs from November 2022 to August 2024.

### Background

The main aim of the project is to establish and build a database in support of the marula and baobab sectors for which growth strategies were created during the ABIOSA project. The main gap found by sector players refers to a lack of baseline data to standardise the commercial use of marula and baobab oil respectively; as well as to brace for the economic impact which adulteration may have on expanded use of these oils. This includes collecting data on the provenance and traditional use of and rituals around the harvesting, processing, and use of the oils; growing and/or cultivation conditions; seasonality; proven efficacy; ethical or fair cultivation/ production and processing systems; consumer or market trends; and innovative/ novel uses for these oils.

The specific concern around the adulteration of indigenous oils comes with the large-scale import and influx of commodity natural oils (eg, sunflower) which can be procured on the open market more cheaply and have, to the layperson, similar differences can be proven. This threatens the sustainability of biotrade of indigenous oils.

The most important data to be collected during the project are from quality and compositional testing. The database will be publicly accessible for marula and baobab sector players.

### How is b-TAF implemented?

#### b-TAF Partnerships

b-TAF is being implemented by Precision Oil Laboratories (POL) from Tzaneen, South Africa with the support of ABioSA. The research is supported by University of Pretoria (UP) and Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). The southern African cooperation partners are African Baobab Alliance



***Under b-TAF, some 100 samples will be tested, from across southern Africa.***

(ABA), Namibia Network of the Cosmetics industry (NANCI), Southern African Essential Oil Producer's Association (SAEOPA). Other business support organisations in the region with a focus on natural oils are welcome to join the initiative.

## How can you as producers or traders participate?

In this first phase, b-TAF seeks to test 42 crude marula and 30 crude baobab oil samples. Producers or traders of **crude** marula and/or baobab oil belonging to the above-mentioned organisations can send their samples for testing. Samples need to be sent from the producer/ trader directly to POL. Each seasonal batch of samples per participant will obtain a certificate of analysis. Where ABS legislation is in place, compliance must be adhered to.

## Sampling

The samples should originate from 2-3 consecutive harvesting seasons and from the same area where the producer sources her/his fruits or nuts from. The oil to be sent for testing should have been processed in the same manner over the 2-3 seasons. Optimally, the harvesting seasons of 2022, 2023 and 2024 would be captured. If a producer/ trader has older samples that are still intact, s/he are welcome to include them. Sample size is 2x100ml of crude oil per area, filled in amber glass bottles with minimal headspace. Logistics from production site to POL will be arranged and paid for by b-TAF.



## Further information

For any further details on participation, logistics for sampling, timelines, and regular feedback, please contact Ms Dagmar Honsbein, Project Manager on [dagmar@ixiss.org](mailto:dagmar@ixiss.org) or +264 (0)81 149 1086 also on WhatsApp, Telegram or WeChat.

POL can be reached at [admin@precisionoils.co.za](mailto:admin@precisionoils.co.za) or +27 (0)15 004 0010. All participants will receive regular updates on project progress, either via their business support organisations or directly from the project team.

**We stand ready to authenticate your natural oils.**

