



THE
MARULA
FRUIT PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION

Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea subsp. caffra*) is an abundant but under-utilised natural resource in southern Africa with vast economic potential.

The Marula Fruit Products Association (MFPA) will coordinate the development and growth of an industry based on the many potential food, beverage and nutritional ingredients and products derived from Marula fruit.

ABOUT MARULA



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Marula is a fruit-bearing tree from the same family as Avocado and Mango (*Anacardiaceae*). It is common in many parts of southern Africa and has ecological, economic and social significance. The ripe yellow Marula fruit is traditionally used to make beer and juices, and is being explored for its flavour, fragrance and nutritional potential in international food and beverage markets.

The tree is perennial and drought-resistant and produces an abundant crop. Commercial development of Marula could be key to future climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. The Marula fruit sector in southern Africa has potential to expand production and enter new export markets, stimulate rural development and create jobs.

Marula is classified as least concern status and not listed on CITES. Commercialisation of Marula can already draw from sustainable harvesting of the existing natural resource. Future development of the sector will benefit from improved genetic selection, domestication and cultivation. Carbon sequestration and biodiversity credits may contribute to sustainability of the sector.

MARULA & NUTRITION

Many claims have been made about the nutritional and phytochemical properties of Marula fruit juice, pulp and skin.

The Marula Fruit Products Association will help industry to present scientific evidence and verifiable data in support of the actual nutritional profile of Marula fruit ingredients.

Organisations with profiles of Marula fruit and its benefits include [ABioSA](#), [SANBI](#), [World Agroforestry Centre](#), and [PROTA](#). Further details are available in the [presentation](#) to the 2023 African Biotrade Festival about Marula and its potential as a new 'superfruit' from Africa.



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Access to export markets for Marula fruit products will require manufacturers and marketers to satisfy international regulators responsible for consumer food safety. For example, ingredients and products intended for the European Union will require compliance with EU Novel Foods Regulation [EU 2015/2283].

This is a priority task for the Marula Fruit Products Association, which will learn from the experience of the Baobab sector. Development of a strong Baobab economy in southern Africa was enabled by EU Novel Foods authorisation, Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) status in the USA through the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and approval for the Canadian Market through Health Canada.

EU Novel Foods authorisation requires the establishment of a Food Business Operator (FBO), a role which will be played by the Marula Fruit Products Association.

The FBO will be the entity responsible for ensuring compliance with regulations governing the introduction of food and drink products on the EU market.

The strategy of the MFPA is to secure authorisation in the EU and then use it to access the United States market through the FDA's GRAS regulations.

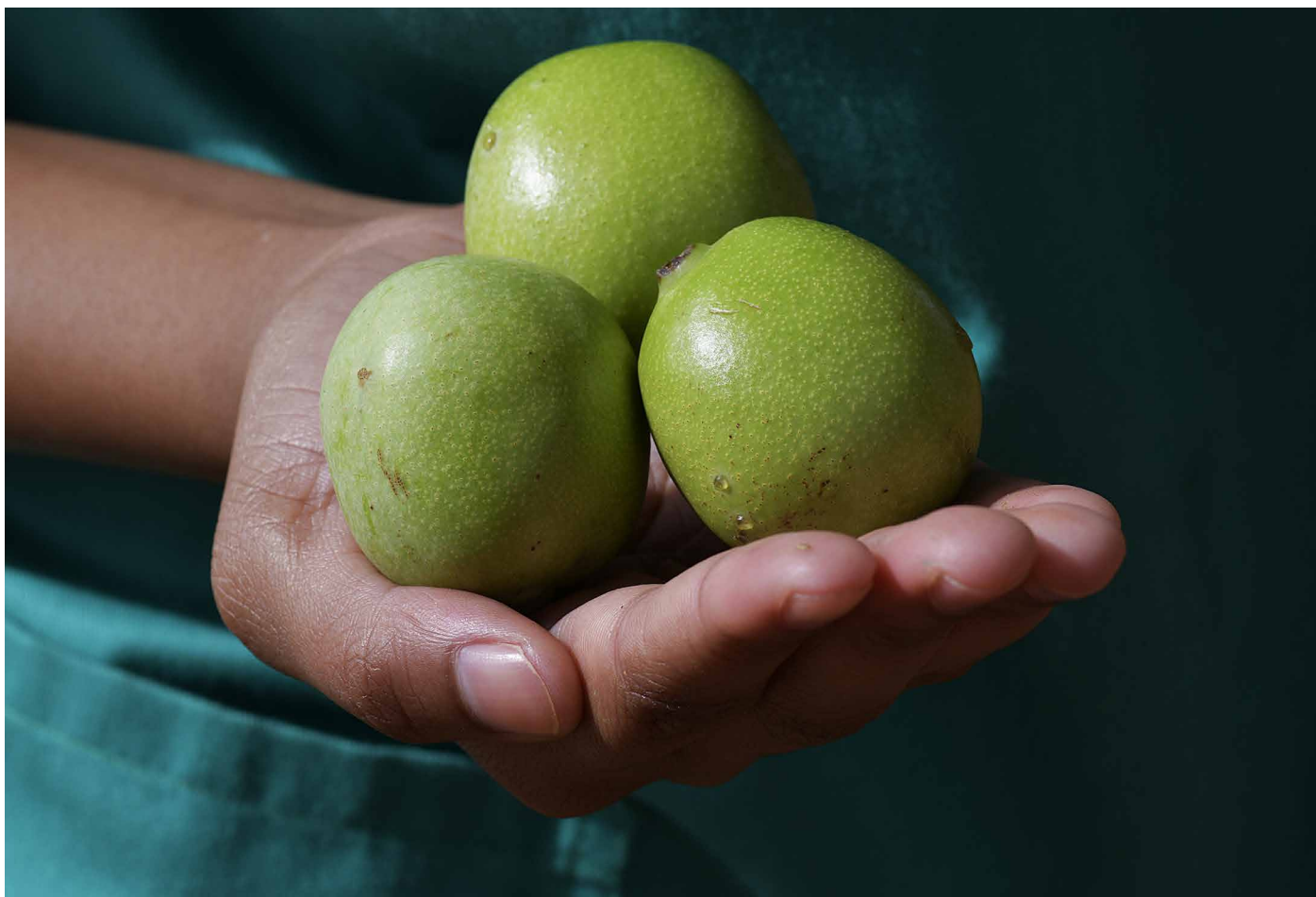
Compliance with Chinese market access regulations can also be supported by these dossiers and data. The MFPA will liaise with regulatory authorities in southern Africa to ensure coherence between local and export market approaches and standards.

ABOUT THE MFPA

The Marula Fruit Products Association (MFPA) will coordinate the development of a successful Marula fruit sector in southern Africa. The sector includes people and organisations in the Marula fruit value chain, from harvester and farmer communities and cooperatives to product developers, exporters and product manufacturers and marketers. The MFPA will work with traditional knowledge holders, government agencies, trade associations, food scientists and technologists, regulators, research institutions, investors and funders.

The sector must take account of differing national Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) regulations in southern Africa, ensure conservation and sustainable use, and will require evidence-based ecological, economic and social baseline data and monitoring. The MFPA will work with the relevant regulatory authorities to enable collective solutions to ABS compliance.

The association will actively engage companies and organisations in Europe to promote Marula fruit and advise them on progress with EU market access. It will assist the southern Africa membership to develop business relationships with these European companies. Key trade shows have been identified and discussions are underway with import promotion agencies.



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Establishment of the Marula Fruit Products Association is one of the ambitions in the Marula Sector Development [Plan](#) (SDP) developed in 2021.

The SDPs were developed with the facilitation support of the [ABioSA](#) project funded by SECO and implemented by GIZ.

SDPs are an industry and government roadmap which include production, market demand, employment, conservation & sustainable use, quality & testing, research, access & benefit sharing, regulatory issues and organisational strength.

Sector plans have also been developed for the Aloe, Baobab, Buchu, Honeybush and Essential Oils sectors.

MFPA MEMBERS

Membership of the Marula Fruit Products Association is open to people and organisations with a relevant interest in developing the commercial potential of Marula fruit. As the association develops it will create different categories of membership with specific benefits and services.

Categories under consideration include:

- Organised farmer and harvester groups
- Businesses including current and future processors and manufacturers of Marula fruit products
- Affiliates including researchers

The different categories will have benefits linked to different membership fees.

Fruit processors and manufacturers who form the core of the planned Food Business Operator (FBO) will have access to a large library of confidential and unpublished data and other information on Marula fruit, and the opportunity to participate in preparation for EU Novel Foods authorisation. These companies will benefit from first access to the EU market.

Farmer and harvester groups will be introduced to processing companies as potential partners and collaborators and will be helped to enter Marula fruit value chains.

The full details of membership, membership fees and benefits are under active discussion and various meetings and dialogues are underway.

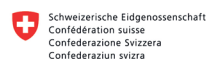


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CONTACT

Contact the Marula Fruit Products Association by email to cyril@biotradeventures.com Please include your contact details, name and company, and where you may fit into the Marula value chain.

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