



Certified karité butter from Mali

Börlind and sequa work with smallholders for increased supply security



The challenge

As one of the world's poorest countries, Mali is heavily dependent on world market prices for cotton and gold, its most important export commodities. Farming is also becoming increasingly important to the economy, and one interesting activity is the export of karité nuts and karité butter. The karité tree is a botanical anomaly. It reaches a height of just 15 to 20 metres and it takes two decades before the tree bears fruit. But its nuts carry a precious oil, which is made into karité butter, known in Africa as 'women's gold'. We also know it as shea butter. This vegetable fat, which is in high demand especially in the field of natural cosmetics, is produced almost exclusively by women.

The demand for organically grown karité butter is rising steadily, but supplies can hardly keep up. In order to meet the requirements of customers on the world market, quality standards must be observed over the entire karité butter production process. In particular cultivation and harvesting methods as well as high processing standards are important. However, the farmers in Mali lack the necessary know-how for implementing such measures.

'In the course of the project we were able to significantly improve the quality of our raw material, karité butter, and had it certified according to organic standards.'

Guylaine Le Loarer, Director of Research and Development at Börlind GmbH

The solution

On the occasion of its 50th company anniversary, the natural cosmetics manufacturer Börlind from the town of Calw in southern Germany launched a karité butter project in the community of Siokoro in Mali together with the non-governmental organisation Häuser der Hoffnung e.V. The aim was to meet the rising demand. Under this partnership Häuser der Hoffnung set up a factory for processing karité nuts into karité butter in Siokoro.

However, in order to carry out the necessary training measures for the staff, the two partners needed expert support, which they found in sequa gGmbH. A development partnership was established under the develoPPP.de programme, which sequa is implementing on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

Our services

The Jigiya Bon cooperative from Siokoro has 650 members. In a joint project of sequa and Börlind, men and women have been trained in order to achieve the necessary quantities and quality for certification of the karité butter in accordance with organic standards. Comprehensive training has been conducted in the areas of cultivation, harvesting, processing and selling and the cooperative has been supported in introducing a quality management system. In addition, a laboratory has been set up and laboratory workers have been trained. The project also included



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HIV/AIDS awareness-raising and hygiene education as well as a literacy programme for the cooperative members and other people living in Siokoro.

It was not long before the first signs of success emerged. The project in Mali was one of the winners of a BMZ innovations competition in 2012, which honours innovative projects resulting from successful development cooperation between the private sector and civil society in vocational education.

Impacts and results

- A modern laboratory has been set up to assess the karité butter produced for export to Europe. Two lab workers have been trained.
- Over 300 nut harvesters have been trained and are now in a position to cultivate, harvest and process karité nuts according to organic standards.
- The members of the Jigiya Bon cooperative have been trained to comply with the required hygiene standards in the harvesting and processing of karité butter.
- 14 extension workers in 8 villages have been trained in order to spread the know-how throughout the community and secure it over the long term.
- A quality manual has been created and the organic production processes have been communicated to the members of the cooperative in comprehensive training sessions.
- 114.75 ha of farmland and the factory for the production of karité butter in Siokoro have been certified by Ecocert.

Thanks to the develoPPP.de project, the Jigiya Bon cooperative in Siokoro produces up to 6 tonnes of karité butter that meets Ecocert criteria each year. It is of such high quality that it can be used by Börlind and other European cosmetics manufacturers in their products. Börlind was able to secure its long-term supply chain for organically produced karité butter from Mali with the help of the partnership.

The members of the cooperative now achieve higher incomes through quality improvements in the production of karité butter and can, for example, pay for their children to attend school.

At a glance

Duration	1 June 2011 – 31 May 2014
Country	Mali
Objective	Introduction of organic standards and certification of the karité nut production of the Jigiya Bon cooperative in the community of Siokoro.
Partners	Börlind in cooperation with Häuser der Hoffnung e.V. and sequa
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A laboratory for quality testing has been established.• Over 300 nut harvesters have been trained in the ecological production of karité butter.• 14 extension workers have been trained as multipliers.• 114.75 ha of cropland and the factory have been certified by Ecocert.• Approximately 6 tonnes of karité butter (and the volume is growing) can be produced annually to Ecocert criteria and exported.• The cooperative in Siokoro can achieve a higher income from the organic production of karité butter.

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