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The Kustha Project in Rwanda

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GENERAL INFORMATION ON OUR COMPANY

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GLOBAL COMPACT – CASE STUDY

THE KUSTHA PROJECT IN RWANDA

FAIR TRADE BUSINESS MODEL

The context

Based on the promising project idea to develop essential oils plants with outgrowers in Burundi, the Rwandan Government requested the International Trade Centre¹ (ITC) in 2005 to undertake a needs assessment mission to Rwanda. Potential stakeholders and partner organizations were met and the income generating and poverty reduction potential of essential oil production, especially patchouli, presented.

Subsequently, four private Rwandan entrepreneurs formed the EPCHER group to develop patchouli planting and processing in two project sites – Nasho, in the north-east and Bugarama, in the south-west of the country. Both sites are surrounded by many poor farmer communities who have land and time available to plant new crops as outgrowers. The Rwandan Government is very supportive of the project and has put 200 ha of land at the disposal of the outgrowers in Bugarama.

¹ The ITC is the joint technical cooperation agency of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).



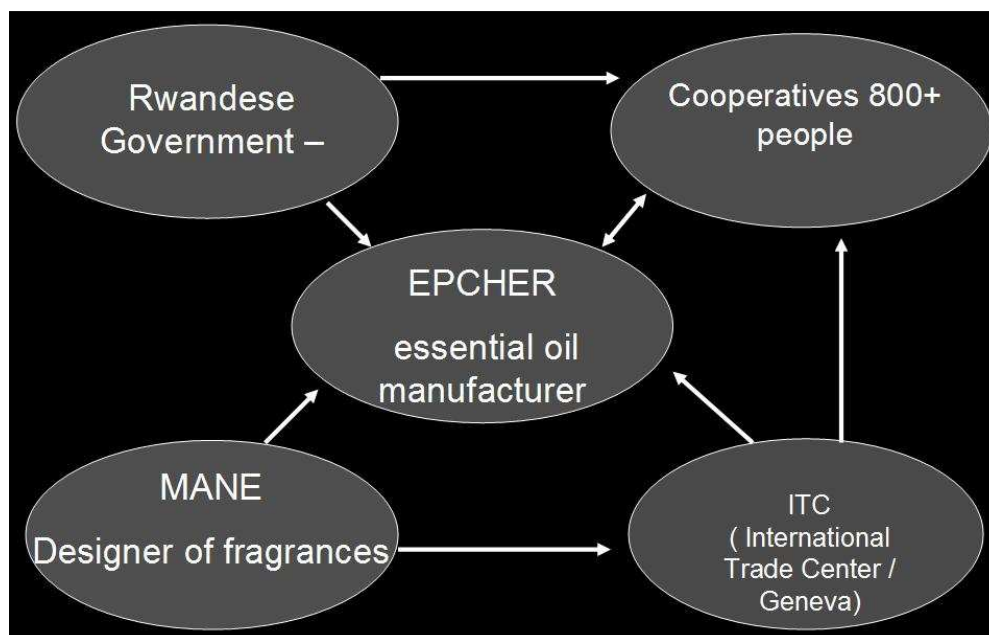
Nasho Plantation



Bugarama Plantation

Activities

The Bar-sur-Loup (France)-based fragrance company MANE signed into the Global Compact with the United Nations in July 2003, thus committed to align their operations and strategies with principles in the area of human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. Contacted by the experts and the Rwandan Government, MANE has shown interest in buying the Rwandan essential oil, and has become a partner of EPCHER and the local farmers of Nasho and Bugarama, in order to develop fair trade business activity with the support of ITC.



MANE is also committed to assisting EPCHER to optimize the quality and yield of its produce by transferring technology and know-how. The company also guides them and shares its knowledge on a regular basis. Moreover EPCHER was allocated the proper equipment (alambic, etc...) to distill the oil from the patchouli leaves by the ITC. And on each site EPCHER has a distillery to extract the dry leaves of patchouli that are cropped by the communities. The communities have the responsibility to grow patchouli and EPCHER has a system in place to dry the leaves (3 months) before extracting the oil.



MANE has not only committed to buying the complete production of the project's essential oil at a fair and stable price, but is also to testing samples of the oil at their laboratories and training two members of the project in oil extraction and international quality requirements at their company site. Sourcing from EPCHER will allow MANE to offer their more and more conscious clients a fair trade product line.

Results achieved so far

The ITC works with two renowned consultants to train the communities to grow patchouli. Also they are continuously studying the soil to improve the yield of the crops. The first results have been successful and they are looking forward to this year's production.

EPCHER has planted patchouli multiplication fields in Bugarama and Nasho and has started to provide seedlings to outgrowers in early 2007. Two patchouli distillation plants, designed by the ITC expert and constructed by a Kenyan company were delivered to the project in Spring 2007 and first distillation trials have been made.

Impact on the poor

It is expected that by 2009, about 2,000 poor farmers will be able to increase their income by selling dried patchouli leaves to EPCHER.

