

Finding the niche farming in harmony with nature:
Fairtrade Biodiversity Friendly Rooibos



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Suid Bokkeveld – Landscape context



- 380km from CT
- Falls within GCBC domain
- Northernmost geographic reach of Fynbos & rooibos distribution area
- *Organically and fairtrade certified*

Heiveld Co-operative - Brief Background



- Established in 1999
- Membership = 54
- Produces wild and cultivated rooibos for direct export
- Annually supplies bulk and locally packaged rooibos to niche markets
- *Organically and fairtrade certified*

Wild and cultivated rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*)

Wild

More resistant to drought, pests, disease

Harvested once every two years – or less

Resprouters

Cultivated

Less resilient to disturbance, pests and disease

Harvested once every year – replanted every 6-8 yrs

Reseeders

Wild rooibos – a natural asset

Economic

Contributes to
Business
sustainability

Supply
continuity

Social

Cultural
valuation

Valued source
of income

Ecological

Nitrogen fixation

Disturbance adaptability

Certification

Certified organic producers since the Co-operative was founded.

First rooibos producer in the world to be certified by Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) and by Naturland.



Fairtrade advocates...



Stable prices

- Prices that at least cover sustainable production costs
- Allows producers to negotiate realistic prices despite market fluctuations



Fairtrade premium

- Paid on top of agreed price
- Used at producers' discretion, generally for organisational development & community contributions



Partnership

- Involvement and participation in decision-making
- Negotiation of own prices



Empowerment of farmers and workers – promotes democracy and transparency in governance.

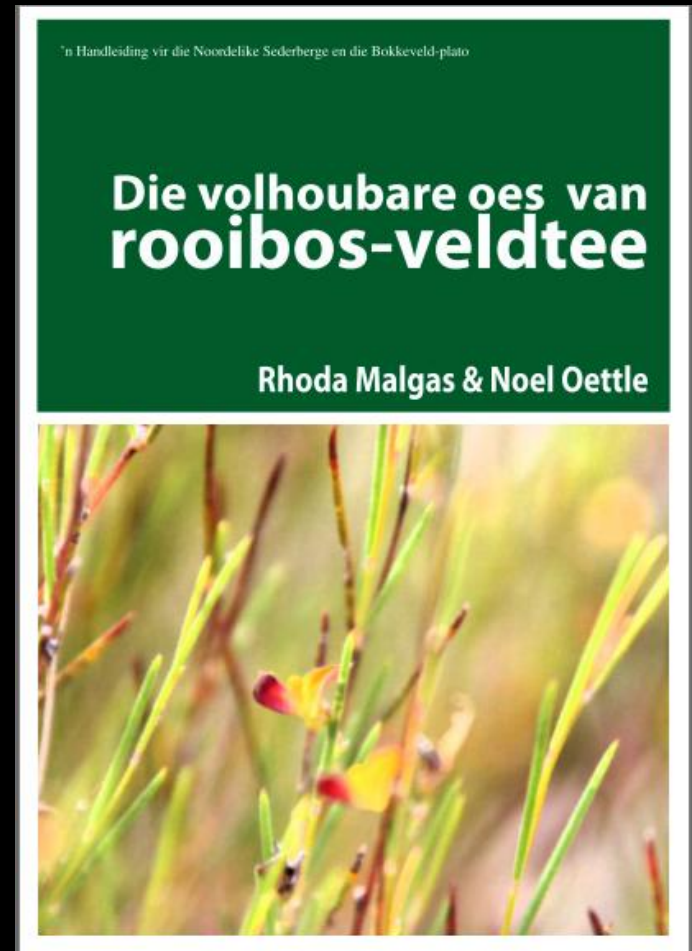
The role of research in self-governance and resource use

Based on the outcomes of a participatory based MSc. research project completed at UCT in 2006, the Heiveld has developed a policy on sustainable harvesting of wild rooibos.

Land-users are obliged to harvest between 50 – 70% of harvestable volume, and above a stem diameter of 2-5mm.

Wild resprouting plants are harvested once every two years, or less often, depending on rainfall.

An example of how research results can support governance of wild natural resources...



Finding the niche...

- Small-scale landusers have difficulty accessing sound markets
- Wild harvested indigenous products are, well, wild!
- Resource-poor communities usually with low formal education, limited access to land, insecure tenure, but other resources often ignored
- Opportunities through niche markets exist, but require large investments of time, energy and knowledge to access and maintain them

They Heiveld has harnessed the local knowledge and wisdom amongst their members and partners to enhance economic, social and ecological sustainability with wild rooibos— can we?



Thank you...

