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**NAMIBIA**

# SUCCESS STORY

## Namibia Launches Cosmetics Industry

**A woman develops a national skin care brand with local ingredients**



Photo: ECI Africa/Tulimeyo Kaapanda

An advertisement for Neema Cosmetics skin care products.

***After Neema Cosmetics becomes an established brand in Namibia and the region, its products may even find their way onto pharmacy shelves in the United States and Europe.***

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For years, Namibia has exported natural oils for use as ingredients in world-class beauty creams and lotions. While Namibian women use these natural oils in traditional treatments, they have not been commercialized within Namibia. Thanks to the innovation of Esther Hoveka and support from USAID, the face of Namibia's cosmetics industry is changing.

Esther Hoveka always dreamed of launching her own cosmetic line using natural oils from Namibia. She started experimenting with a set of cosmetic products made from Marula kernel and Kalahari Melon seed oil, producing body lotions and face creams informally. They sold quite well among friends and colleagues, so she decided to launch a commercial line of skin care products.

To expand her market share and establish her brand, Hoveka needed to invest in research and development and business planning. As a small business with limited capital, she needed outside financing. USAID helped fund a feasibility study and a marketing strategy for her brand: Neema Cosmetics. The company used these documents in its loan application to a leading bank in Namibia.

Launching a new brand requires a well-devised strategy. To help Neema Cosmetics enter the market with a splash, USAID helped the company develop product labels, print marketing materials such as posters and pamphlets, and secure participation in trade fairs in Southern Africa. Neema Cosmetics was officially introduced to the market in August 2005 and the brand now retails at pharmacies and beauty parlors. By 2007, Neema Cosmetics expects its sales to grow from about \$7,000 in its first month to approximately \$375,000 per year.

As sales increase, rural communities in Namibia will benefit from the income they earn by providing the raw materials for the cosmetics. In addition, Neema products have a promising export potential within the Southern Africa region, where traditional oils are well known and trusted. And who knows, after Neema Cosmetics becomes an established brand in Namibia and the region, its products may even find their way onto pharmacy shelves in the United States and Europe.