

Entering the European market for ximenia oil

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Entering the European cosmetics market requires understanding strict EU regulations. These include the EU Cosmetics Regulation and REACH. Exporters of Ximenia oil must ensure high product quality and traceability to meet buyers' expectations and compete with suppliers from countries like Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The best way to enter the European market is through importers. However, it is important to add value to your oil to compete with other oils that offer similar benefits at lower prices.

Contents of this page

1. [What requirements and certifications must Ximenia oil meet to be allowed on the European market for cosmetics?](#)
2. [Through which channels can you get Ximenia oil on the European market?](#)
3. [What competition do you face on the European Ximenia oil market?](#)
4. [What are the prices of Ximenia oil on the European market?](#)

1. What requirements and certifications must Ximenia oil meet to be allowed on the European market for cosmetics?

To export Ximenia oil to the European Union (EU), you have to comply with several requirements. There are no legal obligations applicable to non-EU countries, but you should understand the EU regulatory context and additional buyer requirements well. This will ensure that you produce an ingredient that the cosmetics industry can use and that your offering truly meets buyers' expectations.

For a detailed overview of the applicable requirements, please refer to our study on [buyer requirements for cosmetic ingredients for cosmetics](#) or consult the specific requirements for your product in [Access2Markets](#).

What are the mandatory requirements?

There are no legal obligations for non-EU countries. However, it is crucial for exporters who want to enter the European market to be familiar with the following regulations and to adapt their operations accordingly. By doing so, you can help companies subject to these regulations. European buyers appreciate this proactive approach. It can make you a more attractive trading partner and help you reduce barriers to market entry.

EU Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009 on Cosmetic Products

European cosmetics legislation ([Regulation \(EC\) 1223/2009](#)) sets out rules to ensure the safety of cosmetic products. These rules protect human health and the proper functioning of the internal cosmetics market. Specific requirements for cosmetic ingredients can be found in the cosmetics legislation for final products. This regulation also contains annexes listing [more than 1,600 ingredients that are prohibited or restricted](#) in cosmetic products sold in the EU. Restricted ingredients are subject to conditions of use and warnings, as well as a maximum concentrations in ready-for-use preparation. Ximenia oil is not included in this list of annexes.

Annex I of the Cosmetics Regulation provides a non-exhaustive guide to the minimum requirements for cosmetic ingredients for manufacturers. These requirements guide what suppliers of cosmetic ingredients have to ensure to successfully sell to manufacturers. It also guides what you need to comply with to sell to European importers as an exporter of Ximenia Oil.

Before placing cosmetic products on the EU market, European legislation requires manufacturers prepare Cosmetic Product Safety Reports. These documents require data on ingredients' composition and other quality and safety parameters. Suppliers have to provide well-structured documentation on product's physical-chemical compositions, including impurities, microbiological quality and toxicological profile. The documentation includes:

- Technical Data Sheet – TDS (e.g. [TDS from Biottonia Essences](#))
- Certificates of Analysis – CoA (e.g. [Soapmaker Store's CoA](#))
- Safety Data Sheets – SDS (e.g. [SDS from Biottonia Essences](#))
- Organic certification where applicable
- Microbial tests (if requested)
- Phytosanitary certificates (if requested)
- Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) certificate (if requested)
- Certificate of origin (if requested)

EU Regulation (EC) 1907/2006 on Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals

[Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals](#) (REACH) ([Regulation \(EC\) 1907/2006](#)) aims to protect human health and the environment from chemicals manufactured and used in the European Union. Cosmetic ingredients, including natural ingredients, are chemicals. If they fall within the scope of REACH, the importer or manufacturer needs to register them with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). Registration applies to importers and manufacturers of non-exempt substances that import or manufacture more than one tonne annually.

Ximenia oil is exempt from REACH registration regardless of imported or manufactured quantities because it is considered a non-chemically modified vegetable oil. However, you still need to provide a Safety Data Sheet with information about the oil's properties, potential hazards and safe handling practices.

EU Regulation (EC) 1272/2008 on Classification, Labelling, and Packaging of Chemicals

The [Classification, Labelling and Packaging of chemicals](#) regulation (CLP) aims to ensure that the hazards presented by chemicals are communicated to workers and consumers in the EU through classification and labelling of chemicals. The regulation requires European manufacturers and importers to classify, label and package hazardous chemicals appropriately in their substances and mixtures before placing them on the market.

The CLP is a piece of EU legislation derived from the [UN Globally Harmonised System of Classification, Labelling of Chemicals](#) (GHS). Most countries have also derived legislation based on UN GHS guidance. This has created a kind of safety net between individual states.

Hazard labels and safety data sheets communicate the presence of hazards to users. Even though Ximenia oil is not hazardous, you have to label it correctly. Labels should include the product name, INCI name, CAS number, batch code, place of origin and storage conditions.

Global Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

To trade plant materials and their derivatives, you have to check their status on the CITES database. Your product will be stopped at the border if it does not comply. You have to comply with requirements on trading plant resources that have been agreed internationally under the [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of wild fauna and flora](#) (CITES). While there are no restrictions on *Ximenia americana*, exporters must ensure their plants are not endangered. As a result, knowing the botanical names of the species you are handling is essential.

Tips:

Read our study on [buyer requirements for cosmetic ingredients for cosmetics](#) to learn about the requirements suppliers have to satisfy.

See our [workbook on preparing a technical dossier for cosmetic ingredients](#) for more information and tips on documentation requirements.

Provide buyers with detailed information on composition, quality, traceability and sustainability. You also have to show where your product comes from and where it is processed.

Regularly check the [EU's list of banned substances](#) to ensure your natural ingredients comply.

What additional requirements and certifications do buyers often have?

European buyers and importers expect consistent and high-quality products.

Quality requirements

Ximenia oil should be pale yellow to golden yellow, have a mild odour, a peroxide value below 10 meq O₂/kg and an acid value below 1 mgKOH/g. Several factors can influence the active components of *Ximenia* oil and its efficacy. These include the fruit's maturity, the drying conditions of the seeds, extraction methods, oil purification and filtration, and the storage and preservation of the end cosmetic product.

Monitoring these factors is important to ensure the oil meets European standards. Proper handling and storage are crucial. They prevent deterioration from exposure to oxygen, humidity, heat and light. You should also regularly test your oil for free fatty acid (FFA) and peroxide values during storage.

Importers will check the quality of pre-shipment samples and delivered orders to ensure they match the specifications and Certificates of Analysis (CoA) sent by the supplier. The samples must match your documentation and agreed specifications. You should also avoid adulteration because most countries have strict controls to detect potential adulterants. If there are undeclared substances in your product, they will likely be detected. In case of detection, the product will be useless for the buyer, you will not be paid, and your business and reputation will be harmed.

Quality management standards

European buyers often prefer suppliers that follow recognised quality management standards like HACCP and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). These practices help ensure product safety and consistency, improve your credibility as an exporter and show your commitment to providing high-quality *Ximenia* seed oil. They also help showcase compliance with mandatory requirements.

European buyers of *Ximenia* oil for cosmetics expect suppliers to follow [Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points \(HACCP\)](#) principles in their processing facilities to ensure product safety for cosmetic applications.

Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) are not required for cosmetics ingredient producers. However, compliance can provide advantages. The European Federation for Cosmetic Ingredients has developed [guidelines to help producers implement GMP in their companies](#). It also offers a certification scheme. Following basic GMP and HACCP practices will help you deliver a good and reliable level of quality.

Sustainability requirements

European buyers face increasing pressure from the EU to make sure their supply chains are sustainable and transparent. The most important new developments to be aware of are the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence directive](#). Both proposals will indirectly affect you if you do business with European companies.

One of European buyers' primary considerations is transparent supply chains that can be easily traced, partly because of these developments. Buyers want guarantees that products can be traced back to their source to ensure good social and environmental practices throughout the chain.

Suppliers should show good Corporate Social Responsibility practices. For example, they should develop a code of conduct and improve performance in key areas, by improving working conditions in supply chains and limiting damage to the environment. Look at social responsibility and sustainability platforms like the [Supplier Ethical Data Exchange \(SEDEX\)](#). These platforms [provide tools and guidance for suppliers and organisations to operate ethically](#) and to source responsibly. They also facilitate the sharing of this information with potential customers. This means adopting CSR practices can help you meet buyers' expectations.

Labelling requirements

Suppliers of Ximenia seed oil need to include product documentation and labelling to comply with legal and buyer requirements. Labelling must include:

- Product name/International Nomenclature Cosmetic Ingredient (INCI) name
- Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS) number
- Batch code or number
- Place of origin
- Name and address of exporter
- Date of manufacture
- Best before date
- Net weight or volume
- Recommended storage conditions
- Organic certification number, along with the name/code of the certifying inspection body if you export organic-certified Ximenia oil

Label your products in English unless your buyer wants you to use a different language.

Packaging requirements

European buyers have specific packaging requirements to preserve product quality. In general, Ximenia oil is transported in UN-grade clean, new, 25 kg jerry cans for small volumes. Be sure to label them correctly with the date of manufacture to ensure proper stock rotation

Unrefined cold-pressed Ximenia oil has a long shelf life (two to three years from the date of pressing) provided it is stored in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, away from heat and light. You should also keep your containers closed to avoid cross-contamination. You can also use a headspace gas, such as carbon dioxide, to reduce the risk of oxidation.

Tips:

Always ask your buyer for specific packaging requirements to ensure you meet their expectations. Packaging requirements can vary from buyer to buyer, so it is important to communicate and agree on terms and conditions. Sticking to these agreements will ensure a reliable supply chain.

See the [Codex Alimentarius for named vegetable oils](#) for general information about oil quality standards.

Check [our study on tips for organising exports](#) for information on international payment terms and customs policy.

Read our [study on the impact of the European Green Deal \(EGD\) on exporters](#) and suppliers to understand the obstacles and opportunities that the EGD and its related regulations may present.

Make sure that your fatty acid profile includes every fatty acid, especially the ximenynic acid. This acid sets Ximenia oil apart from other vegetable oils, so it should be given special focus.

What are the requirements for niche markets?

Consumer concerns about environmental and social issues mean European buyers have become stricter in their requirements for the sustainable production. Buyers increasingly want ingredients with voluntary standards and certifications, especially in niche markets where certification of sustainable practices is a requirement.

Figure 1: Niche certification standards for the European cosmetic sector



Source: [Cosmos Standard](#), [UEBT](#), [NaTrue](#), [Fair for Life](#) and [FairWild](#)

The natural cosmetics market is the largest and most important niche market. The definition of natural and organic cosmetics is based on private sector standards [NaTrue](#), [Cosmos](#), [ISO 16128-1](#) and [ISO 16128-2](#). Natural ingredients and raw materials can be COSMOS certified [if they comply with specific organic content](#). Non-organic ingredients can only apply for COSMOS approval. The same applies to the NaTrue standard, according to which a raw material can be NaTrue-certified or approved [depending on whether it comes from organic agriculture or not](#).

Organic is another important niche market closely related to the natural cosmetics market. Producers have to implement organic farming techniques to market Ximenia oil as an organic ingredient in the EU. They also need to have their facilities audited by an accredited certifier. The rules for organic production and labelling requirements are specified in [EU Regulation 848/2018](#). Relevant standards in the organic cosmetics market include NaTrue, Cosmos, [Soil Association Organic](#), [BDIH Certified Natural Cosmetics](#) and [ICEA Eco Bio cosmetics](#). Specifically for ingredients, [BDIH requires raw materials of plant origin to be organic](#) certified, while [ICEA requires ingredients of natural origin from organic-certified agriculture](#).

Fairtrade production is a small niche market in terms of cosmetic ingredients. It covers important issues like human and workers' rights, community wellbeing and local development. The fairtrade market for Ximenia oil is very small, and there are few Ximenia oil suppliers with certifications like [Fair for Life](#).

Small producers for whom private certification standards are too expensive or unnecessary can also choose to implement alternative self-certifiable standards. The ISO 16128 standards [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) provide guidelines on the definitions and criteria for natural and organic cosmetic ingredients and products. These standards allow new market entrants to demonstrate what they can do.

Tips:

Consult the [COSMOS](#) and [NATRUE](#) databases to learn more about the products, ingredients and companies that have been [certified](#) or [approved](#).

Find out if there is a market for your products before you certify them. Although buyers value an organic certificate for ingredients, applying for organic certification is not interesting for every producer. Only SMEs in developing countries who can deal with certification, conversion and administrative costs should get certified. This mostly applies to producers that supply considerable volumes, are able to share costs with cooperative members and organic buyers, and those who already produce organic.

Learn more about fairtrade certification and standards in [our study on social certifications](#).

2. Through which channels can you get Ximenia oil on the European market?

Ximenia oil is mainly used in skincare products in Europe. The primary channel to enter the market is importers and distributors that directly buy natural ingredients from exporters.

How is the end-market segmented?

In terms of industry use, the end market for cosmetics can be divided into five main product categories: skincare, toiletries, hair care products, fragrances/perfumes and decorative cosmetics.

Source: Cosmetics Europe & Euromonitor International, 2023

Ximenia oil is mainly found in the skincare cosmetics segment, [the largest segment in the European cosmetics market](#). It makes up 29% of the market and recorded the third highest growth (10%) between 2022 and 2023. Ximenia oil is commonly used in skincare products due to its skin conditioning and emollient properties. It is

marketed as a moisturising, hydrating and cleansing beauty product.

Another important segment for Ximenia oil is hair care products. Some cosmetics manufacturers already use Ximenia oil in shampoos, conditioners and hair masks. This segment makes up 18% of Europe's cosmetics market. Between 2022 and 2023, the hair care segment recorded a growth rate of 8.1%.

The oil quality depends on its application. For example, traditionally processed oil is often used in the hair care segment because it is [considered the best for hair solutions](#). Cold-pressed oil is mainly used in cosmetic and anti-stretch mark formulations. Meanwhile, light-refined oil is best used in the skin care segment, especially for anti-ageing applications.

Tips:

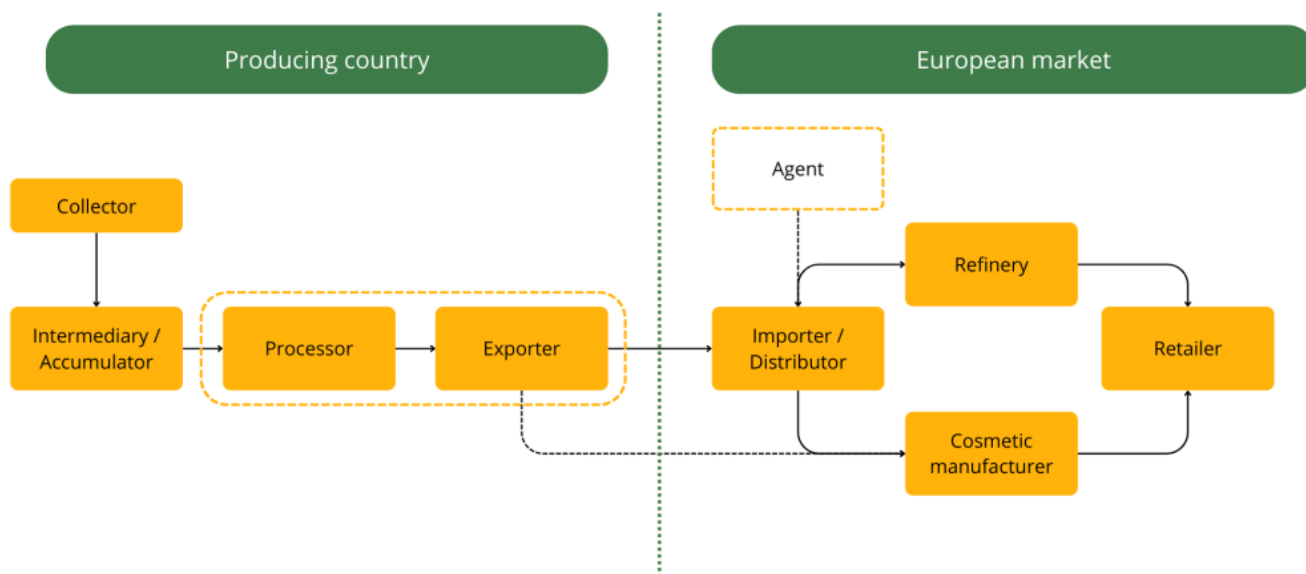
Look at trade fair catalogues (e.g. [in-cosmetics](#)) and websites that specialise in promoting ingredients (e.g. [SpecialChem](#)) to find potential buyers in each segment.

Get familiar with the benefits that Ximenia oil offers the cosmetics industry, such as its emollient and skin conditioning properties.

Through which channels does a product end up on the end-market?

In Europe, trade in Ximenia oil is not too concentrated. Large players are responsible for importing bulk vegetable oils, while small companies are more likely to be interested in niche, low-volume oils like Ximenia. The figure below shows how processing and exporting in countries of origin are often combined in the same company. It is uncommon for Ximenia seed oil exporters to sell to European consumers directly. Currently, most Ximenia oil enters the European market through importers and distributors

Figure 3: Main European distribution channels for Ximenia oil



Source: [ProFound](#), 2024

Importers and Distributors

Importers and distributors are your main target customers. They make cosmetic ingredients available on the EU market, buying directly from exporters, often in large quantities. Distributors work as intermediaries in the supply chain and downstream entities in the distribution channel. They check the quality of the oil to ensure it meets EU standards. They also refine it, either themselves or through refiners, before selling to cosmetic manufacturers for their products. However, exporters should also carry out their checks before exporting.

Some examples of European distributors and importers that already deal in Ximenia oil include:

Aston chemicals (UK) – Distributes natural oils, butters and waxes to the European personal care industry. It has two facilities; one in the UK and one in Poland. Aston chemicals offers Ximenia seed oil from South Africa. It also develops formulations to demonstrate benefits of its products, and it makes products according to customers' desires.

Aldivia (France) – Specialises in the sourcing, design, manufacturing and marketing of plant-based lipids for cosmetics and industry. It offers several oils and butters, including Ximenia seed oil, and derivatives such as Ximenia seed oil PEG-8 esters and Ximenia seed oil polyglyceryl-6 esters.

Biottonia Essences (Spain) – Imports and produces essential oils, vegetable oils and natural exfoliants for several industries, including marula, moringa and Ximenia seed oils. It has farms in Spain and Angola, so it has complete control over product traceability. Biottonia Essences offers products with both organic and non-organic certification.

O&3 (UK) – Distributes natural oils, butters and waxes all over Europe. It has three production facilities in the UK and a supply facility in Poland. O&3 offers Ximenia oil cold-pressed from South Africa.

Unifect (UK) – Has a portfolio of over 2,000 products. It sources Ximenia seed oil directly from South Africa.

Phileol (France)– Specialises in sourcing, processing and marketing vegetable oils. It manages the supply chain for their Comptoir des Huiles brand. The company focuses on sustainably sourced and ethically produced oils and is Ecocert, Fair for Life and Agriculture Biologique certified. Phileol works closely with local communities, mainly in Madagascar, to grow and process Ximenia oil and other products.

Refinery

Once in Europe, Ximenia seed oil often undergoes a second processing stage. Refining is commonly carried out in Europe. This is done because of the high quality requirements in the market and the need for oils that are standard in terms of their colour and odour. Refiners source Ximenia seed oil from importers, distributors and directly from exporters. Note that some importers also do refining, and some importers use the toll refining services of some refineries. Refineries sometimes package the refined oil for retail sales in smaller packages, at the request of manufacturers and brands. Examples of refineries include **AAK** (Sweden), **ZOR**, **Special Refining Company** (the Netherlands) and **Natura-Tec** (France).

Manufacturers

Manufacturers produce cosmetic products and market them under their name or brand. Most cosmetic manufacturers source their raw materials from refiners, distributors and wholesalers. Brands sometimes recommend manufacturers suppliers to buy from, especially to suppliers they have special relationships with. It is not common for small exporters from developing countries to supply refiners and manufacturers directly.

Cosmetic manufacturers use Ximenia oil in products like face creams, hair conditioners and body lotions. European manufacturers that already use Ximenia oil in their beauty products include **Drunk Elephant**, **Liz Earle** and **Wet n Wild**.

Some cosmetic manufacturers that focus on sustainability source directly because of their business philosophy. Through direct sourcing, buyers can guarantee transparent and short supply chains. Note that manufacturers that buy from exporters directly have higher expectations for quality and logistics because there is no processing stage that transforms the imported raw material into a cosmetic ingredient suitable for their requirements.

What is the most interesting channel for you?

European importers and distributors are your most important entry point into the market. Distributors usually arrange for refining before selling to cosmetics manufacturers for certain products. Generally, the most successful way to access markets is to create a network of distributors in different European countries.

Tips:

Target European ingredient importers or refiners that specialise in small, speciality oils if you can produce Ximenia oil with a unique selling point.

Check buyers' websites to find out if they work with certified ingredients. Buyers that do not are unlikely to pay a premium for certification.

Visit and participate in trade fairs to test market receptivity, get market information and find potential business partners. The most relevant trade fairs in Europe are **in-cosmetics** (a travelling trade fair), **Beyond Beauty** (France) and **SANA** (Italy). **Vivaness** is an interesting trade fair for organic producers (Germany).

See our studies on **finding buyers** for natural ingredients for cosmetics for more information.

3. What competition do you face on the European Ximenia oil market?

The European market for vegetable oils in cosmetics is competitive. There are many suppliers from different countries that offer similar products. The market for Ximenia seed oil is not very large compared to other ingredients. However, there is a lot of competition for exporters from other suppliers and other oils. To succeed in this market, you need to understand who your competitors are and find ways to make your product stand out.

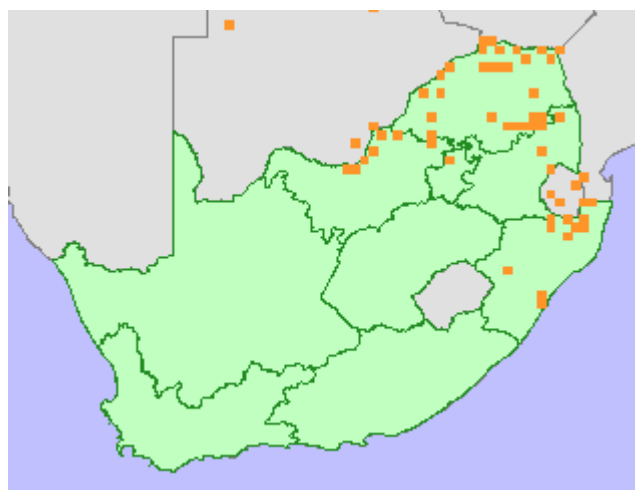
Which countries are you competing with?

Ximenia is grown in several countries and can be sourced from several places, mainly in Africa and South America. Due to the lack of data on Ximenia production and trade, it is impossible to know exactly which countries are the largest exporters of Ximenia seed oil and how much is exported to Europe. In this study, given the long history of traditional use, the largest competitors are assumed to be in southern Africa.

South Africa has a relevant export market of Ximenia oil

Ximenia has a long history of traditional use in South Africa. The plant is mainly found in KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Limpopo and North West provinces.

Figure 4: Presence of Ximenia trees and shrubs in South Africa



Source: [Red List of South African Plants](#)

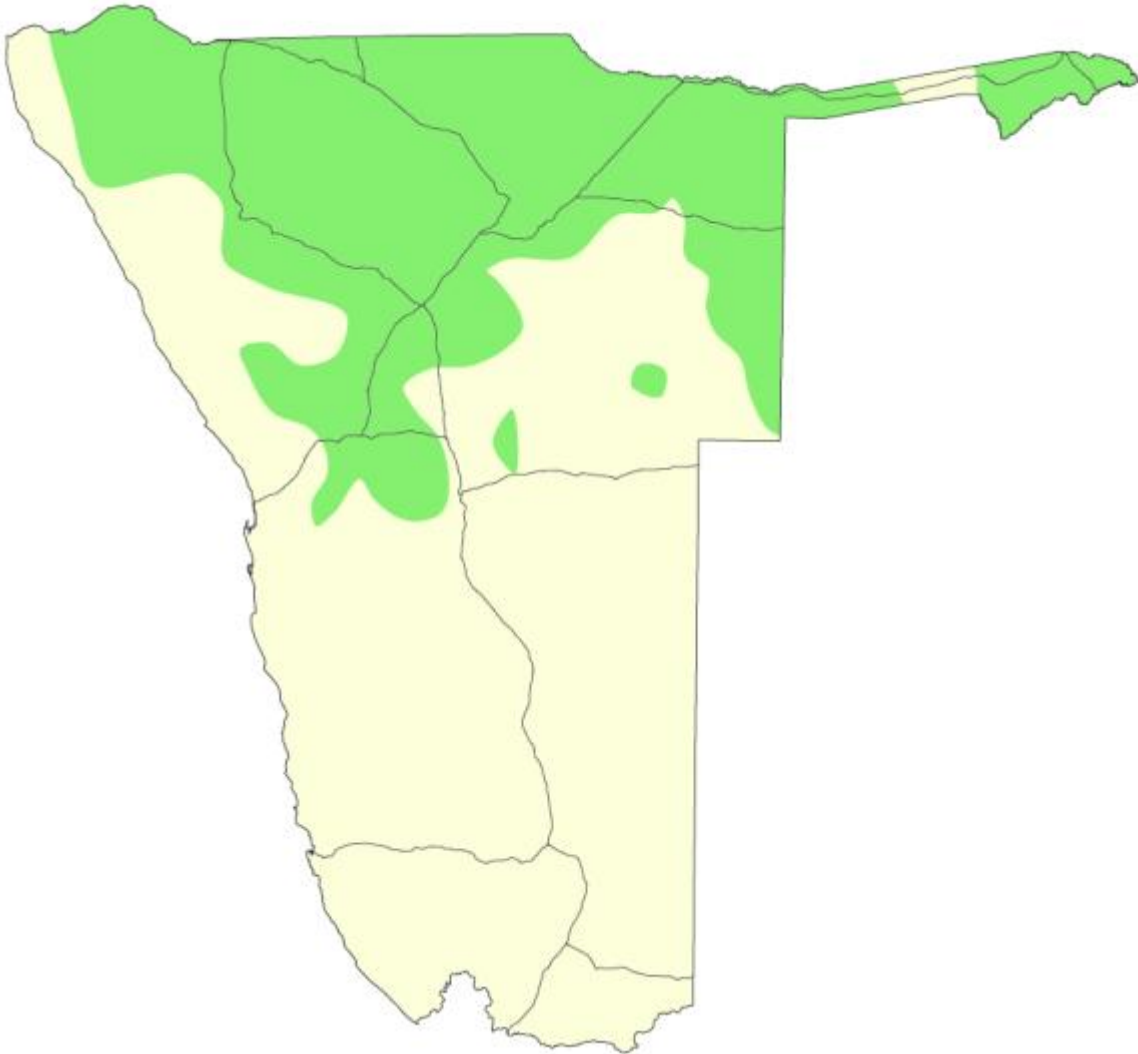
In 2023, South Africa exported 2,778 tonnes of vegetable oils under HS code 151590. South African exports grew on average by 13% per year between 2019 and 2023. The highest volume was recorded in 2022, when 4,158 tonnes were exported. In 2023, a significant share of exports went to Europe, mainly to Germany (230 tonnes), Portugal (215 tonnes), Italy (117 tonnes) and Spain (109 tonnes).

Namibia has a long history with Ximenia and Ximenia oil

Namibia has a wide range of plants that have medicinal, cosmetic and nutritional value. Recently, the country has promoted some of these plants and derivative products to make money, especially for rural women. Ximenia was included in the 'pipeline' list of priority species to be promoted, along with other indigenous natural products, such as marula oil, dried devil's claw and morama bean.

Sour plum (*Ximenia americana*) trees and shrubs grow extensively across northern Namibia. Ximenia has a long tradition of use in northern Namibia. The plant's roots, bark, leaves and seed oil are used for traditional remedies and personal care.

Figure 5: Presence of Ximenia trees and shrubs in Namibia



Source: [Atlas of Namibia](#)

Namibia is [one of the main producers and exporters](#) of Ximenia oil. The [Tulongeni Twahangana](#) cooperative (TTC) is Namibia's largest Ximenia oil producer. It focuses on harvesting Ximenia fruits and producing and selling premium-quality Ximenia kernels for further processing. This cooperative has been running since 2012. It has more than 1,000 members, 98% of which are women. The TTC benefits greatly from its partnership with the NGO CRIAA SA-DC, which develops its international marketing for Ximenia oil.

In 2023, Namibia exported 162 tonnes of vegetable oils with the code HS 151590. A significant share of this is assumed to be Ximenia oil and marula or Kalahari melon seed oils. This represents a decline in exports compared to 2019, when exports reached 1,473 tonnes. On average, Namibia's exports have declined by -42% every year over the past five years. This is because the production of these oils has been difficult to maintain due to frost and forest fires. Of the total exports, 31 tonnes went to Germany. Most exports were sent to other African countries, such as Zambia, Angola and Congo.

Despite its long tradition, Namibia faces several challenges, such as accessing international markets, maintaining the sustainability and supply of its products, and improving the expertise of producers, processors and local product developers.

Ximenia oil production is growing in Zimbabwe

Ximenia trees and shrubs are found throughout the country, but the [highest concentrations are in the Hwange district](#). Interest in this oil is growing in Zimbabwe but the main outlet for Ximenia oil is exports.

Zimbabwe exports very small quantities of vegetable oils. Only 13 tonnes were exported in 2023, which probably consisted of Ximenia, marula, and/or baobab oils. This volume represents a slight average annual growth of 2% over the last five years, compared to 2019, when 12 tonnes were exported. Zimbabwe exports mainly to South Africa, from where it is distributed to Europe and other regions.

Tunisia exports directly to Europe

In 2023, Tunisia exported 59 tonnes of vegetable oils with HS code 151590. Most of this is assumed to be argan and prickly pear oils, and to a lesser extent Ximenia oil. This represents a decrease in exports compared to 556 tonnes in 2019. On average, Tunisia's vegetable oil exports have decreased by -43% per year over the last five years. In 2023, most of Tunisian exports (63%) went to Europe, specifically to France (18 tonnes), Germany (14 tonnes), Spain and Switzerland.

Tunisia is an important [exporter of olive, soybean and palm oil](#). Its strong export infrastructure and experience give Tunisia an advantage when exporting other, less common oils such as Ximenia oil. [Actifs précieux](#) is an example of a French brand that sells Ximenia seed oil from Tunisia and Morocco, in addition to other vegetable and essential oils. This company works with Ximenia seed oil because of its moisturising and anti-inflammatory properties, which stand out among other oils.

Which companies are you competing with?

Several African companies supply the European market with Ximenia oil and other natural ingredients. These companies often offer high-quality products, certifications and sustainable practices.

Kupanda (South Africa)

Founded in 2014, [Kupanda](#) specialises in producing niche, high-value natural plant ingredients sourced from Africa. The company is known for its refined oils, particularly its unique 'Mideka Ximenia Oil', named after the word 'mideka', which means 'to rejuvenate' in the tribal regions of northwest Ethiopia. Kupanda exports this oil in 25kg net steel drums, primarily from Zimbabwe.

Kupanda's Ximenia seed oil is highly valued in various [formulations, including anti-ageing, hair care, facial skincare, lip care and body care products](#). The company's products comply with key European regulations, such as REACH and CLP, meaning it can ensure safety and quality. Kupanda also adheres to Cosmos-approved certification standards for raw materials, enhancing its credibility in the global market.

As a medium-sized vegetable oil refiner and trader, Kupanda exports its Cosmos-approved ingredients to Asia-Pacific, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The company has a robust [distribution network across several countries](#), including France, the UK, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Poland and Ukraine.

Afrinatural (South Africa)

[Afrinatural](#) is a dynamic company that caters to EU and non-EU wholesalers, retailers, product developers and content suppliers in various industries, including cosmetics and cosmeceuticals. The company specialises in botanicals, offering a wide range of pressed oils and butters, including conventional and organic Ximenia seed oil.

Committed to ethical practices, Afrinatural operates under a policy of fair labour and ethical trading. The

company has also participated in projects for organisations such as the CBI and the Belgian Government, further cementing its reputation as a responsible and reliable supplier in the global market.

Afrika Botanicals (South Africa)

[Afrika Botanicals](#) is a prominent exporter and importer. It supplies bulk botanical products and natural oils tailored for the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. The company adheres to fair labour practices and is committed to the principles of the CITES convention. Afrika Botanicals also complies with ISO 26000:2010 standards for social responsibility, reflecting its dedication to sustainable business practices.

The company manages the entire supply chain process, from documentation and product sampling to packaging, labelling, and delivery. Afrika Botanicals also offers a cosmetic range, which is sold online. The company supplies organic (USDA organic certification) and conventional Ximenia seed oil, sourced from Zimbabwe, in sizes ranging from 5 kg containers to 180–200 kg drums.

Namibian Naturals (Namibia)

[Namibian Naturals](#) sources its ingredients locally, focusing on sustainably grown and wild-harvested plants. The company works directly with small enterprises. It also embraces Fairtrade principles to promote equitable trading partnerships. Namibian Naturals offers a wide range of cosmetics, including lip balms, handmade soaps, body washes, and lotions under four distinct brands: Desert Secrets, Mbiri, Nara and Namibian Naturals.

In addition to cosmetics, Namibian Naturals provides a selection of vegetable oils, such as baobab, marula, Kalahari melon and Ximenia. Ximenia oil is prized for its anti-ageing properties and is sourced from a women's cooperative in north-central Namibia. The company sells its products in Europe through online retail channels and holds both EU Organic and Fair for Life certifications, underscoring its commitment to quality and ethical practices.

Kaza Natural Oils (Zimbabwe)

Founded in 2016, [Kaza Natural Oils](#) produces and supplies natural ingredients, specialising in organic oils and extracts for the global cosmetics market. The company works closely with rural producer communities throughout Southern Africa, fostering sustainable development and fairtrade practices. Kaza Natural Oils is [certified by UEBT](#) and offers various African oils, including Ximenia, baobab, marula, Kalahari melon and mongongo. These oils are known for their quality and are used by cosmetic manufacturers around the world.

DLG Naturals (Botswana)

[DLG Naturals BW](#) produces fairly traded, high-quality oils for the cosmetic industry, including marula, baobab, mongongo, Kalahari melon and Ximenia oils. DLG Naturals is committed to environmental conservation and supports rural livelihoods by providing fair compensation to local harvesters, which are mainly women.

Which products are you competing with?

The European cosmetics industry is highly competitive and driven by innovation. Manufacturers want new oils that have special properties or have high marketing values. Potential substitutes for Ximenia oil are mainly thick and sticky vegetable oils with similar moisturising qualities and cosmetics applications, such as argan, castor and almond oils. However, in terms of fatty acid composition, there is not much competition for Xymeninic acid. This is unique among vegetable oils.

Table 1: Example of product substitution for Ximenia oil

	Ximenia oil	Argan oil	Castor oil	Sweet almond oil
Properties	Skin conditioning, emollient, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anti-ageing properties Rich in vitamin C. Very sticky.	Skin conditioning, emollient, antioxidant, anti-ageing, and anti-inflammatory properties. Rich in vitamin E.	Skin conditioning, perfuming and fragrance functions. Very viscous.	Anti-ageing and skin conditioning properties. Rich in vitamins A and E. Thick oil.
Fatty acid profile	Rich in oleic acid (50–80%) and Ximenynic acid (10–15%)	Most of the fat content of argan oil comes from oleic (45–50%) and linoleic acids (26–35%).	The main component is ricinoleic acid (85–90%).	Most abundant fatty acids are oleic (62–86%) and linoleic (20–30%).
Main uses	Anti-ageing face creams, hair conditioners and lipsticks.	Serums, hair masks, lotions, hand and nail creams.	Shampoos, soaps, lotions and lipsticks.	Hand creams, cleansers and moisturisers.
Wholesale price	Average price for Ximenia oil is €90 per kg. Ximenia oil has an average shelf life of three years but can be up to five years.	Average price for argan oil varies around €24 per kg. Argan oil has a shelf life of one to two years.	Average price for refined castor oil is €8 per kg. Castor oil has an average shelf life of one year.	Average price for almond oil is €28 per kg. Almond oil has an average shelf life of two years.

Source: [ProFound](#), 2024

Tips:

Differentiate your product by excellence in terms of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), sustainability and traceability, or by providing more services than your competitors.

Investigate and show how Ximenia oil can substitute other oils and butter, by comparing the properties of your oil and its alternatives.

Build and communicate Ximenia’s marketing story, focusing on traditional use and benefits to local communities.

Be a price maker, not a price taker: Accurately calculate all your costs, including collection, transportation and transformation, and apply reasonable industry-standard margins. The costs of Ximenia oil can be high due to the low oil yield from the fruit and the expenses involved in sourcing and processing. Setting your prices strategically will help you stay profitable and competitive.

4. What are the prices of Ximenia oil on the European market?

Wholesale prices for Ximenia seed oil can be as high as €180 per kg (according to the [Soapmakers Store](#)). Industry experts suggest a 40% to 50% margin between the exporter’s price (FOB) and the wholesale price in Europe. This difference includes costs like shipping, duties and the importers’ profit. Using this margin, the import price is approximately €90 per kg, positioning ximenia oil as a premium-priced product.

Retail prices for ximenia oil are also significant. A 50 ml bottle of ximenia oil costs around €11, while a 100 ml bottle is priced at €26. Skincare products containing ximenia oil are typically priced between €30 and €40.

Organic and fair trade certification can add value to Ximenia oil for cosmetics. A price premium can be paid by European companies that are interested in organic ingredients as well as social and environmental responsibility practices.

Table 2: Price breakdown of Ximenia oil

Link in the value chain	Volume	Price
Retail price of 100% pure natural Ximenia seed oil	100 ml	€26
Wholesaler price for Ximenia oil assuming 50% margin	1 kg	€180
Import price of Ximenia oil	1 kg	€90

Source: [ProFound](#), 2024

Since ximenia oil is still relatively new to the European market, there is variability in FOB prices and margins. For this reason, suppliers are encouraged to calculate their prices based on their own cost structures, ensuring that all expenses are covered while incorporating a reasonable profit margin.

Tips:

Explore the possibility of obtaining certification schemes, like organic and fairtrade, which are becoming more popular on the European market. They may enable you to charge more for your Ximenia oil.

Consider offering potential buyers discounts. This could help you establish long-term partnerships with them. To avoid losses, include discounts in your original price calculations so you do not sell at a loss.



[ProFound – Advisers In Development](#) and [Fair Venture Consulting](#) carried out this study on behalf of the CBI.

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