Three questions for Jerida Sinange, UEBT’s Standard and Certification Expert and Certification Body Coordinator

1. How long have you been working at UEBT and what made you want to work with UEBT?

I’ve been here since August 2017. Back in Kenya, where I am from, I was working in certification and sustainability for commodity products in Eastern and Southern Africa. When I moved to the Netherlands in 2017, I wanted to continue working in the same field and when I came across UEBT’s work, its mission and vision, it resonated for me because of both my experience and passion. On top of that, I was very much looking forward to working in a new field for me: speciality ingredients. At the time I started working at UEBT, the team was much smaller and I was also curious to see how a small organisation works.

2. Can you tell us what is your role at UEBT?

I am part of a 4 person certification team. My role is ‘custodian’ of the UEBT standard, its revision, implementation and interpretation by both Certificate Holders (CHs) and Certification Bodies (CBs). My role is, on the one hand, to help CHs understand the requirements of the standard by giving them the appropriate information and tools to prepare for certification. On the other hand, I am also ensuring we have qualified auditors trained on our standard and making sure these professionals all have a similar understanding and interpretation of the UEBT requirements.

3. You sometimes travel to the field. Can you give us a specific example of how the standard has been used to improve practices in the sourcing areas?

I traveled once to Uganda to some remote villages. In the past, people would trek for several kilometers to get water for domestic use. Now the villagers have several points of water wells/boreholes within the communities, so it saves them a lot of time. This was as a result of projects with one of UEBT’s member companies. UEBT has a requirement in principle 3 of its standard that asks organisations to discuss and support local development needs in the communities they work in. This touched my heart and I felt extremely proud of such concrete impacts on the ground. They might look small, but for the local communities these actions are life changing.