

Benefit Sharing in Practice: Hersil



Benefit Sharing in Ethical BioTrade

Equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity is at the core of Ethical BioTrade, which seeks to advance incentives at the local level for the sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as adequate recognition of the contributions of local actors. Principle 3 of the Ethical BioTrade Standard deals with equitable benefit sharing, both in the sourcing activities and in biodiversity-based research and development. “Benefit Sharing in Practice” provides concrete examples of how members of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) are working towards equitable sharing of benefits in their policies and practices linked to natural ingredients.

Hersil: Biodiversity-based innovation and equitable benefit sharing

Hersil S.A. is one of Peru's leading laboratories, recognized for its high-quality pharmaceutical and nutritional products, as well as its commitment to social and environmental values. In 2012, the Hersil Natural Products Division became a member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) as a way to continue implementing these values, particularly in the sourcing of biodiversity.

In its over forty years of operation, Hersil S.A. has increasingly focused on natural products, putting its research and innovation competences forth to promote and valorize Peruvian biodiversity. The Hersil Natural Products Division has several dietary supplements and nutraceuticals that are based on Peruvian ingredients and sold around the world. These natural products are based on innovative compounds and combinations, whose quality, safety and effectiveness are supported by scientific research and trials.



Towards ethical sourcing practices

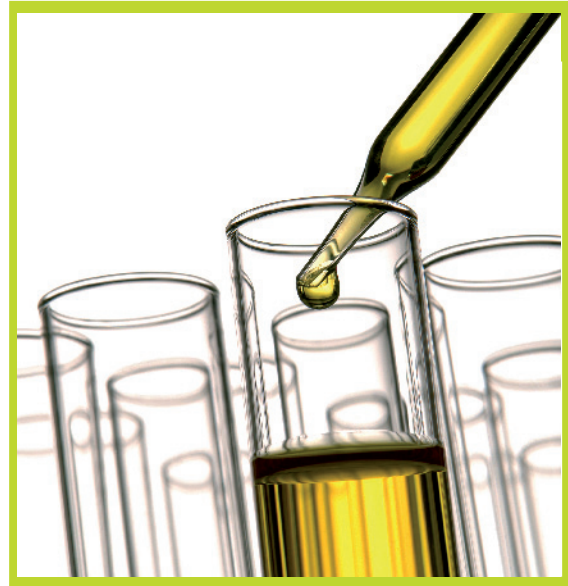
Hersil NPD procures plants such as maca (*Lepidium meyenii*), uña de gato (*Uncaria tomentosa*) and chancapiedra (*Phyllanthus niruri*) as natural ingredients for its dietary supplements and nutraceuticals. Providers of these plants and plant parts, primarily small Peruvian enterprises, commit to ethical sourcing practices. For example, agreements with providers require measures to advance conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and promote respect for traditional practices. Hersil also supports social initiatives in sourcing areas, such as projects to improve local schooling, nutrition, and living conditions.



Sharing the benefits of research and development

Hersil has been among the pioneers on benefit sharing in Peru. From early on, its strategy on natural products has focused on recognizing and increasing the value of Peruvian biodiversity, and sharing the resulting benefits through partnerships and collaboration. For example, Hersil has been working since 1997 jointly with the Universidad Nacional Agraria La Molina (UNALM) to promote biodiversity-based research and development. The project has generated significant innovation, a number of patents and a line of products, with profits being shared equally between them and supporting further training and research on biodiversity. This partnership has provided a model for agreements with other universities, research institutions and local companies.

Hersil actively contributes to discussions towards the implementation in Peru of international, regional and national requirements on access to genetic resources and traditional knowledge and the fair and equitable sharing of resulting benefits. Through the Peruvian Institute for Natural Products (IPPN) Hersil has also been involved in initiatives such as the National Anti-Biopiracy Commission. In this context, Hersil has supported actions to identify, prevent and avoid acts of misappropriation, as well as emphasized the recognition of the economic value of biodiversity as a fundamental step towards using it sustainably.



Looking forward

The Hersil Natural Products Division, as part of its UEBT membership, is strengthening practices on fair and equitable benefit sharing. In its sourcing activities, Hersil is working with providers to more precisely account for the implementation of sustainability commitments. It is also gathering additional information on the prices effectively paid at the producer level, and contemplating setting parameters for such prices. In its research and development activities, steps currently under consideration include the review of partnership agreements and internal procedures to ensure more systematic fulfillment of principles such as prior informed consent, mutually agreed terms and contribution to conservation and sustainable use. As a member of UEBT, Hersil also needs to develop a policy on the use of patents related to biodiversity, on the basis of the UEBT Principles on Patents and Biodiversity.



Support by:



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UEBT is a membership-based, non profit organisation - www.ethicalbiotrade.org

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