

Benefit Sharing in Practice: Talapetraka



Talapetraka: A partnership towards ethical sourcing of biodiversity

Talapetraka is the Malagasy name for *Centella asiatica*, a plant renowned for its healing properties and utilized in pharmaceutical, cosmetics and other products.

For over 30 years, Talapetraka has also been at the core of a partnership between Serdex, now a division of Bayer Santé Familiale, and SOTRAMEX, a local enterprise, that is pioneering the equitable sharing of benefits in Madagascar. Throughout their collaboration on *Centella asiatica*, Serdex and SOTRAMEX have recognized the need to address the link between sourcing practices, conservation of biodiversity and local development.

More recently, as UEBT members, these companies are also systematizing their efforts towards equitable benefit sharing, including increasing value addition and contributing to sustainable development at the local level, which are fundamental aspects of the Ethical BioTrade standard.

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.



Increasing value addition at the local level

A central aspect of the partnership between Serdex and SOTRAMEX is the commitment that more and more value addition in the supply chain takes place at the local level. Serdex places importance on fostering SOTRAMEX as a business, providing crucial technical know-how, financial support and purchasing guarantees. Such support has allowed SOTRAMEX to take onboard additional steps in the value chain, including product selection and quality control. SOTRAMEX has also been able to expand its industrial site and constructed new buildings.

Local technicians have been trained and new laboratory equipment purchased. The partnership is increasing the value addition of SOTRAMEX in regards to *Centella asiatica*, as well as supporting the diversification of its work to other plant extracts. For Serdex, it is also a way to recognize and encourage a solid and sustainable relationship.



Contributing to local sustainable development goals

Madagascar currently faces significant political, social and economic challenges. Such a complex context for sourcing activities only reaffirms the relevance of contributing to local sustainable goals, as defined by collectors, local partners and their communities. Of course, the sourcing activities themselves constitute an important step to local development: Talapetraka is a complementary income – particularly in the months outside of the rice growing season – for a network of collectors, sub-collectors and harvesters of over 2500 people. There are also local benefits in the sustainable collection practices promoted, demonstrated and monitored by Serdex and SOTRAMEX.

Yet, furthermore, Serdex and SOTRAMEX have been working together for almost ten years now to support local projects and plans, including for new schools, libraries and water taps. Projects are identified alongside local communities and chosen for their long-term viability and positive impact on local sustainable development. Serdex works with an internal budget specifically created for such projects, and financed through a sustainable development premium on sales, as well as other client contributions. SOTRAMEX contributes by managing all the projects, as well as through financial support whenever possible.



Looking forward

Circumstances in Madagascar certainly limit the impact that sourcing practices and other related efforts have on sustainable development at the local level. For example, water pipes require maintenance and new schools require additional teacher salaries, which may be problematic in the current political and economic context. Nevertheless, through their long-standing partnership on Talapetraka, Serdex and SOTRAMEX are taking important steps towards strengthening the supply chain, increasing the value of their product, and recognizing and encouraging local engagement in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

In line with the UEBT principle of continuous improvement, Serdex and SOTRAMEX will continue their work to improve sourcing practices, including to increase awareness among their clients and to improve equity in the sharing of benefits among the network of collectors, sub-collectors and harvesters. In addition, Serdex and SOTRAMEX are now looking to expand their partnership to other products and thus increase their support for local sustainable development in Madagascar.



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

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