

## API – NATURA

México



Api-Natura is a beekeeping company that collects, processes, and markets honey from the Mexican Mayan Jungle, a mixed heritage of humanity and the world's second lung after the Amazon.

Api-Natura collects honey from 667 beekeepers concentrated in the Yucatan Peninsula, in the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo. This Peninsula is an important honey-producer region worldwide.

Api-Natura was created 22 years ago to promote economic and social change in the countryside, society, and Mexican markets. It works with beekeepers in the area while maintaining a sustainable ecosystem and ensuring local human development. It produces, markets, and exports natural honey and its derivatives.

80% of Api-Natura's suppliers are descendants of the Mayan and Chol cultures, and 30% are women. Beekeepers have 55,500 hives across 32,000 hectares and produce 630 tons of honey annually. Each beekeeper produces around 940 kg of honey and owns 83 hives.

Api-Natura was initially founded to support and add value to beekeepers' work while contributing to a better quality of life and reducing migration. Api-Natura buys honey from beekeepers, processes and standardizes its quality, and commercializes it. Apinova, a sister organization, provides technical assistance regarding quality and traceability and sells beekeeping inputs. Of the 667 beekeepers, 200 are members of Api-Natura. In 2023, the organization started a project with Conservation International to accelerate honey quality standardization and improvement from the 467 external producers so they can become members. Even though 467 are external producers, all beekeepers receive the same technical assistance from Apinova.

### IMPACT OVERVIEW

Improving the livelihoods of smallholder beekeepers and extending the life of the planet with the production of honey.

No. of beneficiaries	667 families
% Women	30%

### COMMUNITY

	<b>Country:</b>	México
	<b>Municipalities:</b>	Campeche & Quintana Roo
	<b>Communities:</b>	Maya y Chol

## Impact Background

The Mayans of the Yucatan Peninsula are currently a community with a vibrant culture. Many indigenous communities still uphold their ancient customs, speak their original language, and wear traditional clothing, particularly women. Some still farm their land, primarily cultivating papayas, citrus fruits, and beekeeping. Many families continue to pass on their artisan skills, with some specializing in crafting wooden handicrafts or creating hand-embroidered garments.

On the other hand, the Chol culture is an indigenous ethnic group found in several Mexican states, including Campeche. According to their worldview, their existence revolves around corn, which they consider a sacred food gifted to them by the gods. Like other indigenous groups, agriculture is the foundation of the Chol economy. This culture makes up 12.5% of the indigenous-speaking population. Historically, the name Chol was given by the Spaniards to refer to the region where several groups with close cultural and linguistic ties coexisted. When the Spaniards first encountered the Chol people, they had no state entity, although the Spanish considered them a nation they could not conquer.

The Yucatan Peninsula is a popular archaeological and tourist destination, but unfortunately, the indigenous population has been facing displacement from their lands for several years. They have been subjected to discrimination, and their opportunities for commercial, social, and economic development are limited. However, agriculture, specifically beekeeping, offers a viable opportunity for economic growth for families. Honey production allows farmers to sustain their livelihoods without harming the forest.

Api-Natura continues to expand its reach in different regions. One of the new areas where Api-Natura has started buying honey is Calakmul in the State of Campeche, where producers have a great opportunity for both productive and economic growth. 43% of the population of Calakmul is indigenous to the Maya and Chol ethnic groups, with a poverty rate of 74.3% and 23.5% of extreme poverty.

## Impact Delivery

Api-Natura seeks to help generate socioeconomic development by improving the quality of life of families in the Yucatan Peninsula. Beekeepers are advised from the pre-harvest period, from December to February, and the harvest stage, from March to May. Apinova works closely with each producer to improve hive management and sustain the family's income. Moreover, as Api-Natura's total production comes from smallholders covering 32,000 hectares of the Mayan biosphere, environmental conservation is also part of its advisory programs.

Customers count on Api-Natura's reliably high quality. The company has successfully maintained its HACCP, HALAL, and FDA certifications, guaranteeing a 100% natural and organic product. Its most recent achievement, the FDA certification received in 2022, opened doors for Api-Natura's export business. It helped the company export honey to international markets such as Dubai, the USA, and Canada. Api-Natura is forming alliances with buyers from the European market. Through Api-Natura, smallholder beekeepers from the Yucatan Peninsula reach global customers.

Api-Natura recently added 400 new hives in Calakmul between 2021 and 2022, increasing honey production by around 11 tons yearly. Each hive is estimated to produce between 28 and 32 kilograms of honey yearly. These hives were given to 20 new beekeeping families for higher, more stable incomes and fair prices, generating an added income of approximately USD 1,080 per family.

More seasoned beekeepers have higher yields. On average, a beekeeper sells approximately 944 kilos of honey to Api-Natural annually. The organization pays USD 1.98 per kilo of honey, resulting in an income of USD 1,821 for each producer.

### Outcome

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#### *Improvement of livelihood*

- Income generation for indigenous families within the Mayan biosphere without harming nature.
  - Entire families united in decent work, reducing migration and family disintegration.
  - Training in best practices on honey production and marketing for national and international markets.
  - Integration of rural producers from the Yucatan Peninsula into a supply chain that supplies the different markets for fair incomes.
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#### *Environmental preservation*

- Conservation of the Mayan jungle.
- 100% organic production without harming livelihoods in the ecosystem.
- Conservation of the biodiversity of ecosystems through the plants and flowers pollination.
- Respect and free movement of bees in peninsular territory, not hindering the biological and botanical process of the region.