
Najil Cab

Investment Summary

Country: Yucatán, Mexico

Sector: organic honey

Investment: Build and equip independent production facility

Total estimated capital expenditure: 550,000 USD for land purchase, factory construction, and equipment installation

Investment type: Seven-year subordinated loan, two-year grace

Amount invested by Kampani: 450,000 USD for factory construction

Co-investor: Not applicable

In portfolio since: January 2021

Deal sourced by: Alterfin

The investment

Founded in 2012 by two ambitious young entrepreneurs, Najil Cab (Mayan for “the house of the bees”) is a private company producing honey in Yucatán, Mexico. Alterfin has been providing working capital to the company for several years and has been impressed with its growth and social impact. In June 2020, Alterfin invited Kampani to consider making a long-term investment. In January 2021, Kampani completed the transaction.

Najil Cab stands out from other honey producers in the way it works with predominately Indigenous communities in small villages on a day-to-day basis, providing producers with support and technical assistance. This, combined with paying a higher price, secures the supply and consistent quality. Cultivating such a long-term relationship with the beekeepers is a necessity in the context of the production of organic honey.

Najil Cab now has a solid reputation, both locally as well as in the international market, thanks to the strong commitment of its founders, and staff, to achieve the organization’s mission by:

- a) developing beekeeping as a profitable activity for smallholder farmers, complementing traditional agricultural activities in the area;
- b) contributing to improving members’ living conditions and promoting development;
- c) developing social cohesion by organizing the beekeepers.

With Kampani’s support, Najil Cab broke ground on their processing factory in February 2021 (*see photo below*). Once complete, these operations will support their further growth and generate important efficiencies, supporting an ever wider network of beekeepers.



The Africanised honeybee is known for its defensive (aggressive) nature. Not wearing protective gloves, the producers need to handle the bees gently.

Social Impact

Najil Cab is by its very nature a social enterprise. It was founded and exists to create – and to maximise – social impact, rather than profit. In a region facing extreme poverty and lacking in



alternatives to generate cash income, Najil Cab provides greatly needed support to the largely Indigenous Maya population of Yucatán. The honey trade is for most producers their only source of cash.

An estimated total of 300,000 Maya live in Yucatán today. At its peak the Maya civilization had one of the richest cultures in the Americas. Today, ethnic Maya across central America suffer from discrimination, exploitation, and poverty.

The Indigenous population was always seen as a cheap source of labour and this persists to this day. In Mexico, social misery and exploitation led to the creation in 1994 in Chiapas state of the media-savvy but later weakened Zapatista National Liberation Army, which drew attention to the community's plight.

In spite of modernization and intermarriage between the Indigenous population and Spanish immigrants, many Maya communities have managed to retain their identity and their ways. Like their ancestors, most Maya households engage in corn farming, and many also produce crafts, such as woven textiles, for sale in regional markets.

Maya have been cultivating bees for over 1000 years. Bee keeping was so important to the ancient Maya that they even had a god of bees and honey called Ah Mucen Kab. The producers in the network of Najil Cab have been working on their hives for decades. Most of the land is owned by the communities (*Ejidos*) and cannot be sold to third parties.

As part of their commitment to empowering and improving the lives of the beekeepers and their communities, Najil Cab provides the producers with the following benefits:

- Secured off-take
- Above-market price and transparent price setting
- Technical Assistance Services and Training

With the establishment of its own production facility, Najil Cab aims to expand its social impact and create a space for farmer collectives to gather and organize, further strengthening their position in the broader market. Again, an example of Najil Cab's unrelenting commitment to supporting the beekeepers and their communities.



Despite the good road network, the indigenous communities in Yucatan are surprisingly isolated.