Cosmetic ingredients:

a new approach to organic / natural certification

Considering the growing demand of cosmetic brands for natural and organic raw material certification in the absence of clearly defined rules — the main certifying certifications available today being primarily dedicated to finished products — UNITIS has been developing since March 2009 a specific working tool that could be used at an international level.

The boom in natural and organic products has led to the creation of a large number of certifying bodies and organic and natural labels, which has forced ingredient suppliers to multiply their applications for compliance certificates for the same product. "It is a complex situation since the assessment criteria are different from one country to another, and even between certifying bodies in the same country. Moreover, the procedures have become increasingly cumbersome for suppliers, being time-demanding but also expensive...," *says Josiane Alirol, Secretary-General of UNITIS. This leaves a bitter taste all the more since this context often leads to paradoxical situations as Nicolas Pajot, member of the board, explained it at the latest Cosmetech Congress in Chartres:* "Quite similar ingredients, such as starch and guar gum, both of them of vegetable origin and obtained through the same manufacturing process, have received different opinions: one of them obtained a dispensation, and the other was withdrawn from the market." *The suppliers are therefore facing a difficult situation: they can not do without these natural and organic certifications, while the present system is still not adapted to the particular features of raw materials.*

A certifying body especially dedicated to raw materials

In the light of this finding, UNITIS has worked together with the owners of finished product labels to create a certificate adapted to ingredients which defines two basic concepts (check sidebar for formula computing method):

- *the certificate necessary for obtaining the ORGANIC label (auditing),*
- *the approval for NATURAL ingredients (file assessment). The manufacturing processes were established for each concept as follows: physical, chemical, or biological. Please note that in order to foster innovation, chemical processes were selected according to the principles of green chemistry.*

In order to ensure enhanced transparency vis-à-vis the cosmetic brands, the suppliers will be able to classify their ingredients into four categories: "ORGANIC", "ORGANIC ORIGIN", "NATURAL", "NATURAL ORIGIN" and determine the ORGANIC and / or NATURAL percentage of their products.

A working basis for ISO

The dialogue conducted with the key players in these markets (Cosmébio, NaTrue...) regarding this novel approach to ingredient certification has not led to any conclusion concerning the inclusion of this type of certification into their own standards. Nevertheless, UNITIS is optimistic as this work may be inspiring for certain bodies – NaTrue is currently launching a system adapted to raw materials – and will continue to remain a working basis for the future. "Our project, which is directed by Laurent Sousselier, is a working tool available for everybody and we do not intend to use it so as to create even more confusion. This is why, over the past year, we have attended, together with Colipa, working groups with a view to establishing an international standard ISO, a project initiated by AFNOR and coordinated by Spain. Hopefully, this project will lead to the creation of new guidelines that support the international certification of ORGANIC and NATURAL. We are pleased to have played our role while being a major player in the sector of ingredients, as natural origin raw materials are our main trade," *points out Jean-Pierre Barrère, President of UNITIS. Josiane Alirol also added that* "By working on this ISO project, we hope to establish clear, factual, qualitative and consumer-friendly rules. However, the procedure will be time-demanding and I'm afraid that the current situation will continue to last for another couple of years. At the same time, we continue our discussions with all involved parties."

Nouveau référentiel ingrédients et principe des règles de calcul
New ingredient certification and formula calculation method

• Certification BIO

Un extrait ne peut être réalisé qu'au moyen de solvants acceptés : eau, éthanol, glycérine et huiles d'origine végétale ou CO_2. Un extrait sans solvant d'extraction résiduel (extrait sec par exemple) obtenu par procédé physique à partir d'une matière première certifiée BIO sera 100 % BIO. Dans ce même cas, mais avec un solvant d'extraction résiduel (eau, glycérine, alcool), la formule de calcul utilisée est la suivante pour déterminer le % de bio :

• ORGANIC certification

Extracts can only be obtained by using acceptable solvents: water, ethanol, glycerin, vegetable oils or CO_2. Extracts that do not contain residual solvents (dry extracts, for instance) and are obtained via physical processes from ORGANIC certified raw materials will be 100% ORGANIC. If the same extracts contain residual solvents (water, glycerin, alcohol), the computing method used to determine the organic content % will be as follows:

(Poids de la matière première fraîche + poids du solvant d'extraction BIO mis en oeuvre / *Weight of the fresh raw material + weight of the used ORGANIC extraction solvent*) x 100

Poids de l'extrait obtenu / *Weight of the obtained extract*

Des particularités sont prévues pour les hydrolats, distillats et poudres réhydratées. Avec un procédé chimique ou biologique, la formule de calcul prend en compte les réactifs chimiques et devient :

Particular methods are to be taken into consideration in the case of hydrosols, distillates and rehydrated powders. Thanks to a chemical or biological process, the computing method takes into account the chemical reagents and turns to:

(Poids moléculaire de la fraction de la molécule issue de la matière première primaire / *Molecular weight of the fraction of the molecule derived from the primary raw material*) x 100

Poids moléculaire de l'ingrédient final / *Molecular weight of the final ingredient*

Un ingrédient cosmétique BIO ne peut pas contenir plus de 5 % d'additifs synthétiques.

An ORGANIC cosmetic ingredient cannot contain more than 5% synthetic additives.

• Approbation pour le NATUREL

Un extrait avec ou sans solvant d'extraction résiduel obtenu par procédé physique à partir d'une matière première et un solvant d'extraction accepté dans le référentiel sera 100 % NATUREL. Avec un procédé chimique ou biologique, la formule de calcul du pourcentage de NATUREL devient :

• NATURAL approval

Extracts with or without residual solvents and obtained via a physical process from a raw material and a certified extraction solvent will be 100% NATURAL. In the case of a chemical or biological process, the computing method used to determine the percentage of the NATURAL content becomes:

(Poids moléculaire de la fraction de la molécule issue de la matière première primaire / *Molecular weight of the fraction of the molecule derived from the primary raw material*) x 100

Poids moléculaire de l'ingrédient final / *Molecular weight of the final ingredient*

Un ingrédient cosmétique NATUREL ne peut pas contenir plus de 5 % d'additifs synthétiques.

A NATURAL cosmetic ingredient cannot contain more than 5% synthetic additives.