



## Biodiversity and Access to Affordable Medicines

by Gustavo Urrea BioTrade Manager, Labfarve

## A beauty healthy choice

Consumers today are voting with their wallets. They want to know that the products they buy are made from ingredients obtained ethically and sustainably.

And a growing number of businesses, including those in the cosmetics, pharmaceutical and complementary medicine sectors want guidance on how to source their materials in biodiversity-friendly ways.

The equitable sharing of benefits along supply chains. Although human well-being and the improvement of livelihoods are an integral part of sustainable development, the objectives of Ethical BioTrade are not directly health related. Yet our experience shows that there are several ways in which it can have a positive impact on people's beauty and health.

It can lead to an increase in living standards from trade of biodiversity products; provide access to medicines, health services and medical assistance to remote populations through the transport of these products; and offer direct health benefits through the use of ingredients derived from biodiversity.

In Colombia, Labfarve, a laboratory that researches native species, provides products for the beauty and health. It is part of the Corpas Group, which includes a medical school and a hospital, all of which share a strong social commitment.

Labfarve uses a wide range of species derived from Colombia's rich biodiversity, from the high Andes to the Amazon region. By implementing the principles of Ethical BioTrade throughout its supply chains, the laboratory links the benefits of affordable and efficient products for the people to providing better living conditions for the different actors in the supply chains, up to the producers. Labfarve, a founding member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade, has long-term contracts with its suppliers, provides continuous training and shares 10% of its profits with local communities.

Recognizing the importance of natural species offers a unique opportunity to link biodiversity, beauty and sustainable development.

Biodiversity is the source of many innovations products for the development of new products. Moreover, the ethical sourcing of native species can play an important role in the conservation and sustainable use of these species and their ecosystems, as well as provide a significant avenue for local sustainable development.

For almost 30 years, Labfarve has strived to combine economic, social and environmental objectives in its ethical sourcing of biodiversity in Colombia. Labfarve is a leading research laboratory in the field of medicinal plants. It was founded in Colombia in 1984 by Dr. Jorge Piñeros Corpas, as part of a wider initiative to improve access to health services for the poorest segments of society. Today, Labfarve is recognized throughout Latin America for facilitating access to native species and advancing the recognition and sustainable use of biodiversity.

The main activities of Labfarve consist of research, development, transformation and commercialization of natural products derived from Colombia's rich biodiversity, including the high Andes and the Amazon rainforest. Labfarve develops phytopharmaceutical, cosmeceutical, and nutraceutical products based on extracts of native species that come from Labfarve's own organic cultivation areas. For example, Labfarve has developed a cosmeceutical product based on an extract of "*Acmella oppositiflora*" used like natural Botox.

### **Ethical BioTrade**

Today, Labfarve numbers approximately 170 direct employees, which includes biologists, chemists, pharmacists, doctors, employees and administrative personnel. The company also provides jobs for close to 100 affiliated farmers in charge of the sustainable wild collection of raw materials. Throughout its supply chains, Labfarve implements the principles of Ethical BioTrade. It holds long-term contracts with its suppliers, offers continuous training to its commercial partners, and shares 10% of profits with local communities providing the raw materials. It also respects traditional knowledge, ensures there are numerous positive impacts on health, and its principles and criteria include safeguards to avoid harmful effects such as threatening the food security of local populations.

Labfarve adheres to the concept and practices of Ethical BioTrade for a number of reasons. Ethical BioTrade can bring health benefits, both direct and indirect, to thousands of the rural poor.

Ethical BioTrade also ensures that native biodiversity and related ecosystems will be sustainably managed and conserved, and the rights of indigenous and local communities in relation to their lands, resources and knowledge will be protected. Equitable benefit sharing is, in this regard, an adequate recognition of the contribution of biodiversity and traditional knowledge to new products, as well as an essential incentive to protect and integrate such biodiversity and knowledge in sustainable development policies and plans. Indeed, Ethical BioTrade is a critical concept that underlies the partnerships among all participants in the supply chain, key to achieving improved local health care and livelihoods, and for sustainably meeting the international demand for natural health products.

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