

Centroflora API Unit - Case Story



Sustainable Sourcing of Jaborandi in Brazil

Centroflora Group – Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients Unit (API Unit, formerly named Vegeflora), is a company of the Centroflora Group, which was founded in 1957 in São Paulo, Brazil. The Centroflora Group uses technologies and processes that allow the extraction, isolation, concentration and drying of natural assets with assured quality and traceability. The company operates globally and offers a variety of extracts from various regions of the planet, giving special attention to those derived from Brazilian biodiversity.

As part of Centroflora Group, API Unit believes in sustainable economic development all along the supply chain, as well as in interaction with communities and responsibility towards the environment. Therefore, API Unit became a trading member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) in 2011 and is involved in Centroflora's "For a better World Program", created in 2002 to bring together consumers with communities and small farmers through the promotion of family organic farming and sustainable stewardship.

API Unit concentrates its activities mainly on the native species *Pilocarpus microphyllus* (jaborandi) and all its raw materials originate from sustainable farming.



Source: Köhlers Medizinale Pflanzen

Jaborandi

Jaborandi (*Pilocarpus microphyllus* Stapf ex Wardlew) is a plant native to the forests of Brazil. The shrub grows from 4 to 5 feet high, with smooth grey bark, and thick, small, and reddish-purple flowers. API Unit specializes in the extraction of the alkaloid pilocarpine, which is used in the production of medicine to treat glaucoma, a degenerative disease that increases the eyes' blood pressure, which can cause damage to the optic nerve and ultimately blindness.

Historically, jaborandi was harvested without concerns about the conservation of the species and pickers did not receive fair payments nor were they organized socially. Besides the legalization of areas for jaborandi forest management in the region, the "Enhancement of Jaborandi" project encouraged the application of proper pruning techniques and stimulated the organization of harvesters in a cooperative, where pickers would have the opportunity to improve their incomes and guaranteed rights. The objective of the project is to enable traditional communities to extract jaborandi in a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable way.

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Ethical BioTrade Standard

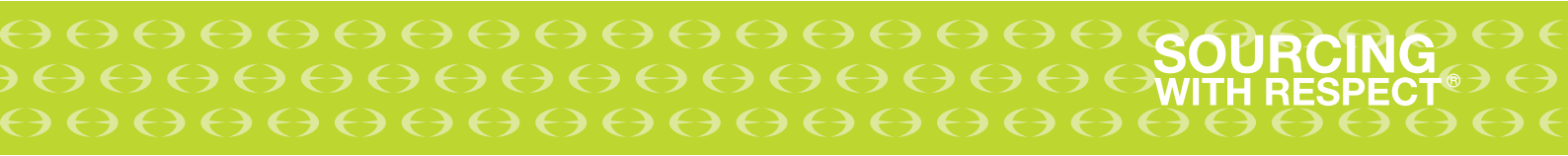
Membership to UEBT means the organisation commits to putting in practice the principles of the Ethical BioTrade Standard (see table below). This means ensuring that its practices promote the sustainable use of natural ingredients while making sure that all contributors along the supply chain are paid equitable prices and share the benefits derived from the use of biodiversity. In this way the Ethical BioTrade Standard aim to further the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which are the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use, and the equitable sharing of benefits resulting from the use of genetic resources contained in biodiversity.

All UEBT members work to gradually implement the Ethical BioTrade Standard in their operations and along their supply chains involving natural ingredients. Regular third party audits are performed to track progress. Working towards the Ethical BioTrade Standard allows members to identify areas in their sourcing policies and practices that could be improved and provides third party verification to claims about ethical sourcing. Companies use their membership to UEBT as a way of underlining their commitment to biodiversity, as well as continuously improving their sourcing of natural ingredients.

Ethical BioTrade Principles and Criteria	
Biodiversity conservation	Preserving ecosystems and promoting practices that contribute to conservation plans and strategies.
Sustainable use	Sourcing practices promote the long-term ability of an ecosystem to function.
Fair and equitable benefit sharing	Use of biodiversity and traditional knowledge occurs on the basis of prior informed consent and the equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits.
Socio-economic sustainability	Adopting quality management and financial practices that are sustainable and socially acceptable.
Legal compliance	Respecting all relevant international, national and local regulations.
Respect for the rights of actors	Taking into account human rights and working conditions of indigenous and local communities.
Clarity about land tenure	Respecting land tenure and rights over natural resources.

Community Trading Grants - Upscaling an ethical supply chain

In 2010, API Unit received a Community Trading Grant, awarded by UEBT with the support of the Doen Foundation and designed to support and facilitate Ethical BioTrade practices at the community level. The specific objective of the grant to API Unit was the support of sustainable management of jaborandi forests in the North and Northeast of Brazil. The project for the enhancement of sustainable jaborandi extraction incorporates and implements the Principles and Criteria of the Ethical BioTrade, including fair and equitable benefit sharing and the conservation of biodiversity. In lines with these Principles, the project, called “Enhancement of Jaborandi”, aims to generate employment and income through guaranteed, fair purchase prices and local development as well as to disseminate sustainable operating practices in the harvesting areas.



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Challenges and successes

API Unit's pharmacology unit is located in the city of Parnaíba (Piauí), in the Northeast region of Brazil, but the harvest of raw material for the manufacturing of products for the pharmaceutical industry takes place in forests located in the region of São Félix do Xingu in the southern state of Pará, a transition area between the Cerrado and the Amazon rainforest, and the region with the highest biodiversity in Brazil. Thus, one of the biggest challenges of the jaborandi project were the physical distances. Other challenges included the harvesters' initial lack of training and formal education, but also API Unit's missing experience in cooperating with and training indigenous people in this area. Furthermore, there was an initial resistance to some changes which were introduced following a management plan to ensure biodiversity conservation, like improved pruning techniques and a temporarily reduced harvest.

Through the Community Trading Grant, the API Unit is able to significantly support the "Cooperative Extraction Products and Non-Timber Products Buyers Extraction of São Félix do Xingu – COOPEXINGU" under Centroflora's "For a better World Program". The program has resulted in the provision of traceable and sustainable jaborandi, the acquisition of new customers and the increased sprouting in plants due to better pruning techniques.

The cooperative of currently 119 registered collectors operates in management areas located in the Kayapó Indigenous Land. Annual trainings are held for, amongst others, appropriate applications of best practices in plant management, respectful relationships, environmental education and waste management. Also visits to harvesting sites are made to monitor whether the principles and criteria of Ethical BioTrade are being implemented. These insights will be used also in the support of other supplier cooperatives.

The sustainable jaborandi management in this region is an economical alternative that helps curb deforestation, preserving important services ecosystems and helping to maintain carbon stocks in standing forests.

Centroflora Group - API Unit
UEBT membership since 2011
Auditing Company - IBD Certificações Ltda
CTG Support - 17,655 Euros

The Community Trading Grant was made possible through the support of the Doen Foundation



The Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) is a non-profit association that promotes the 'Sourcing with Respect' of ingredients that come from biodiversity. Members commit to gradually ensuring that their sourcing practices promote the conservation of biodiversity, respect traditional knowledge and assure the equitable sharing of benefits all along the supply chain.

The DOEN Foundation's ambition is to help build a sustainable world in which everyone can participate. DOEN promotes sustainable, social and cultural pioneers among others†with the revenues of the Dutch Postcode Lottery. DOEN promotes people and enterprises that take the lead in the field of sustainable, cultural and social innovation. DOEN seeks out these innovators, supports and inspires them and brings them together.