

PRESS RELEASE
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The Union for Ethical BioTrade welcomes Serdex

The [Union for Ethical BioTrade](http://www.ethicalbiotrade.org) has announced the membership of [Serdex](http://www.serdex-plantextracts.com/), a pharmaceuticals and cosmetics company and a division of Bayer Santé Familiale (France). Serdex is the first business to join the Union for Ethical BioTrade since its founding members launched it in May 2007.

Set up by a group [of companies and non-private organizations](#) in Europe, the USA, Africa and Latin America, the not-for-profit Union for Ethical BioTrade promotes ethical trade in products that come from biodiversity. It does this by supporting members in their efforts to meet a set of principles and criteria developed by the [United Nations](#). These principles and criteria include conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, fair and equitable sharing of benefits from biodiversity, and respect for the rights of actors involved in biotrade.

Serdex produces natural extracts of tropical plants for pharmaceutical and cosmetic applications. The company originally developed its business around *Centella asiatica*, a plant that was known for its healing properties and was later developed for cosmetic uses. Approval for a drug based on the plant and named Madecassol® was given in 1958. Since then Serdex has greatly expanded its portfolio. It now forms a division of Bayer Santé Familiale, which is a subsidiary of Bayer HealthCare Consumer Care of the Bayer AG group.

The Executive Director of the Union for Ethical BioTrade, Rik Kutsch Lojenga, said: "We are delighted to welcome Serdex into the Union. This reflects a growing market interest in ethical trade and biodiversity. A number of other companies have also expressed interest in membership and are expected to join soon."

As part of the application process, Serdex underwent an audit to ensure that it met requirements for membership, and to identify areas where additional work is needed. The audit covered Serdex's factory and laboratories in Pau, France, its providers in Madagascar (Sotramex & Soamadina), as well as their local collectors. The results have been used to develop a work-plan that will be undertaken over the next few years. The plan includes monitoring the ecological impact of the company's local collection practices in Madagascar, and an awareness raising and training programme for Serdex's R&D team in France on issues related to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

All Union members develop similar work-plans, with progress reported annually. Periodic independent audits check that members' activities are in line with the Union's standards. Serdex's audit was conducted by South African group SGS Qualifor. Gerrit Marais, Director of SGS Qualifor, said "This was the first audit we have carried out for the Union for Ethical BioTrade. It clearly demonstrated the positive contributions that Serdex and its providers make to local sustainable development in Madagascar, but it also identified areas for improvement."

Gerard Sené, President of Bayer Santé Familiale and Serdex Division Manager, said the company was proud to become a member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade. He added "The audit that was part of the application process provides an excellent basis for continuous improvement of our sourcing practices in Madagascar shared and implemented with our local partners Sotramex and Soamadina. We have come a long way since we started working in Madagascar in the 1950s, but exercises like this keep us sharp and contribute to our commitment to constant progress. It's very encouraging recognition for us and our Madagascan partners. With our membership of the Union for Ethical BioTrade, our clients, but also the authorities in Madagascar, can rest assured that we take the sustainability, quality and ethics of our sourcing very seriously, and deal with these issues in a transparent manner."

For more information please visit: www.ethicalbiotrade.org, <http://www.serdex-plantextracts.com/> or contact the Union for Ethical BioTrade at info@ethicalbiotrade.org.
