



# '1.6 billion people suffer from anemia. That is 25 per cent of the world's population!'

Anemia, the lack of red blood cells, is one of the world's biggest - and least visible - health threats, currently affecting nearly one out of four human beings worldwide. Sera Scandia has a solution.

You cannot see it, and you might not even feel it. Nevertheless, anemia has a major impact on human health and well-being. In its moderate form, the condition may cause fatigue and inability to concentrate. In serious cases, it inhibits an individual's cognitive development and can be fatal. Fortunately, we are in a position to end anemia, but only if poor populations across the world gain access to essential nutrients. This is where Sera Scandia enters the picture, CEO Stefan Bødtker Michelsen explains:

'There is hardly any health condition that is more prevalent globally than anemia, and yet we rarely talk about it. Anemia is particularly widespread in developing countries because low-fat diets do not contain sufficient amounts of iron derived from haemoglobin, the so-called heme iron. By passivating children, it prevents effective learning at school. In fact, the cognitive development as a whole is jeopardised for someone who has insufficient amounts of red blood cells, which work to distribute oxygen to the cells of the body.'

Although Sera Scandia is headquartered in Denmark, the Sera Scandia Group was started in Venezuela in 1975 as a supplier of pig pancreas for a Novo Nordisk research project. Today, the company's main activity is to produce blood proteins and serum collected from slaughterhouses around the world. These proteins are crucial constituents in a number of industrial value chains such as biotechnology and pharma. They can also be used in food production, Stefan Bødtker Michelsen explains:

## Sustainable Development Goals at play

### SDG 2: Zero hunger

Target 2.2: By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.



'The advantage of the blood proteins is that they contain haemoglobin, which is absorbed in the body almost 20-40 percent more efficiently than non-heme iron and is therefore a very effective way of fighting anemia. By enriching food with aseptically treated blood, we can ensure that people in developing countries get the nutrition they so desperately need, thereby providing communities with an opportunity to break the vicious cycle of underdevelopment inherited across generations.'

Sera Scandia has already partnered up with several food and ingredient manufacturers that will add heme iron in their products/ingredients and replace the expensive egg albumin with plasma albumin. Among them we find a Peruvian soup- and biscuit company and a Guatemalan peanut butter producer. Recently, a strategic partnership was set in motion with a Danish ingredient- and nutrition company that operates globally. Stefan Bødtker Michelsen also points out, that the huge breakthrough and impact for heme



iron-enriched products require partnerships with global NGO's. This is why Sera Scandia's participation in the SDG Accelerator programme has given the company an important boost.

'The SDG Accelerator programme is all about partnerships and opening doors for one another, a prerequisite itself for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. If we want to fight anemia, we will need to partner with either UNICEF or the United Nations World Food Programme, alternatively get support from another major food assistance organisation. At the same time, we need to spread knowledge about anemia. Local and global players alike must understand that simply adding vitamins and minerals to a diet is not enough to tackle malnutrition in the broadest sense of the word.'

In the SDG Accelerator, Sera Scandia not only explored and established critical partnerships with UN and NGO partners working on nutrition challenges. They also refined their go-to-market strategy for its heme iron and identified potential pitfalls to avoid. At the same time, there is a need for more data collection and more communication, Stefan Bødtker Michelsen says:

'We are already working with academic institutions to increase awareness around the benefits of heme iron, which is why we have established the 'Global Initiative for a World Without Anemia', (GIWWA). In this forum we bring together all stakeholders, commercial and non-commercial, in order to unite initiatives and speak with one voice to reach our common goal: a world without anemia.'

The cooperative spirit and the global movement against malnutrition have made Stefan Bødtker Michelsen optimistic about the future.

'Our philosophy is a perfect match, not only with the Sustainable Development Goals, but also with FAOs recommendation to reuse waste products from slaughterhouses in the fight against malnutrition. It also means that we can create revenue from something that might be environmentally harmful if flushed down the drain, which is often the case in developing countries. Remember that the blood in a cow represents 6-8 per cent of the total protein yield of the animal. We are confident about our potential impact on the well-being of the world, and we are very excited to see where it will lead us.'

### This is how Sera Scandia contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

- Sera Scandia produces heme iron from blood collected from slaughterhouses.
- Heme iron is a crucial dietary supplement for the 1.6 billion people in the world, who lack red blood cells in their blood.

### Facts about Sera Scandia

- Founded in Venezuela in 1975
- Specialised in developing products for the food and biotech industries based on blood
- Has manufacturing facilities throughout South America, USA, South Africa and France
- Head office in Hellebæk, Denmark
- Approximately 450 employees



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Stefan Bødtker Michelsen  
CEO, Sera Scandia