

Integrity, Excellence, and Operational Maturity: The Qualitative Leap of BioNatura Journal: Ibero-American Journal of Biotechnology and Life Sciences (2024–2026)

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ABSTRACT

BioNatura Journal celebrates its third anniversary by denoting a transition from an emerging publication to a consolidated scientific platform, driven by foundational efforts in 2024 and 2025. This period emphasized operational maturity and moral standards, highlighted by a constant publication cadence of four issues per year. Technological evolution was achieved through a formal migration to Open Journal Systems (OJS) to standardize metadata and ensure digital archiving via PKP PN and LOCKSS/CLOCKSS. Furthermore, the journal implemented an "Online First" policy to eliminate artificial delays in knowledge dissemination while retaining persistent DOIs. The success of its Open Access model is evidenced by over 1.16 million PDF downloads across 116 countries in 2025, as well as its inclusion in the OpenAlex ecosystem to foster candid communication. With a rigorous double-blind peer-review process and a diverse editorial board representing 22 countries, BioNatura published 180 articles involving authors from 27 nations. These results support the journal's role as a mature, international bridge for scientific collaboration in biotechnology and life sciences.

Keywords. BioNatura Journal, Scientific Integrity, Operational Maturity, Open Access, Peer Review, COPE, OJS, Internationalization.

Editorial

The launch of a scientific journal is an act of faith in shared knowledge, but its consolidation is the result of rigorous discipline and unwavering ethical commitment. As we inaugurate this first issue of 2026, *BioNatura Journal* (ISSN 3020-7886) celebrates its third anniversary, looking back with pride and forward with determination. The years 2024 and 2025 were not merely the start of our editorial activity; they represented the foundational period where we transformed our mission of "disseminating science" into the tangible practice of "building credibility."

Operational Maturity and Technological Evolution

One of the clearest indicators of the transition from an emerging journal to a consolidated publication is the regularity of publication. During 2024 and 2025, *BioNatura* demonstrated robust operational capability, maintaining a constant publication cadence of four issues per year. This punctuality is a promise we have kept to our community that the journal is a live and reliable channel.

During this period, we maintained a rigorous double-blind peer-review process, supervised directly to ensure quality and confidentiality. To scale our capacity and standardize our metadata and preservation practices, we have, since January 2024, formally migrated the entire workflow to OJS (Open Journal Systems). This technological evolution allows us to centralize the editorial process, improve traceability, and comply with the highest standards of digital archiving (PKP PN, LOCKSS/CLOCKSS).

Since its inauguration in 2024, *BioNatura* has prioritized dissemination speed. To consolidate this practice and provide it with a formal framework, we officially implement the "Online First" system starting in February 2024. This policy ensures that articles are hosted in a dedicated section immediately after proof correction,

retain their persistent DOI, and are assigned to the corresponding volume later without duplication. This reaffirms our philosophy: in today's science, knowledge must flow without artificial delays.

The Open Access model sustains this operability. The usage data from our platform in 2025 validate our strategy: we registered over 211,000 verified visits and distributed 1.16 million PDF files to readers in 116 countries. These figures demonstrate that content is not only available ("Online Availability") but is actively consulted and downloaded by the global community. Comparative studies show that open-access journals with solid editorial standards can achieve visibility comparable to, or even superior to, that of subscription journals¹.

Our commitment to open science extends beyond access to full text; it encompasses the traceability and interoperability of our metadata. *BioNatura* has successfully integrated into the OpenAlex ecosystem, the open catalog of the global research system. Through this platform, our works are indexed and linked within an open framework that fosters the discovery and analysis of scientific impact without barriers². This integration not only amplifies our authors' visibility but also aligns us with the global movement toward transparent, interconnected scholarly communication, ensuring that our data contributes to the collective intelligence of the scientific community.

Integrity: Beyond Nominal Adherence

In a global ecosystem where the proliferation of "paper mills" threatens to contaminate the scientific record, *BioNatura* has adopted an active stance of defense of integrity. Evidence suggests that a journal's credibility does not reside in nominal membership to ethics committees, but in the visible and enforced application of its policies³.

We have implemented and refined strict protocols aligned with the *Committee on Publication Ethics* (COPE), ensuring editorial independence and transparent management of conflicts of interest⁴. We stand against "silent retractions"; at *BioNatura*, every correction is transparent to maintain the integrity of the record^{5,6}. Peer review, the basis for the validity of publications⁷, has been refined into a constructive scientific dialogue, recognizing that transparency in this process correlates with higher perceived quality⁸.

Content Quality and Universal Accessibility

We recognize that scientific excellence loses value if not communicated clearly. To ensure that research published in *BioNatura* has a true global impact ("Readability of articles"), we have raised our standards of linguistic editing and abstract structure. Our goal is to ensure that a researcher in Asia, Europe, or Africa can understand and apply an author's findings in Ibero-America with precision. This attention to detail in content presentation is fundamental to the journal's relevance and readability for an international audience.

A Global and Multidisciplinary Editorial Board

The quality of a journal is a reflection of its Editorial Board. *BioNatura* has built a robust, multi-layered structure that includes a Governance Council, a Principal Editorial Board, an innovative Junior Board, and a Technical Team.

Our editorial geography spans 22 countries. We have consolidated our Ibero-American base and, simultaneously, built high-impact networks in Europe, North America, and Asia, including editors from international reference institutions such as *EMBL-EBI* (UK), *BioNTech* and *Fraunhofer* (Germany), *Moderna* (USA), and *Johns Hopkins University*. This geographical diversity is functional: diverse boards are essential for enriching peer review and fostering submissions from all parts of the world^{9,10}.

A proud distinction is our **Junior Editorial Board**, composed of young scientists at cutting-edge institutions such as the *Max Planck Institute* and *Charité*. This initiative ensures the journal's sustainability and the incorporation of modern methodologies. Furthermore, our technical quality is ensured by standardization experts (such as the SciELO Cuba coordination), aligning our processes with the highest international standards.

Quantitative Balance: Real Reach (2024–2025)

The publication data (OJS) for Volumes 1 and 2 validate our committee's work. We have published 180 original articles submitted to arbitration.

- **Geographical Diversity:** Contributions from authors in 27 countries.
- **Internationalization:** 22.2% of articles (40 of 180) included extraregional participation, a figure that remained stable between 2024 and 2025.
- **Collaboration:** 11.7% are products of multi-country collaborations.

This breadth demonstrates that *BioNatura* has ceased to be a strictly regional forum and has become a bridge for scientific collaboration ¹¹.

BioNatura Journal: Ibero-American Journal of Biotechnology and Life Sciences Global Reach and Collaboration Network (2024–2026)

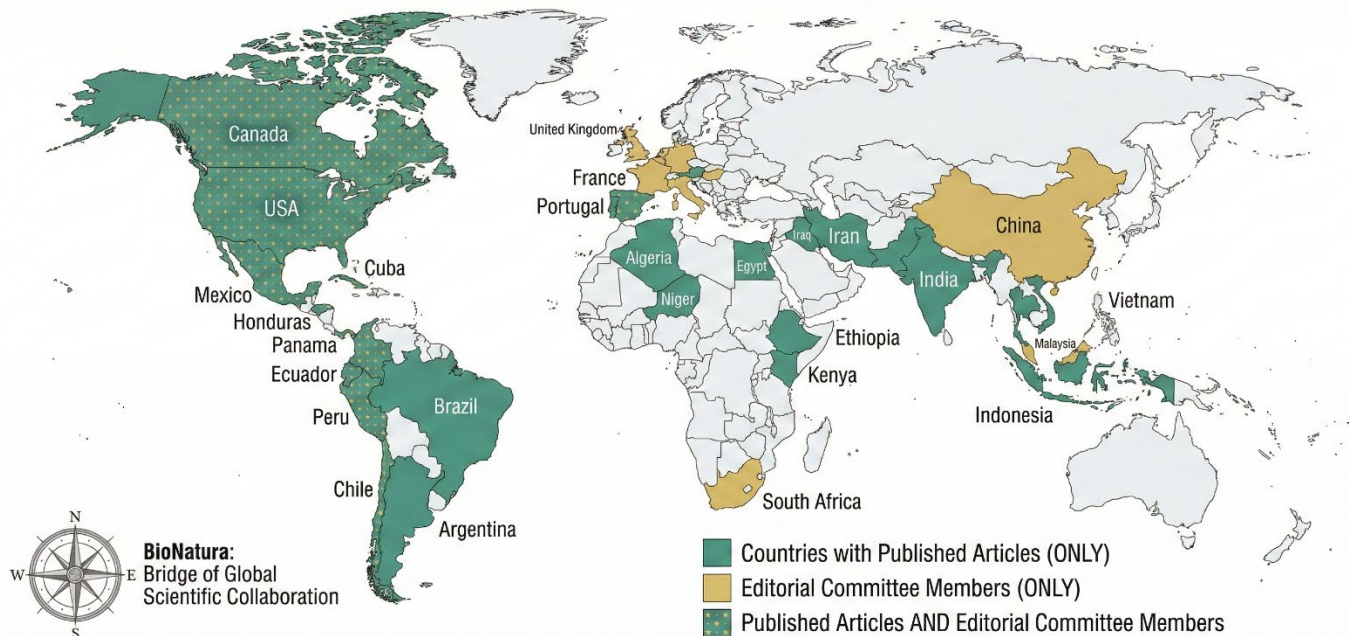


Figure 1. Global Reach and Collaboration Network of *BioNatura Journal* (2024–2026).

This infographic illustrates the journal's international expansion, highlighting an editorial geography that spans 22 countries. It showcases research contributions from authors located in 27 different countries, with 22.2% of published articles involving extraregional participation. The map differentiates between regions with published articles, editorial committee representation, and areas where both activities intersect. This visual representation underscores *BioNatura Journal*'s consolidation as a mature, global platform and a bridge for scientific collaboration in biotechnology and life sciences.

Towards the Future

The biennium 2024–2025 laid the foundations of integrity, rigor, and diversity. With the migration to OJS, the official implementation of *Online First*, and our integration into the OpenAlex ecosystem in 2026, we take a definitive step towards scientific agility and standardization. Our focus is on operational excellence and deepening our impact. We will continue to protect our community from "citation contamination" ¹² and ensure that every published article is a valid and accessible contribution to global biotechnology. *BioNatura Journal* is today a mature, transparent, and global platform.

CONCLUSION

The biennium 2024–2025 has successfully established the necessary foundations of rigor, diversity, and transparency for *BioNatura Journal* to operate as a mature scientific platform. Technological advancements, including the adoption of OJS and the "Online First" system, have ensured that validated research is accessible without delays while meeting high international standards for digital preservation. The journal's internationalization is now a measurable reality, evidenced by stable extraregional participation and robust multi-country collaborations. Looking forward, *BioNatura* will continue to prioritize operational excellence

and protect the scientific record from citation contamination, ensuring that every article remains a valid contribution to global biotechnology. Ultimately, the journal remains committed to serving as a transparent and interconnected channel for the global research community.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Declaration

Generative AI tools were used only for language/format editing and to assist in drafting Figure 1 using <https://gemini.google.com/app> under full human supervision. No AI was used for data generation/analysis/interpretation. Authors reviewed and verified all content and the final figure per BioNatura Journal AI policy (<https://bionaturajournal.com/artificial-intelligence--ai-.html>).

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