



Givaudan announces partnership for sustainable supply of benzoin from Laos

Paris, France, 18 March 2009 – Givaudan today announced a partnership focusing on the sustainable supply of benzoin from Laos as part of its Innovative Naturals™ programme.

The project involves economic and social initiatives and aims to ensure a sustainable supply of benzoin, a raw material used in Fine Fragrances and Consumer Products and extracted as gum or 'tears' from *Styrax tonkinensis* trees by villagers in northern Laos.

It is the third project in the Innovative Naturals™ programme to be announced by Givaudan, joining those on the sustainable supplies of sandalwood oil in Australia and tonka beans in Venezuela.

Givaudan's partner in the latest project is Agroforex Company, a Laos-based producer and exporter of pharmaceutical and aromatic plants, which arranges benzoin production with the local communities.

As part of the project, Givaudan has financed the construction of – and the equipment for – a secondary school at Aseuh in Phongsali province with Agroforex's participation. The school was formally opened in September last year, and at that time was also officially transferred to the Laotian education authorities. In addition, Givaudan is funding the training of teachers for the school over three years.

The benzoin project has other social advantages. Because secondary education in the area is not sufficient, many parents must move their families or send their children away to study in town. This rural exodus not only threatens the fabric of social cohesion, but eventually the future of benzoin production.

Givaudan is also participating in a programme launched by Agroforex over a decade ago for the long-term management of the mountain forest ecosystem. A technical course on production for village communities is contributing to improving *Styrax tonkinensis* planting and benzoin collection, by teaching intercropping with rice and red ginger. This offers local people additional sources of income.

New qualities of raw materials, including organic beeswax and organic red ginger oil, as well as other benzoin-based products, have been discovered through this initiative.

"Our sustainable supply project in Laos, with our partner, is a new strategic initiative in our growing

naturals programme, to which we aim to add at least one new partnership a year," says Rémi Pulverail, of the Innovative Naturals™ programme.

"Our approach is different to that of fair trade projects because we are trying to develop additional natural products in parallel to benzoin, to help village communities to diversify. The villagers are mostly farmers, and benzoin collection is their only means of bringing in an income that is in addition to their staple crops of rice and vegetables."

Innovative Naturals™

Givaudan sources nearly 200 pure and natural raw materials for its fragrances creations. The Innovative Naturals™ programme, launched in 2007, aims to enrich this palette with new and exclusive naturals. For details of the Innovative Naturals™ programme's initiatives in Australia and Venezuela, see www.givaudan.com

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