



Dear Reader,

much can be achieved alone. But little will last without persevering partners. Partnerships have a long tradition in SEKEM. We have reported on them often, particularly on how the multiple international partners have helped to realize the very large projects SEKEM has taken on over the past years. Especially the work of the SEKEM Development Foundation (formerly Society for Cultural Development in Egypt) would not be possible with their voluntary engagement.

In our present-day world, social philanthropy usually just doesn't compute. Naturally, we are primarily thinking of its economic dimension. There needs to be a flourishing economic life where human development is supposed to grow. It is clear that this can often lead to conflicts and constraints. After all, wasn't the original idea of „sustainability“ meant to crack the mould of old-style capitalism?

There are other perspectives on the issue. Maybe we should remind ourselves more often that „economy“ initially meant to „run the house“. Its linguistic roots stem from the greek „oikos“ („house“) and referred to the general idea of keeping many more than just monetary interests in a stable and fruitful balance in order to allow for good conditions of human life.

SEKEM has just found two strong partners in its work towards such an understanding of economics. We will introduce them to our readers in this issue and wish the common future plans best of luck.

The SEKEM Insight-Team

News

Triodos, GLS Bank invest in SEKEM

Events

70. Anniversary of Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish

Business

From Egyptian fields to Tokyo's shows

Triodos Bank, GLS Bank Invest in SEKEM Initiative

Large-Scale Financial Investments Support Longterm Business Development



Peter Blom (Triodos Bank), Helmy Abouleish (SEKEM) and Thomas Jorberg (GLS Bank)

On occasion of the Biofach 2007 fair in Nuremberg, the GLS Bank and the Triodos Bank announced a far-reaching expansion of their engagement in the advancement of the SEKEM Initiative. The two banks will contribute to future investments of the SEKEM Group added to an overall immediate financial investment in shares of 2,5 million Euro per institution. Both institutions will furthermore receive one seat each on the board.

The two banks have been working on the foundation of comprehen-

sive business development principles for an extended time and for several years in cooperation with SEKEM. They have contributed a substantial part to SEKEM's successful development until today, particularly to the double-digit growth most SEKEM firms experienced on average in the past years. They have helped SEKEM to become the healthy business it is today.

Helmy Abouleish underlined his excitement about the decision of the two banks: „Both banks have been specializing in ‚green money‘.

Continued on page 2



The comprehensive concept of their financial investments has and will continue to have a central importance in the development of SEKEM. Eventually, all of us are interested in more than just money.



We are proud to now being connected more directly to the SEKEM enterprise.

Thomas Jorberg, Chairman of the GLS Bank, welcomed the investment of the two leading institutions for ecologically sound, socially aware and sustainable investments: *„We are proud to deepen our cooperation and that we can now be connected more directly to the SEKEM enterprise.“* Peter Blom, Chairman of the Triodos Bank, added: *„SEKEM shows that a firm can be supported successfully by several partners. Together, we will make growth possible beyond former limits.“*

Concrete plans for investment projects are supposed to be formed and realized in the course of 2007. The GLS Bank and the Triodos Bank will contribute in an even more substantial way as in the past to investments that will amount



to 25 million overall in the coming years. As the SEKEM Group has seen significant growth in recent years, it will have to increase its overall investments in the future.

Not only machines and tools will have to be purchased. The group will also have to make investments in infrastructures on the mother farm. Furthermore, additional funds will allow for an increase in employee numbers and investments into regular business materials. Particularly the firms ISIS and ATOS will benefit from the greater financial room for manoeuvre available to them. Now SEKEM can commence with investing more in processing machinery, cooling and storage facilities or new production plants for dried and fresh vegetables, herbs and other products.

The two new financing partners are well-known beyond the borders of Europe for their ‚green investment‘ interests. The GLS Bank, based in Bochum and Freiburg, Stuttgart, Hamburg and Frankfurt works exclusively with ecologically sound, socially aware and sustainable projects. One of the most important principles of the Bank’s work is total transparency, particularly in the loans segment.

The GLS Bank also offers the usual banking services and additionally acts as a foundation. Currently, the institute finances about 4.000 projects.

Since its inception in 1980, the Triodos Bank also supports sustainable, social and financial goals in compliance with the „Three-Way-Principle“, that is investments in the interest of human life, the environment and the economy. It is an innovative, driving force in the sustainable banking business with branches in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain and Germany. The Triodos Bank finances enterprises that exhibit ecological, social or cultural engagement. For more than 10 years, the institute has been active also in private equity. The Triodos Bank Group currently finances around 4.000 projects.

More information on the two new partners of SEKEM and the future plans are available online at: www.triodos.com and www.gls.de.

Triodos Bank, GLS Bank, Bijan Kafi



Naturetex Now fairtrade-Certified

Certification Process Completed for Successor of Conytex Nature Textiles Brand

SEKEMs successor company to Conytex, Naturetex, has recently received fairtrade certification from the Fairtrade Labeling Organization (FLO) in Bonn as a processor and exporter of textiles made from fair-trade cotton. The document now officially certifies what has been a part of SEKEM’s business model for a long time: the responsible and fair treatment of employees and suppliers of organic cotton. Furthermore, SEKEM has always highlighted the level of communication between processor and supplier as an important part of a healthy value chain, particularly through extensive social protection schemes and a trustful cooperation

of close and dependable partnership. Now, the new certification can demonstrate even more clearly and believably what that precisely means:

long-term guarantees for organic farmers at stable and guaranteed minimum prices that do not only cover their running costs but also allow for room for development, fair wages for the employees of the textile production plants and work conditions including numerous opportunities for personal development through adult education or artistic courses and free from human exploitation.

The criteria of fairtrade for the cultivation and the processing of its pro-



Sewer in SEKEMs Firm Naturetex

ducts are publicly accessible at www.fairtrade.net.

Christina Boecker



Double Anniversary Marks New Challenges

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish and SEKEM Initiative Celebrate Anniversaries



Dr. Abouleish among the crowds of employees and guests of SEKEM at his public anniversary celebrations

Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish, founder of the SEKEM initiative and the chairman of the SEKEM Group of companies until the present day, celebrated his 70. anniversary on 23 April 2007. This year, the event was celebrated publicly as an open air event in the roman theatre of SEKEM on its mother farm near Belbeis.

The theatre was filled to the last place on this day as hundreds of SEKEM employees, pupils and trainees had arrived to celebrate together with Dr. Abouleish what turned out to be a double anniversary. Furthermore, numerous additional guests had been invited from all over the world.



SEKEM founder Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish and his family

With the 70th birthday of Dr. Abouleish the SEKEM initiative itself celebrates its anniversary, too. Three decades ago, in 1977, the Round House that today houses the guest house, served as the founding stone of the initiative that has in recent years grown to more than 6 firms with approximately 2.000 employees leading a great number of educational and cultural projects. Appropriately, today the Round House houses next to the guest rooms also a centrally placed, lush garden place marking the spot where the centre of the first of SEKEM's buildings was constructed.

The double anniversary this year primarily marks the challenges of a handful of upcoming projects. In their greetings, the guests present at the event therefore aimed to convey their best wishes for these projects and to express their hope that they may develop as fruitfully as all other endeavours did over the course of the past thirty years. Obviously, everyone's thoughts were on the SEKEM University project that is in its final stages of development.

Impressions from SEKEM

The children from the SEKEM kindergarten that walk in a colourful procession across the stage of SEKEM's roman theatre on this picture are dressed according to classes and groups.

The „uniform“ of the children is coloured in a different way every year not only making the daily routine in the school more enjoyable but also supporting a sense of connectedness and belonging. This way, such kind of clothing also helps teachers in their aim to positively influence social cohesion in the classroom and avoid tension between poor and rich children.



Kinder in farbiger Bekleidung der SEKEM Schule

A colorful mixture of artistic presentations was on the agenda for the event. The musical and theatrical pieces presented combined with the participation of the pupils and teachers once again demonstrated ostensibly that the year-long continuous educational work from the SEKEM school, the vocational training centre, the farms and firms to the adult training institute and the cultural programmes has been tremendously fruitful. The trainees from the vocational training center concluded the event with a colourful folk dance.

Andreas Lenzen, Bijan Kafi



From Egypt to Tokyo's Cat Walks

SEKEM's products may have to go a long way to reach the consumers all over the world and particularly in Europe, too. Sometimes these ways can be very long.

Produced on the fields of SEKEM's cotton farms in the Nile delta, the initiative's demeter-cotton is woven into fine garments and then shipped by Naturetex (formerly Conytex) to resellers like the atelier of Stimamiglio in Italy. Here, the premium quality garments that so far have been mostly used in textiles for babies and toddlers, are being transformed into fashionable women's wear.

On 5 and 6 April these products will now be shown on the cat walks of the fashion show „Tokyo Midtown“ bearing the label „Nathu“. Naturetex' managers are eagerly awaiting the interest in organic cotton by fashion resellers following the event.

Christina Boecker



ELIANT Supports Bio-Dynamic Agriculture in Europe

Beginning immediately, everyone can support the initiative ELIANT directly on its homepage at www.eliant.eu. The new alliance has set out to increase the weight of applied anthroposophic work on the European level. Demeter international is also among the first subscribers to the new venture and part of the alliance. SEKEM has been producing demeter-certified products for years and thereby has always been a supporter of bio-dynamic agriculture. Therefore, EU legislation is also of relevance to SEKEM and its suppliers.

The survey and signature collection ELIANT has been organising for several months aims at raising support for the proper development of key European legislation that affects applied anthroposophic work. According to the organisers, there are several legislative regulations relevant to anthroposophic industries: for the access to and the development of anthroposophic medicine, demeter foodstuffs, Steiner pedagogy, or curative education and other initiatives.

The organisers of the European Alliance of Initiatives of Applied Anthroposophy have been working for several years in support of legislation that recognizes the particularities of anthroposophic work. It has now set out to support



Italian fashion - now made from Naturetex organic cotton

this work through the collection of 1 million signatures to signify the political weight of anthroposophic work. ELIANT claims this to be necessary as, for example, demeter international has already lost its licence for distributing baby food without added vitamins. The respective EU regulation stipulates that all baby food has to contain vitamins. Such legislation also has a comparable effect on anthroposophic medicines. Such products need a specific form of registration to comply with the special needs of key anthroposophic concepts and their particular forms of production. ELIANT wishes to raise its voice in support of these and other initiatives of applied anthroposophic work and encourages readers to sign the petition online.

ELIANT, Bijan Kafi



Masthead:

Publisher: SEKEM, Egypt

The editors of SEKEM Insight wish to thank all contributors who helped in creating this edition.

Editors:

Christina Boecker
Bijan Kafi
Natascha Floride

SEKEM-Insight
c/o Sekem Holding
P.O.Box 2834
El Horreya, Heliopolis
Cairo, Egypt

insight@sekem.com