

Sonae Indústria received a honourable mention

During the 3rd edition of the Prize for Product Innovation, COTEC and Unicer have awarded a honourable mention to a range of particleboard and fiberboard (BEST) produced by Sonae Indústria, in Portugal.

Maia, 1st June 2010 – In a ceremony, which took place yesterday at the *Centro de Congressos do Estoril* in Lisbon, the President of the Republic, Cavaco Silva, handed over a honourable mention to Carlos Bianchi de Aguiar, Chief Executive Officer of Sonae Indústria.

The product, which received the honourable mention, is a range of particleboard and fiberboard called BEST, whose differentiating characteristics in terms of environmental concerns, such as the use of raw materials either recycled or from a controlled source, the low energy consumption during production, the carbon sequestration and low VOC emissions, made it worthy of this important distinction.

As Carlos Bianchi de Aguiar stated: “In fact, wood is a highly important eco-efficient material, the only one that can capture CO₂ from the atmosphere. The reutilisation and recycling of wooden products extends its life cycle and maintains the storage of carbon during a longer period. All our plants in the Iberian Peninsula are already certified under two certification systems, PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification) and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council), this guarantees that the wood used comes from sustainably managed forests. It only lacked a combination between recycled panels from a controlled origin, very low emissions of volatile organic compounds, and with an excellent mechanical performance. That was what we achieved with the new range of BEST products.”

The very low volatile emission enables the products of the BEST range to be certified under standards with specifications significantly more strict than those imposed by the European Union, as for example the CARB (California Air Resources Board) or the Japanese standards (JIS standards).

COTEC's Unicer Product Innovation Prize aims at distinguishing innovative products that result from a consistent and continued business innovation. The purpose is to distinguish innovative products, goods or services, targeted to global markets, developed by national or international companies operating in Portugal, and that have not been in the market for more than five years. The applications were assessed by a jury constituted by individualities of renowned institutions of the National System of Innovation. As per the regulation, candidates were evaluated according to several criteria, such as: innovation level; its potential in global markets; the result of consistent and continuous effort of RDI; competitive advantages; place of this product development in the company's global innovation strategy; protection of the underlying know-how to the development and commercialisation of the product; the compliance with the legislation in place in the target markets; economic feasibility and environmental sustainability.

For Sonae Indústria's Chief Executive Officer, "this honourable mention is the recognition that, in spite of challenges and setbacks faced, the company is capable of maintaining an attitude of constant innovation, always concerned with the common well-being, sustainable growth and ecological responsibility." He adds: "this is the path the Portuguese industry should follow: differentiation focused on added value products and environmental concerns."

The BEST range of products is the company's focus to penetrate the farthest markets, such as the Middle East and South West Asia. Considering the transport costs involved, these markets will absorb higher value added products. The BEST range stands for Sonae Indústria's concern with the ecology, included in its strategy of eco-sustainability, defined in the Environmental Policy, which is based on sustainable forest management principles, the sustainable utilisation of forest resources, the energy recovery of non-reusable materials and the minimisation of environmental impacts of our plants.