

Collaboration with Aveda is fighting poverty with conservation enterprises in Nepal



Aveda's 2007 Holiday gift sets feature handmade Lokta bark paper from Nepal. While beautifully showcasing the Aveda products, this exceptionally durable and attractive paper that is harvested from well-managed forests by local communities in the Nepal Himalayas, is helping marginalized community groups effectively fight poverty, improve their standard of living and while conserving globally significant areas of biodiversity. The Nepali Lokta paper used by Aveda is the first Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified handmade paper in the

world.

"The effective collaboration between Aveda and the Himalayan Bio Trade Private Limited (HBTL)—the community-based natural products processing and trading company that the paper is sourced from — is a result of years of coordinated effort in strengthening the capacity of community forest user groups and community-based forest enterprises to sustainably develop the forest products value chains" says Dr. Bishma Subedi, Executive Director of ANSAB.

In continuation of their effort to advance biodiversity conservation and community development goals through community-based enterprise oriented solutions, ANSAB (Asia Network for Sustainable Agriculture and Bioresources) introduced Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification in 2002. ANSAB coordinates a private-public alliance to promote Nepal's unique Non-timber Forest Products. The alliance includes Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Forest Users Groups, local forest products companies, The Rainforest Alliance and Aveda. Initially supported by USAID, Ford Foundation, and SNV, the effort successfully developed the Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) as a resource manager for FSC group certification and enabled it to receive the first community based non-timber forest products (NTFP) FSC certification in Asia. Similarly, eight forest-based enterprises including HBTL, received FSC Chain of Custody certification.



This and other ANSAB economic incentive based biodiversity conservation program interventions in Nepal has resulted in monetary benefit of US \$ 5.54 million for 65,000 rural women and men in 2006 and has brought 85,000 hectare of forests and meadows under improved community management in Nepal.



The FSC certification is a great achievement from environmental and social points of view, but it is only a step to place products with high value international markets. The capacity

building, enterprise development and product supply chain development championed by ANSAB and EnterpriseWorks/VITA (EWW) in partnership with Aveda were just as important if not more so. "The average buyer looking at the Aveda packaging and buying the products has no idea how much expertise is needed to bring a product up to international standards, comply with all export and import regulations, and develop a local community's basic business skills to profitably manage an enterprise that meets the highest environmental and social standards" says Ann Koontz, Senior Program Advisor for EWW.

Aveda's invaluable advice and assistance to Nepali enterprises enabled them to become successful enterprises meeting the requirements of international buyers, regulations of importing countries, and distinguishing their products in the marketplace. Aveda made investments in HBTL to help them improve production efficiency and quality consistency. "Having an international company of Aveda's caliber in the value chain of Nepal's sustainably produced natural products and the strong linkages to rural community based forest enterprises and resultant increased income to individuals of organized community groups is creating a powerful system to encourage sustainable use of forest resources in poverty stricken but biodiversity rich areas of Nepal Himalaya" Says Dr. Subedi.

ANSAB thanks Aveda for their continued commitment to Nepali community forestry initiatives that fight poverty. Aveda Corporation, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Estee Lauder Companies Inc. is a worldwide beauty company that manufactures plant-based hair care, skin care, makeup, and lifestyle products with a commitment to protecting the environment, conserving resources and supporting indigenous communities. Founded in 1978, Aveda has long been a leader in conducting business in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.