

## Belgium's BENE0 production site invests in sustainable rice value chain in Laos

08 March 2023 | News

### Initiates projects to strengthens rice supply chain by equipping local rice farmers in Southeast Asia's Laos with Farm Machinery



### Initiates projects to strengthens rice supply chain by equipping local rice farmers in Southeast Asia's Laos with Farm Machinery

BENE0 (HQ: Belgium), the global market leader in the production and sale of rice starch has initiated sustainable value chain projects in Southeast Asian Laos regions by provisioning harvesting and threshing machinery to regional farmers to improve farmers working conditions.

BENE0 has partnered with Indochina Development Partners Lao (IDP), a rice milling Company and long-term logistic partners to further the project. The project aims to invest in enhancing and strengthening its farm level partnerships throughout its entire supply chain. The rice ingredients production site in Wijkmaal, Belgium is aiming to change the long-term working life of more than a hundred small-scale farmers in Laos.

Approximately 70% of the total cultivated area and one-fifth of the national GDP are devoted to small-scale rice farming in Laos. BENE0 worked with its longtime partner IDP, the largest rice producer and supplier in Laos, to improve working conditions for local farmers. Consequently, eight harvesting machines and four threshers were purchased to ease workloads and increase yields.

As part of the initiative, machines are provided to 10 groups of 10 small-scale farmers. The machines eliminate the need for manual harvesting by eliminating the need for hand cutting and manually threshing. Farmers can expect higher yields and higher incomes from direct threshing because rain-related losses, as well as mold formation, are reduced. Further, farmers can rent the machines to other farmers in the region, allowing many farming families to benefit from BENE0's investment. In order to ensure the long-term success of the project, BENE0 retains ownership of all equipment, while training the farmers on its use and maintenance.

Roland Vanhoegaerden, Operations Managing Director for BENEÓ's rice ingredients comments: "By supporting farmers with new equipment, we have helped 100 farming families ease their everyday workloads. By providing these economic resources to rice farmers, we are contributing to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Given the success of this initiative, we intend to launch another project of this type in the coming year to support more rice farmers."

BENEÓ has been developing and producing plant-based functional ingredients from natural sources for the food, feed and pharmaceutical industries. BENEÓ's production site in Wijnmaal (Belgium) is the source for more than half of the world's rice starch, despite the rice crop being primarily imported from South East Asia. Unique rice derivatives such as rice starch, rice flour and rice protein are being produced at the site for the food and feed market. BENEÓ is active in over 80 countries, and has six state-of-the-art production sites in Belgium, Chile, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands that deliver high-quality ingredients at all times.