

Brussels, 16 February 2010

## **Electrabel, GDF SUEZ Group, and Pacific BioEnergy sign cooperation agreement**

Electrabel has taken a minority interest in a joint venture created with Pacific BioEnergy Cooperation to support the expansion of its existing wood pellet production in Prince George, British Columbia. Pacific BioEnergy is a leading manufacturer and supplier of wood pellets. The estimated cost of the investment of this expansion is € 17 million.

In addition to this interest, Electrabel has concluded a long term purchase agreement of wood pellets assuring a greater security of supply of biomass. Under the agreement, Electrabel will buy 225 000 tonnes of biomass annually over a period of 10 years.

In 2009, Electrabel used 1.1 million tonnes of biomass in its generating facilities in Belgium, so avoiding the emission of 1.6 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, compared with an equivalent coal-based production.

By replacing coal with biomass bought under these new long term purchase agreement, Electrabel will avoid the emission of 4 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

The wood pellets will mainly be used in unit 4 at the Rodenhuize power station, which is currently being converted into a 100% biomass-fired unit (180 MW), capable of producing enough green power to cover the annual consumption of 320 000 households.

It dovetails with the "Together for less CO<sub>2</sub>" sustainable development plan Electrabel introduced in late 2008, and with the company's pledge to develop its generating facilities to be able to supply green power to 1 million Belgian households by 2015.

This move confirms GDF SUEZ Group's commitment to renewable energy under the general agreement concluded with the Belgian government in connection with the decision to extend the operating lives of some nuclear power stations.

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This press release is also  
available in English.*

**Pacific BioEnergy Corporation** is a leading manufacturer and internationally recognised supplier of wood pellets. Based in Prince George, the company has its headquarters in Vancouver and development projects in Kitwanga and Nazko, (British Columbia). The company has access to one of the largest fibre supply sources in the world. Pacific BioEnergy has been supplying sustainable green energy for homes, businesses and industrial customers since 1994 and has been exporting wood pellets to major European utilities since 1998.

**Electrabel** is part of GDF SUEZ, a world energy leader active throughout the energy chain, in electricity and natural gas, both upstream and downstream. The Group seeks to meet energy needs, provide secure supplies, combat climate change and optimise the use of resources. Electrabel is the biggest energy supplier on the Benelux market, where it is active in electricity generation, sales of electricity and natural gas and energy services. The company offers value-added energy solutions as well as tailored services to its 6 million residential, professional and industrial customers. Electrabel benefits from synergy between electricity and natural gas for the development of its energy products and services. The company also disposes of diversified generation facilities in the Benelux for a total capacity of 16 000 MW. These include facilities that work with renewable energy sources, as well as conventional and nuclear power stations. The greenhouse gas emission rate at its generation facilities is one of the lowest in Europe. In Belgium, Electrabel is the largest producer of green energy.

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