



WE SUPPORT

МЕ ЗУББОУТ

2020-2021

**BIO
GROW**

NATURAL CHOICE



**UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL
COMPACT**

CEO Message

Building a sustainable model for Biogrow

With the Food and Agriculture Organization estimating that there will be around 9 billion people to feed by 2050, the question of what agricultural models and practices will be able to support this population boom, remains a significant one. At Biogrow, we aim to produce alternatives to current types of non-natural, non-organic substrates, and consequently, contribute to, and promote the development of more environmentally responsible methods of agriculture.

To help promote sustainable development both within our company and those of our partners, we devised a ‘corporate social responsibility’ strategy that we strongly believe will help us improve our impact on local environments, while contributing to the management of more global issues.

We see sustainable development as an opportunity to develop our company by reducing some of our operational costs (e.g. energy consumption, waste production) and by promoting responsible behaviour towards our stakeholders. It is our responsibility as a modern, forward thinking and ethical company to encourage such actions, and to ensure that every employee is involved. Our 2020 action plan aims to give our managers the tools to reach their sustainability targets and positively alter the company’s impact from a global perspective. We have every confidence that as a team - and as an environmentally sound and responsible company - we will remain true to our commitments and reach all our objectives.



BRUNO VILLA
CEO of Biogrow India

Biogrow Substrates India Pvt Ltd began its life in India in 2015, with the purchasing of land in a small village called Poosaripatti, in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Situated within the heart of the world's biggest coconut producing area, Pollachi, the site was perfect for our needs. Our main objective when choosing this site was to focus on the production of grow bags, as market demand was high and the raw material was both in abundance, and readily available.

Once building work got underway in 2015, we were able to start production the following year, helped along with the purchase of our first two hydraulic grow bag machines. Now, in 2020, we have a total of six hydraulic machines, and a warehouse capable of holding 3000 tonnes of coco peat, enabling us to continue meeting the demands of our global partners even during the monsoon seasons.

In 2018, as production increased, we created Biogrow Ultra Pvt Ltd to enable us to produce our own raw materials, and we purchased land in a nearby village called Nallampalli. With an existing defibring unit for raw material already in place, the site also gave us ample opportunity to expand in the future.

By the end of 2019, the Biogrow Ultra site had been completely renovated and a new processing plant with the capacity to clean and calibrate 250 tonnes of raw material per week, had been constructed. This also enabled us to produce coco nut fibre and wet coco peat ready for the aging and drying process. Spotting an opportunity to diversify, we then began making and selling 2 ply twine and 5kg coco peat bales.

In 2020, with both sites now fully operational, we can produce up to thirty containers every month of high-quality grow bags that meet the exact specifications and needs of each of our global partners.

Our Mission

To offer high quality cocopeat substrates for farmers across the world - created by growers, for growers – and to pursue the highest level of work quality and product excellence in our field of specialization. We are also focused on maximizing returns for stake holders, to ensure sustainable development.

“We Care We Perform”



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Profile and History

Biogrow India (Pvt) Ltd is an India subsidiary of SARL Vila - a company belonging to a French fruit and vegetable growing company in the south of France. We have production sites in Brazil, India and Sri Lanka.

Biogrow has been operating in the field of coconut-based organic substrates for more than 6 years in India, and has two main operating sites: Coimbatore for administrative purposes, and both Poosaripatti and Nallampalli for production.



Thanks to the hard work of more than 200 employees in India during high season, Biogrow annually produces more than three million slabs of coconut-based organic substrates and serves more than 180 customers worldwide. Additionally, the company employs about 20 workers through its subcontractors.

Our Commitments

Employees

At Biogrow, we believe our employees are essential to the success of our business, and while we rely predominantly on low-skilled workers for production duties, they are as integral to our company as all other team members.

We also have a commitment to ban forced and child labour, and will not employ minors, neither support the employment of minors in companies that we work closely with.

Our workers are employed on the premise that the same pay should be given for the same job, or 'Equal JOB, Equal PAY'.

We have also expanded and improved the living quarters for out-of-state labourers who reside with us, including supplying them with washing machines and satellite television to help improve their quality of life.



This year, the deadly virus COVID-19 spread across the world indiscriminately affecting everyone within its reach, and India underwent a lockdown for three months, followed by a full and virtually total month-long lockdown for all factory production and related activities; many companies, including our own, struggled to maintain our workforce throughout these periods.

However, because we value the wellbeing of our entire workforce, basic salaries were paid to each employee throughout the entire lockdown period, and our out-of-state labourers were given free onsite accommodation along with regular deliveries of fresh fruit, vegetables, rice and other essential supplies.

We also ensured that all workplaces were safe and hygienic by mandating the regular washing and sanitizing of hands for all employees, and implemented regular checking and recording of body temperatures using the appropriate tools and technology.



Environment

Biogrow believes that environmentally conscious production is crucial for the sustainability of any business, least of all our own, and to help protect our planet for future generations, it's the only solution.



In line with the Prime Minister's central governments' Swachh Bharat mission, we continually strive to maintain a clean and tidy environment around our production sites, and all recyclable waste is dealt with in the appropriate manner as per the government's guidelines.

Suppliers & Subcontractors

We believe that those suppliers and subcontractors with whom we do business, are as much a part of our success and sustainability as we are, and we continue to rely heavily on a growing network of small, medium and large businesses for their supply of raw materials.

In understanding the gravity of the situation for those suppliers during the lockdown period, wherever possible, we made advance payments to help them sustain their businesses.

Customers

For us, providing our customers with a quality product is our primary goal, and we have put several systems in place to ensure that we can maintain that commitment at all times.

Some of these include frequent checks to manage moisture levels, water retention capacity, sand content, mixture of coconut chips and fibres, electric conductivity, expansion level, size and weight, to name but a few, and during loading, we also check the quality of packing and loading of each pallet, to minimize transportation damages and keep the product safe.

Community and Charity work

At Biogrow, we strive to help and support our local community as best we can, and with a strong sense of compassion among our own company community, helping others around us becomes second nature.

Educating the younger generation is important to us, and over the years we've donated many items to our local school, such as desks, chairs and writing supplies to support the student's educational growth, and we will continue to do so over the coming



Constantly aware of the struggles that many people and businesses living in our community face due to poverty, Covid-19 and a range of other factors, we do our bit to help them whenever we can. Recently, desks, chairs and filing cabinets were donated to the new village council office, to help them get back on their feet and attend to the needs of the villagers; we're certain they were gratefully received.



The United Nations Global Compact Principles

We also concentrate on the 10 principles of the United Nations Global Compact:

- 1) Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.
- 2) Businesses should make sure that they are not complicit in human rights issues.
- 3) Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.
- 4) Businesses should support the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.
- 5) Businesses should support the effective abolition of child labour.
- 6) Businesses should support the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- 7) Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges.
- 8) Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility.
- 9) Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.
- 10) Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Committed to maintaining the highest ethical standards within our company, we are in constant compliance with all anti-corruption laws at every stage of our business, and are extremely proud of this fact.

With our long-standing commitment to conducting business with integrity, we avoid all forms of corruption - including bribery - and encourage our partners and suppliers to do the same. Our anti-corruption compliance program encompasses numerous reporting, monitoring and certification controls, as well as providing education to our employees.

