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Press release

## **Gazobois SA takeover: carrying on an innovative energy project**

**The founders of Gazobois, which is developing a process for converting wood and wood waste into gas and electricity, have decided to hand over their project to a consortium formed by Holdigaz, sol-E Suisse SA (a subsidiary of BKW FMB Energie SA) and Romande Energie. The consortium will work to finalize the studies being undertaken to bring this innovative technology to life.**

Vevey, Bern, Morges and Cossonay, 17 November 2009 – Holdigaz SA, sol-E Suisse SA and Romande Energie (through its subsidiary Romande Energie Renouvelable SA) have taken over Gazobois SA. They each hold one third of the company's capital.

Gazobois was created by visionary founders in 1992 with the aim of building a system to generate electricity and synthetic natural gas that is compatible with the natural gas network, using wood from the region's forests together with industrial wood waste.

Preliminary research and analysis, as well as laboratory testing, have demonstrated the project's technical feasibility and its environmental and economic potential. A 1 MW pilot plant is currently operating at the European Centre for Renewable Energy in Güssing, Austria.

The next step is to complete the study phase, build a production plant in Eclépens and then commission it. In view of the major investment required for this, the company's founders preferred to hand the project over to a consortium of established and experienced companies capable of seeing it through to fruition.

Technical development of the project began at the University of Nancy in France. It was then expanded by a technical consortium made up of the Paul Scherrer Institute, Conzepte Technik Umwelt (Winterthur), the Vienna University of Technology and Repotec Renewable Power Technologies Umwelttechnik (Vienna). Technical support was also provided by the LENI laboratory at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (EPFL) in Lausanne.

Holdigaz, sol-E Suisse and Romande Energie look forward to working together to turn the Gazobois project into an innovative technology through the use of local resources. They are grateful to the project's originators for this opportunity.

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## Note to editorial desks

This press release is being issued outside the trading hours of the SIX Swiss Exchange as required by the SIX Listing Rules on ad hoc publicity.

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