



**GROWING TOWARDS A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**



ULTRA-CHARGED, ON AN AROMATIC MISSION

10,000 kilograms of rose petals, 250 kg of lavender, 6,000 kg of melissa plant, 1,500 lemons, and so on; the sheer volumes of plants and naturals required to produce just one kg or a small batch of essential oils is no secret. As the exploration of alternate therapy becomes more in-depth, the myriad applications of essential oils have become an integral wellness fix in our daily lives. However, in the whiffs of amplified usage of plant essences, we are increasingly becoming aware of the heightened pressure on Mother Nature's bounty and the environments in which they are found. In fact, some of the favoured essential oils like rosewood and sandalwood are obtained from endangered species of flora. What is always at the top of one's mind is that the extensive usage of essential oils could very well spell doom for certain species of plants, leading to extinction. As such, there is a pressing requirement to proceed with caution. In addition, the journey from seed to shelf is fraught with risks of damage as it is labour-intensive. It entails the involvement of rural and indigenous communities, apart from the distillers, who are crucial cogs in the wheel in bringing these essentials oils to end-users.

Today, as the questions of sustainability loom large, we at Ultra International Ltd. have pledged to put people and planet before profitability. Spurred by our unwavering quest to leave minimum carbon footprint, we have undertaken concerted initiatives to ensure ethical harvesting and sourcing; and transparency in transactions in every phase of our supply chain. Finally, in the locations it is not possible to source, it is our endeavour to offer safe, quality synthetics, or adapt products so as to reduce dependency on naturals. For we staunchly believe that it is our responsibility to take care of the people and the planet that share their treasures selflessly with us.





SANGANERIA FOUNDATION FOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION



An act of kindness set the bedrock for a business firmly grounded in the basic tenets of community participation and respect for the planet. Prahalad Sanganeria, by donating his ancestral property Daya Daan to Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, sowed the seed, while his son Sant Sanganeria brought it to fruition. The Sanganeria Foundation for Health and Education (SFHE) was formally established in 2003. Today Ultra's business centres around empowerment, health, and education.

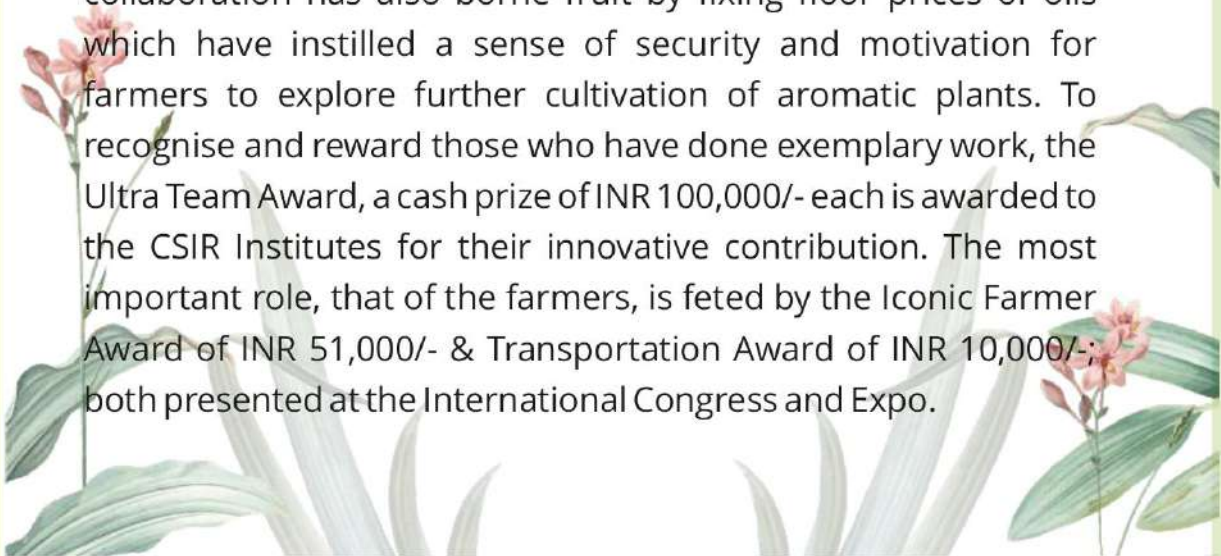




MISSION WITH A PURPOSE, CSIR-CIMAP AROMA MISSION

People, planet, and partnership, as envisaged by the UN, finds reflection in this significant Aroma Mission initiative of Ultra in partnership with the Government of India. Steered by Prof. Anil Kumar Tripathi, Director, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), it has catalysed adoption of best practices; easy accessibility of technologically-advanced agronomy solutions, a buy-back mechanism and an equitable trading platform. It has been rolled out at Polachi Annamalai Tiger Reserve, Ooty, Bastar, Mirzapur, and Sitapur in India. Farmers, especially tribals, have benefitted immensely from mentoring and skill development, intercropping, and job creation, leading to the betterment of livelihoods.

Ultra provides free saplings and distillation units to facilitate optimum production and quality at source. The Aroma Mission collaboration has also borne fruit by fixing floor prices of oils which have instilled a sense of security and motivation for farmers to explore further cultivation of aromatic plants. To recognise and reward those who have done exemplary work, the Ultra Team Award, a cash prize of INR 100,000/- each is awarded to the CSIR Institutes for their innovative contribution. The most important role, that of the farmers, is feted by the Iconic Farmer Award of INR 51,000/- & Transportation Award of INR 10,000/-; both presented at the International Congress and Expo.



REVELLING IN RESEARCH

Recognising the value of scientific innovation, Ultra has unwaveringly supported research and those involved in it. SFHE sponsored five promising scientists to visit the prestigious World Congress of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants held in Cyprus in November last year. V. Sundaresan from the CSIR-CIMAP Research Centre in Bangalore, Robin Joshi and Dinesh Kumar from the CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology in Himachal Pradesh were joined by fellow scientists Douglas S.A. Chaves from the Institute of Natural Fibres & Medicinal Plants in Poland, and Asad Choudhary from Salalah Frankincense Oil LLC in Oman. With exposure to a spectrum of topics, Ultra firmly believes that initiatives like these will encourage more science-backed innovation.



AIMING HIGH WITH EDUCATION

Accessible education has always been a priority for Ultra. With this being the driving force, SFHE has constructed a dedicated Science block at The Hindu College, Delhi University. It spans four floors and is spread over an impressive 2,000 square metre area. It houses impressive, state-of-the-art laboratories for physics, chemistry, zoology, and botany. The College has honoured Sant Sanganeria by awarding him the Sarthak Samman Award.

Apart from this, Purkal Youth Developmental Society in Uttarakhand, Raghunath Balika Vidyalaya in Rajasthan, and the Maharani Laxmibai College in Haryana receive financial backing and support from SFHE. The Foundation joined hands with Humana People to People India to run educational programmes for street and working children in the Sahibabad Industrial Area near Delhi; with the newest endeavour being the Digital Literacy Centre for children of Karkar in Uttar Pradesh.



EMPOWERING WITH EMPATHY

Inclusive communities are an important facet of sustainability in the new world order. A cleanliness and beautification drive by Ultra International in Karkar village in UP has set the bar for community awareness for health and hygiene. The remodelled and renovated Rana Street has emerged as the aspirational epitome for every locality. Especially tailored for women, the Ultra Skill Development Centre is a big step towards imparting vocational education. The 'waste not, want not' mantra has been instilled in several women of Karkar village in an immensely successful workshop where they learnt how to use floral waste from temples to create incense sticks. In addition to supporting Kiwanis Club of New Delhi, a philanthropic organisation providing prosthetic limbs free of cost to patients, the SFHE has also built 100 biogas plants in the Sikar district of Rajasthan.



GOLDEN GROVE NATURALS

Down under, Ultra's unswerving commitment to the golden rule of sustainable growth is equally steadfastly upheld by its Australian affiliate, Golden Grove Naturals (GGN). GGN has extended its sustainability principles that yield superior quality tea tree to include other in-demand Australian naturals.

GGN's environmental programmes include varied endeavours. One of these is the extensive use of spent biomass and mulch on cropping fields. The spent plant material is utilised as a natural and organic soil conditioner, thereby increasing microbe activity, reducing nutrient leaching and eliminating the requirement for chemical fertilisers. Another innovative initiative is the aeration of process water prior to discharge into the catchment area. The process water passes through open air channels and undergoes natural aeration. A considerable portion of the spent water is also utilised in crop irrigation.

GGN's ample eucalyptus acreage abuts Australia's famed local koala rehabilitation forest, the Tucki Tucki Nature Reserve. The company has added a two kilometre stretch of eucalyptus corridor, extending to the Wilson River's edge. Not only does this provide food and seed for the koala population, but also GGN actively partners with Lismore City Council to rehabilitate sick, injured or orphaned animals and re-introduce them back into the wild.





The collaboration with the Southern Cross University extends to in-depth scientific exploration of tea tree biodiversity with deep-rooted perennial tree cropping systems, best water management practices, ecological diversity, habitat quality, soils and carbon improvement methods and riparian conservation.

The company's proactive efforts in engaging indigenous landowners and farmers have resulted in an income increase by developing plant clusters of selected aromatic crops.



GGN actively undertakes aboriginal education programmes and facilitates memberships into industry associations for aromatic crops and bushfoods. GGN has also supported the recent renovation of the local aboriginal land council tea tree crop which has not been harvested for the last twelve years. The company continues to work with its on-ground partners to engage with the aboriginal land council to test new land and establish native crops, proliferate eucalyptus and lemon myrtle, and make considerable headway in its sustainability goals.

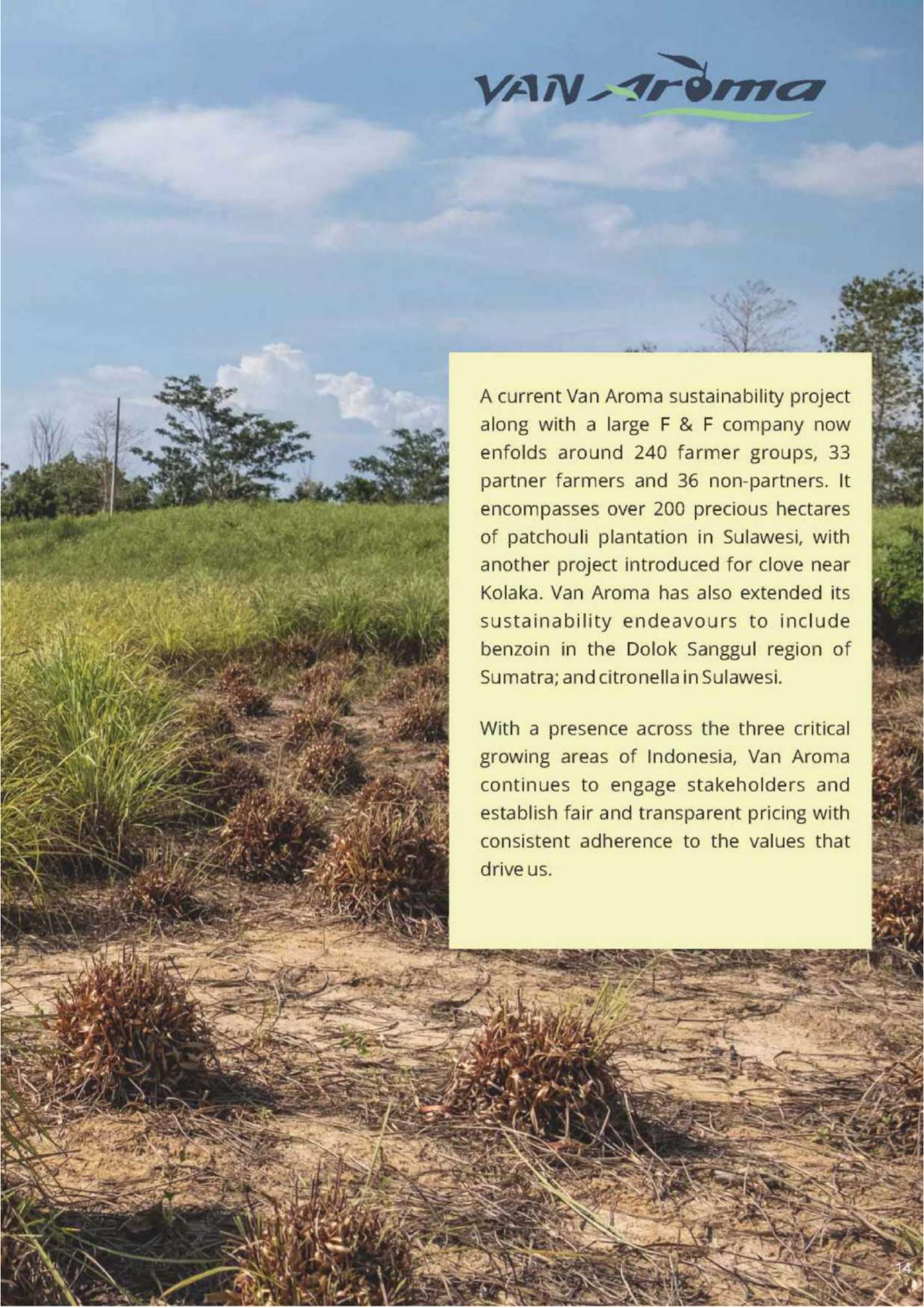


VAN AROMA

Deep inside the heart of Sulawesi, in a mountainous field in the southern Kolaka region of Indonesia, miles away from the nearest village, a farmer is hard at work readying his patchouli plants for cutting. While the harvested plants will subsequently be carted to a distillery a considerable distance away for extraction of essential oil, the field will be readied for planting the next batch of patchouli. What the farmer, and numerous more like him, do not realise is that patchouli is a soil-depleting plant. Growing patchouli in repeated cycles exhausts the soil of its nutrients. The soil is not nutrient-rich to provide sustenance for the next batch of patchouli. The result: an inferior crop affecting both farmer, distiller, distributor as well as consumer. Here is where the sustained, collaborative efforts of Van Aroma and large F & F companies over a period of time have brought in a semblance of sustainable cropping.

The three-pronged modus operandi of such joint sustainability programmes has shown a remarkable positive effect at the grassroots level. They work on the critical parameters of farmer education through demonstration and development of local ecosystems with upliftment of communities. A paradigm shift towards adoption of eco-friendly farming methods and cultivation best practices has reduced crop migration and improved the quality of patchouli at source. Intensive training and demonstrations are the beacon for the community. Innovations like using organic decomposers and plant waste to create compost has yielded good organic fertiliser every three months. In addition, patchouli crop rotation with other botanicals like citronella and vetiver has enabled replenishing the nutrient content of the soil.





A current Van Aroma sustainability project along with a large F & F company now enfolds around 240 farmer groups, 33 partner farmers and 36 non-partners. It encompasses over 200 precious hectares of patchouli plantation in Sulawesi, with another project introduced for clove near Kolaka. Van Aroma has also extended its sustainability endeavours to include benzoin in the Dolok Sanggul region of Sumatra; and citronella in Sulawesi.

With a presence across the three critical growing areas of Indonesia, Van Aroma continues to engage stakeholders and establish fair and transparent pricing with consistent adherence to the values that drive us.



SUSTAINABILITY: DEVELOPED VS UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES

Say "sustainable development" and the alarm bells start ringing. And why not? Human development goals, economic upliftment, and climate change are some of the biggest challenges plaguing humankind today. The United Nations earmarks poverty, hunger, health, quality education, gender equality, water and sanitation, affordable energy, quality and dignity of work and economic growth, industrialisation, inequality, cities, sustainable consumption, and climate change as the goals of sustainability; each affecting the other in myriad ways. These socio-economic criteria along with a high industrialisation level and per capita income determines the 'developed' status of nations. Like all the other sectors, the essential oils industry too is significantly affected by rising sustainability concerns.

Sustainable agriculture is a concept better understood by developed countries. For smaller farmers grappling with harsh living conditions in the underdeveloped and developing nations of rural Africa, South America or remote Asia, the sole objective of agriculture is food production. Ecological awareness is low; practical problems of day-to-day existence take on bigger significance.

Secondly, there is an entire cosmos of difference in education levels of communities in underdeveloped countries as opposed to their developed counterparts. Communities are more responsive to technology-backed best practices for better agronomy, pest management and biological biodiversity when they have been exposed to a scientific way of thinking. The broadening of horizons that comes with education is inadequate in underdeveloped countries, which makes it difficult to penetrate.

Another sustainability challenge of underdeveloped nations remains that most sustainable agriculture attempts are private CSR attempts with almost no survival mechanism after funds dwindle. Indigenous communities battle numerous constraints of limited resources and access to opportunities of better livelihoods. Alternatively, the inherent knowledge of the earth is also endangered.

However, in light of the above, it is evident that underdeveloped nations hold the potential to become hotbeds of essential oil crops. The potential must be unlocked in a concerted, collaborative effort with integrated biodiversity safeguards and knowledge enhancement; and go a long way in mitigating sustainability challenges.

