



Press Release – 4/09/2017

Moringa invests in Floresta Viva, an agroforestry heart of palm company in Brazil

Moringa SCA SICAR (“Moringa”), a private equity impact investment fund specialized in agroforestry projects in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, announces the closing of the fifth investment of its portfolio. Moringa took a stake in Floresta Viva, a Brazilian company developing a groundbreaking agroforestry system revolving around organic heart of palm, a Brazilian delicacy that is commercialized through their two environmentally-conscious brands. 150’000 tons of heart of palm have been produced in the world in 2015, a figure that has never ceased to increase since the 90s. Brazil is the first producer and consumer of heart of palm, absorbing 75% of this USD500m market.

The Floresta Viva company anchor and origin is a 1’000ha farm, of which 800ha is preserved native forest, located in the Mata Atlantica (Brazilian Atlantic Forest) of the Vale do Ribeira (São Paulo Estate). Since its acquisition by the Floresta Viva team in 2013, the farm has been replanted with a mix of heart of palm plants and native tree species, following agroecological practices. The objective of this innovative model is to re-insert this previously deforested estate in the Mata Atlantica landscape, with the aim of preserving and valorizing such a unique biome, and establish a new benchmark of sustainable and profitable human intervention. The company is led by a strong team of promoters with complementary and diversified skills, from agronomy to marketing and environmental conservancy.

“Heart of palm has been a plague for forest biodiversity in the past, extracted from natural forests of Brazil with such intensity that some of its species almost reached extinction. Other alternatives to these vulnerable species do exist like the *Bactris Gasipae* commonly called the Pupunha. Unlike existing monoculture and chemical intensive plantations of pupunha, Floresta Viva has chosen to develop a new paradigm based on an agroforestry and agroecological multi cropping system, maximizing profitability with the highest quality and environmental expectations.”, explains Roberto Pini, founder of Floresta Viva.

The vision of Floresta Viva is to become an organic leader of heart of palm sourcing its pupunha from its own agroforestry farm and also a large network of surrounding smallholders. The company will give support to small farmers, spread its agroforestry model and trigger its social impact in the underdeveloped region of Vale do Ribeira.

“Cultivating sustainable heart of palm is an opportunity today”, says Clément Chenost, Investment Director of Moringa, “Brazil is witnessing a switch in its consumption pattern, fueled by a rising middle-class demanding healthy and environmental-friendly products; the Brazilian organic food market shows an average growth of 20% per year. However, the heart of palm sector is still lagging behind to meet such standards. Considering these trends, producing a heart of palm that contributes to the social development of the Vale do Ribeira, while preserving its ecological balance seems a promising opportunity.”



The first stage of the investment plan is dedicated to the scale-up of the operations on the farm and is co-invested with another impact investor and strategic partner, famous Brazilian film director Fernando Meirelles. Next stages will focus on the development of a bottling facility and an extensive network of farmers.

About Moringa

The Moringa Fund is an investment company that provides equity financing for sustainable agroforestry projects in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Agroforestry combines tree planting with agricultural crops to create positive synergies in economic, environmental and social terms. The fund was initiated by the Edmond de Rothschild Group and ONF International, an international subsidiary of the French Office National des Forêts (ONF).

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About Floresta Viva

Floresta Viva is a Brazilian company producing food and timber products following syntropic agriculture principles and agroforestry systems. Its flagship product is the pupunha heart of palm which is planted in association with leguminous, grasses, cereals and other plants, that will constitute secondary products, and trees from noble essences that will be medium and long-term commercial products.

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