



Embargo: 13 June 6:00 p.m. (Brussels time)

## Solvay is Solar Impulse's technological partner

*Innovation from a leading industrial group serving sustainable development and state-of-the-art technologies*

The Solvay group announced today that it has entered into a partnership agreement with Solar Impulse, for whom it will provide crucial R&D support. The agreement means that Solvay will play an active role, along with balloonist Bertrand Piccard, in a daring technological challenge: Solar Impulse has set itself the goal of circumnavigating the globe in stages by 2010, in an aeroplane to be powered solely by solar energy, to the exclusion of any other source, and producing no environmentally harmful emissions.

In its capacity as the company's technical partner, Solvay will put its recognised scientific skills at the disposal of Solar Impulse, not least in the field of the development and production of innovative materials. These skills form part of the positive, specific contribution made by the Group to sustainable development in terms of aiding the advent of alternative or renewable energy sources.

Jacques van Rijckevorsel, General Manager of the Plastics Sector and Group Innovation Sponsor at Solvay comments: "The partnership between our Group and Solar Impulse is a reflection of the confidence we put in personal commitment, the entrepreneurial spirit and technical innovation, as responses to the challenge of Sustainable Development". He adds: "We are, moreover, taking up a challenge that will take us to the limits of technology, measuring us against the best practitioners in the world in each of the disciplines involved". He concludes: "For Solvay, this partnership also harbours a positive financial dimension, since it will provide an excellent springboard for the promotion and development of those products, services and solutions which the Group will be in a position to contribute."

**SOLVAY** is an international chemical and pharmaceutical group with headquarters in Brussels. It employs some 30,000 people in 50 countries. In 2004 its consolidated sales amounted to EUR 7.9 billion generated by its three activity sectors: Chemicals, Plastics and Pharmaceuticals. Solvay is listed on the Euronext 100 index of top European companies. Details are available at [www.solvay.com](http://www.solvay.com).

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Ce communiqué de presse est également disponible en français - Dit persbericht is ook in het Nederlands beschikbaar

**Notes to the editors:**

**Solvay's contribution to the Solar Impulse project** will be based around research into innovative materials and technical solutions, the replication and simulation of their behaviour in extreme environments, their technical evaluation and the conduct of a series of tests.

More specifically, Solvay's technical partnership with Solar Impulse, involving the fields of both Chemistry and Plastics, will be concentrated in the following areas:

- research into optimum solutions and materials, especially through the definition of composite structure materials;
- the production and/or selection of high performance polymers for critical applications (watertight joints, lubrication,...);
- methods of encapsulating and assembling photovoltaic cells using the structural material selected for the plane;
- research into the production and utilisation of appropriate photovoltaic materials;
- research into batteries satisfying the project requirements;
- selection of high performance thermal insulation materials;
- technical modelling and simulation using software adapted to suit large-scale parts and extreme conditions,
- mechanical evaluation and testing of materials in extreme conditions.