

Press release

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The Vaud International Business Awards, now in its 10th year, announces its three winners

Lausanne, 30 November 2023 – The winners of this year's Vaud International Business Awards are **Haleon**, a leading global provider of consumer health products, **Fischer Connectors**, a **Conextivity** company that develops innovative, high-performance connectivity solutions, and **POMOCA**, which makes specialty skins for ski touring. The awards, designed to showcase three thriving local businesses that have also made a name for themselves internationally, are handed out jointly every year by the Vaud Department of Economy, Innovation, Employment and Heritage (DEIEP), the Vaud Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CVCI) and Innovaud. This year's awards ceremony took place at IMD in Lausanne on 30 November, with some 300 people attending.

Haleon, a former GSK division that was spun off as a separate entity in 2022, was the winner in the **Foreign Company** category. The company has a large site at Nyon Prangins, where its flagship products like Voltaren and Otrivin – found in most drug stores around the world – are produced. The site is the only one of its kind at Haleon and covers the complete product lifecycle. There, some 1,100 employees from 50 countries develop, manufacture and market around 300 million units of over-the-counter drugs each year. The firm is known for being one of the most innovative and reliable in its industry. Through its Nyon Prangins site, it helps build up Vaud's reputation and illustrates the exceptional skillset found in the canton. The site itself has been producing pharmaceuticals since 1917.

The **Best Swiss Company** winner was **Fischer Connectors**, a family business that's grown substantially since it was founded in 1954. Today part of the Conextivity group, its core business has expanded to include cable assemblies and embedded electronics, so that it now provides high-performance, end-to-end connectivity solutions for locally connected sensors, devices and ecosystems. The other Conextivity company is Wearin', which makes AI-powered, cloud-operated IoT systems. Globally, Conextivity has 700 employees and six production sites, along with an R&D centre in Vaud backed by regional support hubs. The group's headquarters and an ultra-modern production plant with 320 employees are in Saint-Prex. Conextivity Group is currently led by the third generation of the Fischer family: Jonathan Brossard, CEO since 2016, and Sabrina Brossard, who became the chair of the board this year.

The **Special Jury Award** went to **POMOCA**, which has been operating out of Denges for nearly 90 years. The firm is known around the world as an expert in self-adhesive ski-touring skins thanks to its innovative, high-quality products. Today POMOCA has around 40 employees in Vaud and sells its products in 35 countries. It works with 21 ski and snowboard manufacturers and has an approximately one-third share of the global ski-skins market.

POMOCA's products are behind two-thirds of all international medals and the Patrouille des Glaciers time record. It plans to open a new 3,800 m² production plant in Chavornay in April 2024 in order to better serve skiing enthusiasts around the world.

The awards were handed out on 30 November by members of the selection panel and the three sponsor organisations. The ceremony was attended by Vaud State Councillor Isabelle Moret. The selection panel was chaired by Moret and included Aude Pugin, Chairman of the Vaud Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CVCI); Rémi Walbaum, Chairman of Innovaud; Benoît Leleux, the Stephan Schmidheiny Professor of Entrepreneurship and Finance at IMD in Lausanne; and Marianne Schmid Mast, Dean of HEC Lausanne. It also included representatives from last year's winners: Abdallah Rizki, Operations Director at Dentsply Sirona; Jean-Paul Vionnet, Chief Operations Officer at SICPA; and Patrick Thévoz, Co-founder and CEO of Flyability.

Awarding local businesses in three categories

The Vaud International Business Awards, which are handed out every fall, were introduced in 2014 to recognise companies that have their headquarters in Vaud and have successfully expanded internationally. The companies must also play a role in boosting Vaud's image abroad and creating jobs at home. Additional selection criteria for the Best Foreign Company award are whether the company's goods and services are produced locally, how much it helps diversify the Vaud economy, how many of its suppliers are local, and how well it is integrated into the canton. Additional selection criteria for the Best Swiss Company award are how much the company helps train local workers, whether it has any joint R&D programs, and how much of its revenue is generated internationally. And finally, the additional selection criteria for the Special Jury award are how innovative the company is, how big of a role it plays in the local community, and to what extent it works with other local businesses. We would like to take this opportunity to thank *24 heures*, which provided press coverage for the awards.

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