



SEED Initiative

Supporting entrepreneurs for sustainable development

Press Release

Winners of 2009 SEED Awards Announced; Local Entrepreneurship Celebrated at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development

New York, USA – 12 May 2009.

The winners of the 2009 SEED Awards for Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Development were announced today at a high level award ceremony and reception. The international award recognizes innovation in local, environmentally-responsible and sustainable entrepreneurship.

Twenty local initiatives from across the developing world received this year's award. Together, the winners cover a diverse range of promising business models that will tackle poverty and environmental stewardship in areas such as water and waste management, sustainable energy, recycling, and fish farming.

The SEED Award is the flagship programme of the SEED Initiative, a partnership founded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The ceremony, which was attended by high-level delegates from government, civil society and the business community, was held in conjunction with the second week of this year's United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Taking advantage of the concentration of national delegations engaged in the CSD, the reception hoped to direct the collective attention of the conservation and development community to the contributions local entrepreneurs are making to attainment of international sustainable development objectives.

"This is an inspiring group of entrepreneurs who demonstrate that environmental sustainability and business can be synergistic goals," said Assistant Administrator of UNDP, Olav Kjørven. *"It is this type of innovation and responsible entrepreneurship that will create jobs, provide for food security and save the environment. It is our objective at UNDP to promote these progressive business ideas as they are the seeds of future economies and are one of the key instruments that will allow us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. UNDP is proud to be a SEED Initiative partner and I congratulate the 2009 SEED Award Winners on their outstanding achievements and leadership."*

The SEED Awards are distinctive in the growing field of environment and development awards in that they identify, profile and support promising, locally-driven, start-up enterprises working in partnership in developing countries to improve livelihoods, tackle poverty, and manage natural resources sustainably. Rather than the traditional monetary prize, applicants compete for a package of individually-tailored capacity development— a suite of that will help the winners to grow their business idea and establish lasting partnerships across sectors.

In closing remarks, Achim Steiner, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UNEP said: *"The \$3 trillion-worth of stimulus packages assembled to revive the global economy can be spent on keeping ailing industries, such as gas guzzling car companies and polluting factories on life support systems or can be invested in a sustainable Green Economy for the 21st century. The 2009 SEED Award winners are shining examples of the kinds of low carbon, innovation-led, recycling and green job enterprises shooting up across the globe—enterprises that echo to the multiple challenges of here and now, enterprises that with just a fraction of the bail-out billions and trillions could be the new Microsoft, Siemens, Tata, and Unilever – able to deliver tomorrow's economy today."*

Competition for the 2009 SEED Awards was particularly fierce. Winners were selected by an international jury of sustainable development experts. Julia Marton-Lefèvre, Director General of IUCN who was also in attendance said of the level of competition: *“This fourth round of SEED Awards demonstrates resoundingly that there are a vast number of innovative and practical ideas in the world about how to make sustainable development happen. These SEED winners were selected from more than 1100 applications from close to 100 countries worldwide, representing the collaborative efforts of about 5000 organizations from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, women’s groups, labour organizations, public authorities, international agencies and academia. Our hope is that with SEED’s support, they will grow and inspire similar initiatives elsewhere.”*

Beyond the annual SEED Award, the SEED Initiative works to learn from the experiences of the individual start-ups to derive tools and guidance that can be helpful for all entrepreneurs who are aiming to deliver social and environmental benefits. The latest tool, a major on line resource developed by SEED in partnership with the International Institute for Sustainable Development and the Commission on Environmental Cooperation, was launched at the reception. Set up as a wiki, at www.entrepreneurstoolkit.org, this tool is designed so that social and environmental entrepreneurs around the world can write about their experience with setting up and running their businesses.

For more Information

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About SEED: the SEED Initiative identifies, profiles and supports promising, locally-driven, start-up enterprises working in partnership in developing countries to improve livelihoods, tackle poverty and marginalisation, and manage natural resources sustainably. SEED develops learning resources for the broad community of social and environmental entrepreneurs, informs policy- and decision-makers, and aims to inspire innovative, entrepreneurial approaches to sustainable development.

SEED is a global network founded in 2002 by UNEP, UNDP and IUCN to contribute towards the goals in the UN’s Millennium Declaration and the commitments made at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

SEED’s Partners: the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**); the United Nations Development Programme (**UNDP**); **IUCN** (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of **Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom** and the **United States of America**.



Notes for Editors – 2009 SEED Award Winners

- **Bangladesh:** “*Solar conversion of traditional kerosene hurricane lamps*”. A national NGO in partnership with a local NGO and a cooperative have developed an innovative device called “SuryaHurricane”, a low-cost solar lantern made from recycled parts of the conventional and much-used kerosene lantern.
- **Bangladesh:** “*Generating local economy through regenerating local resources*”. A cooperation between a national NGO, a research institution and a small-sized business aims to avoid bio-diversity losses and degradation of the agricultural lands, by recycling waste from rice-growing for the production of cement that will be used in the production of low cost housing materials.
- **Brazil:** “*One Million Cistern Program (P1MC)*”. Local NGOs and local community associations have joined forces with the national government and international agencies to develop and build one million home cisterns to collect and store rain water in the semi-arid region, bringing access to potable water for poor rural families.
- **Brazil:** “*The sustainable use of Amazonian seeds*”. Regional development in the Brazilian Amazon is the aim of the partners, achieved by encouraging the organization of the local communities as a co-operative, and by transferring technologies and training the community in the production of oils made from Amazonian seeds, resulting in increased incomes for these communities.
- **Brazil:** “*Eco-Amazon Piabas of Rio Negro*”. A national NGO, a cooperative of small producers and public authorities are working together to build a niche market of specialty ornamental fishes and to introduce a fair trade system through socio-environmentally responsible fishing.
- **Burkina Faso:** “*Nafore & Afrisolar energy kiosks*”. A small business and international NGOs are cooperating to provide sustainable energy supply to poor communities by expanding the use of “Nafore”, a PV-based telephone charger, powered 100% on solar energy.
- **Colombia:** “*Oro Verde® - Facilitating market access for artisan miners*”. A national NGO and local community associations are engaged in an initiative to reverse environmental degradation and social exclusion produced by illegal and uncontrolled mechanized mining. A mining certification process and capacity building program have been created. More than 1000 artisan mines are now following social and environmental criteria.
- **Colombia:** “*Camarones Sostenibles del Golfo de Morrosquillo*”. The partners of this project are a community-based organization, a local NGO and a small business which are aiming to establish an cooperative enterprise that includes families of traditional fishermen in the Morrosquillo Gulf, farming shrimp in a way which produces zero emissions.
- **Cook Islands:** “*Innovative inland oyster aquafarming*”. A local business in partnership with a national NGO is farming oysters under controlled conditions in an environmentally friendly and wholly sustainable manner. Farming fish provides relief from subsistence fishing of the over-harvested lagoons in the region as well as new food security and income generation to communities involved.
- **Kenya:** “*MakaaZingira*” produces FSC certified charcoal for conservation and livelihood creation. A national NGO, a community-based organisation and a small business network aim to establish a sustainable eco-charcoal production model, helping small scale farmers to replace unsustainable practices while also bringing social benefits.
- **Kenya:** “*Integrated plastics recovery and recycling flagship project*”. A project carried out by a large and a small business in partnership with a national NGO, aiming to offer the most viable option to recycling of dirty polythenes into plastic poles. It works to improve and strengthen livelihood assets for poor and marginalised youth and women.
- **Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia:** “*Sunny Money - solar micro-franchising*”. International NGOs and community-based organisations in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia have created a micro-franchise named Sunny Money, which recruits, trains and supports a growing

network of solar entrepreneurs in East Africa, especially deaf and disabled people, helping them build and sell solar kits to power lights, radios and mobile phones.

- **Mozambique:** “*The clean energy initiative*”. This project aims to provide rural electrification using sustainable energy, generating local employment and promoting entrepreneurial skills, by offering capacity building in the manufacture, installation and maintenance of micro wind turbines. The partners of this project are local small businesses and an academic institution.
- **Niger:** “*Almodo*”. A partnership between a small business and a research institution is developing a sustainable self-financing solid waste management system that contributes to improving living conditions of the poorest population, in collaboration with a women’s group that collects solid waste in poor urban areas of Niger’s three biggest cities.
- **Panama:** “*Planting Empowerment*”. An initiative involving a small business in partnership with a community-based organization and an international agency is leveraging private capital to increase conservation and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities to the local population as the same time as improve natural resource conservation in fragile environmental areas.
- **South Africa, Namibia and Botswana:** “*Biocultural protocols - community approaches to Access and Benefit Sharing*”. Civil society organizations have mobilized efforts to develop bio-cultural protocols with different local indigenous communities which will help to provide a model whereby local communities can share the benefits if local resources and expertise are developed for market purposes.
- **Sri Lanka:** “*Solar energy, education & fishing*”. National and international NGOs, with the cooperation of public authorities, are working to expand the use of an alternative lighting system in rural villages, through the replacement of kerosene lamps with solar panels.
- **Tanzania:** “*KOLCAFE - Smallholder coffee revenue enhancement*”. This initiative, involving national NGOs and a local research institution, aims to empower coffee farmers and increase coffee production by improving agronomic practices and adding value through building product processing infrastructure and selling products directly to export markets.
- **Thailand:** “*Carbon bank and village development*”. This innovative initiative of national NGOs and an academic institution aims to encourage, support and enhance community-based indigenous forestry through carbon credit trading to enable successful climate change adaptation and socio-economic development for local communities and biodiversity conservation.
- **Zimbabwe:** “*Bridge to the World*”. A small business, a research institution and an association of small-scale women farmers together are facing the challenge of improving rural livelihoods and reversing severe land degradation through innovative organic farming of essential oils, made from the indigenous *Tarchonanthus camphoratus* bush.

2009 SEED International Jury

The 2009 SEED Award winners were selected by the independent International Jury which very kindly dedicated considerable time to choosing the most promising of the applications. The members of the jury are:

- Leila Akahloun: *Integrator for Africa Programs, Ashoka*
- Nicole Haeusler: *Managing Director of ‘mas contour – Tourism Consulting & Regional Planning’*
- Paul Laird: *Corporate Partnerships Manager, Earthwatch, UK*
- Juan Mayr Maldonado: *former Minister of the Environment, Colombia*
- Brian Milder: *Director of Strategy and Innovation, Root Capital*
- Jennifer Morris: *Vice President, Verde Ventures at Conservation International*
- Kofi Nketsia-Tabiri: *Regional Manager, E + Co Africa*
- Sarah Timpson: *Senior Adviser on Community-based Initiatives, UNDP*
- George Varughese: *President, Development Alternatives Group, India*