

Press release: Responsible Care Awards 2011

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European Responsible Care Winners Announced

Trade group applauds emphasis on life cycle approach, innovation

MADRID, September 30, 2011 – Cefic announced today the three winners of its European Responsible Care Awards at a special ceremony at its annual general assembly in Madrid.

Chosen by a panel of independent judges who carefully assessed the applications, two companies and one trade association took home the hardware. Evonik Industries of Germany won the large company category for its project that improves the reforestation of the Argan Tree in Morocco. Finnish young start-up company Akkuser won the award for small- and medium-sized enterprises for its work in recycling batteries and accumulators. A special award on community outreach celebrating the International Year of Chemistry went to French chemicals trade group Union des Industries Chimiques in France for their project *L'Art en la Matière*.

Cefic President Giorgio Squinzi, presenting the awards during a ceremony, said: "This year's competition was again exceptional for the large number of high quality entries. More than 40 entries were received this year from 12 countries. It was the second year in a row that awards were given to organisations representing France and Germany."

SME award winner: Finland's Akkuser lauded for patented battery recycling process

Akkuser won for its high-tech battery and accumulator recycling business that helps recover resources and protect the environment. The company's patented technology, called Dry Technology, extracts metals such as nickel, cobalt and iron as well as compound materials which are then further processed by its customers. The method raises the recovery rate of these metals above 90 per cent and reduces energy consumption compared with conventional recycling techniques. Their work is important because of rapidly growing demand for mobile electronic devices and the resulting battery waste is an environmental concern, due to the heavy metals and hazardous chemicals contained.

Founded in 2005 and currently employing 10 people in the west of Finland, the company was praised by the panel for its technological approach as well as for turning an environmental need into a business case.

Large company winner: Evonik provides water-saving reforestation product

Further south in Krefeld, Germany, large company winner Evonik teamed up with the Hassan II Institute of Agronomy in Agadir, Morocco, and other partners to use its hydrogel STOCKOSORB product for the reforestation project, which is helping to increase the number of Argan trees. Endemic to the southwest of Morocco, the Argan tree forms an underlying ecosystem in the area, which is a UNESCO biosphere reserve. Capable of thriving on relatively poor soils under extreme climate conditions, the trees have been recently under threat as reforestation has proved difficult, causing concern for the local population dependent on the trees to produce Argan-based cooking oil, animal feed and timber.

In 2009, the Hassan II Institute started the first tests using the hydrogel STOCKOSORB and in 2010, more than 1000 trees were planted. The likelihood of seedlings surviving improved by up to 50 per cent thanks to STOCKOSORB. By applying the hydrogel, the need for irrigation decreased, saving water and contributing to more cost-effective reforestation.

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Special Award: Union des Industries Chimiques

A special award on community outreach celebrates this year's the International Year of Chemistry. The special award went to French chemicals trade group Union des Industries Chimiques in France for their project *L'Art en la Matière*. The project paid tribute to the International Year of Chemistry 2011 by inviting artists to exhibit their work with a reference to chemistry in four French cities – Paris, Lille, Lyon and Marseille.

The Paris event, "Rosae Plasticae" by artist Marie-Hélène Richard, is a exhibition made from thousands of used plastic bags promoting a circular material economy crucial to save natural resources and to preserve the environment. In Lille, artist Vincent Leroy's thermoplastic "mechanical field" highlighted the development of bio-based molecules and materials. Artists Stephan Bohu and Marie-Hélène Richard set up in Lyon "Sph'air", an installation made from meteorological balloons symbolizing the need for clean air and chemistry's contribution to preserving it. Artist Shigeko Hirakawa presented in Marseille "Hélioflore", a flower sculpture with photovoltaic petals which stores solar energy during the day and uses it to fuel its lights by night.

Cefic President Giorgio Squinzi concluded: "The awards help us increase the profile and visibility of Responsible Care, which helps to spread the message to bring smaller companies into the Responsible Care family and drive continuous improvement in other regions of the world, especially in China and India."

For more information or awards ceremony press photos, presentations on the winners, please contact Bernhard Thier on +32 478 320 455 or via e-mail at bth@cefic.be

For general information on Responsible Care go to www.cefic.org/Responsible-Care or www.responsiblecare.org

Notes to editors:

Judges Panel

The 2011 Responsible Care Awards panel of judges were:

- **Dania Cristofaro**, policy advisor, European Commission Directorate General for the Environment;
- **Rainer Grieshammer**, director of the Öko-Institut of Applied Ecology, Freiburg, Germany;
- **Jim Hopwood**, personal & organizational development consultant;
- **Hilfra Tandy**, journalist, Chemical Matters; and
- **Reinhard Reibsch**, secretary general, European Mine, Chemicals and Energy Workers' Federation;

About the Responsible Care Initiative

Responsible Care® is a global initiative of the chemical industry to drive continuous improvement in its health, safety and environmental performance and to make a strong contribution to sustainable development. First launched in 1985 in Canada, Responsible Care is now run by the national/regional chemical associations in 53 countries around the world. Responsible Care commits companies and national/regional associations to work together to:

- Continuously improve the environmental, health and safety knowledge and performance of our technologies, processes and products over their life cycles so as to avoid harm to people and the environment.
- Use resources efficiently and minimise waste.
- Report openly on performance, achievements and shortcomings.
- Listen, engage and work with people to understand and address their concerns and expectations.
- Cooperate with governments and organisations in the development and implementation of effective regulations and standards, and to meet or go beyond them.
- Provide help and advice to foster the responsible management of chemicals by all those who manage and use them along the product chain.

