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World Wide Fund For Nature

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WWF-SA announces 2015 Climate Solvers

WWF South Africa (WWF-SA) has announced the three winners of the 2015 South African Climate Solver Awards in recognition of innovations that reduce carbon emissions or boost access to energy.

The three are MellowCabs, a prototype for a public transport micro vehicle, Findmyway, a smartphone app to help commuters navigate public transport and Eco MC², a hydraulic energy storage system.

Speaking at the award ceremony in Johannesburg Director of the Centre for Renewable and Sustainable Energy Studies at Stellenbosch University Professor Wikus van Niekerk, emphasised the critical role clean technology businesses have to play in driving the transition from a high fossil-fuel economy to one based on clean, renewable energy before awarding Climate Solver Certificates to the three South African innovations.

Mellowcabs is a public transport solution in the form of a micro vehicle designed to provide convenient, low cost and potentially emissions-free transport in cities. The three-seater electric vehicle, which runs on hydrogen fuel cells supplemented by solar panels and regenerative braking, provides transport at a lower cost than traditional taxis.

Founder Neil du Preez: "Transport produces approximately 23% of global CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion. One of the major impediments to widespread use of public transport in South Africa is the challenge of first and last mile transport, in other words, how does one reach the train station or bus stop from one's home or workplace? Mellowcabs aims to bridge this gap."

Findmyway, developed by South African-based start-up WhereIsMyTransport (WIMT), is a smartphone app to help commuters find their way from A to B navigating across the various modes of available public transport in South Africa.

WIMT co-founder Devin Devries: "Our mission is to make transport in South Africa more efficient and accessible. Not only does the app inform commuters on their travel options, but it also feeds back to transport operators enabling them to improve their services going forward."



The Eco MC² from Leaper Innovate is a hydraulic energy storage system designed to store energy generated from renewable energy sources such as solar photovoltaic panels.

Leaper Innovate founder Warwick Leaper: “The major problem with any form of renewable energy has always been storage. Batteries have a number of problems; they offer limited storage, contain heavy metals and may contain substances which are limited resources. The Eco MC² has a thirty-year lifespan and far longer storage capacity.”

WWF International Senior Adviser Climate Innovation Stefan Henningsson: “Climate Solvers was developed to raise awareness for essential technologies like those designed and already commercialised by our winners and to communicate the value of innovation and rapid commercialisation as an immediate and practical solution to climate change.

“South Africa is a nation with a history of strong innovation and entrepreneurship, but shows little support for cleantech innovators compared to many other countries. South Africa risks falling behind in job creation for global solution providers if there is no boost in public and private finance for both mature and early stage cleantech. Data from the Global Cleantech Innovation Index 2014 shows that a large country like South Africa spends eight times less in cleantech research, development and demonstration than Finland and 100 times less than Japan. Connected to this is that South Africa currently files 60 times less environment-related patents than Germany and six times less than India.

“There is however an increase in the number of creative South African entrepreneurs who will have many of the solutions we need to see growing on the global market in order to simultaneously combat climate change and energy poverty in the years ahead. Attention to the needs of these solution providers by policy makers, investors and corporates is crucial to enable the growth of the clean technology sector and our global effort to disrupt the current high-carbon paradigms.”

“Part of the goal of Climate Solvers is to give the awarded cleantech companies the best chance of success by giving them the credit they deserve and increasing their national and international profile. They also serve as beacons for inspiration of others, spurring entrepreneurship as well widespread adoption of clean technologies.”

WWF partners on the Climate Solver project include; Centre for Renewable and Sustainably Energy Studies (CRSES), University of Stellenbosch, GreenCape, The Green House, Atlantic Specialised Finance, University of the Free State, Process, Energy and Environmental Technology Station (PEETS), University of Johannesburg, and the Technology Innovation Agency.

More information on Climate Solver is available at:

www.climatesolver.org and www.wwf.org.za/what_we_do/climate_solver/

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About WWF

WWF is one of the world's largest and most respected independent conservation organisations, with almost 5 million supporters and a global network active in over 100 countries. WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the earth's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature, by conserving the world's biological diversity, ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable, and promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption.

WWF South Africa

WWF South Africa is a national office that is part of the WWF network. We are a local NGO that for more than 40 years has worked towards the aim of inspiring all South Africans to live in harmony with nature, for the benefit of our country and the well-being of all our people.

WWF stands for the World Wide Fund for Nature

See www.wwf.org.za for more information

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