

For immediate release

Small businesses rewarded at the Eskom Business Investment Competition

Budding small businesses from around the country were rewarded at the 2015 Eskom Business Investment Competition Awards, held on Thursday, September 10 at the Ticketpro Dome in Johannesburg. Over 400 entries were received from registered small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from across the country in this year's competition. The entries were whittled down to 41 finalists, who slugged it out in the four categories of the competition; manufacturing, services, trade and agriculture.

The winner of the competition was Mamapo Chemicals from Lebowakgomo, Limpopo. The company, which was competing in the manufacturing category, warded off some stiff competition from the other finalists to be named the overall winner for 2015.

The company was founded in 2012 by Ezekiel Madigoe, who, upon completing his Chemical Engineering degree, decided it was time to start his own business. Mamapo Chemicals is an innovative manufacturer and distributor of cleaning chemicals for industrial, commercial and household consumption. Part of their production process involves collecting waste chemicals from detergent manufacturing companies, recycling and processing them into degreaser, car wax as well a range of multipurpose cleaners.

The Business Investment Competition was launched eight years ago by the Eskom Development Foundation, which is responsible for Eskom's corporate social investment. "The annual competition is aimed at recognising, rewarding and inspiring small businesses that are significantly contributing to the fight against our biggest socio-economic enemies, unemployment and poverty," says Eskom Development Foundation CEO, Haylene Liberty-Nel.

There was R1.3 million worth of prizes up for grabs, and an opportunity for all the finalists to exhibit their businesses at the Business Entrepreneurship & Franchise Expo from 10 to 13 September 2015 at the Ticketpro Dome in Northriding. The Expo provides small businesses with a versatile marketing platform from which to build awareness and interact with potential customers and investors.

The team of adjudicators were unanimous in their admiration for this year's quality of small businesses in the competition. The finalists impressed them with their excellent business skills, professionalism and the passion they all displayed for their businesses. Despite the fierce competition, all the adjudicators were in agreement that they had found a worthy winner in Mamapo Chemicals.

The business has grown far beyond expectations, and now intends to buy additional machinery to increase production to meet the current demand. The factory offers employment to 34 people who were all trained by Ezekiel.

"Being named the overall winner of the competition was totally unexpected. The R150 000 prize money is going to help us to expand and create more than 150 jobs. Just making it to the finals was an achievement and being part of this year's competition, interacting with some great minds from around the country made it worthwhile. We're passionate about what we do and are looking forward to contributing further to our country's growth," said Madigoe.

The winners in the four categories were:

Manufacturing

- Winner – Mospak Trading & Projects Primary Co-Operative (Phuthaditjhaba, Free State)
- First runner-up – LBN Hygiene Solutions (Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape)
- Second runner-up – Bee Brite Cleaning (East London, Eastern Cape)

Services

- Winner – Exquisite Stationery (Cape Town, Western Cape)
- First runner-up – Mtimposo (Johannesburg, Gauteng)
- Second runner-up – Marumo Green Projects (Burgersfort, Limpopo)

Trade

- Winner – Ngaphaya Y2K10 (Cape Town, Western Cape)
- First runner-up – Fenako Electrical (Queenstown, Eastern Cape)
- Second runner-up – Excell Consumables (Cape Town, Western Cape)

Agriculture

- Winner - Greenland Landscaping (Thohoyandou, Limpopo)
- First runner-up – Livhuki General Trading Pty Ltd (Makhado, Limpopo)
- Second runner-up – Krout Sprout (Johannesburg, Gauteng)

Category winners scooped R100,000, first runners-up, R50,000 while second runners-up received R25,000.

“All the winners and their businesses are great examples of what is required to take South Africa’s economy forward. They have all demonstrated that their businesses have the potential to grow and make a significant difference in their communities and ultimately, our economy,” said Liberty-Nel.

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About the Eskom Development Foundation NPC

The Eskom Development Foundation is tasked with implementing Eskom’s CSI strategy and operates as a not-for-profit company, which supports enterprise development programmes, education, environment, agriculture, healthcare, social and community development.

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