

National cleantech innovation winners announced at gala event

Klerksdorp innovator Yolandi Schoeman of Baoberry took top honours at the 2016 Global Cleantech Innovation Programme for SMEs in South Africa (GCIP-SA) awards ceremony with her water re-use and recycling solution called aWetbox.

She received a cash prize of R120 000 and an all-expenses paid trip to Silicon Valley in the US to compete against top performers of other GCIP programmes from across the world.

Pamela Alborough of SanAqua HCA with a wastewater treatment enhancement and sanitation solution and Martin Ackermann of Thevia with roof tiles made from 99% waste materials were the runners-up. They received R60 000 each as well as a trip to the Cleantech Open Global Forum in Silicon Valley.

Yolandi Schoeman was also named the most promising woman-led team, while the award for the most promising youth-led team went to Sandiswa Qayi of Amahlathi Eco-Tech who developed the Hot Spot for geysers, an innovation that supplies hot water within 30 minutes. They received R20 000 each.

The Innovation for Social Impact award went to Louise Williamson for her fuel-efficient Mashsha syngas stove. She received a cash prize of R10 000.

Delivering the keynote address at the award ceremony in Pretoria last night, Naledi Pandor, minister of Science and Technology, said through its various activities and continuous engagement with stakeholders, the GCIP-SA contributes to the development, promotion and deployment of clean technology innovations.

“The programme also creates a platform for linking South African entrepreneurs with investors, business and commercial partners, potentially resulting in the commercialisation of new products and services and ultimately job creation.

“This cleantech programme has showcased an innovative nation. Innovation adds momentum to the structural economic change that is needed for economic growth, job creation and an improved quality of life for us all,” she said.

The GCIP-SA is part of a global initiative that aims to identify and support SMEs and start-ups with innovative solutions that can tackle the most pressing energy, environmental and economic challenges facing the planet, focusing on energy efficiency, green building, renewable energy, waste beneficiation and water efficiency. These categories are aligned with the national priorities of each of the seven participating countries.

The GCIP-SA combines a competition and a business accelerator to help de-risk the businesses of participants by offering them extensive mentoring, training, access to investors and opportunities to showcase their innovations to the media and the public. This year there has been an increase in the number of entries from 45 to 88, with energy efficiency dominating the semi-finalists making up 35% of the total. Water efficiency is the next highest, comprising 23% of the total semi-finalists. Of the nine finalists, five were women.

Speaking on behalf of UNIDO Director General Dr Pradeep Monga, James New commended South Africa as an opportune country where technological breakthroughs can create ample platforms of opportunity, either in the form mature or start-up businesses, as well as academia and research institutes for much-needed solutions to the national challenges of achieving sustainable development and creating green employment opportunities.

“Taking into account the importance of job creation and diversity, the role of women and youth in South Africa cannot be overstated and therefore let me celebrate the successes of the female and young entrepreneurs that have been actively involved in the 2016 cycle. Female and young entrepreneurs assist in reducing market barriers in the cleantech industry and are examples of success. We are proud of the diversity and the inter-generational mix of men and women that are developing the cleantech products and services for all provinces of South Africa,” he said.

“The South African Cleantech Programme and UNIDO remain ever committed to find, foster and connect South African innovators, inventors and problem-solvers who have found innovative, practical and commercially viable ways to address these issues.

“All of our 2016 cycle companies will have gained a better understanding of the core principles of becoming a long-term, sustainable, commercial entity and they have received expert advice and tutoring on issues such as legal matters, financial management and investor pitching. We firmly believe that this better enables our entrepreneurs to meet the challenge in the cleantech space to gain access to the necessary markets, not only in South Africa, but also internationally.”

Legal firm Spoor and Fisher also sponsored R30 000 worth of legal services to Thevia for the best pitch of the evening.

About the GCIP-SA

The GCIP-SA is implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) with funding by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In South Africa UNIDO partners with the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) as the execution and hosting institution for the GCIP, while the US-based Cleantech Open serves as the main knowledge partner of the global programme.

Captions for photographs

“GCIP-SA winner”

Yolandi Schoeman of Baoberry won the first prize in the 2016 National Cleantech Awards. She also won the award for the most promising woman-led business. On the image she is holding the first prize, a cheque for R100 000. Next to her are science and technology minister Naledi Pandor, Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) CEO Barlow Manilal and James New of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) holding Yolandi’s certificate.

“GCIP-SA finalists”

Back: André Reyeneke (Ducere Holdings); Lovell Emslie (Pegasus Engineered Green Mobility); James New (UNIDO); and Aki Anastaciou and Weza Matomane, who were the masters of ceremony.

Middle: Johny Harris (Isidima Design); Corinne Greyling (Coco’s Solutions); Louise Williamson (Sustainability Professionals), winner of the Innovation for Social Impact

award; Pam Alborough (SanAqua HCA), a runner-up; and Barlow Manilal (CEO of TIA).
Front: Yolandi Schoeman (Baoberry), overall winner and most promising woman-led business; Sandiswa Qayi (Amahlathi Eco), winner of best youth-led business; minister of science and technology Naledi Pandor; and Martin Ackerman (Thevia), the other runner-up.
