

Yorkshire Forward announces innovation awards shortlist

Regional Development Agency Yorkshire Forward has revealed the names of the 12 companies short-listed for the prestigious Innovator/10 awards, which celebrate innovation and collaboration among businesses in Yorkshire and Humber.

Three businesses will now battle it out for each of the four categories celebrated by the awards, which are sponsored by Yorkshire Forward in association with Yorkshire Innovation and Business Link Yorkshire.

The Partners in Innovation Award, in association with the prestigious Lord Stafford Awards, which have rewarded knowledge transfer between businesses and universities in the Midlands since 1998, is aimed at celebrating and rewarding businesses which have collaborated with and used the region's research community, resulting in the successful development of an innovation with the potential to deliver improved business performance and commercial success. Finalists for the award are:

Double Green Limited, from North Cave, and The University of York, who developed the use of glycerine, a co-product from biodiesel production, in various applications, including the generation of biogas. The Research and Development work carried out at the University of York contributed to the characterisation of glycerin at different stages of production as well as the development of protocols for the synthesis of added value chemicals from glycerine.

Nature's Laboratory, of Whitby, and the Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation developed an innovative water soluble deodorised propolis (resin collected by bees and used by them as an immune defence mechanism), which has numerous therapeutic effects, including antimicrobial, immunomodulatory and anticancer. Propolis product development previously posed challenges because of its poor solubility.

Peratech Limited, located in Brompton, and the University of Leeds formed a partnership to produce printable electronic switches and sensors. The resulting Quantum Tunnelling Composite (QTC) ink is a nanotech material which is extremely sensitive to pressure and is used in keyboards and keypads of mobile telephones to interpret the touches and gestures of the user. The ink can be applied during the normal keypad printing process and provides much more functionality than discrete pressure sensing components at a fraction of the cost.

The Innovation in Action Award, which aims to reward and celebrate an innovative new product, process or service developed in Yorkshire and Humber, is between:

Belgravium Ltd, from Bradford, developed PalletStar, an innovative combination of mobile computing hardware and application software designed for use by logistics companies offering a pallet distribution service. PalletStar offers the ability to scan barcodes and photograph products in an outdoor environment and to scan from a long distance, features that were not available from any competitor in a *single-box* solution.

Crompton Mouldings Ltd, of Brighouse, created LEAP (Layered Engineering Active Polymer) which is a novel patented process designed to manufacture large, high spec panels using recycled materials. It has significant energy savings over conventional processing methods and has been designed to provide a wide range of sizes of panels for many different purposes.



EMSc (UK) Limited, located in Sheffield, designed and manufacture Powerstar - a voltage optimisation unit that works to significantly reduce energy consumption. Powerstar voltage optimisers reduce the voltage supplied to a building, therefore generating great savings on electricity consumption and CO2 emissions. Each Powerstar system is made in the UK, and is custom wound to the exact requirements of each site, which offers unrivalled efficiency and savings.

In the Young Innovative Business Award category, which is aimed at businesses that have shown creativity and entrepreneurial flair in the launch and early growth of a business, the finalists are:

Image Analysis Ltd's Dynamika MRI software speeds up the reviewing of Dynamic MRI and breast imaging scans by using an automated process that dispenses with labour-intensive and expensive manual interpretation. The Saltaire-based company's software, consisting of highly specialised algorithms, provides massive cost savings for PCTs, improves patient care processes and reduces waiting lists and diagnosis times for patients.

Radio Design Ltd, from Shipley, came up with a way of allowing up to three cellular base stations from two UK-based mobile phone system operators to share the same antenna system, resulting in both site rental and equipment cost savings. Without this, separate antennae systems and often an additional mast would have to be installed to allow a cell site to be shared.

Leeds-based Random Storm Ltd's Vulnerability Management Platform is a suite of network security tools designed to automatically scan and analyse all components of a corporate network and alert IT managers to any potential vulnerability present in the system. The suite includes a range of tools that can be deployed separately or as an integrated solution covering all parts of the IT infrastructure.

The Sustainable Innovation Award celebrates outstanding advances by Yorkshire and Humber businesses in environmental sustainability through the development and marketing of innovative products, processes and services and will be contested by:

Bioflame Ltd, of Pickering, use it's cleanburn technology to deliver a plant that converts 30,000 tonnes of low grade biomass waste (that would otherwise go into landfill sites) into 20,000 megawatt hours per year of electricity supplied to the National Grid. This is enough energy to power over 6000 houses from each site. Bioflame has built its first operational plant and is mid-build on a further three all of which are bank funded.

Havard Engineering, from Leeds, developed LeafNut, a ground breaking central monitoring and wireless control system for street lights which can lead to savings of £46 per street light per annum. LeafNut also significantly reduces carbon emissions by 100kg per light per annum. With the system, street lights are controlled via a web server and are programmed to vary their light level to correspond with traffic and population density. It provides monitoring, switching and dimming control of each street light.

Tadpole Energy Limited, located in Selby, created Tadpole, a deaerator designed with proven technology, to remove dissolved air and thereby oxygen from water in a domestic heating system to an inert level. This prevents the development of magnetites which corrode the components of the system. Prior solutions included deaerators, have failed to address the cause of the problem – the oxygen within the water. Tadpole has many other benefits including reducing energy consumption by up to 29%.

The four awards – each of which carries a £3,000 cash prize – are aimed at recognising those companies and individuals in Yorkshire and Humber who have embraced innovation and developed, alone or in partnership, new ideas, products, technologies or ways of working in order to improve their business.

A panel of expert judges will now visit and assess each business between February 1 and February 12 before the winners are unveiled on Wednesday, March 3, at a prestigious black tie event at Leeds City Museum with guest speaker Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project.

Julie Kenny, Yorkshire Forward Board Member and chair of the short-listing panel, said: “The overall standard of entries this year has been exceptionally high and we really had our work cut out narrowing down such a large number of high quality entries to just 12, which speaks volumes about the thriving nature of the Innovation Sector within the region.

“By recognising those companies within the region who excel through innovation, the bar is continually being raised. But I am confident that the skilled workers at businesses in Yorkshire and Humber will continue to meet, and exceed, the increasingly high standard they set themselves.”

Richard Gregory, chairman of Yorkshire Innovation, commented: “The quality of the shortlist demonstrates tremendous promise for the future competitiveness of this region. I hope the event acts as an inspiration for others and helps spread the word that Yorkshire is a great place to innovate.”

Tim Smit, founder of the Eden Project, added: "Innovation is the lifeblood of our civilisation. We are living through a time in history where for the first time nature rather than man is setting a deadline. Innovation will be utterly crucial in turning the threat of climate change into a wellspring of opportunity.”

Media Invite: If you wish to cover the awards ceremony on March 3, please contact Daniel Murphy, Yorkshire Forward Press Manager, on 0113 3949904 or e-mail Daniel.murphy@yorkshire-forward.com. Spaces are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

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For further information or to arrange an interview, please contact Dan Murphy, Press Manager on 0113 3949904 or email Daniel.murphy@yorkshire-forward.com