



**seed initiative**  
supporting entrepreneurs for environment and development

**PARTNERSHIPS FROM FIVE NATIONS RECEIVE “2007 SEED AWARDS” FOR INNOVATION IN LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

*Seed Awards recognize, support and encourage the delivery of innovative, local, partnership-based solutions to global challenges of environmental stewardship and poverty eradication*

**New York, May 30, 2007.** The global community of organizations and agencies that constitute the *Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development (Seed) Initiative* today announced that partnerships from Vietnam, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil and Sierra Leone are the winners of the *2007 Seed Awards*.

Launched in 2004, the *Seed Awards* biennially recognize and reward five partnership-based initiatives that combine innovation and entrepreneurship in delivering effective social development and environmentally sustainable programs in their countries. The partnerships also serve as models to inspire new local entrepreneurs, communities, companies and others to join forces in advancing sustainability.

The 2007 recipients were selected following a rigorous 10-month review process that examined more than 230 applications from some 70 countries worldwide. The partnership applicants represent nearly 1,100 organizations drawn from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, women’s groups, labor, public authorities, U.N. agencies and others.

The five winning partnerships differ in that they address a wide range of issues. They are alike, however, in that each translates internationally agreed-upon environmental and developmental goals—such as those put forth in the U.N.’s Millennium Declaration and at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development—into community-based actions that respond to specific regional priorities and needs.

This year’s *Seed Award* winners:

- In **Vietnam**, *Bridging the Gap* uses sustainable cultivation of traditional medicinal plants to develop high value-added products, the manufacturing and proceeds of which improve the livelihoods of ethnic minority communities;
- In **Peru**, *T’ikapapa* links small-operation potato farmers in the Andes with high-value



niche markets in urban centers. T'ikapapa promotes biodiversity conservation and environmentally friendly potato production techniques while giving farmers open access to technological assistance and innovation, encouraging local farmer's associations and propagating the flow of market information;

- In **Ecuador**, a partnership also operating in the Andes has reintroduced native cereal and tuber crops that diversify food production, improve local food security and reduce soil degradation. The partnership then sells surplus yield through a women's organization it has created in three communities resulting in new economic, financial and marketing engines for the area;
- In **Brazil**, *Projeto Bagagem*, creates unique travel packages that give visitors a first-hand look at local development initiatives and nature reserves in a novel approach to community-based ecotourism; and
- In **Sierra Leone**, a unique partnership between a traditional healers' association, an academic research institute and local communities will help to protect biodiversity and provide sustainable livelihoods for local communities through the establishment of the *Tiwai Island Health and Fitness Center*—a facility to provide health services based on principles of West African ethno-medicine.

Over the next 12 months, each of the five *Seed Award* recipients will receive targeted support services specifically designed to expand and extend their activities, turning them from a good project idea into a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable enterprise.

Simultaneously, the *Seed Initiative* will study each recipient's progress to 1) identify and promulgate to other communities the award-winning "best practices," 2) provide lessons-learned to assist other partnership practioners; and 3) use the experiences and results observed in these communities as the basis for recommendations to policy makers and *Seed Initiative* partners for better supporting, encouraging and implementing locally-based partnerships.

More detailed descriptions of the Winners with photographs are available at [www.seedinit.org](http://www.seedinit.org)

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## EDITORS' NOTES

In making the 2007 Seed Awards, representatives of *Seed Initiative* organizations said:

- **Paula Dobriansky**, Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, United States of America:

"Partnerships, such as Seed, are a vital aspect of transformational diplomacy's goal to assist local communities help themselves improve the quality of life and build a foundation for the future. By leveraging resources and innovation from both government and non-governmental groups, we can accomplish a lot, more quickly."
- **Sigmar Gabriel**, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany:

"Seed is set apart from other Award schemes in that it selects nascent partnerships – the ones that are starting to bloom but which need support to get them through the early, difficult stages. Locally-conceived partnerships have great potential, more so than externally imposed ideas and it is our aim to encourage these ideas and give meaningful support to their implementation. Germany started the Seed Initiative five years ago in the context of the Johannesburg Summit and it is a very rewarding experience to see the enthusiastic responses and the quality of the short-listed and award winning partnerships!"
- **Derek Hanekom**, Deputy Minister for Science and Technology, South Africa  
"Seed pushes past the traditional relationships between "donors" and "recipients", rewiring global and local actors into a balanced support process, which focuses on co-operation and mutual learning, finding out how to best link globally defined goals with locally-defined priorities . . . Seed Award winners are listened to – starting with a joint needs analysis, where partners can express their visions and needs. "
- **Valli Moosa**, President, IUCN – the World Conservation Union  
"I'm proud of what we achieved five years ago in Johannesburg, and I'm pleased that in a world where we are often forced to consider difficult trade-offs, Seed Winners are demonstrating that economic growth, social development, and sustainable environmental management can be achieved together. The Seed Initiative is a valuable path-finder, supporting the tenacious and creative organisations and individuals which work so hard to turn global aims into reality, listening to their good ideas, exploring how to scale them up, learning from their experiences."
- **Ivo Menzinger**, Head, Sustainability and Emerging Risk Management, Swiss Re:  
"These types of entrepreneurial partnerships may well become engines of growth in their countries. Governments and established businesses can benefit from understanding and helping them. We certainly believe in these winners' scalability and replicability, and the detailed case studies Seed will carry out on each winner will be a valuable addition to our collective knowledge of what works and what doesn't, bringing local and global bodies together, collaborating to achieve development which is truly sustainable."
- **Achim Steiner**, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):  
"The world's nature-based resources are under assault as never before due to unsustainable exploitation and the growing impacts of climate change. It is therefore fitting that the theme linking each of the SEED award winners - from medicinal herbs to nature-based tourism - is the central contribution biodiversity and the Earth's ecosystem services make to the wealth of communities up to the wealth of nations. By spotlighting the value of nature and natural resources the awards can—in a small but nevertheless concrete ways—underline the need to step up action to reverse the rate of loss of biodiversity by 2010"



### ***About the Seed Initiative: A global support network for entrepreneurial partnerships***

Seed partners are keen to see internationally agreed goals, such as those in the UN's Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development, turned into reality at a local level. The Seed Initiative highlights good practice every two years, publicly applauding five partnership-based initiatives which are taking an innovative, entrepreneurial approach to social development and environmental sustainability in their countries, and which have the potential to inspire other local entrepreneurs, communities, companies and others to join forces in fostering sustainability.

### ***Linking global aims with local solutions***

In many situations, sustainable solutions to global challenges can only be delivered by local organisations bringing a range of skills and disciplines to the table. The Seed Award offers such partnerships public exposure and more too. Launched in 2004, with the first Class of five Winners announced in 2005, the Seed Initiative starts where other Awards finish, working with the Winners to mitigate some of the many constraints young projects face in their initial stages, rather than rubber-stamping already successful ventures.

### ***Directly supporting and empowering nascent partnerships***

The *Collective Leadership Institute*, in Germany, which provides Seed Support to the 2007 Winners, will work closely with the 2007 Winners to develop a tailored Support Plan for the coming year. This could include training, help to build the partnership and its networks, developing the partnership's capacity in specialized areas, providing opportunities for exposure, help with financing. A small bursary of \$8,000 US helps implement the support plan through to May 2008. Seed Partners and the Support Channel also create a conduit for investment in winners, seeking additional partners to provide in-kind services or funding.

### ***Researching and sharing lessons***

The *International Institute of Sustainable Development*, which provides Seed's Research and Learning Channel, will study the Winners - and all the unsuccessful applicants - leading to a report in May 2008 which shares good practices, offers lessons to inspire others, and makes evidence-based recommendations to decision-makers.

### ***Seed's Major Supporters***

Partners in the Seed Initiative are the World Conservation Union (IUCN); the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the governments of the United States of America, Germany, the Netherlands, South Africa, and the United Kingdom; and private sector partner Swiss Re.

Seed's Secretariat, hosted by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in Gland, Switzerland, has just been significantly strengthened. Dr Helen Marquard, supported by the UK Government's Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), will act as Seed's Executive Director for the next two years.

The Seed Initiative Board is currently chaired by Dan Reifsnyder, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Environment in the US Government's Department of State.