

SCIENCE | BUSINESS

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Europe's academic innovators recognised in ACES awards

Academic entrepreneurs from France, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom were recognised in the second annual ACES awards, held in Paris on 10 December and awarded by the Science Business Innovation Board. The winners come from the UK, France, Sweden and Italy.

Winners include entrepreneurs who devised a new system for re-growing bone and cartilage, ultra-light metal components for airplanes, a new cement-making process, new robotics software and a water-purification system. The vice rector of Italy's top-ranked university, the Politecnico di Milano, was also honored for encouraging spin-outs and industrial relations on campus.

The ACES is a pan-European competition among companies spun out from universities – to recognize the best academic entrepreneurs from across all technology disciplines. This year, the ACES drew nominations from around Europe and culminated in an awards ceremony at Paris City Hall.

The winners, selected by a distinguished jury of European business and academic leaders, include:

Professor Molly Stevens from Imperial College London won the Amgen Life Sciences award on the basis of her role in the founding and running of Bioceramic Therapeutics Ltd. Her company has developed a novel scaffold for regrowing bone, cartilage and other tissue. With the prize comes a cheque from Amgen for €5000. The judges praised the transformation of outstanding science into an innovative company with enormous potential for human health.

Nikolaos Vlasopoulos, whose company Novacem has a new and promising process for making cement without making carbon dioxide at the same time – currently one tonne of carbon dioxide is released to make one tonne of cement – carried off the Energy/Environment award. The judges noted in particular the opportunity to reduce the production of carbon dioxide, given that the cement industry produces 5 per cent of the world's industrial output of CO₂. Novacem is a spin-off from Imperial College London, UK.

The Microsoft ICT Award went to French entrepreneur **Jean-Christoph Baillie**. The company he formed, Gostai, has created a platform that allows proprietary robots to use the same kinds of software. There are many robots with embedded software, said the judges, but Gostai's approach could present a layer of independence and offer a web service to provide a number of activities for robots. Gostai is a spin of from ENSTA/ParisTech, France. As part of the prize, Jean-Christoph wins an all-expenses-paid visit to the headquarters of Microsoft in Redmond, Washington.

In the Materials/Chemistry section, the prize went to **Mattias Grufberg and Anders Axelsson** from Sweden. The judges were highly impressed with the way in which the technology they developed had led to the creation of a company, Lamera, which makes metal components with a third the weight of traditional components but the same strength – simply by creating a metal laminate. The original idea came from Volvo and the spin-off company was developed at Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden.

The Fast Start Award, for companies formed in the past year, went to **Nigel Brown and Ted Roberts** from Arvia Technology Ltd, UK, who have developed a new process to remove low and trace levels of organic pollutants in water cost-effectively. The judges praised the company's approach as holding enormous potential to deal with a serious global problem. The company is a spin-out of the University of Manchester, UK.

The judges' final award, the Bridge Award for individuals who have done the most to promote technology transfer and a culture of innovation in Europe, went to **Riccardo Pietrabissa** from the Politecnico di Milano, Italy. The judges cited in particular his role in setting up the Italian tech transfer network Netval, which has grown into an association of 45 universities providing one voice for university technology transfer in Italy.

The ACES Awards are sponsored by Amgen and Microsoft, with support from Procter & Gamble, Imperial Innovations Group PLC, ParisTech, the Paris Mayor's Office, the American Chamber of Commerce in France, and the Economist magazine.

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Notes for Editors

1. The judges

The judging panel, composed of members of the Science Business Innovation Board and eminent invited members, consisted of:

- J. Frank Brown (Dean, INSEAD Business School)
- Pat Cox (President, European Movement International)
- Jean-Philippe Courtois (President, Microsoft International)
- Marc de Garidel (Vice President, Amgen International),
- David Eyton (Group Head for Research and Technology, BP)
- Prof Marja Makarow (Chief Executive, European Science Foundation)
- Dr Philippe Pouletty (General Partner, Truffle Capital)
- Alfons Sauquet Rovirar (Dean, ESADE Business School)
- Cyrille van Effenterre (President, ParisTech)

2. The Science|Business Innovation Board

To encourage public dialogue about innovation policy in Europe, the Science|Business news service began organising in 2007 a blue-ribbon panel of leaders in industry, academia and policy. The Science|Business Innovation Board meets twice a year to debate important aspects of European innovation policy, and to formulate recommendations for policy action. It also names the winners to the annual

ACES awards. In 2009 the Board was incorporated as a non-profit association in Belgium. Its founding members are Science|Business, INSEAD, ESADE, Microsoft and BP. For more information, see www.sciencebusiness.net/innovationboard

3. The winners

Amgen Life Sciences Award

Winner

Professor Molly Stevens

Bioceramic Therapeutics Ltd, UK

Spin-out of Imperial College London, UK

Runners-up

Michael Wacker

Glycovaxyn, Switzerland

Spin-out of ETH Zürich, Switzerland

Shamus Husheer

Cambridge Temperature ConCepts, UK

Spin-out of University of Cambridge, UK

Energy/Environment Award

Winner

Dr Nikolaos Vlasopoulos, Novacem Ltd

Spin-out of Imperial College London, UK

Runners-up

Gunawan Kusuma, Holland Container Innovations BV, The Netherlands

Spin-out of Delft University of Technology

Prof Ayodhya Tiwari, Flisom AG, Switzerland

Spin-out of ETH Zürich, Switzerland

Microsoft ICT Award

Winner

Jean Christoph Baillie, Gostai

Spin-out of ENSTA/ParisTech, France

Runners-up

Andy Lüring/Sven Bakkes/Manuel Rejen

iOpener Media GmbH, Germany

Spin-out of European Space Agency/TU Delft

Johan Mundiger

routeRank Ltd, Switzerland

Spin-out of Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, Switzerland

Materials/Chemistry

Winner

Mattias Grufberg and Anders Axelsson

Lamera, Sweden

Spin-out of Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

Runners-up

Dr Edward Marshall

Plaxica Ltd, UK

Spin-out of Imperial College London, UK

Prof Ravi Silva

Surrey Nanosystems Ltd, UK

Spin-out of University of Surrey, UK

The Fast Start

Winner

Nigel Brown and Ted Roberts

Arvia Technology Ltd, UK

Spin-out of University of Manchester, UK

Runners-up

Raffaella Dellaca

Resmon SRL, Italy

Spin-out of Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Dr Stefan Duhr and Philipp Baaske

NanoTemper Technologies GmbH, Germany

Spin-out of Ludwig-Maximilians University, Germany

The Bridge Award

Winner

Riccardo Pietrabissa

Professor of Bio-engineering and Vice-Rector of the Politecnico di Milano, Italy

Runners-up

Marco Waas

Dean of the Faculty of Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering, Technical University of Delft, The Netherlands

Ederyn Williams

Warwick Ventures, University of Warwick, UK