

Launch of Enterprising Solutions Award 2008

10th Annual Enterprising Solutions Awards 2008

£10,000 prize on offer to social enterprises

For the 10th year in a row, the most dynamic and innovative social enterprises have been offered the chance to win over £10,000 by the Social Enterprise Coalition - at the launch of the 2008 Enterprising Solutions Awards yesterday evening.

The launch, held at the Royal Bank of Scotland offices, marked the start of the application period which will continue until 1 July 2008.

The Enterprising Solutions Awards (ESA) are a call to action for successful social enterprises to be recognized for their achievements as sustainable businesses that trade for a social purpose. Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in mid to late October.

First place wins a cash prize of £10,000 and free membership of the Coalition. Three other finalists and the winner of the New Social Enterprise Award will receive £5,000 each. This year, a new category has been added, Social Enterprise in Schools Award, and the winner will receive £1,000.

Jonathan Bland, chief executive of the Social Enterprise Coalition, said: "We are thrilled that this is the 10th year of the ESA. This is an exciting time for social enterprises as people begin to appreciate their potential as viable, powerful businesses."

Last year's winner, Sophi Tranchell, managing director of Divine Chocolate Ltd, said:

"Winning the award in 2007 was an incredibly proud moment and it is tremendous for us to join such an illustrious list of past winners. It also goes a long way to help recognise the efforts of everyone who has worked so hard to prove that being Fairtrade and farmer-owned can be a commercially successful business model."

Phil Hope MP, Minister for the Third Sector, Cabinet Office, said: "Social enterprises are leading the way in using innovative business solutions to tackle some of the most challenging social and environmental issues that we face and the Government is committed to supporting the sector to thrive and grow."

Business wishing to apply can download an application form, at www.enterprisingsolutions.org

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Notes to Editors

- The awards are run by the Social Enterprise Coalition on behalf of the Cabinet Office, RBS, and NatWest, in association with The Department for Children, Schools and Families, The Department of Communities and Local Government, Social Enterprise Magazine and the Times Public Agenda, and accept applications from all established social enterprises regardless of their size or legal structure.
- For further information or photographs please contact Caroline Borge on 020 7793 2318 or pressoffice@socialenterprise.org.uk
- The Social Enterprise Coalition (SEC) is the UK's national body for social enterprise. Acting as the voice for the sector, it supports and represents the work of its members, influences national policy and promotes best practice. www.socialenterprise.org.uk
- Social enterprises are dynamic businesses with social and environmental aims. Well known examples include The Big Issue, Café Direct and Jamie Oliver's Fifteen, but there are many other social enterprises operating in a wide range of industries from farmers markets and recycling companies to transport and childcare providers.
- According to figures from the Government's Annual Small Business Survey 2005 and existing data for the social enterprise sector, there are at least 55,000 social enterprises in the UK with a combined turnover of £27billion per year.