

With more than 50 original submissions from companies in 11 European countries, this year's entry field was particularly diverse. Nevertheless two areas stood out with a clear majority: those focused on the more traditional Responsible Care issues of health and safety; and those addressing topics that have appeared more recently on company agendas – energy efficiency and climate change.

On the community outreach front we received more projects focused on working with students than in previous years, perhaps a reflection of the need to target the youth sector because of ongoing challenges to recruiting talented youngsters into the chemical sector. The low number of entries from SMEs was disappointing but not surprising bearing in mind the economic pressures still being felt by the chemical sector as a whole, and SMEs in particular. We hope numbers will pick up next year as the recession recedes and smaller firms are under less pressure.

### Environment

Specific actions to reduce a company's environmental impact frequently resulted in substantial savings. For Donau Chemie, Austria, its investment in development of new technology for cleaning off-gas from hydrochloric acid (HCl) synthesis units, paid back within a year and means production units can now be operated as a closed system, thus reducing HCl and chlorine emissions. Were all Europe's hydrochloric acid production units retrofitted with this technology, Donau Chemie notes the environmental burden could be reduced significantly.

Technology innovation was also at the heart of Lamberti Group's entry, with the Italian firm highlighting green chemistry principles in the production of guar gum, a complex polysaccharide derived from a shrub that grows mainly in India and Pakistan. Lamberti aims to manage the guar supply chain from raw material production, to product and process innovation, and novel applications development. The judges praised several aspects of this entry as innovative and demonstrating good business, commenting on its "outstanding and broad approach combining the use of a renewable material and the phase-out of hazardous compounds with the improvement of HSE standards."

Solvents management was the focus for a number of companies including Belgium's Janssen Pharmaceutica and Clarochem Ireland. Both companies were praised for their responsible approach and initiatives that result in significant savings. Also focused on solvents, Eastman Chemical worked with partners to develop a novel technology to treat chlorinated solvents contamination (by a previous owner) at a site in Belgium. The approach involved biodegradation using a waste by-product from the sugar refinery industry, enabling a sustainable route to remediate the contamination within a much shorter timeframe than traditional methods. Significant reductions in waste, water and energy use were achieved. This challenging project was recognized by the judges as involving difficult-to-tackle substances.

The DuPont Cernay site which produces a range of agrochemicals, developed a comprehensive plan to reduce traces and prevent surface and ground water exposure to chemicals from its operations, and notes major environmental benefits and team-building. High savings were achieved in 2009 thanks to reduced waste and disposal costs.

### Outreach & biodiversity

The successful engagement of students by industry was a recurring theme: from a project centered around the planting and processing of rosemary into an essential oil submitted by French firm Chimex, and a widespread art competition plus open door event devised by Hungary's TVK, to a vocational training initiative by German copper giant Aurubis, and extensive wildlife/biodiversity projects from ExxonMobil and Huntsman in the UK. SME Multisol cited its work with primary and secondary school children as part of a comprehensive submission covering other key areas such as safety and product stewardship. Multisol earned praise from the panel for its overall performance and for providing a good example of distributors getting really involved in Responsible Care.

The Chimex entry was commended as a progressive outreach activity with good staff involvement.

In Hungary, TVK's cartoon characters Ethylla and Propilla – personifying ethylene and propylene molecules – were central to a highly successful art competition to generate interest in the sciences among 12-15 year olds, improve industry's image, and illustrate how its products are found in virtually everything society uses on a daily basis. Bearing in mind the regional and historic circumstances, this project demonstrated "huge progress" agreed panel members.

GPSG Ireland's involvement in Special Olympics events has a "huge positive motivational impact" amongst employees, and involves local public representatives, community partners, sports personalities, employees, and Special Olympics personnel as well as athletes, their coaches and families.

## The judging panel

This year the judging panel included:

- Dania Cristofaro, Policy Advisor, DG Environment, European Commission
- Rainer Grieshammer, Director of the Öko-Institut (Institute of Applied Ecology) in Freiburg, Germany
- Jim Hopwood, Personal & Organizational Development Consultant
- Sean Milmo, freelance science and technology journalist
- Reinhard Reibsch, Secretary General of the European Mine, Chemicals and Energy Workers' Federation, EMCEF
- Paul Tock, EHS Manager, Sabic, representing last year's winning company in the general Awards category