

World Bank Group to Reward Lighting Africa Innovations
Development Marketplace Grant Competition Reveals Vast Business Community Trying to Improve Africa's Access to Modern Lighting

In Washington, D.C.

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Washington, D.C, January 30, 2008 – After receiving more than four hundred proposals on innovative solutions for off-grid lighting products and services for Sub-Sahara Africa, the World Bank Group officially announced today the selection of 54 finalists for the Development Marketplace Grant Competition. The finalists will present their ideas to an international panel of select jurors, in Accra, Ghana, at *Lighting Africa 2008*, the first global business conference for off-grid lighting in Africa, to be held May 5-8, 2008. The panel will select ten to twenty winners who will receive up to \$200,000 in seed funding to develop and implement their ideas.

The Development Marketplace team received proposals from a host of organizations including private businesses, non-governmental organizations, universities, government entities, and individuals. The popularity of the competition highlights the vast potential for the market, and is the latest indication of the magnitude of global entrepreneurial interest in tackling energy issues and developing solutions for off-grid lighting in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Examples of projects submitted by the finalists include: the distribution of affordable solar lamps through used clothing networks; a landfill gas system and plant based on bio-digestion of piggery manure; the creation of supply chains and distribution networks of solar energy systems and light-emitting diodes (LEDs); and solar electric street lighting. The projects could be implemented in as many as 23 individual countries or combinations of countries, such as Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Cameroon, Rwanda, South Africa, Ethiopia, and Zambia.

As part of the *Lighting Africa 2008* global conference, DM contenders will have the opportunity to showcase their projects to the more than 300 expected conference attendees. Bringing together a diverse array of global players from the lighting industry, international financial institutions, the private sector, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations, the Development Marketplace event and broader conference will provide ample opportunities for participants to share market and industry knowledge, establish strategic business partnerships, and gain the skills, tools, and capacity to tap into this evolving market area. Registration to the conference is ongoing until May, 2008, and can be done through: "<http://www.lightingafrica.org>"

Anil Cabraal, Acting Energy Sector Manager/Lead Energy Specialist at The World Bank, said, “The Lighting Africa Development Marketplace Competition can assist entrepreneurs in moving from *innovation to impact*. It provides a platform for the World Bank Group to team up with the global lighting industry and local entrepreneurs to offer cheaper, cleaner, consumer-friendly products and services into the budding off-grid lighting market in Africa.”

Finalist Mohamedrafik A. Parpia of Zara Solar Limited of Tanzania said, “Off-grid lighting is the only viable option in providing lighting needs to the 98% of Tanzanians who have no grid electricity now and may not have it for many years to come.”

Dr. Dickson E. Ozokwelu of Besteck Energy Limited, another finalist, stated “The best way to alleviate poverty and therefore empower the people in these rural areas is through the deployment of renewable power technologies.”

Lead sponsors of the Development Marketplace Grant Competition include the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program, the Global Environment Facility, and the Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility. Other supporters include Good Energies Inc., the governments of Netherlands, Norway and Luxembourg, and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership.

For more information about *Lighting Africa*, the *Lighting Africa 2008* conference, and the Development Marketplace Grant Competition, visit: <http://www.lightingafrica.org>

About Lighting Africa:

Launched in September 2007, *Lighting Africa* is a program managed by the World Bank Group and operated in conjunction with a range of global partners. Lighting Africa seeks to support the industry in reaching 250 million customers with modern, affordable lighting by 2030.

About Development Marketplace

The World Bank’s Development Marketplace (DM) is a competitive grant program that funds innovative, small-scale development projects. These projects not only deliver results, but also have the potential to be expanded or replicated elsewhere. Since its inception in 1998, DM has awarded over US\$50 million to roughly 1000 projects through global, regional and country-level Marketplaces. For more information, please visit www.developmentmarketplace.org

About the World Bank

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world, with the mission of global poverty reduction and the improvement of living standards. It is not a bank in the common sense. It is made up of two unique development institutions owned by 185 member countries — the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Association (IDA). Each institution plays a different but supportive role in this mission. The IBRD focuses on middle income and creditworthy poor countries, while IDA focuses on the poorest countries in the world. Together, they provide low-interest loans, interest-free credit, and grants to developing countries for education, health, infrastructure, communications, and many other purposes. By doing so, the World Bank concentrates on building the climate for investment, jobs and sustainable growth, so that economies will grow, and investing in and empowering poor people to participate in development. For more information, please visit www.worldbank.org

About IFC

IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, fosters sustainable economic growth in developing countries by financing private sector investment, mobilizing capital in the international financial markets, and providing advisory services to businesses and governments. IFC’s vision is that poor people have the opportunity to escape poverty and improve their lives. In FY06, IFC committed \$8.3 billion, including loan participations, to 284 investments in 66 developing countries. For more information, please visit www.ifc.org.