

A Cambodian social business receives the International Ashden Award for Avoided Deforestation 2014

Phnom Penh, May 27th 2014 – Sustainable Green Fuel Enterprise (SGFE), a Cambodian social business which produces char-briquettes out of recycled waste, got rewarded by the prestigious International Ashden Award. An outstanding recognition for this innovative project launched in 2008 by two French NGOs: **GERES** and **PSE**. Thanks to this prize, SGFE hopes to continue its development and maximize its social and environmental impacts.

Carlo Figà Talamanca, owner and CEO of SGFE, was very proud to be on stage of the Royal Geographical Society in London, on 22nd of May, to receive the Ashden Award for Avoided Deforestation 2014, supported by Waterloo Foundation. Aside him, **two of his Cambodian staff** joined the trip and got to see Europe for the first time. A great way for Carlo to thank his loyal colleagues, without whom nothing would have been possible. SGFE is the third Cambodian organization winning this Award. Already GERES, in 2006 for the work on improved cookstove dissemination. **This new prize shows that Cambodia is leading the way in South-East Asia in using sustainable energy to improve people’s health and livelihoods and protecting the planet.**



“By winning the Ashden Award, we have demonstrated that through innovation, with some daring and hard work, also small Cambodian businesses like SGFE can make a big difference in the international arena” says Carlo.

Case study and video on SGFE : www.ashden.org/winners/SGFE14

A company envisioned by 2 NGO’s

Sustainable Green Fuel Enterprise is the result of a successful project launched by the environmental NGO **GERES** - Group for the Environment, Renewable Energy and Solidarity - in partnership with the **social NGO PSE** - Pour un Sourire d’Enfant -. **A surprising yet efficient and fruitful project** for both parties: SGFE provides **stable jobs** for the poor communities supported by PSE; and by offering an alternative to traditional charcoal, SGFE contributes to **mitigate the environmental burden of charcoal consumption on Cambodian natural resources.**



In Cambodia, solid biomass amounts up to 84% of domestic cooking fuels. This demand for biomass fuels, combined with a lack of regulations, contributes to **endanger Cambodian forests.** Yet, the current charcoal consumption is expected to **triple in the next 20 years.** In urban areas, where wood collection is impossible, charcoal represents 30% of the energy used for cooking.

To tackle these issues, GERES envisions and develops **technical solutions** to propose **alternative cooking fuels** combining **social benefits** and **environmental protection.** In 2009, **SGFE** started manufacturing and selling char-briquettes. The resulting product offers a **higher calorific value,** emits **less smoke,** produces **fewer sparks** and **burns twice as long** as traditional charcoal.

After operating SGFE for 2 years, GERES seeks an independent entrepreneur to hand over the business. In January 2012, **Carlo FIGÀ TALAMANCA,** sees the great potential of this activity and decides to take up the challenge. He managed to make **SGFE profitable in less than two years.** Today, SGFE is the **number 1** sustainable fuel producer and distributor in Cambodia, and with an average production of **40tons per month,** it supplies a network of over **100 retailers and restaurants.**

“Since I started using the briquettes, I don’t want to cook with traditional charcoal anymore. This one emits less smoke and burns much longer.” Says user Lin Haiy.



GERES and **PSE** are both very proud of what SGFE has accomplished. The fact that two organizations, with very different missions, were able to **jointly set up a development project** where each of them could **realize their mandate,** was already a great success. But this initiative leading to the creation of an **independent and viable business,** while remaining **consistent with the core values of its founders,** is the finest example of a successful project: by adding economic benefits to the targeted social and environmental impacts, **SGFE secures its sustainability of long term impacts.**

About Ashden Awards



The **Ashden Awards** were set up in 2001 to champion **trailblazing sustainable energy enterprises** and programmes that **improve people's lives and tackle climate change**. Since then Ashden Awards have rewarded and supported more than 150 winners across the UK and the rest of the globe. Ashden Award winners have improved the lives of 37 million people worldwide, and are now saving over 5 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year. The Ashden Award comes with a grant and aims to "promote practical, local energy solutions that cut carbon, protect the environment, reduce poverty and improve people's lives."

www.ashden.org

About SGFE



Sustainable Green Fuel Enterprise (SGFE) is the first and biggest sustainable fuel producer and distributor in Cambodia. SGFE serves Cambodian households and catering businesses with high quality, **affordable** and **environment-friendly char-briquettes made from recycled biomass waste**.

Envisioned by GERES, **SGFE** provides jobs for **24 employees** (8 women, 16 men) coming from the **poorest segments of the population** (former waste pickers). In exchange for **good working** conditions and **income 25% higher than the national average**, all SGFE workers are committed by contract to send their children to school through PSE programs.

Since its creation, the company has produced **700 tons of char-briquettes**. This means that SGFE contributed to **avoid the transformation of 4.5 million kg of wood into charcoal**, provided that 6.5 kg of wood are traditionally needed to produce 1kg of charcoal.

SGFE and its char-briquettes have met the challenge to make **cooking with charcoal a socially responsible and environmentally sustainable practice**.

www.sgfe-cambodia.com & www.ashden.org/winners/SGFE14 (Case study, a one-minute video and photographs of SGFE)

About GERES



Group for the Environment, Renewable Energy and Solidarity (GERES) is a French NGO created in 1976 after the first Oil Shock. Since then, GERES aims to implement **efficient energy solutions** adapted to **developing countries** to **improve the living conditions** of their inhabitants. GERES currently employs **236 staffs** carrying innovative development projects in **four regions**: South-East Asia, Central Asia, West-Africa, Europe-Mediterranean.

GERES works in Cambodia on the sustainable supply and demand of biomass energy:

- By innovating in production of sustainable fuels from solid biomass, GERES supports **local value chains** and their private stakeholders, respecting **local practices** while promoting **green growth in Cambodia**.
- By improving the way people use biomass in their day-to-day life thanks to improved cookstoves, GERES reduces the risk of **energy poverty**, cutting household costs and lessening the toll on the environment.

GERES Cambodia has won an Ashden Awards I n2006 for its work in efficient cookstoves (New Lao Stoves).

www.geres.eu

About PSE



Pour un Sourire d'Enfant (PSE) is a French NGO established at the end of 1995 in Cambodia, with the mission to provide **food, shelter, medical care, general education and vocational training** to **destitute, maltreated, abused and uneducated children** in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siem Reap. Currently PSE is providing help to **more than 6,500 children**, supporting around 3,000 children in public schools, 1,500 in the remedial education program and 1,500 in the vocational training program. Around 500 children benefit from their specific educational programs: classes for children with a disability, day-care centers, infant welfare etc.

www.pse.asso.fr

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