

The Fifth National Biennial Competition for Scouting Green Grassroots Unaided Technological Innovations Traditional Knowledge

National Innovation Foundation (NIF), constituted by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India aims to recognize, respect and reward grassroots technological innovators and traditional knowledge experts. NIF was established as an autonomous society in 2000 under the Chairpersonship of Dr R A Mashelkar, Director General, CSIR. It is mandated to build a National Register of green Grassroots Technological Innovations and Traditional Knowledge practices developed by various individuals and communities in the unorganized sector. NIF's commitment to grassroots innovators and traditional knowledge holders is aimed at (a) building their linkages with institutional scientists, technologists and designers to add value in their technologies, (b) providing micro venture innovation fund (MVIF) - support to help convert innovations into enterprises, (c) protecting their intellectual property rights and (d) creating a culture of creativity and innovation in society. Through its activities, NIF is striving to make India innovative, self-reliant and a world leader in sustainable technologies.

The role of Honey Bee Network: The Honey Bee Network was established about eighteen years ago to connect creative people across language cultures, acknowledge the contribution of innovators and expand policy and institutional space for local knowledge experts by ensuring fair share of benefits. NIF while building upon the Honey Bee philosophy, is trying to generate a movement in the country by linking green grassroots innovators with one another as well as with experts in modern science and technology, markets, design and other relevant formal sector institutions. The national campaign is a means to build solidarity among creative people, by unfolding the potential of genius at grassroots. Several values (7 E's) are being blended such as ethics, excellence, efficiency, environment, education, equity and empathy. Creativity in that sense is being combined with compassion, conservation and concern for the disadvantaged people. The entries received by NIF are screened for their possible validity, uniqueness, potential social impact, creativity or embedded valuable traditional knowledge. The selected entries are evaluated with the help of group of experts and Honey Bee Network collaborators. The most outstanding entries are given awards and also support for prototype development and scaling up depending upon the social criticality, potential impact, eco-friendliness, economic condition of the innovator, potential for value addition through linkage with science and technology and prospects of diffusion through commercial and non-commercial channel.

The competition: NIF solicits entries about unaided technological innovations and traditional knowledge developed by individual or group comprising farmers, artisans, fishermen and women, slum dwellers, workshop mechanics, students, local communities etc., in managing natural and/or other resources. Innovations can be in machines, gadgets, implements, or processes for farm operations, household utility, transportation for

improved efficiency, energy conservation or generation, and reduction in drudgery, creative use of biodiversity, plant varieties, generation of herbal remedies for human or animal health or developing new or any other low cost sustainable green technology related to various aspects of survival in urban and rural areas. Creative ideas for innovative technologies are also welcome. Communities developing People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) or People's Knowledge Register (PKR) are encouraged to register/link their knowledge base with the National Register at NIF.

The awards: The best three innovations and traditional knowledge practices will be awarded Rs 1, 00,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 each in different categories. In addition, individuals and/or organizations that make extraordinary contributions in scouting grassroots innovations and traditional knowledge may also get awards worth Rs 50,000, 25,000 and 15,000 respectively besides recognition to many others. There will be several consolation prizes of Rs 10,000 each in different categories depending upon the number of entries and incremental inventiveness and potential social and environmental impact. Special awards will be given for innovations and outstanding traditional knowledge of/for women. There will be special prizes to recognize outstanding innovations by/ for people with physical disabilities. Certificate of appreciation may be given to herbal and traditional knowledge holders whose claims may not have been validated but whose contributions are worth emulating for the society. Three most outstanding innovative ideas may be given prizes of Rs 50, 000, 25, 000 and 15, 000 in addition to consolation prizes of Rs 5, 000 each. The outstanding entries will also be widely publicized in the Honey Bee Newsletter and through other media. Summary and/or details of the selected innovative practices and traditional knowledge practices included in the Register will be displayed at the websites of NIF with the Prior Informed Consent (unless such knowledge is already in the public domain) of the innovators/knowledge providers.

Who can apply: Individuals or communities who have achieved distinction in improving quality and productivity without the aid of formal institutions are invited to participate in the fifth national biennial competition for ideas, innovations and traditional knowledge. Ideas for innovative technologies which have not yet become products, are also welcome. The resources of NIF are dedicated to supporting innovators and traditional knowledge holders from the unorganized sector only. Therefore, entries from professionals that is, those having professional degrees or affiliation with formal institutions or have gained long professional experience in public or private sector are ordinarily not accepted. However, if anybody develops a technology in their individual capacity without any institutional help and that has grassroots applications, it may be considered for inclusion in a separate database of grassroots innovations by professionals. NIF may help them only through linkages and providing visibility, but not financially. NIF is very keen that women knowledge holders participate in this campaign in as large a number as possible. We have had rather limited participation from women in the past and we wish to rectify

this situation with the cooperation of groups working with women in the unorganized sector.

Students: Young inventors and innovators are invited to send their ideas or innovations for a special category of awards for them. These should be unsupervised, an outcome of their own creativity, without any support from their teachers or outsiders. Students are also encouraged to join SCAI at grassroots (Student Club for Augmenting Innovations) to help other innovators (scai at nifindia.org). Supervised project from engineering or other professional colleges will not be accepted except under professional category. There will be prizes worth Rs 15,000, 10,000 and Rs 7,500 for the best three entries and several consolation prizes of Rs 5,000 each in this category.

How to participate: Individuals or groups may send as many entries as they wish on plain paper providing a) genesis of innovation and traditional knowledge b) background of innovation and c) background with complete educational qualification of the innovators/ traditional knowledge holders, accompanied by photographs and/or videos if possible and any other information that may help in replicating the innovations/traditional knowledge. Herbal entries may be accompanied by dried plant samples to enable proper identification procedure. The last date for the fifth biennial competition is January 31, 2007. It is requested that every entry includes full postal address, to facilitate further communication.

WHY THIS CONTEST?

The purpose of the competition is to uncover the hidden creative and innovative talent of our society so that livelihood prospects for masses improve through greater efficiency in existing enterprises and also through establishment of new innovation based enterprises. NIF believes that innovations developed by individuals in our society without any outside help from markets or formal institutions can help generate a new model of poverty alleviation and providing employment. These innovations will also hopefully help in conserving resources and energy in every sector. A National Micro Venture and Innovation Fund has been set up with the support of SIDBI. The idea is to provide risk capital to such individuals from the unorganized sector whose innovations or traditional knowledge are found promising and meet the priority criteria of NIF. GIANS (Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network) provide incubation support to the selected and prioritised innovations scouted through the contest.

Outstanding traditional knowledge is getting eroded very fast. We want to document and disseminate the valuable knowledge produced by individuals and communities under the

conditions specified by the knowledge providers. This will also contribute towards preservation and augmentation of the heritage of creative knowledge systems

Prior Informed Consent:

Each knowledge provider whose contribution is accepted for entry into the National Register will be requested to sign a Prior Informed Consent form. It will specify the conditions under which the knowledge provided to NIF can be shared with third parties with or without restriction on a commercial or non-commercial basis. The PIC form also provides an option for suggesting benefit-sharing formulae, should that technology or traditional knowledge be commercialized.

NIF will not include the entries in which

The innovation has received institutional support at any stage of the research design or experiment, either in the development of process or product. Exception can be made for such grassroots innovators who have developed the product on their own, but were assisted in testing or slight modification by the formal sector.

The research has been pursued in formal research institutions supported by private or public sector (except the unaided innovations in small scale or tiny industrial sector).

Innovations are developed by those having professional degrees or diplomas in say engineering, medical science, pharmacy, biotechnology, veterinary science, architecture, agriculture etc., or those having long professional experience in the organized sector. Such innovators may apply to IIM, Ahmedabad incubator managed by CIIE (Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship). For sending entries, the Application Form, Summary Format and NDA are available at www.ciieindia.org

Research projects by students supervised and guided by faculty.

Essays or mathematical formulae or proposals for some development projects or infeasible ideas.

A separate database of innovations by professionals for applications at grassroots will be developed. These entries will include cases (a) where a self employed professional or one engaged in tiny or small sector has developed an innovation or conceived an idea with applications at grassroots without institutional help, (b) a professional has developed an innovation in a field other than in which he is professionally trained with applications in saving energy, reducing for drudgery of women or other such priority areas. These entries may not be provided any financial support except linkages with formal R and D sector wherever necessary.

The decision of NIF in regard to acceptance of entries and for consideration of award will be final and no correspondence will be entertained in the matter.

Where to send entries

**National Coordinator (scouting and documentation),
National Innovation Foundation, Satellite Complex,
Bungalow No 1, Premchandnagar Road , Jodhpur Tekra,
Ahmedabad 380015 Gujarat.
Email: campaign at nifindia.org**