

The Green Star Awards for Excellence in Preventing, Preparing for and Responding to Environmental Emergencies



A collaborative initiative among
Green Cross International (GCI)
UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Objective

The Green Star Awards is a peer recognition forum to increase awareness of environmental emergencies by drawing attention to efforts made to prevent, prepare for and respond to such disasters. This awards scheme is intended to help raise the profile of environmental emergencies, and underlines the connection between environmental impacts of natural disasters, technological accidents and complex emergencies, and their consequences for affected populations and providers of humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, it facilitates the communication of relevant key messages such as:

- The inseparable nature of environmental emergencies and humanitarian crises;
- The importance of treating environmental emergencies as part of a holistic response effort, by identifying and mitigating adverse environmental impacts concurrently with response to humanitarian crises;
- Raising awareness of environmental emergencies may lead to the involvement of more individuals, organizations and national governments, thereby improving readiness and response to future disasters;
- Increased frequency and volatility of natural disasters due to climate change is highly likely to continue to increase the number of requests for assistance;
- Efforts must be augmented to ensure that global capacity to respond to environmental emergencies is always being improved, and that those capable of helping to build such capacity do so.

The Green Star Awards serve as a form of advocacy for environmental emergencies by generating positive media and public attention for individuals, organizations, corporations, and countries that assist with missions and supply experts. These awards help to increase international participation in preventing, preparing for and responding to environmental emergencies, both on the part of existing and potential donor nations, as well as existing and potential recipient nations.

Background

The seventh meeting of the international Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies (AGEE), held in Rosersberg, Sweden, in June 2007, recommended the establishment of a special recognition scheme and requested that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Green Cross International (GCI) develop a suitable award/honor. The concept of the Green Star Awards was endorsed by participants in a follow-up meeting held in Tunis, Tunisia in December 2007.

Procedure

The Green Star Awards will be presented biennially to coincide with the meeting of AGEE. They will cover the period since the prior AGEE, but will take into consideration a longer timeframe of past activity on the part of recipients.

The awards consist of a trophy and a certificate that will be presented to recipients. The announcement of their selection and actual awards presentation ceremony will take place to coincide with the AGEE meeting and it will be part of any AGEE related public information activities.

The inaugural Green Star Awards will be featured on Thursday 7, May 2009 at the 8th meeting of the AGEE, to be held from 6 to 8 May in Brussels, Belgium. The 2009 awards will primarily cover the period from June 2007 to May 2009 (AGEE 7 to AGEE 8).

The Nomination and Selection Process

The three entities are encouraged to reach out to their networks of collaborators (such as, but not limited to, AGEE members, affiliated experts and consultants) to solicit suggestions for nominees. An organizing committee comprising staff of GCI, UNEP and OCHA are responsible for overseeing the nomination and selection of award recipients, in conjunction with a judging panel. The final selection of awardees is undertaken by a panel consisting of two representatives from each partner organization: GCI, UNEP and OCHA.

Note that the nomination and selection process will be reviewed following the inaugural awards presentation.




There are five categories of nominees/awardees, namely:

1. Individuals
2. Organizations (very broad, to include NGOs, IGOs, academic/research institutions)
3. Donor Governments
4. Aid-Recipient Governments
5. Corporations

Ideally, there would be one winner for each category. However, this should remain flexible so as to accommodate multiple winners in a single category, or, if deemed appropriate, to allow for no winners in a given category.

2009 Green Star Awards panel members

	Name	Short biography	Organization
	<p>Alexander Likhotal</p>	<p>Alexander Likhotal is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Green Cross International. In addition to an academic career as a Professor of Political Science and International Relations, he served as a European Security analyst for the Soviet Union leadership. In 1991, he was appointed Deputy Spokesman and Advisor to the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev. After Mr. Gorbachev's resignation, Professor Likhotal served as his advisor and spokesman and worked at the Gorbachev Foundation as the International and Media Director. Having been President of Green Cross International since 1996, he is actively involved in promoting sustainable development principles.</p>	
	<p>Adam Koniuszewski</p>	<p>Adam Koniuszewski is the Chief Operating Officer of Green Cross International. As a Chartered Accountant and a Certified Financial Analyst, he has over 16 years of international business experience including senior managerial roles with global corporations and business consultancies where he was responsible for strategy and business development, regulatory and business risk management, public relations, communication and government relations at the national / EU level. His areas of expertise include the development and oversight of the corporate communication strategy including corporate social responsibility program development.</p>	<p>Green Cross International</p>
	<p>Kasidis Rochanakorn</p>	<p>Kasidis Rochanakorn has been Director of OCHA in Geneva since 2006. Kasidis Rochanakorn started his career in UNHCR in 1979 in his native city Bangkok, Thailand. Later he worked in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, was UNHCR Chief of Mission in China and Regional Representative in Japan and the Republic of Korea. He served twice at the UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, including as Chief of the Emergency and Preparedness Section from 1996 until 1999. Before joining OCHA, he served as Humanitarian Coordinator in the Russian Federation.</p>	
	<p>René Nijenhuis</p>	<p>René Nijenhuis, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, has been with the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit since 2004. He has participated in several United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) response missions to undertake rapid environmental assessments. Prior to joining the Unit, he worked with various departments of UNEP in Nairobi and Geneva as well as the UN Economic Commission for Europe.</p>	<p>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</p>

	<p>Satinder Bindra</p>	<p>Satinder Bindra is the Director of the UNEP Division of Communications and Public Information. An accomplished journalist and independent documentary filmmaker, Mr Bindra is a former Special Correspondent for CBS San Francisco, Senior International Correspondent and South Asia Bureau Chief for CNN New Delhi, and also worked with the USA's leading media think tank – the Paley Center for the Media. Mr Bindra received the duPont Award for being CNN's lead correspondent during the 2004 Tsunami .</p>	
	<p>Asif Ali Zaidi</p>	<p>Asif Ali Zaidi joined UNEP as a Programme Manager in Afghanistan in 2004. Since September 2008, he has been the Operations Manager at the Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch of UNEP in Geneva. With a background in medicine and public health, he has acquired over two decades of experience in international development and environmental management in Iran, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, while working for the Government of Iran, Aga Khan Development Network and the World Conservation Union (IUCN).</p>	<p>United Nations Environment Programme</p>

Selection criteria

Selection of nominees and awardees is based generally on demonstration of one or more of the following criteria:

- Marked improvement in performance based on lessons learned
- Innovative dissemination and communication of lessons learned, including the development of education and training courses based on these
- Development of sources of information on disasters which are readily available to key stakeholders
- Willingness to provide assistance and efforts to support international response missions on environmental emergencies
- International capacity-building missions aimed at helping countries prepare for environmental emergencies
- Major improvements in internal capacity and preparedness to deal with environmental emergencies
- Dedication to respond to environmental emergencies in a professional, collaborative and transparent manner

Ideally, award recipients will have established a history of the above criteria.

More information about the Green Star Awards can be found at: <http://www.unep.org/greenstar/>