

IFIA-ECO



M. G. 1996

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF INVENTORS' ASSOCIATIONS

No. 1 January - June 1996

INVENTOR ASSOCIATION PLAYS A LEADING ROLE (Finland)

The Council of Europe declared 1995 European Conservation Year in 40 countries.

"Why not organize a national contest in this framework to encourage, publicize and reward environmentally friendly inventions?" was the question posed by the president of the Central Organization of Finnish Inventors' Associations (KeKe) to the Director General of the National Board of Patents and Registration. No sooner asked than done!

A dozen Finnish organizations from both private and public sectors got together and launched on May 2, 1995: BLUE GLOBE, the national Environmental Invention Contest. In his capacity as President of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF International), HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, gave his support.

BLUE GLOBE was divided into three categories:

1. Forest, i.e., forest industry and economy;
2. Water systems, i.e., seas, oceans and fresh-water ecosystem;
3. Other environments, i.e., soil, atmosphere, energy and natural resources.

Technical innovations, products or methods submitted had to be recently invented or introduced: after January 1, 1990. Of the 431 entries, the majority dealt with energy production (16%), water purification and treatment (13%), tools and working methods (12%), logistics (8%), and agriculture and forestry (8%). One quarter of the entries came from companies which received two thirds of the prizes. Financial support given to companies for development and research is about 50 times the sum spent on supporting individual inventors.

On January 9, 1996 the Minister of Environment presented prizes totaling FIM320,000 (US \$69,400) to the winners. First prize (FIM100,000) recognized several patents dealing with "chlorine-free bleaching methods for cellulose production which ensure the production of high-quality printing paper without chlorine emissions and reduce the amount of waste water." Second prizes (FIM50,000 each) went to "chalk-filter drainage that considerably reduces phosphor and solid matter leach from fields," and a "new method for producing pure milk acid," already known for use in the production of wholly biodegradable plastics.

Twenty other prizes (totaling FIM120,000) were also awarded. A primary-school club for environmental questions received an Award of Merit (FIM7,500) for the design of a "waste container with fume hood for the chemistry laboratory."

This is the first issue of *IFIA-ECO* – a newsletter entirely devoted to invention and the protection of the environment. New ideas and inventions are urgently needed in this field, and I am certain that the inventor's place is in the forefront of the global battle against pollution.

This personal conviction goes back a quarter of a century to a time when the protection of the environment was somewhat of a new subject. The UN had convened the first world conference on "Human Environment" in Stockholm, June 1972. I attended the meeting as representative of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and was very impressed by the statements made, day after day, during those two weeks.

IFIA's role is to launch ideas and to act as a catalyst. Therefore, it is our hope that through this newsletter, inventor associations and other institutions linked to the world of invention will feel encouraged to undertake relevant activities.

Geneva, March 15, 1996

Farag Moussa
President of IFIA

**INNOVATION CENTRE
REWARDS
ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTIONS
(Canada)**



The Canadian Industrial Innovation Centre/Waterloo (CIIC/W) is a not-for-profit corporation, which is a Collaborating Member in IFIA. It was established in 1981 to help Canadian individuals and businesses commercialize technological innovations that create economic benefits. With its 25-member staff, the center responds to more than 8,000 inquiries annually, providing product evaluation and engineering, market research, advocacy and training services. In 1995, the CIIC/W received a contribution of C\$5.6 million from the federal government.

From 1990, the CIIC/W established **Green-vention**, an Annual Environmental Invention Awards competition. Two prizes are awarded of C\$1,000 each. Readers of *IFIA-ECO* will find it interesting to learn the criteria for submission reproduced below:

For an invention to be considered "environmental," it must meet one or all of the following criteria:

- be used in the clean-up/protection/conservation of the environment
- decrease pollution levels
- educate people on positive environmental practices

For an invention to be eligible for entry in the Environmental Invention Awards competition, it must:

- be pre-commercial (not yet in the marketplace). Inventions are acceptable up to and including the test marketing phase, and
- be submitted by the original inventor or co-inventors who can be made up of individuals or a company of no more than ten people, and
- the invention must receive a positive rating through the Critical Factor Assessment of the CIIC/W program before it will be considered for a Green-vention award.

**INVENTORS SAVE
A FRESH-WATER LAKE
(The Philippines)**

"Can you save the Laguna de Bay lake? It is the most beautiful lake in our country – the largest in the South East Asia region – and it's dying and needs rehabilitation. Normally its waters should provide 80% of fish-food requirements for the 6 million population of the capital and surrounding area. In spite of government efforts and regulations established by concerned agencies, alarming quantities of dead fish (625,000k approx.) have been found over the past two years."

This dramatic appeal in July 1995 was addressed by the Minister for Science & Technology to the laureates of a national invention contest when he presided over the award ceremony.

The laureates accepted the government's challenge to solve this problem which presented a danger to the economy and local ecology. The **Responsible Inventors, Scientists and Engineers (RISE)** for the Philippines was created and a year later the group became a Collaborating Member of IFIA.

"Save Laguna Bay!" was the first project undertaken by RISE. It proposed a greater involvement of lakeshore-area inhabitants and fishermen, as well as guidance on the principles of conservation to supply sustainable food and water requirements. Bottom dredging and reclamation would invigorate the lake. The creation of an ecological showcase island for the generation of income and tourism, would provide a practical demonstration and application of scientific findings, technologies, inventions and innovations. A lakeside retirement village resort, golf course, and physical amenities such as orchards, organic vegetable farming and an underwater tunnel for viewing aquatic life were among other proposals.

This project is a fine example of problem solving through creativity and invention taking economic and human-interest issues into consideration, but not necessarily involving technology. In the long term, such enterprise will increase the credibility of inventor associations and enhance the image of the inventor in general.

**MAJOR 1993 to 1995
IFIA ECO EVENTS**

1993: TUNISIA

It is IFIA that launched the first ever major international meeting to study the relationship between inventions and environment. Named the Mediterranean Meeting, it took place in Tunis from September 20 to 24, 1993, was followed by over 100 participants from 23 countries and nine international organizations. It was organized by IFIA in cooperation with the Tunisian Association of Inventors (ATI), the Tunisian State Secretariat for Scientific Research & Technology, and the Tunisian Ministry for the Environment & Territorial Development.

Twenty-two oral presentations were given on a wide variety of subjects. The meeting also adopted the Tunis Declaration on Invention and Environmental Protection, as well as two resolutions – one of which was the establishment, under the patronage of IFIA, of an international prize for innovative environmental inventions from Mediterranean countries.

1994: NETHERLANDS

A second important meeting on the topic of Invention and Environment was organized by IFIA, this time in cooperation with the Netherlands Association for Inventors (NOVI) and took place in Rotterdam from September 14 to 16, 1994.

Over 30 persons from 18 countries and two regional organizations participated in the meeting. Most of the lectures focused on the theme "Renew Technological Concepts for a Long-Term Sustainable Future." A lecture covered the subject of "Patent Law and Environment Protection." The author was Dr. (jur.) Rainer Moufang, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Patent, Copyright & Competition Law, Munich. Copies of this 18-page lecture are available on request to IFIA.

1995: CYPRUS

In 1995, IFIA organized the first IFIA Mediterranean Competition for Inventions Protecting the Environment with the award ceremony held in Nicosia, Cyprus. (See next page.)

IFIA FIRST MEDITERRANEAN COMPETITION FOR INVENTIONS PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT 1995 Award Ceremony: Cyprus

The topic chosen for this first competition was related to an issue of high priority to most Mediterranean countries: **Treatment of industrial and domestic wastewater to improve its quality.**

IFIA sent invitations to over 100 institutions from the 21 Mediterranean countries. Inventions were proposed from 10 countries: Croatia, Egypt, France, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

An international jury of five members judged the inventions during a meeting held in Geneva on May 12, 1995.

Over 200 people attended the award ceremony which took place in the gardens of the presidential palace in Nicosia, capital of Cyprus, on June 24, 1995. The TV and local press, as well as the *Corps diplomatique*, were largely represented. Speeches were delivered by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, the Minister of Commerce, Industry & Tourism and the President of IFIA. A concert of gospel and folklore singing closed the ceremony.

Best invention

Prize: IFIA Cup and US\$ 5,000 sponsored by the Cyprus Petroleum Refinery Ltd., and the Cyprus Petroleum companies. H.E. Mr. Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, personally presented this prize to the top laureate.

Inventor: Professor Elisha Tel-Or, head of the Department of Agricultural Botany at the Hebrew University's faculty of agriculture in Rehovot (Israel).

The invention is a process for the absorption of heavy metals, i.e., cadmium, nickel, copper, zinc, chromium, uranium, from industrial wastewater using the dry biomass of a plant - azolla fern - in filter containers. Azolla fern is common to many countries throughout the world, especially China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Central America. It can be cultivated in "water farms."

Patented in several countries in 1991, the technology of the azolla detoxification process is now developed and marketed by one of Israel's largest agro-chemical companies.



Best invention by a woman

Prize: IFIA Cup and US\$ 1,800 offered by the Soroptimist International Club of Nicosia, Cyprus.

Inventor: Professor Margareta Glancer-Soljan, Faculty of Food & Biotechnology of the University of Zagreb, Croatia.



Professor Margareta Glancer-Soljan in her lab with her team of co-inventors, among them her son Vice Soljan (second left).

The invention is a process based on the principle of bio-augmentation. That means an enrichment of the activated sludge by a mixed culture of bacteria and yeasts. The chief improvement this process brings is the possibility to remove completely and more rapidly the nitrogen compounds from industrial and municipal wastewaters. Considerably smaller volumes of bioreactors and lower instrument are required.

ENEKO, a company in Zagreb, is commercializing the invention.

(left) Inventor Professor Elisha Tel-Or at his "water farm," and (right) at the award ceremony with his wife and daughter, in the company of the President of the Republic of Cyprus, H.E. Mr. Glafcos Clerides.



Logo of the Cyprus Marine Environment Protection Association

Cypriot inventors also honored

According to the rules established by IFIA for the Mediterranean Competition for Inventions Protecting the Environment, citizens from the country hosting the award ceremony do not participate in the competition. Nevertheless, the host country may honor its own inventors on the occasion of the award ceremony. This was the case of Cyprus.

Mr. Michael Z. Papadopoulos, mining engineer, received an IFIA certificate and US\$ 2,000 sponsored by the Cyprus Popular Bank Ltd., for his invention: "Process for producing calcium silicate bricks or cement." Certificates were also awarded by IFIA to eight other Cypriot inventors.

ECOLOGICAL INVENTIONS AT 1996 GENEVA FAIR

"Trade Promotion in Favor of Developing Countries" is a department of the Swiss Office for Trade Promotion (OSEC). They asked IFIA to contact inventor associations from 36 developing countries, to assume the responsibility for selecting some 15 among the best inventions proposed, and to give associations any necessary advice with a view to mounting a collective booth at the next International Exhibition of Inventions, Geneva, April 19 to 28, 1996.



It should be noted that OSEC had decided to limit the inventions to those with an **ecological character**. These would be selected according to the following criteria:

- inventions which permit an economy of energy (of whatever form);
- inventions covering renewable energy, new energy sources;
- innovations in existing sectors (solar energy, etc.);
- inventions based on natural products (plants, extracts, medicinal herbs, etc.);
- inventions which could contribute to the improvement of the quality of the environment and/or the quality of life in general;
- alternative means of transport and locomotion.

THANK YOU CYPRUS!

We are most grateful to the Department of the Registrar of Companies and Official Receiver (Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism of the Republic of Cyprus) for having sponsored the printing and the mailing of this first issue of *IFIA-ECO Newsletter*.

IFIA received application forms for 43 inventions from 12 countries. Sixteen inventions were selected from the following nine countries: Cameroon (1), Cuba (2), Mali (2), Philippines (3), Sri Lanka (3), Syria (1), Togo (2), Tunisia (1), and Zaire (1).

In addition to covering all expenses related to the collective booth, OSEC will pay the local expenses in Geneva of six inventors (or their representatives) from Cuba, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Togo and Tunisia.

The inventions were selected on the basis that they were "environmentally friendly" and commercially viable, particularly on the Swiss market.

OSEC will also offer cash awards to the total of Swiss francs 2,500 (US\$ 2,170 approx.): 1st prize (Sfr. 1,000), 2nd prize (Sfr. 500), and five encouragement prizes of Sfr. 200 each. It should be emphasized that the 16 selected inventions will be judged equally with all the other inventions presented at the Geneva Invention Fair and thus be eligible for numerous prizes, distinctions, and medals offered during the 10-day Fair. Further details will appear in *IFIA-ECO* No. 2.

MONACO 1994

The theme of the first European Inventions Competition of Monaco, 1994, was Invention and the Protection of the Environment. IFIA was associated with this event and offered a prize for the best European woman inventor. This award consisted of the IFIA Cup and a cheque for FFrs. 15,000 (US\$ 3,000) offered by Mme Colette Emery, President (1992-1994) of the French Union of Soroptimist International, the well known service organization which groups women - one from each profession in each club - all over the world.

Participating in this IFIA competition were 13 women from 7 European countries: Finland, France, Germany, Romania, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine. The winner was Dr. Mirja Salkinoja-Salonen, Professor of Microbiology at the University of Helsinki (Finland), for her invention: "Process and means for the microbiological remediation of polluted soil." The award ceremony took place on December 3, 1994, and was honored by Prince Albert of Monaco.

The laureat generously offered her cash award to the women inventors' organization of Finland which had nominated her.

IFIA EXHIBITION 1995

Nuremberg, Germany, December 1995. The IFIA Cup for an Outstanding Invention Protecting the Environment, was awarded to Mr. Young C. Chung from Seoul, Korea, for his UNIMIZER. This device not only makes savings in electric power use of up to 25%, it has various other functions that improve the performance and life-span of electrical appliances, including noise diminution and reduction of emissions from motors.

Mr. Chung (photo) is president of S.N. Korea Scientific Engineering & Manufacturing.



To all IFIA member associations and organizations: *IFIA-ECO Newsletter* is your newsletter. If you have programs which encourage ecological inventions, write to us in either English, French, Spanish or Arabic.

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