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Media release

Frewitt and PMFch win Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award. Softcar takes Swiss Startup Summit Award

This evening, the canton of Fribourg honored its most innovative firms. Frewitt Engineering Works Ltd, based in Granges-Paccot, won the Business Award, while the Start-up Award, which is voted for by the public, went to PMFch from Marly. The winner of the Cleantech Award was Samvaz SA, based in Châtel-St-Denis. The inaugural Swiss Startup Summit Award was won by Softcar from Fribourg. More than 500 guests attended the official award ceremony at Forum Fribourg.

The canton of Fribourg Innovation Award is now in its 25th year. As well as crowning the canton's most innovative firms, the official ceremony also saw the presentation of the inaugural Swiss Startup Summit Award. Speaking at the ceremony, the cantonal Minister of Economic Affairs, Beat Vonlanthen, declared: "My time as president of the jury over the last 10 years has afforded me a real working insight into the state of the Fribourg economy. The determination and commitment of the Fribourg business community to seeing through their research projects and innovative ideas never ceases to amaze me, and strengthens my belief that innovation is the engine that drives our society."

Frewitt: Modular laboratory mill system

With prize money of CHF 10,000, the Business Award, presented by Edgar Jeitziner, Chief Executive Officer of the Fribourg Cantonal Bank, went to Frewitt for its groundbreaking modular milling solution, FreDrive-Lab. Designed with the pharmaceutical, fine chemicals and food industries in mind, the system features a set of interchangeable heads, which means that the machine can perform up to six different milling processes. The platform is also capable of shrinking 20-millimeter particles down to 50 nanometers, and guarantees true scale-up from lab-size batches of a few grams right up to 50 kg/hr production rates for pilot-scale quantities.

Around 80 people are employed at the company's Granges-Paccot headquarters. Frewitt Engineering Works has been developing and manufacturing high-grade mill systems since 1946, and exports to customers in more than 80 countries.

Jury and public vote for PMFch in the Start-up Category

Over the last four weeks, the general public has been busy voting for one of three finalists in the Start-up Category. In a first for the awards, the public was able to vote, by SMS, during this evening's ceremony. With 44% of votes cast, the Start-up Award went to PMFch from Marly.

PMFch SA, based in Marly, has developed a fast, simple and effective assembly system ("PMF system"), which anyone can use to build a tubular structure of their own choosing. The square tubes can be inox, aluminum or steel, and all come with standard cross-sections. With the aid of a simple

Allen key, the 40 components in the PMF product portfolio can be turned into work stations, exhibition standards and even furniture for the home or office. For the time being, PMF has set its sight firmly on the industrial market, providing solutions that can optimize the production process and improve workplace ergonomics.

Jean-Luc Mossier, Director of the Fribourg Development Agency and vice-president of the jury, presented the winner with the award, which this year stood at CHF 30,000. Second and third places went to ViDi Systems from Villaz-St-Pierre and Setza from Fribourg, respectively

Samvaz wins Cleantech Award

The Cleantech Award, worth CHF 6,000, went to Samvaz SA from Châtel-St-Denis. The company has developed a sound-proofing corner angle for use in timber construction. The corner angle is made up of two wood panels encasing a core of sound-absorbing recycled foam, which significantly attenuates the transmission of sound waves through walls by acoustically decoupling the two outer wooden panels. The product has the same mechanical load-bearing capacity and comes in the same sizes as conventional corner angles already on the market.

The Cleantech Award was presented by Chantal Robin, Director of the Fribourg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and member of the jury. It is funded by Cleantech Fribourg, the Fribourg Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Fribourg Development Agency.

Inaugural Swiss Startup Summit Award goes to Softcar

In the weeks leading up to this evening's ceremony, three new companies were put forward for the inaugural Swiss Startup Summit Award. Throughout this evening's ceremony, the public voted for their favorite by SMS. The results are now in: the winner of the 2016 Swiss Startup Summit Award is Softcar.

Softcar Ltd in Fribourg has developed an electric automobile using an entirely new kind of vehicle architecture. With much fewer parts than a standard motorized vehicle and a bodywork made from biodegradable biopolymers, Softcar is the lightest and cleanest four-seater city automobile ever manufactured.

Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award Jury – contact details

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2016-2017 Canton of Innovation Award Finalists – contact details

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Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award turns 25

The Fribourg Innovation Award is organized by the Fribourg Development Agency (FDA) and the Fribourg Cantonal Bank (BCF), with the backing of the Cantonal Ministry of Economic Affairs. Other key partners include leading local media outlets: – La Liberté, Freiburger Nachrichten, La Télé, Radio Fribourg/Freiburg and La Gruyère.

Launched in 1991, the Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award is presented every two years and honours the groundbreaking achievements of locally-based companies. The next Innovation Award is scheduled for 2018.

For more detailed information, go to: www.innovationfr.ch