



THE WORLD BANK

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Free of Poverty

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **World Bank offering US\$4 million in grants for innovations in agriculture**

**Washington, DC January 22, 2008** – The **2008 Global Development Marketplace (DM2008) competition** was launched today, offering \$4 million in grants to social entrepreneurs with innovative ideas that have potential for high impact in promoting sustainable agriculture.

The competition this year is focused on the theme of “Sustainable Agriculture for Development.” It is asking participants to focus on solutions to agricultural challenges in developing countries such as linking small-scale farmers to markets; improving land access for poor farmers; and promoting the environmental services of agriculture in addressing climate change and biodiversity conservation.

DM2008 awards will support 25-30 of the most innovative ideas that advance sustainable agriculture in developing countries. Typically, DM competitions attract close to 3,000 applicants, which are then narrowed down to about 100 finalists. Finalists of DM2008 will be invited to the competition’s Marketplace event in Washington, September 24-25, to compete for grants and participate in knowledge exchange activities.

“The Development Marketplace has proven to be an effective mechanism for identifying innovative projects with great development potential,” *said Katherine Sierra, Vice President of the Sustainable Development Network, who oversees the World Bank’s agriculture portfolio.* “Tapping into that resource is a valuable opportunity to identify and support emerging ideas within sustainable agriculture.”

Global DM competitions are held every 12 to 18 months. Since 1998, they have awarded more than \$30 million to nearly 300 projects worldwide. Past competitions have identified and funded innovative ideas including: a new water pump in Zimbabwe made from common waste materials; promoting literacy in India by placing same language subtitles on popular Hindi music videos; and creating an agriculture e-marketplace that provides price updates via cell phone text messaging to small farmers in the Philippines.

As a seed-funder, The Development Marketplace serves as a launching pad for projects to prove their concept, scale-up, or replicate. In the words of Trevor Field, a winner from the 2003 competition: “Without [Development Marketplace] funding, we’d still be in our infancy. Now we can fly.”

The themes of DM2008 stem from the recently published World Development Report (WDR) 2008. Sierra said the WDR renews the consensus on the positive role that agriculture can provide as an engine of growth, an instrument of poverty alleviation, and as a provider of environmental services.

Eligibility criteria, competition guidelines and step-by-step instructions are available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish at the DM website: [www.developmentmarketplace.org](http://www.developmentmarketplace.org). Proposals will be accepted in English only through March 21, 2008 (23:00 GMT).

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[www.developmentmarketplace.org](http://www.developmentmarketplace.org)

For more information about the World Bank's role in Agriculture and Rural Development visit  
<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTARD/0,,menuPK:336688~pagePK:149018~piPK:149093~theSitePK:336682,00.html>