

First RCE Award on Education for Sustainable Development Initiatives

For a better tomorrow: starting today

Call for applications for the 2012 Pilot RCE Award

The Global RCE Service Centre of the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) is calling for applications for the 2012 pilot RCE Award to celebrate 'good practices' in education for sustainable development (ESD). The Award will recognize ESD projects, initiatives and activities that have translated existing local knowledge into concrete sustainability change practices, and empowered individuals and communities to make sustainable choices for the future. The nominated projects should provide evidence of involvement of diverse actors in addressing local sustainable development challenges through dialogue, education, research and multi-stakeholder learning. The pilot Award will be conferred during the 7th Global RCE Conference to be held from 21–24 September in Tongyeong, Republic of Korea.

Who can participate?

All RCEs and organizations, institutions and groups involved in the work of RCEs can send nominations for the Award. The distinctive feature of RCE work is in the implementation of ESD activities through innovative platforms for exchanging local knowledge, expertise and good practices on sustainability change.

What is an RCE?

A Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) is a network of individuals, organizations and experts who are dedicated to enhancing education for sustainable development (ESD) through local formal, non-formal and informal education institutions. Based on distinct sustainable development capacities, expertise and resources within the network, RCEs contribute to multi-stakeholder learning and policy development. RCEs, both individually (local level) and collectively (global level), work to achieve the goals of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, by building an innovative platform for information sharing, dialogue and collaboration for ESD. They also advance partnerships for ESD across geographic, knowledge and interdisciplinary boundaries. Collaborative ESD undertakings within and across RCEs include research and development, re-orientation of education towards sustainable development, increasing access to quality education and providing training programmes for all sectors of society. Furthermore, RCEs lead advocacy and raise awareness concerning the role of ESD in achieving a sustainable future. The success an RCE achieves on the local level is brought to scale through the global RCE network of more than 100 members spread across the globe.

Goal and categories for the Award

The purpose of the Award is to increase the visibility of the work of RCEs, and to celebrate 'good practices' in ESD, which have contributed to multi-stakeholder learning

processes and policy development. The Award will recognize innovative ESD projects, activities and initiatives that highlight core elements of an RCE such as research and development, networked governance, transformative education and collaborative partnerships. Submissions that underscore the role of RCEs in enabling multi-stakeholder learning and sustainability change are invited in the following six categories.

Category 1 – Contribution to innovative multi-stakeholder learning and educational processes for sustainable development

This category recognizes creative projects, activities and initiatives that foster multi-stakeholder learning to improve sustainability practices in a specific context. Principles, values and practices of sustainable development underpinning emerging learning and educational processes should be clearly described. The projects could also deal with development of competencies and capabilities of local partners (e.g. teachers, NGOs, representatives of local communities, higher education institutions, governments, businesses) for addressing sustainability.

Category 2 – Building enabling conditions for sustainability change

Existing policy frameworks, social, political, economic and cultural factors found in the broader RCE context are known to constrain implementation of ESD projects, activities and initiatives towards sustainability change. Submissions within this category should highlight how such constraints have been addressed to build enabling conditions for sustainability change. This may involve improving organizational capacities for networking, policy development, advocacy, leadership and collaborative partnerships.

Category 3 – Bridging local and global perspectives on sustainable development

The category deals with bridging local practices and experiences with the global ESD perspectives as well as multilateral policy processes. This involves contextualizing local action in globally oriented thinking, as well as translation of global visions and policy processes into local contexts. Submissions should focus on how local and global linkages are established using appropriate innovative collaborative approaches and methodologies. It has to present regional or international cooperation within the RCE network as well as in other bilateral or multilateral processes.

Category 4 – Upscaling of ESD and sustainable development projects and activities

This category relates to increasing scope and scale of ESD and sustainable development practices, for example, from single short-term projects to larger in-scale and/or longer-term projects. Submissions should highlight how local sustainability initiatives have increased in scope, and provide the methods used to measure the increased scope/impact and implementation of increased activities. Submissions can also focus on present needs, innovative approaches (e.g. use of modules, new pedagogies), governance as well as resource frameworks for upscaling and mainstreaming ESD and sustainable development practices.

Category 5 – Assessment of collaborative ESD projects, activities and initiatives

This category reports on assessment of collaborative projects as a social learning process. It considers the use of innovative evaluation methodologies in determining the quality of multi-stakeholder learning processes taking place in an RCE or network. Emphasis will be on how lessons from assessment processes are used to improve planning for new collaborative projects. Special emphasis will be placed on the use of locally derived, relevant and agreed indicators for assessment of ESD learning outcomes. Submissions are required to demonstrate assumptions behind methodologies of the assessment/s and its outcomes.

Category 6 – Application of innovative networked governance strategies

Submissions within this category should report on innovative governance strategies that have been applied to enhance decentralized and collective decision-making. Applications should highlight how a networked governance structure has made it easy to draw upon distinct capacities, expertise and resources within an RCE network for multi-stakeholder learning and policy development. The submissions are expected to demonstrate how governance challenges have been identified, addressed and changed into constructive and collaborative relationships. Applicants can also report on the emergence of reflexive, open-ended, communicative and interactive forms of steering and coordination in achieving multi-stakeholder learning and policy-making.

Process

Winners will be chosen following an assessment process conducted by invited technical experts, including those from the RCE community. The first selection process will be conducted during the International RCE Conference in Tongyeong. The timeline for the nomination, selection and presentation processes is as below:

1. Announcement and call for submissions – 20 July 2012
2. Deadline for submissions – 30 August 2012
3. Completion of initial screening – 5 September 2012
4. Review process and preparation of the assessment – 15 September 2012
5. Presentation of ‘good practice’ cases in Tongyeong – 23 September 2012
6. Announcement and celebration of the Award Winners – 24 September 2012
7. Publication of ‘good practice’ cases in RCE Bulletin, UNU website and other agreed outlets – 31 December 2012.

Submit your applications to the Global RCE Service Centre at the UNU-IAS using the following email: rceconference2012@ias.unu.edu

Format for Submission of Nominations

The selected cases are to be presented by the RCEs attending the conference; in case authors are not attending the conference they will be introduced by session facilitators. Four parallel sessions will be dedicated to the 'good practice' case presentations and discussions. The submissions are to be prepared according to the criteria listed below. Where possible, applicants are encouraged to complement their written submissions with short (up to 5 min) audio visual or other supporting materials that may highlight practical learning and sustainability change processes from the ESD project, initiative or activity.

1. *Short description of the action/programme/initiative/network (300 words)*
2. *Description of the context in which the projects/programmes were undertaken*
3. *Main partners and their roles*
4. *Contribution of your project (300 words)*
 - *What according to you is the most innovative aspect of your case study? (E.g. learning, technology, knowledge, etc.)*
 - *In which area has your project contributed the most (entrepreneurship, local/regional community empowerment, sustainable lifestyle, development of sustainable livelihoods, development of green/sustainable skills, better integration of production and consumption, development of alternative market option, better value education, etc.)? Please explain how, if necessary, with examples.*
 - *What is the unique long-term sustainability element(s) in your case?*
 - *What, according to you, are the critical factors that made your project successful?*
 - *What, according to you, is a critical governance element that made your project successful?*
 - *Are there any ethical, socio-cultural, political or economic dilemmas? If yes, how have they been addressed?*
 - *What are the major institutional barriers that you have had to face and how have they been addressed?*
5. *Upscaling of project results*
 - *What are the major actions that would enable similar activities to grow in scope, scale or impact? Please elaborate.*