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ENDURA, NEPTUNE AND JOSEPH JOSEPH CROWNED HSBC GLOBAL CONNECTIONS 2014 WINNERS

Endura, Neptune and Joseph Joseph have been crowned the UK National Winners of HSBC Global Connections 2014, an HSBC initiative to find the country's most innovative and forward-thinking businesses. The companies picked up their award at a prestigious ceremony held at Cameron House in Loch Lomond, Scotland.

Endura and Neptune were unveiled as the winners of the SME category, which is for companies with a turnover of up to £30 million, whilst Joseph Joseph picked up the award in the Mid-Market Enterprise (MME) category, which is for businesses with a turnover of between £30 million and £100 million.

The businesses were selected from thousands of entries from across the UK to become one of the 15 regional winners invited to attend the UK National Final event, hosted by Katie Derham.

HSBC UK Chief Executive António Simões said: "HSBC's Global Connections celebrates the forward thinking, innovative businesses driving economic growth in the UK. Across a diverse range of sectors - from furniture makers to oil engineers to craft brewers - the 15 UK finalists have all demonstrated vision and passion in growing their business both at home and overseas. Making the final decision was very difficult, which demonstrates the strength of our finalists, and of UK business. Congratulations to this year's winners Endura, Neptune and Joseph Joseph, and thank you to all the other entrants."

The HSBC Global Connections initiative is founded on the belief that expansion and success for UK businesses is likely to come to those that venture beyond their home territories and take their products and services into the growth markets of the future. To help facilitate that growth, the national finalists joined other regional finalists from across the UK on an HSBC 'International Exchange' visit to Turkey, where they gained an insight into the opportunities to trade with that market and develop links with local businesses.

In addition to the International Exchange, the winning businesses can gain access to lending facilities up to £6m, linked to a financial reward of up to £240,000 (£120,000 for the other finalists).

The judging panel for the SME category included HSBC's Amanda Murphy, Head of Business Banking, HSBC's Head of Global Trade and Receivables Finance, Mark Emmerson, as well as Bremont watch company co-founder Giles English, serial entrepreneur Sir Eric Peacock, and Grant Thornton director Paul Brown.

The MME judging panel consisted of HSBC's Head of Corporate Banking, Daniel Howlett, and Head of Payments and Cash Management, Frances Howell. They were joined by the Managing Director of Brompton Bikes, Will Butler-Adams, the founder of Genius Foods, Lucinda Bruce-Gardyne, and Grant Thornton partner David Riley.

The Winners

Endura

West Lothian-based Endura designs, manufactures, and markets functional clothing, helmets, eyewear and luggage specifically for cyclists. It now has established or pending distributors around Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, South Africa, Australia, Canada, South America, India, the USA and the Far East with a range that spans MTB, road and commuter clothing. This year saw two teams competing in the Tour de France wearing Endura clothing; Movistar Team (World No.1 ranked team) and Team NetApp-Endura.

Jim McFarlane, Endura Managing Director, said: "We didn't expect to get to this stage let alone win, so we're surprised and hugely appreciative. We think we've got a great business that's worthy of it and I'm glad that came through in the presentation. We are planning to establish a venue where we can introduce underprivileged kids to mountain-biking and the funding will go towards that and help accelerate the process."

Neptune

Neptune is an international lifestyle brand that designs and manufactures handcrafted furniture and accessories for the whole home. As co-founder, John Sims-Hilditch leads the company's creative direction, brand development and customer-centric philosophy, with a

focus on outstanding product development and the delivery of Neptune's multi-channel distribution network. The company is forecasting a 25% growth in business through an increased online presence and 10 new stores across the UK and North East Europe.

John Sims-Hilditch, co-founder of Neptune, said: "We're delighted and humbled by winning this award. It was something that we truly wanted to win but felt it was going to be incredibly hard with such amazing talent here. This means a huge amount to the business. We're planning to build a business that will last a long time and this will help build the DNA that we are a special business. The staff will take a lot from that."

Joseph Joseph

Twin brothers Richard and Antony Joseph founded Joseph Joseph in 2003, combining their respective experience in product design and business. Antony studied design at Central St Martins, whilst Richard studied business at Cambridge University. Specialising in contemporary kitchenware, Joseph Joseph is now internationally-recognised for producing some of the most stylish and technically innovative products available, and has become one of the fastest-growing companies in the worldwide homewares market.

Richard Joseph, Managing Director of Joseph Joseph, said: "We're absolutely over the moon, it really is incredibly special to win, especially when you consider the quality of the other businesses here. People make businesses. We have a great team, and we are very lucky to employ a small but hugely creative group of people. We all work very hard so it is wonderful to receive this recognition."

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