

# PRESS release

## THREE START-UPS AWARDED AT SAINT-GOBAIN NOVA INNOVATION COMPETITION 2012 HELD AT THE GREENBUILD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN SAN FRANCISCO

**Paris, Nov 15, 2012** – After a final “speed dating” round, Saint-Gobain, the world leader in the habitat and construction markets, and the U.S. Green Building Council – Northern California Chapter (USGBC-NCC) announced today the three winners of the NOVA Innovation Competition 2012 held this year at the Greenbuild International Conference and Expo in San Francisco. The NOVA Innovation Competition rewards start-ups offering the most innovative solutions in the field of habitat, energy and the environment. After being held twice in France and once in Germany, the international Saint-Gobain NOVA Innovation Competition occurred in the USA for the first time.

**Heliotrope**, the winner of the competition was awarded the top cash prize of \$50,000 (about €38,000).

Based in Oakland, CA, Heliotrope is a developer of energy-efficient electrochromic (EC) glass that switch reversibly between three states: solar transparent, heat blocking, and heat and light blocking (i.e. darkened). Heliotrope’s technology can be relevant to a range of windows products, including buildings, satellites and automobiles. The company is focused on the commercial window market given the immediate potential of its technology to improve the efficiency of building lighting, heating, and cooling. Heliotrope’s smart window technology leverages a novel electrochromic effect discovered by the founders to control light and heat transmission dynamically. A small voltage controls the optical state of the device. Minimal power is consumed during switching and almost none is used to maintain either of the two solar blocking states. This yields great flexibility for system integration and low cost installation.

**PlanGrid**, the second-place winner received a cash-prize of \$25,000 (about € 19,000).

Based in San Francisco, Calif., PlanGrid is a complete collaborative platform for construction information and the fastest PDF viewer in the universe. PlanGrid is a platform that combines the power of the cloud with the mobility of the iPad to provide a service that finally allows builders to view and communicate with all their project information right from the field. PlanGrid allows builders to easily distribute, version and view all their drawings, specifications, submittals, schedules and progress photos right on the iPad. PlanGrid is a SaaS (Software as a Service) business that charges a monthly

recurring subscription fee per user. By leveraging cloud-based computing, PlanGrid can perform computation and image processing on people's construction documents to make the rendering of them instantaneous, even on relatively underpowered devices like tablets.

**SmarterShade**, the third-place winner was awarded a cash-prize of \$10,000 (about €7,700).

Based in South Bend, Indiana, SmarterShade is a unique approach to the emerging technology being called "smart windows". A user can control the amount of light and heat entering a home or office through controlling the tint level on their window. The first generation of SmarterShade is a retrofit film system that is integrated into the window itself. This film is designed so that it will selectively tint at the push of a button. Unique features of the SmarterShade system are that it does not require wires or electricity, it is instantly switchable, and achieves full privacy- eliminating the need for blinds and shades. All of this while reducing energy usage in a home or office. SmarterShade not only gives the user the ability to tint the window, but also to control the level of tinting. A window can go from clear to dark or anywhere in between. Its products can be applied to windows that are positioned in difficult places where a traditional blind or shade is not possible; such as doors, skylights, and transportation windows. The SmarterShade system is also a well suited wire-free alternative to other "smart window" technologies that utilize electric current.

The bigger prize for *all* NOVA Innovation Competition contestants is the opportunity to partner with Saint-Gobain in exploring potential joint development, licensing or other collaboration agreements.

"This year's NOVA Innovation Competition attracted our largest and most innovative field of contestants yet," said Rakesh Kapoor, director of NOVA External Venturing. "We congratulate Heliotrope, PlanGrid and SmarterShade on their winning presentations, and we look forward to forging long lasting relationships with any NOVA Competition participant whose innovation and entrepreneurial drive aligns well with Saint-Gobain's market objectives."

The NOVA Innovation Competition involved several months of assessment using an open, transparent judging process with experts from MIT, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the USGBC-NCC and Webcor, one of the world's top commercial building contractors.

Of the 168 original entrants, eight finalists were notified at the end of September that they were selected to participate in the final speed-dating round at Greenbuild. The three winners were then chosen following the live speed-dating format where the eight finalists pitched their innovations to a judging panel of Saint-Gobain business leaders.

"We expect to be working with the industry to turn our lab discoveries into commercial technologies over the next few years. We were looking for partners to help us create revolutionary products, and to help us scale the manufacturing and production of those products, and ultimately to get those products into the hands of end users," said Andrew Lim, CEO, Heliotrope. "Saint-Gobain has a strong platform in window products. We believe

we can provide additional features and functionality to those products and contribute to the success of Saint-Gobain in the future.”

### ***Saint-Gobain and Innovation***

World leader in the habitat and construction markets, Saint-Gobain is present in 64 countries with nearly 195,000 employees. The Group designs, manufactures and distributes building materials, providing innovative solutions to meet the key challenges of growth, energy efficiency and environmental protection. Innovation is at the heart of the Saint-Gobain strategy. This notably involves working closely with young companies. More than €430 million were invested in R&D last year. 3,700 researchers (37 nationalities) are working on more than 700 projects. 396 patents were registered in 2011 and more than one product out of five sold by the manufacturing sectors did not exist five years ago.

#### Saint-Gobain and start-ups

- NOVA examines how projects coming from innovative start-ups can be implemented faster by leaning on the industrial and commercial assets of Saint-Gobain, for the greatest benefit of each partner. NOVA serves as a unique interface for start-ups and helps create and develop links with all Group activities worldwide.
- 168 candidates from 28 nationalities participated in the 2012 Saint-Gobain innovation competition.
- Since 2006, Saint-Gobain partnered with 54 start-ups thanks to NOVA.

For more information about NOVA External Venturing, please visit <http://www.saint-gobain.com/en/nova>. To learn more about the NOVA Innovation Competition, visit [www.saint-gobain.com/innovationcompetition2012](http://www.saint-gobain.com/innovationcompetition2012).

### **About U.S. Green Building Council, Northern California Chapter (USGBC-NCC)**

The USGBC is committed to a prosperous and sustainable future through cost-efficient and energy-saving green buildings. USGBC works toward its mission of market transformation through its LEED green building certification program, robust educational offerings, a nationwide network of chapters and affiliates, the annual Greenbuild International Conference & Expo, and advocacy in support of public policy that encourages and enables green buildings and communities.

USGBC-Northern California Chapter is one of the largest USGBC Chapters in the country, with 22,000 constituents, 10,000+ LEED credentialed professionals, and more than 5% of the world's LEED certified square footage. The Chapter hosts more than 150+ annual events, workshops, and conferences with regional, national and international organizations, and is a leading voice in green building public policy throughout Northern California. As the premier green building organization in the region, USGBC-NCC plays a pivotal role as a convener, mobilizer and educator in transforming the built environment.

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