

Francisco Gallo Mejia Laureate of the 2008 Altran Foundation Award

The 2008 Altran Foundation Award – whose Jury was headed by Leopold DEMIDDELEER, New Business Director at SOLVAY – focusing on “**Reducing CO₂ levels in the atmosphere: our technological challenge!**” was awarded to Spanish researcher **Francisco GALLO MEJIA** for his “**HABITABLE CARBON DIOXIDE SINK DEPOT**” project, developing a new bamboo-based local and sustainable architecture. This project held the attention of the jury because of its impact on CO₂ reduction in the atmosphere and because of its technical, social, economical and environmental aspects.

BUILDING ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY HOUSES

Francisco Gallo Mejia is an architect-researcher at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) in San Sebastian (Spain). He has been studying sustainable building and environmental education but also safety and human rights for several years. **For the last few years, he has given his studies a more precise direction: a bio-composite based on *Guadua* bamboo¹ that can be used for building in tropical areas.**



His ambition: Turning his dream of economic development for the people and protection for the environment into a reality.

A HUMAN SCALE INNOVATIVE ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT

The project developed by Francisco Gallo Mejia seduced the members of the Altran Foundation jury by its three-dimensional and complementary approach:

- **Technical aspects:**

The bamboo fibres, used as a basic material for the creation of a new generation of composite, are at the core of the project. The complex assembling of these fibres with other materials (glue...) allows for the production of efficient and cheap building boards. One of the obstacles is the development of production equipment whose costs are sufficiently low to meet the local economic reality.

- **Social and economic aspects:**

The ambition of this project is to support the development of a local sustainable industrial activity, fostering local economy along the whole cycle. It aims at allowing local people to appropriate the project in its entirety, notably thanks to micro credit, by buying land, growing bamboo, creating transformations businesses and building houses.

- **Environmental aspects:**

Growing bamboo allows to preserve the soil and, most important, to capture CO₂.

The composite end-product stores the carbon absorbed by the bamboo and requires, for its fabrication, a little energy, water and materials (wood, bricks, metal, etc.). In addition, its production requires smaller machines and little transportation as the plantations are located close to the final user. This project is also part of several international programs such as the INBAR (International Net for Bamboo and Ratam) or the European project “Iberoeka”.

¹ *Guadua* bamboo is well known for its properties of resistance, yield and fast growth (more than 21cm a day!).

THE FUTURE OF THE PROJECT WITH ALTRAN

The dynamic of this project requires devising and implementing a full industrial roadmap, including product definition, machinery design, process, fundraising, complementary materials qualification, training and commercialization. These are all the tasks undertaken by Altran teams with Mr. Gallo Mejia.

“Winning the Foundation Award is a great pleasure: I expect the Altran team to reinvent the relationship between man, environment, economy and society”. Francisco Gallo Mejia

A UNIQUE AND ORIGINAL GRANT

A scientific and technological support that could value up to €1 million!

As every year, the award winner will be offered a financial grant of **€16.000** plus **one year of technological and personalised support**, for use in the furtherance of the project. More precisely, the winner benefits from the unique expertise and know-how of the **18.000 international consultants and managers** at Altran, in terms of **research and scientific innovation**: technological and applications development, industrialisation, cost optimisation, project management, design, market studies, partnership searches, communication, corporate strategy, ...

An audit of the laureate project will be conducted soon in order to define the objectives of our collaboration.

SOME FIGURES ON THE 2008 AWARD

This year again, the Altran Foundation Award has been a huge success. In 2008 more than 750 people downloaded the application form on www.fondation-altran.org, and finally 159 international project holders applied (a 17% increase compared to the 2007 Award). During the different selection steps, the best 28 projects have been short listed and last September the 6 finalists were chosen.

THE COLLABORATORS' FAVOURITE PROJECT

For the first time, Altran collaborators have the possibility to elect their Favourite project. This initiative enables the whole group to discover the six finalists and to give its opinion. The 2008 Collaborators' Favourite is awarded to the Italian team of **Siglinda PERATHONER** for the project of converting CO₂ back to fuel thanks to an innovative photoelectroncatalytique system.

About Altran

Altran is the European leader in innovation consulting and high technology. The Group's 18,000 consultants, operating worldwide, cover the entire range of engineering specialities, including electronics, information technology, quality and organisation. Altran offers its clients ongoing support throughout the innovation cycle, from technology watch, applied basic research and management consulting to industrial systems engineering and information systems. The Group provides services to most industries, including the automotive, aeronautics, space and telecommunications sectors.

Founded in 1982, Altran operates in 20 main countries. In 2007, it generated a turnover of €1,591.4 million.

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