

Free support and training Award up for grabs for innovative start-ups in Edinburgh and Central Belt

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New charities and budding entrepreneurs in and around Edinburgh have the chance to win free support and training for a year, thanks to a unique programme designed to kick start social ventures.

Emerging entrepreneurs and start-up and non-profit organisations with innovative ideas can now apply to The Melting Pot to win a package of start up support on the [Social Innovation Incubator Award](#) programme.

The SII Award provides a package of start up support for social entrepreneurs and community activists keen to develop their innovative ventures that deliver on social and environmental goals.

Previous winning ideas include a cargo bike service, a hip-hop music centre, computer training for older people and a youth music orchestra project.

Ten lucky start-ups will win a package of sponsored support worth £10,000 including office and meeting space, ITC support, training and access to expertise in all areas of social business start-up.

Entrepreneurs also benefit from being able to tap into a thriving network of other projects that already make use of the business facilities provided by The Melting Pot,

Scotland's Centre for Innovation.

The Melting Pot launched the SII Award for the first time last year. Sophie Unwin, Founding Director of Remade in Edinburgh, was one of the eleven winners of last year's Award.

"The Social Innovation Award has been a great boost to the project. It came at just the right time and has helped us to implement ideas and facilitate growth. We now have service level agreement with a local council, received corporate funding and opened a shop/ training centre to teach computer and furniture repair. Last year all our income was grant funding. Now we get 55% income from sales and business, so we are more sustainable."

The SII Award is now open for applications and the deadline is 20th May 2013. The 12 month programme starts on 1 July. The Social Innovation Incubation Award programme is run in conjunction with a range of partners and sponsors including The Big Lottery, FirstPort, Social Enterprise Academy, WWF Scotland, Red Lynx and others.

[The Melting Pot](#) is also calling for sponsors to contribute towards the Award through offers of financial or in-kind business support. Claire Carpenter, Managing Director at The Melting Pot said:- "People can also contribute a small – or significant – amount of financial support to help these start-up projects by getting behind the crowd-funding campaign – it all goes into the same pot!"

"The aim is to replicate and build upon the first year's achievements, creating an effective social business incubation service that provides just the right resources during those critical early-days when resources are particularly tough to find."

The Social Innovation Incubator Award package includes free access to co-working space and meeting rooms; a range of dedicated business support including ICT and printing

facilities; a range of training opportunities specifically designed for start-up and emerging non-profits; business coaching mentoring and the all important emotional support.

For more information about the SII Award crowd-funding campaign which launches on 1st April 2013 visit <http://www.igg.me/at/siia2013>

Submitted by [Claire Carpenter](#)

