

EBAE speech – Tallin - Oct 27th 2016

On behalf of all of the team I would like to thank the jury of the European Business Awards for the Environment for choosing Madinter as the winner of this award. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Spanish Biodiversity foundation for selecting us as the Spanish candidate; it is an honour to represent Spain, and to represent all SMEs, to prove to the world that we can be leaders in innovation, sustainability and responsibility.

Thank you to Bob and to Taylor Guitars for partnering up with us in this battle, this is theirs too.

I wish to congratulate all of the other candidates, especially Fairphone, whose project really is outstanding and an inspiration to us all.

The Crelicam project has established a solid business in Cameroon exporting legal and socially responsible ebony, creating a new standard in an industry that has prioritized low prices over compliance with the local laws, protection of the environment and quality of life of its employees.

Ebony is a unique wood, both for its colour and its hardness and stability. It is one of the most essential for the construction of musical instruments such as guitars, violins, cellos and pianos. This precious wood represents the extraordinary natural wealth of Africa, and this unique natural wealth must be the engine of economic development of countries like Cameroon.

The impact our project has had in Cameroon goes much further than our forestry management policies, our legality standards, our safe work environment, our increased yield, our ebony nursery to guarantee the future of the species, our well with clean water, our free canteen, our fair salaries, our people and the community around us. Our impact is also the message that we have managed to spread around the world, the demand we have created for legal and socially responsible tropical wood.

Together, we have managed to create an international business that has set a new standard in legality and sustainability in Cameroon. Investing in better facilities and machines, and in training our employees, we have challenged the established model, that consisted of exporting the raw material from the country leaving little value behind, and have started producing a value added product that generates wealth and economic growth in Cameroon. With our social programs, such as our schooling aid policy, access to a doctor, and the building of a well with clean water for the community around us, we want to ensure the value we generate is distributed in society.

All of this, in a country with incredible natural beauty, where we know there is huge potential for growth.

The music industry is our greatest ally in the struggle for sustainability and responsible trade. Music crosses continents, is heard by the whole world; transcending cultural, religious and social divides.

More than any other industry, music has the power to communicate; it has something unique that makes people receptive to its messages. Music is something that vibrates in every human being. Thanks to music we have the power to be an inspiration for businesses, governments, NGOs and consumers around the world.

Each new fingerboard, chinrest, and piano key is an opportunity. An opportunity for hard work, for strong values and for a future filled with music.

Luisa Willsher

Madinter Sales Manager