



## UN Announces Eight Small Business Winners Providing “Good Food for All” in South Asia

*The US\$100,000 global competition, held in conjunction with the UN Food Systems Summit, showcases innovative solutions in improving access to healthy, sustainable food*

**Tuesday, July 27, Rome** – Eight inspiring, small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from South Asia have been announced among the 50 Best Small Businesses of the “[Good Food for All](#)” [competition](#), held in conjunction with the UN Food Systems Summit.

Selected from nearly 2,000 applications from 135 countries, these winners all showcase inspiring, diverse, and impactful solutions in improving access to healthy, sustainable food. They form part of a global set of 50 winners – half of whom are youth-led and nearly half are women-led – who will all share a US\$100,000 cash prize.

“Small businesses are the hidden heroes of our food systems, managing at least half of our food economies and keeping food on our plates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic,” said **Dr Agnes Kalibata**, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the 2021 Food Systems Summit. “We must understand the challenges they face and work together to ensure they remain at the heart of efforts to improve the future of food.”

Each winner was selected for how their business contributes to healthier, more sustainable, and equitable food for the communities they serve; the strength of their vision for the future; and how well they communicate the current and future impacts of their business.

The social and economic wellbeing of local populations is at the core of many small enterprises as they strive to tackle malnutrition and improve livelihoods. [North Lanka Foods](#)’ family-managed business prides itself in directly employing 120 people, mostly women and youth. The enterprise produces over 350 organic, fair-trade products, including speciality curry mixes from local spices, for global markets.

Another organic farming organisation, India-based [Edible Routes](#) sets up kitchen gardens, rents out community farms for urban growers, conducts workshops on organic farming and sustainability, and sells farming products. “Our educational courses have taught over 7,000 people to grow their own food and become stewards of community-supported agriculture,” explains founder and CEO **Kapil Mandawewala**.

Among the regional winners in South Asia, several female-led enterprises demonstrate the critical role of SMEs in nourishing people and providing inclusive livelihoods and equity. [Taru Naturals](#) is a fairtrade network connecting 10,000 tribal and small-scale farmers across India to markets with healthy, organic produce. In Bangladesh, farmers in Dasherband are provided with seed and technical support by [Amader Khamar](#), which also offers transport solutions to deliver safe, organic products to urban retailers.



Many other enterprises are innovating and scaling solutions for nutrition and sustainability. In Nepal, [DV Excellus'](#) dynamic team of 25 young people is using a digital marketplace to connect and build relationships between consumers and more than 10,000 farmers both digitally and physically. "It is high time to redefine the food systems of Nepal and beyond," emphasises co-founder **Tulsi Giri**.

The competition winners were announced alongside a new [report](#), based on a global survey of these businesses' ambition and needs. The report outlines three critical pathways for supporting small businesses in realising their full promise: creating more conducive business environments, offering more positive incentives, and empowering small business leaders to have greater influence in sector planning.

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

For all media enquiries and interview requests, **contact:** [FSScommunications@un.org](mailto:FSScommunications@un.org)

**Find out more** about the 50 winners on the [Food Systems Summit Community Page](#)

**View** the announcement ceremony via the livestream: [www.facebook.com/UNFoodSystems](https://www.facebook.com/UNFoodSystems)

**Download** the full accompanying report "**A Small Business Agenda for the UN Food Systems Summit**" (PDF): [www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss-small\\_business\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/unfss-small_business_agenda.pdf)

**About the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit**

The UN Food Systems Summit was announced by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, on World Food Day last October as a part of the Decade of Action for delivery on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The aim of the Summit is to deliver progress on all 17 of the SDGs through a food systems approach, leveraging the interconnectedness of food systems to global challenges such as hunger, climate change, poverty and inequality. More information about the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit and a list of Advisory Committee and Scientific Group members can be found online: [www.un.org/foodsystemssummit](http://www.un.org/foodsystemssummit)

**Additional South Asia winners' information and quotes:**

Impacting on rural poverty and hunger, food SMEs operate in the toughest markets, whilst ensuring resilience to shocks such as conflict, COVID-19 and climate change. In the challenging conditions of Afghanistan, [Karwan Saffron](#) works with women to harvest high-value saffron to export to the world market.

In India, Oonnayan – India's first decentralised pay-as-you-go, solar-powered cooling-as-a-service – provides an inclusive and innovative model developed by [Oorja Development Solutions](#). This renewable energy approach enables smallholder farmers to store their horticulture produce, extend shelf life, and realise higher prices, thus increasing their incomes.



The future of food and global ecosystems requires new ways of doing business. Rapid developments in digital agriculture during recent years is bringing in a tide of new approaches. Specialising in deep learning and precision technologies, [iPAGE Bangladesh](#) is an agritech service aggregator providing actionable information to farmers and connecting them with consumers to promote nature-positive production.

**List of regional winners (with country and video links):**

Amader Khamar	Bangladesh	<a href="#">Link</a>
DV Excellus Pvt. Ltd.	Nepal	<a href="#">Link</a>
Edible Routes Pvt.Ltd.	India	<a href="#">Link</a>
iPAGE Bangladesh Ltd.	Bangladesh	<a href="#">Link</a>
Karwan Saffron	Afghanistan	<a href="#">Link</a>
North Lanka Family Foods (PVT) Ltd	Sri Lanka	<a href="#">Link</a>
Oorja Development Solutions India	India	<a href="#">Link</a>
Taru Naturals	India	N/A