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EE winners: Oriental Tanks, Biomax, G-Energy Small, young firms' 'passion, tenacity and courage to dream big' lauded

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Oriental Tanks, Biomax Technologies and G-Energy Global have taken top honours at the Emerging Enterprise (EE) Awards this year for their sustainable business models and strategies to take on challenges and opportunities in their respective industries -

PHOTO: EMERGING ENTERPRISE

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Business Times. The number of applications has grown more than seven-fold since its inception in 2008.

This year's awards feature submissions from the education, food and beverage, electronics and engineering, information technology, environment sciences and green industries. A total of 14 small companies were recognised as finalists.

Oriental Tanks' international business development manager Yohei Ueno said winning the award was a way to boost staff morale. "They see that their hard work has materialised."

With this, the company - which provides container rental and logistic solutions for transporting bulk liquids - hopes to hire more employees to expand its Singapore and regional businesses, Mr Ueno added.

The three EE winners each received \$440,000, which includes a \$150,000 interest-free loan from OCBC, a \$50,000 package offered by MasterCard, as well as professional services, training programmes and support in capability development offered by the other partners.

"We'll make full use of the awards and prizes to see how we can add value to our business," said Vincent

[SINGAPORE] Oriental Tanks, Biomax Technologies and G-Energy Global have taken top honours at the Emerging Enterprise (EE) Awards this year for their sustainable business models and strategies to take on challenges and opportunities in their respective industries.

The winners were announced at the gala dinner and awards ceremony held at The Ritz Carlton last Friday evening. The annual awards target small businesses with annual sales of up to \$15 million and not more than 10 years old.

This year's winners understand the importance of having a clear game plan that helps them identify their market niche, while being aware of their business environment, said Eric Ong, head of emerging business at OCBC Bank.

"What they lack in size, they more than make up with their passion, tenacity and courage to dream big," Mr Ong added.

The Emerging Enterprise Awards, now into its sixth year, is organised by OCBC Bank and The

Low, vice-president of energy auditor G-Energy Global. The company intends to promote its concept of building aquaponic farms atop buildings next year.

The Best Innovation Award this year went to E-Tag RFID, which designs and makes radio-frequency identification tags for use in industries like automotive, retail, agriculture and logistics.

The company received the \$45,000 information and communication technology prize from the presenting sponsor SingTel last Friday.

"We have received a lot of enquiries from new customers since joining EE. We will continue to help customers come up with better products and to raise their productivity," said E-Tag's managing director Edmund Lee.

A key trend that emerged among this year's finalists is that more than half of them already have a presence overseas, in places as far away as Africa and as close as Malaysia, OCBC's group chief executive Samuel Tsien noted.

They go overseas for growth, as well as cheaper land and labour that is more readily available, he said.

"We are seeing more and more young companies ready to venture overseas from Day One. This is very different from the past when companies typically do that only after they had gradually built up their credentials domestically," Mr Tsien added.

The message urging small companies to venture overseas was also echoed in Minister of State for Trade & Industry Teo Ser Luck's speech that evening.

Mr Teo said the long-term prospects within Asia and emerging markets remain sound, with the middle-class population rapidly growing in these regions.

"For our business to grow and scale, they need to consider internationalisation relatively early in their growth," he added.

EE winner Biomax, which specialises in converting organic waste into odourless, nutrient-rich organic fertilisers within 24 hours, already has a presence in over 10 markets globally since it was founded in 2009.

"The awards will be a stepping stone for us to embark on our next phase of growth and to expand our international footprint," said the company's chief executive officer, Sim Eng Tong.

"Now that we have gained some recognition, it should help us to speed up the process," he added.