



## Decentralized Composting for Sustainable Farming and Development : Ghana

Significantly increasing crop yield through the provision of an organic fertilizer service in Northern Ghana

### Project description

DeCo! offers a composting service to smallholder farmers in Northern Ghana. DeCo! follows a low-tech approach and aims for scalability. The plants are run by highly educated local managers and DeCo! offers part-time work for local people during the off-farming season.



### Business model

DeCo! is a social business convinced of the benefits of compost, which addresses soil degradation and its associated local challenges by providing a composting service to smallholder farmers.

Local people sell farm and household waste biomass to DeCo!. At a decentralized composting plant, the biomass of 3-6 surrounding villages is gathered and composted.

DeCo! employs only local people who have no alternative work during dry season. The compost is then sold to local farmers who apply it before the sowing period.

### Scaling up activities in 2011

- Completion of the pilot phase.
- Securing local partnerships, including with the ministry, scientific bodies, local farmer organisations, and international NGOs.
- Continuing field experiments with SARI and UDS.
- Attracting new investors.

### Immediate needs

- Nationwide contacts and networks to businesses, organic farmers, and politics.
- Financial support for marketing and scale-up activities.
- Increasing human capacity with skills development and training, for scale-up.
- Establishing a strong strategy and structure for marketing.

**DeCo!**





# SEED Awards 2010

for entrepreneurship in sustainable development

## WINNER

### Partnership

- **SARI (Savanna Agricultural Research Institute):** Field experiments and advice.
- **University of Development Studies:** Field experiments.
- **Regional office of MOFA (Ministry of Food and Agriculture):** Field experiments.
- **B&S Consultancy:** Promotion and marketing of the organic fertilizer.
- **Myclimate:** Supports DeCo! to develop a CDM project based on the saved emissions through composting.
- **GLZ (German Development Cooperation):** Development assistance.



### Social, environmental and economic impacts

**Social impact:** By involving local people in the production and sale of compost, DeCo! aims to increase local employment during the off-season. Using the organic compost will in turn increase the agricultural yields, thereby reducing food shortages and improving food security. DeCo! also raises awareness on soil degradation, which is counteracted by organic compost.

**Environmental impact:** The benefits of the organic compost fertiliser include decreased

soil degradation, improved long-term environmental sustainability, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and improved soil productivity.

**Economic impact:** By working with local farmers to increase local employment, DeCo! increases levels of income for farmers and employees. DeCo! also strengthens the local economy in the long-run through sustainable social business solutions, providing capacity building and training and improving long-term agricultural productivity and sustainability.

### Contact

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### SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



### About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: [www.seedinit.org](http://www.seedinit.org)

### SEED Secretariat

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