

EUROPEAN MICROFINANCE WEEK WRAPS UP WITH LOOK AHEAD TO FUTURE OF MICROFINANCE

- *Closing Plenary: Marc Labie: Success stories will be those that are socially and culturally embedded*
- *Effective replication of successful tech innovations even more important than technology itself*
- *Over 450 practitioners, investors, academics and support providers gather at Abbaye de Neumünster in Luxembourg to discuss sustainable development in financial inclusion*
- *Crédit Rural de Guinée wins 6th European Microfinance Award for response to Ebola outbreak*

Luxembourg

Monday, 23rd November 2015

[European Microfinance Week](#) (#EMW2015), organised by the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP) concluded Friday in Luxembourg, with a closing plenary looking ahead to the future of microfinance, ‘Where to from here?’, with Blaine Stephens of the MIX Market, and Marc Labie of UMONS.

An unusually interactive final session involved a real-time survey of participants’ views, looking at the drivers of success and pitfalls ahead, with Marc Labie at UMONS responding to the audience’s views, and outlining among other things the importance of replicability of technology innovations in increasing inclusion, access and sustainable development in the years to come.

Throughout the conference, and with this year’s attention on sustainable development, the conference workshops, Action Groups and plenaries addressed the various financial, social and environmental components of sustainability, including: identifying overheated and underserved markets to better target growth and increase sustainability; incentivising long-term financing by investors; new approaches to managing risk and expanding outreach through better understanding of client needs and developing tools to reach them effectively and affordably; protecting clients from shocks in difficult contexts and providing them with a suite of financial services for sustainable livelihoods; and increasing environmental sustainability – through finance for clean energy products and improved agricultural practices.

Over the three days of the conference, each of these themes were covered by leading experts in the field. As Anne Contreras, Chairwoman of the European Microfinance Platform, observed in her speech to close the conference, “what these themes have in common is long-term thinking about the future of the Financial Inclusion sector, and of its clients”.

Thursday saw the long-awaited ceremony at the European Investment Bank for the 6th European Microfinance Award, won by Crédit Rural de Guinée (CRG) from a list of 47

applicants from 28 countries, Organised jointly by the Inclusive Finance Network Luxembourg (InFiNe), e-MFP and the Government of Luxembourg, this year's Award recognised excellence and innovation in Microfinance in Post-disaster, Post-conflict Areas & Fragile States.

CRG won for its response to the Ebola outbreak in Guinea. The award was collected for CRG by its Director General Mr. Lamarana Sadio Diallo, who in an ebullient acceptance speech: "We are proud to accept this Award and will use the €100,000 prize to continue supporting clients, mitigating the impact of Ebola and boosting the solidarity fund to help clients increase their resilience against the outbreak and economic challenges".

This year's EMW conference, run for the tenth straight year by the European Microfinance Platform (e-MFP), brought together over 450 opinion-leaders, top management of banks, funds and other financial institutions, practitioners, academics, analysts, raters and industry commentators to present key innovations, challenges and the work conducted in the previous year by e-MFP's several dedicated Action Groups.

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e-MFP is a multi-stakeholder organisation representing the European microfinance community, and comprises banks, financial institutions, government bodies, consultancies, NGOs researchers and academics. Its aim is to promote cooperation among European microfinance bodies working in developing countries. It facilitates high-level debate and research on key issues in inclusive finance, and is an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders to share Best Practice in a rapidly-evolving sector.

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