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Scionix win the 2006 National Energy Efficiency Award in the research and development category

Scionix has won the prestigious 2006 National Energy Efficiency Award in the research and development category, which was presented at the National Energy Efficiency Awards ceremony on the 6th of December in Science Museum, London.

Scionix has developed a new type of solvent that is more efficient, recyclable and environmentally friendly. It is based on ionic liquids: non-volatile liquids that offer a clean way to carry out chemical processes, such as the electropolishing of stainless steel. Electropolishing is a chemical process that protects metals and alloys against corrosion. It is a huge, but also highly specialised industry.

Conventional electropolishing, carried out in acid baths, is very inefficient in its energy usage with only 10 to 20 per cent of the energy supplied for the process actually used in electropolishing. Not only is it very inefficient, the acids are very harmful. They are naturally corrosive, dangerous to work with and must be neutralised before they can be disposed of.

The ionic liquids developed by Scionix offer just as high a level of protection for metals and alloys, but they are much more energy efficient. Moreover they are wholly biodegradable, non-toxic, non-flammable and non-corrosive.

Dr Khalid Shukri, director of Scionix, calculates that the new technology could cut energy bills for electropolishers by at least 50 per cent, which for an average sized plant equates to £50,000 per year. He said: "The current metal polishing industry has not changed since its inception and the basic idea of using acids to polish the surface is still the norm today. This new technology will completely revolutionise the metal finishing industry. There is a massive need for green technology, especially as environmental legislation is becoming stricter and companies are being forced to look for more sustainable alternatives."

Judges said this entry represented: "A significantly more energy efficient approach to an energy intensive process that also uses less chemicals, reduces costs and achieves a better end-product." Eva Eisenschimmel, Chief Operating Officer at EDF Energy, said: "One of our ambitions is to



strike the right balance between our business operations and the environment, which is why we are delighted to support these awards. "Recent reports on climate change show that businesses, as well as individuals, have a responsibility to do our bit for future generations, and the National Energy Efficiency Awards offer thanks and congratulations to those who have really made a difference."

These are the first National Energy Efficiency Awards which were launched to recognise good practice in this increasingly important area. The awards highlight the importance of energy efficiency in combating climate change and increase the take up of energy efficiency measures among business, government and consumers.

Supported by DEFRA, the awards have been presented for successful implementation of innovative, cost-effective and transferable energy efficiency measures across a number of categories. The call for entries was launched in the spring and the response was overwhelming with more than 150 high quality entries received across all the awards.

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Notes to Editors:

Scionix

Scionix Limited is a Joint Venture between Genacys Ltd (subsidiary of Whyte Group Ltd) and the University of Leicester. The company was set-up in 1999 to commercialise the industrial use of a novel class of solvent systems. Scionix is developing business in several areas including metal plating, metal polishing, ore refinery, biocatalysis, cleaning and synthesis.

These solvents, which are known as Ionic Liquids are in effect room temperature salt melts and are highly polar. Among many of their idiosyncrasies is the fact that they do not exhibit a vapour pressure ie they do not evaporate at room temperature. Furthermore, due to their polarity and ability to complex ions, they also solubilise compounds and salts which normally would only dissolve in highly corrosive or caustic aqueous solutions. These revolutionary solvents are not only cheap to produce and store - but they are also unreactive to air and moisture. www.scionix.co.uk