

# Press Release



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Covestro AG  
Communications  
51365 Leverkusen  
Germany

Contact  
Sara Bartlett  
Telephone  
07787 571020  
Email  
sara@sarabartlett.co.uk

DIP 2021 winner announced

## University student creates solution to universal problem of pesticide spray drift

A student from Brunel university has claimed top prize in the 2021 Design Innovation in Plastics (DIP) competition, with a product which will help reduce pesticide spray drift.

Pol Blanch designed his product to help people in the developing world, after being inspired by his interest in agriculture and the rural issue of how to apply pesticides safely to vital crops.

The product, D-Shield, is a semi-translucent, foldable shield that minimises spray drift, blocking pesticides from drifting during application. The shield, made from low density, heat resistant polypropylene, is designed to be carried by individuals using backpack sprayers, as is often the case in developing countries, where plots are smaller and the expense of agricultural machinery is prohibitive.

D-Shield was judged to be outstanding in its design and application, as well as addressing a fundamental problem in the environment, in line with the competition's 2021 theme of 'Design for a Natural World'.

Chairman of judges, Richard Brown, said: "Pol applied design thinking and conducted extensive research to find a cost-effective solution to a universal problem that threatens both our society and wildlife across the world. His research recognises the scale of the problem and how pesticide overspray damages the natural environment. His product is well designed, and we believe that with some refinement, it is good enough to be commercialised."

A delighted Pol Blanch said: "I have worked very hard to create this product and am delighted it has received such a positive response. The Design

Innovation in Plastics competition has helped instil the value of sustainable design. It has been really rewarding to take a disposable product category and create a reusable solution – this is a trend I would love to continue in my future career.”

DIP is supported by the Institute of Materials Minerals and Mining, and the Worshipful Company of Horners, and headline sponsored by polymers manufacturer, [Covestro](#). DIP is unique in that it offers an industry placement to all six finalists with one of the competition sponsors, Brightworks, Innovate Product Design, PDD and RJG Technologies, as well as cash prizes.

In second place was *Christopher Farrell*, from Technological University Dublin, who designed ‘ClearWater’, a hand held, user-friendly water quality device to test for the presence of nitrates, phosphates and sulphates in open water; while in third came *Finlay McEwan*, Glasgow School of Art, with Equipoise, a reusable plastic gas canister for outdoor cooking, with a cleverly designed stand for stability on rough terrain.

Highly commended prizes go to *Euan Gibson-Smith* – Glasgow School of Art, *Pradip Gurung* – Brunel University, and *Andrei Petrar* - London South Bank University.

Richard Brown added: “We’d like to congratulate all the finalists for the exceptionally high standard of their designs and presentations. It was clear they had all researched their solutions to the brief very thoroughly. They are a very talented group, and it made the task of selecting the winner very challenging!”

Pol Blanch has beaten an original entry of more than 150 students from all over the UK and Ireland to win the top prize of a trophy and £1,000; a placement with a DIP sponsor and an invitation to the Lord Mayor’s Banquet as a guest of the Worshipful Company of Horners.

#### **The final results are:**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> Pol Blanch – Brunel University**

*D-Shield*: a semi-translucent foldable shield that minimises spray drift, blocking pesticides from drifting during application.

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> Christopher Farrell – Technological University Dublin**

*ClearWater*: a handheld water quality testing device for the presence of chemicals in water, due to run-off from land, providing on the spot testing for several chemicals in one go.

##### **3<sup>rd</sup> Finlay McEwan – Glasgow School of Art**

*Equipoise*: a reusable plastic gas canister for outdoor cooking, with a stand designed for stability on rough terrain.

**Highly Commended:**

**Euan Gibson-Smith – Glasgow School of Art**

*ReCreate*: a monthly educational service enabling children aged 7-11 to convert plastic waste into recyclable outdoor products.

**Pradip Gurung – Brunel University**

*Stratus*: a wildlife collar specially designed to prevent illegal poaching of big cats.

**Andrei Petrar – London South Bank University**

*AER Drone*: a fully autonomous drone which can be deployed in an emergency to alert rescue services.

**Notes to editors**

1. Established in 1985, **Design Innovation in Plastics** is the longest running student plastics design award in Europe. For more information visit [www.designinnovationplastics.org](http://www.designinnovationplastics.org)
2. **The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)** is a major UK engineering institution and is the professional body for the advancement of materials, minerals and mining to governments, industry, academia, the public and the professions. For more information visit [www.iom3.org](http://www.iom3.org)
3. **The Worshipful Company of Horners** is one of the oldest livery companies in the City of London and was formed to regulate the horn-working trade. In 1943 it adopted its modern equivalent, the plastics industry. For more information visit [www.horners.org.uk](http://www.horners.org.uk)

**About Covestro:**

With 2020 sales of EUR 10.7 billion, Covestro is among the world's leading polymer companies. Business activities are focused on the manufacture of high-tech polymer materials and the development of innovative, sustainable solutions for products used in many areas of daily life. Covestro is gearing itself completely to the circular economy. The company's main customers are from the automotive and transportation; construction; furniture and wood processing; and electrical, electronics, and household appliances industries. Other sectors include sports and leisure, cosmetics, health, and the chemical industry itself.

Covestro has 33 production sites worldwide and employs approximately 16,500 people (calculated as full-time equivalents) as of the end of 2020.

**Forward-looking statements**

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Other competition sponsors:

- **Brightworks:** an award-winning UK product design and development consultancy dedicated to helping other companies develop the best products for their customers, their markets and their brands
- **Innovate Product Design:** specialises in helping individuals to protect, develop and commercialise their new product ideas and inventions
- **PDD:** provides integrated design and innovation skills, working with organisations worldwide to develop novel products, services and business processes that drive revenues and create competitive advantage
- **RJG Technologies:** an independent, non-biased company offering injection moulding industry support, training and advisory services
- **Media partners:** British Plastics and Rubber, Materials World, Mould Technology