



Sunlabob provides efficient solar panels to bring energy to rural families.

Sunlabob reaches finals of Ashden Awards

□ KHONESAVANH LATSAPHAO

SUNLABOB Renewable Energy Company is one of the finalists selected for leading green energy awards in London, the United Kingdom, company director Mr Saleumphon Vongsakhamphoui said yesterday.

The Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy has selected 10 renewable energy

pioneers from across the globe to enter the final stage of the competition.

The company from Laos will compete with contenders from Bangladesh, China, Ghana, India, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines and Tanzania, for five awards and more than 200,000 pounds in prize money earmarked to help project expansion and replication in other communities both locally and

nationwide.

All the finalists were selected because they stand out as inspiring examples of how providing local sustainable energy solutions to reduce global carbon emissions can also reap tremendous social and economic rewards for local communities around the world.

"We are hopeful we will win the award, because our solar power systems are high

quality," Mr Saleumphon said.

He said that the finalists will be in London next month for the last stage of the judging process.

With pioneering projects from Sunlabob, the Lao PDR has been selected to compete in the world's leading green energy awards with prizes presented by former US Vice President Mr AI Gore.

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Energy Company, a solar business based in urban and remote areas of Laos, has developed an innovative and commercially viable business model which provides high-quality solar energy systems to the rural poor at a price they can

afford, Mr Saleumphon said.

High up-front costs often prevent people from opting for solar energy. Sunlabob has addressed this by providing a service which rents out solar panels at prices that start lower than the cost of kerosene.

This commercial approach works because Sunlabob uses high quality components to ensure reliability and places a strong emphasis on customer support and training local entrepreneurs to maintain the systems, Mr Saleumphon said.