



Awards Dinner



HIGH ACHIEVERS

WINNERS AND HIGHLY COMMENDED IN THE 2017 DEALS OF THE YEAR AWARDS REFLECT A COMMITMENT TO REACHING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

Words: Sharon Newell / Photography: Carol Moir

Italian telecommunications company Wind Tre was announced overall winner at the 2017 *Treasurer's Deals of the Year Awards* dinner held on 1 February, in front of an audience of 150 of treasury's most talented, for an ambitious refinancing of its entire debt and capital structure. The now-famously competitive team awards saw Unilever return from its 2013 triumph to take EMEA team of the year, with Reckitt Benckiser and National Express winning Large and Small UK Team of the Year respectively.

Caroline Stockmann, ACT chief executive, and John Feeney, managing director, head of global corporates at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, lead sponsor and long-standing supporter of the ACT, welcomed guests. Senior treasury and finance representatives from corporates across Europe and from as far as West Africa had come to the Grade II listed Banking Hall, Cornhill, for a fantastic evening celebrating excellence in the profession.

The night marked the 21st year of the ACT recognising the outstanding achievements of corporate treasurers and their teams and organisations. They have shown innovation and excellence across the treasury spectrum and the highest professional standards that are at the heart of the ACT's values and its Royal Charter.

These are something that speaker Stuart Rock, business editor, writer and co-founder of World Class Britain, highlighted in his speech. For the past 200 years, Rock said, Britain has been a world leader in the development of professional standards, a concept that owes much to the Royal Charter. The real value of the Royal Charter, he opined, is that it keeps a professional institute focused on its core charter responsibilities, which, in turn,

Clockwise from above left: ACT Future Leaders' special recognition award winner Fatou Toure, African Guarantee Fund; guests entering the Banking Hall for dinner; bonds above £750m and overall winner Wind Tre with ACT chief executive Caroline Stockmann; Emerging Treasurer winner David Plimmer, National Express; John Feeney, managing director, head of global corporates at Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking; the awards in progress

builds and consolidates a profession's status in society. Chartered status is a mark of professional excellence that has legitimacy across the world. Excellence was represented in abundance by all the award winners on the night, many of whom are ACT members – holders of, or studying for, our professional treasury qualifications – or ACT CPD-accredited employers. Success and standards go hand in hand.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITION

The outstanding treasury teams nominated in the 2017 awards managed to secure more than £200bn in funding between them, executed against a backdrop of uncertainty, digital disruption and an ever-changing technological landscape – and, of course, Brexit negotiations. The 170-plus nominations ranged from blockbuster deals – the classic jumbo investment-grade issuance to unrated emerging-market deals, and everything in between. What stood out was the ability of the teams to execute all facets of major transactions while maintaining the quality of their day-to-day roles.

The major theme this year was the range of areas in which treasury is being asked to provide expertise and financial leadership, something that ties in with our annual survey, *The Business of Treasury*. Treasurers play a key role in their companies' success amid an often-bewildering landscape with frequent new demands. A number of this year's nominations illustrated the extent to which they are taking a proactive approach and shaping, as well as responding to, organisational strategy.

This year, we adjusted some of the values in the awards to reflect changes in markets and market capitalisations, and broadened the geographic

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range of nominations to cover EMEA. This saw some interesting entries from across the region, including MTN Nigeria Communications, winner of the loans below £750m award, which negotiated currency and multijurisdictional challenges to secure \$329m in largely US-dollar-denominated financing to fund equipment upgrades. Highly commended in this category was Kenyan solar energy provider M-KOPA, which secured \$80m in receivables financing to help finance its pay-as-you-go installations in East Africa.

We congratulated our second Emerging Treasurer of the Year, National Express's David Plimmer, who captured the judges' attention for his consistent desire to find better ways of working. We also presented an additional accolade, the ACT Future Leaders' special recognition award to Fatou Toure, of African Guarantee Fund, who stood out to both the ACT Future Leaders' chair and the ACT chief executive, not just for her professional achievements, but also her relationship-building skills – an important part of what makes for a well-rounded and successful treasury professional today.

This year, we were delighted to champion a new Green Finance award category, sponsored by BBVA, and shine a light on this important area of future finance. As Stockmann said: "Those companies embracing Green Finance are not only helping to assure us all of a future, but they understand there is a solid business case backing their approach." Congratulations to all those who were nominated for the green finance award this year and to our winner, Anglian Water – we hope for many more in the future.

For full details of the 2017 winners, visit www.treasurers.org/awards/2017/winners 🍷