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2014 edition of UN-Water 'Water for Life' Best Practices Award goes to India and Singapore

Category 1 has been awarded to a project focusing on policy research in co-management of energy and groundwater in India. Category 2 has been awarded to a project focusing on wide-scale implementation and public engagement plan of reclaimed water in Singapore.

21 March 2014. Tokyo, Japan – The prize has been awarded during the official UN ceremony of World Water Day 2014 taking place at UNU Headquarters, Tokyo, Japan.

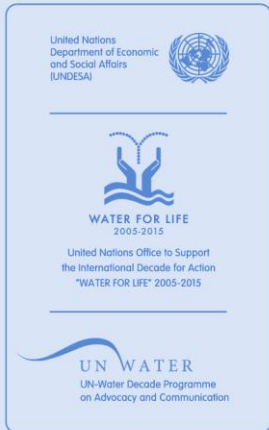
The purpose of the 'Water for Life' UN-Water Best Practices Award is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015 through recognition of outstanding best practices that can ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources and contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed goals and targets contained in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

"The UN-Water 'Water for Life' Best Practices Award is an important prize as it recognizes sustainable practices of water resources. Our future is highly dependent on our ability to manage our resources and at the same time educate and raise awareness around them", said Mr. Jarraud, Chair of UN-Water. "The winners this year are excellent examples of two organizations that tackle future challenges in a sustainable way".

The prize is awarded yearly in two categories: Category 1 is awarded for 'best water management practices' and Category 2 for 'best participatory, communication, awareness-raising and education practices'. Each year special emphasis is given to the theme selected for World Water Day. In 2014 the focus is on **'Water and Energy.'**

The Secretariat, ensured by the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC), has received applications from Africa (15%), Asia (26%), Europe (24%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (35%).

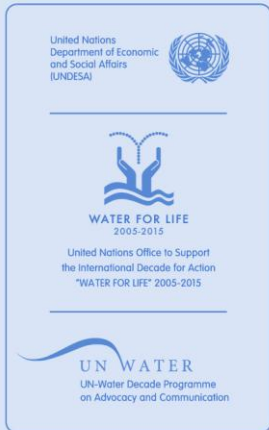
Category 1, best water management practices, has been awarded to a project based across agricultural India, **The International Water Management Institute (IWMI)-Tata Water Policy Programme (ITP)**. In the past, a lack of communication and research in regards to water



management in agricultural India has led to a paradoxical situation where in regions with rapidly depleting groundwater, farmers get free or highly subsidized power supply while in regions with abundant groundwater resources, farmers tend to economize on irrigation due to expensive diesel. As a result, water scarce India ends up exporting 'virtual water' to water abundant India. Examples like this can be attributed to the fact that, while there is a lot of potentially useful scientific research being conducted in India, it often does not reach the policy makers. Thus, ITP tried to fill the gap between research and policy action by simultaneously engaging with scientists and policy makers. The jury decided to select this practice for 'directly tackling the socio-economic environmental challenges related to the improvement of the energy-irrigation nexus by engaging with various stakeholders and for its strong potential for replication'.

Category 2, best participatory, communication, awareness-raising and education practices, has been awarded to the '**NEWater programme**' in Singapore. At the time of independence in 1965, the city-state of Singapore was almost completely dependent on outside sources, with most of the population living in slums without a proper water supply, sanitation or adequate public transport. In the short term of 20 years, Singapore policy makers moved towards strengthening internal capacities and reducing its reliance on outside sources based on some of the best policy, planning, managerial, governance, education, science and technology focused approaches globally. NEWater is treated used water that has undergone stringent purification and treatment processes to reach an ultra-pure quality. While reclaiming used water is not a new concept, what is significant is the successful wide-scale implementation and public engagement plan of NEWater along with its participatory practices and public education programmes, which have allowed delivery of an exponentially successful service. Currently, NEWater can meet 30% of Singapore's daily water needs. The jury selected this practice 'for its strong social component and enduring partnerships in its manifold and remarkable water management practices contributing to Singapore's water and energy sustainability'.

Finalist candidates in **category 1** include the 2nd ranked Participatory Groundwater Management in Andhra Pradesh Community Based Tank Management Project, India, which focuses on stakeholder participation and involving farmers in water management; and the 3rd ranked project 'Sustainable Southeast', in the Canary Islands, Spain, which applies



innovative approaches in combining renewable energy sources with wastewater management systems.

In **category 2**, finalist candidates include the 2nd ranked Safe Water and AIDS Project, Kenya, which aims to improve the health and socio-economic status of Kenyan people through disease prevention and socio-economic empowerment as well as the quality of life of the vulnerable in the community by building their capacities and supporting them to develop profitable health oriented micro-enterprises; and the 3rd ranked 'Pan in the Van' WASH, India, an onsite capacity building and awareness generation project, using camps which provided opportunities for about 12,000 women and girls to actively learn and participate in the improvement of the sanitary status of their community, as well as capacitate 100 workers, 700 school teachers and 40,000 school children.

"One of the merits of the winning projects is how they have been able to integrate and scale-up practices to be able to improve access, efficiency and sustainability in water and energy and to do so in partnership with local and national actors" said Josefina Maestu, Director of the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication.

More information on the award:

<http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/waterforlifeaward.shtml>

***The Water for Life Decade 2005-2015.** The primary goal of the 'Water for Life' Decade is to promote efforts to fulfill international commitments on water-related issues by 2015. These commitments include the Millennium Development Goal to reduce by half the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2015, and to stop unsustainable exploitation of water resources.*

www.un.org/waterforlifedecade

***The United Nations Office to support the International Decade for Action 'Water for Life' 2005-2015 based in Zaragoza, Spain, implements the UN-Water Decade Programme on Advocacy and Communication (UNW-DPAC).** UNW-DPAC facilitates and implements communication, information and awareness-raising activities in the framework of the 'Water for Life' Decade. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) hosts and leads the Office*

www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/unwdpac.shtml

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