



Press Release

WINNERS OF THE WATER CHANGEMAKER INNOVATIONS AWARD 2023 ANNOUNCED

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2nd December 2023

The Water Changemaker Innovation Awards 2023 has announced the winners of the competition; a global initiative that recognizes high-level commitment and leadership for climate-resilient water investments. The Awards also showcase the most promising climate-resilient innovations with the greatest potential for scale, replication, and further investment to support a water-secure world.

H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana and Chair of the Awards announced the three winners during the launch of the Africa Water Investment Action Plan at a side event at the ongoing COP28 conference, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The winners are as follows:

Inclusion Award: Virtual Irrigation Academy from Australia

The company developed innovative technology that helps small-scale farmers who are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The company developed a soil water sensor – buried in the ground and attached to a light – that shows blue when the plants have plenty of water, green when things are ok and red when they need a drink. The sensor is already in use across 20 countries, including in Africa.

Scalability Award: NXTLVL Water Technology INC from Philippines

NXTLVL Water technology solves the water scarcity problem in island and coastal communities in the Philippines, a nation of over 2000 inhabited islands, by using a fully off-grid renewable desalination solution. NXTLVL's desalination is simple to install harsh weather resilient and requires minimal maintenance.

Innovation Award: CAST Co., Ltd. From South Korea

CAST provides eco-friendly ozone and radical sterilization solutions that only use air and oxygen to disinfect food and water. This innovative technology uses a low-temperature microplasma technology that helps reduce carbon emissions.

The three winners will be supported to access investment, finance, and technical assistance of at least Euros 100,000 for acceleration of their innovative business models and preparation for successful scaling up and replication.

H.E Dr. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana and Chair of the Awards said, "Selected innovations will be matched with investors to scale up their innovations. As Chair of the Global Water Changemaker Awards, I am committed to policies and strategies that promote the most promising climate-resilient innovations with the greatest potential for scale and replication I am also pleased to confer Ms Sawyer Anderson of Water Works, USA, the Chair's Innovation, Diversity, and Inclusion Award for mobilizing funding for providing water to rural areas at a young age of 14. Congratulations to the winners".

A celebratory event will be held on December 11, 13:00 – 14:00 Dubai time, on the sidelines of COP28 where the innovations that have matched with investors for potential investments will be announced. The event will be held at the Water Pavilion. Winners of the Youth Changemaker Awards will also be showcased during that event.



Jaehyang So, Chair of the Technical Committee of Global Water Partnership, and the Jury Chair of the Water Changemaker Awards congratulated the winners, indicating that the competition received brilliant submissions that addressed the water and sanitation challenges ranging from clean water access, improving quality and efficiency and conservation efforts to cutting-edge technologies and nature-based solutions.

The Jury expressed that it was not easy to sieve through the 300 applications that the competition received worldwide, to identify these three winners. The competition has shown that innovators are committed to making a meaningful impact to combat climate change and ensure water and sanitation security in places worldwide that lack these. They said the winning innovations are creative, unique and have the potential for scalability and replication.

“We also thank our partners, including Venture funds and investors that partnered with Water Changemakers Awards to review the submissions. It is gratifying that funds have identified potential investments in selected finalists. We wish these matched finalists fruitful discussions and successful continued growth,” explained Jaehyang So.

Prior to the announcement, on 28 and 29 November 2023, the top 30 finalists of the competition participated in a bootcamp that brought on renowned speakers on a range of topics including *Innovations in Water and Climate leadership, crafting a compelling value proposition and investor perspectives on water and climate innovations*. The participants also had an opportunity to join a mentorship session with highly skilled global industry experts.

The Water Changemaker Awards are convened by the Continental Africa Water Investment Programme, K-water, the World Bank and the Global Water Partnership.

Various partners are also supporting the awards including Africa Renaissance Partners, Ambo Ventures, Saudi Water Partnership Company, Kaist Venture Investment Holdings, Deutsch Kasachische Universität (German Kazakh University), HIMangel, K-Fund, KAIST Ventures, Mercy Corps Ventures, Yonsei University, WBCSD, Youth Water Network, South South North, Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), Wilo and WWF.

The Water Changemaker Innovation Awards 2023 was officially launched during the largest gathering on water in Asia, the International Asian Water Week in South Korea on 6 July 2023 where the keynote address was delivered by Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations, who said climate resilient innovations with potential for scale and replication can expedite our progress by providing governments with technologies and approaches that were not only previously unavailable, but that also have the potential to create sustainable jobs and improve livelihoods.

To explore more about the winners and their innovations, visit the official Water Changemaker Awards website: waterchangemakers.org.

The Water Changemakers Secretariat and its partners congratulate the winners. The competition was highly competitive, featuring excellent submissions from around the world. The Changemakers Secretariat and its partners eagerly anticipate witnessing the winners' expansion and continued support for a water-secured world.

[For media interviews:](#)

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Editor's Note: About the Water Changemakers 2023 Awards

Water Changemakers 2023 is a global challenge to recognize high-level commitment and leadership for climate-resilient water investments and showcase the most promising climate-resilient innovations with the greatest potential for scale, replication, and further investment to support a water-secure world. The Water Changemaker Awards include:

- (a) Presidential Global Water Changemaker Award - for demonstrated leadership and commitment
- (b) Innovation Water Changemaker Award- for the most promising climate innovations
- (c) Youth Water Changemaker Award -for demonstrating commitment to social change.

Recipients of the Presidential Global Changemaker Awards are identified by the Changemakers jury and awarded at a global UN event.

Recipients of the Innovation Water Changemaker Award are identified through a global competition while recipients of the Youth Changemaker Awards are identified through independently managed competitions at the regional level by GWP regions, as well as WMO and Water Youth Network at the global level for integrated drought and flood management.

The core partners running the Water Changemaker Awards 2023 include:

- Global Water Partnership
- Korea Water Resources Corporation (K-Water)
- The World Bank Group
- Continental Africa Water Investment Programme

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