PRESS RELEASE

30 September 2023

Saudi Arabia honors winners of Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination

Innovators from more than 27 countries competed to win $10 million.

His Excellency Engineer Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen AlFadley,

the Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia, bestowed honors upon the recipients of the prestigious Global Prize for Innovation in Desalination on Saturday. Among these distinguished individuals, Syed Shah from Aqua Membranes, USA, was awarded the grand prize for his groundbreaking project entitled "Revolutionizing Reverse Osmosis through 3-D Printed Spacers."

The most promising technologies in water desalination have been awarded with the Global Prize Innovation in Desalination (GPID)

The GPID awards were presented in the presence of H.E. Eng. Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia (MEWA) and H.E. Eng. Abdullah Ibrahim Al Abdulkarim, Governor of the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC) at Innovation Drive Desalination event (Three days of insights, presentations, and networking to advance water solutions), in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

- The Grand Prize Winner is Aqua Membranes (USA) and the applicant is Ben Shultz.
- The most promising technology in increasing Green Field Accessibility is Mega Vessels Water (USA) and the applicant is Hany Said.
- The most promising technology in increasing Brown Field Accessibility is Active Membranes (USA) and the applicant is Arian Edalat.
- The most promising technology in reducing Energy Consumpion while promoting Decarbonization is Energy Recovery (USA) and the applicant is Amy Davis.
- The most promising technology in reducing Chemical & Consumables is Harmony Desalting (USA) and the applicant is Quantum Wei
- The most promising technology in promoting applications of desalination that go Beyond Water is the Institute on Membrane Technology, National Research Council (Italy) and the applicant is Alberto Figoli.
- The most promising technology in reducing Environmental Impact is Desolenator (Netherlands) and the applicant is William Janssen.

In 2023, the GPID has also awarded some personalities in the desalination world with special mentions for their extraordinary impacts resulting from regulatory changes (policy makers):

- George Brik, CEO & Co-Founder, HydroVolta

- Alejandro Sturniolo, Vice President of Marketing and Sustainability, H2O Innovation
- Domingo Zarzo, Innovation and Strategic Projects Manager, Sacyr Water

The winners of the Global Prize Innovation in Desalination (GPID) have been selected among the most important research centers, the most promising start-ups, and some research centers of large multinational companies with the help of a high-level International Jury

After a stakeholder engagement activity that lasted from January 2023 to June 2023 and led to the GPID being presented at the most important conferences on desalination, more than one hundred applications were collected representing the most important research centers, the most promising start-ups, and some research centers of large multinational companies. The collected nominations were processed by a top-notch international jury that included: Tariq Alghaffari, Executive Director, Water Technologies Innovation, Institute & Research Advancement (WTIIRA); Abdulaziz Almalik, Deputy Minister for Research & Innovation, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (MEWA); Avent Bezuidenhoudt, CEO, Earth Capital; Miriam Brusilovsky, Board Director, Asociación Latinoamericana de Desalación y Reúso del Agua (ALADYR); Eva Jalon, Director General, SACYR Water; In S. Kim, Professor of Environmental Engineering, Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology; Mariam Nouh, VP Future Economies, KACST; Tom Pankratz, Consultant, GWI; Karen Stummeyer, Project Director, Fitchner; Ben Tam, CEO, Isle Utilities; John Tonne, Executive Director, American Membrane Technology Association (AMTA); Rong Wang, Full Professor and President's Chair in Civil and Environmental Engineering, NTU Singapore, Singapore Membrane Technology Center.

The mission of the GPID is to advance the research and development of innovative solutions in water desalination at the international level to address the critical global issue of water scarcity.

The Global Prize Innovation in Desalination is committed to enhancing the availability, affordability, and accessibility of water for all. At present, %26 of the world's population resides in water-stressed regions and faces challenges in accessing safe drinking water.In recent years, there has been a %30 increase in the number and duration of drought crises, with %15 of natural disasters being associated with drought. The GPID seeks to address these pressing issues by recognizing innovative solutions in the field of water desalination and promoting advancements in the research of related technologies and the deployment of innovative business models.

For more information on The Global Prize Innovation in Desalination and to apply, please visit the website at https://www.innovatedesal.org/.

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With approximately 15,670 scientific papers and more than 40 thousand patents published in the field of desalination and water technologies over the last five years, the potential for innovation and technological advancement is vast. The GPID aims to promote and support the diffusion of these innovative solutions and create positive impacts and benefits for all of humanity. By recognizing and supporting groundbreaking achievements in the field of water desalination, the GPID seeks to alleviate water stress and foster sustainability worldwide.

These esteemed winners were chosen from a competitive pool of 105 participants representing twenty-seven countries, including innovators from research institutions, universities, entrepreneurs, and professionals employed in the global water desalination industry.

The minister emphasized the prizes' alignment with the comprehensive water strategy, which integrates prevailing trends, policies, legislation, and practices within the water sector.

H.E. Eng. AlAbdulkariem commended the participants of the award competition and reaffirmed SWCC's unwavering commitment to the sustainability of water resources. The governor highlighted the corporation's prominent position as the world's largest water producer, delivering a staggering 11.5 million cubic meters per day. He underscored the significance of collaboration, technical knowledge exchange, innovation, research and development, and prioritizing funding for pivotal projects to ensure the sustainability of water resources and enhance global access.

With a total value of $10 million, the prizes specifically focused on environmental aspects of the desalination industry, energy consumption reduction, cost efficiency, innovative technology utilization, business model transformation, and future analytical studies pertaining to innovation.

The awarded innovations were recognized as exemplifying achievements that benefit humanity and reflect SWCC's vision of conforming to international standards and innovative technology.

The announcement of these awards aligned seamlessly with SWCC's staunch support for this initiative, as well as its encouragement for both national and international companies to partake, particularly in the construction of large-scale desalination plants.

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