



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

[Source of Innovation: Accelerating SDG 6]

[Friday, March 24, 6:00-8:15 pm (ET), Le Skyroom, FIAF, 22 E 60th St, New York, NY 10022]

Organized by: [Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of the Government of Switzerland, Government of Israel, Ministry of Environment of the Government of South Korea, Fundación FEMSA and Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).]

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Innovation requires the opening of spaces for dialogue and exchange, so that both traditional (ie, service providers and regulators) and non-traditional actors (ie, entrepreneurs and innovators) can interact, learn, collaborate, and contribute to the adoption of innovative solutions to ensure the achievement of the SDG6. In these spaces, the governments play a fundamental role by creating and implementing policies, programs, and regulations that create favorable conditions to scale-up innovations and reach vulnerable populations. This conference and showcase highlighted the main points of the side event “Source of Innovation: Accelerating SDG 6”, which was held inside the UN’s headquarters. It also provided an opportunity for participants to network.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the Water Action Agenda database)

Under UN DESA consideration, soon to be published.

Source of Innovation is an alliance of the IDB Group with external partners to promote the development and adoption of innovative solutions in the water, sanitation, and solid waste sector to achieve smart, inclusive, and sustainable services, with a focus on service providers in Latin America and the Caribbean: <https://www.iadb.org/en/sector/source-innovation>

The commitment of the Source of Innovation alliance and its partners to achieve SDG 6 is to promote innovation as an accelerator towards better services and to continue carrying out different initiatives that identify and support the transformation of the WASH sector in Latin America and the Caribbean for the next five (5) years. This will be achieved through activities

such as: the e-Hackathon for young people to develop innovative ideas to address gaps in the WASH sector (i.e. sanitation in informal settlements, water services in dispersed rural areas), the Ideas in Action awards that recognize service operating companies, and the IDB-FEMSA Awards for entrepreneurs and innovative companies, to promote cooperation for water and tangible actions for the coming years in the sector.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Water is the most valuable commodity, and we have to save it and invest in innovation to make it more accessible and equitable .
- Rural and indigenous populations suffer the most from lack of access to water and sanitation.
- Innovation is only possible through partnerships across different sectors and actors.
- The IDB-FEMSA Innovation 2023 Awards competition was promoted. This award will seek to recognize the most innovative projects in sanitation in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Wayru, Tierra Grata, and EPMAPS are successful examples of key agents in an innovation ecosystem, and prove how the interactions with other agents have enabled them to scale.
- The Stockholm Junior Water Prize (SJWP) is another example of initiatives that identify and support innovation in the WASH sector. SIWI's SJWP, is a competition for students aged 15 to 20 from all over the world who have developed research projects that can help solve major water challenges. This prize has become a popular part of World Water Week (WWW), whose thematic scope for 2023 "Seed of Change: Innovative Solutions for a Water-Wise World" will provide a global platform to discuss ideas, innovations, and governance to improve water management to tackle the water crisis and climate change, while reducing inequality and poverty.
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Meteorological Organization to improve access to quality data, information and technical capacity.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Governments should implement specific and targeted incentive mechanisms to foster innovation.
- We need to unify forces to reach more people who do not have access to water and sanitation.
- Innovation cannot stop at the idea phase; it must be supported through an active ecosystem. Collaboration and financial resources help scale innovative projects throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.