EVENT SNAPSHOT

ADB

URBAN CLIMATE
CHANGE RESILIENCE
TRUST FUND
Asian Development Bank

Catalyzing Innovations and Digitization for Safe, Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Water Management

LAUNCH OF E-MARKETPLACE AND PUBLICATIONS

15–19 March 2021

Image from the event website

EVENT DETAILS

Catalyzing Innovations and Digitization for Safe, Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Water Management
Launch of e-Marketplace and Publications

15-19 March 2021 | Zoom
Organized by the South Asia Department (SARD), Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC), and Information Technology Department (ITD) of ADB

Opening Remarks: Shixin Chen, Vice President (Operations 1), ADB

Session Moderators (Opening and Closing)
• **Norio Saito,** Director, South Asia Department (SARD), ADB
• **Neeta Pokhrel**, SARD, ADB
• **Susann Roth**, Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department (SDCC), ADB

Opening Plenary – Panel Discussion
• **Kenichi Yokoyama**, Director General, SARD, ADB
• **Jong Jin Lee,** Korea Water Resources Corporation
• **Payden,** WHO Country Office, India
• **Shantanu Mitra,** Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom

Closing Plenary – Panel Discussion
• **Chrisoph Aubrecht,** European Space Agency
• **Brian Arbogast,** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
• **Annelise Avril,** Suez
• **Animesh Bhattacharya,** Government of West Bengal
• **Pradip Kalbar,** Indian Institute of Technology Bombay

Presentation
• **Dominic Mellor,** Private Sector Operations Department, ADB
• **Virinder Sharma,** SDCC, ADB

Closing Remarks
• **Takahiro Yasui,** Executive Director (for Japan), ADB
• **Kenichi Yokoyama,** Director General, SARD, ADB

ENHANCING COLLABORATION AND DIALOGUE TO SCALING-UP INNOVATION AND DIGITIZATION

" *Water management, whether for urban or rural areas, cannot be done without considering integrated solutions for basins, sanitation and wastewater, and tackling pollution in water bodies for assets, efficiency and utility management. That's why we emphasize the need for integrated approach.*

– Shixin Chen, Vice President (Operations 1), ADB

Held from March 15-19, the e-Marketplace has provided a dedicated platform to connect various sectors and showcase digital technology and best practices on products, tools and technologies for delivering smart, resilient, safe, and inclusive water management and services delivery.

The 5-day event featured an Opening, and Closing Plenary, and 52 virtual booths and Interactive Sessions.

Around 500 participants from 42 countries have registered for the entire event. They were from various sectors including the government, water services and management solutions providers, development professionals, academia, and the private sector from ADB's developing member countries (DMCs).

Opening Plenary | 15 March

Kicking-off the e-Marketplace was an opening plenary which focused on rural and bulk water services delivery. It showcased the West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project (WBDWSIP). UCCRTF under the ADB Urban Financing Partnership Facility and Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction also provided support to the project to make services inclusive, resilient and safe.

In the panel discussion, Shantanu Mitra of UK FCDO, one of the funding agencies of UCCRTF, stressed the need to scale up these innovative and smart technology with clear focus on enhancing the resilience of the poor and vulnerable.

Three publications supported under WBDWSIP were also launched at the opening plenary including the (i) Guidelines for Drinking Water Safety Planning for West Bengal; (ii) Water and Sanitation Plan for Brahmandiha GP in Bankura, West Bengal; and (iii) Measuring the Impact of West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project: A Baseline Study. These were developed in partnership with the government, various ADB departments, and external partners including WHO.

More than 250 participants from several countries attended the Opening Plenary.

Around
500 participants
from **42 countries**
have registered in the
e-Marketplace

Catalyzing Innovations and Digitization for Safe, Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Water Management

LAUNCH OF **E-MARKETPLACE**
15–19 March 2021

Image from the event website

Interactive Sessions | 15-19 March

Virtual booths of 52 digital innovations from 58 solution providers from 16 countries were showcased in the 5-day event. These digital solutions, which range from local to international level, offer comprehensive solutions covering many aspects of water management including basins, utilities, assets, efficiency, and sanitation.

Each virtual booth held an interactive Zoom session where organizations promoted their solutions to water issues and answered questions from the participants. The booths will remain open until 31 March 2021, 5:00 p.m. Manila time. Visit here.

Closing Plenary | 19 March

Capping off the week-long event was a Closing Plenary which provided a snapshot of the knowledge, innovations and insights uncovered during the Interactive Sessions. Experts from the European Space Agency, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Suez, Government of West Bengal, and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay have shared insights on next steps toward safe, sustainable, resilient and inclusive water management.

Two initiatives within ADB promoting digital solutions, including the ADB Ventures and Spatial Data Analysis Explorer (SPADE), were also presented in the Closing Plenary.

Norio Saito of SARD, ADB presented the next steps from the e-Marketplace which include the publication of a e-book in May 2021 featuring research and findings from the activity; and recommendations to continue collaboration and facilitate adoption of digital technologies in ADB's programming.

In his closing remarks, Kenichi Yokoyama, Director-General of SARD, ADB, emphasized that digital technologies are available, as demonstrated by the e-Marketplace. He encouraged stakeholders and partners to maximize these available solutions when developing and implementing initiatives.

The e-Marketplace has showcased
52 smart water solutions
from **58 organizations**

WATER AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESILIENCE LESSONS

" It is quite clear that the next generation of water systems will encompass digital technologies – from smart devices, to big data, to interoperability approaches. This has great potential to deliver huge benefits to communities for equality, reliability, resilience and sustainability.
– Shantanu Mitra, Senior Climate and Environment Adviser, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), United Kingdom

- **Water security, safety and resilience is fundamental to human health and well-being and underpins social and economic development.** As highlighted by the COVID-19, access to safe and reliable water is a vital and first line of defence against such pandemics.

- **Digitization is a key aspect of achieving resilience in water and sanitation management.** Digitizing water operations can enhance services and improve safety throughout the entire water cycle.

- **Digitization support evidence-based decision-making– providing deeper visibility into operational systems.** This facilitates real-time monitoring allowing matching of supply and demand; identification of asset failures; and deployment of appropriate solutions in a timely manner.

- **Basic technologies are available, but innovation is further needed to support application of these technologies in the urban and rural water systems.** The bigger challenge, which is scaling up, requires not only support to innovators, but also multi-stakeholder collaboration, and providing enabling environment towards public-private partnerships and ensuring sufficient access to finance from idea formation up to commercialization.

- **When applying these smart and innovative technologies, there must be a clear focus towards prioritizing poor and vulnerable communities.** Communities must be treated as active partners and designers in shaping up technology – thereby, contributing to empowerment of communities and achieving inclusion.

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