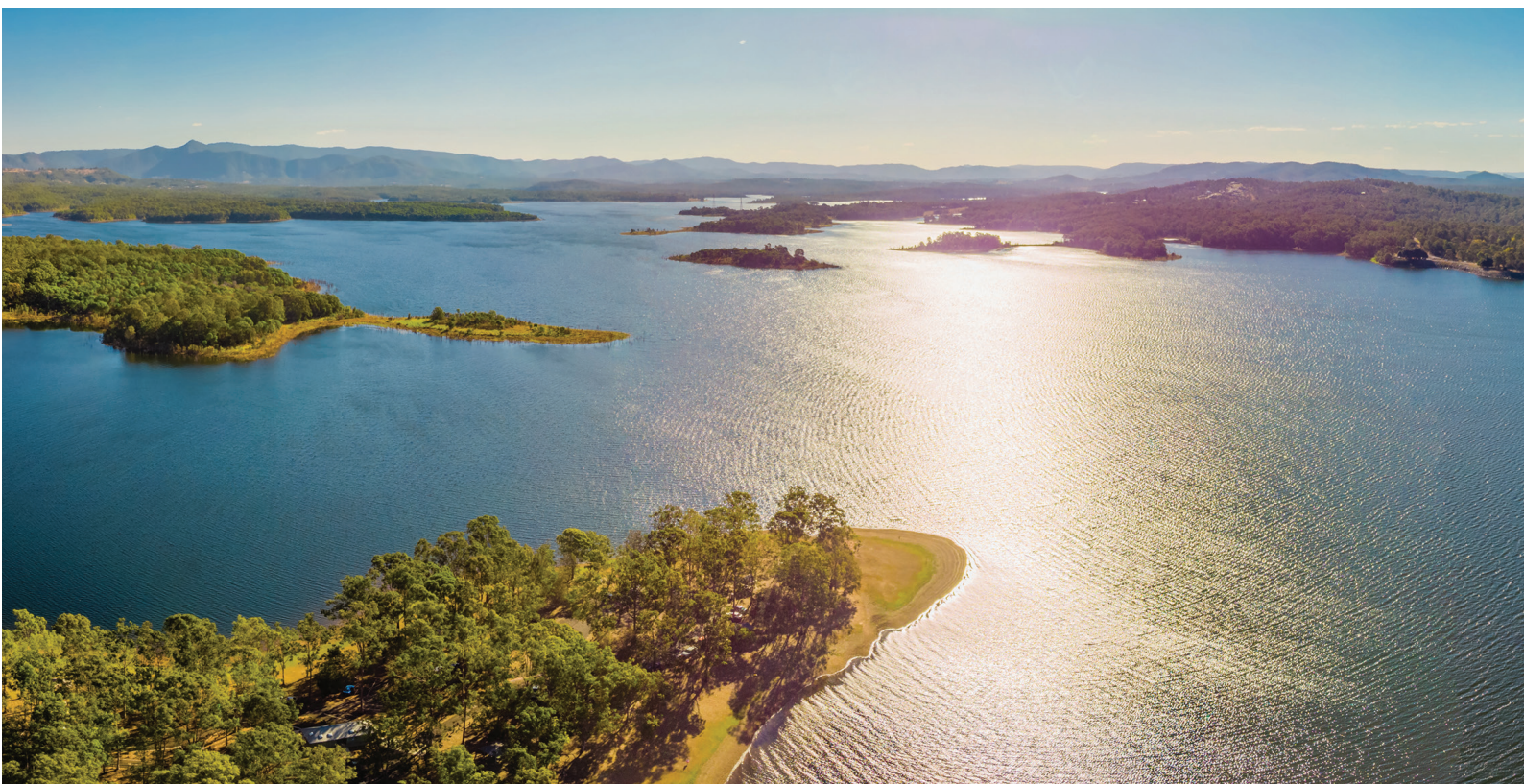




WATER
CHANGEMAKER
AWARDS

Water Changemaker Awards: 2025 and 2023



SCALING UP INNOVATIVE CLIMATE FINANCE AND
TECHNOLOGIES FOR A WATER-SECURE WORLD

H.E. Adv. Duma Boko, President of the Republic of Botswana and H.M. Mswati III, King of Eswatini present the Water Changemakers 2025 Presidential Awards during the G20 AU – AIP Africa Water Investment Summit

2025 Presidential Changemakers Award Recipients:



H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa
President
Republic of South Africa



H.R.H. Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud
Crown Prince & Prime Minister, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



H.M. King Letsie III
Kingdom of Lesotho



H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan
President
United Republic of Tanzania



H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
President – United Arab Emirates



H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye
President – Republic of Senegal

Presidential Awards were presented to the Recipients and their Representatives during the G20 AU – AIP Africa Water Investment Summit in Cape Town on 13 August 2025:



H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa
President - Republic of South Africa, Chair-G20



H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Alshaibani, Deputy Minister for Water, *on behalf of H.R.H. Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud*, Crown Prince, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia



Hon. Mhlomi Moleko, Minister of Natural Resources and Energy *on behalf of H.M. King Letsie III*, King of the Kingdom of Lesotho



H.E. James G. Bwana, High Commissioner of the United Republic of Tanzania *on behalf of H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan*, President of the United Republic of Tanzania



H.E. Sheikh Shakhboot bin Nahyan Al-Nahyan Minister of State *on behalf of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan*, President of the United Arab Emirates



H.E. Dr. Cheikh Tidiane Dièye Minister Water and Sanitation *on behalf of H.E. Bassirou Diomaye Faye*, President of the Republic of Senegal

1. Background

An estimated 3.6 billion people, nearly half the global population, live in areas that are potentially water-scarce at least one month per year. As the world's population reaches 9 billion, demand will require a 50 percent increase in agricultural production and a 15 percent increase in already-strained water withdrawals. Poor water quality means that much of the available water is not suitable for use. Climate change is disrupting weather patterns, leading to extreme weather events (both droughts and floods), unpredictable water availability, exacerbating water scarcity and further contaminating water supplies.

The world faces multiple, interrelated, and simultaneous transitions in food; cities; and energy. Energy and water are more interconnected than ever - significant amounts of water are needed in almost all energy generation processes. Conversely, the water sector needs energy to extract, treat and transport water. Both energy and water are used in the production of crops, including those used to generate energy through biofuels.

Seas, surface waters, and groundwater form a system that provides the foundation for life as well as for economy. This source-to-sea system is threatened by climate change. Good water governance is key for increasing the resilient of water societies to climate change.

Water scarcity has enormous knock-on impacts throughout the economy. Managing water is clearly a development and growth priority for countries. However, currently the progress on SDG 6 on clean water and sanitation is badly off track; this affects progress in achieving other water-related, such as SDG 1 on poverty, SDG 13 on climate resilience and SDG 14 on sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources. Progress needs to quadruple in order to meet the Global Goals. Governments are working hard to ensure water access to all the diverse stakeholders, public and private; however, quadrupling of momentum cannot happen from governments alone. Innovations that involve all stakeholders, public, private, and communities must be identified and scaled up to drive a momentum change for a water secure and climate resilient world. Promising climate innovations must be identified and nurtured to have significant impact on today's water challenges and lead to tomorrow's water-secure world.

2. Water Changemaker Awards 2023

What is it?

Water Changemaker Awards 2023 is a global initiative that aims to recognise 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. Water Changemaker Awards include: (a) Presidential Changemaker Award - for demonstrated leadership and commitment (b) Innovation Changemaker Award- for the most promising climate innovations.

Every USD \$1 invested returns at least USD \$7

A paradigm shift in water investments is required to access new sources of innovative finance. Investment in climate-resilient water security and sanitation has an economic return of USD \$7 for every USD \$ 1 invested. Investing in a water secure future now will realise human security, a healthy environment, amplify gender equality, health, energy, education, food security, and many other societal gains for this generation – and those to come.

Promising climate innovations exist, but many of them fail before reaching the scale at which they can make significant impact. Water Changemaker Awards 2023 seek proposals from those innovations that have already proven their business model by operating for at least 1 year.

Matchmaking 'supply and demand' of climate resilient innovations

Water Changemaker Awards will bring together the supply and demand for innovative finance with a special focus on climate resilient, blended public-private finance, and gender transformative approaches. The initiative promotes the most promising climate resilient innovations to enable them to access new and innovative finance sources from institutional investors, debt, equity, and others from private and public sources, to enable them to scale up.

Enhance investment opportunity for scaling up

Selected Water Changemakers will receive technical assistance and seed funding to scale up their innovations, and strengthen their business and investment case for investors.

Contribution to the UNFCCC's Resilience Frontiers¹

The Water Changemaker Awards contribute to Resilient Frontiers, an initiative of the United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change (UNFCCC) that 'reimagines our world beyond its current horizons, where in harmony with nature and each other, we harness the power of frontier technologies to enrich, rather than deplete, our environment and overall wellbeing'.

Mobilise high level political commitment and global leaders

The Water Changemaker Awards 2023 will recognise global leaders demonstrating high level political commitment and leadership for climate resilient water security. In Africa, this global initiative will contribute to the Mind the Gap – Invest in Water Campaign of the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa². Comprising current and former Heads of States and global leaders, the panel is developing actionable pathways for mobilising USD \$30 billion annually by 2030, to close the existing water investment gap in Africa through the implementation of the Continental Africa Water Investment Programmes, that was adopted by the African Union Heads of States in February 2021. Collaboration with other high level related water investment initiatives at Heads of States level will be pursued in South Asia, South East Asia, Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean.

3. Objectives and outcomes

OBJECTIVE

To identify and promote the most promising and innovative water and climate resilient solutions, specifically:

1. To identify and promote high level political and global leaders demonstrating commitment and leadership for scaling up climate resilient water investments.
2. To identify and scale-up innovative climate solutions.
3. To promote access to climate finance for innovators.
4. To promote collaboration among innovators, funders, and technical partners.

OUTCOMES

- Coalition of High-level political and global leaders demonstrating commitment and leadership for transforming climate resilient water investments created.
- Selected water and climate innovations, solutions, and access to climate finance scaled up.
- Enhanced collaboration among innovators through matchmaking of supply and demand
- Increased access to impact investments, offering investment opportunities, equity, strategic partnerships, and alliances with development impact and return on investments.

¹<https://resiliencefrontiers.org/about/>

²<https://aipwater.org/high-level-panel/>

4. How it works?

Recipients of the Presidential Changemaker Awards are identified by the global Water Changemakers jury and awarded at a global UN event. Recipients of the Innovation Changemaker Award are identified through a global competition. Recipients of the youth changemaker awards are identified through independently managed competitions at regional level by GWP regions, as well as WMO and Water Youth Network at global level for integrated drought and flood management.

CATEGORY

- (a) Presidential Changemakers Award
- (b) Innovation Changemaker Award
- (c) Youth Water Changemaker Award

THEMES

The Water Changemaker Awards will contribute to:

- Water solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals
- Climate resilience through water
- Transboundary water cooperation
- Private sector, gender equality, and youth empowerment.

PROPOSED TIMELINE

- **2 March 2023:** Presidential Changemakers Awards at UN Water Conference, New York, USA
- **4 July 2023:** Launch of Changemakers Asia, Singapore hosted by Social Innovation Park and Singapore's National Water Agency Public Utilities Board, PUB.
- **6 July 2023:** Global Launch of Changemakers, Hosted by K-Water, in Korea. Call for climate innovations opens.
- **September 2023:** Announcement of top 30 shortlisted applicants at UN SDG Summit, UN General Assembly (UNGA) New York, USA
- **November 2023:** Winners announced during COP 28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Water Changemaker Awards 2023 is an engagement that will take place over the course of 9 months, in various locations throughout the year. It is not only the ultimate winners that receive recognition, but the participation of the applicants to showcase the innovation developed around the world.

AWARDS

The Water Changemakers Awards 2023 contribute to GWP's climate resilience strategy (2020-2025) that aims to support more than 30 countries access climate finance and influence investments of more than €1 billion for climate-resilient water management and infrastructure founded on robust, inclusive, and effective water governance systems. Selected winners will be considered for the following categories:

- (i) **Global Leadership and commitment** – Special Presidential Recognition Award at a global event
- (ii) **Innovation on climate finance for water security:** Investment, finance, and technical assistance of at least Euros 100,000 for acceleration of innovative business models and preparation for successful scaling up and replication.

5. Who can submit?

Entities are eligible to enter the Innovation Changemaker Award if they have been operating for at least one year and are seeking to scale up on a successful business model.

- **What:** Innovative initiative should be about a business model involving water which has contributed to building resilience to climate change.
- **Who:** All organisations, entities, and individual as associated with the private and non-profit sector are eligible to submit their innovative changemaker initiative. Applicants need to be involved in the initiative described or have the agreement of those that are involved to submit. If you have more than one experience to share, you may - multiple submissions are welcome.
- **Where:** Innovations can be from anywhere in the world. Applicants are invited to join the GWP network, if they are not already a member.
- **When:** Innovation must have been in operation for at least one year.
- **Verification:** When a candidate submits their application, they must provide a contact in their country who can verify the existence of their organisation or group. The applicant will also need to provide proof of project impact, audited financial statements, team member profiles, Intellectual Property License (if available), and entity track record from previous ventures.

- **Exclusion:** Staff employed by GWPO or any of the GWP Regional Secretariats, or their direct relatives (partners, children, parents) are not eligible to take part in the Water Changemaker Awards, nor are members of GWP's Global Steering Committee or Global Technical Committee.
- **Languages:** Submissions are accepted in English, French, and Spanish. We do work, however, in English and we will therefore use publicly available online translation tools to convert non-English submissions into English

6. Our partners

Any or all of the partnership options can be met through a financial contribution to GWPO or in-kind contribution by the partner. The following partnerships opportunities are available:

- Sponsorship of 1 or more winners
- Sponsorship of 1 or more winners in an accelerator/incubator in the company/organisation to prepare it for investment
- Participation in Jury to evaluate applications
- Participation in outreach campaign to publicize the competition

7. Core partners

- Global Water Partnership
- Korea Water Resources Corporation (K-Water)
- The World Bank Group (up July 2025)
- Continental Africa Water Investment Programme



8. Changemakers Governance and Leadership

2023 Chair:



H.E. Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi

Former President of Botswana

2023 Chair - Presidential Global Changemakers Award



Dr. Seog Dae Yun

Chief Executive Officer of Korea Water Resources
Corporation (K-water)

H.E. Mokgweetsi Masisi, President of Botswana presenting the Water Changemakers 2023 Presidential Awards during the UN Water Conference

Panel Leadership:



H.E. Macky Sall, Co-Chair.
President of the Republic of Senegal. Chair: African Union



H.E. Hage Geingob, Co-Chair.
President of the Republic of Namibia



H.E. Mark Rutte, Co-Chair.
Prime Minister of the Netherlands



H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Alternate Co-Chair. Former President of the United Republic of Tanzania

2023 Presidential Awards were presented to the representatives of the High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa and the alternate co-chair



H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, Alternate co-chair of the High-Level Panel, Former President of Tanzania



H.E. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia on behalf of H.E. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia



H.E. Mark Zellenrath, the Kingdom of the Netherlands Ambassador to the United States of America on behalf of H.E. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands



H.E. Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Water and Sanitation on behalf of H.E. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal

Heads of state of the countries who have launched their Country Water Investment programme



H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia



H.E. Chola Milambo, Zambia Ambassador to the United Nations on behalf of H.E. Hakainde Hichilema, President of Zambia.



H.E. Hussein Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar

Jury: Technical Committee:



Ms. Jaehyang So - Chair

Jaehyang So is currently the chair of the technical committee. Jae had an extensive career at the World Bank Group, working on sustainable development and finance, including infrastructure, water, urban development, gender, and public-private partnerships.



Dr. Dustin E. Garrick

A research fellow at Oxford University, associate professor of global water policy at the University of Waterloo - school of environment and sustainability. He co-founded a global initiative on water markets with World, expert advisor to OECD, governments, corporations, NGOs.



Dr. Thomas Panella

Asian Development Bank's Director, Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture, East Asia Department, manages ADB operations in Mongolia and China. Chair-ADB Water Sector Committee and provides oversight for policy development, institutional engagement in water issues, and strategic directions.



Dr. Barbara Janusz-Pawletta

Head of the regional Program on Integrated Water resource Management in Central Asia, at the German-Kazakh University in Almaty, Kazakhstan, UNESCO Chair on water resources management. Fellow-German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Kazakh University.



Dr. Winston Yu

Winston Yu holds a PhD from Harvard University and is the Water Practice Manager for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region at the World Bank. Extensive experience on technical, institutional issues, investment projects in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, China, Ethiopia, Ukraine, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Poland.



Dr. Kenji Nagata

Kenji Nagata is a Senior Advisor on Water Resources and Disaster at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He has been extending assistance to more than twenty developing countries as an engineer, advisor for 30 years in the water resources sector.



Dr. Franz Rojas-Ortuste

Franz Rojas-Ortuste is Director of Water and Sanitation Analysis Division at CAF -Development Bank of Latin America. He chairs the Water Finance Coalition that integrates more than 60 international, regional, and national Public Development Banks.



Mr. Tom Williams

Tom Williams is a Senior Director, Nature Action at the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and leads WBCSD's work on accelerating the adoption of nature targets, strategies, and actions by business.



Ms. Neeta Pokhrel

Neeta Pokhrel, Chief of Water Sector Group, has over 25 years of experience working with Asian Development Bank, private sector, international consulting firms, non-governmental organizations and water utilities.

Secretariat:



Mr. Alex Simalabwi - Director
Graduate of Harvard University with expertise in public policy, business, climate change. Currently, Executive Secretary, Global Water Partnership CEO -AIP High Level Panel Secretariat



Ms. Anjali Lohani
Graduate of Harvard University Kennedy School in Public Administration, served at the World Bank global water practice and is GWP Senior Water & Climate Resilience Specialist.



Dr. Gergana Majercakova Senior Learning Specialist. She is also serving as an Acting Lead for Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Knowledge. Gergana has expertise in knowledge management, communications and M&F and Evaluation.



Dr. Kelly Ann Naylor
Served as UNICEF Director-Water Sanitation Hygiene at UN HQ and Deputy for UN Water. She is Special Advisor to the secretariat of the International High-Level Panel on Water Investments for Africa and leads liaison for AIP with Permanent missions at the UN.



Ms. Svetlana Doneva
Senior Communications Advisor to the AIP International High Level Panel on Water Investment for Africa. Svetlana has expertise in behaviour change, communications, communication strategy development and execution, as well as publication and material design.



Dr. Valentin Aich
Senior Water & Climate Specialist. He is also a Network Specialist for Central Asia and Caucasus. Valentin has expertise in integrated Drought Management, Hydrology and Climatology.



Ms. Andiswa Nyongwana - Coordinator
Water and Climate Specialist and Assistant Coordinator of the global Changemakers Awards. She has expertise in Climate Change Adaptation, Integrated Water Resource Management and Agriculture.



Mr. Dimitris Faloutsos
Deputy Regional Coordinator at GWP Mediterranean. He is also a theme leader on Transboundary, WEFE Nexus, and Environment. Environmental Science and post graduate in Oceanography. He has more than 20 years of professional experience in Environmental Science.



Ms. Teresa Chirwa-Ndanga
Harvard Graduate in Public Policy. Teresa is the first female chairperson of the Media Institute of Southern Africa MISA Malawi Chapter, and the recipient of the 2010 CNN/Multichoice Health and Medical reporting award. She is a regional communications specialist at GWP Southern Africa.



Mr. Fany Wedahuditama
Regional Coordinator of GWP Southeast Asia and Executive Director of Water Stewardship Indonesia. With a background in Science, Development and Economics and post graduate studies in Politics and development. He has more than 15 years of experience in Development, Water and Gender.



Ms. Alejandra Mujica
Regional Coordinator of GWP South America. With a background in Biology and post graduate in Science and Technology, she has more than 20 years experience in the academia, governmental, and the private sector.

Partners involved in Water Changemakers 2020



New Partners involved in Water Changemakers 2023



Global Water Partnership (GWP), Global Secretariat, PO Box 24177, 104 51 Stockholm, SWEDEN.
 Visitor's address: Linnégatan 87D, 115 23 Stockholm, SWEDEN T: +46 (0)8 1213 8600, E: gwp@gwp.org

www.gwp.org



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Global Water Partnership (GWP), Global Secretariat, PO Box
24177, 104 51 Stockholm, SWEDEN.

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