

PRESS RELEASE
TUE28 Imagine H2O

Urban Drinking Water Challenge Winners Honored at World Water Week in Stockholm

Three winning startups from 160 applicants recognized as innovative drinking water solutions for tomorrow's megacities

STOCKHOLM (SWEDEN) - August 28, 2018: Three innovative approaches to solving urban water scarcity, a growing threat to global populations, were showcased at the [Imagine H2O Urban Drinking Water Challenge](#) 2018 awards ceremony yesterday in Stockholm, the Swedish capital that is playing host to World Water Week.

The Challenge's Founding Partners, water tech leader [Bluewater Group](#) and oceans stewardship initiative [11th Hour Racing](#) committed up to \$1,000,000 in cash prizes, pilot funding awards and investment to deploy and scale decentralized and data-driven solutions in water scarce cities.

Over 160 startups from 37 countries registered for the Challenge. The three winning companies, [Drinkwell](#) (Dhaka, Bangladesh), [Microlyze](#) (Denver, USA) and [SmartTerra](#) (Bengaluru, India), represent a diverse range of technologies and entrepreneurial approaches to solving urban water scarcity and advancing U.N. Sustainable Development Goal 6.

The award ceremony, held at World Water Week, convened over 100 water leaders, investors and entrepreneurs. Record-breaking yachtswoman and Bluewater Brand Ambassador, Dee Caffari, joined UN Environment Director Oceans, Lisa Svensson, in presenting the 2018 winners' trophies. The startups will also be interviewed [live via Vimeo](#) in a World Water Week Sofa Session at the Stockholm City Conference Centre on August 29th.

"Over the next three decades, projected demand for water in cities such as London, Rio de Janeiro and Beijing, will increase by 70%, resulting in more scenarios similar to Cape Town," says Anders Jacobson, Bluewater President and Chief Strategy Officer. "This competition unlocks the resources to validate and scale three promising solutions that prove the benefits of smarter water management in the face of rapid urbanization and looming drinking water shortages."

"11th Hour Racing's strategic partnerships drive innovation that tackles the challenges impacting our oceans and planet," says Todd McGuire, Program Director of 11th Hour Racing. "At the Volvo Ocean Race stopover in Cape Town last December, we saw first-hand how drinking water scarcity is

impacting quality of life and the environment in large cities around the world. This innovation challenge ties together issues of water scarcity as a result of climate change, equity issues surrounding drinking water, and plastic waste caused by limited access to clean water. We look forward to supporting the winners' progress as they tackle urban water scarcity."

Evaluated on the basis of commercial viability, impact and market readiness, the startups merge technology with innovative business models to improve the reach and sustainability of drinking water services. The Challenge's award funding will enable each startup to launch a new deployment in a water-scarce city.

- **Drinkwell** is expanding its turnkey decentralized water purification systems across arsenic-contaminated communities in Bangladesh, focusing on the three million people in Dhaka that live in low-income communities, and are often given no choice but to drink from unsafe, illegal water sources.
- **Microlyze** is deploying real-time water testing devices to empower households and provide cost-effective monitoring for US utilities, helping protect the estimated 22 million Americans exposed to lead and other contaminants through their water often due to aging infrastructure in cities.
- **SmartTerra** is equipping second-tier Indian cities with the tools for data-driven decision making and operations to improve delivery and access for the underserved. Growth in these cities outpaces infrastructure improvements, and therefore water supply is often unequal leaving large segments of the population without safe and reliable access.

Imagine H2O's evaluation committee included a diverse group of experts from institutions including the World Bank, Grundfos, The Schmidt Family Foundation, Anaergia, Rotoplas, Xylem, Aquaya Institute and Water & Sanitation for the Urban Poor.

Three startups from the competition have been recognized as *Imagine H2O Asia Finalists*, a dedicated track for emerging water technology startups addressing Southeast Asia's water challenges. [Drinkwell](#) (Dhaka, Bangladesh), [Watchtower Robotics](#) (Cambridge, USA) and [THE.WAVE.TALK](#) (Seoul, South Korea) will be showcased at Singapore Week of Innovation and Technology (SWITCH) through Imagine H2O's recently announced partnership with [Enterprise Singapore](#). Additionally, the Challenge's Evaluation Committee awarded an Honorable Mention to [Majik Water](#), a Nairobi-based team developing an atmospheric water generation device in partnership with local communities.

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About Imagine H2O

Imagine H2O is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people to deploy and develop innovation to solve water challenges globally. The organization's water innovation accelerator provides entrepreneurs with the resources, insight and visibility to launch and scale water solutions. By partnering with industry and policy experts and a global network of customers and investors, Imagine H2O has become a proven path to market for emerging water technology businesses. Since 2009, the organization's program alumni have collectively raised more than 1 in every 10 dollars of early-stage investment in the water industry. www.imagineh2o.org.

About the Founding Challenge Partners

11th Hour Racing establishes strategic partnerships within the sailing and maritime communities to promote collaborative, systemic change benefitting the health of our ocean. Since 2010, 11th Hour Racing has been harnessing the power of sport with an innovative and comprehensive approach through three primary areas of engagement: grantees, partners, and ambassadors. www.11thourracing.org.

Bluewater is a world leader in innovating, manufacturing, and commercializing water purification technologies and solutions for residential, business and public use that harness the company's patented reverse osmosis technology to remove virtually all pollutants from water, including micro plastic fibers, lead, bacteria, pesticides, medical residues, chlorine, and lime-scale. www.bluewatergroup.com.