

Catalyzing Small-Scale Water Innovations

For nearly three years Aidenvironment has successfully hosted and managed the Micro Water Facility (MWF), an independent foundation established in 2007 by Aidenvironment and the Ecological Management Foundation (EMF). At the beginning of 2010 the board of EMF asked Aidenvironment to manage EMF as well.

The Ecological Management Foundation (EMF) is a public benefit charity dedicated to improving access to clean water facilities in developing countries. It is a typical network organization: the head office is based in Amsterdam and staffed by a committed group of part-time employees and volunteers; several partner organizations around the world share the same ideals and ambitions and provide support where and when needed. Since its foundation in 1990, EMF has established a solid track record in initiating water projects, raising public awareness and stimulating innovative water technologies.

EMF identifies and promotes small-scale projects that are innovative, practical, solution-oriented, and have a broad impact in the target country. The activities are structured around the following themes:

- **Blue Energy:** technologies that use a minimum of energy and can be widely deployed locally to give large numbers of people access to clean water
- **Blue Highway:** efficient and reliable community and/or entrepreneur-run distribution channels that reach end users at affordable prices
- **Blue Gold:** suitable instruments to finance distribution channels and end users

EMF works on a project basis. The time-frame and scope may differ, but the projects are always designed to achieve tangible and practical results. Two recently launched projects illustrate this.

The Bangladesh project

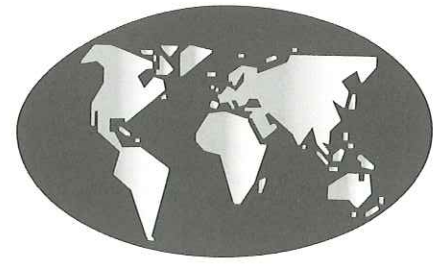
In 2008, the Clean Water Foundation initiated a project to provide clean drinking water to areas in Bangladesh affected by serious arsenic contamination and salinity problems. The groundwork for the project (market feasibility

study, assessment of water treatment technologies, draft business plan, communication plan, testing protocol and identification of local partner) has been completed and the project will be taken over on 1 June 2010 by EMF, which will be responsible for phases 1 and 2. In phase 1, a water treatment technology developed by Voltea will be tested in Bangladesh. EMF will then proceed with phase 2 and set up a larger-scale commercial pilot. If successful, the project will be handed to a local organization, which will roll out the concept and continue to run the business as a social venture.

Faith Schools and Water Program

Together with the Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC) and the International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), EMF organized the Salisbury Faith in Water workshop in 2009. The event brought together key faith school networks from six faiths, innovators/entrepreneurs and secular bodies (including UNICEF, UN-Water, the World Bank, and the UK Department for International Development) to discuss water, sanitation and hygiene issues in faith schools.

The workshop resulted in the establishment in early 2010 of the Faith Schools and Water Program, now called 'Water Schools', housed at ARC's headquarters. Its mission is to promote sustainable clean water and sanitation facilities in faith-related schools. Access to clean water and sanitation facilities and proper hygiene will lead to a reduction in water-related school absenteeism and, in the long run, a community-wide reduction in water-borne disease. In the period 2010–2013, the 'Water Schools' program will expand its relationship with faith-school networks internationally and develop partnerships with water innovators and rele-



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vant secular groups, such as UNICEF and the World Bank. Pilot projects at schools in developing countries will follow, with a guidebook on running effective water programs in such schools. The results of this work will be presented at a second Faith in Water conference, which in turn will lead to further initiatives and outreach.

The role of EMF in this program is to give faith-related schools access to its network of innovators and portfolio of techniques.

Cooperation

Both EMF and the Micro Water Facility (MWF) concentrate on small-scale initiatives that are innovative, practical, solution-oriented, and have a broad impact in the target country. EMF is the party that incubates and catalyses such solutions at a very early stage. MWF then takes over and supports partner organizations with business plans and financing.

EMF and MWF will start working more closely in 2010, to the benefit of both. EMF has a solid track record in initiating water-solution projects, raising public awareness and stimulating innovative water technologies. MWF is a young organization with an innovative portfolio of high-impact water and sanitation initiatives.

More info:

www.emf.nl

www.microwaterfacility.org

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