



ICRISAT leads consortium for project on wastewater reuse in EU & India

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Aiming to address issues of water scarcity, poverty and food insecurity through wastewater reuse for agriculture, ICRISAT is leading a consortium of national partners in the implementation of India's component of the project "Integrating bio-treated wastewater reuse with enhanced water use efficiency to support the green economy in EU and India." The project was launched in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The project, also referred to as 'Water4Crops-India,' would look at recycling and judicious reuse of treated wastewater, combined with enhanced water-use efficiency, promised increased crop productivity and improved livelihoods of smallholder farmers, and the rehabilitation of degraded lands in India and the European Union (EU).

This was made known at a kick-off meeting held at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and attended by the EU and Indian consortia partners from state agricultural universities, national research institutes, non-government organisations (NGOs), and private industrial partners.

The initiative is a mirror of EU's Water4Crops project composed of 21 consortium partners led by the Istituto di Ricerca Sulle Acque – Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (IRSA-CNR), department of Bari, Italy.

Highlighting ICRISAT's role, director-general William Dar stated: "Water reuse is of critical importance to the semi-arid regions of the world. Following ICRISAT's successes with rainwater harvesting and management, we will now lead the Indian consortium in venturing into recycling industrial and domestic wastewater for agricultural use to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor particularly those in the country's dryland areas."

Under the project, ICRISAT along with its consortium partners will be embarking on recycling of treated wastewater (grey water) from domestic uses and industrial wastewater. The consortium is unique as national and international research organisations and universities have joined hands with private entrepreneurs to find a win-win solution to wastewater disposal using bio-treatments for reuse in agriculture. This initiative will benefit farmers, industries, researchers as well as government organisations.

Among the Indian consortium partners are The Energy Research Institute (TERI); National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI); Euro India Research Centre (EIRC); University of Agricultural Sciences Bangalore (UASB); University of Agricultural Sciences Dharwad (UASD); MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF); SABMiller, India; and Jain Irrigation Systems Ltd (JISL).

Through the initiative, Europe and India will share experiences, technologies and knowledge to benefit farmers, researchers and policy-makers. The consortium will be working on three types of industrial wastewater mainly from the Charminar Breweries of SABMiller; the Onion and Fruit Processing Plant at JISL; and the Sugar Factory from Ugar Sugar.

Treatment of domestic wastewater will be studied and used in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh; Kolar, Karnataka; and Nagpur, Maharashtra; and saline wastewater from industries in the coastal regions. The consortium will also address the issue of rehabilitating degraded lands using untreated wastewater at certain sites to be identified.

The project is led in India by Dr Suhas P Wani, assistant research programme director, Resilient Dryland Systems, ICRISAT, and in Europe by Dr Antonio Lopez, head of unit, National Research Council, Water Research Institute, Italy.