

PUB wins three awards for innovative projects

International Water Association honours its sensor technologies, conservation programme

By: Audrey Tan, Straits Times (Home B4), 26 April 2014

SINGAPORE'S national water agency PUB has made a name for itself yet again on the international stage.

It bagged three awards at the biennial Asia Pacific Regional Project Innovation Awards, a prestigious competition organised by the International Water Association which recognises water engineering excellence.

PUB won two of a possible three prizes for applied research: A sensor that can detect toxic compounds such as heavy metals in used water and a network of sensors which monitors water quality and detects leaks were both given the Honour Award.

The first, called the Microbial Electrochemical Sensor, allows water reclamation network and plant operators to act fast to identify the source of contamination and take measures to stop the contaminated flow from reaching the plant, so treatment processes down the line are not affected.

The technology is the first of its kind in the world, and was developed jointly by PUB and the Centre for Water Research at the National University of Singapore.

The other innovation, the Smart Water Grid, is a network of 50 wireless sensors that monitors water quality and detects leaks in real time.

It has been in use in central Singapore and Queenstown for a year, allowing PUB to repair leaks faster and reduce water loss in the process.

About 300 sensors will be installed across the island by the end of next year, PUB said.

The technology was developed by PUB, the Centre for Environmental Sensing and Modelling at the Singapore-MIT Alliance for Research and Technology, and local water company Visenti.

The top prize in the category went to Australia for a sewer corrosion and odour management project that provides knowledge and technology support.

PUB also scooped up an Honour Award for its Water Conservation Awareness Programme, under the marketing and communications category.

Water was saved through initiatives such as the Mandatory Water Efficiency Labelling Scheme - which helps consumers identify water-efficient appliances such as taps and washing machines - as well as educational outreach in schools.

The winners will receive their awards on June 3 during the Singapore International Water Week.

PUB chief executive Chew Men Leong said: "PUB looks at research and development as a key enabler to create innovative solutions that strengthen the resilience of our water infrastructure and open doors to partnerships... with the industry and the larger community."

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