



Swiss Re awards USD 1 80 000 for sustainable watershed management projects in the Philippines, Cameroon and Bolivia

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Zurich, 22 March 2006: Under the banner of its International ReSource Award for Sustainable Watershed Management, Swiss Re grants the winning project in the Philippines USD 80 000. Further, USD 50 000 each go to projects in Cameroon and Bolivia. The award that annually recognises innovative watershed management projects was awarded for the fourth time.

Ivo Menzinger, Head of Sustainability and Emerging Risk Management at Swiss Re and Chairman of the International ReSource Award Jury, comments: "Swiss Re witnesses that a majority of natural disasters are water-related events, and they are on the increase. Poor land use exacerbates this trend and it is our goal as a leading global risk manager and reinsurer of such catastrophic events to support and reward inventive and diverse community engagements from around the world preserving and nurturing our water sources."

This year's winning project comes from the Philippines and focuses on sustainable watershed management and poverty alleviation in the Philippine Uplands. The project is based on a "Payments for environmental services (PES)" system, compensating the local Ikalahan people for their upstream activities to the benefit of the downstream communities such as domestic water users or farmers. The project foresees training support on sustainable upland farming practices and puts strong emphasis on a series of practical dialogues among providers, beneficiaries and intermediaries. The winning project was submitted by Resources, Environment and Economics Center for Studies, Inc. (REECS), Quezon City, Philippines.

The project in the municipality of Peñablanca, Cagayan Province, supports the award's goal to contribute to raising awareness of the ecological, social and economic significance of water sources and watersheds in the local community. The project demonstrates innovative preventative measures for protecting water resources involving the local community.

Water conflict mitigation in Cameroon; Bolivian highlands support

For the first time a project from Africa received support from Swiss Re. The Ntunir watershed project in the Jakiri Council municipality of the North West Province, Cameroon, spreading over 700 hectares in a moorland landscape, will receive USD 50 000. It was submitted by KivenK development, a local NGO. The project mitigates conflict among people of different cultures who are either concerned about protecting the catchments for quantitative and qualitative water supplies or grazers who need the catchment areas for fresh grass to browse their animals.

An equal contribution of USD 50 000 was granted to a project in the Suches River basin, in the Bolivian highlands. This proposal aims to establish best practices in water management along the full length of the Suches River, from Alpaca grazing grounds at 4,800 meters to the shores of the Lake Titicaca. The project is unique in its mix of traditional farming techniques, culture and modern approach to sustainable use of natural resources. It was submitted by Grupo de Voluntariado Civil (GVC), La Paz, Bolivia.

Access to safe drinking water: a United Nations priority

According to a recent report by the United Nations, meeting the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving the number of people without a steady supply of clean water by 2015 would save USD 7 billion annually. The UN said 1.6 million people could be saved per year if they had access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

The International ReSource Award

This year the International ReSource Award prize money was increased from USD 100 000 to USD 150 000 granted to one or several projects selected by an international jury. The higher contribution of USD 180 000 conferred this year is the result of extraordinary projects submitted in 2005. Launched in 2002, the ReSource Award is an internationally recognised prize for leadership in implementing the principles of sustainability in watershed management. It is conferred annually. As one of the world's leading reinsurers, Swiss Re is committed to supporting the planning, evaluation and implementation

of water-related projects with the aim of promoting awareness and encouraging the efficient use of this precious resource.

Further information on the International ReSource Award is available at www.swissre.com/resource. Details on the winning projects can be consulted on the main website www.swissre.com (Media Centre section).

Notes to editors

Swiss Re

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