



3rd Swiss Re award for sustainable watershed management goes to projects in China and Ecuador; winners receive USD 50 000 each

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Zurich, 2 May 2005: Two water projects, one from China and one from Ecuador, have each won USD 50 000 to support water sanitation measures in their respective regions. Swiss Re will present its third International ReSource Award today at an award ceremony at the Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue in Rüschlikon, Switzerland.

Ivo Menzinger, Head of Group Sustainability Management at Swiss Re and Chairman of the International ReSource Award Jury, comments: "water is a fundamental human need and a threatened resource. The projects in China and Ecuador were selected by the jury because they encourage the efficient use of this precious resource, thereby helping local populations in both countries to obtain better access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation."

The first winning proposal was submitted by the Yunnan Environmental Development Institute in Kunming, China, together with the Yunnan Environmental Protection Bureau. Yunnan's still relatively untouched landscape serves as a water reservoir for millions of people and for many industrial plants in the densely populated coastal region of China. The project aims at reducing water pollution through the promotion of innovative eco-sanitation, biogas production and stakeholder engagement workshops. The project is being supported by the government of Yunnan Province and Wenshan Prefecture. The pilot project will be implemented in the upper region of the Puzhehei Lake watershed by January 2006.

Ecuador: strengthening communities

The second winner of the International ReSource Award is a project submitted by ETAPA, the public municipal company for water supply and wastewater treatment of the district of Cuenca, Ecuador. Profiting from this innovative solution are about half of the 1 50 000 inhabitants of the city of Cuenca who rely on treated drinking water from the Tomebamba River covering an area of about 300 km². The construction of new roads and subsequent economic development in the un-

protected area of the upper Tomebamba watershed – especially intensive agriculture and cattle farming, tourism and fish farming – have had a negative impact on ecosystems and water quality. A key focus of the project is to support the local population in the sustainable management of natural resources and by demonstrating the use of alternative farming and production methods.

Millennium Development Goals attained through small projects

According to a recent WHO report, the world is – with regional discrepancies – on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target of improving access to safe drinking water with 83 percent coverage. However, with an estimated 2.6 billion people currently living without improved sanitation facilities, it may prove difficult to meet the MDG water sanitation target "to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation" by 2015.

At the award ceremony, a panel moderated by Stefan Klapproth, Swiss TV anchor, will explore these challenges and the possible measures to be taken by the public and private sectors and civil society.

Further information on the International ReSource Award is available at www.swissre.com/resource.

Notes to editors

Swiss Re

Swiss Re is one of the world's leading reinsurers and the world's largest life and health reinsurer. The company operates through more than 70 offices in over 30 countries. Swiss Re has been in the reinsurance business since its foundation in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1863. Through its three business groups Property & Casualty, Life & Health and Financial Services, Swiss Re offers a wide variety of products to manage capital and risk. Traditional reinsurance products, including a broad range of property and casualty as well as life and health covers and related services, are complemented by insurance-based corporate finance solutions and supplementary services for comprehensive risk management. Swiss Re is rated "AA" by Standard & Poor's, "Aa2" by Moody's and "A+" by A.M. Best.