



Wetskills-Taiwan 2016

Media Advisory

Wetskills for the first time to Taiwan

Taipei / Tainan, Taiwan – After 20 successful editions worldwide in the last six years the Wetskills Water Challenge will be organized in Taiwan for the first time. 36 Young professionals and students in the Taiwanese and Dutch water industry will compete to develop an innovative concept for four case studies to create solutions for water issues in a changing world. They will be mixed in 6ix transdisciplinary Dutch-Taiwanese teams that will learn from and work with local professionals and water experts on challenging water case studies posed by the case owners. This Wetskills program will start at 10 July and end at 23 July.

The teams will present their out-of-box concepts during the final Workshop at the FE Water Show Exhibition on Saturday 23 July.

Case topics

During the Wetskills program, participants, water experts and companies will compare views on global water innovations, share best practices, and find new solutions on several topics, playing in Taiwan, including:

- Public awareness on the world leading sediment removal practice (Case owner: Southern Region Water Resources Office, WRA)
- Robust and reliable water supply within the typhoon season (Case owner: Taipei Water Department, Taipei City Government)
- A sustainable farming practice for food and water (Case owner: Chi-Seng Water Management Research & Development Foundation)
- Integrated, green and safe retention ponds in urban areas (Case owner: Tainan City Government)
- Restoring water infrastructure heritage for a ecology friendly city environment (Case owner: Taipei City Government)
- Floating buildings as Solution for climate change (Case owner: National Cheng Kung University)

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Water Resources Agency
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About Wetskills: international and out of the box

Wetskills was first organised in 2010 and became an independent Foundation in 2015. It uses an innovative approach of experimental learning and international networking for students and young professionals with different professional backgrounds. The Challenges take place worldwide, usually during international water related events. The challenges that participants work on are real life cases from companies and (governmental) organisations. Their challenge is to think out-of-the-box and - develop realistic solutions. Since 2010 20 Wetskills events have been organised worldwide, in 15 different countries. In total about 400 students and 100 universities and organisations were involved.

More information: www.wetskills.com or johan.oost@wetskills.com

Partners

The following organizations are working together to produce the Wetskills Water Challenge:

- Water Resources Agency of Taiwan
- National Taiwan University in Taipei
- Taiwan International Institute for Water Education
- Wetskills Foundation (The Hague, The Netherlands)

Case owners

- Southern Region Water Resources Office, WRA
- Taipei Water Department, Taipei City Government
- Chi-Seng Water Management Research & Development Foundation
- Tainan City Government
- Taipei City Government
- National Cheng Kung University

Suppliers

- Netherlands Trade and Investment Office in Taipei
- H₂Oost (Amsterdam)
- TopSector Water (The Netherlands)

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Invitation for press

Invitation for press to the main parts of the Wetskills programme in United States 2016
Members of the media are invited to all the events. Of particular interest are the following parts of the program:

- Wetskills kick-off event: on Monday 11 July 2016 9.00-11.00 (in Tainan: NCKU (成大 綠色魔法學校). This is the official opening with the Director-General of WRA.
- Wetskills event: *The BrainHurricane* on Friday 15 July 2016 13.30-16.00 (GIS NTU Convention Center 集思會議中心 B1 Add: B1F., No.85, Sec. 4, Roosevelt Rd., Taipei). This is an interactive brainstorming event where participants will learn more about the case studies, contact the case owners. A special speed date session will be organized with 8 Taiwanese and Dutch experts from the water industry.
- Team presentations to the jury during the final Workshop on Saturday 23 July 2016 14.00-17.00 (Location: FE Water Show Exhibition in Taipei):
 - Pitch competition: 14.00-15.15
 - Poster Market: 15.15-16.00
 - Announcement of the winner of the Wetskills Water Challenge: 16.15-16.30

Information about previous Wetskills editions: www.wetskills.com/publications/

For More information contact:

Website: www.wetskills.com

Twitter: @Wetskills, #Wetskills

Facebook: Wetskills

Water Resources Agency

Jammie Hsu

Engineer

A600250@wra.gov.tw

National Taiwan University

Gene You

Professor

genejyu@ntu.edu.tw

Wetskills Foundation

Johan Oost

Managing Director

johan.oost@wetskills.com

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Overview of the cases

Case 1: Public awareness on the world leading sediment removal practice

Case owner: Southern Region Water Resources Office, WRA

The Water Resources Agency (WRA) faces negative publicity in situations where water issues occur. Yet the good performance of WRA the public was left unaware. The scale has tilted too much towards the negative side. One of the projects where WRA is world leading and proud of is the current construction of the sediment-flushing tunnel in the Zengwen Reservoir. This reservoir was built around 50's similar to most dams in Taiwan and globally. Due to the natural conditions over time reservoir sedimentation in Taiwan is a serious problem.

WRA is looking for innovative ways to promote its activities to the public in an easy, modern and understandable way. A considerable plan should awake the public for the big achievements, taking the sediment-flushing tunnel in the Zengwen Reservoir as example.

Case 2: Robust and reliable water supply within the typhoon season

Case owner: Taipei Water Department, Taipei City Government

The water supply to Taipei Metropolis depends on upstream rivers and reservoirs. During the Typhoon Soudelor in August 2015, the turbidity of the main water source Nanshih River became extremely high. Proper treatment of water was not possible so the Taipei Water Department was forced to shut down 3 of 6 treatment units in Zitan Purification Plant and limited the water supply. The shutdown took place 10 hours during the strike of typhoon. Citizens did not tolerate this lightly as it led to a social unrest within the city. Taipei City Hall is looking to an integrated approach for water supply during a typhoon season. It will consider the mitigation of water turbidity, water resources management, water cutback measures and public awareness.

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Case 3: A sustainable farming practice for food and water

Case owner: Chi-Seng Water Management Research & Development Foundation

Traditionally, Taiwan was a self-sufficient country in terms of food supply. This food supply is measured in rice quantities. Nowadays, the food pattern in Taiwan is shifting toward a 'more western style' with products such as bread and beef. This shift in food production requires more water supply at a larger scale. Due to recent climate change and frequent droughts the water supply for crops is under stress. Moreover the farming practice in Taiwan was a sunset industry. The average age of farmer is 62 where they are used to the traditional way of farming. The willingness to change their farming practice and to use new crops is low. There are hardly any incentive to use innovative methods to save water and attracting young people to enter this sector of work. To break this vicious circle new business cases need to be created promoting modern production chain and marketing mechanisms from a consumer perspective. It should contain incentives for farmers to change their traditional agricultural methods and attract young people to enter the farming industry.

Case 4: Integrated, green and safe retention ponds in urban areas

Case owner: Tainan City Government

Urban areas cover the west coast of Taiwan and space is scarce. As result, space for urban water management is under stress. In recent years, the Flood-Prone Areas Regulation Project has improved the situation significantly. However, the extreme climate in the recent year has caused heavy rain and severe flood more frequently. Let's take Tainan City as an example. In the past, most areas in Tainan were lagoons and lakes and as a result the city is mainly build on reclaimed land. Therefore, vast areas locate at low-lying and thus flood-prone. The retention pond Ren-De in Tainan has proven that it could avoid flooding loss, but it requires a lot of space. There are some more negative sides: the public considers it to be dangerous, unhealthy (due to mosquitos) and ugly. A well-designed retention pond can become an attractive, safe and green place in a city area. An integrated plan should lead to a Ren-De retention pond that is public accepted and even liked by the people. More importantly, the Ren- De retention pond can benefit in the storm water management and it has a reasonable maintenance cost.

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Case 5: Restoring water infrastructure heritage for a ecology friendly city environment

Case owner: Taipei City Government

Taipei City's focus is to become a greener city since the mid-nineties. Water in the city is a vital part in this philosophy. The Liugong Canal is one of the oldest irrigation channels, which was built in eastern Taipei more than 250 years ago. With the development of Taipei City, its function of irrigation is diminished. Different sections of Liugong Canal are either filled or used for sewerage channels. Liugong Canal is near another historic water channel (Horikawa), which it was built in the Japan ruled period. Taipei City government is discussing the restoration and utilization of these channels. The integral plan of these two channels is to connect them with the water systems of the National Taiwan University's campus and the Da-An Forest Park. It should mitigate the effect of the surrounding traffic and buildings and also has small investments and maintenance costs. Meanwhile the plan should include construction of a water landscape in the Da-An Forest Park. Last but not least, losing the historic value of the old channels is not an option.

Case 6: Floating buildings as Solution for climate change

Case owner: National Cheng Kung University

Recent Climate change has led to more extreme weather conditions. Adaptive water management strategies focus on flexible and integrated solutions to (1) prevent and (2) mitigate potential loss cause by those extreme weather events. The use of floating buildings is an adaptive measure that is recently gaining more popularity in the Netherlands. The question raised is: How can floating buildings become an option for Taiwan as well? Both countries have densely populated urban areas, but different social, geographical and water situation. Taiwan has much more precipitation, steep mountains, flash floods, large water level fluctuation and hilly areas. Culturally, Taiwanese perceive water more as a threat rather than a quality. Moreover, floating buildings should get aligned with the belief of Feng Shui (geomantic omen). The challenge is to create a Taiwan Floating House based on potential locations (riverbeds, old harbours, detention ponds and fish farms), different types of construction technologies and environmental factors.

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