

PSIPW Speech for COPUOS Meeting, June 2024

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Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure here today to make the official announcement of the winners for the 2024 11th Award of the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water.

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The Prize was established by HRH Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud back in 2002 to award cutting-edge scientific solutions for water scarcity.

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This vision is shared by his son and president of the prize organization, HRH Prince Khaled Bin Sultan Bin Abdulaziz.

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To award the best, most innovative work, we award a suite of five prizes that cover the entire water-research landscape.

First, there is our Creativity Prize, a unique prize that specifically awards research teams for their interdisciplinary work.

Most water resources research today, especially when it employs space technology, is interdisciplinary and this work deserves special attention and encouragement.

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We also have four specialised prizes in surface water, groundwater, alternative water resources, and water management & protection.

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Competition for the 11th Award was fierce. Our six winners were chosen from 220 nominations from 62 different countries. Many of the nominees were leading water scientists from the world's top universities and research institutes.

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Our interdisciplinary Creativity Prize was won by the team of Maria Cristina Rulli of the Polytechnic of Milan, and Paolo D'Odorico of the University of California, Berkeley, for spearheading novel analyses of the water-energy-food nexus that describe how numerous complex factors interact, providing for better freshwater stewardship in a changing, globalised world.

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Our Creativity Prize was shared by Zhiguo He and his team at China's Zhejiang University for developing working, versatile soft robots with unprecedented manoeuvrability that have the capacity for numerous underwater research and monitoring applications.

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Our Surface Water Prize was won by Qiuhua Liang of Loughborough University in the UK for developing innovative, open-source, multi-GPU hydrodynamic models to support real-time flood forecasting at fine temporal resolutions.

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Chunmiao Zheng of the Eastern Institute of Technology in Ningbo, China, received our Groundwater Prize for developing powerful management tools to understand groundwater processes in ecohydrolic systems under diverse hydrological and climatic conditions, considering environmental and socioeconomic factors at local and national scales.

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Our Alternative Water Resources Prize was won by Virender K. Sharma, of Texas A&M University in the United States, for achieving the effective removal of antibiotics and pharmaceuticals from wastewater through advanced oxidative processes by activated ferrate, which work at high, even enhanced, efficiency in water containing commonly occurring natural organic matter.

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Joseph Hun-wei Lee, of Macau University of Science and Technology in China, won our Water Management & Protection prize for developing unique and highly effective hydro-environmental modelling systems for the sustainable water management of smart cities.

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Nominations for the 12th Award, which will be awarded in 2026, are now open. Nominations will remain open until 31 December 2025. Nominations can be made online through our dedicated website.

Thank you.