

## **IDB and FEMSA Foundation Celebrate 10 years of Rewarding Innovation in the Water, Sanitation and Waste Sectors**

- Since 2009, the IDB-FEMSA Award has been awarded to the most innovative and life-enhancing solutions in the water, sanitation and solid waste management sectors in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Solutions from Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico and Chile received the IDB-FEMSA 2019 Award for being the most innovative in Latin America in the sectors of water, sanitation and solid waste management.

**Panama City, Panama, October 30, 2019.-** The IDB-FEMSA 2019 award recognized the most promising social and technological innovations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Solutions from Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico and Chile were considered the most innovative in the region.

Since 2009, the IDB-FEMSA Award, promoted by the Inter-American Development Bank and FEMSA Foundation, has shown that the greatest challenges produce the most innovative solutions. Its goal is to promote creative, innovative projects, products, initiatives or services that have positive and demonstrable impacts and results in the sectors of water, sanitation and solid waste management.

The winner of the tenth edition was Yakupura, an Ecuadorian innovation that produces a water purifying filter based on activated carbon, from coconut fiber, for which it received a grant of \$15,000 USD. Yakupura is a household filter that easily attaches to the kitchen faucet. It is certified in removing chlorine, pesticides, trichloromethane, removes bad taste and smell and also alkalizes water.

Carolina Placencia, representative of Yakupura, was in charge of presenting her solution in the final round of the contest, which consisted of presentations by the six finalists who presented their innovation in the “pitch by fire” format. The finalists had to highlight its innovative characteristics and social impact in two minutes, and answer a five-minute round of questions and answers in front of the evaluation jury.

The contest’s final was held as part of the celebrations of IDB’s 60th anniversary in Panama. In 2019, the IDB-FEMSA award celebrated ten years of searching for the most innovative solutions in water, sanitation and solid waste. This year we decided to summon the winners of the previous editions, which participated in the “All Stars” category and competed for a single prize of \$15,000 USD.

Acualight, from Mexico, won second place and \$10,000 USD. It is an innovative system that helps avoid wasting water in bathroom showers; it is unique worldwide, inexpensive and easy to install. With an alternate pipe and a sensor, the system redirects the cold water that is wasted while we wait for the hot water to arrive, to the cistern.

FreshWater Solutions won third place and \$5,000 USD. It is a technology that allows the generation of purified water through the air, through a system that captures the environmental humidity, thus accelerating the natural water cycle and obtaining between 5 and 28 liters of quality water per day at a fair price, which can be used for drinking and / or cooking.

The finalists, chosen from more than 60 proposals received in the contest’s initial round, participated in the final round as part of the international conference “Water for the Present and the Future: Water Security in Latin America and the Caribbean”, held in Panama City.

In the regular category, the finalists were: Alejandra Rivera, representative of Sumando

Impactos by El Salvador; Ana Paula Mejorada, from Mexico, representative of Escuelas de lluvia; and Fernando Silva, from Brazil, representative of PWTECH.

### **Ten years rewarding innovation**

IDB-FEMSA Award celebrated ten years of promoting innovations that have resulted in viable and effective solutions that improve lives throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Therefore, along with the regular category, a special call was made among the 2009 – 2018 editions' winners, who had the opportunity to present the way their proposals have evolved and participated in the "All Stars" category.

Brazil's Eco Panplas, which was represented by Felipe Cardoso, won a \$15,000 USD prize for its technological solution, which decontaminates and recycles plastic containers of lubricating oil in a way that respects the environment: without water and without waste generation; all the unused oil is recovered and recycled through refining, eliminating environmental risk.

José Luis Ortiz, representative of Mexico's Cplanta, participated in the All Stars category, as well as Martín Guimaraens, Uruguayan resident in Chile, who represented Smart Wells.

The jury was made up by Verónica Zavala, Representative of IDB Panama; José Agustín Aguerre, IDB Infrastructure Sector Manager; Mariano Montero, Director of FEMSA Foundation; Luz Amalia González, Deputy Director of the Panamanian Institute of National Aqueducts and Sewage Systems (IDAAN in Spanish); and Miroslava Morán, Program Coordinator of the National Water Commission (CONAGUA in Spanish) of Panama.

As part of the final phase of the contest, the nine finalists participated in an innovation and preparation workshop in Panama, which included a field visit to the wastewater treatment plant in Panama City.

The IDB-FEMSA Award will continue to be awarded to the most innovative and life-enhancing solutions in Latin America and the Caribbean. The call for the 2020 edition will be announced in the second quarter of next year.

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**About FEMSA Foundation:** *For ten years, at FEMSA Foundation we have created positive impacts on people and communities through social investment projects for sustainability. We work on the conservation and sustainable use of water and the promotion of early childhood development. We have also added to our activities the dissemination of Latin American art and culture through FEMSA Collection. For more information visit [www.fundacionfemsa.org](http://www.fundacionfemsa.org) or follow us on Facebook (FundacionFEMSA) and Twitter (@FundacionFEMSA).*

**About the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB):** *The Inter-American Development Bank's mission is to improve lives. Founded in 1959, IDB is one of the main sources of long-term financing for the economic, social and institutional development of Latin America and the Caribbean. IDB also conducts research projects and provides policy advice, technical assistance and training to public and private clients throughout the region. More information in [www.iadb.org](http://www.iadb.org), [blogs.iadb.org/agua/](http://blogs.iadb.org/agua/), @BIDagua y [Facebook.com/BancolInteramericano](https://www.facebook.com/BancolInteramericano)*

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