



Media Release

HCL Commits \$15 million to address global freshwater insecurity

- Freshwater ecosystems around the world are under threat from climate change, with record-breaking droughts in India, France and the US
- The time to act on water security is now – [by 2030, the global demand for water will exceed sustainable supply by 40%](#)
- Leading global conglomerate, **HCL**, with a significant presence in technology and healthcare is committing **\$15 million over five years** to support water-focused entrepreneurs – “aquapreneurs” – who can drive innovation in freshwater resource management through this program titled the ‘**Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative**’
- **HCL Group’s CEO, Roshni Nadar Malhotra**, also the first woman to Chair a listed IT company in India (HCL Technologies), is championing the initiative, together with the World Economic Forum’s UpLink platform

Davos, Switzerland, 24 May 2022. Water security has never been more urgent. With the global population set to hit 8.5 billion by 2030, pressure is increasing on the world’s limited supply of freshwater. By 2030, the global demand for water will have exceeded sustainable supply by 40%. In addition to immediate and dire consequences to people’s health and food production, a lack of access to clean water can limit economic growth by up to [one-third](#), as well as have adverse effects on natural biodiversity and social fabrics. Governments and businesses must bring freshwater to the forefront of their strategies, and innovation will play a key role in their success.

To drive the freshwater conservation and management agenda, leading global conglomerate, HCL has partnered with UpLink, the open innovation platform of the World Economic Forum that connects highly-promising start-ups with the partners and funding they need to scale. Through a \$15 million investment over five years, HCL will help accelerate the innovation agenda for water and create a first-of-its-kind innovation ecosystem for the global freshwater sector on UpLink, called the ‘Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative’.

This initiative will draw on HCL’s own regional experience of driving innovative projects in water conservation and brings global leaders and champions together, to foster multi-stakeholder collaboration. In building this ecosystem, water entrepreneurs will be able to thrive and influence freshwater ecosystems all over the world.

*“Today, freshwater resources globally are extremely burdened and every fifth child on this planet faces water scarcity,” said Roshni Nadar Malhotra, CEO of **HCL Group** and Chairperson of **HCL Technologies**. “At HCL we want to make every effort to help resolve this global crisis. Our partnership with World Economic Forum’s UpLink platform is a step in this direction and our ecosystem approach can be truly transformative. Together we will not just encourage and scale innovations in this critical area, but also help build capacity amongst water-focused entrepreneurs - aquapreneurs - to execute on the innovative solutions. Through the Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative, we are re-committing to accelerate multi-stakeholder collaboration and innovation in the global freshwater conservation space.”*

HCL’s new collaboration with UpLink will encompass building the freshwater innovation ecosystem including running innovation challenges to source solutions from ‘aquapreneurs’ (water focused entrepreneurs), connecting these aquapreneurs to existing initiatives and water networks, unlocking funding opportunities to scale their ventures and raising awareness on the global agenda on the importance of freshwater.

Together, HCL & Uplink will also aim to help aquapreneurs build their skills and leadership capacity. Combined, these efforts will help drive and accelerate the innovation agenda for water and the sector’s mainstream ideas, approaches and solutions.



“The Aquapreneur Innovation Initiative comes at a critical time,” said Olivier Schwab, Managing Director, World Economic Forum. “With water scarcity enveloping regions around the world, we need to fast-track progress within the freshwater sector and build security for people and planet. HCL’s collaboration with UpLink will harness and drive forward the solutions of the world’s top innovators, connecting them to the initiatives and networks which can see them scale and drive transformational change for the world’s most fragile water systems.”

Innovation in freshwater management is also critical for water’s role in the transition to a green economy, as highlighted in the release of a new report in Davos today, [*A Freshwater Future: Without Blue, There Is No Green Economy.*](#)

[UpLink](#) was launched at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2020 in collaboration with founding partners, Salesforce and Deloitte. The platform sources new innovations through a competition framework known as *innovation challenges*. UpLink has now run more than 30 challenges and identified over 260 entrepreneurs with innovative solutions for the world’s most pressing issues.

About HCL Group

Founded in 1976 as one of India’s original IT garage start-ups, HCL is a pioneer of modern computing with many firsts to its credit, including the introduction of the 8-bit microprocessor-based computer in 1978 well before its global peers. Today, the HCL Group has business presence across sectors including technology and healthcare and comprises three group companies –HCL Technologies, HCL Infosystems and HCL Healthcare. The Group generates annual revenues of over US\$11.5 billion with more than 209,000 employees operating across 52 countries.

HCL Technologies, a group company, empowers global enterprises with technology for the next decade, today. As a leading global technology company, it takes pride in its diversity, social responsibility, sustainability and education initiatives. HCL Technologies is also a strategic partner of the World Economic Forum.

For further information, visit www.hcl.com

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