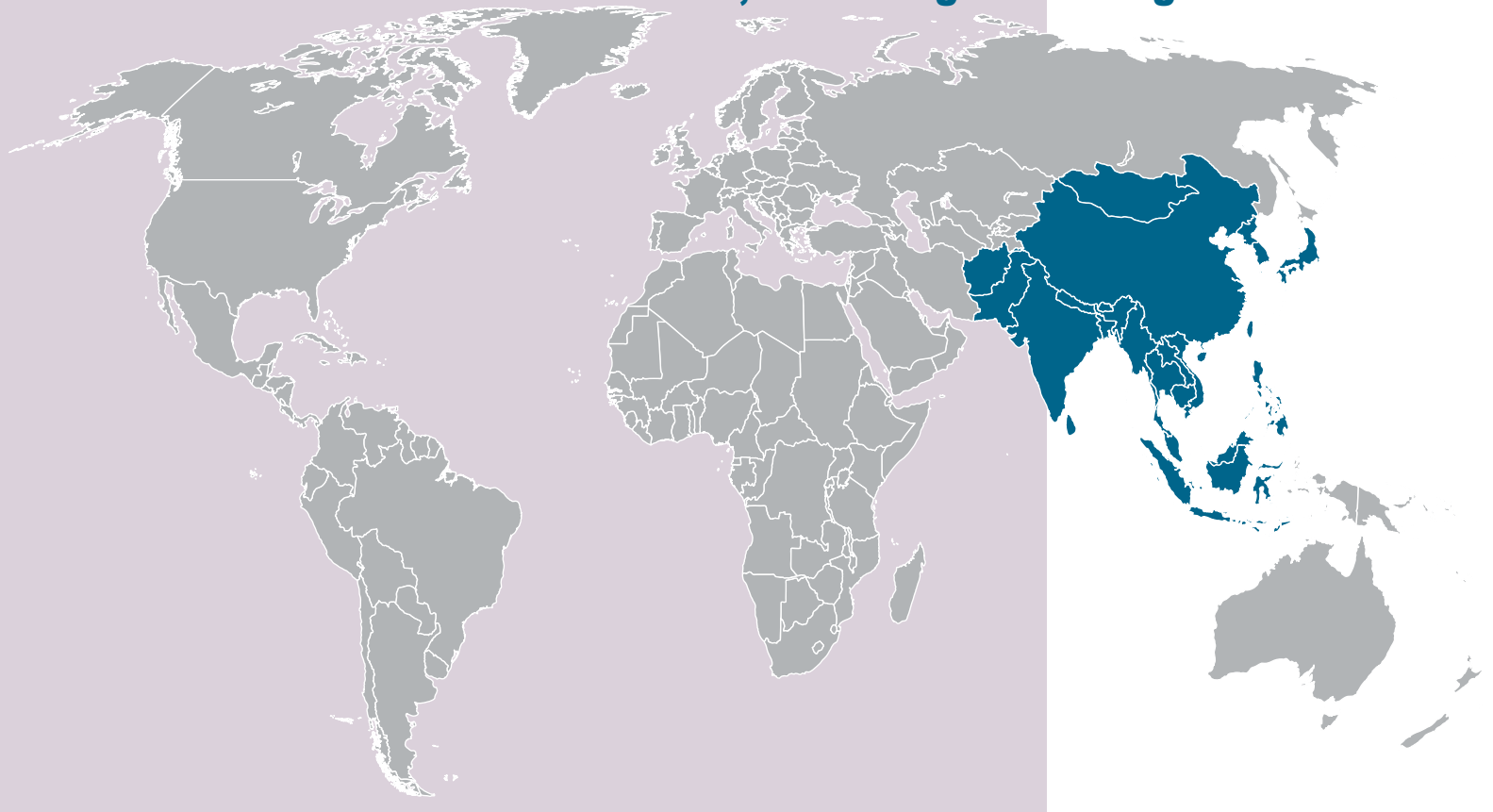


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GOVERNMENT, POLICY & FINANCE

- 2 Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Urged for India's Urban Centers**
- 2 Regional Conference Draws Attention to Future Needs of Afghanistan**
Afghanistan's participation in regional water and energy projects was among the main issues addressed at the Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, held in the Tajik capital from March 26-27.
- 3 Indus River System Authority Announces Short-Term Distribution Plan**
With reduced water flows in the Indus River, Pakistan's Indus River System Authority (IRSA) is projecting water cuts of at least 21 percent for the next two months.
- 4 SPML Plans Expansion in Africa, Southeast Asia**
- 4 World Bank Lends \$250 Million USD for Punjab Irrigation Project**

The World Bank in mid-March approved \$250 million USD to support a major irrigation program in Pakistan.

INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

- 5 Marubeni in Talks for Stake in Maynilad**
Japanese trading house Marubeni Corp is reportedly in talks to acquire a sizeable equity stake in Maynilad Water Services Inc., the Philippines' biggest private water company.
- 6 Suez, Wessex Water May Help Selangor in Takeover of Assets**
France's Suez Environment and Britain's Wessex Water have offered to help advise Malaysia's Selangor state on the planned takeover of its water assets from private concessionaires.
- 6 Korean River Restoration Project Attracts Global Interest**
Korea's near-completed and controversial campaign to revive its four main rivers has sparked the interest of several other nations in pursuing similar

initiatives.

ENVIRONMENT, SECURITY & RISK

- 7 International Land Leases, Purchases Rarely Address Water Use**
- 9 Elections Suspended in Burma's Kachin State, Site of Dam Protests**
- 9 South Asia's Water Resources a Flashpoint for International Conflict**
Climate change, rapid population growth and urbanization, combined with highly politicized and technocratic approaches, are making South Asia's water resources a flashpoint for conflict between nations.
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GOVERNMENT, POLICY & FINANCE

SPML Plans Expansion in Africa, Southeast Asia

Girish Chadha, OOSKAnews, NEW DELHI, India -- Delhi-based water infrastructure company SPML Infra is exploring opportunities to expand into Southern and West Africa and Southeast Asia.

“We believe the next phase of growth in the water sector will come in management of city water distribution systems and long-term operation and maintenance contracts.”

The company is looking for engineering, procurement and construction or build-own-operate-transfer projects in the water sector.

SPML Infra Limited Executive Director **Rishabh Sethi** told OOSKAnews his firm was open to forming associations or joint ventures with companies with technological expertise in other regions to bid for water and wastewater projects.

“We also do specific technology tie-ups as per project requirements,” said Sethi.

The company already has business associations in Iraq and Indonesia, where it hopes to secure water projects.

“We have already started looking for good projects and our discussion with authorities in Indonesia and Iraq are going in a positive direction. We hope to start our overseas project within a year’s time,” said Sethi.

In Indonesia, SPML acquired a coal

mine, which began commercial production in June 2010 and reached a million tons last year.

Water and wastewater projects contribute about 70 percent of SPML’s overall business, and the company is also engaged in power transmission and distribution and civil infrastructure development.

The company is also looking for a suitable overseas acquisition. It dropped acquisition talks with a West India-based water company last year.

“We are interested, and will make a call on an acquisition depending upon the overseas opportunities,”

said Sethi.

In India, SPML Infra is aggressively pursuing public-private partnership projects in the water and wastewater space, along with management contracts for city water distribution.

“We believe the next phase of growth in the water sector will come in management of city water distribution systems and long-term operation and maintenance contracts. Currently, we are operating six city distribution systems. We are looking at financial partners to grow and develop the private water management business,” he added.

World Bank Lends \$250 Million USD for Punjab Irrigation Project

Haroon Mirani, OOSKAnews, ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- The World Bank in mid-March approved \$250 million USD to support a major irrigation program in Pakistan.

The Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Improvement Program is part of a broader, \$1.09 billion USD program to support Pakistan’s growth agenda for reducing poverty.

The project’s goals include improving efficiency of water supply and irrigation practices, crop diversification and measures to ensure “more crop per drop.”

Pakistan relies on the Indus Basin Water System for basic food security and water supply for all

sectors of the economy. Seventy percent of the cropped area serviced by the river system’s 60,000 kilometers of canals is in Punjab province.

This canal system is archaic and highly inefficient. According to estimates cited by the World Bank, 40 percent of the system’s water is lost in community watercourses, while during flood irrigation, 20-25 percent of water is lost due to uneven fields and poorly designed farms. The bank wants to mitigate those issues.

The agricultural productivity program is divided into four parts.

The first focuses on high-efficiency irrigation systems such as drip, bubbler and sprinkler, which

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