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**LEE KUAN YEW WATER PRIZE 2024 PRESENTED TO PROFESSOR GERTJAN MEDEMA FOR HIS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS IN REVOLUTIONISING THE APPLICATION OF WASTEWATER-BASED EPIDEMIOLOGY FOR VIRUS DETECTION**



*Caption: From left to right, Senior Minister Teo Chee Hean, Prize Council Chairman; Professor Gertjan Medema, Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2024 Laureate; Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore; and Professor Leo Tan, Board Member of Temasek Foundation. (Photo credit: SIWW2024)*

**Singapore, 18 June 2024** – Guest-of-Honour, Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, President of the Republic of Singapore, presented the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize 2024 to Professor Gertjan Medema at the Award Ceremony and Banquet held at The Clifford Pier, The Fullerton Bay Hotel earlier today.

Professor Medema is awarded for his breakthrough research and discovery, and significant contributions in the field of wastewater-based epidemiology (WBE). His research revolutionised the application of WBE for virus detection in wastewater during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020, Professor Medema, a renowned microbiologist and an expert in water quality and health, and his team, recognised the need for early detection and monitoring, and began collecting wastewater samples across the Netherlands to test for the SARS-CoV-2 virus. He quickly focused his team's research on curbing the spread of the virus in the community through wastewater surveillance. The results were promising when evidence of the virus was detected in the wastewater of several cities even before they were officially reported in these cities.

Professor Medema's work has been foundational in establishing WBE as a tool for public health surveillance during the pandemic. The impact of his work was evident from his first publication in this area which garnered substantial attention with over 1,400 citations and more than 34,000 views between 2020 and 2023. Wastewater surveillance has since been adopted worldwide as a powerful tool for the early detection of diseases like SARS-CoV-2, even before cases are reported through clinical testing. This in turn provides valuable insights into the prevalence of the virus in a community, and a proven cost-effective and non-invasive method for tracking the spread of the disease.

Launched in 2008, the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize honours outstanding contributions by individuals or organisations towards solving the world's water problems by developing or applying innovative technologies or implementing policies and programmes which benefit humanity. The Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is one of the key highlights of the Singapore International Water Week (SIWW).

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#### **About the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize**

Launched in 2008 to honour outstanding contributions by individuals or organisations towards solving the world's water problems by developing or applying innovative technologies, or implementing policies and programmes which benefit humanity, the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is the highlight of the Singapore International Water Week. Named after Singapore's first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize laureate receives S\$300,000, a certificate and a gold medallion at the award ceremony held during SIWW. The Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize is presented in partnership with Temasek Foundation.

#### **About the Singapore International Water Week ([www.siww.com.sg](http://www.siww.com.sg))**

As one of the premier global platforms, the biennial Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) gathers thought leaders, experts and practitioners from governments, cities, utilities, and industry to share knowledge and best practices on innovative water, coastal and flood solutions, and foster partnerships to tackle urban water and associated climate challenges.

Organised by PUB, Singapore's National Water Agency and Singapore's Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, SIWW flagship programmes include the Lee Kuan Yew Water Prize, Leaders Roundtable and Summit, Water Convention, Water Expo, Thematic and Business Forums and Technical Site Visits. The 10th edition of SIWW will be held from 18 to 22 June 2024 at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre in Singapore, alongside CleanEnviro Summit Singapore organised by Singapore's National Environment Agency.

To find out more:

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