



The Sahel Young Water Champions (SYWC)

A Movement to Transform the Sahel through Water, Youth and Entrepreneurial Innovation
and

The Young Hydrologic Society (YHS) - India

A Unified Platform to Enhance the Participation of Young Hydrologists from the Global South

are delighted to invite you to a

Webinar on Entrepreneurial Innovation in Hydrometry

*Technology, Partnerships and Locally-Driven Solutions for Smart and Sustainable
Water Resources Management in the Sahel and West Africa*

Co-organised with the AGRHYMET Regional Climate Centre for West Africa and the Sahel (Niamey, Niger), the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO HydroHub and WMO Youth Network), the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) Early Career Committee, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, the University of Labé (Guinea), and the Geneva Water Hub

Tuesday, 15 September 2026, 12:00 – 13:30 UTC/GMT

Zoom link: <https://unige.zoom.us/j/68460984230>

Simultaneous Interpretation English-French

The Sahel is facing an existential water management challenge. Floods are affecting communities against a backdrop of limited capacity in operational early-warning systems. Droughts are destroying crops and contributing to worsening food security crises. In this context, decision-makers and those working on the ground often manage emergencies with little advance planning.

And yet, water resources are abundant, and technological, institutional and entrepreneurial solutions are within our reach. The Sahel sits atop Africa's largest aquifers, including the Senegal-Mauritanian, the Taoudéni, the Iullemmeden and the Lake Chad Basin Aquifer Systems. It possesses immense potential for renewable energy and a large, educated and determined young population. It could become a breadbasket of the African continent and a global hub for innovative hydrological solutions.

To achieve this, one condition is non-negotiable: **access to reliable data, effective monitoring systems and operational hydrometric services capable of saving lives, securing resources and designing the major infrastructure of tomorrow.**

However, despite decades of efforts and successive regional programmes, none has resulted in a sustainable regional framework. Most have suffered from the same shortcomings: a top-down approach, a heavy reliance on imported equipment, external expertise and funding, and an inability to mobilise the endogenous capacities that do exist in the region.

In response, a regional workshop on innovation is proposed to mark the start of a roadmap towards a new endogenous, systemic and entrepreneurial paradigm. This workshop would be designed as the first step of an annual regional event dedicated to hydrometric innovation, bringing together public agencies, universities, young professionals, startups, technology providers and development partners.

The ambition extends far beyond the workshop itself: the aim is to lay the foundations for an open, modular and interoperable regional forecasting architecture, coupled with an operational structure within AGRHYMET CCR-AOS, capable of unifying fragmented efforts and enabling the gradual scaling up of national and regional information and early warning systems.

In preparation for the regional innovation workshop, a number of experience-sharing events are planned, including an initial webinar on 15 September 2026 which will examine recent achievements in India. Indeed, with its shared monsoon-driven climatic traits and its socio-cultural affinities with the Sahel, India offers a remarkably relevant model of success.

Its National Hydrology Programme, its digital water-information platforms, community-based groundwater management under Atal Bhujal Yojana, and the country's university-startup ecosystem provide lessons in large-scale modernisation, institutional coordination, data services, endogenous technology development and user engagement. These experiences should be assessed critically and adapted - not copied - to Sahelian institutional, environmental and market conditions.

The Sahel Young Water Champions were able to see this for themselves during their visit to India in October 2025 to attend the International Assembly on Hydrological Sciences (IAHS 2025-UNESCO), at the invitation of the Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee. At the invitation of the Ambassador of Burkina Faso to India, the SYWC subsequently presented an innovative proposal for a partnership with India at the **1st India-Africa Symposium in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.**

This strategic proposal, entitled *‘Transforming the Sahel through water, youth and entrepreneurial innovation: Towards an innovative, two-way strategic partnership with India’*, will be presented during a plenary panel session at the **West African Regional Water Forum (FREAO)** in Abidjan on 24–25 September 2026. **The regional workshop on innovation in hydrometry, scheduled for early 2027, will serve as its logical and operational follow-up.**

The National Hydrology Project for India showed that (i) a flexible, decentralized implementation model can enable large-scale institutional transformation; (ii) sustained investment in capacity building strengthens institutions and enables reform; and (iii) a system-based, cross-program approach can catalyze broader sectoral transformation. In particular, the Project played a catalytic role in expanding domestic market capacity and establishing the foundation for future private sector engagement in performance-based and annuity-type service contracts. These market-enabling outcomes created jobs through the growth of the vendor base, improved cost efficiency, widened technology adoption, and strengthened long-term delivery potential. Moreover, the hybrid model of centralized oversight with decentralized delivery proved effective in the context of India’s federal structure. It is thus highly relevant to West

Africa where the goal is also to achieve a « federal » structure for hydromet services through regional organisations, river basin organisations and national services.

AGENDA

Time (UTC)	
12:00 - 12:10	Welcome Remarks by Agrhymet CCR-AOS, WMO, UL, IAHS and GWH (facilitator)
12:10 - 12:20	Presentation of the SYWC Movement and of the Proposed Innovation Workshop <i>Speaker: Abdou Wahab Halidou Mounkaila, SYWC member and PhD student at the University of Abomey-Calavi. Benin</i>
12:20 - 12:50	Keynote presentation: India National Hydrology Project (NHP) and the Use of Remote Sensing in Water Resources Management <i>Keynote Speaker: Anju Gaur, Senior Water Resources Specialist, World Bank, Delhi</i>
12:50 - 13:00	Opportunities for Collaboration between India and Initiatives in the Sahel and West Africa <i>Speaker: Abinash Ganapathy, Secretary of YHS India</i>
13:00 - 13:25	Question-and-Answer Session
13:25 - 13:30	Conclusion and Next Steps by SYWC and YHS-India

CALL TO ACTION

In the face of the climate and water crisis, inaction carries costs in human lives, economic losses and security crises. Although several Hydromet projects have helped to develop networks at national level, there is still a lack of a sustainable, interoperable regional framework that can be managed locally. A new initiative must therefore build on past lessons while changing the delivery model to suit current needs and the local context.

What is different this time is the proposed approach: demand-led, endogenous, entrepreneurial, youth-driven, locally-owned and anchored in public institutions, with balanced South-South cooperation and sustained support from regional and international partners.

By nurturing young talent and investing in locally-driven start-ups, the next generation will be prepared not only for the challenges facing the Sahel, but also for the immense opportunities presented by its water resources, which remain so under-utilised. The aim is to reposition the Sahel not as a region plagued by water crises, but as a **global hub for innovative solutions tailored to climate challenges.**

The Young Water Champions for the Sahel (JCES), the Young Hydrological Society – India, with the support of AGRHYMET CCR-AOS, the IAHS Young Researchers' Committee, the WMO Youth Network, the WMO HydroHub, IIT Roorkee, the University of Labé together with other confirmed partners, **invite stakeholders to shape and implement this agenda.**

Join this Movement. The Sahel's Water Cannot Wait.

**Together, Let's Make Water a Force for Peace, Prosperity and
Unity in the Sahel and West Africa!**