



# SOLAR INNOVATION MAKES CLEAN DRINKING WATER A REALITY IN SUNDERBANS : SAFE WITH HSBC

One step more towards Sustainable Development Goals: Water & Sanitation for all



Project title : Solar Water Program for Sunderbans – SUN-VILL WATM  
Implemented by : SAFE Funded by : HSBC  
Project location : Sunderbans Project site : Pakhirala  
Event : **Opening ceremony, 7th December 2018**



## Sunderbans got what it desperately needed for years : Drinking water

Until two years ago, Sunderbans had no clean drinking water project, except for depending on few handpumps. South Asian Forum for Environment, SAFE with support from the HSBC, brought together the SunVill WATM project in year 2017, a community intervention on sustainable solar village for water, agriculture, sanitation and Hygiene in Sunderbans, world heritage site. The third drinking water project with solar innovation in series successfully launched at Pakhirala village of Sunderbans on 7th December 2018. Last year, first project installed in Gosaba village and second in Tilplighiri village of Sundarbans providing clean drinking water and sanitation to communities.

*SUN-VILL WATM' implemented SAFE) in partnership with HSBC is a 3- year project till 2020, that will instill six solar-run water ATM facilities for 18 hamlets of Sundarbans, to provide safe drinking water and hygienic sanitation to nearly 10,000 coastal families. The project will ensure 24×7 supply of safe drinking water, hygienic sanitation, harvested surface water for community usage and equitable access to Sun-Vill WASH powered by solar energy. This project is a comprehensive extension of WASH-US project providing clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to marginal communities covering four major slums of Kolkata (2014-17, SAFE & HSBC).*



The launching ceremony held on 7th December at Pakhirala village in Sunderbans, participated by HSBC officials, SAFE project team, local Panchayat members, brought the most awaited gift to the village families and that is, 'drinking water'.

Namita Mandal, local resident said, “This project in our village will change our life, now I can save a lot of money, as this water comes in good quality at a nominal fee”.

However, majority don't buy water, as they cannot afford the cost. Women in the family gets her household's daily water supply from whatever local supply is available in the locality. Across the Sunderbans, rural households do not have access to clean drinking water; they must rely on water sources from handpumps or public standpipes connection that may be unhealthy. Women and girls, walk miles to have access to water. It takes 3-4 hours to collect the two pots of water for the family, and in many areas time length is even more.

Despite poverty, majority of villagers are constrained to buy water for infants, lactating mothers, patients in their families, not only the Sunvill WASH project saves considerable time and effort, but also brings drinking water at a nominal fee of 50 paise litre, said Kailash Biswas, Block Secretary, Panchayat member at the ceremony.

Sunderbans faces a number of limitations in achieving expanded access to clean water, the irony is that coastal Sunderbans villages



**Padma Jahagirdar**  
Center Director, HSBC, Kolkata.

“The project achieves the water and sanitation goals through a CSR programme of HSBC, and we are committed to eco conservation by not only humanity, but social responsibility too. Thanks SAFE for their efforts...”



**Dr. Dipayan Dey**  
Chair, SAFE

“Water and sanitation is the basic necessity of life that gets compromised due to climate change impacts, with this project Sun-Vill WASH we could enable the vulnerable communities of Sunderban with climate preparedness and as well make them free from water-poverty trap...”

are islands, with only 4% of fresh water-available. World Bank report has pointed out poor situation of drinking water and sanitation in Sunderbans. Primary need assessment survey and resource mapping conducted by SAFE shows that having no water has devastating effects both on individuals and communities.

People need water to live. In Tiplighiri and other remote islands of Sunderbans, it was observed through socio-metric surveys and health camps that children under five suffer acute malnutrition, however there is free food with availability of local fish from ponds and vegetables grown in open fields, but there is no water suitable for drinking. The drinking water solution came in Tiplighiri village with unveiling of the second unit of Sun-vill WATM on 6th April 2018.

The first unit Sun-Vill WATM, was launched on 24 November 2017, in Gosaba, Sunderbans, near to the hospital to provide safe drinking water to the patients, pregnant women, mothers, children, senior citizens in priorities and local community members. The event was attended by officials of HSBC, stakeholders including, local authorities, school students and community and members of SAFE.

Local authorities congratulated the project partners HSBC and SAFE, and publicly announced that implementing a project of this kind is not easy in a terrain like Sunderbans, however, the first project creates a milestone in bringing clean drinking water to the poorest and especially patients and school children in the area.





## Major impacts

- Reduction in infections and water borne diseases by 70-75% in the community of 5 surrounding villages.
- Project rendering a cost cut of 45% per household on average in medical expenses in a span of three years.
- Equitable access to water, energy and sanitation to almost 2500 households in a year.

Since year 2014, the SAFE & HSBC collaborative project is providing safe drinking water to poorest of the poor. Internationally recognized and numerous award winner WASH innovation is attributing to 10 sustainable development goals out of 17 goals identified and defined by the UN Framework Convention to Climate Change.

### Awards SAFE & HSBC won for the project :

- UN Water for life Award in year 2015
- Shortlisted for Ashden in year 2015
- Hogan Lovells Award for community Solar innovation 2017
- FICCI Water Awards 2018, 1st Prize community initiatives by industry category, to HSBC in partnership with South Asian Forum for Environment.



HSBC team in towards Pakhirala village, Sunderbans on 7th December 2018



SAFE & HSBC partnership delivers the 3rd solar run drinking water project in Sunderbans



The 3rd solar powered drinking water and sanitation project for community in Sunderbans, SAFE with HSBC



Ongoing health camp at the project site at Pakhirala village, Sunderbans, to create awareness on health and hygiene.



The Sunvill WATM launching ceremony on 7th December 2018, attended by HSBC officials, SAFE project team, Panchayat members and community.



Local residents of Pakhirala joins to celebrate the inaugural event of drinking water project





Project LCC member from HSBC switches on the solar panel of the water treatment plant.



Dr. Dipayan Dey, Chair, SAFE explains the innovations that makes the project work in a terrain like Sunderbans.



Local community rejoices the drinking water by touch of WATM card.



HSBC and SAFE team at project site Sun-Vill WATM, Pakhirala, Gosaba block, Sunderbans