



Introduction

1 The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) was established on 15 February 1997 under the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), an informal dialogue process in which 43 countries from Asia and Europe¹, the ASEAN Secretariat and the European Commission participate. ASEM seeks to strengthen co-operation between Asia and Europe in three key areas - political and security dialogue, enhanced economic co-operation as well as social, cultural and educational co-operation. ASEF was set up to complement the dialogue at the inter-governmental level under ASEM and create better mutual understanding between the peoples of Asia and Europe through greater intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

2 Fostering contacts and exchanges in the field of education between Asia and Europe is one of ASEF's main priorities. To this end, ASEF launched a number of programmes and activity series to strengthen linkages and co-operation among educational institutions of Asia and Europe and promote contacts among students at different levels.

3 Launched in December 1998, the **Asia-Europe Classroom (AEC)** is ASEF's main platform to forge contacts among secondary and high schools, teachers and students in Asia and Europe. In the beginning of 2006, the Asia-Europe Classroom was renamed as the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET).

4 The AEC was conceived at a brainstorming session attended by secondary and high school teachers and educators from Asia and Europe held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in May 1998. The original challenge was to harness the potential of infocomm technology (ICT) in connecting secondary and high schools of Asia and Europe and construct the framework for a "cyber classroom" that would promote intellectual and inter-cultural exchanges among secondary and high school teachers and students of Asia and Europe. The AEC has since evolved further.

5 Today, the principal activities held under the AEC framework are as follows:

- (a) The annual Conference, which is attended by secondary and high school teachers from Asia and Europe;
- (b) The various AEC on-line collaborative learning projects involving different groups of students from secondary and high schools of Asia and Europe; and
- (c) The AEC Students Enrichment Programme for secondary and high school students from Asia and Europe to further develop their interest in specialised fields in a multicultural environment.

Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET)

6 The AEC-NET should be understood as a network of networks, and as a project involving all the relevant partners in ICT education. More importantly, ICT should be seen as a means towards an end. This objective is no other than bringing students and educators closer together for better understanding and intercultural collaborative learning.

¹ From Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam; and from Europe: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

7 Please refer to Appendix A showing the organisational chart of the Asia-Europe Classroom Network (AEC-NET).

Association of Highschools for Europe Asia Dialogue (AHEAD)

8 The Association of Highschools for Europe Asia Dialogue (AHEAD) would be evolved as a result of a concept refinement based on the analysis of the different elements of the International Teachers' Conference to be kept or modified. First and foremost, teachers involved in the project should not only be educators with a particular interest in developing closer ties with other European or Asian colleagues or mere representatives of their own schools. Instead, practitioners present in any structure fostering ICT collaborative learning should be real facilitators, promoting of representing networks of schools in their own countries, becoming at the same time, focal points in the necessary dialogue and co-operation that should be established on a regular basis between schools and the Ministries of Education / National Agencies for Education.

Ministerial Steering Committee

9 This committee comprises of departments in the Ministries of Education / National Agencies of Education of the ASEM member states involved in ICT learning. A network aiming at promoting ICT collaborative learning cannot be understood without the close involvement of the Ministries of Education / National Agencies of Education. The present experience of the International Teachers' Conference constitutes a valid proof of such a need. Therefore, co-operation between schools and Ministries of Education / National Agencies of Education should take the form of a stable partnership.

10 For this reason, the establishment of a permanent dialogue between Ministries / National Agencies and schools should be the most important aspect of the project and not, as it has been so far, the face-to-face encounters that were not even based on criteria of broad representation. Meetings should complement the ongoing collaborative partnership.

Coordinating Committee

11 ASEF enjoys a position of privilege as a potential interface in the evolution of such a partnership. Therefore, ASEF should play the role of general coordinator. At least two (2) representatives from Asia and two (2) from Europe representing both schools and ministries / national agencies should be part of the mechanism.

Advisory Board

12 ASEF could not claim any specific expertise in the field of ICT education. Therefore, a geographical balanced group of selected experts representing the different sensitivities and perspectives involved should work as a provider of academic criteria in order to evaluate the different activities of the project as well as to assess and advise on the best direction and strategies for the future.

Institutional Partners

13 In the last years, several institutions and networks have been developed in order to foster ICT learning and secondary/high school co-operation. The Asia-Europe Classroom should benefit from experiences coming from those partners. This need for the development of institutional and civil society links should be a mutually enriching exercise on which the success of the project would highly depend.

Supporting Partners

14 As other experiences clearly show, ICT collaborative learning at the secondary and high school level represents an area with considerable potential to attract private funding, either from public institutions / corporations or from foundations specifically interested in promoting education and ICT learning.

15 ASEF will foster such project oriented partnerships that should not only reduce the costs of our activities, but at the same time, highlight the stature the AEC-NET deserves in the world of ICT education and collaborative intercultural learning.

The AEC-NET Conference

16 The key objectives of the AEC-NET Conference are as follows:

- (a) To foster collaborations among secondary and high school teachers and students in Asia and Europe with a view to promoting collaborative, cross-cultural learning and bi-regional exchanges.
- (b) To encourage the advancement of education through the use of infocommunication technology (ICT).
- (c) To develop innovative and interactive platforms offering online inter-cultural learning opportunities for secondary and high schools in Asia and Europe; and
- (d) To develop a network of secondary and high schools from Asia and Europe

17 The Conference is usually held over a period of four (4) days and the essential components of the programme are as follows:

- (a) **Professional Enrichment** - Two or three internationally-recognised experts are invited to give presentations on topics dealing with the latest in ICT applications, particularly in connection with education. Alternatively, activities are conducted to develop the pedagogical skills of the teachers.
- (b) **AEC Projects** – Participants will review the results of the AEC on-line collaborative learning projects that had been developed in the preceding year and shortlisted for the AEC Awards, presented to the most outstanding projects. Participants are also encouraged to submit proposals for on-line collaborative learning projects that teachers and students could develop over the course of the next 12 months. These proposals are presented and further developed in different Working Groups during the meeting. The outcome of the Working Group discussions is then presented at a plenary session for adoption.
- (c) **Introduction to Host Country's High School Education System** - Activities, including visits to places of cultural and historical significance in the host country, are organised to give the participants a better understanding of the different aspects of the host country. The host country might also take the opportunity to organise activities to better acquaint the participants with its approach to secondary and high school education, which may include visits to schools or specialised training centres for teachers.
- (d) **Networking** - Participants will be given adequate opportunities during the programme to interact with one another at the social level, outside of the plenary sessions and the working groups. This is to engender camaraderie and *esprit de corps* among participants, thereby fostering the creation of human networks that could form the foundations of future and further contacts and collaborations.

18 The Conference is open to secondary high school teachers and educators in the 43 ASEM member countries, who would like to propose or collaborate in ICT projects designed to promote exchanges among students aged between 9 to 19 years old. To enable them to draw full benefit from the Conference, participants need to:

- (a) be proficient in both spoken and written English;
- (b) have sufficient knowledge about ICT generally, and ICT applications in learning and training; and
- (c) be prepared to share their experiences and ideas on ICT projects and/or propose project ideas.

19 The first conference was held in Singapore in September 2001, in collaboration with Raffles Girls Secondary School and the Singapore Ministry of Education. The second Conference was co-organised with the National Board of Education of Finland, in Tampere in September 2002. The third Conference was held in Bogor, Indonesia, in collaboration with Madania School and the Indonesian Department of National Education in September 2003. The fourth Conference was hosted in Groemitz, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, with the support of Kreisgymnasium Neustadt. The fifth Conference was hosted in Beijing, China, in collaboration with Beijing Jingshan School, with the support of the Ministry of Education. The last conference was co-organised with the Gymnasium of Livadia, with support from the Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia, Greece.

The AEC Projects

20 These projects were developed during the annual Conference. By collaborating closely and pooling their resources, teachers and students from secondary and high schools of Asia and Europe learn more about one another and about one another's views and perspectives on a broad spectrum of issues. These projects have also enabled students involved to acquire new tools of learning and establish friendships with their counterparts in the other region.

21 A list of the AEC Project Groups that have resulted from previous AEC Conferences is attached at Appendix B.

22 To recognise efforts to produce outstanding on-line learning platforms or applications under the AEC framework, ASEF presents **AEC Awards** (each consisting of a cash grant of Euro 2,000) to AEC Project Groups that have developed the most outstanding on-line learning platforms/applications at the AEC Conference. The grant should be used either to further develop the AEC Project or to develop a new project. The key criteria used to assess the AEC Projects are as follows:

- (a) The level of participation and involvement of students in developing the project;
- (b) The contribution that the project can make towards advancing intercultural understanding among high school students of Asia and Europe;
- (c) The effective application of ICT tools in promoting collaborative learning; and
- (d) The quality of the overall presentation of the project (design and structure).

The AEC Student Enrichment Programme

23 The AEC-SEP is targeted at bringing high school students together. Its main aims are as follows:

- (a) Add a new dimension to the AEC initiative and further its long term objective of promoting cross-cultural exchanges and collaborative learning beyond the classroom at the secondary and high school level between Asia and Europe;
- (b) By giving them an opportunity to learn in a multicultural environment, instill in secondary and high school students of Asia and Europe a greater awareness of the other region through personal encounters and intercultural experience, as well as a greater sensitivity to and appreciation of the cultural diversity, which engenders different value systems and viewpoints;
- (c) Enhance the thinking skills (analysis, evaluation, constructive criticism, reconciliation, etc) and social skills (communications, interpersonal skills, gender and cultural sensitivity, teamwork, consultation, etc) of secondary and high school students that would enable them to work effectively in different cultural environments; and
- (d) Provide secondary and high school students an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills in areas related to the theme of each programme.

24 Each AEC-SEP will be organised around a specific academic field. Different programme formats would be employed depending on the subject matter. These may include lectures, working group discussions case studies, and workshops related to the theme of each AEC-SEP. In general, however, the AEC-SEP should comprise the following components:

- (a) Project-based module, requiring students from one region to work with another from the other region on a common project;
- (b) Camp activities that will foster the discovery spirit, adventure, leadership and teambuilding;
- (c) Mentoring by experts in the relevant fields;
- (d) Personal development activities, such as social etiquette, study skills, IT related skills, etc;
- (e) Field trips or study visits and homestays.

25 Participants at each AEC-SEP must meet the following criteria:

- (a) Must be a secondary/high school student between 14 – 16 years of age;
- (b) Must be recommended by the national accreditation authority; and
- (c) Must be proficient in English, and have special aptitude in the theme of the AEC-SEP.

26 The inaugural AEC-SEP is the Asia-Europe Scientists of Tomorrow Programme (or "AESOTOPE"), which ASEF organised in close collaboration with the Italian Institute for the Physics of Matter (*Istituto Nazionale per la Fisica della Materia* or INFN) of Genoa, Italy. The event was held during the Genoa Science Festival in October 2004.

Conclusion

27 ASEF is open to work with interested academic institutions and national education organisations in organising activities under the AEC-NET framework on a co-financing basis. Host countries would benefit substantially from hosting AEC-NET activities as they could promote and enhance the profile of national programmes to promote the use of ICT in education. These activities also offer opportunities for educators and high school teachers not only to establish useful contacts with counterparts in other countries in Asia and Europe, but also to explore the possibility of joint collaborations.

28 The People-to-People Exchange Department is the main contact point in ASEF for all substantive and organisational matters. Responsibility for the overall management and co-ordination of work relating to the different activities is that of the Director for People-to-People Exchange and the Coordinator of the AEC-NET Programme. As the situation varies from one activity to another, the detailed division of responsibilities in respect of organisational matters between ASEF and partner organisations will be determined after discussions.²

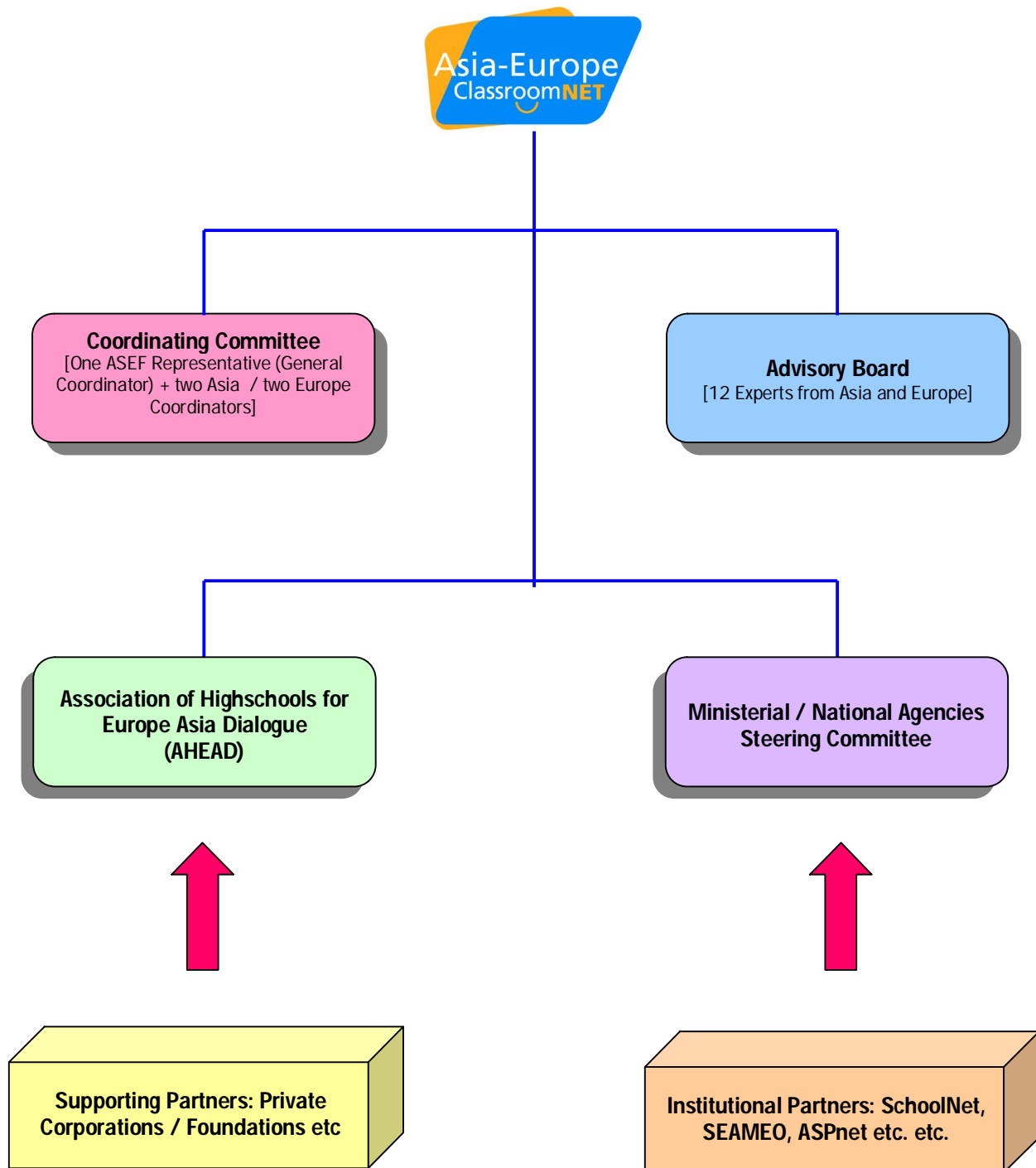
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² Please note that given ASEF's commitment to regularly review our programmes and initiatives with a view to ensuring their continuing effectiveness, the provisions of this paper are subject to further confirmation.



ASIA-EUROPE CLASSROOM NETWORK CONFERENCE

VENUE/DATE	CO-ORGANISERS	RESULTING AEC PROJECTS
1 st AEC-NET Conference Singapore 2 - 5 Sept 2001	Ministry of Education, Singapore Raffles Girls' Secondary School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effects of Modernisation on Agriculture 2. Nuclear Energy 3. Cultural Fusion 4. Water is Life 5. 1st AE Classroom Meeting Point 6. Halo-Halo to Mooncake 7. T.O.F.U (TransOceanic Forum United)
2 nd AEC-NET Conference Tampere, Finland 11 – 14 Sept 2002	National Board of Education, Finland Education Committee of the City of Tampere	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. e-World 2. Face 2 Face 3. Handshakes All Around the World - A Virtual Homestay 4. Let's Do the Same Lesson 5. Living in a Multicultural World 6. Merging Melodies 7. Ndolalak and Hambo 8. The Multicultural Exchanger - A Newspaper Online 9. Women All Over the World
3 rd AEC-NET Conference Bogor, Indonesia 28 Sept – 2 Oct 2003	Madania School Department of National Education European Commission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Local Sacred Building 2. A Long Journey – A Global Story 3. Cultural Cybercards 4. Culture Ambassador 5. Peace Project 6. Science Beyond the Classroom 7. The Students' Online Magazine

VENUE/DATE	CO-ORGANISERS	RESULTING AEC PROJECTS
<p>4th AEC-NET Conference</p> <p>Grömitz, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany</p> <p>27 Sept – 1 Oct 2004</p>	<p>Kreisgymnasium Neustadt</p> <p>European Commission</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Asia-Europe EduRepository 2. Cultural Kaleidoscope 2005 3. How Do Your Winds Blow? 4. Multicultural Webquest on <i>mySchool!</i> 5. Online Smart Learning 6. Peace Project 7. Puppet on the Web 8. Science Beyond the Classroom 9. Social Entrepreneur 10. The Online Students' Magazine 11. The World in a Book 12. Utopia@VHome
<p>5th AEC-NET Conference</p> <p>Beijing, China</p> <p>25 – 29 Sept 2005</p>	<p>Beijing Jingshan School</p> <p>Ministry of Education, China</p> <p>European Commission</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Language in Asia and Europe 2. Cultural Fiction 3. Cultural Kaleidoscope 2006 4. Eco-Cultural Tourism 5. Foodfest@VirtualHomestay 6. Global Music Composition 7. Local Traditions and Ceremonies 8. Mastering Media 9. Mosaic 10. Peace Project - Phase 3 11. Ten In One 12. The World in a Book 2005
<p>6th AEC-NET Conference</p> <p>Kerkini, Serres Prefecture, Greece</p> <p>9 – 13 October 2006</p>	<p>Gymnasium of Livadia</p> <p>Hellenic Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Greece</p> <p>Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Central Macedonia-Greece</p> <p>European Commission</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All Ahoy 2. Asia and Europe Money 3. Building the Children's Online Geographical Atlas 4. Cultural Fiction 5. Cultural Kaleidoscope 2007

VENUE/DATE	CO-ORGANISERS	RESULTING AEC PROJECTS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Cultural Lessons Exemplars (CELEX) 7. Experience Exchange of in Learning English as a Foreign Language 8. Flavours of the World 9. FoodTaboos@VirtualHomestay 10. Going Global Family 11. I Investigate my History, I Shape my Future 12. iMyths, Beliefs and Legends 13. Insights into Foreign Schools 14. Junior Cartoonists 15. Let's Make Movies! 16. Links in History 17. Local Industry and Enterprise 18. Local Traditions and Ceremonies 19. Mastering Media – The Sequel 20. Mosaic 21. Natural Disaster 22. Peace Project 2007 23. Renewable Energies 24. School Events 25. The Book of Our Multicoloured Dreams and Dreamers 26. The Silk Road 27. The World in a Book 2006 28. Understanding Other Cultures via the Internet (UCI) 29. V.O.C.A.L: Caves Exploration 30. Weblink Q 31. When Nature Calls 32. Young Diplomats

VENUE/DATE	CO-ORGANISERS	RESULTING AEC PROJECTS
Jan – December 2007		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. About the Past 2. Asian-European e-class 3. Brick&Mortar@VirtualHomestay 4. Cultural Kaleidoscope 2008 5. Dictionary of Water 6. East or West, Global is the Best 7. Fit and Easy 8. Going Global Family 2007 9. Insights into Foreign School 10. Literary Corner 11. Local Industry and Enterprise 12. Mastering Media Goes Digital 13. My Urban Utopia – The Ideal City 14. Project ACE - AEC-NET Culture and Education Project - "Building Bridges Beyond Borders" 15. Save Our Planet Using Biodegradable Plastics 16. Tailor Inc. 17. The Olympic Games 18. Toys of Our Youth 19. V.O.C.A.L: Caves Exploration 20. Young Diplomats – International Ambassadors

ASIA-EUROPE CLASSROOM - STUDENTS ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

VENUE/DATE	CO-ORGANISERS	PARTICIPATING PROJECTS
AESOTOPE - Asia-Europe Scientists of Tomorrow Programme	Italian Institute for the Physics of Matter	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploration of Boiler Scale Formation (Austria) 2. Rational Energy Use at School (Belgium) 3. Selirong Island: A Truly Unique Mangrove Forest in Brunei (Brunei Darussalam) 4. Entertainment Robot (China) 5. Facilities for Urban Water System Cleaning by Raising Seawater with Tidal Energy (China) 6. Multi-Functional Remote Control Disinfection Car (China) 7. Evo Forest Research Project Autumn 2003 (Finland) 8. Digital Pin-Hole Camera and Digital Aspects of Semi-Conductor Physics and Diffraction of Light (Germany) 9. From Hero of Alexandra to Watt, From the Aeolipile to the Steam Engine (Greece) 10. Distillation Tank to Overcome Water Crisis in Small Islands and Coastal Areas (Indonesia) 11. The Mediterranean Sea and its Different Stories: Sulla Rotta di Omera (Italy) 12. The "Lab of Tomorrow" Project: Teaching Science in the Science School Laboratory of Tomorrow (Italy) 13. Fermenting (Korea) 14. Turning Prawn Pond Sludge into a Fertilizer (Malaysia) 15. The Versatility of Jatropha Curcas Plant (Philippines) 16. NEWater: Singapore's Water Reclamation Project (Singapore) 17. Study of One Prototype for Desalinate the Sea Water (Spain) 18. Forest at School (Sweden) 19. Iron Removal from Groundwater by Catalytic Oxygenation in Drinking Water Production (Vietnam)