



Prize for Sustainable Hydropower Projects Awarded at UNFCCC Montreal Climate Change Conference

MONTREAL, Dec. 5 /CNW Telbec/ - The International Hydropower Association (IHA) announced the three winners of the 2005 Blue Planet Prize at an event held during the United Nations Conference of Parties on Climate Change in Montreal, Canada.

The projects that received the Blue Planet Prize this year are:

The Arrow Lakes Generating Station (185 MW), Canada - recognized for social, environmental and technical excellence.

The Sechelt Creek Generating Station (16 MW), Canada - recognized for social, environmental and technical excellence.

The Andhikhola Hydel and Rural Electrification Scheme (5 MW), Nepal - recognized for excellence in socio-economic benefits and capacity- building.

"All three projects demonstrate a strong consideration of environmental, social and economic aspects and, as such, are excellent examples of sustainable hydropower development," said H.E. Anita Utseth, the Norwegian Deputy Minister for Petroleum and Energy, who presided over the awards ceremony. Introduced by the International Hydropower Association, in association with UNESCO, to recognize excellence in sustainable practices at hydropower facilities in operation for a minimum of three years, the Blue Planet Prize is awarded every two years. Facilities are evaluated in accordance with the IHA Hydropower Sustainability Guidelines and Compliance Protocol. This evaluation tool, recently acknowledged by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), enables schemes to be judged on key technical, environmental, social and economic aspects.

The 2005 Blue Planet Prize Jury included:

Prof. Dr Andras Szollosi-Nagy, Deputy Assistant Director General, UNESCO;
Prof. Dr Dogan Altinbilek, President, International Hydropower Association (IHA);
Mr Andrew Scanlon, Chair of the IHA Environment Committee; Mr Oivind Johansen, Senior Water and Energy Advisor, Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, Norway.

About Arrows Lakes

The Arrow Lakes Generating Station was completed in 2002 through a special public-private partnership. The original Keenleyside dam (owned by BC Hydro) was built in 1968, 40 km north of the US/Canada border. The dam regulates the annual spring flood of the Columbia River. It minimises the risk of flooding in Washington and Oregon States during spring, and stores water for the rest of the year. Significant technical challenges had to be overcome to make hydro generation efficient and economic at the site; the turbines operate over an unusual range of water level (head: 4.5 - 22.5 m). The flow released through this station also enables increased generation from several schemes downstream. At the same time, the scheme delivers benefits relating to water quality, fish stocks and community development. One half of the net revenues from this scheme go to a trust for reinvestment in the region to promote social, economic and environmental well-being.

About Sechelt Creek

The Sechelt Creek scheme is a private development, which incorporates technical innovation in synergy with the local environment in a remote part of Canada. The scheme's intake and powerhouse have been designed to be as unobtrusive as possible. The development has also been successful in the re-establishment of a thriving salmon run. An important element of the scheme is the partnership with local Sechelt Indian Band and fisheries authorities, leading to benefits for the local community and the environment.

About Andhikhola

The Andhikhola scheme was described as "inspirational" by the inspection team. This scheme delivers reliable water and electricity services to 100,000 local people, improving their quality of life and driving the local economy. The pioneering approach, innovation and application of technology all helped to reduce the costs of rural electrification, making electricity affordable for the first time to 22,000 low income families. In addition, secure supplies of irrigation water have enabled the previously impoverished region to become a net exporter of food products. The scheme undoubtedly created a feeling of ownership and stewardship in the region; at the same time, it has built capacity within Nepal for similar development initiatives.

About IHA

The International Hydropower Association is the global organization advancing hydropower's role in meeting the world's water and energy needs by championing continuous improvement and sustainable practices, by building consensus through strong partnerships with other stakeholders, and driving

initiatives to increase contributions of renewables, including hydropower.
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