

## **Nabsamruddhi and Water.org host joint WASH lending Summit on 14 September in Mumbai**

NABSAMRUDDHI and Water.org came together to host the first WASH Lending Summit of 2023 on 14 September at the Westin, Powai, Mumbai. This is a champion segment for NABSAMRUDDHI under its focus area of Green and Wellness Finance.

Over 60 delegates representing the key stakeholders in the space assembled to dissect the problem statement - challenges faced in WASH lending and the nuances around it. It was felt that the outcomes from the summit will be instrumental in moving the needle towards achievement of the nation's sustainable development goals through WASH.

The proceedings of the event started with a keynote address by Ms. Bonani Roychoudhury, Managing Director, Nabsamruddhi, who touched upon the whole sentiment guiding the organization's goals in the space. She highlighted the criticality of WASH in health and wellness which can ensure a sustainable ecosystem both in the real and financial sectors. She also mentioned that over 90% of about 40,000 ultimate beneficiaries covered under NABSAMRUDDHI's WASH program through 22 partners with cumulative credit exceeding Rs. 200 crore, are women. She set the tone by leaving the audience with a list of pertinent issues to be addressed in the ensuing forum discussions.

This was ably supplemented by Mr. Manoj Gulati (Regional Director, South Asia at Water.Org) an industry veteran with over 25 years of experience, who spoke about the need to look at WASH financing using a gender lens and thereby adding a whole new dimension to it. Among other topics he spoke about mainstreaming climate resilient models and need to move- steadily and firmly.

A vibrant panel including Mr. Ramesh Ganta, GM, NABARD; Mr. Aswini Acharya COO & PSL Head – Inorganic Business, DBS Bank; Ravinder Kumar- National Financial Inclusion Expert, FINISH Society and Mr. Maheep Panwar COO, NABSAMRUDDHI moderated by Shri Gyan Prakash from Water.org touched upon the "Impact of RBI regulations pertaining to WASH financing and ways to strengthen it". Mr Ganta highlighted the various initiatives undertaken by NABARD in WASH segment and also mentioned the Special Refinance Facility to eligible financial institutions for financing WASH related activities at concessional rates. Mr. Aswini Acharya emphasised the need to have a separate sub-target for WASH under Priority Sector Lending Norms to give a much needed impetus to WASH lending. Mr Maheep Panwar elaborated on the steps taken by Nabsamruddhi to scale up WASH lending including coverage of entire risk rating spectrum in respect of client FIs as also partnering with Water.org and other enabling agencies.

Dr. Ravi Modani, Founder & CEO - 121 Finance, an NBFC Factor, emphasised that Collateral free, customized financing mechanism through factoring works well for

receivable financing in respect of WASH MSMEs taking up contracts from ULBs, Panchayats and other Government bodies for setting up FSTPs, STPs and other community level WASH projects by drastically improving TATs, which may be act as a breakthrough for the stakeholders in the WASH ecosystem.

Mr. Sankar Chakraborti, MD & CEO- Acuité Group & Chairman – ESGRisk.ai (the leading ESG rating agency for listed companies in india) discussed about best- in -class ESG rating solutions for entities engaged in WASH lending so as to attract impact investments. He emphasised the need for meaningful partnerships between ESG rating agencies, FIs, impact investors and enabling organisations in WASH lending.

Kamal Chhabra and Rasika Chopra of Microsave Consulting( MSC) conducted a masterclass "raising capital for wash sector" which covered an innovative ESG scoring tool for WASH, various instrument types, impact monitoring and assessment related tools and framework and defined investor approach methodology.

Water.org also showcased sample IEC material being developed for WASH partners of NABSAMRUDHI in both print and AV formats.

The breakout session in three groups with multi-stakeholder participants came out with concrete action planning and policy advocacy such as carving out a specific WASH sub-target under PSL loans by RBI to give an impetus to the segment, focusing on the supply side of WASH lending to ensure innovations and efficient delivery, need for MFIs to recognise WASH as a qualifying asset under Microfinance post RBI's revised Microfinance directions removing the 'income generating loan' criteria, interest discounting rather than subsidies as a more long term solution to support the segment, sensitizing investor classes to treat WASH loans on par with other segments.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Water.org.

Some of the photographs of the event are attached below.

## Lamp lighting by dignitaries



**From Left to Right** – Shri. S.S.Bhatt (CEO, FWWB), Shri. Vivekanand Salimath (Chairman, IDF Financial Services), Smt. Bonani Roychoudhury (MD, NABSAMRUDDHI), Dr. Ravi Modani (Founder & MD, 121 Finance), Shri. Manoj Gulati (Regional Director, Southeast Asia, Water.org), Shri. Sankar Chakraborti (CEO, Acuite Ratings & Research and Chairman ESGRisk.ai)

**Keynote address by Smt. Bonani Roychoudhury (MD, NABSAMRUDDHI)**



**Regional Director South Asia of Water.org Mr Manoj Gulati addresses the summit attendees**



**Panel discussion pertaining to wash financing**



**From Left to Right** – Shri. Gyan Prakash (South-Asia portfolio lead, Water.org), Shri. Aswini Acharya (COO, PSL at DBS Bank), Shri. Ravi Ganta (GM, NABARD), Shri. Maheep Panwar (COO, NABSAMRUDDHI), Shri. Ravinder Kumar (National financial inclusion expert, FINISH Society)



**Dr Ravi Modani speaks about factoring and its relevant in context to WASH**



**Mr.Sankar Chakraborti (MD& CEO- Acuité Group & Chairman – ESGRisk.ai) presents best- in -class ESG rating solutions**



## MSC's Rasika and Kamal conduct a masterclass on aspects of WASH financing



## Breakout groups deliberating and action-planning

