

# Report

## Report of the International Jury

On Friday, the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2012 the Jury of the Delta Alliance Young Professionals Award met at UNESCO-IHE in Delft, the Netherlands, to assess the submissions to the Delta Alliance Young Professional Award. The jury was pleased by the active, international participation in this award, since the call for solutions published in January 2012 drew an impressive number of 53 contributions, originating from 29 countries.

The Jury members appreciated the creativity and originality of the submissions, as well as their scientific quality. Furthermore, the jury was highly impressed by the diversity of the contributions and the broad enthusiasm of young professionals around the world for solving delta issues.

Entries were assessed on the basis of the criteria as published in the announcement of this award:

- Relevance for the acute Delta challenges as referred to in the call
- Scientific quality,
- Creativity & Originality
- Innovativeness of solution
- Degree of integration of approach
- Presentation of solutions

In two selection rounds the jury has decided to grant the Delta Alliance Young Professionals Award to three entries, and to present these, together with the seven entries which qualified as next- best in the present booklet.

The Winners of the 2012 Delta Alliance Young Professionals Award are:

- **Thriving Deltas** by Richard Fisher and Ryan Whipple
- **Re-generation Delta** by Federico Curiel
- **Balance Island** by Sander van Rooij, Emil Kuijs, Bert van Bueren

The following paragraphs give a brief justification for the selection of these three contributions by the Jury.

**Thriving Deltas** proposes the transformation of a location at risk in the Sacramento – San Joachim Delta in California into a pilot ground for new promising developments.

Jury acknowledges the high relevance of this solution to Deltas around the world. The authors of this proposition followed a comprehensive line of thinking, and designed

and presented their idea in a convincing manner. A creative combination of measures is proposed, which is worked and thought through carefully. In the further development of the presented solution, the jury suggests to pay attention to a full integration of the various elements of innovation and alternative land and water use, the impacts on the neighboring areas in the delta and a sound cost-benefit analysis. In this respect potential positive effects on upstream communities could help to increase the feasibility of the solution.

**Re-generating Delta** proposes a strategy for large scale micro-algae harvesting, converting the farmland along the coastline of the Pearl River Delta into large scale open algae harvesting ponds. The Jury appreciates this solution as it is a creative and very relevant contribution to the ongoing discussions about green economy, also in scope of the Rio+20 Summit on sustainable development. The jury was taken by the simplicity and the high scientific quality of this solution, and sees great chances for implementation. Albeit at a relatively initial stage, the jury is convinced that this innovative idea would profit strongly from further elaboration focusing on an in-depth feasibility study (including a societal cost – benefit analysis) and on the possible repeatability of the idea in other river deltas.

**Balance Island** aims at reducing salt intrusion and restoring natural estuarine dynamics and ecology by creating a semi enclosed estuary with a series of constructed sandy islands in the South West Rhine-Meuse Delta in the Netherlands. This truly innovative, creative, nicely presented and original contribution has been thoroughly thought through. Not only the physical and ecological but also the socio-economic aspects of the proposed solution are clearly analyzed. By presenting a new measure to mitigate saltwater intrusion, the authors contribute to solving an important and relevant challenge which deltas around the world are facing. The proposed solution responds highly to all the criteria of the call. The jury appreciates the high scientific quality of this paper, and suggests to focus on the further elaboration of this solution on the inherent uncertainty of hydro-morphological predictions in medium and longer term, particularly in the chosen study region, where the Maasvlakte 2 is now under construction with its own morphological effects. Attention should also be paid to the current (environmental) value of the location where the island is projected.