

## 2016 Award winners at HydroGaïa

*HydroGaïa – International Water Exhibition – 25 & 26 May 2016 – Montpellier Exhibition Centre, France*

The International Water Exhibition HydroGaïa, a crossroads for high-level meetings between water industry professionals and part of the European Smart Specialisation (3S) Platform, pays tribute each year to the vitality of innovative firms in the water sector. The Hydro Innovation Award, an initiative of the Languedoc Roussillon Midi Pyrénées regional authority, is organised with the support of Transferts LR. **The award ceremony took place on Wednesday 25 May 2016 at 5.30pm on the Languedoc Roussillon Midi Pyrénées region stand in the presence of Mrs. Agnès Langevine**, Vice President in charge of the Ecology and Energy Transition, biodiversity, the circular economy and waste management.

**The winner of the 2016 Hydro Innovation Award** is the company **Nereus** (from Le Pouget, Hérault department) for its work on “the development, design and construction of a demonstrator for the fractionation of slurry and digestates from fermentation.” Founded in 2013, Nereus designs and builds energy-efficient high quality water extraction units for use by biogas producers (methanisation units), farmers (slurry pits) and builders of HQE facilities (water recycling). The solutions use membrane technology formulated and patented by Nereus which separates water from other matter.

### **The judges also awarded two “Special Distinctions” to the companies:**

- **ImaGeau** (from Clapiers, Hérault department) for “a technological products / services solution contributing to the sustainable exploitation of coastal aquifer resources threatened by saltwater intrusion”. ImaGeau was created in 2008 when its three founders joined forces around a major idea: protecting groundwater resources through accurate and closer monitoring using a new technology, the SMD (Subsurface Monitoring Device), patented in France and Europe.

- **Microbia Environnement** (from Saint-Jean-Lasseille, Pyrénées Orientales department) for “the quick diagnostic kit solution to identify and immediately quantify different species of toxic marine micro algae, to anticipate risks.” Founded in 2013, Microbia Environnement is a biotech firm specialising in molecular diagnosis in environmental biology. It develops and distributes quick diagnostic kits to help firms from the water, aquaculture and shellfish farming sector identify risks relating to toxic micro algae and microbiological contaminants in production sites.

### **Hydro Jeunes Award**

Erin and Leah Kunkel won this year’s Hydro Jeunes Award, presented as part of the Future of Water Days (Avenir de l’Eau) held during HydroGaïa. Leah Kunkel is a student at Saint Louis University in the state of Missouri, USA. Erin Kunkel is studying for a Masters in Water Science at Montpellier University. Erin and Leah’s winning project aims to reduce water wastage in developed countries using social networks and applications that anyone can download on their smartphone. The project **REDUCT’EAU** is made up of two parts: a smartphone and a small water meter, the “Réduct’eau Mètre” which fits onto water outlets. The two items connect with each other, allowing for permanent monitoring of domestic water use. Erin and Leah are now in search of financial and industrial partners and specialists in the development of mobile applications.

➤ **HydroGaïa runs until Thursday 26 May at Montpellier Exhibition Centre.**

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