

Designing Water's Future

People, creativity, and
technology uniting to shift the
world's dangerous course. Now.



Produced and curated by
circle of blue



Our blue planet is thirsty.

We have never been more aware of the catastrophic consequences of the world's accelerating water crises. And we have never felt so overwhelmed, disconnected, even helpless.



70 percent

of the world's freshwater resources support agriculture, and millions are still hungry.

700 million

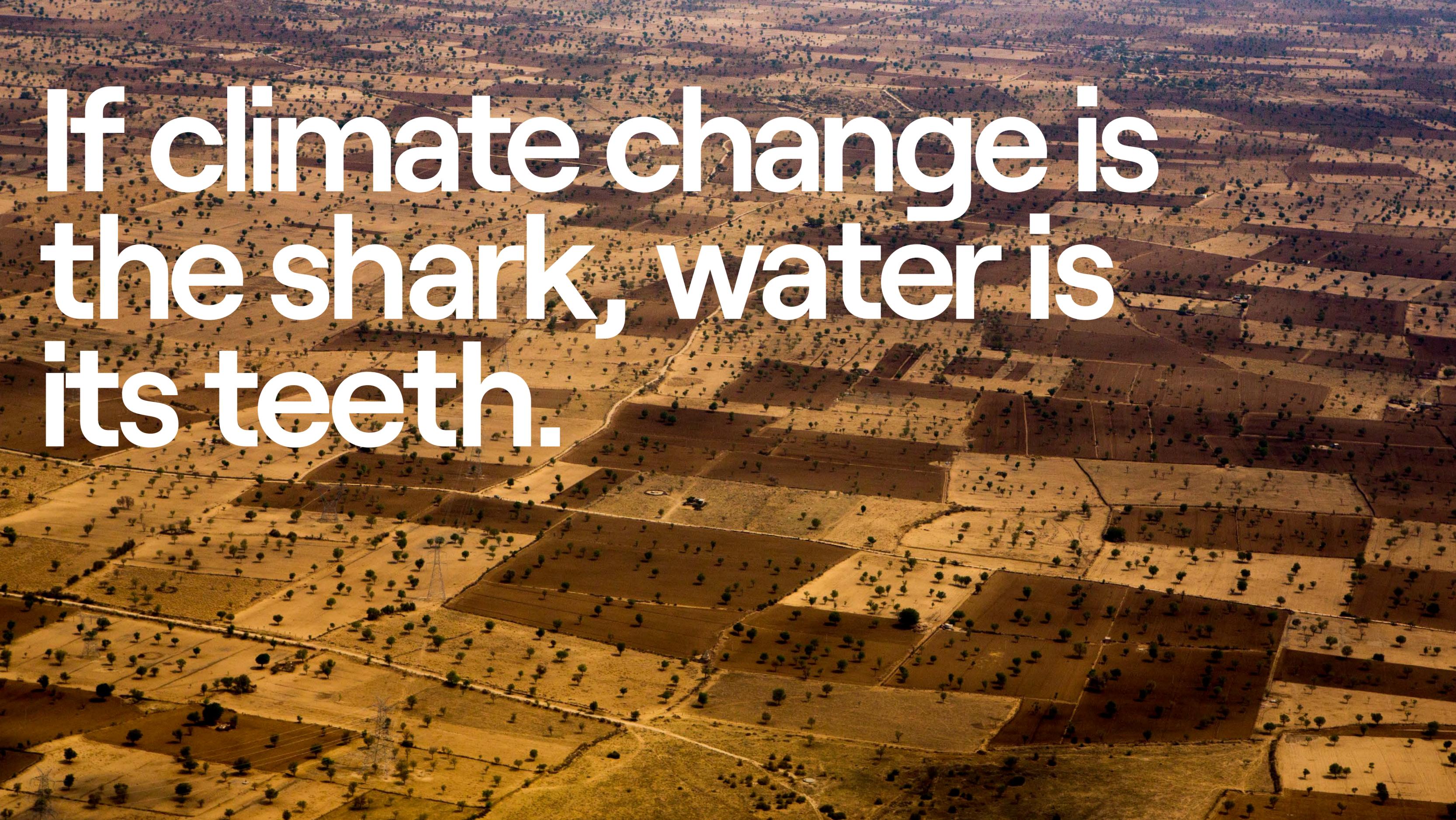
climate refugees will be forced to move by 2030 in search of water.

5,000 children

die each day from preventable diseases because they have no access to safe water and sanitation.

21 cities

inch closer to "Day Zero," when their taps will run dry.



**If climate change is
the shark, water is
its teeth.**

Climate is water.

1

If climate mitigation is about carbon emissions, climate adaptation is about water.

2

Warmer temperatures and deeper droughts stress food security and political stability.

3

Climate change increases intensity and impact of water pollution and water-borne diseases.

4

People pay more attention to water than climate: It's visible and tangible.

It's happening now.

Politics & Policy

India's Water Crisis Is Man-Made

One of its largest cities has virtually run dry and it won't be the last if the country doesn't change its habits quickly.

By [Mihir Sharma](#)
June 25, 2019, 11:09 PM EDT



Chennai's lakes are empty. Photographer: Arun Sankar/AFP/Getty Images

Mihir Sharma is a

One of India's largest cities, Chennai, is dealing with a crippling lack of water. In the middle of a particularly hot summer

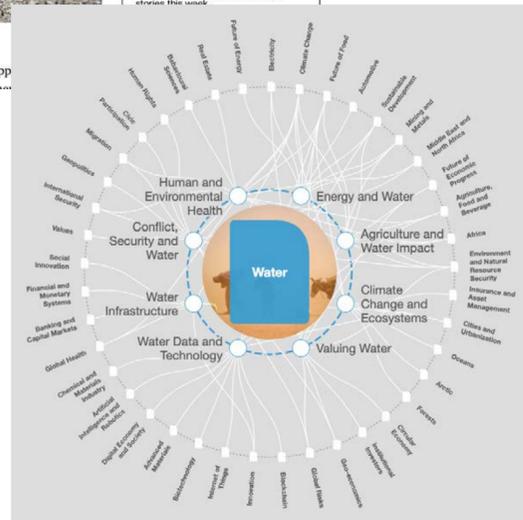
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Popular in Opinion

Trump's Go Back' Tweets Leave No Room for Doubt
by Timothy L. O'Brien
The president has ripped the band-aid off any reassuring notions the U.S. had about the progress of civil rights and the withering of racism.

President Trump's Bigotry Is Part of a Pattern
by Jonathan Bernstein
The president's latest remarks are perhaps a new low. But at this point, they shouldn't be surprising.

Trump Should Worry About Epstein Ties: Weekend Edition
by Brooke Sample
Here are Bloomberg Opinion's top stories this week.



PERSPECTIVE: Water Risks Threaten to Derail Vietnam's Economic Success

Depletion and pollution of Vietnam's water supplies are hurting the country now, and could cause economic losses up to 6 percent by 2035, says new World Bank report.



Flood risks are growing, particularly here in the Mekong Delta and in Vietnam's southern and central regions, according to a new World Bank report. Peak flood flows that used to occur every 100 to 200 years are now expected across half the country every 20 years or less within the next two decades. © J. Carl Ganter/Circleofblue.org

By [Abdelrazq F. Khalil](#) and [Jennifer Möller-Gulland](#)

HANOI — Vietnam's economic growth and social stability face increasing risk of disruption due to water scarcity, flooding, and pollution, according to the new World Bank report, "Vietnam: Toward a Safe, Clean, and Resilient Water System".

Ample water supplies combined with open-market economic policies transformed Vietnam from an impoverished country to a rising middle-income nation within two decades. Now the fruits of success are starting to turn bad. Though growth has developed new markets for fish, agricultural, and industrial products, it has also placed unrelenting pressures on water resources, which are now straining the economy.

5 things you need to know about water and climate



Image: Children wash their hands in a partially dried-out natural pond at Radarganj village, in the western Indian state of Gujarat, August 5, 2012. REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

14 Jan 2016

Carl Ganter
Founder and Director, Circle of Blue



In the [Global Risks Report 2016](#), which draws attention to ways that global risks could evolve and interact in the next decade, water crises features highly. Here are five reasons why.

If climate mitigation is about carbon emissions, climate adaptation is about water

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The Next Urban Water Crisis? Inadequate Data Clouds the Forecast

The Stream, August 15, 2019: Multi-Year Snow Droughts Could Be New Normal for Western United States

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The Stream, August 13, 2019: Newark, New Jersey, Plans to Distribute Bottled Water as Lead Contamination Persists

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The future is
here. Ahead of
schedule.

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape at dusk. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, transitioning into a deep blue. In the foreground, a winding road or path is visible, illuminated by a soft light. The middle ground shows a vast, flat desert floor with some sparse vegetation. In the background, a range of mountains is silhouetted against the sky. The overall mood is serene and forward-looking.

A man wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat and a green short-sleeved button-down shirt stands in a river. The river is filled with trash, including plastic bottles, cardboard boxes, and other debris. The background shows a natural landscape with trees and a clear blue sky. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**We're losing
the battle.
There is no
time left
for individual
action.**

A network of superheroes.

Designers • Data experts • Scientists
Storytellers • Practitioners •
Governments Young talents • AI pioneers

Combining immersive journalism, arts
and culture, and citizen science with
sophisticated data analysis and AI at
unprecedented scale.



Four challenges to change the world's most dangerous course.

1



A New Generation Designs a New Narrative

Students from more than 250 universities from Beijing to Boston will take on “water as a client” using a broad array of design tools, working through cross-disciplinary teams to create the new narratives needed to frame the challenges, capture attention and imagination, and to make hope visible.

2



Engage the World: On-the-Ground Stories & Citizen Science

Integrated crowd-sourced content: **#MyWaterStory**, **#MyWaterScience**, **#MyWaterData**, and **#MyWaterSolution**, sparks participation and creative problem-solving among story tellers, researchers, scientists, data experts, engineers, practitioners, (unrecognized) geniuses, students, and the wider public. Participants share water status, challenges, history, arts, culture, and perspectives, and are empowered to collect and share data on their water.

3



Evidence-Based Data, Clearly Visualized

A hackathon will invite data experts, designers, and others to verify and package water data into insightful, compelling, and cutting edge visualizations that reveal new trends and stories, and inform decision-making and action.

4



Connection & Collaboration

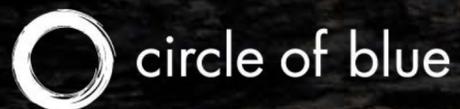
More than a status-quo accumulation of content, Designing Water's Future becomes the world's first active multi-nodal, persistent network of engaged storytellers, data collectors, and scientists — sharing urgent problems, inspiring solutions, feedback, and new systemic responses to the world's water crises.

Founders

The founders and team have been part of the largest publishing events in history, have set agendas, changed policy, achieved breakthroughs in data management and engagement, edited major magazines, addressed Congress, orchestrated Olympic bids, and coached legions

Born in Davos

Designing Water's Future's first iteration grew out of a 2008 session at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, led by Brian Collins, Chief Creative Officer at COLLINS, and J. Carl Ganter, co-founder of Circle of Blue. It engaged more than 10,000 students worldwide before the birth of



Circle of Blue, founded in 2003, is the internationally recognized centre for original frontline reporting, research, analysis, and covering on water resource issues, particularly the competition between water, food, and energy in a changing climate. In addition to delivering award-winning reportage, it curates the World Economic Forum Transformation Maps, and produced Watershed at the Vatican which was opened by Pope Francis. Circle of Blue's unique model received the Rockefeller Foundation Centennial Innovation Award.

Advisors

Activating the world's best talents and intelligence to Design Water's Future.

Including



Brian Collins, Chairman and Chief Creative Officer, COLLINS

Lee Maschmeyer, Chief Creative Officer, Chobani

Chris Fitzgerald, Etage, Inc.

JP Rangaswami, Chief Data Officer and Group Head of Innovation, Deutsche Bank;
Chief Scientist, Salesforce (ret)

Megan J. Smith, Founder, Shift7; former United States CTO

Dominic Waughray, Managing Director, Centre for Global Public Goods and
Environment, World Economic Forum

Chris Luebke, Fellow and Global Director of Foresight, Arup

Patrick Frick, President and Co-Founder, The Value Web

Dr. Peter Gleick, President Emeritus/Chief Scientist, Pacific Institute

Margaret Catley-Carlson, Past chair, Global Water Partnership;
Deputy Minister, Health and Welfare, Canada (ret.)

Dr. Upmanu Lal, Director, Columbia University Water Center

Dr. Rabi Mohtar, Dean of Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences,
American University of Beirut

Lindsey Adalco-Manner, President, World Youth Parliament for Water

Jennifer Pailonis, Director of the Center for Emerging Media, Ball State University

Ben Braga, President emeritus, World Water Council, Secretary of State for
Sanitation and Water Resources for the state of Sao Paulo

Dr. Jerry Linenger, Astronaut/Cosmonaut

Claudia Sadoff, Director General, International Water Management Institute

Steve Howard, B-Team, former director of sustainability, IKEA

Jennifer Turner, Director, China Environment Forum, Wilson Center

Kigge Hvid, President emeritus, INDEX Awards Copenhagen

Toshika Mori, Toshiko Mori Architect, PLLC and Vision Arc

Brent Stirton, Senior Photographer and World Press recipient, Getty Images

Steffi Czerny, Founder & Managing Director DLD Media/Burda

Jim Leape, Fellow, Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment

Geoff Dabelko, Associate Dean and Director of Environmental Studies, Ohio University

Parag Khanna, FutureMap

Greg Mort, NASA artist, Art of Stewardship

David Rosenberg, Global Advertising Director, Amazon Echo/Alexa

Seth Siegel, author, Let There Be Water

Andrew Morlet, CEO, Ellen MacArthur Foundation

Robert Wolcott, Executive Director, Kellogg Innovation Network,
Northwestern University Kellogg School of Management

Daniel Brown, Segal Design Institute, Northwestern University

Jeffrey Smith, Managing Editor, Contact Press Images

Rick Smolan, Founder, Day in the Life, Against All Odds Productions

Philippe Cousteau, Founder, EarthEcho

Alexandra Ralevski, Director, AskNature | Biomimicry Institute



An aerial photograph of a vast, arid desert landscape. The terrain is a mix of light brown and tan, with numerous deep, dark cracks and fissures crisscrossing the ground, indicating extreme dryness. A single, winding river of a dark, almost black color flows through the lower portion of the image, providing a stark contrast to the parched earth. The sky above is a pale, hazy blue, suggesting a clear but dry atmosphere.

“The only hope for water’s future is the one we deliberately design.”

Press release

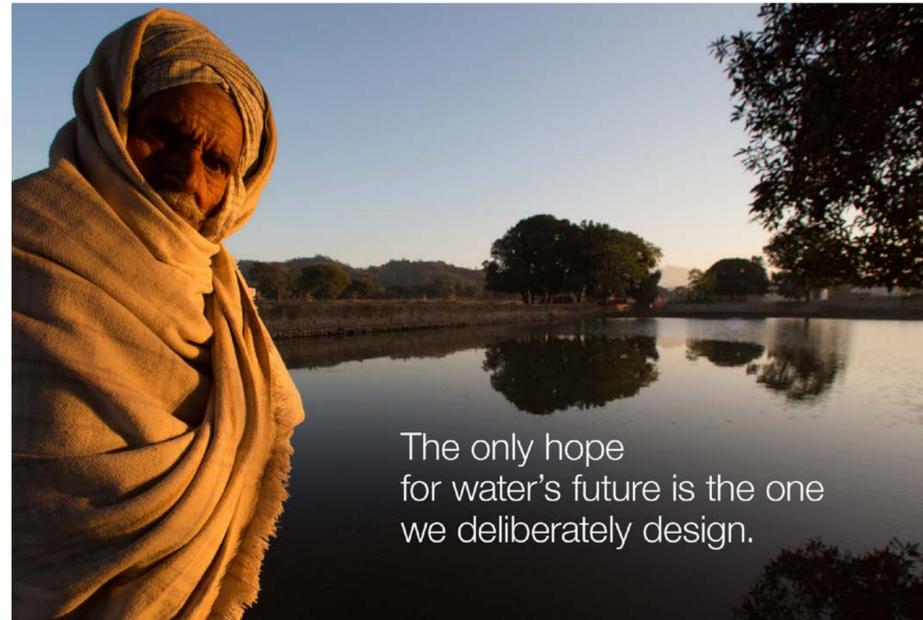
New Design Challenge Empowers and Informs Responses to Global Water Crises

Initiative engages cross-disciplinary teams of next-generation thinkers to shift the world's dangerous course through:

- Creative design and innovative communications
- Citizen science
- Applied data analyses and visualization
- AI-powered connectivity

DETROIT and THE HAGUE, Netherlands, June 4, 2019 — Circle of Blue — in collaboration with leading institutions, designers, educators, and youth organizations — today announced *Designing Water's Future*, an unprecedented global challenge to develop creative, cross-disciplinary, and participatory solutions to water crises worldwide. The World Economic Forum ranks water crises among the gravest risks to political, environmental, and economic stability.

Designing Water's Future, leverages the power of creative design and communications, citizen science, frontier data analysis, visualization tools, and AI-powered analysis to advance responses and solutions.



Circle of Blue is the leading media, science and convening organization that reports on the global competition between water, food, and energy in a changing climate. It announced the initiative simultaneously on stage at the Sustainable Brands conference in Detroit and the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in The Hague, The Netherlands.

"We face a rare moment in human history where we no longer have any margin of error. We must unite the best in creativity and technology to shift the world's most dangerous course," said J. Carl Ganter, co-founder of *Designing Water's Future*, managing director of Circle of Blue, and past vice chairman of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Water Security.

"People need to be connected, inspired, and empowered with shared stories, data, solutions and urgency. This is the moment in history when arts, culture, and story combined with science and technology can shift our dangerous course."

New data indicates conflicts over water are increasing around the world while worldwide acceleration of debilitating droughts, catastrophic floods and other risks pose imminent and material threats to lives, livelihoods, and businesses. Yet imperatives such as the Sustainable Development Goal on Clean Water and Sanitation are underfunded, global water stories of success and failure remain underreported, data is still often lacking, unverified or remain unshared with stakeholders, and increasingly urbanized populations are out of touch with where their water comes from and where their wastewater goes. While many organizations are working on promising solutions, the scale and urgency of water challenges outpace current efforts and resources.



Designing Water's Future connects four critical challenge areas where water intersects with food security, energy production, climate change, health, and sustainable cities.

The specific challenges will be active this summer and previewed at World Water Week in Stockholm in August:

Innovation: Narrative design challenge — design and communications students from more than 250 universities from Beijing to Boston will be challenged to take on “water as a client” using a broad array of design tools, working through cross-disciplinary teams. They will create campaigns to communicate the value of water and imminent threats of inaction.

Participation: Grassroots stories and citizen science — A dynamic platform will integrate crowd-sourced content on “#MyWaterStory,” “#MyWaterScience,” and “#MyWaterSolutions,” sparking participation and creative problem-solving among researchers, engineers, practitioners, (unrecognized) geniuses, students, and the wider public. Citizens can share their water status, challenges, history, culture, and perspectives (#mywaterstory); are empowered to collect and share data on their water (#mywaterscience); and showcase solutions, large or small (#mywatersolutions).

Inspiration: Visualization hackathon — A visualization challenge will invite data experts, designers, and others to verify and package water data into insightful and compelling visualizations to enable awareness and decision-making.

Interaction: Collaboration network linking efforts across sectors — Designing Water's Future will serve as an accumulation of content and resources between experts, executives, policy-makers, design professionals and the public, aligning efforts and resources.

Designing Water's Future's first iteration grew out of a 2008 session at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, led by Brian Collins, Chief Creative Officer at COLLINS, and Ganter of Circle of Blue. It engaged more than 10,000 students worldwide.

“The only hope for water's future is the one we deliberately design,” Ganter said. “People need to be connected, inspired, and empowered with shared stories, data, solutions and urgency. This is the moment in history when arts, culture, and story combined with science and technology can shift our dangerous course.”

Early collaborators include the World Economic Forum, Voice for the Planet, Global Commons Alliance, Science Based Targets Initiative, China Environment Forum, Columbia University Water Center, Earth Echo, Northwestern University Segal Design Institute, Imagine H2O, Qlik.org, Water Foundry, and Vector Center.

Register for updates at designingwatersfuture.org



Circle of Blue, founded in 2003, is the internationally recognized centre for original frontline reporting, research, and analysis on water resource issues and the competition between water, food, and energy in a changing climate. In addition to delivering trusted reportage, it curates the World Economic Forum Transformation Maps, and produced Watershed at the Vatican which was opened by Pope Francis. Circle of Blue is a member of the Science Based Targets Network and founding member of the Global Commons Alliance, whose partners are engaged with more than 10,000 cities and local governments worldwide. Circle of Blue's unique model received the Rockefeller Foundation Centennial Innovation Award.