Aga Khan Rural Support Programme awarded 2015 Times of India Social impact award for safe drinking water and improved sanitation

Ahmedabad, India, 10 March 2015 - The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) has been awarded the Times of India Social Impact Award 2015, in the “environment” category, for its effort in ensuring access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation in Bihar and Gujarat. AKRSP was a joint winner with the Jal Bhagirathi Foundation, which is involved in water rejuvenation through community interventions.

AKRSP’s work in water and sanitation includes the construction of 7,300 toilets and access to safe and pure drinking water to nearly 29,000 households in rural Gujarat and Bihar. Through such interventions, the organisation has been instrumental in reducing the drudgery of over 350,000 people. The programme began in 1998 when it became clear that, in addition to its work on improving agricultural practices in Gujarat, AKRSP needed to address persistent issues of drinking water supplies and related health issues. It pioneered community-based water management, under “Pani Samiti”, or water committees, which help fund repairs and maintenance.

Since 1984, when it was founded, AKRSP has put water conservation and sustainable natural resource management at the heart of its work. In addition to the drinking water and sanitation programmes cited in the Times of India Social Impact Award, AKRSP has also built or rejuvenated 4,000 drinking water supply sources and schemes, 200 percolation wells and over 10,000 roof rainwater harvesting structures.

In coastal areas of Gujarat where saline water has encroached on fresh water supplies, AKRSP has pioneered methods of remediation and community management of these resources. Soil and water conservation measures have built dozens of irrigation and ground water recharge systems. AKRSP has also promoted micro-irrigation devices like drips and sprinklers and worked to manage the critical water resources in river basins, including the construction of over 1,300 check dams and irrigation tanks. Other watershed management measures have improved 46,000 hectares of land. AKRSP has also planted over 12 million trees.

AKRSP now reaches to over 1,000,000 beneficiaries, in nearly 1,900 villages, in the states of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

For more information, please contact:

 Vaidehi Chokshi
Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India)
9-10th Floor, Corporate House, Opp. Dinesh Hall,
Off Ashram Road, Ahmedabad.
Telephone: 079 66312451-61, 98791 66971