

Governor Walker: Announces new water technology partnerships

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Note to media: High-resolution photos from Governor Walker's trade mission can be downloaded [here](#).

TEL AVIV, ISRAEL — In a move that further expands Wisconsin's global presence in the water technology sector, The Water Council today signed two agreements during Governor Scott Walker's trade mission to Israel that will increase collaboration and establish new partnerships between Wisconsin and Israel. The Water Council and the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev signed an agreement that calls for collaboration on water-related applied research aimed at introducing new technologies into the global marketplace through Wisconsin's National Science Foundation sponsored Industry/University Cooperative Research Center (I/UCRC) for Water Equipment and Policy (WEP).

The Water Council and the Israel Innovation Authority also signed an agreement to develop a new research partnership in which Israeli and Wisconsin water technology start-up companies will collaborate on piloting and developing new applications for the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) and other Wisconsin water utilities.

The agreements were signed in separate ceremonies in Tel Aviv and at Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva on the last full day of Governor Scott Walker's trade mission to Israel.

"These agreements will further enhance Wisconsin's international reputation as a global leader in water technology by forging new partnerships that will pay

dividends in the long run,” said Governor Walker. “These partnerships will strengthen the sector in both countries, and are expected to open new markets to water technology companies in Wisconsin and Israel.”

“For the past year The Water Council has laid the groundwork for the development of these vitally important agreements, which will result in bringing together our two world water technology hubs,” said Dean Amhaus, president and CEO of The Water Council. “The partnership with Ben-Gurion University lays the foundation for creating the first I/UCRC presence for the National Science Foundation in Israel and fosters greater business and academic collaboration. The agreement with the Israel Innovation Authority offers tangible support for Israeli businesses seeking to conduct pilots with Wisconsin water utilities.”

The agreement with Ben-Gurion University’s Zuckerberg Institute marks the important first step of incorporating the university, Israeli businesses and utilities into the Water Equipment and Policy Center (WEP Center), which serves as a catalyst for synergizing Wisconsin’s assets to create the next generation of products and processes and to advance the water industry. The Zuckerberg Institute, Israel’s largest and leading water institute, conducts interdisciplinary, cutting-edge research and graduate education in water sciences, aimed at improving human well-being through technologies and policies for sustainable use of water resources.

With offices and supporting labs located in the Global Water Center, the WEP Center is a collaborative non-profit organization centered on research universities, led by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) in partnership with Marquette University, and eighteen members, including corporations such as A. O. Smith, Badger Meter, and Dow, as well as government agencies including the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

“The Zuckerberg Institute is pleased to be partnering with The Water Council to increase our collaboration opportunities, share our research and explore commercialization opportunities for our innovation,” says Zuckerberg Institute Director Noam Weisbrod. “While we share different water challenges, we look forward to complementing each other in addressing water quality issues.”

Once that partnership is finalized, Wisconsin universities and U.S. companies would have access to promising research being conducted by Zuckerberg Institute researchers and be connected to some of Israel’s innovative water technology companies. Likewise, Zuckerberg Institute would be able to present its research to

some of the world's leading water companies and the Israeli businesses would have access to innovative research being conducted at UWM and Marquette.

Under the agreement with the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA), The Water Council will secure \$100,000 in research funds from the MMSD. Those funds will be matched by the authority, a public organization responsible for Israel's innovation policy.

The funds will be used by IIA to enable Israeli companies to pilot select innovative technologies at Wisconsin utilities. These projects may include cyber-focused technologies, data analytics for utility applications and stormwater-focused technologies or applications. The agreement calls for Israeli startups to come to the U.S. to commercialize their products for the North American market. MMSD will provide the facilities for those companies to develop this technology in a pilot program, and will have some preferential access to that technology if the pilot is successful.

Wisconsin's leadership role in water technology also was the focus of an "Opportunity in Wisconsin" networking event held Wednesday in Tel Aviv for Israeli companies interested in establishing or expanding operations in the U.S. Governor Walker and Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation Secretary and CEO Mark R. Hogan provided attendees with information on opportunities to expand their businesses in Wisconsin and the benefits of investing in the state. At the event, hosted by SelectUSA, Mr. Amhaus gave a presentation on Wisconsin's global leadership role in the water technology sector.

The delegation also visited Hatzerim, a kibbutz in Israel that was one of the first to start its own business, called Netafim. The company, which sells smart drip and micro-irrigation systems to achieve maximum growth using fewer resources, is now a multinational corporation with facilities worldwide.

The governor is leading the 16-member Wisconsin delegation on a trip aimed at boosting exports, increasing foreign investment in Wisconsin and developing new partnerships between the state and Israel. The governor will return to Wisconsin on Thursday.