

## METRO Water Initiative: Second year of partnership with One Drop doubles number of the beneficiaries

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- 2020 is our 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of MWI and our 2<sup>nd</sup> year of close collaboration with One Drop Foundation
- 250,000 people in the north Indian state of Bihar will have sustainable access to safe water and sanitation facilities, thanks to 'Project Sheohar'
- An additional 250,000 people in the state of Bihar will benefit from the new 'Project Boond', ensuring sustainable access to water and sanitation
- More than 20 METRO countries and ~20 suppliers support the METRO Water Initiative in the campaign anchored around the UN World Water Day on 22 March
- A minimum of 1.2 million Euros will be collected for this purpose through the METRO Water Initiative. These funds will be matched by One Drop Foundation.

Düsseldorf, 23 March 2020 – METRO together with its customers in 22 countries and 18 global suppliers will implement the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of its 3 year collaboration with the Canadian-based One Drop Foundation. The project kicked off in June 2019 in the north-eastern Indian state of Bihar and aims at providing permanent access to safe water and sanitation to half a million people: doubling our original plan. The population of Bihar is among those most deeply affected by the lack of water and sanitation facilities and the consequences are devastating. And for One Drop, access to water is only the beginning. Alongside its partners, One Drop promotes a behaviour change approach through social art initiatives that take into consideration local cultural and artistic references, resulting in healthier practices around water, sanitation and hygiene. Furthermore, communities and individuals are empowered and trained to manage the water and sanitation facilities in a sustainable way.

In June 2018 Metro Water Initiative kicked off its cooperation with the international One Drop Foundation which will ultimately ensure sustainable access to safe water and sanitation to three districts in the federal Indian state of Bihar: Sheohar, Madhubani and Gaya.

The project was made possible via a globally coordinated campaign in 22 countries jointly with our global suppliers. During the two-week campaign period around World Water Day, they donate a certain share of the selling price of pre-defined products to the METRO Water Initiative. Our campaign slogan "Water Runs Your Business" was well-received by our customers

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demonstrating the impact water can have on the quality, price and availability of products.

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Due to the successful partnership Metro Water Initiative will extend the project in India and together with all partners we will raise over € 5.3M and change the lives of 500,000 people.

*"By partnering with our global suppliers and One Drop Foundation for a common goal we can generate exponential awareness and funding meaning ultimately we can make a bigger impact. The positive reactions from our customers demonstrates that the topic is also high on their agenda."*, said Philippe Palazzi, Chief Operating Officer, Member of the Management Board of METRO AG responsible for Sustainability.

Over the course of 2019 the project in India reached over 85,000 people. 110 water points were installed and safe drinking water and sanitation in 14 schools was secured. Numerous composts pits and household latrines were installed to give people access to safe water and hygiene. Together with local artists over 30 multi-disciplinary shows, 160 street-plays and 120 film screenings were performed to explain the importance of sanitation and hygiene.

In addition, local farmers in particular are sensitised through training in water-saving techniques and waste management and supported through entrepreneurial development. One Drop also ensures that access to micro loans for water supply and hygiene facilities is improved. Since the beginning of the project approximately 1,700 loans were approved, which has led to the construction or rehabilitation of 1,700 household latrines.

For the people in three districts of Bihar the joint project of METRO and One Drop Foundation does not only mean safe access to water and sanitation facilities – it also improves their lives. Child mortality decreases, waterborne diseases are reduced, health of mothers and newborns improves, girls are enabled to safely manage their periods and attend school and overall safety is increasing. The One Drop "Social Art for Behaviour Change" approach also aims to achieve individual, interpersonal, community and social engagement. The aim is to promote healthy and sustainable behaviour with regard to water, sanitation and hygiene.

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## Beneficiaries of the Bihar district

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Throughout India, access to clean water and sanitation is scarce. Over 600 million Indians are exposed to extreme water stress. In addition, the quality of the available water is often alarming – about 70% of the water in India is classified as contaminated according to the Composite Water Management Index of June 2018. Groundwater is undrinkable in 1/3 of India's 600 districts because the concentration of fluoride, iron, salt and arsenic exceeds the specified limits. Other reports show that about 70% of India's water

supply is heavily polluted by wastewater. This is also a reason why more than 100,000 people die every year in India from waterborne diseases. More than 500 children under the age of five die every day from diarrhea alone. The child mortality rate (under the age of 5) in the state of Bihar is even exceeding the national average.

*“The METRO Water Initiative is a good example of how by creating bold partnerships and innovative fundraising initiatives, we can find new ways to unlock funds that allow us to pursue our mission to ensure sustainable access to safe water and sanitation worldwide and reach the United Nation's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 17. Seeing so many suppliers and even competitors joining forces in a common initiative shows that when we talk about sustainability, and about achieving the SDGs, there is no competition.”* explains Lauren Alcorn, Project Director at One Drop.

For the three year project METRO guarantees at least 1.2 million Euros to be raised, all of which will flow into projects in India. One Drop doubles the amount and ensures close cooperation with local government, development banks and other implementing NGO partners thus each donated Euro will have a leverage effect of up to 10 Euro.

The participating suppliers in this year's METRO Water initiative are: Barilla, Bolton, Campofrio, The Coca-Cola Company, Diageo, Glaxosmithkline, Henkel (Cosmetics and Detergents), Lavazza, Mars (Wrigley and Uncle ben's Rice), McCain, PepsiCo, Pernod Ricard, Reckitt Benckiser (RB), SC Johnson and Unilever.

Read More: <https://www.onedrop.org/en/projects/sheohar-2/>

<https://www.mpulse.de/en/movingboundaries/metro-water-initiative-our-project-for-india>

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#### About METRO

METRO is a leading international wholesale company with food and non-food assortments that specialises on serving the needs of hotels, restaurants and caterers (HoReCa) as well as independent traders. Around the world, METRO has some 16 million customers who can choose whether to shop in one of the large-format stores, order online and collect their purchases at the store or have them delivered. METRO in addition also supports the competitiveness of entrepreneurs and own businesses with digital solutions and thereby contributes to cultural diversity in retail and hospitality. Sustainability is a key pillar of METRO's business. METRO has been the European sector leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. The company operates in 34 countries and employs more than 100,000 people worldwide. In financial year 2018/19, METRO generated sales of €27.1 billion. In October 2019, METRO AG signed an agreement to sell a majority stake in METRO China. In September 2018 METRO initiated the divestment process for the food retail chain Real with its 34,000 employees. For more information, please visit [www.metroag.de/en](http://www.metroag.de/en)

#### About One Drop

One Drop™ is an international foundation created by Cirque du Soleil and Lune Rouge founder Guy Laliberté with the vision of a better world, where all have access to living conditions that allow empowerment and development. Our mission is to ensure sustainable access to safe water and sanitation for the most vulnerable communities through innovative partnerships, creativity and the power of art. Together with its partners, One Drop deploys its unique Social Art for Behaviour Change™ approach designed to sustainably foster the adoption of healthy water, sanitation and hygiene-related behaviours and empower communities. For this to be possible, One Drop puts together novel fundraising initiatives supported by a visionary community of partners and donors. One Drop counts over 12 years of turning water into action, with projects that will soon have improved the living conditions of over 1.6 million people around the world. In 2019, the Foundation was recognized for a second year in a row by Charity Intelligence Canada, this time as one of the Top 10 International Impact Charities. To learn more about One Drop, visit [www.onedrop.org](http://www.onedrop.org)

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