

# Singapore honours Dutch scientist

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Singapore said Monday it will award nearly 200,000 US dollars to a Dutch scientist who pioneered an environmentally friendly, low-cost way of treating waste water and refused to patent the process.

Gatze Lettinga, an environmental engineer from Amsterdam, was chosen as this year's winner of the award, launched in 2008 and named after Singapore's founding father and former prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, officials said.

Resource-starved Singapore, which is already recycling sewage into clean [water](#) for use in factories and homes, gives out the award to honour persons or groups for "outstanding contributions" in the field of water.

Lettinga, who turns 73 next month, said he did not patent his discovery because he wanted everyone to benefit.

"I believe that innovative technologies for treating used water, waste, and gas... will contribute to more sustainable living which the world urgently needs," the retired professor told a news conference in Singapore.

Lettinga focused on [anaerobic technology](#), which uses micro-organisms in an oxygen-free environment to purify [waste water](#) before it is released to the environment, reducing the threat of pollution.

While anaerobic technology has been around for hundreds of years, his research proved that it can be done at a much lower cost and in a manner that is environmentally sustainable, organisers of the award said in a

statement.

Because it does not use oxygen, anaerobic technology uses up to 40 percent less energy than the conventional [aerobic system](#) and is also cheaper to operate and maintain, the statement said.

The technology is now used in almost 3,000 reactors, representing 80 percent of all anaerobic used water treatment systems worldwide.

The award, which comes with a cash prize of 300,000 Singapore dollars (194,000 US) and a gold medallion, is sponsored by the Millennium Foundation, a philanthropic body supported by sovereign wealth fund Temasek Holdings.

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