



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Habitat for Humanity invests in Cambodian water-access startup TapEffect

**The investment marks the fifth anniversary of Habitat’s Shelter Venture Fund, which has already disbursed US\$3 million in equity to 11 housing innovations**

**PHNOM PENH, August 11, 2022** – Habitat for Humanity’s Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter announced today a US\$300,000 equity investment in [TapEffect](#), a Cambodia-based startup which provides clean and affordable tap water to underserved rural and semi-rural communities. The investment also marks the fifth anniversary of Habitat’s [Shelter Venture Fund](#), launched in 2017 to accelerate innovative startups tackling affordable housing challenges worldwide.

It is estimated that 110 million people in Southeast Asia lack access to safe drinking water. In Cambodia, one third of the population rely on water from impure sources. TapEffect, founded in 2018, started from the desire to bring safe water to rural communities in Cambodia, while addressing the systemic barriers often faced by local providers, such as set-up costs and ongoing maintenance. The company designs, builds and operates self-sustaining piped water systems that can each support more than 10,000 people, and uses Internet of Things technology for remote monitoring and payment management, which reduces cost and increases operational efficiencies.

TapEffect offers a market-based solution where families pay a fraction of the cost for water compared to bottled or truck-in water options. Their initial demonstration system, built in 2020, serves over 14,000 people in 19 villages, and connects 12 schools and two healthcare facilities to clean and safe water.

“TapEffect’s model combines technology, engineering and blended finance to create a holistic approach that can be easily replicated. By employing local contractors and construction teams,

we also build capacity within local communities,” said Hourt Vuthy, general manager at TapEffect. “We have been partnering with Habitat for Humanity since joining the ShelterTech Southeast Asia accelerator in 2020. The investment will help to bring the solution to more families across the region who still lack access to clean water and sanitation.” TapEffect is also an investee of World Hope Social Ventures, which supports market-based, community-driven enterprise solutions.

Habitat’s Shelter Venture Fund aims to nurture businesses with solutions that can improve housing conditions for low-income families. “We realized that high-potential enterprises often face a pioneer gap in their early stages of growth, when they are considered too risky by impact investors,” said Luis Noda, Habitat for Humanity’s Asia-Pacific vice president. “Through the Fund, we also send a message to the market that profitable opportunities exist in supporting entrepreneurs that are driving social change through innovation.”

Twelve startups have received investments from the Shelter Venture Fund to date globally, supporting over 5 million people in accessing improved housing-related products and services. The portfolio includes Tvasta – builder of India’s first 3D-printed house; Meridia – which uses mobile-based technology to improve land documentation and tenure security in Africa and Asia; and BURN – which impacts lives and the environment through the design, manufacturing and distribution of clean-burning cook stoves.

Since its launch, Shelter Venture Fund investees have catalyzed over US\$34 million in further investments. At present, 40% of the portfolio focuses on solutions that are less damaging to the environment than market alternatives, such as water saving and reduced carbon emission technologies. The 12 ventures are also responsible for the creation of over 600 jobs in the locations where they operate.

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### **Notes to Editors**

To set up interviews, receive photos or further information, please contact Julia Ferraz at [jferraz@habitat.org](mailto:jferraz@habitat.org), +852 61001806.

### **About World Hope International**

World Hope International addresses poverty and injustice through market-based and community-led programming in over 20 countries worldwide through its core focus areas of global health, protection, clean water & energy, and social ventures. World Hope International strengthens public health systems alongside doctors, clinicians, and physical therapists so communities gain

access to affordable healthcare and prevention services and provides clean water, sanitation, and hygiene services to healthcare facilities.

### **About Habitat's Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter**

The Terwilliger Center for Innovation in Shelter, a unit of Habitat for Humanity International, works with housing market systems by supporting local firms and expanding innovative and client-responsive services, products and financing so that households can improve their shelter more effectively and efficiently. The ultimate goal of the Terwilliger Center's market systems program is to make housing markets work more effectively for people in need of decent, affordable shelter, thereby improving the quality of life for low-income households. To learn more, visit [habitat.org/tcis](http://habitat.org/tcis).

### **About Habitat for Humanity**

Driven by the vision that everyone needs a decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity found its earliest inspirations as a grassroots movement on an interracial community farm in South Georgia, U.S.A. Since its founding in 1976, the housing organization has since grown to become a leading global nonprofit working in more than 70 countries. In the Asia-Pacific region since 1983, Habitat for Humanity has supported millions of people to build or improve a place they can call home. Through financial support, volunteering or adding a voice to support affordable housing, everyone can help families achieve the strength, stability and self-reliance they need to build better lives for themselves. Through shelter, we empower. To learn more, donate or volunteer, visit [habitat.org/asiapacific](http://habitat.org/asiapacific).