

Kohler Co. and California Institute of Technology’s Solar-Powered Toilet Heads to India

The off-the-grid toilet aims to provide safe sanitation to rural India



KOHLER—Kohler Co. and Caltech embrace the next milestone of a more than two-year collaborative journey in the development of a photovoltaic toilet as part of the [Reinvent the Toilet Challenge](#), hosted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

A showcase of the projects funded through the Reinvent the Toilet Challenge - The system includes a self-contained water purification and disinfection system that allows water to be reused and does not require wastewater disposal.

Kohler and Caltech put the final touches on the unit – including the installation of plumbing products and exterior design. Every detail of this container from the specific plumbing products used inside to the décor of the exterior was carefully chosen to best assimilate the Indian culture.

“Global sanitation is an issue that needs to be addressed, and we are proud to be a part of what the Gates Foundation is doing to increase awareness and inspire solutions,” says Rob Zimmerman, sustainability manager for Kohler Co. “Regardless of the technology developed, cultural acceptance of the solution is the key to its success. We put a lot of time and thought into how to best achieve that.”

Zimmerman’s reference to the solution to cultural acceptance concerns stems from the company’s extensive collaboration with its Indian marketing experts and designers. Kohler’s global experience brought an insight into Indian culture to the project with Caltech. Kohler’s Indian team assisted in choosing region-specific plumbing products as well as guidance on the overall décor to ensure that the Indian communities who will participate in field testing of the units will be more accepting of the new technology.



Caltech University and a team of scientists there and KOHLER have developed this solar power close loop toilet system that disinfects the water, and it's really for those who don't have access to safe sanitation. We have one installed in Kerala, and are now working on the second phase with Caltech to develop 6 of these units, and put them into action in India.

About Kohler Co.

Founded in 1873 and headquartered in Kohler, Wisconsin, [Kohler Co.](#) is one of America's oldest and largest privately held companies comprised of more than 30,000 associates. With more than 50 manufacturing locations worldwide, Kohler is a global leader in the manufacture of kitchen and bath products; engines and power systems; premier furniture, cabinetry and tile; and owner/operator of two of the world's finest five-star hospitality and golf resort destinations in Kohler, and St Andrews, Scotland.