

SOUTH AFRICAN YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME

Rationale

To fulfill the present and future needs of the water and wastewater industries requires the continuous development of a workforce which is both adequate in size, capable in skills and strong in leadership. Young water professionals (students and professionals in the water sector and under the age of 35) are the future of the water sector, and therefore the future of the International Water Association (IWA) and the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA).

Aim

- Establish IWA / WISA as the national network for YWPs who are under the age of 35 or who have graduated in the past five years and who contribute to the water and wastewater sector through study, work or practice.

Objectives

- Provide opportunities for YWPs to meet and communicate
- Provide career development opportunities for YWPs
- Support employers with the recruitment and retention of YWPs
- Ensure the Programme remains relevant to YWPs

Description of Programme

The YWP Programme provides a range of activities, services and initiatives to young professionals and students in the water and wastewater sector under the age of 35. As well as engaging with YWPs, the YWP Programme also connects with employers, academic institutions and other professional associations to ensure that the future needs of the sector are understood and addressed. The activities and initiatives of the Programme should demonstrate the value of IWA/WISA membership to South African¹ YWPs and encourage more YWPs to join the organisations.

The means of achieving the objectives of the YWP Programme are divided into four work areas:

¹ "South African" is not restricted to South African nationals but includes all nationalities living and working / studying in South Africa.

1. Connecting People
2. Career Development
3. Sector Support
4. Programme Development

Description of Work Packages

WORK AREA 1: CONNECTING PEOPLE

Objective Provide opportunities for YWPs to meet and communicate

Description A series of national conferences for South African YWPs will be organised and accessibility to other IWA/WISA conferences to YWPs will be enhanced. This work area will inform YWPs of recent and forthcoming activities of the Programme and other news from the water sector relevant to them. It will also provide mechanisms for YWPs to communicate between themselves.

Work Package 1.1 Communication

A biannual newsletter will aim to communicate Association and sector news relevant to YWPs. YWPs will be given the chance to contribute to the newsletter by submitting comments, articles and reports. The newsletter will be distributed electronically (attached to an email) to all South African IWA/WISA members under the age of 35; it will also be available to members on the IWA website and eWISA. Editorial management of the newsletter will be delegated to members of the YWP committee.

An e-newsletter will be distributed on a bi-monthly basis (six issues per year). This email-based newsletter will be a simple update of recent news and include links to my-water-career.com (job listings and courses), for example. The e-newsletter will be sent to all South African YWPs in the knowledge network, not just those who are members. As well as being informative, this newsletter will encourage subscribers to keep their contact details up-to-date. This enables WISA and IWA HQ to maintain an accurate database of contacts that are not currently members. The content of the e-newsletter will be derived from the news section of the YWP programme web pages and the WISA newsletter and distributed from WISA.

The IWA website includes a number of pages dedicated to the YWP Programme. The eWISA website will be used to host South African YWP pages and will link in. The SA YWPs will also make use of electronic networking facilities (such as Facebook or the World Association of Young Scientists' networking platform).

Work Package 1.2 Networking

The biennial international IWA Young Water Professionals Conferences (YWPC) aims to provide YWPs in water and wastewater science, engineering and management with a forum to discuss current and future water management concerns. It also aims to expose researchers with backgrounds from social science to those in the technologies to the multi-disciplinary nature of water research, thus integrating regulatory and environmental quality issues

The increasing number of South African papers submitted to the International YWPC events and the financial restrictions of SA YWPs to attend international conferences have suggested the need for national and/or regional YWPCs. These events attract students or professionals working in a particular country² or region to present their work to an audience of peers. The organisation of national conferences is an effective way of mobilising SA YWPs by providing a common platform to meet and share experiences and knowledge.

A second effective way to mobilise SA YWPs is by the accommodation of YWPs either in dedicated session in other WISA conference or by integration of YWPs' work within the conference programme through engagement with the organising committees of other events. The bi-annual WISA Congress and Exhibition would be the primary target event at which to host a range of dedicated YWP functions.

Deliverables

- SA YWP Newsletter launched
- SA YWP e-Newsletter launched
- SA YWP Web discussion forums launched
- National Young Water Professionals Conference staged

WORK AREA 2: CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Objective Provide career development opportunities for YWPs

Description The Programme will provide YWPs with support to enhance their career development. This will be achieved through the development of resources, organisation of a series of workshops and recognising the excellence of YWPs as they develop their career.

Work Package 2.1 Workshops

Workshops have proved to be an ideal forum for discussing career development issues and providing YWPs with career advice. As a part of national WISA events such as the Biennial Congress and Education, Training & Youth Development conferences, the YWP Programme

² National events are not restricted to that particular countries nationals, but *all* young individuals studying or working in that country

will organise workshops to cover issues related to career opportunities, increasing the participation of YWPs in the organisations' activities and increasing the involvement of YWPs in specific regional issues.

Work Package 2.2 Mentoring

This work area will aim to form links between senior members of the organisations and young members to provide career guidance, professional assistance and build mutually beneficial relationships. A pilot mentoring programme will be launched with the assistance of the IWA Council of Distinguished Water Professionals and the WISA register of Members' Areas of Expertise. Such a programme will provide resources and a web-based platform for the facilitation of mentoring. The Mentoring Programme will be restricted to IWA / WISA members only.

Work Package 2.3 Web-Based Resources

Resources for career development will be developed and implemented on the eWISA website.

Work Package 2.4 Recognition

Recognising the achievements of YWPs and the progression they have made in the sector is an important part of career development. The IWA Young Professionals Award is traditionally awarded to a professional under the age of 35 from either the practical side of the industry or from research/academia to recognise both outstanding career achievement to date and future potential. It is proposed that a national award should be created to become a key initiative of the SA YWP Programme by raising the profile of YWPs within the IWA, WISA and the water sector generally. Nominations will be solicited through the IWA / WISA membership for outstanding career achievement to date and future potential. All nominees for the Award must be members of IWA or WISA.

Deliverables

- Workshop staged at WISA conference
- Pilot mentoring programme launched
- Young Water Professional Award presented

WORK AREA 3: SECTOR SUPPORT

Objective Support employers with the recruitment and retention of YWPs

Description Engagement with the sector to support work related to the recruitment and retention of their workforce through development of activities which recognise excellence in providing professional development programmes and supporting collaborative efforts in recruiting high calibre YWP.

Work Package 3.1 Recognition

In supporting the sector, the SA YWP Programme will recognise those employees who have demonstrated a commitment to the development of their workforce. The WISA / IWA Professional Development Award recognises companies in the water sector that are making a significant contribution to the professional development of young employees. The nominations for the award must come from young employees of a company clearly stating how their employer has supported them and/or their colleagues. The prize will be recognised as a prestigious award promoting excellence in the sector, which will be presented during the WISA Biennial Conference. The winning company will gain recognition by the leading association of water professionals as an excellent place of work for young employees. All companies nominated for the Award must be corporate members of IWA or WISA.

Work Package 3.2 Recruitment

This work area will focus on supporting employers in the water sector with the recruitment of young talent by providing opportunities to communicate and interact with YWPs. This work area will look inwards towards those currently working in the sector or studying for water-specific qualification and also outwards to those studying 'non-water-specific' subjects (e.g. chemistry, microbiology, engineering, biochemistry, etc).

A Careers Fair offers an opportunity for YWPs to meet a range of industry recruiters to establish new contacts, ask specific questions and improve their career prospects. Staging this event at the 2010 WISA Conference provides ample opportunities for various institutions and companies to be involved. Each employer will have a display stand and a table that will be staffed by company representatives handing out brochures and answering questions. Staging a Career Fair at the WISA Congress will ultimately add value for the event and is beneficial because many sector organisations/companies/institutions exhibit and already have a presence at the Congress.

Work Package 3.3 External Relations

This work area will focus on developing relationships with organisations, companies and institutions in the sector to provide mutually beneficial support to achieve common goals. Such relationships may have a focus on, for example:

- Recruitment of YWPs (including exchange/internship programmes and full-time employment);
- Working towards common strategic objectives (of the Programme and the Association at large);
- Extending and strengthening the network (linking-up with other like-minded networks)

Where appropriate, such relations will be recognised as supporting organisations of the Programme. A list of these will be listed on the eWISA website, with details of any ongoing cooperation.

Deliverables

- Career Fair staged at the WISA Congress
- Professional development award presented

WORK AREA 4: PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Objective Ensure the Programme remains relevant to YWPs

Description It is the needs of the sector and the ambitions of YWPs that will drive the YWP Programme and the future strategic direction of WISA and IWA. This work package will support the further development of the programme through consultation and evaluation.

Work Package 4.1 Representation

The YWP Committee consists of young members of WISA and the IWA. The role of the Committee is to guide the development and implementation of the young water professionals' programme. The Committee will convene at least once every year and report to the Boards of Directors of the IWA and WISA. The Chair of the Committee will have an advisory role to the Presidents of the two associations and will assist their meetings upon invitation.

Work Package 4.2 Reactive to Needs

YWPs are the driving force behind the Programme. They are the main benefactors and so the Programme has to remain relevant to their needs and ambitions. An online survey of YWPs will be developed during to establish their needs and ambitions and assess the impact of the Programme. The results of the survey will be published in a report and will contribute to the programme review.

Work Package 4.3 Programme Review

An impact assessment report of the Programme will be produced on an annual basis and will feed into the IWA and WISA business plan and annual report. The programme review will be conducted by IWA and/or WISA staff with the assistance of the Committee.

Work Package 4.4 Recruitment

Having acknowledged that the YWPs are the driving force behind the Programme, it is also important to admit that they are the reason for the YWP Programme. The main objective of the IWA/WISA Young Water Professional Programmes is to become the SA YWP Programme. In order to achieve this, and to raise the profile of the Programme, several recruitment and awareness campaigns will be executed. These campaigns will be evaluated by the IWA and/or WISA Membership Departments and executed with their support.

Deliverables

- YWP Committee meeting held
- YWP survey report
- Programme reviewed
- Increase the number of YWP

SA YOUNG WATER PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME | MEMBER BENEFITS

	IWA or WISA INDIVIDUAL MEMBER	IWA or WISA CORPORATE MEMBER	NON MEMBER
CONNECTING PEOPLE			
SA Young Water Professionals Conferences	✓ ³	-	✓
SA Young Water Professionals e-Newsletter	✓	-	✓
SA Young Water Professionals Discussion Forum	✓	-	✓ ⁴
CAREER DEVELOPMENT			
Workshops	✓	-	✓
Mentoring Programme	✓	-	x
Young Water Professionals Award	✓	-	x
SECTOR SUPPORT ⁵			
Professional Development Award	-	✓	x
Career Fair	-	✓	✓

³ Discounted registration fee for IWA and WISA members

⁴ Only IWA and WISA Members can post messages, non-members can only see forums.

⁵ For 'Corporates' only, not individuals