



MEDIA ADVISORY

Wetskills for third time to South Africa

Durban, South Africa – After 18 successful editions worldwide in the last six years, of which two in Southern Africa, the Wetskills Water Challenge will be organized in South Africa for the third time. This Wetskills program will start at 6 May and end at 18 May. 18 young professionals and students in the South African and Dutch water industry will compete to develop an innovative concept for five case studies to create solutions for water issues in a changing world.

Find a press release to be used as appendix

Case topics

During the Wetskills program, participants, water experts and companies will compare views on global water innovations, share best practices, and find new solutions on several topics, playing in South Africa, including:

- Climate resiliency
- Water management
- (waste)water treatment
- Capacity development in South Africa
- International knowledge exchange

Find the short case descriptions as appendix

About Wetskills

The Wetskills Water Challenge is a two-weeks pressure-cooker programme for students and young professionals with a passion for water from all over the world. They meet in a country and work in transdisciplinary and transcultural teams at water-related topics. The main challenge: develop as a team your own innovative and out-of-the-box solution for water challenges in a changing world. The study cases are provided and formed by



study case owners, companies and organisation with a dedicated challenge in a local situation. These concepts are presented during the formal event through an ice-breaking and energizing session, when the cooperation between the Dutch water sector and the partner-country is showed and positioned. It provides a floor to integrate generations, water challenges, disciplines and cultures.

Since 2010, about 350 international water young water professionals and graduate students from more than 80 international universities and organizations have participated Wetskills Water Challenges, organized in China, India, Israel, United States, Canada, Mozambique, Romania, the Netherlands, Egypt, South Africa, Oman, Indonesia, Philippines and Morocco.

Wetskills was founded in The Netherlands in 2010.

Partners

The following organizations are working together to produce the Wetskills Water Challenge:

Wetskills Foundation

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Pretoria

Kingfisher project

Water Institute Southern Africa (WISA)

Top Sector Water (The Netherlands)

Case owners (organisations that formulated the cases for the teams);

- AquaDactics (World Water Academy)
- Berson UV
- Kingfisher project
- Water Authority Drents Overijsselse Delta
- Water Authority Vechtstromen



Invitation for press to the main parts of the Wetskills programme in South Africa 2016

Members of the media are invited to all the events. Of particular interest are the following parts of the program:

- Wetskills kick-off event: The so-called Brain Hurricane on **9 May 2016 9.00-13.00** (location: University of KwaZulu-Natal: Discipline of Chemical Engineering, Howard College, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 4041, Durban, South Africa), an interactive brainstorming event where participants will learn about the case studies, contact the case owners, and learn more about the water challenges in South Africa from experts. A special speed date session will be organized with 8-10 South African and Dutch experts from the water industry.
- Team presentations to the (international) jury during the WISA Conference in Durban (Durban ICC): **Monday 16 May around 15.40-16.30 B** (detailed information will be provided later)
- Announcement of the winner of the Wetskills Water Challenge on **Monday 16 May around 17.10-17.20** after the team presentations (detailed information will be provided later).

Information about previous Wetskills editions: www.wetskills.com/publications/

For More information contact:

Website: www.wetskills.com

Twitter: [@Wetskills](https://twitter.com/Wetskills), [#WetskillsZA](https://twitter.com/WetskillsZA)

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Appendix 1 - Standard press-release in English

Wetskills: for the third time in South-Africa

Between 6 and 18 May, the third South African Wetskills Challenge will take place in Durban. The event will be partially parallel to the WISA 2016 Conference organized by the Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA). During the Wetskills Challenge 18 students and young professionals from South-Africa, Swaziland and The Netherlands will work together on actual water related cases. The cases of this edition are provided by Aquadactics (World Water Academy), Berson UV, Kingfisher Project, water authority Drents Overijsselse Delta en water authority Vechtstromen.

Presentations during WISA-Conference

It's the 19th time that a worldwide Wetskills Challenge is organized. 'The fact that this is the third time that we're going to South-Africa, is not a coincidence of course', says Johan Oost, project leader. 'Both South Africa and The Netherlands are confronted with very specific water related problems. In this fast changing world we get more and more confronted with challenges around water quality and water safety. South-Africa for example has to deal with a.o. challenges related to waste water, sanitation, health aspects, mining water and groundwater. The first South-African edition of Wetskills took place during the WISA 2012 Conference in Cape Town. The second South-African edition took place during the WISA 2014 Conference in Nelspruit. This year the WISA Conference 2016 takes place from 15 till 19 May in Durban.'

Programme

On Monday 9 May the program starts with the Brain Hurricane, a brainstorm guided by experts. On 16 May all groups present the solution to their case to a jury of South-African and Dutch experts during the WISA conference. During the two weeksthe program also contains several work related excursions and social activities.

About Wetskills: international and out of the box

Wetskills, a program, organized for the first time in 2010 and since 2015 an independent Foundation, chooses an innovative approach of experimental learning and international networking for students and young professionals with different professional backgrounds. The Challenges find place worldwide, usually during international water related events. The cases that participants work on are real life challenges from companies and (governmental) organizations. Since 2010 Wetskills organized 18 events worldwide, in 14 different countries. In total about 400 students and 80 universities and organisations were involved.

#cocreatesa

#cocreateSA is involved in this Wetskills event. It is a platform for South African and Dutch counterparts to exchange innovations for a sustainable future. By using the available channels, it showcases, inspires, stimulates and facilitates (economic, politic and social) collaboration between South Africa and The Netherlands, based on the belief that if we work together, we can make a difference and co-create solutions for local issues.

More information

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Appendix 2 - Standard press-release in Dutch

Wetskills: voor de derde keer in Zuid-Afrika

Van 6 tot en met 18 mei vindt voor de derde keer een Wetskills Challenge plaats in Zuid-Afrika. De Challenge vindt plaats in Durban, deels gelijktijdig met de WISA 2016 Conference van het Water Institute of Southern Africa (WISA). Tijdens de Wetskills Challenge werken 18 studenten en young professionals uit Zuid-Afrika, Swaziland en Nederland in teams samen aan actuele watervraagstukken. Cases worden dit keer geleverd door Aquadactics (World Water Academy), Berson UV, Kingfisher Project, waterschap Drents Overijsselse Delta en waterschap Vechtstromen. Doel is om te komen tot innovatieve oplossingen die in de praktijk ingezet zullen worden.

Presentaties tijdens WISA-Conferentie

Het is de negentiende keer dat er wereldwijd een Wetskills Challenge plaatsvindt. 'Dat we nu voor de derde keer naar Zuid-Afrika gaan, is natuurlijk niet zomaar,' zegt Johan Oost, projectleider bij Wetskills. 'Zuid-Afrika heeft net als Nederland te maken met serieuze waterproblematiek. Nu de wereld zo snel verandert, krijgen we steeds meer te maken met vraagstukken rondom bijvoorbeeld waterkwaliteit en waterveiligheid. Zuid-Afrika heeft onder andere te maken met uitdagingen op het gebied van afvalwater, sanitatie van drinkwater, gezondheidsaspecten, mijnwater, en grondwater. De eerste Zuid-Afrikaanse editie van Wetskills vond in 2012 plaats tijdens de WISA Conferentie in Kaapstad. De tweede Zuid-Afrikaanse editie vond plaats in 2014 tijdens de WISA Conferentie in Nelspruit. Dit jaar vindt de WISA-Conferentie plaats van 15 tot 19 mei.'

Programma

Op maandag 9 mei start de Wetskills Challenge met de 'Brain Hurricane', een breinstorm begeleid door experts uit het veld. Alle groepen presenteren hun oplossingen op 16 mei met een pitch de jury, bestaande uit Zuid-Afrikaanse en Nederlandse professionals. In de tussentijd staan er ook diverse water-gerelateerde excursies en sociale activiteiten op het programma.

About Wetskills: internationaal en out of the box

Wetskills, een programma voor het eerste gehouden in 2010 en sinds 2015 een zelfstandige stichting, kiest een innovatieve benadering voor ervaringsgericht leren en internationaal netwerken binnen de watersector. De Challenges vinden wereldwijd plaats, doorgaans gelijktijdig internationaal watergerelateerde events. Tijdens de twee weken durende Wetskills Challenges komen studenten en young professionals met verschillende professionele achtergronden tot nieuwe, out of the box oplossingen. Cases zijn afkomstig van bedrijven en overheidsorganisaties. Sinds 2010 hebben er wereldwijd 18 Challenges plaatsgevonden in 14 verschillende landen. In totaal waren hier ongeveer 400 deelnemers en meer dan 80 universiteiten en organisaties bij betrokken.

Meer informatie

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Appendix 3 - Wetskills-ZA 2016: overview cases

Case 1: Water authority Vechtstromen

Climate resilience

The Inkomati catchment area is currently coping with extreme drought problems because of the El Nino effect. The drought leads to a decrease of the crops and water supply, and thus potential unrest in the area. The effects of climate change are expected to lead to even worse extremes considering drought and flood problems in this region. One needs to cope with this problem by adapting to these extreme conditions. The challenge is to improve Climate Change resilience in the Inkomati catchment area, through innovation. In the REMCO trans boundary cooperation, in the Incomati River Catchment, DWA Swaziland and the partners Arasul in Mozambique and IUCMA in South Africa have the ambition to make the Incomati catchment more climate change resilient. The challenge for the students/YWP is to find innovative solutions to cope with the extreme drought and flood problems in the Incomati catchment area, with the final aim: 'to improve climate change resilience in the Incomati catchment area'.

Case 2: Kingfisher project

The international learning cycle

In South Africa water management is being decentralized due to the National Water Act from 2008. Nine Catchment Management Agencies (CMAs) are being established, responsible for the regional water management. These CMAs can be compared to the Dutch Water Authorities (Waterschappen), which have a long history with decentralized water management. Since 2004, Dutch Water Authorities have been exchanging knowledge with the South African Department of Water Affairs and the CMA's. The Kingfisher project supports among othersthe establishment and development of the nine CMAs in South Africa. Ten Dutch regional water authorities are involved and execute a twinning programme with the CMAs. Good results have been achieved so far. However, because of the large extent and complex international structure of the Kingfisher project, it is difficult to share the lessons learned with all the CMAs. There is not an established mutual learning cycle. The Kingfisher project should benefit from an innovative learning cycle in order to become more effective and efficient.

Case 3: Water authority Drents Overijsselse Delta

Future monitoring plan for international water authorities

Reliable monitoring data contributes to a sustainable water supply for now and the future. That's why water authorities from all over the world collect data about hydrological, chemical and biological parameters. However, there's a big contrast in the density of the network, analysis methods, quality and availability of the data due to several causes like financial capacity, knowledge constraints and the size of the management areas. There is a big difference between the availability of information, data and measuring programs between South Africa and the Netherlands: both with their own pros and cons. But why should each country or region have its own monitoring plan? Water authority Drents Overijsselse Delta would like to develop 'a monitoring plan for the future' that is both applicable in South Africa and the Netherlands.



Case 4: Berson UV

Simply safe water

Rural areas globally suffer from water scarcity and water safety issues. For decades the development of water treatment technology has been focused on large scale central treatment. These techniques are efficient for urban areas, but less suitable for rural areas. In cases where water is transported from central facilities to rural communities, water quality deterioration often is an issue. Since 40 years, UV has proven to be a reliable and cost effective disinfection method, providing safety against chlorine resistant pathogens. A recent development is the introduction of solar powered lamp drivers. This opens up application of UV in areas without (reliable) source of electricity. Though the technology is now available, there are still challenges in the introduction of solar powered UV for rural areas: 1. Selection of a simple and reliable pre-filtration for direct treatment of surface water; 2. Generating of acceptance of UV technology at a government, NGO and local level; 3. Development of a service organization that is able to maintain and repair the UV systems. Therefore an integral approach is needed to successfully introduce solar powered UV in rural South Africa.

Case 5: AquaDactics

Unlocking experiential knowledge

Assessments show a scarcity in the actual operating and maintenance skills in South Africa. Moreover a brain-drain is expected within the municipalities, due to the retirement of highly experienced people. Well-knowledgeable and well-skilled staff is the main prerequisite to operate and maintain assets sustainably. The transfer of existing expertise from the retiring staff to younger staff is inevitable. In the vision of Aquadactics, capital investments for water (supply, wastewater, and management) needs to be addressed parallel to the knowledge and skills development of human resources. But investing in this is not so sexy as in investing in capital assets. A main challenge is to convincing the sector to invest in 'unlocking the experiential knowledge that is currently present in the water sector .. and make it financially attractive'.