

Event Details

When and Where



The thinkshop “ Wise use, Smart Plans” takes place on **Thursday 2nd July 2015, 9:30-16:00h** Champagne Sports and Leisure Resort, KwaZulu-Natal, following the 2015 SASAqS conference.

Target audience

The event targets policy makers, regional and national conservationists, water resource users, scientists and other interested stakeholders of wetlands in the region. It is designed as a seeding discussion for the 2015 Wetlands Indaba.



Registration



Cost: R225.00 per person, including tea and lunch. Register via the Conference Secretariat - Mrs. Petrie Vogel | Tel: +27 (12) 346 0687 petrie@savetcon.co.za | www.savetcon.co.za

“In the face of rising water demands for energy, agricultural, industrial and social development, securing sufficient water to sustain the life-supporting functions and services of the world’s rivers, lakes and wetlands is among the most significant challenges of the 21st century.”

*The Global Water Crisis:
InterAction Council, 2012*

WETLANDSFORUM.NET

WISE USE, SMART PLANS



**ENGAGING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
FOR BETTER WETLANDS MANAGEMENT**

Join the Wetlandsforum conversation at the

2015 SASAqS CONFERENCE



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UNESCO-IHE
Institute for Water Education



Wetlands under pressure

Wetlands provide essential natural infrastructure for water regulation, pollution control and disaster prevention, habitats for plant and animal communities, and support for diverse human livelihoods and social structures. Nevertheless, wetlands are in rapid decline and exposed to immense pressures from mining, industrial and urban development, and expanding agriculture.

Despite their recognized importance and increasing protection under the law, decisions favouring short-term economic gains and individual interests at the expense of long-term sustainability continue. Cases like the drainage of the Balamhlanga Pan illustrate the challenges the South and Southern African wetlands community faces. The ambitious goals of our regional water and environmental policies are far from being realized.



Activating Communities of Practice

South Africa's is home to a strong and committed wetlands community, hosting leading research centres and experts on wetlands ecology and management. To 'walk the talk' on wetlands policies, our provincial and national fora need to bring this strength to bear, and play an active and constructive role in policy implementation.

The Wetlandsforum.net initiative is delighted to announce a 'thinkshop' on South and southern Africa's wetlands, following the 2015 SASAQs conference in KwaZulu-Natal on 2nd June 2015. The event will explore the current state of policies that protect or impact wetlands, and the opportunities and challenges for regional communities of practice.

Learning from experience

Using local cases as a scaffold, the thinkshop will take stock of challenges and suggested solutions for African wetland management and explore the potential of communities of practice to improve policies and their implementation.

Session 1 – Local scale: Wetlands for people

Deterioration of wetlands is most acutely felt in local communities relying on wetlands for their livelihoods. Effective wetlands management relies on community involvement. The session explores the role of wetlands practitioners as intermediaries between catchment-scale policies and community-based action.

Session 2 – National Scale: Making policy work

Fully developing and implementing the National Wetland Monitoring Programme presents a milestone for wetlands management in South Africa. The session will assess upcoming challenges and opportunities, drawing on insights and experiences with policy and evaluation frameworks including the European Water Framework Directive and the TEEB for Water and Wetlands approach.

Session 3 – International Scale: Bursting the Bubble

Safeguarding wetlands requires collaboration beyond the catchment scale. Wetlands play an important but underestimated role for priority development goals such as poverty eradication, food security and climate change adaptation. Regional commissions and organizations increasingly influence policy agendas. The final session will discuss opportunities for international collaboration.

The thinkshop is designed as a seeding event for the upcoming National Wetlands Indaba 2015 and other international policy platforms. The format will be active, drawing on participants expertise. Experience from neighbouring countries will be introduced in brief vignettes to stimulate and expand the discussion.



The Facilitator



Prof Kenneth Irvine

Chair of Aquatic Ecosystems, UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, Delft and Chair, Wetlandsforum.net Steering Committee

Over 30 years, Ken has studied aquatic ecosystems ranging from shallow artificial lakes to the African Great lakes, in projects spanning fundamental research to catchment management responsive to policy needs. The International Wetlandsforum in Kigali in 2013 and the wetlandsforum.net initiative are part of his current focus on developing standards to support IWRM, and to build networks and capacities for sustainable management of African wetlands. Ken holds a BSc in Biology from the University of Exeter U.K. and PhD from the University of East Anglia, U.K.. Moving to UNESCO-IHE in 2011, he now works to further develop the understanding between human pressures and ecological integrity, management, and links between ecological functions and policy.

The thinkshop will feature experiences and contributions by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), WWF Zambia, the International Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, and the Institute of Natural Resources NPC.

About Wetlandsforum.net

The Wetlandsforum.net initiative aims to establish an active and self-sustaining African community of practice for wetlands scientists and managers seeking to explore new perspectives for better wetland management.

It works to

- Establish communication platforms and facilitate network development activities fostering south-south partnerships and international collaboration;
- Facilitate and support regional capacity development activities, in particular focusing on training multipliers positioned to disseminate knowledge within and across their organizations, and within and across the region;
- Provide a process to collect, evaluate and share best practices, facilitate and support knowledge management and dissemination of existing knowledge, including publication of case studies and solutions specific to regional and local challenges and pressures.