

## REGARDING ISWA SCIENTIFIC PROFILE AND ACTIVITIES

### Introduction

ISWA's scientific profile and influence has been discussed several times during the last years. It is generally recognized that ISWA's academic participation is not in accordance with ISWA's role as a global stakeholder that promotes sustainable waste management. Sometimes it is also mentioned (as a good or as a bad comment) that ISWA is place for companies and professionals and not for academics. Before proposing some steps to increase academic participation in ISWA the STC and the Board have to create a common understanding of the problems created by the current level of academics' participation.

ISWA promotes sustainable waste management worldwide by providing know- how exchanging activities, promoting best practices and successful applications and finally by demonstrating the importance of well educated and trained professionals that are the foundation of each successful waste management system.

On the other hand, one of the most globally recognized characteristics of ISWA is that it keeps close to reality, it promotes sustainability in practice, inspired and driven from the thorough experiences gained by the high level professionals that participate and contribute to our activities.

It is exactly this characteristic that provides ISWA:

- the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice
- the capacity to catalyze interactive science and market developments
- the perspective to serve as the a worldwide educational center on waste management

If we do share this future for ISWA, we have to recognize the importance of academic participation. The real problem is that the current level of participation does not allow ISWA to realize its potential for the following three reasons.

First, because in a lot of developed but almost in all developing and transition countries academics play a very important role in promoting sustainable waste management, especially in the beginning of the relevant efforts.

Second, because education and training cannot be seriously developed without serious academic support.

Third, because innovation and applied research is a key-issue on waste management development and ISWA has to be very close to it in order to keep its scientific and technical profile high.

Taking into account those problems it is obvious that STC and Board have to act immediately in order:

- to create a new and more attractive framework for academics participation to ISWA,
- to exploit further the academic resources already involved to ISWA, and
- to create better conditions for the required innovative symbiosis between market and science developments

Of course ISWA is not starting from scratch. We have to take into account that the journal of Waste Management & Research belongs to the oldest and most renowned international journals (existing since 1983) on waste management. During the last years the journal has been a success story with triplication of the impact factor since 2005. We have also to consider that there are famous and well placed academics that are already working with ISWA with one or another way, providing substantial scientific value and support to our activities. So what we have to do is to make an action plan that will allow us to further utilize our strengths and opportunities while it will help us to mitigate our weaknesses and threats.

Such an action plan is described below.

## Action plan

The action plan described is conceptual and this must be finalized in details by the Task Force that is proposed, with the active involvement of academics and STC members.

### **Action 1: WM&R Chief Editor**

The current Chief Editor has provided substantial services and improvements to WM&R and he had a great contribution to ISWA's activities through the White paper on Climate Change and Waste Management.

According the new ISWA concepts, all working positions should be described by specific Terms of references that will include his/ her requirements and duties and the need for a more direct link with ISWA activities.

In general terms, it is very important to have an emblematic person in this position, well known and linked with other academics. The Chief Editor must have a long lasting experience in publication and can rely on a good network in the field of waste management. This could be beneficial to invite more people from the scientific field to join ISWA and to publish their work in WM&R. Having the right person for this position can create substantial results even without any other action.

There are three more issues to be considered.

First, WM&R Chief editor must participate to ISWA Board and STC meetings in order to create practical links and to interact with our activities. If required, changes to statutes and constitutional rules of ISWA must be done.

Second, for that purpose WM&R Chief editor must be supported by ISWA.

Third, in his or her obligations there must be details regarding his participation in ISWA activities and promotion of ISWA to academic world as well as a certain development plan.

The procedure of drafting the required ToR must start as soon as possible.

## **Action 2: WM&R and its links with ISWA**

The crucial issue for more academics participation is to have an official recognition of the value of their publications in ISWA conferences, which we do not have now. For that purpose it is necessary to follow certain procedures in order to gain an ISSN number for each annual conference (at least).

This means that there are specific changes that must be done to the way we organize our annual conferences and it is proposed those changes to be realized starting from 2012 conference in Florence.

Change 1: A special WM&R issue must be dedicated to our annual congress, including the best papers

Change 2: An editorial board must be established for all conferences and at least a pro forma evaluation must be done for all submitted papers

Also we have to further utilize WM&R editorial team and make it, practically without special announcements and decisions, ISWA's ambassadors into the academic world. That means that the new Chief Editor has to select the appropriate people for that and make them understand how important is to represent ISWA as well in several activities.

## **Action 3: Involvement of academics and universities to IWM procedures**

Future development of the IWM program must be considered with specific links with academic institutions and the development of distance learning packages for IWM candidates or holders. The idea has already been discussed and approved by the STC (July 2009, Lisbon) but no action has taken place.

## **Action 4: ISWA scholarships and research activities**

It is important to find ways that ISWA will support promote and demonstrate selected research activities, under the Vienna Grants procedures. Emphasis must be given to activities that combine science and market issues.

A certain budget also must be dedicated to ISWA scholarships that must be awarded under certain procedures and aim to promote science – market know-how exchange.

## **Action 5: ISWA summer schools**

ISWA's future depends a lot on the links we will construct with young professionals and academics. In cooperation with certain academic institutes, it is proposed that an ISWA summer school should be organized every year. The purpose of this summer school will be to attract young people around ISWA activities providing high level educational activities and content and the opportunity to contact with reliable professionals.

## **How to go on**

It is proposed that ISWA Board authorizes a TF formulated by Jens Aage Hansen (Current Chief Editor), Goran Vujic (University of Novi Sad), Johann Fellner (Technical University of

Vienna), Dimitris Dermatas (National Technical University of Athens) and Pariatamby Agamutu (University of Malaysia) to work on the details of the action plan proposed (and of course modify it if required) and deliver a final version until May 2011. This TF will work under the supervision of ISWA STC Chair and will have full support of the GS. Only travel expenses for 1 or 2 meetings in Vienna will be covered for TF members and/or reviewers.

The duties of this TF will be the following:

- To prepare a detailed action plan based on the conceptual one that has been already presented and deliver it to STC and Board no later than May 2011
- To organize a meeting in Hamburg with selected academics in order to present an outline of the proposed action plan and test the response of academics to it
- To organize a reviewers or hearing group by selected academics which will provide their opinions for the action plan will propose further activities if required
- To prepare ToR for the Chief Editor of WM&R
- To prepare standard procedures for getting ISSN numbers to all annual conferences and support ISWA to apply them from 2012 conference in cooperation with the Italian Organizers
- To prepare draft terms and conditions for ISWA's cooperation with academic institutes regarding IWM procedures and summer schools
- To prepare draft terms and conditions for ISWA research activities and scholarships

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