



Annual Report 2013 - Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network (ECHN) of IAH

1. INTRODUCTION

The Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network (ECHN) was established during the reorganization of the commissions and working groups of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH) on July 1st, 2011. The ECH Network aims to support hydrogeologists at the start of their professional careers and to promote their involvement in IAH affairs. The ECH Network focuses on information sharing, networking and strengthening the status of early career hydrogeologists within IAH.

2. ECH NETWORK AND ECHN STEERING COMMITTEE

During the ECHN Steering Committee held in Perth (Australia) on 17/09/13 Judith Flügge formally resigned as Chair of the ECHN Executive Committee. Viviana Re was appointed new Chair of the committee and Gillian Hurding replaced Viviana Re in her former position, joining Matthys Dippenaar as co-chair.

In the same occasion a new structure of the Network was discussed and approved. These are the main changes:

- To improve the efficiency of the network (and incorporating experience from previous decision making) the three chairs/co-chairs are now able to make decisions based on a 2 person majority.
- To ensure active participation of the ECHN steering committee, members will be invited to join the committee for one year (running from the end of one IAH annual congress to the next). Following this time members will be asked to re-apply if they are able to stay involved with the network. It is agreed that membership of the steering committee should not be automatically renewed to allow for new member involvement, changing priorities of existing members and also reflect that involvement may be task specific or due to geographical location, e.g. assisting in a specific annual IAH congresses organizing committee
- To acknowledge varying roles and work-level intensity, task groups have been formed (and will be formed) within the committee depending on the Network needs and priorities of the time.

Steering committee members in 2013 were: Judith Flügge (Germany), Viviana Re (Italy), Matthys Dippenaar (South Africa), Gillian Hurding (Australia), Carlos Maldaner (Brazil), Lindsay McMillan (UK), Nelda Breedt (South Africa), Matthew Currell (Australia) and Tirza Contreras (Honduras).

At the end of 2013, Judith Flügge (Germany), changed her status to advisor, and Nelda Breedt (South Africa) resigned.



The ECHN is very thankful to the former steering committee members for their valuable contributions and hard work to promote the involvement of early career hydrogeologists in IAH issues.

3. ACTIVITIES

3.1 Meetings of the Steering Committee

During the reporting period, steering committee meetings were held on January 31st, April 10th, July 23rd, December 3rd 2013 via Skype.

3.2 Sessions at conferences

The 40th IAH Congress held in Perth, Australia, from September 15 – 21, 2013, was a great success for early career hydrogeologists, encouraging their involvement in IAH matters, enabling networking and developing their professional careers. Thanks to the organizers of the Congress, the Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network of IAH (ECHN) was able to offer some outstanding events for interested junior hydrogeologists, including a dedicated early career hydrogeologist poster and oral presentation award, and a social function (organized with the financial support of the IAH Chapter of Western Australia).

Many offers were realized concerning the better promotion of early career hydrogeologists at the congress. These included:

- Highlighting ECHNs with ECHN stickers on their badges and poster presentations,
- Highlighting ECHNs with the ECHN logo in the power point presentation (ECHN logo was made available for download in the conference website)
- Affordable accommodation alternatives (hostels) for students (a list was made available for download at the conference website)
- Pre-congress short courses, some topics in coordination with the ECHN
- A thematic session, jointly organized with the Associate Editor of Hydrogeology Journal on paper writing ("Tips for writing a knock-out paper. Meet the editor(s) of Hydrogeology Journal - Question time for Early Career Hydrogeologists"). The presentation made by Cliff Voss and the results of the subsequent "question and discussion time" chaired by Judith Flügge and John Chilton are available for download from the IAH website
- The active presence of ECHN SC members and the IAH booth during the whole conference
- An annual meeting of the ECHN followed by a social event, attended by more than 100 participants.



3.3 Exchange of knowledge / Dissemination of Knowledge

Since the beginning of ECHN's activities the LinkedIn group is used as platform for information sharing and discussion. We post jobs and conferences announcements, we run polls and, during the IAH annual meetings we use it to promote special sessions and events. The profile of the group is regularly updated and Matthys Dippenaar continues his activity as owner of the subgroup, supported by Nelda Breedt and Tirza Contreras.

The network supports the information sharing possibilities for early career hydrogeologists, and is providing a support network for members to discuss and develop ideas or schemes at LinkedIn. The network is actively recruiting new members for this platform. Once the ECHN website is online, a broader range of offers will be realized. During 2013, the preparation of a new ECHN website, under the IAH domain, was initiated. The ECHN webmaster, Carlos Maldaner, supported by Viviana Re, worked in close collaboration with Kellie Nicholson. In fact, being the first group creating a Network website under the main domain, ECHN also worked as "tester", in view of the creation of other Networks/Chapters websites.

Also during 2013, the ECHN has been actively involved in the establishment and further development of the IAH mentoring program. A productive exchange between junior and senior hydrogeologists ensures the preservation of competence.

To continue the tradition of the publication in national journals, in 2013 a short article for "*Acque Sotteranee* – Italian Journal of Groundwater" was prepared by Viviana Re in order to promote ECHN's activities. Article title: "L'Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network (ECHN)":

Web Link: <http://www.acquesotteranee.it/it/rivista/acquesotteranee/articoli/notizie-dalla-iah-italia-%E2%80%99early-career-hydrogeologists%E2%80%99-network>

4. ECHN Branches

In 2013 two local ECHN branches have been created: ECHN South Africa and ECHN West Australia. The establishment of the national branches highlighted the need of creating a series of guidelines to support and promote the creation of other ECHN-National groups worldwide.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

During 2013, ECHN has contributed several articles to IAH "e-News" and "News and Information" publications.

In 2013 Viviana Re started being involved, as ECHN delegate, in a IAH Working Group on Educational Materials, chaired by Bruce Misstear.

6. ECHN VACATION with Science ("Summer School")

In close cooperation with Antonio Chambel (IAH Vice President - Programme and Science Coordination), the ECHN started working on realizing a "Vacation with Science" program. This represents a good opportunity to



realize summer training courses on hydrogeology while also strengthening the contacts between IAH/ECHN and National Universities.

7. Outlook

During 2014, the following issues will be addressed by ECHN:

- **IAH Congress 2014, Marrakech, Morocco.**

For the IAH Congress 2013 the following items will be addressed:

Low-cost ECH accommodation, ECH labeling (in the handbook, on badges, etc.), specific short courses, ECH best presentation prize, ECH co-chairs for technical session, ECH representative in scientific committee, organization of the joint ECHN-HJ joint session, ECHN annual meeting and social event.

- **In close cooperation with IAH Secretariat support the development of a mentoring program and creation of the ECHN website**
- **Creation of the guidelines for the establishment of ECHN National Branches**

Viviana Re and Judith Flügge

on behalf of the Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network

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