



International Association of Hydrogeologists

Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network (ECHN)



Annual Report 2016/2017

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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 in the early stages of their 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. The network has 666 members currently in the LinkedIN website and it continues to grow everyday. There are many people sending requests to join the network, however, most of these requests are declined since the IAH membership of the applicant is checked first.

This report presents activities carried out by the ECHN from September 2016 to August 2017, as well as the plans for the coming year.

2. ECHN structure and ECHN Steering Committee

The present structure of the network consists of a Steering Committee (SC), led by a Chairperson and two Co-chairs and Task Teams, supported by a group of Advisors composed of founding members of the network.

To ensure active participation of the ECHN steering committee, members are invited to join the committee for one year as part of the task teams. Following this time, members can re-apply if they are willing to continue involvement. Membership of the steering committee is not 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 the organizing committee in a specific annual IAH congress.

After the IAH Congress held in Montpellier (September 2016) the ECHN Steering Committee was renewed as follow:

- Gaathier Mahed (South Africa) and Stefania Stevenazzi (Italy) joined the SC,
- Gillian Hurding (UK), Kelley Swana (South Africa) decided not to renew their commitment with ECHN SC,
- Viviana Re (Italy) resigned chair and became an ECHN Advisor and Carlos Maldaner (Canada/Brazil), previously a co-chair, was asked to take the position.
- Raquel Sousa (Portugal) and Rui Hugman (Portugal) accepted the invitation to be co-chair and second co-chair, respectively.

Current steering committee

Carlos Maldaner (Brazil/Canada)	Chair
Gaathier Mahed (South Africa)	Task team
Raquel Sousa (Portugal)	Co-chair
Rui Hugman (Portugal)	Co-Chair
Sebnem Arslan (Turkey)	Task team
Stefania Stevenazzi (Italy)	Task team
Tirza Contreras (Honduras)	Task team
Viviana Re (Italy)	ECHN Advisors (Past Chair)

Information on the ECHN-SC is regularly updated and available online at:

https://echn.iah.org/steering_committee

3. Activities

3.1. Meetings of the Steering Committee

During the reported period, steering committee meetings were held on the following dates:

- November 29, 2016
- March 31, 2017
- June 28, 2017
- August 04, 2017
- September 11, 2017

3.2. IAH Congress

The 43rd IAH Congress held in Montpellier, France, from September 25-29, 2016, was a great success for early career hydrogeologists, encouraging their involvement in IAH matters, enabling networking and developing their professional careers. Thanks to the support of the Organizing Committee and IAH Central, 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 awards, and a thematic social function.

Attendance to IAH Council meeting by the ECHN chair at the time, Viviana Re, and co-chair Carlos Maldaner.

- Highlighting ECHN delegates on congress badges.
- Highlighting ECHNs with the ECHN logo in the powerpoint presentation (ECHN logo was made available for download in the conference website) and stickers on poster presentations.
- Affordable accommodation alternatives made available both on the conference website and ECHN one.
- A thematic session entitled “Career Development for Early Career Hydrogeologists”.
- The active presence of ECHN SC members at the IAH booth during the whole conference and the organization of the IAH Book Exchange activity together with the IAH Secretariat.
- An annual meeting of the ECHN followed by a social event organized in collaboration with the financial support of IAH-France, and attended by more than 100 participants.
- The Coolest Paper Award Celebration
- Early Career Oral Presentation and Poster Prizes (organized in collaboration with the Organizing Committee), awarded during the closing ceremony. The evaluation commission was composed by ECHN-IAH members (Viviana Re and Carlos Maldaner).
- As part of the IAH 60th anniversary celebrations, Viviana Re and Carlos Maldaner were invited to contribute to the opening ceremony, representing ECHN.

4. Exchange and dissemination of knowledge

Since the beginning of ECHN’s activities, the LinkedIn group has been used as a platform for information sharing and discussion. We post jobs and conference 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 by Tirza Contreras and Sebnem Arslan. All SC members contribute posting news and update in the group page. 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 from this platform, supported by the newly established Facebook page (administered by Rui Hugman) and Twitter account (administered by Stefania Stevenazzi).

The ECHN website, launched in 2014 (<https://echn.iah.org/>) is currently administered by Carlos Maldaner and Raquel Sousa. The website is constantly updated with news and pictures to help promote both ECHN and IAH activities at international level.

5. ECHN Branches

The ECHN National Groups allow ECH's to network and share technical information with other hydrogeologists in their own country and/or city. Examples of events include technical presentations, hydrogeological tours or socializing with local/national experts in the field of hydrogeology.

Current National branches are:

1. [West Australia](#)
2. Brazil
3. Canada
4. [Colombia](#)
5. [Italy](#)
6. Portugal
7. South Africa
8. United Kingdom

6. Coolest Paper Award

In 2016, the third edition of the coolest paper award was launched (<https://echn.iah.org/2015-coolestpaper>) with the aim of energizing the early career hydrogeologist community and encourage the discussion of new and existing papers. The definition of 'cool' has been deliberately left open to interpretation to inspire a wide range of nominations and voting. The competition was divided in two phases. A nomination period where we asked ECH to nominate any hydrogeology paper published (online or in volume) during 2015 in any peer reviewed journal that inspired with its originality, creativity, thoroughness or any other criteria. In the second phase we asked ECH to vote for the nominated papers. The winner of the competition was announced on the ECHN website and ECHN LinkedIn, while the award ceremony took place during the Annual General Meeting.

The winner of the 2015 Coolest Paper Award was Prof. Fred L. Ogden (University of Wyoming), with the paper: **Ogden, F. L., W. Lai, R. C. Steinke, J. Zhu, C. A. Talbot, and J. L. Wilson (2015), A new general 1-D vadose zone flow solution method, *Water Resour. Res.*, 51, 4282–4300.** He presented at the 2016 IAH Congress on Tuesday, September 27th, 2016, at 18:15 in the Pasteur Auditorium. Not many people attended the presentation and the

ECHN have received criticism from the winner about the organization of the event. It will be important to improve the ceremony for future awards.

In February 2017, the fourth edition of the Award was launched but not many submissions have been received close to the end of the submission period. A trend that has been observed in the last editions. Therefore, the ECHN Steering Committee decided to postpone the Award for next year and perhaps run it every two years instead of every year. However, before the launch of the next edition, the ECHN should brainstorm and find ways to increase the interaction with the community and the number of submissions.

7. Collaborations

7.1. UNESCO-GRAPHIC (Groundwater Resources Assessment Under the pressures of humanity and climate change)

ECHN director, Viviana Re, attended the GRAPHIC meeting held in Rome on September 13th to present the network and to discuss the possibility of joint initiatives. After her presentation during the meeting it was decided to launch a call for a “Topical Collection” on Hydrogeology Journal targeted to Early Career Research on Groundwater and Climate Change. Practical arrangements for this joint action were initiated after the IAH Congress 2015, with the support of Marc Leblanc and Jason Gourdak (GRAPHIC), Clifford Voss and the HJ team. The “Topical Collection” was launched in June 2016 and the following deadline were set:

- September 2016: deadline for manuscript submission to ECHN for a pre-screening of the suitability of the content. In this phase both ECHN and GRAPHIC members contributed to the pre-screening of 7 papers;
- November 2016: deadline for manuscript submission via HJ manuscript central.

8. Outlook

The main objective of the ECHN for 2017/2018 are:

- Attract new ECHs to be part of the Steering Committee;
- Maintain/improve the activities organized during the Annual IAH Congresses;
- Support the launching of National Branches and improve interaction between them and between the Central ECHN;
- Improve communication with the IAH/ECHN community and with ECHN National Branches;
- Create a platform on the website for Career Development for ECHs.

September 18, 2017

Carlos Maldaner

On behalf of the Early Career Hydrogeologists' Network