



## PRESS RELEASE

*Students awarded at WISA conference in Cape Town*

### **' Sewage Treatment: A Walk in the Park' wins South Africa's first Wetskills Water Challenge**

**Cape Town - On Tuesday evening 8 May a team of four water talents won the prestigious Wetskills Water Challenge South Africa 2012 with their integral water design solution "Sewage Treatment: A Walk in the Park". The award ceremony took place during WISA 2012 in Cape Town and Sanne Muis, Nadine Wacka, Linda Carol Zulu and Peter de Jong highly impressed the international jury, headed by Ms Duduzile Twayi on behalf of Deputy Minister of Water Rejoice Mabudafhasi, together with Dutch Climate Ambassador Hugo von Meijenfeldt. "We were extremely thrilled with the high level of solutions presented by the 21 students of South African and Dutch universities, but the winning team proved to be the most convincing, creative and sustainable!"**

The award ceremony was one of the many highlights of the gala dinner held at the CTICC during the bi-annual WISA (Water Institute of South Africa) conference. The final ideas were presented in the morning through a catching elevator pitch and inspiring posters. According to the jury, the idea of the winning young water professionals really stood out. Their solution uses the creation of wetlands to treat wastewater in the village of Barrydale so that it can be reused as surface water.

Nadine Wacka, member of the winning team is very happy with the award: "It feels good to know that within a short time like a week we could come up with a solution that is feasible and imaginative to potential clients; the brainstorming with team members from different cultures was very inspiring, we learned a lot from each other."

#### **About the Wetskills Water Challenge**

The Wetskills Water Challenge is a two-week event for students from all over the world. The participants developed their own innovative and creative concepts for broad water issues in a changing world. In multidisciplinary and intercultural groups, the students gained more in-depth knowledge on the challenge topics by workshops of renowned water experts and field trips. It was the sixth edition of the international challenge that has previously taken place in Shanghai (China), Casablanca (Morocco), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Jakarta (Indonesia) and Sohar (Oman), but the first in South Africa. Sponsored by the Dutch government, Netherlands Water Partnership and WISA, this challenge was organised in close cooperation between the Young Water Professionals in the Netherlands and South Africa.

#### **Team spirit**

Johan Oost from the Dutch water training institute "Wateropleidingen" is looking back at a successful Wetskills Water Challenge. "It is wonderful to see the students cooperate so closely. One student had trouble sleeping because he 'was so excited' about the programme. He noticed that the students were really operating as a team; everybody contributed from their own field

of expertise and it was no problem if individuals didn't know the answer. It was a team effort. This challenge allows students the opportunity to really experience the water sector. The exchange of knowledge is highly appreciated by both the South African and Dutch students. For us - as coaches - it is a privilege to see the team building process and the individual growth of the students", says Oost in Cape Town.

### **Cases**

Each teams was assigned to a specific project that was provided and sponsored by Dutch water sector organizations, such as *Water board Groot Salland*, *DHV*, *Vitens Evides International* and *World Waternet*. The topics that were addressed ranged from water retention functions, to large scale water sanitation ideas, technical solutions to reduce the water spilling, energy from wastewater and re-use of effluent water for agricultural purposes. Study areas included Incomati River Basin, Gansbaai, uMgungundlovu, eThekweni (Durban) and Swellendam. For more information, please visit [www.wetskills.com](http://www.wetskills.com).

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