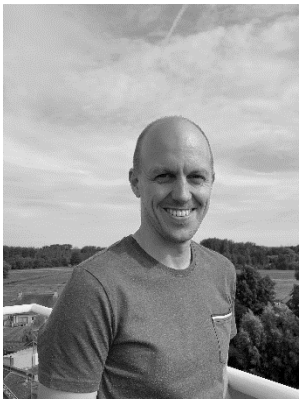
Academia Meets Industry

Water Industry & Research Awards (WIRAs) 2025

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Deadline October 31st, 2025

Willy Gils
General Manager of Watercircle.be



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Beste waterexpert,

Als representatieve netwerken binnen de academische en industriële watersector slaan Watercircle.be en B-IWA weer de handen in elkaar, en dit op het jaarlijkse **Academia Meets Industry event**. Het event en de bekendmaking van de laureaten vindt zoals elk jaar plaats in december, en wil personen die voor een impact zorgen in de watersector extra in de kijker zetten. Dit document beschrijft de selectieprocedure en -criteria, alsook de omvang en de focus van de verschillende prijzen die ingediend kunnen worden via de respectievelijke website van Watercircle.be of B-IWA.

Beste groeten,

Het WIRAs-team

Dear water expert,

As representative networks within the academic and industrial water sector, Watercircle.be and B-IWA are joining forces again, at the annual **Academia Meets Industry event**. As every year, the event and the announcement of the laureates will take place in December and aim to put people in the spotlight who make an impact in the water sector. This document describes the selection procedure and criteria, as well as the scope of the different awards, to be submitted via the respective website of Watercircle.be or B-IWA.

Best regards,

The WIRAs-team

Cher expert de l'eau,

En tant que réseaux représentatifs du secteur académique et industriel de l'eau, Watercircle.be et B-IWA unissent à nouveau leurs forces lors de **l'événement annuel Academia Meets Industry**. L'événement et l'annonce des lauréats auront lieu, comme chaque année, en décembre et visent à mettre en lumière des personnes ayant un impact dans le secteur de l'eau. Ce document décrit la procédure et les critères de sélection, ainsi que la portée et l'objectif des différents prix à soumettre via le site web respectif de Watercircle.be ou de B-IWA.

Salutations distinguées,

L'équipe WIRAs

2025 EDITION
DETAILS

– Submission deadline –
Best before, October 31st

TO:
info@watercircle.be
secretary@biwa.be
info@clusterh2o.be

– Ceremony location Academia Meets Industry (AMI) –
Vivaqua, Keizerinlaan 17/19, 1000 Brussel on December, 2nd

THE AWARDS
OVERVIEW

– Water Technology Awards –

The water technology awards are granted to the best **MSc Thesis** of the past year, with a strong focus on industrial applicability, innovation, sustainability and general scientific quality (Watercircle.be & ClusterH2O will issue separate award).

– Water Research Award –

The Water Research award is granted to the best peer reviewed **scientific publication**, clearly related to water, and showing scientific excellence, quality of communication, practical applicability and overall societal relevance (B-IWA).

– Water Development Collaboration Award –

The Water Development collaboration award is a biennial recognition that is granted to a successful collaboration between a Belgian partner (Academic, Industry or Government) and a partner in a developing country. The award puts special attention to innovation, creativity and effective partnership (B-IWA). [Awarded in uneven years]

– Water Career Achievement Award –

The Water Career achievement award is a once in a life time, prestigious award, granted every 2 year to a professional that has excelled in his/her academic, industrial, non-profit and/or governmental career with respect to water (B-IWA). [Awarded in even years]

– Industrial Water Innovation Award –

The Industrial Water Innovation award is granted jointly by Watercircle.be, B-IWA and ClusterH2O to a company/employee responsible for the creation of an innovation showing creativity and above all a high potential impact (environmental, socio-economic etc.).

– Internet of Water Flanders (IoWF) Innovation Award –

The IoWF award aims to enhance the visibility of initiatives related to the advancement of digital technology in the water sector. The award is targeted to innovations or projects that focus on the use (parts of) the full stack of sensoring, modelling and data analytics, AI, decision support, instrumentation and control for the improvement of water management, water production or treatment, and that show potential impact through a proof of concept or full-scale implementation. The IoWF award is granted jointly by De Watergroep, Aquafin, VMM, IMEC and VITO, and is coordinated by B-IWA.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

WATER TECHNOLOGY AWARD 2025

Watercircle.be & ClusterH2O as representative networks of the water sector, both with industrial and academic members, are strongly committed to accelerate growth and innovation within the sector through partnerships and support for project development. With this, both organizations promote the interaction between academics and industrial partners with a view to exchanging already developed knowledge as well as the detected future challenges and opportunities.

In this context, Watercircle.be and ClusterH2O awards several finished MSc's (universities and higher education institutions) each year, with the **water technology prize**.

These awards aim to encourage research among young people in the area of innovative solutions for sustainable management of water resources.

All MSc's should be directly related to water technology. Two independent juries, one from Watercircle.be and one from ClusterH2O will select a shortlist. Each will reward the best final thesis with the Water technology Award. The jury will judge on the following points (in descending order of importance):

- Innovative character
- Importance of sustainability
- General (scientific) quality

The selected winners will receive a cash price of €500, €300 and €200 for the 1st, 2nd and 3nd prices, respectively

HOW TO APPLY:
Candidate MSc's should sent following documents (or questions):
• A digital version of the Master Thesis including two pages abstract
• An agreement to the publication of the Master Thesis and/or summary on the websites.

To: for Watercircle.be → info@watercircle.be
To: for ClusterH2O → mlismont@clusterh2o.be and cdelahaye@clusterh2o.be

Before 12:00 noon on **31 October 2025**

THE JURY: Two independent juries, set up by Watercircle.be and Cluster H2O, will award the three best Master Thesis.

info@Watercircle.be | www.Watercircle.be
secretary@biwa.be | www.biwa.be
info@clusterh2o.be | www.clusterh2o.be

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

WATER RESEARCH AWARD 2025

- **The B-IWA Water Research Award awards the most *excellent* scientific publication of the past year**. Papers from **any peer reviewed journal** are accepted, but the topic - as judged from title or the keywords - should have a clear link to the theme of water.

- Publications from the past calendar year should be submitted to compete for the award. Thus, for the 2025 award the papers must have appeared in 2024. No papers in press will be accepted. **The first date** of publication – online or print – is the criterion.

- Application for the Water Research Award is done either as a **self-nomination**, or as a **nomination by a third party with respect to the application guidelines below**.

    - All submissions should use the designated e-form to be found on www.biwa.be.

    - Candidates should be affiliated to a Belgian university, research institute, agency, organisation or company (as mentioned in the published paper). (B-)IWA membership is not required.

    - Only one paper can be submitted in a given calendar year per first author and a maximum of two papers per last author.

    - The award is attributed specifically to the **first author**. In certain cases, the jury may decide that the award is to be shared by the co-authors (only in case of equal contributions to the article, but this information has to be explicitly indicated on the printed version of the article). In both cases, all co-authors must agree on the application for this award.

    - First authors who won the prize cannot reintroduce another candidacy in the next 4 years but the co-authors can, except in the above case.

- The jury includes all B-IWA board members but excludes board members with a conflict of interest, e.g. as co-author or sponsor. This applies only for the assessment of that specific submission.

- The jury will consider criteria such as overall scientific excellence, novelty, quality and clarity of communication, practical applicability and overall societal impact.

- The award winner receives **€1000**, a certificate from the B-IWA Board, and will be featured on the B-IWA website. In case of ex-aequo, the jury can decide to award maximum two winners. In this case the monetary prize is halved.

- The B-IWA board reserves the right not to hand out the award in case the quality of the submitted papers is deemed insufficient for an award, or in case there is only a single submission.

- The winner will be invited to the awards ceremony (this year in December at the Academia Meets Industry event) to briefly present the paper. For previous winners check www.biwa.be/awards.

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GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

WATER DEVELOPMENT COLLABORATION AWARD 2025

- **The B-IWA Development Collaboration Award is a biennial recognition that is reserved for a successful collaboration between a Belgian partner (Academic, Industry or Government) and a partner in developing country**. This application is always done **as a duo**. Both names/institutions should be clearly mentioned on the application.

- Applications are either **self-nominations, nominations by a third party, or nominations by the B-IWA board.** All nominations should be submitted by filling out the designated e-form. A submission can only be made once using the e-form on www.biwa.be.

- The type of submission is flexible, and can comprise for example: a PhD thesis, a joint project with demonstrated results, an education project, testing of a prototype in a developing country, development of an interesting new concept, etc.

- Innovation, creativity and effective partnership are preponderant criteria for this award.

- The award winners receive € 500 each, a certificate from the B-IWA Board, and will be featured on the B-IWA website. No ex-aequos are possible for this award.

- The B-IWA board reserves the right not to hand out the award in case the quality of the submissions is deemed insufficient, or in case there is only a single submission.

- Application for the B-IWA Research Award is done either as a **self-nomination**, or as a **nomination by a third party**. Nominations for this award will not be made by the jury. All submissions should use the designated e-form on www.biwa.be

- The winner(s) (or its representatives) will be invited to the **awards ceremony** (this year in December at the Academia Meets Industry event) to provide a short presentation. For previous winners check www.biwa.be/awards.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

WATER CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2026

- **The Water Career Achievement Award represents B-IWA's most important award and is only awarded every 2 years.** It can only be received once. The candidate may still be professionally active, or retired.
- In this case **candidates shall be proposed by members of the B-IWA Board, and selected and formally approved by the Board (majority vote in case of discussion**). Check the Board on www.biwa.be.
- The candidates can have any or blend of the following profiles: academic, industry, government, non-profit.
- The person who proposes a candidate must motivate his/her choice in a short recommendation (which will be used for the press release).
- A nomination is only valid if the candidate is informed and agrees with his/her nomination.
- The nominee shall supply additional information and a detailed CV if requested by the jury.
- The winner receives a certificate from the B-IWA Board, and will be featured on the B-IWA website. There is no monetary prize with this award.
- The winner will be invited to the awards ceremony (this year in December at the Academia Meets Industry event), and has the possibility to deliver a short acceptance speech. For previous winners check www.biwa.be/awards.

EVALUATION CRITERIA BASED ON IWA

- Significant and valued service for B-IWA and/or
- An exceptional body of research which has defined our understanding of water science, management or policy and its application at national/international level, and/or
- An exceptional career in practice or policy that has made a positive contribution to sustainable water management, and/or
- An outstanding publications record which includes landmark papers in major international journals and monographs and other research publications, and/or
- An exceptional contribution to the communication and promotion of water management.

In all cases, there must be a contribution in connection with the activities of B-IWA.

info@Watercircle.be | www.Watercircle.be
secretary@biwa.be | www.biwa.be
info@clusterh2o.be | www.clusterh2o.be

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

INDUSTRIAL WATER INNOVATION AWARD 2025

- The **B-IWA, Watercircle.be and ClusterH2O Industrial Water Innovation Award** aims to enhance the visibility of a company and the excellence of its **achievements in developing innovative and sustainable solutions for the water sector**.

- The following achievements that can be considered for this award are defined as: a newly acquired certificate (patent), a promising new concept or prototype, innovative solutions that have already been tried out and have demonstrated success, or significant improvements on existing technologies.

- Applications are either self-nominations or nominations by a third party. Both persons (employees) and/or companies can be nominated. Nominations will not be made by the jury. All submissions should use the designated e-form.

- The winner receives a certificate from the B-IWA, Watercircle.be and ClusterH2O board, and will be featured on a dedicated page on the B-IWA, Watercircle.be and ClusterH2O website. The winner will be also invited to the awards ceremony (this year in December at the Academia Meets Industry event) to briefly present the project/technology.

- In case of ex-aequo, the jury can decide to award a maximum of two winners. The B-IWA, Watercircle.be and ClusterH2O board reserves the right not to hand out the award in case the quality or quantity of the submissions is deemed insufficient.

- The jury includes the Watercircle.be manager, B-IWA president and ClusterH2O as well as all interested B-IWA board members but exclude board members with conflicts of interest (only for the assessment of that specific work). Scores will be weighted to even out differences in jury member numbers between Watercircle.be, B-IWA and ClusterH2O.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Innovation, creativity and potential impact are preponderant criteria for this award. A file describing (a summary of) the proposed project or technology including adequate documentation and visual material (pictures, short video) should accompany the submission.

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secretary@biwa.be | www.biwa.be
info@clusterh2o.be | www.clusterh2o.be

GENERAL INFORMATION AND APPLICATION RULES

INTERNET OF WATER INNOVATION AWARD 2025

- The IoWF award aims to enhance the visibility of initiatives related to the advancement of digital technology in the water sector. The award is targeted to innovations or projects that focus on the use (parts of) the full stack of sensoring, modelling and data analytics, AI, decision support, instrumentation and control for the improvement of water management, water production or treatment, and that show potential impact through a proof of concept or full-scale implementation. The IoWF award is granted jointly by De Watergroep, Aquafin, VMM, IMEC and VITO, and is coordinated by B-IWA.
- Applications can be as an individual or as a public or private organisation. Only one person or organisation can be awarded for a given year.
- The jury is composed by the B-IWA board members complemented by one representative from each of the organisations mentioned above, but excludes any jury member with a conflict of interest for the submitted projects. A standard procedure is used in B-IWA and all jury members have the same vote.
- The IoWF award will be organized yearly for a period of 5 years (starting 2025) and amounts to 500 € each year. The winner will be featured on the B-IWA website. The jury reserves the right not to hand out the award in case the quality of the submission is deemed insufficient, or in case there is only a single submission.
- The winner will be invited to the **awards ceremony** (this year in December at the Academia Meets Industry event) and can briefly present the project.
- All submissions should use the designated e-form to be found on www.biwa.be.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Achievements that can be considered for this award are defined as: digital solutions that have already been tried out in a proof of concept and/or have demonstrated success in a real life environment. Examples are installations of sensors or sensor networks in a drinking water production or wastewater treatment context, in groundwater, in surface water, data architectures for real-time monitoring and/or extracting insights from historical data, use of gateways and communication devices in water applications, where sensor data aid in development of dashboards and applications for decision support or control, or model-based optimisation.
- The jury will consider criteria such as overall scientific excellence, novelty, quality and clarity of communication, practical applicability and overall societal impact.
- Applicants should submit an **executive summary of max. 2 pages**, which can be supplemented by other pieces of documentation such as reports, publications, a short demo video, etc.

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