

## OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR IWA AWARDS

(Approved on 20 March 2025)

The International Water Association (IWA) is committed to recognising the exceptional contributions and achievements of its members and water sector professionals, acknowledging their invaluable role in advancing global water science and management.

The IWA Awards celebrate excellence, leadership, and innovation, highlighting the impact of IWA members and the broader sector. By recognising these achievements, these awards drive tangible progress toward the sustainable management of water. As such, they play a key role in IWA's theory of change, as outlined in our Strategic Plan.

The IWA Awards serve as a platform to encourage and reward innovation, while also setting international benchmarks for forward-thinking solutions and best practices in water management. Currently, four awards are granted:

- Global Water Award
- Gender Diversity and Water Award
- Young Leadership Award
- Water and Development Awards – Research & Practice

These Operational Procedures detail each award, outlining eligibility criteria, the nomination and selection process, and associated benefits. They establish a clear framework for nominating, evaluating, and recognising outstanding contributions in the water sector, ensuring transparency, fairness, and alignment with IWA's mission.

## Global Water Award

### *Description of the Award*

The IWA Global Water Award recognises individuals who, through innovative leadership, have made an outstanding contribution to progress towards a world in which water is wisely managed. Showcasing exceptional individuals who have changed industry norms to create lasting progress, the IWA Global Water Award recognises and rewards water innovators who are driving impactful change.

The IWA Global Water Award is granted biennially, in even-numbered years.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

Eligible candidates can be IWA members or non-members from various backgrounds, including academia, science, utilities, consultancy, technology providers, government, NGOs, civil society, or international organisations.

Nominators may be IWA members or non-members. Self-nominations and nominations submitted by family members of the nominee will not be accepted. Nominations are free of charge.

### *Nomination and Selection*

The IWA Secretariat will launch a global call for nominations in the first quarter of every even-numbered year. Nominations will remain open for a minimum of six (6) weeks.

A preliminary assessment will be conducted by a panel composed of IWA Secretariat staff, based on the following criteria:

- **Vision:** The nominee will have established themselves as someone to whom others look for inspiration, insight, and authority on the direction of developments relating to water.
- **Leadership:** The nominee will have a demonstrated track record as a leader, initiating and overseeing noteworthy actions in the water sector.
- **Impact:** The nominee will be someone who has clearly been influential in bringing about change in the sector.

The Secretariat will compile a shortlist of nominees, who will then advance to the second stage. At this stage, shortlisted candidates will be required to provide additional details about their career paths, showcasing their excellence in science, practice, technology, management,

or policy, as well as their recognition at both international levels and within the IWA community.

A high-level judging panel of experts, appointed by the IWA Executive Director, will evaluate the second-round submissions. Judges will have a minimum of four (4) weeks to complete their assessment. The scores provided by the panel will be reviewed by the Secretariat, and the final results will be submitted to the Governance, Diversity and Nominations Committee (GDNC) of the IWA Board of Directors for endorsement.

### ***Benefits of the Award***

The winner of the IWA Global Water Award will receive a trophy and certificate in recognition of their contributions.

The award will be presented at the biennial IWA World Water Congress, in front of a global audience of water sector leaders. Additionally, the winner will be introduced to key IWA groups and committees, further integrating them into the Association's global network.

## Gender Diversity and Water Award

### *Description of the Award*

The IWA Gender Diversity and Water Award honours individuals (regardless of their gender) who have made outstanding professional contributions to advancing gender diversity, promoting equity, and driving meaningful change within the water sector.

The IWA Gender Diversity and Water Award is granted biennially, in even-numbered years.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

Eligible candidates may be IWA members or non-members from various backgrounds, including academia, science, utilities, consultancy, technology providers, government, NGOs, civil society, or international organisations.

Nominators may be IWA members or non-members. Self-nominations and nominations submitted by family members of the nominee will not be accepted. Nominations are free of charge.

### *Nomination and Selection*

The IWA Secretariat will launch a global call for nominations in the first quarter of every even-numbered year. Nominations will remain open for a minimum of six (6) weeks.

A preliminary assessment will be conducted by a panel composed of IWA Secretariat staff, based on the following criteria:

- **Impact:** The nominee will have made an impact on the advancement of gender diversity, as evidenced by measurable outcomes such as the number of people affected and the scale of transformation. This impact should be achieved in connection with relevant policies, programmes, or other activities.
- **Accessibility:** The nominee will have led activities that are accessible and open to all genders within the institution or group concerned.
- **Innovation:** The nominee will have implemented new ideas, initiatives, or practices that have not been employed before.

The Secretariat will compile a shortlist of nominees, who will then advance to the second stage. At this stage, shortlisted candidates will be required to provide additional details about their career paths, demonstrating their commitment to advancing gender diversity, as well as their excellence in science, practice, technology, management, or policy. Candidates should

also highlight their impact on equity and inclusion in the water sector and their recognition at both international levels and within the IWA community.

A high-level judging panel of experts, appointed by the IWA Executive Director, will evaluate the second-round submissions. Judges will have a minimum of four (4) weeks to complete their assessment. The scores provided by the panel will be reviewed by the Secretariat, and the final results will be submitted to the Governance, Diversity and Nominations Committee (GDNC) of the IWA Board of Directors for endorsement.

### ***Benefits of the Award***

The winner of the IWA Gender Diversity and Water Award will receive a trophy and certificate in recognition of their contributions.

The award will be presented at the biennial IWA World Water Congress, in front of a global audience of water sector leaders. Additionally, the winner will be introduced to key IWA groups and committees, further integrating them into the Association's global network.

## Young Leadership Award

### *Description of the Award*

The IWA Young Leadership Award is granted to an exceptional water professional age 35 or younger who has demonstrated significant achievements in their career. The awardee will have demonstrated outstanding leadership potential and the ability to play an influential role in the water industry in the future.

The IWA Young Leadership Award is granted biennially, in even-numbered years.

### *Eligibility Criteria*

Eligible candidates may be IWA members or non-members from various backgrounds, including academia, science, utilities, consultancy, technology providers, government, NGOs, civil society, or international organisations. Eligible candidates must be 35 years-old or younger as of the date of the award ceremony.

Nominators may be IWA members or non-members. Self-nominations and nominations submitted by family members of the nominee will not be accepted. Nominations are free of charge.

### *Nomination and Selection*

The IWA Secretariat will launch a global call for nominations in the first quarter of every even-numbered year. Nominations will remain open for a minimum of six (6) weeks.

A preliminary assessment will be conducted by a panel composed of IWA Secretariat staff, based on the following criteria:

- **Vision:** The nominee will have worked towards contributing to the water sector and sustainable development, setting goals that are beyond themselves.
- **Initiative:** The nominee will have taken initiative and responsibility to contribute to sustainable water management and practices by developing new ideas and or opening new possibilities and opportunities.
- **Motivation:** The nominee will have developed work/projects that motivated (a broad group of) professionals within or beyond the water sector and across disciplines to act towards achieving a common goal and positions the individual as a role model among peers and the wider community.
- **Impact:** The nominee will have made an impact with their work to influence the water (related) sector.

The Secretariat will compile a shortlist of nominees, who will then advance to the second stage. At this stage, shortlisted candidates will be required to provide additional details about their career paths, demonstrating excellence in science, practice, technology, management, or policy, as well as their recognition at both international levels and within the IWA community. Particular emphasis should be placed on their role in inspiring, mentoring, and empowering young people (water professionals or not), reinforcing their potential to shape the future of both the sector and the next generation of water leaders.

A high-level judging panel of experts, appointed by the IWA Executive Director, will evaluate the second-round submissions. Judges will have a minimum of four (4) weeks to complete their assessment. The scores provided by the panel will be reviewed by the Secretariat, and the final results will be submitted to the Governance, Diversity and Nominations Committee (GDNC) of the IWA Board of Directors for endorsement.

### ***Benefits of the Award***

The winner of the IWA Young Leadership Award will receive a trophy and certificate in recognition of their contributions.

The award will be presented at the biennial IWA World Water Congress, in front of a global audience of water sector leaders. Additionally, the winner will be introduced to key IWA groups and committees, further integrating them into the Association's global network.

Throughout their two-year tenure as Young Leadership Award holder, the awardee will also take the office of Young Leadership Ambassador for IWA and its Young Water Professionals community.

## **Water and Development Awards – Research & Practice**

### ***Description of the Award***

The IWA Water and Development Awards – Research & Practice recognise excellence, leadership, and innovation in the water sector, with a particular focus on advancing sustainable water management in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC).

These awards celebrate outstanding accomplishments in developing and delivering forward-thinking applications and solutions to advance clean and safe water and sanitation in LMIC. These solutions can range from specific technologies and infrastructure to innovative approaches that improve performance, efficiency, and sustainability in operations and maintenance. The awards also recognise social innovation, social enterprise, and social entrepreneurship.

The IWA Water and Development Awards – Research & Practice are granted biennially, in odd-numbered years.

### ***Eligibility Criteria***

Eligible candidates may be IWA members or non-members from various backgrounds, including academia, science, utilities, consultancy, technology providers, government, NGOs, civil society, or international organisations.

Nominators may be IWA members or non-members. Self-nominations and nominations submitted by family members of the nominee will not be accepted. Nominations are free of charge.

### ***Nomination and Selection***

The IWA Secretariat will launch a global call for nominations in the first quarter of every odd-numbered year. Nominations will remain open for a minimum of six (6) weeks.

The candidate's work should contribute to one of the following key areas: water supply and treatment; (on-site) sanitation, hygiene, and health interventions; water resource management; financing; community engagement and education; planning and capacity building; regulation and standards; institutional development; operations, maintenance, and management.

A preliminary assessment will be conducted by a panel composed of IWA Secretariat staff, based on the following criteria:



- **Innovation:** The nomination should demonstrate creativity and introduce unique or new solutions in the water and sanitation sector. It should showcase fresh ideas that drive change or improvements in existing practices.
- **Impact:** The nomination should have demonstrable uptake and show a significant effect or influence on the water and sanitation sector.
- **Focused on LMIC:** The nomination should be explicitly focused on or have clear relevance for communities in low- and middle-income countries.

The Secretariat will compile a shortlist of nominees, who will then advance to the second stage. At this stage, shortlisted candidates will be required to provide additional details about their career paths, demonstrating excellence in science, practice, technology, management, or policy, as well as their recognition at both international levels and within the IWA community. Particular emphasis should be placed on how their work has led to demonstrable uptake/impact/influence at national, regional or international levels in LMIC.

A high-level judging panel of experts, appointed by the IWA Executive Director, will evaluate the second-round submissions. Judges will have a minimum of four (4) weeks to complete their assessment. The scores provided by the panel will be reviewed by the Secretariat, and the final results will be submitted to the Governance, Diversity and Nominations Committee (GDNC) of the IWA Board of Directors for endorsement.

### ***Benefits of the Award***

The winners of the IWA Water and Development Awards – Research & Practice will receive a trophy and certificate in recognition of their contributions.

The award will be presented at the biennial IWA Water and Development Congress, in front of a global audience of water sector leaders. Additionally, the winner will be introduced to key IWA groups and committees, further integrating them into the Association's global network.