



The IDA Desalination Academy will offer courses around the world.

Earlier this year, the International Desalination Association (IDA) announced the establishment of the IDA Desalination Academy with the mission of providing the highest level of training, education and instruction to individuals, utilities, companies, institutions, universities and other organisations interested in desalination in all its aspects. IDA's vision for the IDA Desalination Academy is that it will be the world's foremost source for professional training and continuing education on desalination and water reuse.

Dr Corrado Sommariva, president of the International Desalination Association (IDA), shares his views on the need for continued training for desalination professionals, and what makes the new IDA Desalination Academy a unique programme.

Introducing...

IDA

DESALINATION ACADEMY

The International Desalination Association (IDA)'s springboard to a world of desalinated and recycled water

Q What prompted IDA to establish the Academy?

A IDA is the leading global association focused on desalination and water reuse. Education is a critical part of our stated mission of "the development and promotion of the appropriate use of desalination and desalination technology worldwide in water supply, water reuse, water pollution control, water purification, water treatment and other water sciences and technology." Our educational programmes include a Scholarship, Fellowship Programme, publications, seminars and of course, our World Congress. The idea of establishing a formal training institute to enhance professional development was a natural progression.

Another driver, of course, is the continued growth in the global desalination industry. This creates demand for highly trained professionals in all aspects of desalination. IDA is in a unique position to support this need.

From a philosophical perspective, I would like to phrase it another way – human resources constitute the most powerful asset we have in any field of endeavour, whether in business, science or any other aspect of our society. An Academy that is tailored to serve today's professionals and develop future experts who are going to design, innovate, operate, manage the desalination plants of tomorrow is one of the noblest legacies we can leave to the generation of desalters who will follow.

There are countless reasons why we are all so enthusiastic about the establishment of the IDA Desalination Academy, but I cannot think of one that is more meaningful than this.

The desalination industry has achieved much in recent years on a wide range of topics that are very important in ensuring the sustainability of water solutions for the next generations. Success in improving energy efficiency and reducing the energy footprint, for example, has been remarkable, but we need to keep innovating.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that we create a framework to prepare the next generation of desalination engineers and other professionals to maintain and improve on what has already been accomplished.

Q How is the IDA Desalination Academy different from other training programmes?

A There are several training programmes in the market, and all have contributed to the purpose of training in desalination. But the IDA Desalination Academy is unique in many ways.

Firstly, it is a truly global programme. We will offer courses in locations around the world. Some of these will be held in conjunction with industry conferences and other events, while other courses will be held as specific training events. For

example, we are formally launching the IDA Desalination Academy on 4 and 5 July at the Marina Bay Sands in Singapore during Singapore International Water Week. We will also offer courses during the Saudi Water & Power Forum and the IDA World Congress 2013 in Tianjin. We are also finalising several other courses.

Secondly, in the IDA Desalination Academy, we do not teach a single subject, but rather an aggregation of subjects that span all desalination disciplines. And we are also planning for course Accreditation.

In addition to these “operational” distinctions, I believe that our philosophy also distinguishes the IDA Desalination Academy. For example, in many training situations, the spotlight is on the lecturer. But our view of this Academy has a more unlimited perspective.

From my perspective, the IDA Desalination Academy is a school where the focus is on the student—not the lecturer—and the development of his/her potential. We have gone to great lengths to assemble the best faculty with technical expertise and a capacity to convey their practical experience and knowledge to the student. It is our hope that this approach will inspire students of the Academy to become great leaders in the water sector.

I believe that there are two components in education. One is the strictly technical component (the discipline), and the other one is the development of the individual within the industry. This duality is our objective. We believe it is completely achievable since the IDA Desalination Academy covers all disciplines in an organised and programmed manner (not as a series of random events) from the technical, management and future development points of view, while it also includes the goal of a graduation and eventually, an accreditation programme, that goes beyond the conclusion of a specific course.

Q Who should attend?

A The IDA Desalination Academy is aimed at mid- to senior- level management in utilities, suppliers, consultants, plant operation, and contractors. In addition, the Academy will offer an introductory desalination course for individuals with zero to one year of industry experience as a way to broaden knowledge and understanding of desalination and desalination technologies.

Q When will the initial courses be presented?

A As I noted, our first courses will be offered during Singapore International Water Week on 4 and 5 July at the Marina Bay Sands. Our inaugural curriculum consists of eight half-day courses offered over the two days. The programme is structured so that participants can tailor the choice of courses according to their particular interest. For example, they can select two courses from Day One or Day Two, or sign up for four courses over both days. In addition, as a bonus, participants can sign up for an optional, free tour of the SingSpring Desalination Plant on 6 July, supported by Hyflux and PUB, Singapore’s national water agency.

Course topics in Singapore include a focus on membrane and thermal technologies as well as costing strategies and plant operations. The Faculty members (Master Teachers) of the Academy are leading experts in their fields, distinguished by their combination of theoretical and practical knowledge and experience. Master teachers for these inaugural courses are Ms Lisa Henthorne, Dr Mark Wilf, Mr Nikolay Voutchkov, Mr David H Paul, Dr Corrado Sommariva and Mr Leon Awerbuch.

IDA’s website, www.idadesal.org, has detailed information about the courses, faculty and registration.

Q What is your personal goal for the IDA Desalination Academy?

A My personal view is that the IDA Desalination Academy should accent a sense of responsibility to innovate and excel in each participant.

We do not simply teach; we also provide emphasis on the importance of what we teach. We want to impart a deep understanding in participants of the importance of their work in the water sector and the impact that anyone involved in this industry can make by developing his/her professional skills to create a difference in the way water is generated.

Ultimately, we want each trainee to think of him/herself as the inventor of new solutions that will solve next generation water projects. Moreover, we want him/her to be inspired during the training so that, in addition to acquiring substantive technical information, each individual will be motivated to continue his/her professional growth, contribute to the industry, and excel.

Our industry touches millions of lives each day. Technical knowledge is essential to our ability to make a positive difference in a world thirsty for solutions. The IDA Desalination Academy provides access to vital knowledge in this most important of career paths while always keeping sight of the spirit of service that each individual can bring to the industry and the global community in which we live and operate. **WWA**



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