

JUNE 2025 ISSUE



SANCOLD NEWSLETTER



SANCOLD

Newsletter of the
South African National
Committee on Large
Dams

"The leading voice on dams in South
Africa."





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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE



Dr. Henry-John Wright
SANCOLD Chairperson

Nearly half of 2025 has already passed. It is time to update all members on SANCOLD activities to date and planned.

A hydropower course will take place in November 2025 before the Annual Conference. Registration will open soon. This follows the hugely popular Tailings Workshop held in November 2024. Other training courses are being developed.

There is a global shortage of skilled dam professionals, and SANCOLD needs to assist and invest in our members to ensure adequate skills remain in South Africa to care for our new and ageing infrastructure.

As always, please talk to us should you have any ideas and want to volunteer.

SANCOLD MANCO

2025-2027

The South African National Committee on Large Dams (SANCOLD) Management Committee (MANCO) plays a vital role in guiding the organisation's activities and initiatives. The MANCO members for the 2025-2027 term will continue driving SANCOLD's mission to advance the science and practice of dam engineering in South Africa. MANCO's responsibilities include overseeing SANCOLD's programs, conferences, and publications, as well as fostering collaboration among industry professionals. With a focus on innovation, knowledge sharing, and capacity building, the MANCO is poised to make a meaningful impact on the dam industry. Through their leadership, SANCOLD will continue to provide a platform for members to share expertise, access cutting-edge research, and contribute to the growth and development of the sector.

The SANCOLD MANCO for the 2025-2027 Term is as follows:

- Dr Henry-John Wright: Chairperson
- Mr Robert Greyling: Vice-Chairperson
- Mr David Cameron-Ellis: Treasurer
- Mr Mongezi Gxamza
- Mr Comfort Mahlabela
- Mr Segomotso Kelefetswe
- Prof Marco van Dijk
- Mr Jacques du Plessis
- Ms Cherie Starke
- Ms Kogi Naidoo
- Ms Michelle Blaeser
- Ms Janice Zhang
- Mr Rudolf van Wyk
- Ms Ashley Coetzee: YPF Chairperson
- Mr Gerald de Jager: Co-opted
- Mr Andrew Copeland: Co-opted
- Mr Dannie Badenhorst: Co-opted
- Dr Quintin Shaw: ICOLD Vice-President
- Mr Benjamin Oberholzer: Webmaster



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SANCOLD CONFERENCE 2025

The Annual South African National Committee on Large Dams (SANCOLD) Conference in 2025 will be held in Gauteng from Wednesday 5 November to Thursday 6 November 2025. SANCOLD invites all from South Africa, Africa and the wider family of ICOLD to participate in the Conference which will include technical presentations and an exhibition. This event will offer dam professionals important international, regional and local linkages, networking and the exchange of knowledge and experience opportunities.

The general theme of the SANCOLD Conference 2025 is *"Investing in the future through dams"*. A listing of the topics is given below as an aid towards the formulation of a suitable paper within the Conference theme. Please note that the topics are not exhaustive and papers satisfying the conference theme can also be submitted under Topic 9: Other. Abstracts and papers are invited under the following topics:

- Modern Technologies and Methods in the Design and Construction of New Dams
- Climate and Environmental Adaption
- Dam Rehabilitation
- Tailings Dam Operations/Lifecycles and Dam Closure
- Dams for Water Retention or Flood Control
- Geotechnical Aspects of Dams and Water Engineering Structures
- Dam Safety and Risk Management
- Pump Storage Schemes and Hydro Power Development
- Other

Call for Abstracts

The abstract should indicate the paper title, the author(s) and the text should not exceed 200 words. The abstract template is attached to this mail. Once the abstract has been received and accepted, the author/s will be provided with a document which sets out the required format for the full paper. The full paper will be subject to peer review. A substantial prize for the best paper by a Young Engineer (see below) will be awarded. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 07 July 2025.

Submission Link: <https://rapidq.co.za/dashboard/#/register/2618/0/1>



Venue and Accommodation

Indaba Hotel, Spa and Conference Centre (4 Star Hotel) Winnie Mandela Drive, Pieter Wenning Road Johannesburg, Fourways, Sandton, 2191. For directions click [here](#).

Hotel Booking Code for Conference will be made available once available.

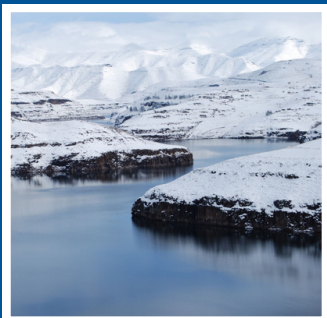
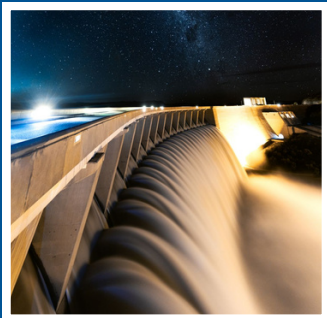
Important Dates

Call for Abstracts	Friday 16 May 2025
Abstract Submitted	Monday 30 June 2025
Abstract Approval	Friday 18 July 2025
Registration Opens	Monday 1 September 2025
Draft Paper Submission	Monday 22 September 2025
Early Bird Registration Close	Wednesday 1 October 2025
Draft Paper Reviewed	Monday 6 October 2025
Final Revised Paper Submission	Monday 20 October 2025

For more information, please click on the [link](#) which will direct you to the Conference First Announcement.

Relevant Contact Details:

- secretary@sancold.org.za
- admin@sancold.org.za
- Sue@qinisaevents.com





SANCOLD YPF WEBINAR SERIES



The SANCOLD Young Professionals Forum (YPF) is hosting a series of informative webinars, providing a platform for dam specialists to share their expertise. This year's concluded webinars and their recordings are as follows:

- CFD Analysis of Spillway Discharge Coefficients for the Steenbras Dams [<https://lnkd.in/dSSzfGwu>].
- Assumptions and Calibration — Should We Care About It? [https://lnkd.in/dWyqj_yE].
- How Big is Your Dirty Water Dam? (How Big Should it Be?) [<https://lnkd.in/d94gKjK6>].

For more information and updates on the SANCOLD YPF Webinar Series, follow the SANCOLD YPF LinkedIn page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/sancold-ypf/posts/?feedView=all>.

The YPF aims to encourage younger individuals to participate in SANCOLD events, facilitate knowledge transfer, and foster connections among professionals in the dam industry. May you please be on the lookout for upcoming webinars!



Ms Ashley Coetzee
SANCOLD YPF Chairperson

SANCOLD TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

As a background, SANCOLD initiated a Mentorship and Training Programme to ensure succession planning among its individual members and corporate members so that the country's ageing infrastructure backlog and maintenance problems could be addressed effectively and diligently with appropriate skill and care. SANCOLD recognises that with skills development and competency in place, retiring specialists can hand over the reigns with confidence, knowing that succeeding members will continue to advance excellence in the field of Dam Engineering.

The Training and Mentorship Committee will be releasing an Onboarding Document, which will have the purpose of providing clarity and to assist with the onboarding of all parties involved in the Mentorship and Training Programme in July 2025. This will be achieved by outlining roles and responsibilities to ensure successful implementation of the Programme without playing undue pressures to the SANCOLD members.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for your interest in participating in the SANCOLD Mentorship and Training Programme. Your enthusiasm and commitment to professional growth and development are truly appreciated.

Stay tuned for more information and updates!



Mr Segomotso Kelefetswe
SANCOLD Training and Mentorship Programme Coordinator



ICOLD YPF BOARD

I had the incredible opportunity to attend the 28th ICOLD Congress and 93rd Annual Meeting held in Chengdu, China, this past May. This was my second ICOLD event, following the 84th Annual Meeting in 2016, hosted in Johannesburg, South Africa. That first ICOLD experience inspired me to set several professional goals for myself, and I was able to achieve some of them at this year's conference.

One of the major highlights was presenting my first paper at an ICOLD Congress. It was a little nerve-racking at first, but ultimately an amazing experience. Being able to engage with an audience that understands and is interested in your work and has the same passion for the same field is very rewarding. The discussions that followed were insightful and encouraging, reaffirming the value of sharing knowledge on international platforms like ICOLD.

The most memorable moment for me, however, was being elected to the ICOLD Young Professionals Forum (YPF) Board as one of the Vice Chairpersons for the 2025–2028 term. It's a tremendous honour to be entrusted with this role, and I'm excited to work alongside a talented and diverse group of young professionals from around the world. The ICOLD YPF aims to support and encourage the skills development and collaboration of young professionals globally by organising webinars, training opportunities and networking events for the global ICOLD YPF.



During my term, I am committed to promoting African projects and perspectives, supporting the activities of the ICOLD African Regional Club, and launching the International Peership Programme. This initiative will group young professionals into small international cohorts, encouraging them to hold monthly discussions focused on industry trends and professional development.

None of this would have been possible without the support from my employer, Knight Piésold Consulting, and the endorsement from SANCOLD. I am truly grateful for the opportunities, and I look forward to contributing meaningfully to the ICOLD YPF board.



The YPF board members (Seated) and YPs.



Ms Janice Zhang
SANCOLD Management Committee Member and ICOLD
YPF Vice Chairperson



ICOLD CONGRESS 2025 – FEEDBACK

The ICOLD Annual Meeting and Congress took place in Chengdu, China, from 16 to 23 May 2025. It was the 93rd Annual Meeting and 28th Congress. A congress is held every three years, where papers suited to specific topics are presented by members worldwide.

A new President was elected, as well as a Vice-President for the Africa Regional Club, who took over from Quentin Shaw. President Devendra Sharma from India and Vice-President Harrison Mutikanga from Uganda's term runs until 2028. SANCOLD wishes them success in their new roles.

As usual, Technical Committees continue with compiling bulletins that will contain state-of-the-art knowledge and several case studies from which all members can gain information and lessons learned. The following bulletins were approved for publication:

- Bulletin 207: Extreme flood estimation and associated uncertainty
- Bulletin 208: Integrating dams with the environment
- Bulletin 209: Climate change, dams and reservoirs



ANAFIDE-PASAE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Association Nationale des Améliorations Foncières, de l'Irrigation, du Drainage et de l'Environnement (ANAFIDE) is pleased to organize, in collaboration with the Pan African Society for African Engineering (PASAE), the 7th Pan African Conference on Agricultural Engineering, scheduled to take place from October 22 to 24, 2025, at the Marriott Hotel in Fez, Morocco. The main theme of the conference is: "Water Management for Resilient and Sustainable Agriculture in Africa".

ANAFIDE, which will celebrate its 55th anniversary in 2025, is a member of PASAE and the Moroccan national committee of the International Commission of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering (CIGR) and the International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID). ANAFIDE is delighted to collaborate with PASAE in organising this important international scientific and technical meeting on a major issue for the African continent, which is Managing Water for Sustainable and Resilient Agriculture in Africa.

Relevant Conference Links

For information pertaining to the full Conference details, please click on the two below links:

- [ANAFIDE-PASAE Conference Second Bulletin.](#)
- [ANAFIDE-PASAE Conference Website Link.](#)

LOSS OF SANCOLD MEMBERS: FORMER CHAIRPERSON



It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the passing of Rob Williamson — a pioneering figure in the consulting engineering industry, a respected mentor, and a cherished colleague. Rob dedicated over six decades of his life to advancing the field of engineering, contributing to vital infrastructure across South Africa, Zambia, the DRC, Namibia, Botswana, Peru, and beyond.

From his early days as an engineer at the Johannesburg City Engineers' Department in 1961, Rob's career was marked by integrity, ingenuity, and service. He joined Watermeyer Legge Piésold & Uhlmann in 1964, where he steadily rose through the ranks, becoming Director and Chairman of what would eventually become Knight Piésold Consulting.

Rob was instrumental in major developments in tailings and earth-fill dams, pollution control systems, geotechnical engineering, hydraulics, and slurry pumping. But beyond the technical brilliance, Rob will be remembered for his leadership — guiding teams with humility, curiosity, and a steady hand during times of change.

One of his most notable achievements is his role as Chairman of the South African National Committee on Large Dams (SANCOLD), where he made significant contributions to the advancement of dam engineering in South Africa. Furthermore, he served as Chairman of the International Commission on Large Dams (ICOLD) Committee on Tailings Dams for a decade, playing a pivotal role in the global development of tailings dam engineering. Rob also received a lifetime achievement award at the 2024 CESA Engineering Awards in South Africa.

*Text supplied by Knight Piésold Consulting

LOSS OF SANCOLD MEMBERS: OTHER MEMBERS

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Mr. Robert (Bob) Pullen, a distinguished leader and former President of the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE) in 1989. Mr. Pullen's contributions to our profession were both significant and enduring, leaving an indelible mark on the civil engineering landscape of South Africa. Mr. Pullen's tenure as SAICE President was marked by visionary leadership and a steadfast commitment to excellence. *

He worked for BKS and TPGP mainly in the water resources field. Bob was a SANCOLD member and attended events and presented papers.

*Text supplied by SAICE



Mr Robert (Bob) Pullen



Mr Rob Williamson



THANK YOU



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Thank you for reading the latest edition of our SANCOLD Newsletter. We hope you've enjoyed staying informed about the latest developments, events, and insights in the field of dam engineering in South Africa. Follow us on social media and contact us to stay connected and join the conversation. We look forward to sharing more updates with you in our next edition!



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