

Call for Content

WEF/WateReuse Industrial Water Solutions Conference Powering the Circular Water Economy

June 8 - 10, 2026
Chicago, Illinois, USA

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: Thursday, January 29 at 11:59 PM Eastern

Abstract Review Period: February 2-16 at 9 AM Eastern

Abstract Notifications: Monday, March 9

This conference is hosted in partnership with the Water Environment Federation and the WateReuse Association.

Circular water is transforming industrial operations by prioritizing resource recovery and innovative water management. Moving beyond the linear “take-use-dispose” model, circular strategies reduce waste, recover nutrients and energy, and regenerate ecosystems to create resilience and enhance resource efficiency.

Industrial water reuse—one of the most powerful economic drivers shaping the future of industry—is at the heart of this transformation. Companies that embrace circular water practices stand to gain operational efficiency, cost savings, and competitive advantage.

The Industrial Water Solutions conference convenes business leaders, utilities, technology providers, and regulators to explore how circular water strategies can deliver measurable value. We invite abstracts that showcase innovative approaches, proven solutions, and emerging technologies and policies that advance industrial water reuse and resource recovery.

All focuses and disciplines in the field of industrial water reuse and resource recovery are encouraged. Abstracts will be submitted through a single submittal platform, and presenters will be able to select their topic of choice. Many solutions in the water and resource recovery space are of a technical nature, but some of the most critical solutions needed to accelerate sustainable industrial water practices must address markets, policy, governance, financing, collaboration, and other nontechnical barriers.

Topics of Interest

Engineering, Technological, and Scientific Solutions

These sessions will provide an in-depth look at innovative water solutions tailored to the unique needs of key industry sectors. Submissions for this track should highlight initiatives, technologies, design and operations practices, case studies, or research that advance the recovery and/or marketability of clean water, energy, nutrients, or other valuable resources in industrial settings. We are particularly interested in solutions that explore the latest technological advancements and sustainable practices designed to optimize water use, enhance efficiency, and address critical challenges across one or more of these vital sectors. All relevant topics will be considered, including:

- **Automotive** - Technologies that minimize water use in vehicle manufacturing, from paint-shop recycling to closed-loop process systems.
- **Chip & semiconductor manufacturing** - Ultra-pure water production, reclamation systems, and advanced treatment technologies that reduce the water intensity of chip fabrication.
- **Data centers** - Solutions that reduce cooling-water demand, recover heat, and improve efficiency in high-density digital infrastructure.
- **Food & beverage** - Approaches that enhance water efficiency and quality in processing, such as onsite treatment, reuse, and resource recovery.
- **Energy sector** - Innovations that reduce freshwater withdrawals and improve reuse in power generation and bioenergy systems.
- **Resource extraction** - Approaches that extract resources from wastewater generated from mining and oil and gas extraction, as well as the use of recycled water in extraction activities.

Economic, Policy, and Collaborative Solutions

These sessions will focus on non-technical barriers to industrial water solutions, including economic and policy development, and highlight partnerships across utilities, industries, and government entities. All relevant topics will be considered, including:

- **Economic and Market Development** – Identify strategies to attract industries to communities and communities to industries through targeted economic development. Emphasize the critical role utilities play in supporting industrial growth and developing value streams for recovered resources.
- **Financing Solutions** – Outline innovative financing models and strategies to support the implementation of industrial water solutions. Highlight new approaches for financing capital expenditures, emerging business models for industrial water services, and the role of the public sector in catalyzing commercial investments.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration** – Focus on fostering partnerships among utilities, industries, and government entities to drive the adoption of industrial water solutions. Examine how partnerships address non-technical barriers such as policy constraints, regulatory challenges, financial hurdles, as well as the need for standardized metrics, uncovering strategies to overcome these obstacles and accelerate market development.
- **Policy Incentives, Solutions, and Barriers** - Provide insights into local, state, and federal policy incentives, opportunities, and hurdles involved in creating competitive advantages, fostering sustainable development, and driving regional economic prosperity.

Submission Types

The Program Committee is pleased to accept the following submission types:

- **Abstract:** 15-20 minute presentations which can involve 1 or 2 speakers. Typically a standard PowerPoint-style lecture, though submitters can also indicate interest in participating in a panel discussion.
- **Session Proposal:** a 60-90 minute session which must involve more than one presenter.
- **Workshop:** 3 hours of educational content which must involve multiple presenters from different companies/organizations and a hands-on, interactive component.
- **Conversation & Cocktails:** Facilitate discussion and networking on a specific topic.

Individual Abstracts

1. All abstract submissions should include a primary contact, and a maximum of two speakers. The abstract itself cannot exceed 5,500 characters. Specific formatting is not required, the submission portal will automatically format your submission. Abstract submissions will include the following components:
 - a. Title
 - b. Speakers (maximum of two) including contact information
 - c. Body text of abstract– this is the only part of the submission that counts towards the 5,500 character count limit
 - d. Topic choice (Engineering, Technological, Scientific Solution vs. Economic, Policy, Collaborative Solution)
 - e. A maximum of 5 keywords to describe your submission
 - f. *Optional – references and sources*
 - g. *Optional – images or graphics*
2. Accepted individual abstract submissions will be paired with 1-2 other individual abstract submissions to develop one technical session. Accepted abstracts must coordinate with the others in their technical session including the facilitator.
3. Each accepted abstract will be assigned a presentation time based on the format of their session. Speakers can expect presentation time to be as short as five minutes or as long as twenty minutes. Presentation times are shared immediately upon acceptance into the technical program. Each abstract should indicate a preference for a session format:
 - a. Traditional Presentation (20 minute presentation, 5 minutes Q&A)
 - b. Panel (5-10 minute presentation per submission and then a panel discussion among 3-5 participants)
 - c. Part of an Interactive Session (5-15 minute presentation and then participate in an interactive learning activity)

Session Proposals

1. All session proposals should consist of a maximum of three speakers, two facilitators, and a complete agenda (90 minutes). Agendas must have a cohesive theme or topic with the goal of encouraging knowledge exchange or development. Proposals must incorporate attendee interaction. Specific formatting is not required, the submission portal will automatically format your submission. Proposals must include:
 - a. Title
 - b. Speakers and facilitators including contact information
 - c. Topic choice (Engineering, Technological, Scientific Solution vs. Economic, Policy, Collaborative Solution)
 - d. Session overview – this is a short description to be used in marketing materials
 - e. Session description – more detailed description of your session, not to exceed 7,000 characters.
 - f. Session agenda – each presentation and interactive activity listed out with timing
 - g. Three learning objectives – for advice on writing these, [please review this document](#)
 - h. *Optional – references and sources*
 - i. *Optional – images or graphics*
2. Accepted session proposals will become a complete technical session. Proposal facilitators will coordinate with staff to finalize the session's agenda and attendee engagement activities before the event.
3. Proposal speakers and facilitators should not all represent the same utility or organization but should come from different backgrounds and experiences.

Workshop Proposals

1. All workshop proposals should propose 3-hour long learning opportunities which include a hands-on, interactive component. Agendas must have a cohesive theme or topic with the goal of encouraging knowledge exchange or development. Specific formatting is not required, the submission portal will automatically format your submission. Proposals must include:
 - a. Title
 - b. Speakers and facilitators including contact information
 - c. Topic choice (Engineering, Technological, Scientific Solution vs. Economic, Policy, Collaborative Solution)
 - d. Workshop overview – this is a short description to be used in marketing materials
 - e. Workshop description – more detailed description of your session, not to exceed 7,000 characters.
 - f. Workshop agenda – each presentation and interactive activity listed out with timing
 - g. Three learning objectives – for advice on writing these, [please review this document](#)
 - h. *Optional – references and sources*
 - i. *Optional – images or graphics*
2. Proposal facilitators will coordinate with staff to finalize the session's agenda and attendee engagement activities before the event.
3. Proposal speakers and facilitators should not all represent the same utility or organization but should come from different backgrounds and experiences. This includes not having all clients from one consulting organization or manufacturer.

Conversation & Cocktails - Table Facilitator

Submitting this type will put your name forward for facilitating an interactive forum featuring multiple concurrent, small-group discussions on topics of broad interest. Facilitators will lead a discussion in the desired topic with a small group for approximately 30 minutes with 10 people. There will then be a rotation of another 10 people for another 30 minutes and so on until the end of the session. Topics can include anything from the list below or any of the topics on page 2 of this document:

- **Agriculture:** Water-smart irrigation, nutrient recovery, and soil-health solutions that improve productivity and resilience.
- **Commercial & recreational:** stadiums, airports, arenas, etc. High-efficiency fixtures, onsite reuse, and stormwater capture that help large public venues reduce water footprints.
- **Mining:** Innovations that enable water recovery, minimize contamination, and improve reuse in extraction and processing.
- **Pharmaceuticals:** Precision water management strategies that ensure quality while recovering resources and reducing wastewater.
- **Pulp & paper:** Process-water recycling, fiber recovery, and treatment solutions that lower water intensity in this highly water-dependent industry.

Submit a brief proposal that includes your topic title, description, key questions to explore (150–200 words), and what participants can expect to gain from the discussion. Selected facilitators will guide lively, solution-oriented conversations on real-world challenges. [Submit here](#) (only for conversation & cocktails).

Method of Submittal: Online only please. Abstracts, Session Proposals, and Workshop Proposals should be submitted here: <https://ww5.aievolution.com/wef/>. Conversations & Cocktails Facilitators should fill out this form here: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/b0XVXTwWzy>. Submissions of any type must be received by 11:59 PM Eastern on **January 29, 2026**.

Important Information About 2026 Submissions

All submitters will be notified of their placement in the technical program in March 2026. All submitters must submit speaker bios and headshots for all speakers along with their abstract.

Presenters are expected to register for the Conference but will be able to register at a discounted speaker rate. No travel or assistance funds are available for presenters.

Abstract Review Criteria

While using a blind review process, reviewers will score both individual abstracts and session proposals based on the following criteria. Typically, less than 50% of submissions are accepted into the technical program. Submitters should take the time to ensure all submissions meet or exceed the scoring criteria.

APPLICABILITY

The submission provides concepts, context setting, or lessons learned that are transferable/usable.

- For session & workshop proposals, this is **25%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **30%** of the score.

RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

The submission provides information supporting lessons learned and proof of concepts, lessons learned, or context.

- For session & workshop proposals, this is **30%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **40%** of the score.

AUDIENCE APPEAL

The submission provides new concepts, ideas, hot topics, or a novel application of concept. The idea has not been presented at this conference in the past.

- For session & workshop proposals, this is **25%** of the score.
- For abstracts, this is **30%** of the score.

CONCEPT INTEGRATION & ACTIVITIES

The submission walks the reviewer through the session layout, ensures cohesive participant experience, and includes meaningful points of engagement (interactive activities) that support adult learning.

- For session & workshop proposals, this is **20%** of the score.

For Questions or Additional Information Please Contact:

speakers@wef.org | 703-684-2400, ext. 7450 | www.iwsconference.org