Here's Looking at Algae

The Water Research Commission (WRC) and Rand Water hosted a four-day workshop on algal identification and microcystin analysis. This was part of a WRC-funded research project involving the compilation of an up-to-date methods manual for all algal-related analysis.

The workshop, held at Rand Water's Analytical Services in Vereeniging, focused on two methods, namely the identification and enumeration of phytoplankton and cyanobacteria and the determination of the algal toxin microcystin by means of the ELISA method. Sixteen delegates from all over southern Africa attended the workshop.

The lecturers who presented included Carin van Ginkel from the Department of Water Affairs & Forestry and George Uys from Rand Water, who facilitated the excursion part of the workshop, where delegates were taught how to sample for all the different kinds of algal analyses. Drs Sanet Janse van Vuuren and Jonathan Taylor from North West University presented the identification of phytoplankton and cyanobacteria. Prof Hein du Preez and Annalie Swanepoel from Analytical Services of Rand Water, respectively handled the design and importance of a monitoring programme and the practical determination of microcystin.

Feedback from the delegates indicated the need for more such workshops and the WRC has committed itself to the funding thereof. It is believed that projects such as these help to build much needed capacity in the South African water purification industry.

Above: *Attendees paid careful attention to the lecture.*
Below: *Zelna Franken from Rand Water and Lebohang Hanyane from Mhlatuze Water exchanging ideas while waiting for the reaction to take place during the analysis of microcystin with the ELISA method.*

Above: *Dr Sanet Janse van Vuuren explained the attachment of the flagellae on members of the Dinophyceae.*
Below: *Delegates from Namwater in Namibia (from left) Inge Kangootui and Elna Almirall also attended the workshop. With them is GP Kriel from North West University and Everton Barnes from Sedibeng Water.*