Water is Life Conference 2026 Information Pack 3

Dear friends of Water is Life,

Teams are forming. Research projects have begun. You are now on your Water is Life Conference 2026 journey! Here in the Netherlands, at Maurick College we are making arrangements for the field excursion, confirming speakers, organizing workshops and arranging host families. We are also appointing our Student Team Coach: our Maurick College students who will be assigned to each Water is Life team from abroad to support you during the conference week.

At Maurick College, we celebrate Water is Life throughout the entire school year. Across all subjects, during lessons and activities, students explore themes related to water, sustainability, and climate. They create a wide variety of projects: transforming waste into new artworks or sculptures, writing poems, and conducting fieldwork assignments. We even have a dance group preparing a special Water is Life performance, and music inspired by the theme is composed by our students.

During the conference week, you will be able to experience the full scope of these efforts. The school truly comes alive with Water is Life, and you can see, hear, and feel the creativity and dedication of our students in every corner.

This information Pack 3 contains the following:

1. Conference Program – draft version
2. Timeline
3. Checklist
4. Research Project, Report and Presentation
5. Highlights of the Conference

   Appendix:
   - WiL Judging Rubric

Conference Programme – draft version

	Activity
Saturday, June 6th Sunday, June 7th	- Arrival overseas participants - Arrival all participants from abroad
Monday, June 8th **Morning**	- Opening ceremony - Lecture by keynote speaker - Discussion with panel
Afternoon	- Ice-breaking activities
Evening	- Barbecue
Tuesday, June 9th **Morning**	- Lectures by keynote speakers - Presentations of research projects by students
Afternoon	- Outdoor activities
Evening	- Students with host families
Wednesday, June 10th **Morning** **Afternoon**	- Excursions to: Delta park Neeltje Jans / Delta Works Waterlab of Delft University of Technology
Evening	- Teachers' dinner - Students with host families
Thursday, June 11th **Morning**	- Lecture by keynote speaker
Afternoon	- Excursions - Canal cruise through Amsterdam
Evening	- Students with host families
Friday, June 12th **Morning**	- Workshops - Poster presentations
Afternoon	- Spare time / preparations for cultural presentations
Evening	- International ceremony / cultural evening - Closing ceremony - Party time gala

Timeline

~~April 2025~~	~~Information Pack 1~~
~~September 2025~~	~~Information Pack 2~~
~~October 10th, 2025~~	~~Deadline Full registration~~
~~January, 2026~~	~~Information Pack 3~~
January 31st, 2026	Deadline Payment Conference Fee
March 10th, 2026	Deadline abstracts / Send Flight details
April, 2026	Publication of abstracts on Website
May 10th, 2026	Deadline research papers
May, 2026	Information Pack 4
June 6th 7th	Arrival of (overseas) participants from abroad
June 8–12, 2026	Water is Life Conference
June 13th, 2026	Departure of participants from abroad

Checklist

Before attending the Water is Life conference, participants must be familiar with the information provided in the previous Information Packs (InfoPack 1 and InfoPack 2 and attachments). There are several tasks that need to be arranged by participants themselves. Please carefully review and complete the following checklist:

o **Hotel Accommodation for Supervising Teachers**

Schools are responsible for arranging accommodation for their accompanying teachers. We have made arrangements with **Hotel Van der Valk** Vught. We highly recommend booking at this hotel due to it's location and transportation that will be arranged for you. Bookings can be made via this link: Hotel Van der Valk Vught using the **booking code: WATERISLIFE2026**. Please make your reservation **as soon as possible**, as rooms will be released to other guests after March 1st 2026.

o **Flight Arrangements**

Participants are requested to book their flights according to the instructions provided in *InfoPack 2*. Once booked, please submit your flight details using Microsoft Forms by this link: Water is Life Travel Schedule
Please share before March 10th

o **Conference Fee**

A fee must be paid for each participant (both teachers and students) **by 31 January 2026**. Detailed payment instructions are available in *InfoPack 2*.

o **International Ceremony (Cultural Evening)**

As part of the conference programme, we invite each participating school to contribute to our International Ceremony, also known as the Cultural Evening. This special event celebrates diversity and cultural exchange, giving students the opportunity to showcase something unique from their country or region. Contributions may include a traditional dance, a song, a short film about daily life in your country or city, or the presentation of special customs and traditions.

The Cultural Evening will take place on the final day of the conference and forms a key part of our closing activities, culminating in a festive celebration that brings all participants together in a joyful and memorable way.

- o **Participant Contributions and Expectations**

To ensure a meaningful and well-structured conference, all participants are expected to actively contribute to the academic programme. Each school is required to submit a:
- - **research abstract;**
- - **written report;**
- - **research poster;**
- - **Presentation.**

All guidelines for these four elements scan be found in InfoPack2 and will be explaned later in this InfoPack 3.

Important message: Excursions during the Conference Week

During the conference week, several excursions will be organised on Thursday morning. The organisation will assign participants to these excursions, while ensuring that student groups remain together with their own supervisors at all times.

One of the possible excursions your group may be assigned to is a visit to a nature reserve. During this excursion, teachers and students will travel on a small open boat. All necessary safety measures will be in place to ensure the excursion is carried out as safely as possible. These measures include, among others, the use of life jackets and the presence of a qualified professional from the organisation responsible for conducting the excursion.

Based on experiences from previous editions of Water is Life, we are aware that some schools do not permit participation in excursions involving water activities. This may be due to various reasons, such as liability considerations or swimming ability requirements.

We therefore kindly ask you to inform the organisation in advance if your school does not grant permission for participation in such excursions. In that case, we will ensure that you and your students are not assigned to this activity.

Please note that this restriction does not apply to the excursion in Amsterdam, which includes a canal cruise through the city.

If your school does not allow participation in boat-based or water-related activities, please inform us by email at waterislifeschools@maurickcollege.nl, so we can take this into account when assigning excursions.

Research Project, Report and Presentation

A key component of the Water is Life conference is the presentation of student research. These projects provide school teams with the opportunity to explore a water-related topic in depth, using a recognized research protocol.

By centering projects on water, climate and sustainability, students develop expertise in their chosen topic. The knowledge they gain is shared with other conference participants, thereby extending the impact of their research on a global scale. Our Water is Life Conference Team will make a thematic classification after the abstracts have been submitted, based on the topics provided. At the end of the conference, first, second, and third place awards will be presented in each themed research category.

Research Ethics and Safety
ALL RESEARCH MUST BE CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED SAFETY STANDARDS AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE TREATMENT OF LIVING ORGANISMS.

The International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) Guidelines are an excellent reference for conducting research safely and ethically. These guidelines include the following principles:

- **Integrity**
  Honesty, objectivity and the avoidance of conflicts of interest are expected at every stage of the research. Projects must reflect independent work carried out by the student(s).
- **Legality**
  All research must comply with relevant international, national, regional and local laws and regulations.
- **Respect for Confidentiality and Intellectual Property.**
  Confidential communications, as well as patents, copyrights and other forms of intellectual property, must be respected. Unpublished data, methods or results may not be used without permission, and all contributions must be properly acknowledged.
- **Stewardship of the Environment**
  Researchers and supervising adults are responsible for protecting the environment and its organisms from harm. All projects involve some level of risk; therefore, hazards must be identified, risks assessed and minimized, and emergency procedures prepared.
- **Animal Care**
  Vertebrate animals must be treated with proper care and respect. Research involving animals should follow the "Four R's": Replace, Reduce, Refine and Respect.
- **Human Participant Protection**
  The health and well-being of student researchers and human participants is the highest priority.
- **Potentially Hazardous Biological Agents (PHBAs)**
  Students and supervising adults must conduct and document a risk assessment and ensure the safe handling and disposal of all organisms and materials.

The Water is Life Research Report
Projects should be planned and completed at least one month before the research report submission deadline of **May 10th**. Approximately one additional month is required to write, edit and finalize the research report.

The report should follow the format of a scientific journal article. Graphs and images based on student-collected data should be included to support the conclusions. All claims made in the conclusion must be supported by clear evidence and sound reasoning.

Detailed guidelines for the Abstract, Report and Poster are shared in Information Pack 2 and are available on the Water is Life website: www.waterislifeschools.com

Project Presentations at the Conference
Each student team is required to deliver a 10-minute oral and visual presentation of their research project during the Water is Life conference. The audience will include a judging panel, other student teams and adult school representatives.
All participating teams must give this presentation.

Teams may use a presentation format with which they feel comfortable. Commonly used software includes Microsoft PowerPoint, Google Slides and Prezi.
Each presentation room will be equipped with: an Apple MacBook and/ or iPad, a TV screen and speakers. Apple MacBooks will have Microsoft PowerPoint and internet access available.
Students must bring their presentation on a USB drive or ensure it is accessible via the cloud. Students who wish to use a different device (such as a laptop or Chromebook) must bring their own device (with HDMI connection)

Presentations should clearly highlight:
- the research question or problem
- expected outcomes
- methodology
- key findings
- conclusions

Students are encouraged to tell the story of their research. Anecdotes about unexpected results can add interest and engagement. Slides with large amounts of text should be avoided.

Suggestions for Effective Visual Presentations
- Limit text on each slide to 25 words or fewer, including titles
- Use a large font size so text is readable from the back of the room
- Make photos and graphs large and clear
- Use high-quality images to support the narrative of the project
- Explain images and bullet points verbally rather than overcrowding slides
- Use animations sparingly
- Include a title slide with the Project Name, Team Name, School Name and Student Names
- Practice the presentation in front of people unfamiliar with the research
- Do not read directly from the slides; use them as visual support for your explanation

Judging Criteria
Each project will be submitted digitally to our judges with expertise relevant to the research topic. Digital copies of the research reports must be submitted to the Water is Life conference committee by May 10, 2026.

From May 15, 2026, projects will be distributed to the judges for initial assessment. All judges have professional experience in scientific fields related to student research and will use a standardized evaluation rubric. This rubric can be found in the attachment to this InfoPack and on the website.

Poster Presentation
The poster presentations allows all conference participants to explore each other's research and engage in informal discussions. Team members should take turns standing by their own poster and visiting others.

Teams may prepare handouts or small items (such as bookmarks) only if these directly support the research topic. (Food or sweets may not be distributed.)

The poster should be a landscape (horizontal) format and present a concise overview of the research, including:
- the research question
- expected findings
- analyzed data
- conclusions
- acknowledgements of significant contributors or organizations

The poster should provide a clear summary; team members can elaborate verbally during discussions.
You need to bring your printed poster. All other materials will be provided by the conference organizers.

POSTERS MUST BE PRINTED BEFORE ARRIVAL.

Please note: students are not able to print posters on site.
Poster guidelines are included in Information Pack 2 and can also be downloaded from the Water is Life website.

Suggestions for Posters and Poster Presentations
- Use muted background colors so text, photos and graphs are easy to read
- Make the title large and clearly visible
- Rotate team members so everyone has time to visit other poster presentations.
- Engage visitors with a friendly introduction
- Use questions to gauge prior knowledge and adapt your explanation accordingly (e.g. "Have you heard about using concrete to create artificial reefs in the ocean?")
- Do not provide food or sweets

Highlights of the Conference

As part of the Water is Life conference experience, we have planned a series of inspiring excursions that explore water, nature and human ingenuity in the Netherlands. These are just a few highlights, we are continuing to organise further visits and activities, and you can also look forward to engaging guest speakers and practical workshops offered by diverse organisations.

Visit to Delft University – Waterlab and Innovation

At **Delft University of Technology**, students will explore cutting-edge water research and innovation. Students and researchers at Delft work on sustainable solutions for watermanagement, climate adaptation and environmental challenges, using experimental facilities and real-world case studies. This visit gives insight into how science and technology combine to address future water issues in the Netherlands and beyond. *(Context: university research on water systems and climate adaptation)*

Excursion to the Bossche Broek – Nature, Water and Biodiversity

In the **Bossche Broek**, a unique wetland and grassland nature reserve on the edge of the city of 's-Hertogenbosch, you will experience how water and landscape interact to create rich ecosystems. This low-lying area is historically shaped by the flow of rivers and natural groundwater, supporting diverse plant and bird species. Guided by local experts, you will learn about wetland ecology, water in nature management and conservation efforts, as well as the connection between the landscape and the city's historical development. *(Nature reserve, wetland ecology)*

Visit to Deltapark Neeltje Jans – The Delta Works and Water Safety

At **Deltapark Neeltje Jans** in Zeeland, you will discover the incredible story of the **Delta Works**, one of the world's most impressive engineering achievements in flood protection. Through exhibitions, films and guided tours, you will learn how the Netherlands defend itself against the sea and manages water at scale. Highlights include an up-close view of the storm surge barrier, built to protect the country after the devastating 1953 flood, and interactive experiences that deepen your understanding of resilience, innovation and history. *(Delta Works and water defence)*

Exploring Amsterdam – City, Water and Culture

Our trip to **Amsterdam** offers a unique blend of history, watermanagement and urban life. A guided city walk will show you how Amsterdam's iconic canals and waterways shaped the city over centuries, reflecting the Dutch mastery of water control. You'll also enjoy a **canal cruise**, providing a different perspective on how the capital continues to adapt and live with water. Amsterdam's blend of cultural heritage, innovative water infrastructure and vibrant city life makes this an unforgettable highlight of the conference. *(Historical watermanagement in Amsterdam)*.