



Sara Marks becomes new member of the Eawag Directorate

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Topics: Organisation & Staff

The ETH Board announces the appointment of Sara Marks as a new member of the Eawag Directorate. On 1 November, Sara Marks will replace Tove Larsen, who will retire at the end of October 2023.

Dr Sara Marks is Group Leader in the Department of Sanitation, Water and Solid Waste for Development (Sandec). She has more than 15 years of experience in applied research on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in twelve countries. At Eawag, she leads the Water Supply and Treatment Group, which aims to develop and improve technologies and systems for the supply of safe drinking water.

Current projects focus on evaluating novel passive chlorination devices, assessing climate impacts on WASH infrastructure and strengthening fit-for-purpose water quality laboratories in rural areas. Her work strongly aligns with the priorities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 6, to ensure safe drinking water and adequate sanitation for all by 2030.

Representing the generation of younger researchers at Eawag

“Sara Marks - like Tove Larsen - is an engineer and represents the generation of younger researchers at Eawag and thus a group that also plays a central role in the further development of the institute and the ETH Domain in particular,” notes Martin Ackermann, Director of Eawag. “I am convinced Sara Marks will make an excellent contribution,” Ackermann continues.

Sara Marks explains her decision to accept the appointment as follows: “Working in the Directorate is

an important opportunity to participate in the discussion within the ETH Domain.” The environmental engineer also wants to help shape how Eawag engages in the international water sector, focusing on strengthening partnerships with development organisations and revitalising Eawag’s role as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. She also wants to start early discussions at Eawag about future priorities in the “post-SDG era”. “Because of my background, I can bring a very pragmatic perspective to these and other issues,” adds Sara Marks. “And it will reflect my experiences as a working mother, early career professional and young researcher. I know both the joys and challenges of starting a career and a family abroad.”

Brief profile: Sara Marks

Sara Marks is an environmental engineer and heads the Water Supply and Treatment Group at Eawag. She is an adjunct professor of civil engineering at the University of Victoria (Canada) and has more than 15 years of experience in global applied research in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Before pursuing academic research, she worked as a groundwater remediation consultant and as a microbiologist at a municipal wastewater treatment plant.

Sara Marks studied chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh (USA) and received her PhD in environmental engineering and science from Stanford University (USA) in 2012. She completed a postdoc at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (USA), where she investigated links between water and sanitation infrastructure, environmental contamination and human health. She works with academics, government agencies and development organisations worldwide and is a member of World Health Organization expert working groups.

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