



South African National Bottled Water Association

SANBWA helps everyone make clear choices

There's a great deal of new stuff happening at SANBWA – based on our having achieved a number of our original objectives in setting up the association.

Setting the standard

For instance, we've changed our messaging to "make a clear choice". We chose it because it reflects the product - in terms of clean, refreshing water in transparent, attractive packaging - that we're dedicated to supporting.

It also reflects the buoyant state of the industry, with sales growing exponentially and the market expanding constantly to accommodate new bottlers, new types of water, and new lifestyles. With so many options available to consumers, it's important for them to be able to tell very quickly which products are of the quality to which they're entitled.

That, of course, is where SANBWA comes in. Because of the work association management and members have put in over the past five years, we've all moved beyond just being adequate to actually being continuously excellent. So, the SANBWA logo has become a seal of quality, a mark of excellence.

In other words, we've achieved the main goal for which SANBWA was established in the first place. And we can now build on this platform to pro-actively educate all stakeholders about the positives of bottled water – enabling them to make a clear choice about what they drink.

Maintaining a cutting edge

Presenting ourselves as the seal of quality means we have to continuously stay ahead of the experience and standards curve.

To achieve that and also complement our information base we joined the European Federation of Bottled Waters (EFBW) in January this year. Through the EFBW we gained membership of the International Council for Bottled Water Associations (ICBWA), which is the global association for bottled waters. The memberships have already paid off big time, providing us with the latest technical know-how as well as an insider view of the global bottled water industry.

Another of SANBWA's original priorities was to get our industry formally regulated. As you know, six years of lobbying and providing input to draft legislation came to fruition on 28 July 2006 in the form of the publication of the R.718 Regulations relating to all bottled water. Following a one-year implementation period, the regulations came into effect on 28 July 2007. Naturally, at our annual general meeting in July, SANBWA members welcomed the regulations, committing to 100% compliance. And, as a service to the industry, SANBWA is prepared to assist non-members in interpreting and complying with the regulations.

Including rather than excluding

Arising from the contribution we made to the development of appropriate legislation – and, in the process, acting on behalf of the entire industry – it made sense to open SANBWA membership to bottlers of prepared water. At the end of this year, therefore, we will be representative of 90% of all the bottled water produced in South Africa.

Our "Guidelines and Standards for prepared water" will be finalised along with our revised "Guidelines and Standards for natural water" by November. Both documents will include the latest international quality parameters.



Working with the trade

We are working to gain co-operation from the trade in accepting our member audits as the standard for their individual supplier audits. This will save time and money for all parties and the trade will also benefit from our bottled water-specific expertise in ensuring that the product they carry in-store is of international quality.

National rather than just Natural

The inclusion of categories other than natural bottled water necessitated our next move – changing our name from South African Natural Bottled Water Association to South African National Bottled Water Association. Serendipitously, the acronym SANBWA and our logo remain the same.

Thanks!

Thank you to all our supporters and partners. Without you, we could not have come this far.

Charlotte Metcalf

European Federation For Bottled Water (EFBW)

Our membership of the EFBW allows us to work alongside international experts to sustain, improve and grow the world-wide bottled water industry.

History

Originally founded as Unesem (European Union of Natural Mineral Waters), then UNSEN (European Union of Natural Waters) to include spring waters, the current association was founded in 2003 to promote all bottled waters. It is a not for profit association incorporated under Belgian law.

Members

Their current members are national associations promoting bottled water in the following countries: Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, UK, South Africa, and Turkey. EBWA, the European Water Coolers Association is also a member.

Structure

- Board: Currently 14 members. Access to the board is open; each national association may propose a representative for election to the board of directors.
- Executive Committee: In charge of the implementation of the board's decisions. Composed of 9 members – a president, 4 permanent representatives for Germany, Italy, France and Spain, 4 other representatives rotating every two years.

Associations

EFBW is the biggest member of International Council of Bottled Water Associations (ICBWA), with the highest number (over 580) of bottlers represented.

EFBW is also a member of CIAA, the European Food and Drinks industry.

EFBW main objectives

- Monitor legislative initiatives at national, EU or International (Codex) level that may have an effect on the bottled water industry and ensure that the industry's interests and point of view are taken into account by decision makers.
- Identify problems encountered by the industry and propose solutions by consensus and promote them before the relevant authorities.
- Provide assistance to national associations and industry members.
- Represent EFBW members before other regional and international associations or institutions (Codex Alimentarius, ICBWA).

Current issues include

Validation of certain specific treatments for the separation of some constituents of natural mineral water (in relation to concentration limits), interpretation of the notion of original purity for natural mineral waters (parameters), labelling/denomination of 'flavoured waters/drinks', attacks by tap water against bottled water, and future limits for radioactivity.

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