The ITA General Assembly in Brazil unanimously approved the creation of the ITA Young Members Group (ITAYM) to applause on 14 May. This decision followed on from a social for young engineers on 12 May, and a seminar held earlier on 14 May to set out the mechanics of the group and answer any questions.

Following acceptance at the General Assembly, the group stated its next aim would be to have its own assembly at WTC 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Committee positions will also need to be filled by elected members, although for the next year, there is a steering board headed by Jurij Karlovšek (University of Queensland) based in Australia, and supported by Petr Salak (Dr. Sauer & Partners) based in the UK.

The ITAYM Group aims to “bridge the generation gap and provide a technical network platform for young professionals in the tunnelling and underground space industry”. And the initiative was clearly well received, with over 65 confirmed attendees at the social. The seminar also attracted representatives from around the world, including: Hungary, Greece, Brazil, Britain, Canada, Austria, South Korea, Germany and Colombia.

This interest, and creation of the ITAYM, is the culmination of over a year of planning and campaign work, begun in January 2013 by Salak, who at that time chaired the British Tunnelling Society Young Members. The success of the group in Britain had led to the move to contact other such national YM groups, and to inspire their creation in countries that had not yet made this step. At WTC 2013, following a presentation from Salak and former BTS chair Damian McGirr, the efforts culminated in the formation of an ITA Task Force, and an unofficial ITAYM group. While newly elected ITA president Soren Eskesen called on ITA member nations to form their own YM groups, or to make existing groups known.

The ITAYM Group is now seeking nominated representatives under the age of 35 from national Young Members organisations. General participation is open to individual affiliate ITA members under 35 years of age who have an interest in the aims of the group. To get in touch, contact itaym@ita-aites.org.

“Everything is happening really fast,” said Karlovšek at WTC 2014, “it's encouraging and exciting. Nearly everything that exists for the ITAYM has been going for less than a year. We need to be a voice for young engineers in the ITA so that we can create opportunities for the next generation.”

One immediate objective is practical preparation for a 2015 ITAYM general assembly in Croatia. There is also work to negotiate lower delegate fees for young engineers, to get a more balanced demographic at future Congresses.

At the conclusion of the ITAYM seminar, Danish representative Lasse Vester offered to buy a beer at WTC 2015 for everyone who creates a national YM group. As vice chair Salak pointed out, this could be an expensive promise.

Alex Conacher

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**ITA YOUNG MEMBERS GROUP LAUNCHED**

WTC 2014 in Brazil saw the launch of the new group, which already enjoys a lot of interest from the industry’s younger members.

**ITA YOUNG MEMBERS GROUP steering board for 2014/15**

- **Chair:** Jurij Karlovšek (Australia)
- **Vice-chair:** Petr Salak (United Kingdom)
- **Treasurer:** Lasse Vester (Denmark)
- **Secretary:** Nichole Boultbee (Canada)
- **Communications and marketing officer:** Sindre Log (Norway)

**ITA YOUNG MEMBERS GROUP objectives**

**Primary**
- Provide a technical network platform for young professionals in the tunnelling and underground space industry

**Secondary**
- Provide international information hubs for young professionals in order to exchange experience and to build the professional network
- Outline the need to bridge the gap between generations and embrace the opportunity to network across generations in the industry
- Improve awareness of the tunnelling and underground space industry in new generations