

Interview

Shwetha Pandurangi

Central Texas Client Relations Director - Lochner, part of Egis group



Shwetha Pandurangi, P.E., CFM, is a civil engineer and water infrastructure leader with over 22 years of experience in public infrastructure planning and delivery. She currently serves as the Central Texas Client Relations Director for the Water/Wastewater Practice at H.W. Lochner, Egis in the U.S., supporting municipalities and utilities across Central and West Texas with water and wastewater planning and design of complex infrastructure.

Prior to joining Lochner, Shwetha spent more than a decade with the City of Austin in progressive leadership roles, including Business Strategy Manager, where she led planning and delivery of bond-funded infrastructure programs and coordinated major regional initiatives, including the Water Forward Strategy. She also served as City Engineer for the City of Lancaster, Texas, overseeing engineering services and capital projects across multiple infrastructure systems.

Shwetha currently serves as a Commissioner for the City of Austin Water and Wastewater Commission and as Chair of the Water Committee for the American Council of Engineering Companies, Austin Chapter, advocating for resilient water infrastructure. She also chaired the Lochner Mentorship Program in 2025, an eight-month initiative fostering cross-collaboration and professional networking across the organization.

She holds a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington and is a licensed Professional Engineer in Texas. Through her work, Shwetha remains committed to advancing sustainable water solutions and strengthening infrastructure that supports thriving communities.

From your perspective, how does the global water crisis affect women, and why is it important to include them at the heart of water-related solutions?

Growing up in Bangalore, India shaped my perspective on water in a very personal way. Back in the early 90's water was supplied intermittently by the city government, so households had to plan carefully when to collect, store and filter it before use. In our home, we stored water in underground storage tanks, pumped it when needed, and ensured it was filtered before drinking. To augment this water supply, we had a private drinking water well. Managing water was a daily responsibility, and it made me realize early how essential reliable and safe water systems are.

That experience also helped me understand why the global water crisis affects women so deeply. In many parts of the world, women are the primary care givers of household water. When supply is unreliable or scarce, they are often responsible for ensuring the family has safe water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene. In that sense, women and girls often carry the greatest burden when access to water is limited. Because of this close connection, women bring practical knowledge that is critical to designing effective water solutions. When women are included in planning, engineering, and decision-making, the solutions tend to be more sustainable, more equitable, and more responsive to the real needs of communities. In many ways, the experiences that shape our relationship with water early in life can also shape the passion and purpose we bring to solving the global water challenges ahead.

In your role, how do you contribute to shaping more inclusive and resilient water services or environmental solutions?

In my role as Central Texas Client Relations Director for the Water/Wastewater Practice, and as an engineer working on water and wastewater infrastructure across the Central Texas and West Texas regions, I help shape more inclusive and resilient water services by supporting communities in regional planning, designing, and improving reliable systems. My work focuses on long-term planning, system evaluations, and infrastructure improvements that ensure communities have access to safe drinking water and effective wastewater management.

I collaborate closely with cities, utilities, and stakeholders to understand their challenges, whether related to population growth, water supply planning, aging infrastructure, or regulatory requirements. By combining technical analysis with input from community leaders and policymakers, we develop solutions that are both technically sound and practical to implement, ensuring systems can adapt to changing conditions and future demands.

Beyond engineering, my leadership role centers on uniting multidisciplinary teams to pursue and deliver impactful projects for communities. This involves identifying strategic talent, fostering collaboration, and coordinating expertise across teams. Equally important is investing in people, mentoring, developing future leaders, and creating opportunities for diverse talent to thrive within the profession.

Ultimately, my work contributes to protecting public health, supporting economic development, and safeguarding the environment by strengthening the essential water and wastewater systems that communities rely on every day, while also helping build a more inclusive and resilient workforce for the future.

What message or advice would you share with young women aspiring to build a career in the water and environmental sectors?

My message to young women aspiring to build a career in the water and environmental sectors is that this field offers unique opportunities to make a meaningful and lasting impact on communities. Water is essential to public health, economic development, and environmental protection, and the work we do can directly improve people's quality of life.

While the core nature of the field is technical, day to day problem solving skills, efficient management, knowledge of policy, and communications all play important roles in solving water challenges, and there is space for a wide range of talents and perspectives. Curiosity, persistence, and a willingness to learn are as important as technical expertise.

I also encourage young women to seek mentors and build strong professional networks within and outside the organization. These networks provide valuable opportunities to learn from experienced professionals, gain exposure to different career paths, and develop leadership skills.

Most importantly, believe that your voice and perspective matter. Diverse viewpoints lead to stronger and more innovative solutions, especially in fields that affect entire communities. The water sector needs passionate and thoughtful leaders, and young women have an important role to play in shaping sustainable solutions for the future.