



Freshwater

# Water Stewardship

Shared risk and opportunity at the water's edge



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**From the United Nations to community water management committees and corporate boardrooms to factory floors, water issues are on the agenda. The stakes are high, and solutions aren't simple. They require a deep understanding of the causes of water risks and a willingness to think beyond a given factory, river basin, industry or border.**

Issues of global water quantity and quality have significant and growing social, environmental and economic consequences. WWF has long been a leader in freshwater conservation because the issue is integral to our mission of building a future in which people live in harmony with nature.

Now, the realities of climate change – coupled with investor expectations, community perceptions and increased consumption – has focused the private sector's attention on water as a key resource under threat.

How can economies and businesses flourish in a changing and uncertain water future, the effects of which reach far beyond traditional water-intensive industries? This is the question savvy companies and policymakers are striving to answer.

Yet most companies don't understand water issues very well, and few have assessed

their exposure to water risk. It's not surprising – water is a resource we have been able to take for granted. But that's no longer the case. Even a small shock to the system could have serious consequences for a company's direct operations, as well as supply chains, brand reputation, profits and growth opportunities.

WWF expects companies to become much more than just efficient water users. We want them to become advocates for better water management because the root cause of water risk is often not the availability or use of water, but governance; unless an entire river basin is managed in a sustainable way, one company's improved efficiency will likely be overshadowed by increased usage by a competitor or a neighboring community. This makes water the ultimate shared resource – and everyone's responsibility.

*“WWF has challenged Coca-Cola to be the best environmental stewards we can be. They're holding us to a high standard and that's going to make us a better company.”*

Jeff Seabright  
Vice President for  
Environment and Water  
The Coca-Cola Company

## Get active on water

*“WWF has the maturity and understanding of business for us to be very open, and they can challenge us, and help us change our thinking, but we trust there will be an understanding of our position.”*

Andy Wales  
Head of Sustainable Development  
SABMiller

***If operations at one of your factories were threatened by severe water shortage, would the community come to you for help, or blame you for the problem?***

***What if your highly efficient factory was located in a river basin facing severe water scarcity?***

***Do you know how much you depend on water, where it comes from and the impacts of your use?***

The answers to such questions may be unique to a given company, but WWF understands that water poses common risks and opportunities for all businesses, and these are shared with communities and ecosystems. That’s why partnership is the cornerstone of our approach to water stewardship.

With our sound understanding of water policy, water science and the needs of business, WWF is collaborating with private, public and NGO actors on a joint approach to help mitigate the water challenges we face.

With WWF, your business can both manage risk and create new opportunities. Together, we will:

- Define your unique water-related risks ([waterriskfilter.org](http://waterriskfilter.org)).
- Integrate water strategy into your operational plans and manage your supply chain.
- Explore in detail your business’s dependence on water and the potential implications.
- Engage stakeholders on the ground where you work and contribute to the global water debate.
- Identify the policy and governance gaps that fuel your risk, and seek solutions with policymakers and local partners.
- Achieve compliance with all relevant policies, and become active in efforts to set standards for water use, adaptable to change and, with WWF, a strong advocate for government accountability.



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**COUNTRIES ARE EXPERIENCING MODERATE TO SEVERE WATER STRESS**



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Sewage pipe spewing pollution from a factory directly into a river near Mumbai, India

	<p><b>Why we are here.</b> To stop the degradation of the planet’s natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.</p> <p><a href="http://www.panda.org">www.panda.org</a></p>
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