



WATER REDUCTION

A FU⁺UREPLUS GUIDE



+ WHY REDUCE?

Conserving water is an important part of responsible business practices, particularly in times of drought, or if operating in water-stressed regions.

Over 2 billion people live in already water-stressed countries. By 2050, global water demand is projected to grow by 55%.

Minimising water use can also help to reduce costs by cutting utility bills, and lower the production of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions released from water treatment and supply.

+ WATER INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES

Agriculture & Meat Production - 70% of the world's freshwater is used to grow crops for human and animal consumption.

Textiles - 79 billion cubic metres of water were used by the fashion industry in 2015, according to one estimate.

Energy - The water used for cooling of power plants accounts for considerable levels of water use - around 52 billion cubic meters according to a 2015 study.

Beverages - Did you know it takes around 350 litres of water to produce one litre of soda, and that one litre of beer requires 60 litres of freshwater?

Construction, Mining & Automotive - Cement, steel, lumber and tyre production are all highly water intensive, as is mining and quarrying, which account for around 4% of global water consumption.

All businesses, not just those in water-intensive sectors, should consider how water is used within their operations and value chain, and what can be done to reduce it.

The irregularity of rainfall occurring as a result of the changing climate is making water availability harder to predict, even in countries and regions not usually considered water-scarce, while demands on water are increasing as populations grow.



+ WHERE TO START

Whatever your industry, monitoring water use is the first step to making reductions.

A smart water meter will allow you to automatically track the amount of water you use, identify areas of potential savings, and quickly address leaks. Monitoring your bills regularly will help you to identify any changes in water consumption.

Check for leaks! In 2021-22, the UK's water industry financial regulator, Ofwat, reported that water companies lost an average of almost 3,000 million litres of water per day via leaky pipes. Water companies and utility providers are largely responsible for improving water infrastructure, but businesses can play their part too by identifying leaking taps and internal pipes, or reporting external leaks to the relevant water company or the local council.

Small behavioural changes can also soon add up, and educating your employees on how they can help to reduce water consumption is key. Simple tips include:

- Switching off taps when water isn't being used
- Using the half flush option on dual flush toilets
- Investing in a washing up bowl for the kitchen sink
- Reporting dripping or leaking taps to management teams
- Filling up washing machines and dishwashers before switching them on
- Only filling the kettle with the amount of water needed

+ BASIC WATER-EFFICIENT TECHNOLOGIES

- Automatic or sensor taps
- A water butt to capture rainwater for irrigation if you have outdoor space
- When buying new appliances or water fittings, look for water efficient models
- Go 'low-flow' – installing low-flow restrictors on all faucets can save 5 litres of water per minute
- Use a water-saving device in your toilet cistern - depending on the cistern size, you could save 1-3 litres every flush



+ IN AT THE DEEP END

Your own operations

If your business is involved in water-intensive processes such as manufacturing or agriculture, use longer-term strategy planning to set out how your business will reduce its reliance on water in the future.

Production of organic cotton, as one example, uses considerably less water than non-organic. Some manufacturing companies are switching to recycled water by collecting wastewater, greywater or rain water, cleaning it, and returning it for use in the industrial operations.

Your supply chain

If the main source of water consumption in your business model is within your supply chain, speak to your suppliers about how they measure and monitor water use, and what plans they have in place to reduce it.

Think about operational or logistical changes you could make to reduce the amount of water used in your supply chain, and consider water-related risks such as how a drought could affect your business in the future.

Your customers

If your customers are responsible for the bulk of water use in your business (for example in the hospitality industry) think about water-efficient technologies you could install to conserve water.

Messaging is also important. Find a way to explain to your customers why conserving water is important to you as a business, and explain clearly the steps you are taking to reduce water usage.

+ NEED MORE HELP?

We offer consultancy services if you would like more comprehensive support.

Please let us know if you would like more information – we would be happy to talk through your requirements: team@future-plus.co.uk