

# The Mandate's Four Primary Focus Areas

The CEO Water Mandate currently conducts activities with respect to four primary focus areas/workstreams:

- Responsible Policy Engagement and Water Stewardship Collective Action
- Water and Human Rights
- Corporate Water Disclosure
- Water Stewardship in the Supply Chain

The Mandate Secretariat encourages endorsing companies to participate in any and all workstreams and associated Working Groups in which they are interested. Read on to learn more about the main objectives of these workstreams and key projects associated with them, and to get involved in shaping the work as it unfolds.

*(click titles to expand)*

## > Responsible Policy Engagement and Water Stewardship Collective Action>

Acknowledging that water scarcity, pollution, climate change, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective water management create risks for companies and governments alike, in 2013, the Mandate released [Guide to Water-Related Collective Action](#), which offers good practice to help companies establish enduring relationships with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, leaders, and individuals to advance shared water-related goals. To further elucidate how companies and other actors can work together to facilitate sustainable water management, the Mandate and the Water Integrity Network are leading the development of a collaborative, applied research project that seeks to understand and develop an integrity management framework, and practical supporting guidance and tools aimed at ensuring high levels of integrity and transparency in multi-stakeholder water stewardship initiatives (WSIs). The first phase of work is slated to be completed by the end of 2014.

Previously in 2010, the Mandate also released [Guide to Responsible Business Engagement with Water Policy](#), which provides principles, concepts, practical steps, and case examples that facilitate companies' responsible engagement with water policy in a manner that reduces business risks through the advancement of equitable and sustainable water management.

The Mandate seeks to facilitate the implementation of these guides' principles and practical guidance on-the-ground through its [Water Action Hub](#) – an online platform whereby companies communicate and partner with other businesses, relevant governments, NGOs, and communities to advance sustainable water management on a location-specific basis. The Hub currently profiles projects and assists collective action projects in river basins around the world, including the Orange-Sengou, Limpopo, Lake Victoria, Colorado, Ganges, Wami-Ruvu, Mississippi, Rimac, and Thames and the country of Uganda and will continue to expand to additional basins in 2015.

The Mandate is currently expanding the Hub to include specialized Sustainable Agriculture and Apparel Portals that will enable companies to collaborate with their peers, suppliers, governments, and civil society groups across the globe to address water challenges related to sustainable agriculture and apparel. The Sustainable Agriculture and Apparel Portals of the Water Action Hub will take a global-to-local approach that can galvanize and upscale on-the-ground action and align efforts of key actors to promote more sustainable practices, highlight on-going basin-level projects, and help organizations to pursue collective action to address shared water challenges related to sustainable agriculture and apparel industry supply chains. The CEO Water Mandate and its partners will “land” the portals in key water-stressed geographies and around key segments of the supply chain, and is interested in connecting with potential partners who have local expertise and/or ongoing efforts in key regions to see if it might be possible to align efforts.

These projects are overseen by the Mandate's Collective Action Working Group (CAWG).

For more information relating to this workstream, please contact Stefanie Woodward, Advisor, CEO Water Mandate +1-510-251-1600 or [swoodward@pacinst.org](mailto:swoodward@pacinst.org)

### > Water and Human Rights

In 2011, the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council agreed to resolutions affirming the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation (HRWS) as a right equal to all other human rights. In response, the Mandate Secretariat has amended the initiative's [founding document](#) to acknowledge these resolutions. Further, Mandate endorsers and stakeholders alike have suggested an awareness that there is a corporate responsibility to conduct business operations consistent with the rights to water and sanitation. However, businesses have also expressed a need for the Mandate to explore what it means in practice for a company to act consistently with these rights and how to operationalize them on the ground.

The Mandate responded to this need in 2012 by developing [Bringing a Human Rights Lens to Corporate Water Stewardship: Results of Initial Research](#) in collaboration with Shift, a non-profit center of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This report summarizes initial research to understand and elucidate international and national legal trends relating to the right to water and sanitation, illustrating current challenges businesses face in respecting this right, as well as the perspectives of potentially-affected communities, and lastly identifying areas of potential synergy with companies' existing water stewardship efforts.

In 2014, the Mandate has built upon this work by providing practical insights on how companies can best meet their responsibility to respect the HRWS, taking into account their existing corporate water stewardship practices. In January 2015, the Mandate – in partnership with Shift and drawing on Oxfam America's extensive subject matter expertise – released [Guidance for Companies on Respecting the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation](#) which:

- Helps companies translate their responsibility to respect the human rights to water and sanitation into their existing water management systems, operations, and company cultures;
- Complements related efforts to clarify the obligations and responsibility of other actors (particularly states and water and sanitation service providers) with regards to the rights to water and sanitation.

This work is overseen by the Mandate's Human Rights Working Group (HRWG).

For more information relating to this workstream, please contact Mai-Lan Ha, Advisor, CEO Water Mandate +1-510-251-1600 or [mlha@pacinst.org](mailto:mlha@pacinst.org)

### > Corporate Water Disclosure

The Mandate disclosure workstream seeks to build businesses' ability to effectively communicate their efforts to be responsible water stewards to key stakeholders (i.e. affected communities, consumers, investors, and the general public).

In order to facilitate improved reporting, in 2014, the Mandate released the final version of the [Corporate Water Disclosure Guidelines](#) – in collaboration with key strategic partners PwC, CDP, World Resources Institute, and Global Reporting Initiative. This project brought together and built on the experiences of water-disclosure-related initiatives to advance a common approach to corporate water disclosure. This approach 1) offers common corporate water disclosure metrics that can begin to harmonize practice and 2) provides guidance for determining report content relevance and aligning water disclosure to stakeholder expectations.

The Mandate has also sought to collaborate with others in the corporate water stewardship community to harmonize definitions of key water-related terms, such as “water scarcity”, “water stress”, and “water risk” that are commonly used in disclosure documents. It is also currently developing the Interactive Database of the World's River Basins, which offers a harmonized lexicon and boundary delineations for the world's major river basins, so as to make companies' location-specific reporting more meaningful. In 2015, the Mandate will continue to support uptake and socialization of the Guidelines, and seek to integrate them into existing disclosure frameworks and other stewardship materials where possible.

This work is overseen by the Mandate's Water Disclosure Working Group (WDWG).

For more information relating to this workstream, please contact Peter Schulte, Advisor, CEO Water Mandate +1-206-257-5251 or [pschulte@pacinst.org](mailto:pschulte@pacinst.org)

### **> Water Stewardship in the Supply Chain**

For many companies, the vast majority of their water footprint is indirect, meaning that it takes place in their supply chains and/or product-use phases, rather than their direct operations. As such, while improving the efficiency of a company's direct operations is certainly important, comprehensive water risk management requires that companies also ensure their suppliers have stable access to water resources and maintain their license to operate over the long-term. If they fail to do so, companies may not be able to procure the supplies they need to make their products. The substantial size of indirect water footprints also means that supply chain management provides companies' a great opportunity to facilitate positive water-related impacts across the globe.

The Mandate's newest workstream aims to enable companies to monitor and encourage more sustainable water performance among their suppliers – both in manufacturing and agriculture. The Mandate Secretariat is currently in the process of launching the Stewardship in the Supply Chain Working Group. Once this is done, the Secretariat and Working Group will set out to define and develop supply-chain-related deliverables that provide the most value to Mandate endorsers and their stakeholders.

For more information relating to this emerging workstream, please contact Stefanie Woodward, Advisor, CEO Water Mandate +1-510-251-1600 or [swoodward@pacinst.org](mailto:swoodward@pacinst.org)

## **How To Get Involved**

CEO Water Mandate endorsing companies are invited to participate in these workstreams primarily through participation in the initiative's corollary working groups. To join one or more of the working groups, please contact Peter Schulte at [pschulte@pacinst.org](mailto:pschulte@pacinst.org).