



# The CEO Water Mandate

## CEO Water Mandate: Water Action Hub Overview November 2011

### Context

There is a need for organized and readily accessible information that could help companies understand their options for collective action on water issues, and who they can work with in a particular area of concern. This would likely result in larger, more effective alliances, with pooled resources, focusing efforts in shared “hotspot” watersheds, rather than the current, more piecemeal approach.

The Water Action Hub (the Hub) is designed to address this need to promote collaboration among stakeholders. The Hub will be an online tool that helps companies to efficiently identify potential collaborators and engage with them in water-related collective action to improve water management in regions of critical strategic interest. The Hub complements an existing collaborative effort between the CEO Water Mandate and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to develop an online capacity building platform that is geared toward raising awareness in the business community about the critical role for businesses in addressing global water challenges, as well as the range of methods and tools available to companies to help them understand and manage their water-related risks and impacts. The primary audience for the Hub is private sector, large-scale water users, with a secondary audience being public sector entities, development agencies, and NGOs interested in engaging with others to improve water management at the local and catchment levels.

### Content and functionality

A core function of the Hub will be to help companies and other organizations more effectively understand the players and initiatives in their watersheds of interest and potentially work with them toward shared water goals. To accomplish this, the Hub will include a mapping function that visually places each facility and/or organization within watershed maps. Along with geographic location, Hub users will “characterize themselves” by providing information about their organization (e.g., for a business, its industry sector), the nature of their water use, scope of existing water collaborations and projects, and/or what water challenges they are most interested in addressing. The amount of information provided by Hub users will be scalable, allowing for a range of detail depending on the company’s relative sophistication on water issues. Such information will allow for more effective match-making outcomes.

These watershed maps will be designed to allow companies to build upon their use of other online analytical mapping tools such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development’s *Global Water Tool* (which can help companies identify water risk across the value chain) and the World Resource Institute’s *Aqueduct* tool (which maps a range of water risk factors at the watershed level including water availability and use trends, pollution, population and wealth distribution, relative investment in infrastructure, economic mix/diversity, and others for 10-12 commercially important watersheds worldwide). Linking the Hub to information from the Aqueduct tool is intended to increase the ability of companies and stakeholders to identify shared challenges and opportunities for collective action.

### Project work plan

The project is expected to unfold in three stages, with each stage needing to be successfully completed before project funders are asked to support the next. The stages are:

- 1) Project feasibility, market need, and scoping,
- 2) Content development, “pre-seeding” of The Hub and beta testing, and
- 3) Public launch, marketing and outreach.

It is expected that the bulk of financial resources will be applied to the first two stages.



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### **Stage One**

For the first stage, work will focus on market research that identifies the initial catchments of focus, as well as assesses how the Hub might be used (depending on the user) such that it can provide particular function/value within the fast moving space of corporate online water-related tools and information systems.<sup>1</sup> It will start with secondary research using information in the public domain, followed by an in-depth survey and interviews with CEO Water Mandate supporting companies and International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) corporate partners. A crucial piece of “market research” at the outset of the project will be an electronic survey of CEO Water Mandate and IBLF supporting companies to identify watersheds of interest, including those where companies have existing (or past) water-focused collaborations or projects.

### **Stage Two**

For the second stage, work will largely entail building and populating the website in the high-priority catchments. The output, generally speaking, will be a flexible, interactive platform that can identify specific actors with shared interests around particular water-issues regionally. This can be a valuable tool for stakeholders seeking collaborators for that locale, but it will also reveal where more efforts and/or research is needed. Additional content and/or function the Hub may provide (pending the outcome of Stage One market research) includes:

- Data that can facilitate water efficiency benchmarking within and across industry sectors;
- A convening mechanism of specialist panels to gauge the viability of new technologies;
- A secure online data exchange platform; and
- A forum for catalyzing cross-sector dialogue and relationships.

### **Governance and Other issues**

The project team will assemble a multi-stakeholder Advisory Committee as a means of gathering input on its functionality and usefulness and to determine how to integrate with related initiatives and tools and to encourage uptake by companies and stakeholders. Project sponsors will have de facto representation on the Advisory Committee.

### **Project Partners and Funding**

The UN CEO Water Mandate<sup>2</sup> is the lead implementing collaborator and will “house” the Hub, within a co-existing project: the CEO Water Mandate-UNEP Water Capacity Building Platform. Project team members also consist of Deloitte,<sup>3</sup> which has committed in-kind, pro bono support including technical and advisory staff experienced with global water issues and strategies. In addition, the IBLF<sup>4</sup> brings extensive experience in project management, stakeholder engagement, knowledge of cross-sector collaborative teams, and access to a global business network to inform and advance many aspects of the project work plan. Lastly, the the German International Development Agency (GIZ, formerly GTZ) is providing both financial support and technical knowledge as a member of the project team. Presently, corporate project sponsors include SABMiller, Coca-Cola, Veolia, and Reed Elsevier, which have undertaken to support the project, conditioned on effective completion of each of the three stages.

The project is currently planned to be completed within two years, followed by two-three years of outreach, content management, and geographic expansion of the Hub.

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<sup>1</sup> In particular, this will include an analysis of how the Hub fits with other existing and developing initiatives and tools, the pressing gap the Hub fills, and how it leverages/links with the work of others.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/Environment/CEO\\_Water\\_Mandate/](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/Issues/Environment/CEO_Water_Mandate/)

<sup>3</sup> As used in this publication, “Deloitte” means Deloitte Consulting LLP, a subsidiary of Deloitte LLP. Please see [www.deloitte.com/us/about](http://www.deloitte.com/us/about) for a detailed description of the legal structure of Deloitte LLP and its subsidiaries.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.iblf.org/>