Talking the Same Talk:
Reaching a Shared Understanding of Key Terms

Sylvain Lhôte
Borealis, Water Project Co-Chair
World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)
What is the WBCSD?

A CEO-led coalition of some 200 companies with a shared commitment to Sustainable Development via the three pillars of economic growth, ecological balance and social progress.
The Business Case?

- **Risk reduction - License to operate**
  - Where business water use competes with meeting the basic needs of local communities

- **Operational efficiency - Increased production costs**
  - e.g. from decreasing availability and reliability of supply, declining quality, supply chain interruptions

- **Community & regulatory pressure + brand image**
  - e.g. highly public and emotionally charged disputes over a resource considered by many to be a human right

- **Health of employees + consumer markets**
  - Business prefers to operate in areas where its customers and employees are in good health

- **Access to capital**
  - Financial markets awakening to water-related risks

- **Creating new markets, products and services**
WBCSD Water Project – 10 years

- **Industry, Freshwater and Sustainable Development** (March 1998)
- **Partnerships in Practice** (April 2000)
- **Water for the Poor** (July 2002)
- **Water Facts and Trends** (Aug 2005)
- **Collaborative Actions for Sustainable Water Management** (Aug 2005)
- **Water Scenarios to 2025** (Aug 2006)
- **Sustain** (Jan 2008)
- **Sanitation Folder** (May 2008)
Why Sustainable Water Management Now?

- Increasing recognition of importance of water on the SD agenda - linked to energy and food security
- Emerging approaches and concepts – understand and define what responsible water use means in practice
- Urgent need for developing common language, clear principles and tools for achieving and demonstrating progress
- Opportunity to accelerate learning and implementation by working together
London Workshop - Working Together on a Common Agenda

Starting with …

✓ Mapping key initiatives concerned with sustainable water management and water stewardship

✓ **Sharing of terms and definitions towards a common language**
Common Language: Where to start?

- Water Stress
- Water Right
- Water Governance
- Water Neutrality
- Indirect Water Use
- Water Offsets
- Consumptive Water Use
- Virtual Water Trade
- Water Balance
- Supply Chain
- Water Stewardship
**Water Use**

Refers to *freshwater use* for human purposes. In many texts the term refers to *'water withdrawal'*, the classic indicator of water use. It can also refer to the sum of total water consumption and water pollution.

Hoekstra, 2008
Indirect Water Use

The water use behind the products consumed by a consumer or used as inputs by a producer (i.e. water used in the production and supply chain of the goods and services consumed; water used in a business's supply chain).

Hoekstra, 2008
Supply Chain

A network of facilities and distribution options that performs the functions of procurement of materials, transformation of these materials into intermediate and finished products, and the distribution of these finished products to customers. Supply chains exist in both service and manufacturing organizations [...] and can include operations such as marketing, distribution, planning, manufacturing, and purchasing.

Ganeshen & Harrison, 1995
Water Footprint

An indicator of water use that looks at both direct and indirect water use. The footprint of a good or service is the volume of freshwater used to produce the product, summed over the various steps of the production chain (...).

Hoekstra, 2008
Sustainable Water Management

Enough water, of sufficient quality, at the right time, and at the right place to meet the ongoing needs of this and future generations and of the ecosystem as a whole.

WBCSD, 2006
How you can contribute?

THANK YOU