



**WATER  
RESILIENCE  
COALITION**



# **Water Resilience Coalition** **2023 Impact Report** Turning Ambition into Action



An initiative in partnership with:



**PACIFIC  
INSTITUTE**

# DEAR WATER STEWARDS,

2023 was a pivotal year for the CEO-led Water Resilience Coalition (WRC), serving as an inflection point in our collective efforts. Aligned with the Coalition's mission to galvanize businesses for a positive water impact in 100 priority basins, supporting 3 billion people by 2030, we made substantial progress last year towards realizing these ambitious goals.

Since its launch in 2020, the Coalition has successfully engaged 35 global companies across various sectors, boasting a combined market capitalization of USD\$4.8 trillion and operational presence in over 140 countries. This powerful private sector momentum significantly bolsters our global endeavors to enhance and further advance water resilience.

A landmark 2023 achievement was the convening of the UN 2023 Water Conference—the first of its kind in almost 50 years. In March 2023, more than 7,000 global leaders assembled, resulting in substantial financial commitments from governments and multilaterals: billions of dollars dedicated to investing in solutions essential for rallying the world to action for water resiliency.

During the Conference the WRC, in collaboration with five leading corporations, the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and WaterEquity, launched the nearly USD\$140 million Water Access Fund committed to facilitating equitable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) initiative.

Additionally, the [Business Leaders' Open Call to Accelerate Water Action](#) was also launched to unite the business community and sustain this momentum. Since its March launch with 50 companies, an additional 20 companies have joined the call. With leadership on water resiliency emerging from the United Nations, governments globally, and corporations, we find ourselves amidst a historic opportunity.

As part of our roadmap to reach the WRC's goals by 2030, we have focused on four key strategies: collective action, innovation, impact measurement, and investment.

Our **collective action** projects actively enhance water resilience in water-stressed river basins across Asia, Africa, South America and North

America, encompassing approximately 700,000 hectares under active restoration to safeguard local water resources.

The WRC's innovative initiatives are creating ripples in the business community. The Business Leaders' Open Call to Accelerate Water Action and the UN Global Compact's Forward Faster Initiative have adopted our 2030 goal for positive water impact in the 100 Priority Basins. By expanding our engagement with more partners, we are amplifying our impact.

Our focus on **innovation and impact measurement** continues to be at the forefront of our joint efforts, with tools introduced in 2023 to measure Net Positive Water Impact, Nature-Based Solutions, and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

Acknowledging the paramount role of finances in driving results, the WRC launched its **investment portfolio** during the UN 2023 Water Conference, introducing innovative financial vehicles to propel our mission forward.



Sincerely,

**Sanda Ojiambo**

Assistant Secretary General  
and CEO, UN Global Compact  
WRC Co-Chair



**Christophe Beck**

Chairman and CEO, Ecolab  
WRC Co-Chair

Still, despite the billions pledged by governments and millions in corporate support at March's UN Water Conference, according to the United Nations, global efforts will need to quadruple to meet the water and sanitation targets set for 2030 through Sustainable Development Goal 6. This underscores the crucial role of private sector investment and commitment in advancing this work.

The WRC and its partners are taking deliberate and resolute steps to impact millions of people positively and secure water for individuals and businesses. Our collective achievements demonstrate the significant strides we can make when we unite for a common cause.

We thank all the WRC members for their unwavering commitment and invite others to join us in building water resilience throughout the 100 Priority Basins initiative.

COMPANIES OF THE WATER RESILIENCE COALITION



PARTNERS



About the Water Resilience Coalition

The Water Resilience Coalition (WRC) is an industry-driven, CEO-led initiative to address the global water crisis.

The Coalition aims to elevate action on mounting water stress and its connection to climate change to the top of the global corporate agenda.

WRC members work to preserve the world's freshwater resources through collective action and investment in water-stressed basins through ambitious, quantifiable goals.

We are an initiative of the CEO Water Mandate in partnership with the UN Global Compact and the Pacific Institute.

OUR AMBITION

- By 2030 the WRC will achieve positive water impact in 100 Priority Basins around the world and provide water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) to 300 million people.
- By 2050 the WRC members will achieve Net Positive Water Impact (NPWI) in the 100 Priority Basins around the world. NPWI is an enterprise ambition that contributes toward reducing water stress in its three dimensions: availability (quantity), quality and access. It ensures companies' contributions exceed their impacts on water stress in the same region. NPWI is a cornerstone concept for accelerating progress on Sustainable Development Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).



About the CEO Circle

The CEO Circle is the pinnacle of leadership and strategic vision for the WRC. Comprised of forward-thinking corporate leaders from diverse sectors, this visionary group plays a pivotal role in steering the activities of the WRC towards a water resilient future. The CEO Circle's collective expertise forms the backbone of the Coalition's initiatives, fostering collaboration and driving impactful change on a global scale.

2023 MEMBERS OF THE WATER RESILIENCE COALITION CEO CIRCLE

- 3M
- AB InBev
- Cargill
- Diageo
- Dow
- Ecolab
- Kurita
- Mars
- Microsoft
- Starbucks

# A SNAPSHOT OF 2023: Turning Ambition into Action

2023 was a transformative year for the Water Resilience Coalition (WRC). It was a year for turning ambition into action.

In 2022, the Coalition launched its ambitious 2030 strategy to build water resilience in 100 water-stressed basins, contribute to water security for 3 billion people, and enable equitable access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) for more than 300 million people. During 2023, the Coalition started to turn that ambition into quantifiable action—in companies' operations and supply chains and in basins around the world.

In March 2023, during the historic UN Water Conference in New York City, the WRC joined partners to launch the Business Leaders' Open Call for Accelerating Water Action. The Open Call members pledge to adopt the WRC ambition to achieve collective positive water impact in at least 100 priority water-stressed basins by 2030.

Six months later, during the UN General Assembly in September, the WRC's ambition was publicly announced as the foundation of the UN Global Compact's Forward Faster Water Resilience target, with 55 companies pledging to the initiative.

2023 laid the groundwork for collaborative efforts towards achieving the WRC's ambitious goals. With the momentum gained and a growing alliance of partners, the WRC is poised for an even more impactful year in 2024, catalyzing transformative change and steering the course towards a sustainable and water resilient future.

## COMPANY MOMENTUM:

7 NEW  
COMPANIES  
joined the WRC

USD\$4.8+  
TRILLION  
market capitalization

140+  
# countries where WRC  
members operate

USD\$150M  
committed investment in  
Water Equity microfinance  
fund for water and  
sanitation access

## BASIN ACTION:

21  
Collective Actions

2,100+  
projects registered in the  
Water Action Hub

Engagement in  
15  
Priority Basins

7  
Net Positive  
Water Impact pilots

## OUTCOMES AND IMPACT:

184M  
Water saved through  
operational efficiency  
(cubic m/year)

267M  
Water reclaimed/  
reused (cubic m/year)

5.8B  
Water replenished  
(cubic m/year)

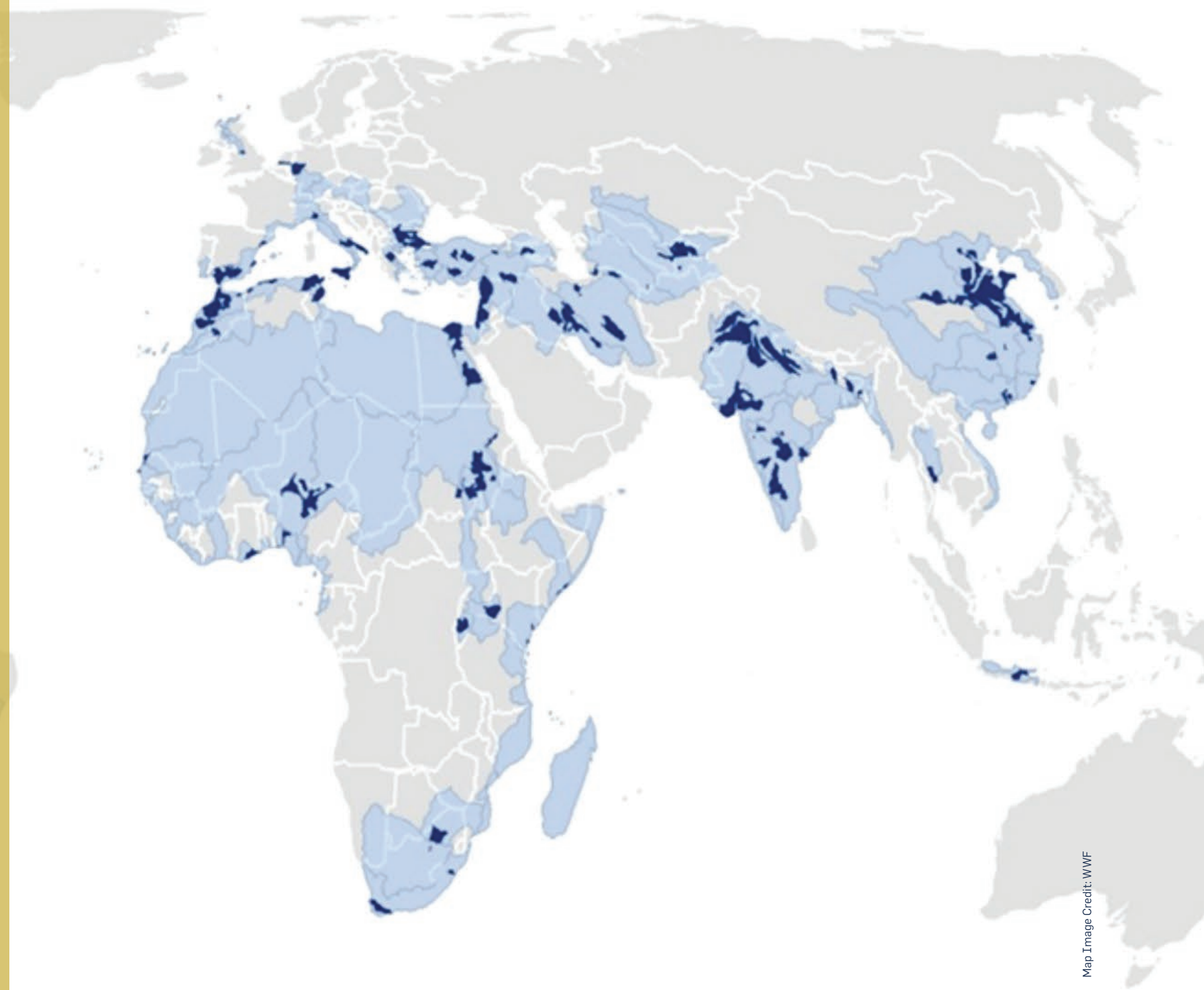
28%  
WRC members worked  
to remove pollutants  
beyond legal  
requirements

703K+  
Hectares conserved &  
restored

137M  
# of people gained  
access to WASH

\*Data collected from reports  
published by WRC member  
companies in 2021–2022.

# MEETING THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM: **LAUNCHING THE 100 PRIORITY BASINS**



# LAUNCH OF THE 100 PRIORITY BASINS



Cape Town, Guadalajara, California, and Dhaka all face water stress, but in different ways, affected by various geopolitical, regional and local issues. Each location is affected by site-specific conditions and activities within local watersheds, sometimes crossing state or national lines. For instance, water conservation in Colorado benefits those downstream in Arizona and Mexico. The global water crisis is accelerating fast and can be felt at the local level throughout the world as we have seen, with droughts and floods ever more present and with worse outcomes from year to year.

Corporate leaders are moving water to the top of their sustainability agendas and are starting to understand the need to mobilize resources to projects beyond internal efficiency. With this increase in understanding, investments that can help address basin-wide challenges are increasing. To support companies and help foster investments in basin solutions, especially through collective actions, in 2023, the WRC launched the 100 Priority Basins initiative to stimulate actions that would lead to a positive impact, with the aim to help close water gaps in quantity, quality and access while considering local context and challenges.

Today, most companies investing in water projects beyond their walls take most action through bilateral partnerships. At the local level, this can lead to

duplicated efforts and missed opportunities for synergies and catalytic impact. Two companies operating in the same basin may both expend resources conducting basin diagnostics, scoping interventions, and investing in bilateral projects, missing the opportunity to leverage their outcomes by acting together and sharing the benefits of improved basin resilience. With a coordinated effort, both companies can leverage the same project, improving the investment per outcome rate and

increasing the possibility of bringing other players to contribute, like local governments, other companies and development banks.

To meet its target of having a positive impact in 100 basins, the WRC first mapped the basins with the most acute stress and potential for collective actions. The list of priority basins was born from a collective effort with the Alliance

for Water Stewardship (AWS), Good Stuff International (GSI), the Pacific Institute, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), WaterAid, World Resources Institute (WRI) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF). The 100 Priority Basins have been selected using important criteria like water stress, climate change, biodiversity, GDP, population and supply chain clusters, and can now be accessed through the Water Action Hub. Companies interested in investing in water resilience will be able to geolocate active or

prospective projects to find interests shared with other businesses, reducing duplicative efforts and maximizing private resources. This type of open and shared data approach de-silos activities to drive action.

In 2024, the WRC will begin synthesizing data from companies, partners and third parties to produce open-source basin diagnostics to lower the barrier to entry for assessing local water risks and investing in solutions. Members of the WRC are currently in the process of pinpointing basins that align with their objectives and exploring opportunities for potential collaborations. The WRC is playing a facilitation role with companies to help foster these partnerships and reduce redundant work in these priority areas. In coming years, the WRC will monitor basin impacts of projects and basin monitoring will incorporate data from the WRC's innovative partnership with the European Space Agency.

## Spotlight on Basin Champions

A key part of catalyzing action and engaging the business sector in scaling existing initiatives is having leading companies that are great examples of water stewardship, with their senior leadership playing the role of champions, act as our water ambassadors. The coalition's goal is to have champions for every one of the 100 basins. Here is a list of our initial champions:

BASIN NAME	COMPANY	REPRESENTATIVE
California (USA)	Ecolab	Christophe Beck (CEO)
Godavari (India)	GSK	Lisa Martin (CPO)
Godavari (India)	Diageo	Debra Crew (CEO) & Local Country Director
Rio Lerma (Mexico)	Diageo	Debra Crew (CEO) & Local CEO
Upper Tana (Kenya)	Diageo	Debra Crew (CEO) & Jane Karuku (African CEO)
Mississippi (USA)	3M	Mike Roman (CEO)
São Paulo (Brazil)	ABInBev	Michel Doukeris (CEO) & Jean Jereissati (Ambev CEO)
Woman + Water Collaborative* (India)	GAP Inc.	Mark Breitbard (GAP Brand CEO)

\* This is a WASH Project and therefore does not have a basin assigned.

## Explore the 100 Basins



### THE PROBLEM

Need to align and prioritize actions from multiple stakeholders, from companies to NGOs, to maximize efforts to scale collective action potential and increase resilience in basins of great importance.

### THE SOLUTION

100  
BASINS  
IDENTIFIED

ENGAGEMENT  
IN  
15  
BASINS

8  
REPRESENTATIVES

250  
COMPANIES  
REPORTING ON  
PROJECTS IN  
THE WATER  
ACTION HUB

2,167  
PROJECTS/LOCATIONS OF  
INTEREST DOCUMENTED ON  
THE WATER ACTION HUB  
(including projects which are not  
part of the 100 Basins)

# IMPACT INVESTING: **PROVIDING WASH TO MILLIONS**



# Impact Investing: Providing WASH to Millions

With 1 in 4 people worldwide still without access to safely managed water and sanitation, massive investments in climate-resilient water systems are necessary. Today's gap between need and funding demonstrates that philanthropy alone is insufficient.

Investment in water systems must be sustainable and scalable. Despite this great need, trillions of dollars of potential private capital are immobilized from contributing to these solutions because of a lack of mechanisms to provide investors with reliable financial returns.

In 2023, the WRC launched its Investment Portfolio Strategy to increase private capital investments in water resilience by leveraging capital markets. At the UN 2023 Water Conference, the initiative's first collective corporate investment commitments were announced with five WRC companies (Starbucks, Ecolab, Gap Inc., Reckitt and DuPont), alongside the US International Development Finance Corporation, contributing to the intended USD\$150 million Water Equity microfinance fund for water and sanitation access. This first set of investment commitments has demonstrated the opportunity of the investment portfolio strategy to invest in water resilience through proven, market-based solutions to maximize social impact, generate financial returns and achieve WRC's collective action goals. The Water Equity Global Access Fund IV will finance safely managed water and sanitation for five million people across eight countries by 2025.

"The WRC Investment Portfolio strategy and the new and increased corporate investment commitments announced this year are demonstrating the power and impact that the capital markets can bring to our shared water challenges, and it is just the beginning," says WRC Senior Advisor Cheryl Hicks. "A multi-billion-dollar pipeline of investment opportunities in water resilience via capital market instruments has been identified by the WRC."

These resources will fund not only WASH access, but investments in nature-based solutions for



watershed health and upgrades to urban water infrastructure to improve system performance and build climate resilience. In 2024, the WRC looks to continue scaling up the Investment Portfolio Strategy with new investment opportunities and commitments.

## Read the fund announcement at the UN 2023 Water Conference



### THE PROBLEM

\$114 billion annual estimated financing gap to achieve SDG 6.

### THE SOLUTION

**5**  
**COMPANIES**  
**COMMITTED**  
**INVESTMENTS**  
**TO A**  
**USD\$150**  
**MILLION FUND**

**5**  
**MILLION**  
**PEOPLE TO**  
**GAIN WASH**  
**ACCESS**  
**BY 2025**

“As a global water leader who helps customers manage water in more than 170 countries, Ecolab believes that water stewardship and sustainable business growth must go hand in hand. Our investment in the WaterEquity Global Access Fund IV will help provide clean water and sanitation for millions of people, while also making the business case for sustainability by showing a positive return on investment and a positive impact.”

—**Emilio Tenuta**  
Senior Vice President, and  
Chief Sustainability Officer, Ecolab

**SDG ALIGNMENT**



# IMPLEMENTING **NET POSITIVE** **WATER** **IMPACT** GUIDANCE



# Implementing Net Positive Water Impact Guidance

All stakeholders in water-stressed basins are responsible for addressing the global water crisis, with private sector inputs being a critical component. To measure and monitor the positive impacts being achieved by companies at their direct operations and through collective action initiatives in water-stressed basins around the world, corporates require practical guidance and a means to collect and collate data.

Being able to verify Net Positive Water Impact (NPWI) at the basin level will give companies, who are invested in securing a water-resilient future for their

operations, and local stakeholders the validation needed to continue investing and directing their efforts to achieve the best possible results. To achieve this CEO-led ambition, companies require evidence-based and operationalizable guidance on how to collect data, implement actions and measure impacts on water availability, quality and accessibility at site and basin scale. The NPWI ambition can provide impact at scale, aligning with and using existing methodologies like the volumetric water benefit accounting (VWBA), science-based targets (SBTs), and the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) standard.

“ NPWI provides a very interesting methodology in that it clearly recognizes the three dimensions of water stress and emphasizes the need to act on all three dimensions in order to make water use in basins sustainable—including water accessibility as a fundamental pillar, at the same level of water availability and quality.”

—Lucie Gerber  
Water Lead Switzerland & Senior Sustainability Consultant, Quantis

In 2023, after three years of collaborative development, the WRC completed the first draft of the NPWI guidance. Seven WRC companies spent four months reviewing the guidance and internal tracking framework. Expert organizations Ceres, Ross Strategic and WaterAid reviewed the resources and provided detailed feedback to refine the guidance and framework.

A further six companies and organizations provided verbal feedback in virtual workshops and an in-person session at Stockholm World Water Week. Over

300 comments were submitted. The WRC integrated all feedback while maintaining scientific rigor. The final NPWI guidance is set to launch in September 2024.

The WRC is confident that NPWI is one of the leading long-term site-level ambitions for corporate water stewardship. As an ongoing commitment with third-party verified results, companies implementing this guidance should aim to achieve NPWI between 2030 and 2050 across their operations in the 100 Priority Basins.

## SDG ALIGNMENT



# Learn More About NPWI



## THE PROBLEM

Practical guidance and a means to collect and collate data are imperative to measure and monitor positive impacts in water-stressed basins around the world.

## THE SOLUTION

7  
PILOT  
TESTING  
WRC  
MEMBERS

3  
PILOT  
TESTING  
EXPERT  
PARTNERS

6  
WORKSHOP  
COMMENTATORS

4  
MONTH  
PILOT  
PERIOD

>300 COMMENTS

“ Ensuring a Net Positive Water Impact isn’t just a corporate responsibility; it’s an essential commitment to building long-term water resilience. By investing in initiatives that go beyond mere water conservation to actively replenishing and restoring water resources, companies not only safeguard the environment but also secure their own resilience in the face of water scarcity challenges. Embracing this ambition isn’t just about doing what’s right—it’s about thriving in a world where water is increasingly precious.”

—Dr. Gregg Brill  
Senior Researcher, Pacific Institute  
Technical Lead, CEO Water Mandate



# SCALING UP PROVEN COLLECTIVE ACTIONS IN INDIA: **WOMEN+WATER COLLABORATIVE**



# Scaling Up Proven Collective Actions in India: Women + Water Collaborative

Globally, 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Shocks, like severe droughts or floods, and stressors from the COVID-19 pandemic and the accelerating impacts of climate change have exacerbated this public health crisis and demonstrate the need for resilient water systems.

According to the Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) of UNICEF and the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 people in India—over 400 million people—lack access to safely managed drinking water, and 600 million people lack access to safely managed sanitation. Proven solutions to provide communities with safe and sanitary water exist and must be scaled up for resources and coordination to meet the magnitude of the problem.

To help address such a critical challenge in India, the WRC has worked to 1) identify water stewardship projects with proven success and 2) convene its members and partners to expand programs as a collective action, working with local organizations who provide on the ground perspectives to ensure program success.

As a result, in October 2023, the WRC and WaterAid, joined by Gap Inc., Cargill and GSK, launched the Women + Water Collaborative, a flagship corporate collective action program to improve access to clean water and sanitation in India. This is one of 21 collective action projects underway in 15 basins across Asia, Africa, South America and North America as part of the WRC's 2030 ambition to build water resilience across 100 Priority Basins.

The Collaborative builds on the success of the previous USAID Gap Inc. Women + Water Alliance, which empowered over 2.4 million people to improve their access to water and sanitation in India between 2017 and 2023. The initiative is landing in two important basins, the Godavari and the Krishna, with potential to positively impact over 5 million people. The 2024 goal is to increase the impact of the collaborative by aggregating more companies in its support. This is a new model for collective action on WASH that can scale to other regions in India and in other countries.

## SDG ALIGNMENT



“The Women + Water Collaborative builds on Gap Inc.’s history of designing innovative programs with nonprofits and the public sector, and then convening corporate partners to drive sustainability at scale. By joining across food, fashion and biopharma, we can drive meaningful impact in communities that fuel our global supply chains.”

—Dan Fibiger  
Head of Global Sustainability, Gap Inc.

“Water is essential for human health, as well as for the ongoing production of our medicines and vaccines. Yet climate change and nature loss are impacting water and health in locally specific ways—with some countries being more vulnerable. That’s why we are focused on water as part of our commitment to contributing to a nature positive world. We are proud to be a founding partner of the Women + Water Collaborative and the Basin Champion for the Godavari, working with communities to improve water quality, quantity and access in India, in turn helping to support local health.”

—Claire Lund  
VP Sustainability, GSK

“We know that reliable access to clean water and sanitation is essential for people and agriculture. Partnership and collective action are a critical pathway to help us deliver on this ambition and we’re pleased to be a participating company in the Women + Water Collaborative.”

—Michelle Grogg, Vice President of Corporate Responsibility, Cargill

# Explore the Women + Water Collaborative



## THE PROBLEM

1 in 3 people in India (over 400 million people) lack access to safely managed drinking water.  
46% of people in India (600 million people) lack access to safely managed sanitation.

## THE SOLUTION

COMPANIES FROM DIFFERENT SECTORS JOIN TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION IN THE SAME COMMUNITIES

ONE OF 21 COLLECTIVE ACTION PROJECTS IN 15 BASINS UNDERWAY ACROSS THE GLOBE

THIS MODEL FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION CAN SCALE TO OTHER REGIONS

“Women in rural India play a crucial role in water collection and use, but their participation in decision-making around water resources remains low. This program will leverage women’s leadership to build water resilience, improve water security, and enable equitable access to water and sanitation for communities across India.”

—André Villaça Ramalho  
Coordinator  
Water Resilience Coalition



# RAISING THE PROFILE OF WATER

## Events 2023

Our 2023 events spotlighted water on the global stage, starting with the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, and closing the year with COP28 in Dubai. In March 2023 the UN Water Conference in New York City was held for the first time in 47 years. During this historic event, the WRC launched the Business Leaders' Open Call for Accelerating Water Action. In September, at the UN General Assembly, the UN Global Compact announced 55 companies had pledged to the Forward Faster Water Resilience target. This target is directly aligned with the Water Resilience Coalition ambition to have positive water impact through collective action in 100 priority water basins by 2030.



IN 2023 THE WRC'S VOICE CONTRIBUTED TO SOME OF THE YEAR'S MOST IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL WATER FORA.

### Launches 2023

#### HIGH-LEVEL LAUNCH:

- Business Leaders' Open Call for Accelerating Action on Water (UN Water Conference)
- Joint Statement from the Global Water Stewardship Community (UN Water Conference)
- Release of 100 Priority Basins on Water Action Hub (UN Water Conference)
- Release updated Nature-Based Solutions Benefit Accounting Guidance (August)
- Launch Forward Faster Water Resilience Target (September 17)
- Launch Women + Water Collaborative (Press Release October 17)
- Launch California Water Resilience Initiative (Press Release October 11)



2023

**JANUARY  
16-20**  
WORLD  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM



**AUGUST  
20-24**  
STOCKHOLM  
WATER  
WEEK



**NOVEMBER 30-  
DECEMBER 12**  
COP28



**MARCH  
18-24**  
UN WATER  
CONFERENCE



**SEPTEMBER  
17-24**  
UN GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY





**CEO  
WATER  
MANDATE**

**WATER  
RESILIENCE  
COALITION**



**Join Our Commitment to Water Stewardship**  
[ceowatermandate.org](http://ceowatermandate.org)