

The Water Futures Partnership opens to new local and global partners

SABMiller, WWF and the German international development agency (GIZ) are inviting businesses, NGOs and other organisations to join the Water Futures Partnership, to help drive collective action to address some of the most pressing water risks in cities and watersheds around the world.

Established in 2009, the partnership today publishes its second report, detailing the progress made in identifying, assessing and beginning to address the challenges facing businesses, communities and the environment in watersheds in South Africa, Peru, Tanzania and Ukraine.

Andy Wales, SABMiller's head of sustainable development said: "Single actors cannot alone effectively mitigate the complex and often deeply-embedded causes of water risks. Our assessments show that the fundamental causes of many of our business-specific water risks are the same drivers of the water problems facing communities and ecosystems. We recognise that these challenges can only be addressed through multi-stakeholder collective action and openly invite other NGOs, donors and public sector agencies, who have a shared interest in the areas in which we are working, to join our partnership. It is only by working in a participatory way can we have an impact on improving water management for communities, environment and business."

The Water Futures Partnership was initiated by the three organisations to demonstrate the business case for private sector engagement in promoting the sustainable management of water resources.

The new report 'Water Futures – addressing shared water challenges through collaborative action' highlights the intension to expand of the partnership to include new partners and new collaboration countries – Colombia, Honduras, India and the USA. It also provides details of the actions that have been taken in the initial four partner countries to address water risk.

Some of the findings and resulting actions include:

George and Polokwane, South Africa - the water footprint assessment in South Africa identified two priority risk areas to be addressed: (1) risks associated municipal effluent treatment affecting the brewery at Polokwane and (2) vulnerabilities associated with SABMiller's agricultural supply chain, particularly the availability of water to hop farms in the dry Western Cape. More detailed





assessments of the latter identified climate change, the spread of thirsty invasive species and competition for water amongst users as drivers of risk to the SAB Ltd's hop farms.

Tanzania - the shortfall between the demands for water and the available water resources are likely to have very serious effects not only on SABMiller's operations but, more broadly, on the country's prosperity, people's health, and aquatic ecosystems. The partnership is developing plans to work with farmers in the upper catchment to reduce their impact on water resources, as well as working with the Dar es Salaam Municipality to reduce water leakage from the city's water and sewer network.

Ukraine – a business risk assessment identified wastewater discharge from the brewery as a potential risk to the local SABMiller business in Donetsk city, both in terms of operation and reputation. Poor municipal sewage infrastructure means that sewer collapse and subsequent pollution of the Kalmius River is a significant risk. The Kalmius runs through Donetsk city and so it was recognised that this risk is shared with the local community and environment. Amongst other things, the Water Futures Partnership is applying for funding to overhaul the municipal sewer, as well as joining with other industries to protect the Kalmius river from further degradation.

Dave Tickner, head of freshwater at WWF-UK said “This partnership is an example of how to use risk assessment approaches to encourage action for improved water resource management. As far as I know, it is one of just a few examples where a business is using the results of risk assessments to justify allocation of resources in order to tackle the most pressing water issues at the river basin scale. We are now in a position to work with other stakeholders to implement real mitigation actions and influence policy. The proof of success will be in what social, economic and environmental impacts we can achieve in the next months and years”.

Robin Farrington, Senior Advisor in International Water Policy and Infrastructure at GIZ says: “The Water Futures Partnership is pioneering new and exciting approaches to address water problems shared by public and private sector actors. We are proving that in a well-facilitated and transparent environment, businesses can form action-orientated partnerships with government, NGOs and donors, in an effort to pool resources to tackle what is likely to be the greatest challenge of the century: water security for all.”

