

# From Risk to Opportunity

**Driving Business Action for  
Corporate Water Stewardship**



**WATER  
RESILIENCE  
COALITION**



An initiative in partnership with:



**PACIFIC  
INSTITUTE**

By the end of 2024, the WRC had grown to 37 member companies, with US\$5 trillion in combined market capitalization and operations in more than 140 countries.

COMPANIES OF THE WATER RESILIENCE COALITION



PARTNERS



“Bayer’s mission is “Health for all, Hunger for none.” Without water, that mission is futile. Caring for and feeding the planet demands sufficient freshwater resources. And as the planet gets warmer, those resources are under threat. As a life sciences company, with energy and water-intensive operations, we’re acutely aware of our responsibility to address the water crisis. And we’re committed to supporting water security in a way that promotes both health and nutrition.”  
**Bill Anderson**  
CEO, Bayer

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

The Water Resilience Coalition is a convener and strategic enabler that brings together companies, NGOs, and public actors to foster collaboration, provide technical guidance, and scale collective action. The outcomes presented in this report reflect the self-reported impact of member companies and implementation partners.

OUR AMBITION

By 2030 the WRC aims to 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 aim to achieve Net Positive Water Impact (NPWI) in the 100 Priority Basins around the world. NPWI is an enterprise ambition that contributes to 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).

INVESTMENT

In 2023 the WRC launched its investment portfolio to increase private capital investments in water resilience by leveraging capital markets. The WRC has identified a multi-billion-dollar pipeline of investment opportunities for member companies to take action. The portfolio features impact investment funds aligned with the WRC ambition of positive water impact across 100 priority basins via investment themes such as WASH water resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions (NBS).

2024 LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The WRC Leadership Committee consists of member companies that provide strategic vision and leadership, driving global collaboration and impactful change.

- 3M
- AB InBev
- Cargill
- Diageo
- DP World
- Ecolab
- Mars
- Microsoft
- Starbucks





# Dear Water Stewards,

2024 marked a significant year for the Water Resilience Coalition (WRC). Founded in 2020 and guided by CEOs of global companies, the WRC has established a strong foundation for change. By 2030, our ambitious goals are to achieve positive water impact in over 100 water-stressed basins that support over 3 billion people and enable equitable and resilient water access, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) for over 300 million people.

**Growth at a Glance:**

- WRC grew to 37 members
- Now representing over \$5 trillion in market capitalization
- With operations in 140 countries
- Over 70% of members are engaged in collective action projects across 24 basins in 9 countries.

As detailed in this report, these efforts have led to significant, measurable impacts for both the environment and local communities.

This progress underscores a powerful truth: the opportunity to deliver business growth while building water resilience has never been stronger. Companies excelling in water stewardship have the potential to enhance operational resilience, mitigate risks, and build stronger reputations, ensuring long-term business success while fostering water resilience in their

communities. The WRC believes bold, collective private sector action is vital – and a core business imperative – for addressing the global water crisis.

Our success is collaborative, but we need to move Forward Faster. The WRC is well-positioned to take advantage of the transformative power of new technology like AI. By leveraging advanced data analytics, AI-driven water monitoring, and satellite-based assessments of water stress, we are enabling our members to implement innovative, scalable solutions efficiently.

As we look to the future, we are committed to our 2030 Ambition and have developed strategies to achieve them. Our efforts will focus on four key pathways: Recruitment, Basin Activation, AI & Innovation, and Water Resilience Financing. These strategies are actively championed by leading WRC member companies to ensure consistent progress. We are deeply inspired by the new energy and efficiency these focused efforts will bring to the WRC.

We invite companies that have not yet joined the Water Resilience Coalition to join us in these efforts to deliver water resilience for all. To our current members, we thank you and look forward to strengthening our commitments and delivering our ambitions together.



Sincerely,  
**Sanda Ojiambo**  
Assistant Secretary-General  
and CEO, UN Global Compact  
WRC Co-Chair



**Christophe Beck**  
Chairman and CEO, Ecolab  
WRC Co-Chair





# A Snapshot of WRC Member Companies' 2024 Impact



## COMPANY MOMENTUM

- **3 NEW COMPANIES** joined the WRC
- **37 TOTAL** member companies
- **US \$5+ TRILLION** in market capitalization
- **140 COUNTRIES** operational footprint of WRC member companies



## BASIN ACTION

- **24 COLLECTIVE ACTION PROJECTS** underway
- **9 COUNTRIES** with Active Collective Action Projects
- **71% OF MEMBER COMPANIES** Engaged in Collective Actions



## IMPACT OF THE WATER ACTION HUB (Since Launch)

- **7,307 LOCATIONS** monitored
- **1,737 ORGANIZATIONS** participating
- **2,214 PROJECTS** registered



## MEMBER COMPANY ACTION ACROSS OPERATIONS

These figures are self-reported by WRC member companies and partners, based on publicly available sustainability reports and direct submissions. While efforts are made to ensure consistency, methodologies and definitions may vary by company or region:

- **394.9M m³/year:** Water Saved Through Operational Efficiency
- **1B m³/year:** Water Reclaimed/Reused
- **2.2B m³/year:** Water Replenished
- **51% of Member Companies:** On Track with Pollutants Removal Targets
- **Ecosystems Conserved and Restored:** 1.2 Million Hectares
- **208.3 Million People Reached** by WASH Programs of WRC Members\*



## OUTREACH

- **4,900 Media Mentions** (Data from Meltwater, CEO Water Mandate and Water Resilience Coalition)
- **40+ Speaking Engagements**



## IMPACT INVESTING

- **US \$1.7 BILLION** in investment opportunities for water resilience.



“We at Anthesis were inspired to join the WRC alongside this network of ambitious corporate water peers—collaborating and engaging with the frameworks at the leading edge of water stewardship best practices. We are walking the talk of accelerating a nature positive future by leveraging our voice and partnerships to deliver positive outcomes for stewarding our planet’s finite freshwater resources.”

STUART MCLACHLAN, CEO  
ANTHESIS GROUP

\*WASH impact data publicly reported by WRC member companies





# The Business Case: Why Companies Are Acting

**Operational risks** are growing as water scarcity threatens supply chains and disrupts production, leading to costly downtime and inefficiencies. According to the World Resources Institute, the annual economic losses attributed to water risks are \$30 billion US. The CDP estimates the industrial disruption due to water scarcity is \$35 billion US annually. The risk of disease outbreaks due to poor water and hygiene conditions is an increasing concern for businesses, as it directly impacts workforce health and productivity. Companies recognize that ensuring access to WASH is not just a corporate responsibility but a strategic necessity to maintain operations and protect employees. WRC member companies confirm that access to WASH services for employees and supply chain workers is critical to their water resilience goals – and have set the collective 2030 ambition to ensure resilient WASH access for 300 million people, with a focus on communities within the WRC’s 100 priority water-stressed basins.

**Financial risks** further compound the issue, with rising water costs, potential stranded assets and long-term economic uncertainty affecting profitability. In its report High and Dry: Climate Change, Water, and the Economy, the World Bank highlights that without improved water-management practices, certain regions could experience a decline in GDP growth rates by up to 6% by 2050 due to water-related impacts on agriculture, health and incomes.

**Reputational risks** mount as consumers, investors and stakeholders increasingly demand sustainable water management. Companies that fail to act may see diminished brand trust, reduced market competitiveness and even investor divestment.

“At Gap Inc., we believe that collective action is essential to solve the water crisis and bridge the climate gap. As a founding member of the Water Resilience Coalition, we are working together to build resilient communities, empower five million people with access to safe water, and achieve our 2050 goal of net positive water impact in our value chain.”

SALLY GILLIGAN,  
CHIEF SUPPLY CHAIN OFFICER, GAP INC.

**The Water Resilience Coalition can help companies reduce risks and strengthen their water resilience strategies by:**

**Safeguarding business continuity through access to WASH:** To accelerate WASH access in geographies and communities where safe WASH is at risk, companies are joining forces to scale impact via WASH collective action projects. WRC member companies launched a WASH collective action project, the Women + Water Collaborative, in India in 2023, and in 2024 three WASH collective action projects were initiated in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Nigeria.

The CEO Water Mandate’s initiative WASH4Work is a tool for companies that want to act on WASH. In 2024, 238 companies worldwide signed WASH4Work’s #WASHpledge. This year’s commitments benefit an estimated:

- 269,000 employees across their direct operations
- One million supply chain workers

**Mobilizing finance to accelerate water resilience:** By joining the WRC, companies gain visibility into a curated portfolio of investment opportunities that deliver both positive water impact and business value through financial returns. Members gain access to a growing portfolio of innovative financing mechanisms, strategic partnerships and collaborative investment projects—all designed to channel greater private sector finance into high-impact water resilience solutions. By investing in water as an asset class rather than relying solely on philanthropy, companies can strengthen their long-term water security, enhance business resilience and drive measurable, sustainable outcomes.

The WRC supports companies in achieving their water targets by curating **collective action opportunities**, coordinating basin-level collaboration, and aligning stakeholders. The Coalition brings together stakeholders, companies, NGOs and the public sector through neutral collective action management collaboratives to foster partnerships and mutual support. It also helps reduce shared water risks in priority basins by creating a common goal and a clear pathway, where investments are optimized to significantly scale positive impact and truly change basin conditions.





# The Power of Highly Coordinated Collective Action at Basin Level

New WRC Basin Collaborative Model shifts fragmented efforts on water into new coordinated model of basin-wide collective action.

While watershed initiatives have often made progress with stakeholders working individually, impact can be scaled through collaboration across sectors and silos. Recognizing this, the WRC developed a new collaborative model to drive coordinated, basin-wide collective action and catalyze systemic change, led by the private sector.

## **The WRC Basin Collaborative Model:**

The WRC unites corporate leaders committed to improving water resilience across 100 Priority Basins—those identified as some of the world's most water-stressed basins by 2030.

## **The WRC's basin collaborative model provides:**

- **Infrastructure and Coordination Support:** Key infrastructure and services to coordinate and scale collective action in water-stressed basins.
- **Scalable, Adaptable Framework:** A structured governance model and data-driven investment strategies that can be applied across different regions while respecting local needs.
- **Strategic Investment Opportunities:** Mobilization of corporate investment into high-impact, scalable water solutions tailored to specific basin conditions.
- **Clear Objectives and Metrics:** Defined goals, a curated project portfolio and standardized metrics to track progress.
- **Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Engagement and alignment of governments, NGOs, companies and communities around shared water resilience goals.

## **FROM PILOTING TO SCALING:**

**Initial successes in basin collaboratives expanding to other high-risk basins around the world**

Building on momentum in basins across India, Mexico and the United States, the WRC is actively expanding the Basin Collaborative Model to additional high-risk basins—all in collaboration with local and global partners.

## **To accelerate adoption, the WRC has prioritized:**

- Expanding the Basin Collaborative Model portfolio to include additional high-priority basins around the globe.
- Enhancing the Water Action Hub, our digital tracking system, to improve data transparency, basin monitoring and corporate accountability.
- Bridging corporate capital with public funding to scale investment in nature-based solutions, infrastructure and community water access.

## **COMPANIES' ROLE IN BASIN-LEVEL COLLECTIVE ACTION**

By investing in the WRC's collective action model, companies mitigate their own water risks and play a catalytic role in unlocking public funding—typically covering 20% of total project needs and de-risking larger government and multilateral investment.

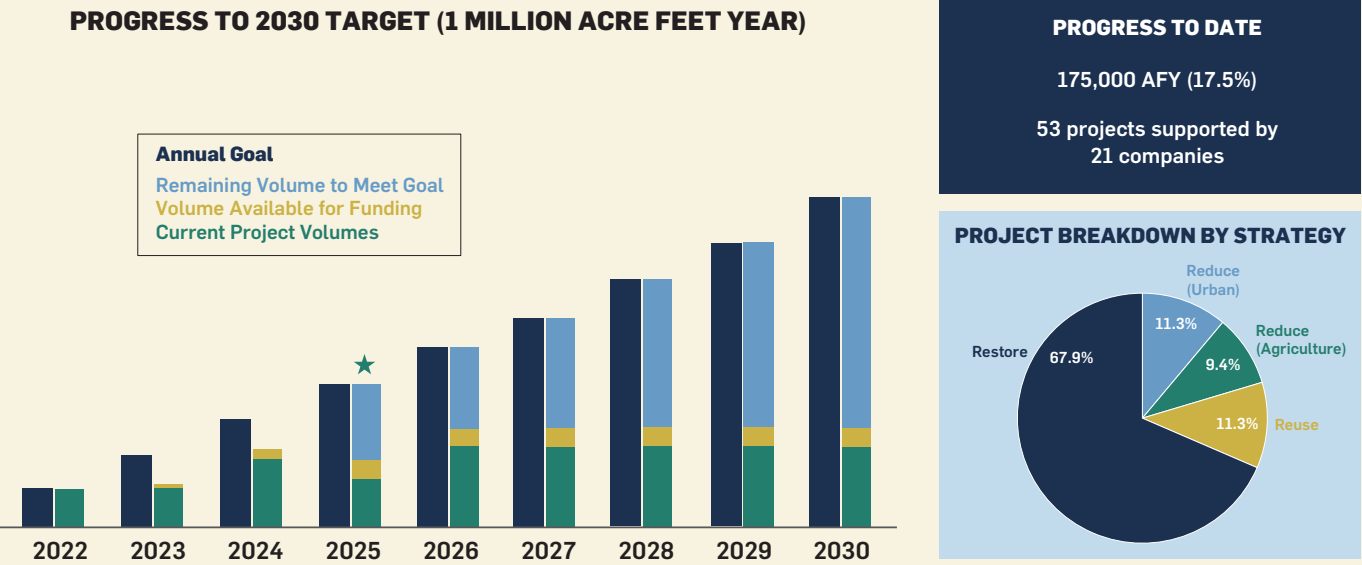


HERE IS HOW THIS MODEL IS ALREADY BEING APPLIED IN THE UNITED STATES:

The **Mississippi River Water Action Collaborative (MRWAC)** is a network focused on large-scale water stewardship solutions in the Mississippi River Basin which spans 31 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces. The MRWAC aims to implement projects across 9.7 million hectares by 2035, addressing 20% of the basin's water challenges while unlocking funding for the remaining 80%.

The **California Water Resilience Initiative (CWRI)** is a corporate-driven initiative that responds to California state scientists' predictions of a looming 10% water supply gap by 2040. The CWRI is working to accelerate action across sectors and ignite public-private partnerships to help close the gap. With a target to provide 1.2 trillion liters of annual water benefits by 2030, by 2025, the CWRI has achieved 17% of this goal through 53 projects supported by 21 companies.

PROGRESS TO CWRI 2030 TARGET





# Harnessing the Power of Technology & AI

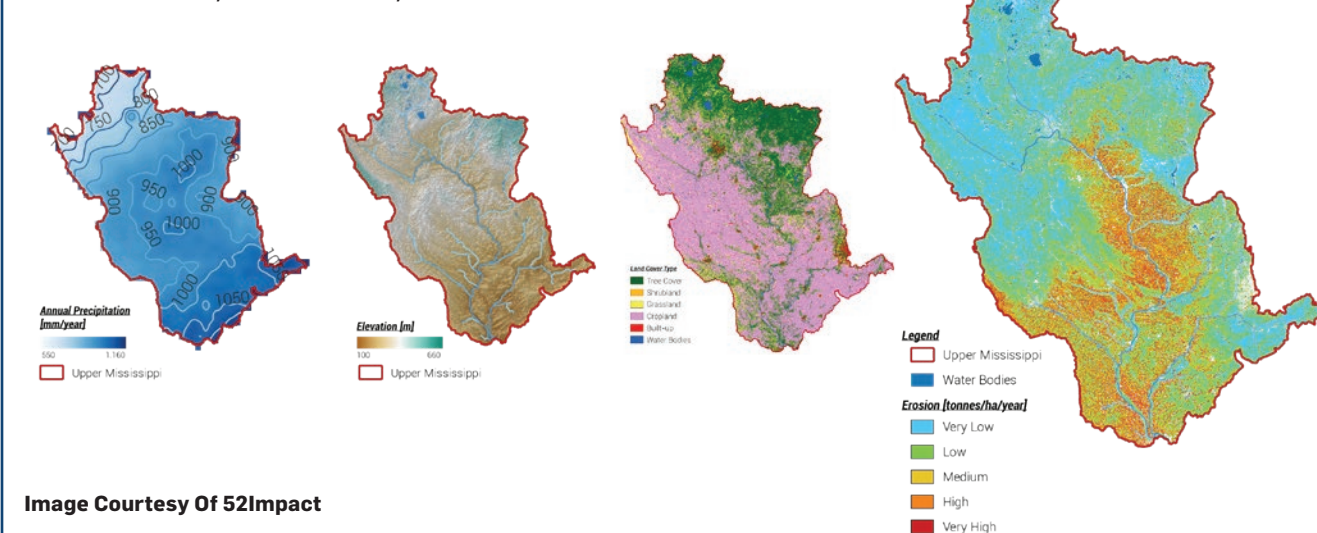
WRC's monitoring system offers an unprecedented view of water resilience—from space.

The WRC is taking bold steps to leverage technology and Artificial Intelligence to monitor large-scale changes in water basin conditions around the world.

Through an innovative digital monitoring system that harnesses satellite imaging, AI-driven analytics and earth observation data provide an unprecedented view of water conditions. The system monitors the three dimensions of NPWI: water quantity, water quality and WASH access conditions across the world's most water-stressed basins.

Developed in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA), NASA, 52impact, Ecolab and Global Water Challenge, the monitoring system enables businesses, policymakers and local stakeholders to make data-driven decisions that accelerate water resilience. By aggregating impacts from WRC company initiatives and other basin interventions, this system provides actionable insights to ensure effective water stewardship at scale.

## PRECIPITATION, LAND COVER, AND EROSION IN THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI



The monitoring system is part of the Water Action Hub, a network of digital water stewardship tools which integrates three main elements:

- **A Data-Based Foundation for Action** – A baseline diagnostic process identifies the current stress level of the basin, shared water challenges and key stakeholders. Then, recommendations are determined and used to understand the types of solutions needed to improve basin conditions.
- **Digital Twins** – In 2024, the WRC began scoping pilot projects on 'Digital Twins', virtual models of watersheds that simulate real-time water system dynamics, through a partnership with 52impact. This approach aims to improve decision-making, risk prediction, and cross-sector coordination.
- **Space Technology for Basin Monitoring** – Using AI and algorithms to interpret satellite imagery, the monitoring system creates reliable data sets that document basin changes over time. For example, the WRC is advancing WASH outcome monitoring using automated methods. This approach can provide more regular updates and basin-specific WASH numbers compared with current country level data, helping to identify areas with specific needs within a country.

## FIND OUT MORE



From 2023 through 2024, the partnership between ESA and the CEO Water Mandate/ Water Resilience Coalition achieved several milestones leveraging space technologies and innovative digital tools for advancing water resilience:

- **Global Reach:** Projects span 13 countries, including Colombia, India, Kenya, Morocco and the United States.
- **Funding Support:** ESA allocated €1.5 million (approximately \$ 1.62 US million) to fund eight feasibility studies using satellite data and digital monitoring tools to create detailed diagnostics and impact assessments for selected basins.
- **Corporate Engagement:** WRC member companies actively contributed to pilot projects, aligning efforts with NPWI monitoring goals.
- **Pilot Project Partners:** Eight European companies participated in pilot projects, showcasing scalable solutions.

Throughout 2025, the Water Resilience Coalition will continue expanding into innovative projects focused on AI and space-based monitoring.

Now is the time for forward-thinking companies to join us and lead the future of water resilience.

“At HEINEKEN we believe that collaboration is critical for water security, now and in the future. This is why collective action is at the heart of our approach to water in our operations, communities and value chain. Using satellite monitoring and local insights, we have determined that 41 of our operational sites are in water stressed areas, and as of the end of 2024, we had started projects in 36 of them to replenish those critical watersheds – from reforestation and wetland restoration to improved irrigation and community water access. We also had 3 new sites in Indonesia becoming fully water balanced through collective action.”

SONIA THIMMIAH, HEINEKEN, SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY





**CEO  
WATER  
MANDATE**

**WATER  
RESILIENCE  
COALITION**



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