WWF and IKEA are working together on forests, cotton, water and climate to protect landscapes and enhance biodiversity.



FACT SHEET: WATER

Promoting water stewardship in the supply chain

Freshwater ecosystems are vitally important for people and our planet: they provide us with drinking water, food and income. They also control floods and soil erosion, and deliver other important ecosystem services, such as water supply for growing crops, manufacturing, energy and transport. But mounting water crises threaten the health of our ecosystems and are having profound impacts on our society and economies.

According to UN data, 2.3 billion people live in water-stressed countries and 20% of river basins are suffering from water scarcity. Accelerating climate change will only intensify this situation. Moreover, according to WWF's Living Planet Report 2020, freshwater biodiversity has declined by 84% since 1970.

Since 2014, WWF and IKEA have been working together to address water challenges by improving the way in which freshwater use is managed, both within the IKEA supply chain and beyond. The WWF and IKEA partnership aims to improve the quality of water basins as well as restore important rivers in Turkey and India, through technology-driven interventions and multi-stakeholder initiatives. We also undertake awareness-raising activities about sustainable water use within the IKEA supply chain, and want to better understand the impacts on water from the company's global operations to help develop solutions.

Between 2019 and 2020, we assessed water risks in each of the river basins where 1,268 global IKEA suppliers are located. We developed recommendations for action plans to mitigate those risks and build resilience against water crises.

WHAT WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

- Assess the IKEA water dependency in its value chain, the impacts of its operations, data accessibility and monitoring system to help create a sustainable supply chain approach
- Set up contextual water targets, by identifying and prioritizing key water issues with supplier sites located in different river basins
- Explore and develop science-based targets for water for IKEA suppliers
- Train IKEA staff and suppliers on water risks and provide information on the latest global water situation, water stewardship tools and good water management practices
- Conduct further water risk assessments in the IKEA supply chain including agricultural and food commodities to get a better understanding of their impact on water basins



FACT SHEET: WATER

Our current work builds on these achievements, while also exploring new directions that contribute to healthy water flows and improve biodiversity in priority river basins. Through a multi-stakeholder approach, we address the use of water in IKEA supply chain operations, develop meaningful local water targets and undertake further research into water risks affecting the value chain.



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WHAT WE'RE DOING

Supporting the development of a sustainable corporate water strategy

WWF provides scientific insight and guidance on how IKEA could further define the concept of "water positive" in its strategy and apply this to its business operations. For IKEA, becoming "water positive" can mean using water as efficiently as possible in its operations, and promoting good water stewardship throughout and beyond its own business. WWF works with IKEA on an integrated approach that addresses water basin risks and impacts, systematically assessing freshwater related issues starting with immediate IKEA suppliers. We evaluate water data, and advise on a monitoring and evaluation system that improves the transparency and data accessibility which will enable better strategic decision making.

Developing contextual water targets

We're setting time-bound objectives for IKEA operations that address both the company's water performance and the water conditions in specific river basins. These targets draw on our assessment of basin water risks and operational water risks from 2019-2020 as well as the latest data from the IKEA supply chain. We're providing recommendations to address risks in hotspot areas and develop meaningful water targets taking the complexities of the river basins into account. This work will serve as a stepping stone toward setting science-based corporate targets to tackle water risks.

PROJECT LOCATION

WWF is working on a global scale with Inter IKEA on water impact reduction and sustainable water management of the IKEA supply chain.



Through a multi-stakeholder approach, we address the use of water in IKEA supply chain operations, develop meaningful local water targets and undertake further research into water risks affecting the value chain.

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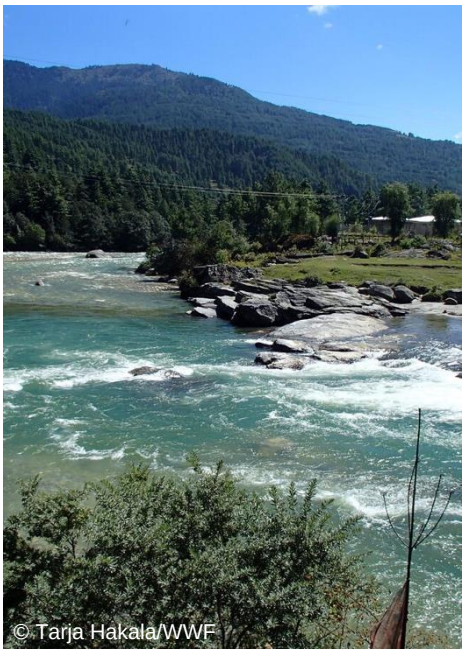
FACT SHEET: WATER

Enhancing understanding of science-based targets for water

Just as businesses like IKEA have been setting targets to reduce their climate impacts in line with what science says is required, science-based targets could provide a clear pathway for companies to reduce their impacts on freshwater ecosystems and contribute their fair share to maintaining or restoring river basin sustainability. Though the methodology and guidelines are still under development, we're building an understanding of the procedures and resources needed to set science-based targets for water. We participate in meetings with the Science Based Targets Network and other stakeholders who are piloting this methodology to keep abreast of the latest developments, and learn from other projects how science-based targets for water can be applied in the context of the IKEA supply chain.

Preparing for assessing water risks of commodities

Assessing water risks related to commodities and raw materials used in the IKEA supply chain is a key part of the work we're undertaking together. Clarifying data requirements, understanding current data availability and identifying how to fill data gaps are all part of this effort.



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FACT SHEET: WATER



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Water stewardship in the Noyyal Bhavani river basins: India

The Noyyal and Bhavani rivers originate from the Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot in India which hosts several biosphere reserves, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. These forests are rich in flora and fauna and home to the country's largest population of Asian elephants and Bengal tigers. Both rivers are critical to secure water supply for the region. But they are under increasing pressure from threats including climate change, the construction of dams, pollution and invasive species.

Since 2018, WWF and IKEA have been collaborating with partners to secure healthy, clean ecosystems for the Noyyal and Bhavani rivers.
In the previous phase of the partnership, research projects examined water challenges and risks in the various zones of both river basins. Based on the findings, we're now testing science-based pilot projects to inform policymakers and demonstrate better river basin management. The partnership also continues to support the conservation and restoration of freshwater ecosystems within these crucial river basins.

WHAT WE'RE DOING

Securing water, protecting landscapes

We're promoting a landscape approach to river basin management and decision-making. This means bringing together multiple stakeholders in a long-term collaboration to secure a sustainable future for the river basin. As a first

WHAT WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

- Assess environmental interactions and trade-offs between water users and sectors in representative zones of the Bhavani and Noyyal river basins
- Demonstrate "model" projects that lead to healthy river ecosystems and secure water availability
- Develop a shared public policy vision that leads to sustainable river basin management policies being adopted and implemented



FACT SHEET: WATER

step, we've mapped out water resources and water needs within the basins, and developed possible future water scenarios. These will help us and our partners to create an integrated management plan to ensure there's enough clean water available for people and nature.

Preliminary research indicates that invasive species put more pressure on both rivers and groundwater compared to native grassland, while climate change is increasingly disrupting the entire water balance. In close collaboration with the government forest department, local communities and regional NGOs, we're creating a management plan for the upstream regions to address these and other issues. Through our participation in an ecological monitoring committee within the Madras High Court, we advocate for better management of invasive species and forested catchments, which are important sources of water for the human population and aquatic ecosystems.

Another major challenge is the presence of several hydropower dams in the Moyar River. These have serious impacts on aquatic ecosystems and fisheries in the region, so we're developing a sustainable hydropower policy for these rivers. We're also working with district wetland management committees and local communities to secure the long-term conservation of four wetlands covering an area of 285 hectares.

Promoting sustainable business

The Noyyal basin, particularly the cities of Tiruppur and Coimbatore, is a major textile hub, responsible for 90% of India's cotton textile exports. Around 29,000 factories are involved in the various stages of textile production in the region, and the textile and garment industry is crucial to the economy and people's livelihoods.

We're engaging textile factories to become water stewards, consuming water in a way that is environmentally sustainable, socially equitable and economically beneficial. So far, we've conducted audits in more than 40 textile factories, and developed plans to improve their use of energy, water, chemicals and materials. Additionally, the partnership helps textile businesses to access financial support, including through credit schemes for installing clean technologies, and by developing bankable nature solutions – financially viable projects that support the development of more climate-resilient and sustainable landscapes and economies.

Promoting sustainable and regenerative agriculture

Intensive water use for agriculture is seriously affecting the Bhavani basin. Under the WWF and IKEA partnership, we're supporting communities to adopt sustainable agricultural management practices and making sure these are widely disseminated. This ranges from improving crop and irrigation patterns to

PROJECT LOCATION





FACT SHEET: WATER

introducing innovative technologies and engaging local communities in watershed management activities. We also support local water conservation systems – including through public awareness campaigns on avoiding overexploitation of groundwater resources, and monitoring changes in groundwater levels.

Strengthening policy

WWF and IKEA work together to strengthen policies and governance structures at both state and national level. By demonstrating the positive impacts of science-based actions, we want to improve governmental landscape planning. At the same time, we are constantly monitoring the effectiveness of various policies and laws that manage these catchments to see how and where improvements are needed. We are working to develop policies for the large-scale removal of invasive species and restoration of natural grasslands, and to avoid damaging environmental impacts from hydropower operations in the Moyar and Bhavani rivers.

As part of our advocacy work in the textile sector, we directly engage with the Central Pollution Control Board to help develop regulatory standards and ensure their national implementation. We're also supporting a joint vision for a sustainable textile sector in India and creating a national sustainability platform with key industry stakeholders.

Promoting community participation

We promote collective action and participation through greater transparency, dialogue and public engagement. Conservation plans and decisions involve all interested parties living around a water basin.

In Tiruppur city in Tamil Nadu, we're engaging with municipal authorities in a multistakeholder working group to address the problem of urban pollution. In each of our four priority wetlands, we're setting up community-based groups who will act as a watchdog to monitor the health of these ecosystems. To support this process and raise awareness among citizens, we're designing science-based community monitoring systems.



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FACT SHEET: WATER



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Sustaining water for biodiversity, communities and business: Turkey

The Büyük Menderes river basin is vitally important for people, nature and the economy. It meets the daily needs of 2.5 million people, and provides water for agriculture, industry, tourism and modern cities. The river basin is an important textile hub, responsible for 60% of Turkey's textile exports, and is also the country's second-largest cotton production region. At the same time, it's home to rich habitats like forests, maquis shrublands and wetlands, including 10 legally protected areas.

However, the basin has been suffering from water stress due to increasing water withdrawals and climate change. Scientific projections indicate that the seasonal water availability will decrease by 50% by the end of this century. In addition, agricultural, municipal and industrial wastewater discharges are adversely affecting water quality, while pollution levels are damaging the entire river ecosystem. All these challenges pose increasing risks for people and nature.

Since 2019, WWF and IKEA have been working with other stakeholders, including public, private sector and civil society partners in the Buyuk Menderes basin to address water risks and implement a model of sustainable water use that can serve as an example for other river basins in Turkey. In the agriculture sector, we've been working together to improve water efficiency and introduce modern irrigation methods. With textile companies, we've been supporting cleaner production practices that reduce water, chemical and energy use.

WHAT WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE BY 2025

- Create financial mechanisms to support textile producers to invest in cleaner production practices, so that cleaner production becomes the norm in the Turkish textile sector
- Demonstrate water stewardship in cotton production, including regenerative agriculture and modern irrigation pilot projects to enhance water and soil management
- Establish a framework for planning, managing and monitoring water-related issues at a landscape level in the Büyük Menderes basin



FACT SHEET: WATER

These efforts led to the launch of a regional public grant programme, with six textile companies in the basin receiving US$300,000 to invest in cleaner production, saving 570,000m^3 of water and 200,000kWh of energy.

We've also carried out studies and raised public awareness of the importance of freshwater ecosystems and the services they provide, including in the Bafa Lake and the Buyuk Menderes Delta. In early 2021, we launched the virtual Journey of Water – a first-of-its-kind awareness campaign in Turkey, taking 5 million followers and web visitors on a virtual tour of the Buyuk Menderes River from source to sea.



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WHAT WE'RE DOING

Promoting best practice in textile production

Enterprises in the textile dyeing industry can save money and reduce their environmental footprint through cleaner production practices – but need investment to do so. The 50 dye-houses in the Buyuk Menderes basin could save an estimated US$10 million per year, as well as reducing their water, chemical and energy use, through a variety of interventions, from phasing out harmful chemicals and improving water management, to installing more efficient equipment and infrastructure. We're facilitating a dialogue between Turkish ministries, exporters associations, chambers of industry and financial institutions to create financial mechanisms for cleaner production investments.

PROJECT LOCATION







FACT SHEET: WATER

Increasing sustainable textile supply chains

Under the WWF and IKEA partnership, we're guiding and supporting cotton farmers to improve the quantity and quality of water and protect biodiversity on farmland. A pilot project on regenerative agriculture on 7.9 hectares of farmland that follow the Better Cotton standard aims to improve soil quality and increase the resilience of cotton production. The outcomes of the project will be used to improve agricultural public policies and programmes and generate financial and technical support for farmers.

Through the Cotton Water Stewardship Committee, we're facilitating a modern irrigation project involving 17 cotton farmers on 95 hectares. We're expecting this project will lead to 50% savings in irrigated water use, 20% savings in input costs, and a 10kg increase in yield per hectare. With the Committee, we're advocating for national and regional decision-makers to adopt this modern irrigation approach.

For companies that want to improve their supply chain, traceability and transparency is key. We're helping establish mechanisms that trace the cotton all the way up from the farm to the end textile product. We help facilitate dialogues between public and private stakeholders with the aim to develop sustainable business models.

Applying a landscape approach in water management

The decline in water quantity and quality is leading to habitat and biodiversity loss in Bafa Lake and the Buyuk Menderes Delta, identified as Key Biodiversity Areas. This is mainly caused by changes in land use and intensive industrial and agricultural practices. The problem is exacerbated by a lack of coordination between the different government institutions responsible for the management of water basins.

WWF and IKEA are facilitating a multistakeholder process to enhance water management in Key Biodiversity Areas. Adopting a landscape approach can benefit biodiversity and support livelihoods including agriculture, ecotourism and sustainable fisheries. Ultimately, we want to see public institutions overcome the current fragmented governance system and adopt an integrated approach to water management in the Buyuk Menderes basin.



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