



UN
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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

WEFE Nexus: highlighting the need for Water-Smart industry

23 March 2023, 18.00-21.00 EST, Denmark House
666 Third Avenue, 11th floor, New York.

Organized by: Grundfos, Water Europe, Consulate general of Denmark,
Water footprint implementation, Veolia, and Ecolab.

TWO PAGE MAXIMUM

Background on the event (one paragraph)

The value of water cannot be understated. The access to clean, safe water is directly linked to the financial stability of economies, the health of the population, and industry's ability to create jobs. By 2030, there will be a significant gap between water demand and water supply. As industry is responsible for a substantial amount of water use, it is essential that they take responsibility for consumption and treatment. The objective of this side event is to highlight the urgent action that must be taken in a beyond business-as-usual approach to solve the challenges and deliver innovative and transformative solutions. One must recognize the true Value of Water and that without blue there is not green, water is intrinsically connected to the green transition. Industry and countries must continue the work to enable Water-Smart Societies, where water sources are sustainably managed, water resources are part of a circular economy, and where water systems are climate resilient. This requires stakeholders in all sectors to be involved and taking action. Sustainable development is dependent on action within the water-energy-food nexus to enable communities and companies to accelerate economic and urban development. By taking the best examples and solutions from European market leaders are delivering impact and accelerating the implementation of technology and projects contribution to achieving SDG 6 and the 2030 Agenda.

Water Action Agenda (one paragraph, if possible, please include the link to your commitment in the [Water Action Agenda database](#))

Build a Water-Smart Society in Europe: 16 partners envision a European society driven by inclusive and open innovations with modern governance structures, solutions and pricing mechanisms reflecting the value of water, technologies to reduce, re-use, recycle and cascade water streams, a redesigned water infrastructure as well as more profound water stewardship programmes. These innovations will manoeuvre the water market towards a 50% reduction of pressure on our natural water system and a more effective resilience against the impact of demographic and climate change. We aim for this purpose to support the achievement of a Water Smart Society, in which the value of water is recognised and realised.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- How can water foot printing contribute to shape water-smart industry?
- How can industrial symbiosis contribute to mitigate water scarcity?
- What are the priorities that the industry consider shall be on the top of the common strategic innovation agenda to mitigate the WEFE nexus?
- Supporting and exploiting quick development in technology would be enough to effectively deal with the complexity of water sustainability or there are other drivers that should be considered?
- Moving towards a Water-Smart Society in a circular economy, what is the role of industry – and other actors – in keeping water in close loops?

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Governments, industry, and the financial sector must step up and play their role, from water smart policy and regulation, to reduced water footprints, increased efficiency and water due diligence in financial decision making.
- Water crisis can have consequences on all aspects of our lives. Partnership and collaboration are key to develop and deploy solutions. This event stressed one example of European collaboration with the European Project Ultimate.
- Industry holds a significant responsibility and potential in intelligently using water and industry accounts for large amount of water withdrawals today (between 20-50% across the globe). Therefore, water in industries to be used in a more efficient and sustainable way.
- There is nothing like wastewater, but only wasted water. We, as people, give priority to urgency than importance. We need to switch our perspective of wastewater to exploit the value in water and encourage reuse water. Examples were already stressed several times such as the event on water efficiency in industry within the European in January 2023.
- There is a critical interrelationship between water and climate because water is the primary medium through which we feel the growing effects of climate change. The solution is addressing the water-energy nexus since our climate and water systems are linked, and valuing and saving water is a tool to address global climate challenges. Large quantities of Water are critical to developing renewable energy tools and the smart reuse of water reduces GHG emissions. Since water is finite, we must use it smartly to address these challenges. The first step is to value water properly and make an abrupt shift in our management of water.