

Natural Environment White Paper – The Natural Choice: Securing the value of nature case study

Greening industry – making more beer using less water

By its nature, brewing is a water-intensive process. Brewer SABMiller recognises that water scarcity represents a significant risk not only to parts of its business and supply chain, but also to some of the communities in which it operates. As part of a drive to make sustainable development a core part of its business strategy, the brewer has committed to reducing its water use by 25% between 2008-2015.



The brewer believes local water challenges are usually best solved in partnership with non-governmental organisations, local government and other local businesses. At the global level, SABMiller has begun an innovative partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the German development agency (GIZ) to explore new approaches to water management. The initiative covers eight countries where SABMiller has brewing operations: Peru, South Africa, Tanzania, Ukraine, India, Colombia, Honduras and the USA; all markets where water has been identified as a long term risk. The partnership is focusing on identifying new approaches to water management, particularly developing a robust approach to evaluating water risks throughout SABMiller's supply chain and sharing best practice throughout its global operations on how to tackle these risks.

Using the results, the company will be able to prioritise action for sites where the risk is greatest. SABMiller is the first commercial company to produce such detailed corporate water footprints.

In 2010 SAB Miller reduced their water use by 4% compared to the previous 12 months, saving 290,000,000 litres of water.

Andy Wales, head of sustainable development at SAB Miller, says:

"Businesses are often the first ones to be alerted to issues such as water scarcity, because we are set up to measure, plan and analyse business risk and opportunity over the long term. But NGOs and governments are better placed than we are, in many circumstances, to help us build relationships and effect change with other water users. We believe that partnerships are key to addressing the water issue."