

Activity: Your company's water footprint

There are many calculators that help you look at your individual water footprint or that of your household. They look at how much water you use directly and indirectly through the products you consume.

However, there are so far no all encompassing tools that help you estimate the water footprint of your SME. To help you understand how water is used in your business and how much you may waste, complete the following activity. The Water Footprint Assessment is used to assess whether your water use is environmentally sustainable, resource efficient and equitably allocated.

Key Steps to Calculate a Corporate Water Footprint

1. Conduct a Water Footprint Assessment
 - Quantify and map the company's green, blue, and grey water footprints
 - Assess the sustainability, efficiency, and equity of the company's water use
 - Identify strategic actions to make the company's water footprint more sustainable
2. Use Established Frameworks and Standards
 - Follow guidance from the ISO 14046 standard (<https://www.dqsglobal.com/intl/certify/iso-14046-water-footprint-verification>) or the Global Water Footprint Standard (<https://ceowatermandate.org/resources/global-water-footprint-standard-2011/>)
 - These provide detailed instructions on calculating green, blue, and grey water footprints
 - They also cover how to conduct a water footprint sustainability assessment
3. Measure Direct and Indirect Water Use
 - The direct (operational) water footprint is from the company's own operations
 - The indirect (supply chain) water footprint is from the inputs and products used
5. Utilize Water Footprint Assessment Tools
 - The Water Footprint Network provides a free assessment tool for personal water use (<https://www.waterfootprint.org/resources/interactive-tools/personal-water-footprint-calculator/>). This can help you get insights into your company's water use.
6. Identify Hotspots and Opportunities
 - Analyse the different components of the water footprint
 - Prioritize areas to focus on for reducing water impacts

By following these steps, companies can thoroughly assess and understand their comprehensive water footprint, which is crucial for developing an effective water management strategy.

The water use in your SME

	Green Water footprint	Blue water footprint	Grey water footprint
	<i>Where is it used? How much is used?</i>	<i>Where is it used? How much is used?</i>	<i>Where is it used? How much is used?</i>
Is it used sustainably, efficiently, and equitably?	<i>Calculate metrics like net water consumption, water recycling/reuse rates, and water use per production unit</i>	<i>Calculate metrics like net water consumption, water recycling/reuse rates, and water use per production unit</i>	<i>Calculate metrics like net water consumption, water recycling/reuse rates, and water use per production unit</i>
Industry benchmarks	<i>Compare your water usage metrics to industry benchmarks and standards to assess your relative efficiency and sustainability</i>	<i>Compare your water usage metrics to industry benchmarks and standards to assess your relative efficiency and sustainability</i>	<i>Compare your water usage metrics to industry benchmarks and standards to assess your relative efficiency and sustainability</i>
Direct or indirect water use	<i>Is the water use coming from the company's own operation? Is the water used through products or inputs along the supply chain?</i>	<i>Is the water use coming from the company's own operation? Is the water used through products or inputs along the supply chain?</i>	<i>Is the water use coming from the company's own operation? Is the water used through products or inputs along the supply chain?</i>
Priority areas where water use can be reduced	<i>Where can you save water? How? And by when?</i>	<i>Where can you save water? How? And by when?</i>	<i>Where can you save water? How? And by when?</i>

- **Green water footprint:** water from precipitation used by plants
- **Blue water footprint:** surface or groundwater consumed
- **Grey water footprint:** freshwater required to assimilate pollutants