

Natural Resource Management

12th February 2009

Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Environmental protection – just a few of the terms currently being linked to global droughts, floods, fires and other climate related natural disasters occurring more and more across the globe. Coupled with an increase in the global population and urban development, heightened environmental risks and vulnerabilities are demanding long-term, sustainable management of natural resources. This is coined as Natural Resource Management (NRM) and involves managing complex and intertwined systems such as biodiversity, desertification, just to name a couple.

This month Article 13 is focussing on two of the issues surrounding Natural Resource Management (NRM) and briefly explores the technological and organisational responses from business to help combat environmental degradation.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Water management refers to the sustainable management, governance and utilisation of water resources, including rivers, lakes and estuaries, coastal and marine waters; sewage treatment; and reservoir safety. Water management is an issue of the global commons, which means it's outside national jurisdiction and there is an ever increasing battle for access to fresh water resources. Initiatives must cross borders and boundaries to make any real difference. The [United Nations Environment Programme \(UNEP\)](#), partners with over 150 businesses and concentrates on the potential risks associated with water scarcity and the strategic importance for businesses to act responsibly. Businesses and Institutions need to start acknowledging the interconnectedness of water resources with many of the world's major issues, including climate change, energy, economic development, environmental health, and social justice. For businesses to tackle the challenges surrounding the depletion of water resources, there needs to be the following:

- Financial investment into a water supportive infrastructure.
- Partnerships with water management coalitions.
- Integrate water management systems into the business, in order to minimise environmental risks

So how are businesses managing water resources? Some examples include:

BAA: A water management scheme at Terminal 5 reduces BAA's reliance on mains water and economically harvests water from rainfall on campus and boreholes on its own land (http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1364).

AWG: "RiverCare" programme a community approach to involving communities in cleaning up watercourses (http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1314).

United Utilities: Establishment of a multi-partner sustainable water catchment management programme to deliver improved water quantity and quality (http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1360).



LAND MANAGEMENT

Land management refers to the sustainable management and development of land resources. Land management practices often include, conserving and enhancing the natural environment, ensuring that industrial processes do not exploit land resources and foster social and economic well being. It is in a business's and individual's best interest to act responsibly with land resources and manage them effectively. Poor land management practices can lead to heightened environmental risks with a rise in CO² emissions and the destruction of ecosystems, biodiversity and plant diversity. Also businesses can be affected greatly through poor land management, with high cleanup costs, consumer boycotts and increased pressure from environmentalists and NGOs. Alternatively, sustainable land management can have beneficial factors in terms of climate change impacts, wildlife, biodiversity, social well-being, social equity and help the bottom line; for example:

Wangari Maathai: "Promoting ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development"

(http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1091).

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Tags: Water management, Land management, sustainable management, Climate Change, global commons, environmental risks, governance.

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