

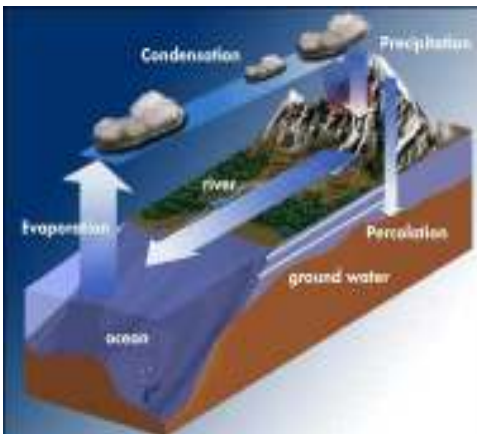
World Water Day

22nd March 2009

Water is one of our most critical resources – even more important than oil. It provides the earth with the capacity of supporting life. The Earth has a limited amount of water, which is in a constant cycle, also known as the hydrologic. This process renews our planet's water within a closed system of the earth's atmosphere. However, as result of changing weather patterns and temperatures caused by climate change (<http://www.article13.com/csr/climate-change-cont.asp>), this cycle is seriously being disrupted and resulting in the depletion of world water resources.

On the 22nd of March, 2009, [World Water Day](#) is highlighting the main issues surrounding the current and worsening water crisis. This report addresses the water life cycle, the impact of climate change on this cycle, and the latest methods used to help increase regional and national water supply levels. This is part of Article 13's United Nations Global Compact ([UNGC](#)) commitment and specifically incorporates our efforts to applying a precautionary approach to environmental challenges (Principle 8).

How the water life cycle works? The water life cycle refers to the natural process of water distribution, which is made up of 4 mains areas.



These include:

- Evaporation (and transpiration)
- Condensation
- Precipitation
- Collection

As represented in this picture, water evaporates from the surface, and then rises into the clouds through condensation, and falls again as precipitation. This is the basis of our globe's weather pattern, leading to rain, snow, growing seasons, floods, monsoons, hurricanes, and so on.

http://www.castlewater.com/images/Life_C2.jpg

Impact of Climate Change In the most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) It was stated that "...water and its availability and quality will be the main pressures on, and issues for, societies and the environment under climate change..." (<http://www.ceres.org/Document.Doc?id=406>). Climate change, specifically global warming, enhances the water cycle because the cycle of water is intensified or becomes more extreme. Climate change doesn't alter how the water cycle works, but it does affect some aspects of it, e.g. altering the proportion of liquid fresh water and its location. As a consequence, some regions of the world end up with less, and others end up with more, e.g. regular droughts and/or flooding. This has adverse implications on weather, which in turn is leading to heightened environmental risks. These risks are seriously affecting plant, animal and human life as we know it.

Monitoring and conserving A combination of climate change and poor resource management is leading to increasing water shortages in even the most developed countries. With global water resources depleting, it is imperative that water resources are

managed and governed effectively on a regional and national scale, otherwise already stressed water resources will become dangerously scarce in years to come.

Water footprinting Water footprinting is a new approach to measuring, auditing and managing water usage. Like carbon footprinting for carbon, this approach measures the water usage of individuals, businesses, and countries, from the bottom level of the water supply chain to the end use of a product or service. The water footprint of an individual, community or business is defined as the total volume of freshwater that is used to produce the goods and services consumed by the individual or community or produced by the business.

Challenges As mentioned, it is similar to carbon footprinting; however, with carbon footprinting, international initiatives and policies can help reduce the amount of carbon emissions being pumped into the atmosphere. Water, on the other hand, is a tangible resource which moves across regions and boundaries (transboundary); as a result it is near impossible to implement international policies, but rather regional policies. Only through individual, corporate and international monitoring of water usage from the bottom of the supply chain will we enable a better system of water management and allow for new improved regional strategies.

At Article 13 we have and are looking for practical ways to use sustainability initiatives, emerging technologies and innovation to improve and tackle water consumption as a major business and social issue. Some Article 13 resources:

- Tackling water consumption as a core business issue
http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1239
- Synopsis of Business in the World of Water
http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1391
- The CEO Water Mandate - working together for change
http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1390

Article 13 case examples:

BAA http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1364
AWG http://www.article13.com/A13_ContentList.asp?strAction=GetPublication&PNID=1314

A notable CoP signatory of the United Nations Global Compact – www.unglobalcompact.org

Article 13 are experts in business responsibility, typically in the areas of corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainability and governance. Article 13 seeks to embed and integrate responsible business practices in organisations by means of consultancy services, training, coach-mentoring and thought leadership.



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