Fact-sheet - How to start saving water?

What is the objective?

Why should a production site save water?

- **Save money** when the water has a cost or when the water needs to be treated prior use in the production;
- **Reduce the depletion of natural water sources** the production site depends on;
- **Reduce the product water footprint** (indicator that can be requested by the customer);
- **Increase the productivity** per water input (improve the efficiency of the management of the production);
- **Lower the wastewater discharge** (reduce the cost of treatment).

How to achieve this objective?

Step 1: the production site can work on water savings at different levels and taking into account different approaches:

Educate employees	• Raise awareness about how the efficient use of water can have positive impacts. • Encourage employees to identify problems and find innovative solutions to reduce water use within the company.
Inspection & regular maintenance	• Write a procedure for regular inspection of machines, pipeline and areas where water leaks can occur and appoint a manager to be in charge of this "Leak detection prevention programme": he will be in charge of the inspection, the maintenance and the report writing.
Minimize water use for cleaning	• Consider water from internal processes to be used for cleaning. • Fit hoses with high-pressure, low-volume nozzles with shut-off valves.
Chose water saving equipment & technologies	• Replace old machines with water-efficient machines well-known in your industry (for example, in textile, use low-liquor-ratio dyeing machines). • Identify new technologies used in your industry such as the ozone machine for textile.
Reuse process water & review/change processes	• Review the production processes (ex: remove desize step in denim treatment or schedule colors more carefully to minimize the need for extensive cleaning between batches in textile). • Consider opportunities to re-use the process water (for example water from cooling towers, water used to rinse, etc.)[1].

Step 2: monitor and analyze the production site water consumption data to **measure the water savings achieved** after implementing the good practices as per the recommendations provided above (refer to the fact-sheet "Water consumption monitoring").

Common non-compliances

Poor maintenance leading to significant water leaks in the production

The production site doesn't ensure a regular maintenance of equipment, pipelines and joints:

Employees not trained

No training provided to the employees to raise their awareness about easy practices they can implement to save water. Water hoses kept open:

Process water not re-used

The production site is not trying to find opportunities to re-use process water which is not polluted.

For example, in laundry operations, washing machines may be retrofitted with washer-extractors that capture water used in the final rinse stage and reuse it in the pre-soak or initial washing phase. This practice can allow the water consumption to be reduced by about 40%.

[1] Useful links with examples of good practices to save water: NRDC & GSCP.