Water

Why is it important?

Water is a key component of many of our products, and there are clear environmental benefits to using it over other solvents. We recognise water as a valuable, shared resource and need to ensure we are responsible in how we manage our water consumption.

Global water use has been increasing by roughly 1% per year over the past 40 years, and is expected to grow at a similar rate through to 2050,[1] driven by a combination of population growth, socio-economic development, unsustainable management and ecosystem degradation. Climate change is making the problem worse, intensifying floods and droughts, shifting rainfall patterns and affecting sea levels.

Our commitments

Synthomer is committed to ensuring that we have sustainable water management systems and practices in place, minimising net consumption and water quality impact, and supporting the objectives of the associated UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 6).

Our Vision 2030 target

- Establish sustainable water management[2] at all sites located in areas of high water stress.

Associated policies

Our Water Management Policy – click here

Our Environment Policy – click here

Our Risk Management Policy – click here

1 United Nations World Water Development Report 2023.

2 Sustainable water management is defined as being certified to the Alliance for Water Stewardship standard or an equivalent standard.

Our approach

We recognise that we need to identify and responsibly manage the impacts and dependencies related to water use across our entire value chain. This approach also supports the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) recommendations for companies to assess the relevant physical risks to their business. Our TCFD work in 2022 identified the need to explore our resilience to physical water-related risks, such as floods and drought.

We introduced our water policy in the same year to explain our approach to managing water use at our sites, and the steps we need to take to deliver our Vision 2030 target. We are making good progress in the following areas:

- Implementing water stewardship systems for any of our own operations located in areas of high water stress to minimise water withdrawal, net consumption and increase effluent discharge quality
- Putting systems and controls in place to prevent incidents at our sites that could lead to water-related environmental consequences and ensure we minimise the potential impact if these incidents occur
- Understanding the impact that our operational activities have on key ecosystems and biodiversity.

In 2023, we adapted our Vision 2030 target to reflect the increasing maturity in our approach to water management. We concluded that the most effective water-related goals for us should focus on the local context of water risks and dependencies, so we decided to set context-based qualitative goals for our manufacturing sites.

Our Vision 2030 target is now to establish sustainable water management at all our sites located in areas of high water stress. We will achieve this in two stages: first, by 2025, at sites in areas of high water stress that also have high water use; and then at all other sites in areas of high water stress by 2030.

To understand each site's local water context, we take a three-step approach to determine materiality and assess site-level water risks. First, we completed a baseline and future water risk screening of physical quantity and quality using the World Resources Institute (WRI) Aqueduct water risk tool to identify our high-risk sites. We then prioritised those high-risk sites with high volume and withdrawal dependencies and conducted a site-specific review at each to better assess the local context. As a result of this work, we identified six sites as high risk and high dependency, and prioritised the need to develop context-based water stewardship goals at three of those sites by 2025.

Our performance in 2024

Our water intensity metrics have improved this year, with water withdrawal intensity 2.2% better than 2023, and all three of our sites that we identified have made progress against their goals.

Our site in Ribecourt, France, has met its legally binding 10% reduction target and has a clear set of objectives to hit its 25% reduction target by 2035. Le Havre has worked with a third-party expert to develop and submit an action plan to its regulator, setting out proposals to meet a 20% reduction target.

Our site in Langelsheim, Germany, has continued work to look at eliminating once-through cooling using river water, which we estimate could reduce overall Group water withdrawal by 12% when

complete. It has also made further progress towards implementing the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) standard with a view to seeking certification in 2025.

We are proud that our sites have continued to drive improvement projects through our Manufacturing Excellence programme in areas like demand management, leak repairs and cooling system management, which have helped reduce water use significantly. At our site in Sokolov, Czech Republic, for example, the team has reduced the use of river water by more than 200,000 m^3 as a result of ending the use of coal in our boilers.

Group water usage	Unit	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	Variance 2024 vs 2023 [3]	Variance 2024 vs 2019 [4]
Total water withdrawal	'000m^3	7,132	7,066	8,091	7,748	7,202	7,143	0.9%	-0.2%
Specific water withdrawal	m^3/tonne production	5.27	5.05	5.16	4.45	4.08	3.93	4.4%	34.1%
Water withdrawal by source									
Public potable supply	'000m^3	2,249	2,105	2,226	1,664	1,640	1,756	6.8%	28.1%
Raw water from river	'000m^3	2,696	2,681	3,231	3,357	2,993	2,810	0.6%	-4.1%
Raw water from borehole	'000m^3	772	783	1,058	1,328	1,158	1,192	-1.4%	-35.3%
Raw water form canal	'000m^3	41	39	54	80	71	65	5.9%	-36.6%
Raw water from other	'000m^3	1,374	1,458	1,521	1,318	1,341	1,320	-5.8%	4.1%
Total water consumption[5]	'000m^3	1,972	2,020	2,566	n/a	n/a	n/a	-2.4%	n/a
Specific water consumption[5]	m^3/tonne production	1.46	1.44	1.64	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.4%	n/a
Sites in extremely high-risk location for water stress									
Number	#	3	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Proportion of Group production volume	%	11.80	10.9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Proportion of Group revenue	%	12.50	12.4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Our next steps

Through our Manufacturing Excellence programme, all sites will look at deploying good water management practices and developing detailed water balances in 2025, as outlined in our water policy.

We will continue to assess the need to develop water stewardship programmes at our lower-volume water stress sites and, where needed, implement those programmes by 2030.

3 2022 data included the sites of our new adhesives business.

4 2019-2021 data excluded our new adhesives business.

5 In 2022, we began using the water mass balance approach. We are not reporting on this approach before 2022.