



# Quick Brief

A news update from the NBI on its programmes, business leadership and issues on sustainable development.

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## The Tools and Frameworks for Water Stewardship

Indicating that water is central to sustainable development in South Africa seems a very obvious statement. Water is paramount to our future development, and without it livelihoods and business continuity will come to a standstill. As we concluded in the [2016 CDP Water report](#), 'business growth and water availability are increasingly interdependent in South Africa'. This is the case not least because we are a water scarce country facing a supply side deficit by 2030, but also because water tends to be a complex local issue that is deeply intertwined with governance and varying stakeholder priorities. Fortunately, the tools and frameworks exist for companies to mitigate water risk and become effective water stewards.

It is within this national context that common frameworks such as the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) provide a very useful tool. Another good example is the [Alliance for Water Stewardship \(AWS\) standard](#). The pursuit of a common language, in the form of the SDGs, and the use of an independent standard, such as AWS, helps bring clarity and impartiality to local water management issues for all parties. Business can only benefit from improving its ability to engage with local government and surrounding communities based on a common framework and common guidance.

The tools already exist for companies to become water mature. A variety of water risk assessment methodologies are in place, many of which have been profiled by the National Business Initiative (NBI) in recent years. The CEO Water Mandate offers some great resources for companies through their [Water Stewardship Toolbox](#), whether the need is to get one's own house in order, or to become a water leader. Reporting to [CDP Water](#) helps companies ask the right questions, undertake appropriate analysis and mitigate their water risk.

Finally, as the NBI we encourage companies to sign up to the We Mean Business (WMB) commitment to '[Improve Water Security](#)'. Not for any other reason than doing so will help extend your reach and understanding in the water space, whether it is through undertaking an effective water risk assessment, reporting on your water use or implementing collaborative management strategies.

The private sector has much to offer in addressing local water challenges in South Africa, from technical expertise, process expertise, management capacity and financing solutions. We know that the global achievement of the water-related SDGs requires private sector participation and **financing solutions**. Exactly the same can be said of South Africa. Common frameworks to build shared understanding between stakeholders are essential in addressing our local water needs and for maximising on private sector capabilities.

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Those with a keen interest in water and its relationship to the SDGs in South Africa are advised to read our short workshop report entitled: '[Water Stewardship and the Water-Related SDGs in South Africa - July 2016](#)'.

**Business Action for Sustainable Growth**

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