CASE STUDY:

CREATING A CORPORATE WATER STEWARDSHIP STANDARD GUIDED BY THE AWS STANDARD

WWF & MONDI PARTNERSHIP

Mondi is an international packaging and paper group that is fully integrated across its value chain – from growing of wood, manufacturing of pulp and paper through to the conversion of packaging papers into corrugated packaging product.

WWF is committed to working with large companies within the pulp and paper sector in support of improving forestry practices and the footprint of paper in the sector. As such, WWF has been working with Mondi since 2014 but more specifically on water stewardship since 2018 . One of the activities of the partnership was integrating the AWS Standard into Mondi's Pulp and Paper mills.

WHAT IS THE AWS STANDARD

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is a global membership collaboration of businesses, NGOs and public sector bodies that are working to contribute towards encouraging and recognising good water stewardship. Mondi is a member of AWS.

The primary mechanism that AWS uses to achieve its mission is through the uptake of the AWS International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard). The Standard seeks to drive water use that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site-and catchment-based actions.

The AWS Standard is focused on the operational site and its local water catchment and it is applicable to any type and size of business in any location.

> "Having a common Mondi language allows us to standardize how stewardship is implemented whilst also ensuring that individual mills are focusing on contextually appropriate actions that address the risks they face. Modelling our approach on the criteria of the AWS Standard provides us with a route to enacting credible, audit-ready stewardship across our business."

– CHRISTIAN RAMASEDER, MONDI GROUP ENVIRONMENT MANAGER

THE WHY: OBJECTIVES OF THE WORK

Mondi was seeking to establish a pathway to both introduce leading water stewardship practices into its mills but also standardise the way water stewardship is implemented across its mills.

In considering the application of the AWS Standard's criteria, within the organisational structure of Mondi, it was clear that the responsibilities for discharging some of the AWS criteria rests with Mondi - not individual mills.

A water risk assessment of mills also indicated a diverse range of water-related risks faced by each mill. As such, WWF and Mondi worked to disaggregate the AWS Standard's criteria, making it clear who (Mondi or individual mills) had responsibility for discharging which criteria but ensuring that the level of water stewardship implementation matched the level of water risk faced by the mill.

THE BENEFITS FOR MONDI IN TRACKING AGAINST THE AWS STANDARD

A CREDIBLE WATER STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY

Tracking the criteria in the AWS Standard directs Mondi and the mills to global best practice

AUDIT-READY WATER STEWARDSHIP PROCESS

Following a certification standard pathway positions mills to be audit ready

CONTEXT APPROPRIATE WATER STEWARDSHIP RESPONSE

Depth of water stewardship implementation dependent on surrounding local water context

THE HOW: ACTIVITIES OF THE WORK

The first task was to complete a full water risk assessment (basin and operational) for Mondi's 12 mills using WWF's Water Risk Filter. This enabled the team to clearly identify the water-related risks faced by each mill.

The second task involved disaggregating all the criteria within the AWS Standard 2.0 into 4 "levels". This was done considering the existing internal responsibilities related to water activities between Mondi Group and its mills. These "levels" included:

- **Group Level:** AWS criteria that Mondi would discharge on behalf of each mill
- **Level 1:** Foundational good water management or AWS criteria that represented basic water stewardship actions and mostly internally focused.
- **Level 2:** Core water stewardship or AWS criteria that represented slightly more advanced water stewardship actions and starts to engage more externally with stakeholders in the catchment.
- **Level 3:** Advanced water stewardship or AWS criteria that represented advanced water stewardship actions and had a larger external engagement focus.

Each of the 12 mills was then assigned one of the above "levels" according to the water-related risks they faced. Each "level" was designed to be additive in nature, so a mill assigned a Level 3 was required to implement all criteria from Level's 1, 2 and 3 while Mondi discharged the remaining criteria (effectively the full suite of criteria within the AWS Standard 2.0).

Certification to the AWS Standard was not mandated in the internal Mondi standard and remains at the discretion of each mill. However, the internal Mondi standard clearly outlines which internal "level" track AWS certification – allowing mills to pursue certification at their discretion.

THE WHAT: OUTCOMES OF THE WORK

The internal water stewardship standard provides Mondi with a clear, graduated and standardized approach for implementing water stewardship across its mills - based on the results of a regular water risk assessments. It also establishes an auditable framework that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities for part of Mondi's organisation that can be used if an individual mill pursues certification.

WWF WATER RISK FILTER

WWF's Water Risk Filter (WRF) is a leading, online tool which enables companies to assess and identify responses to address their contextual water risks.

The WRF's assessment is based on both basin and operational water risks. The tool draws on 32 annually-updated, peer reviewed data layers to assess 3 types of water risks for all mills: physical, regulatory and reputational risks. In the Respond section of the tool, the WRF dynamically links risk assessment results to offer a tailored set of recommended response, enabling users to identify contextually appropriate response actions to help them mitigate their unique water-related risks.

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