

Water Stewardship: a framework for engaging business in sustainable water management



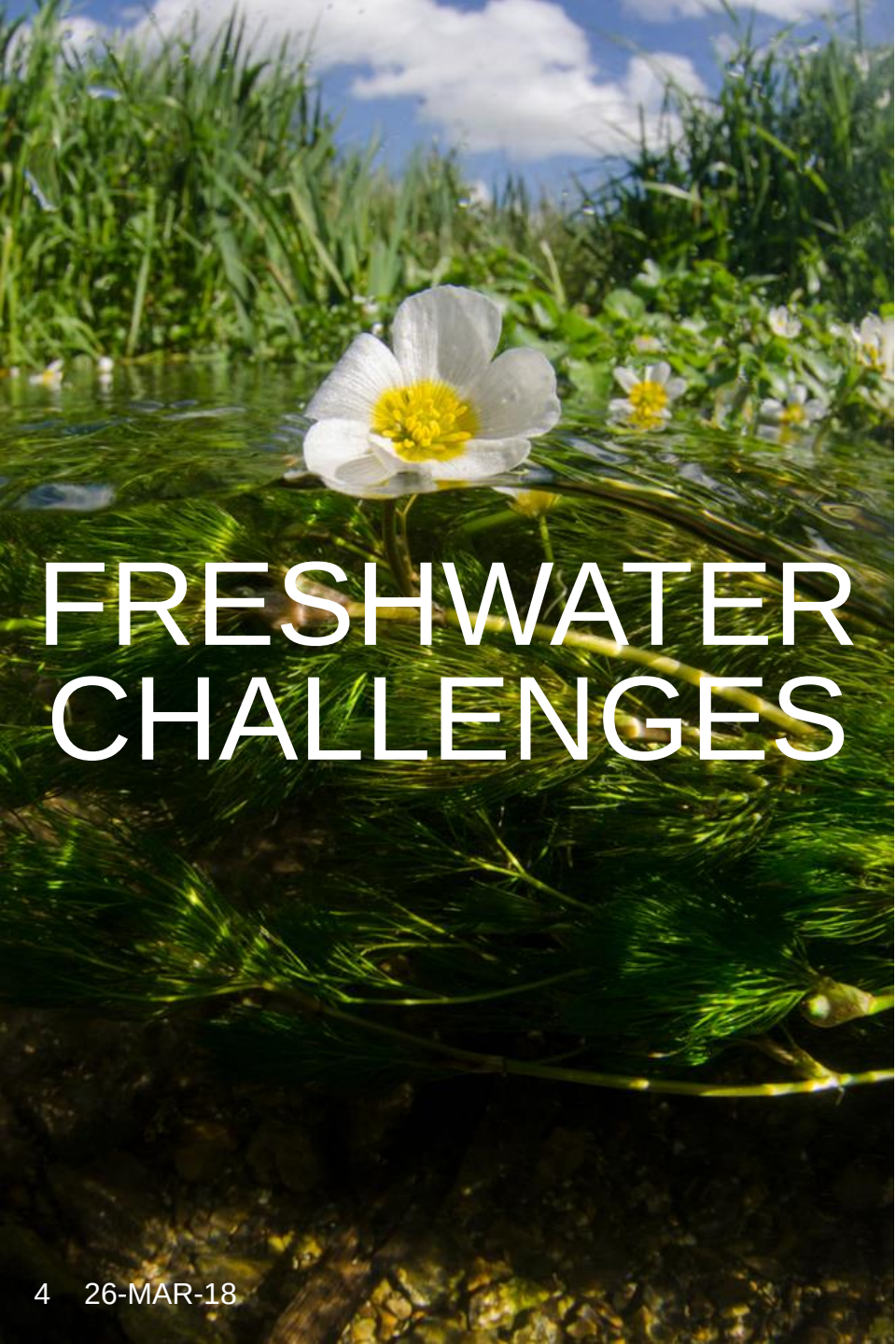
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FOCUS OF THE PRESENTATION

- Freshwater challenges for ecosystems and business
- How water stewardship provides a framework for engaging business in sustainable water management
- WWF's action to date to and plans to scale up activity in the UK and globally

FRESHWATER CHALLENGES FOR ECOSYSTEMS & BUSINESS

A close-up photograph of a white water lily flower with a yellow center, floating on a pond. The water is clear, showing green submerged plants and rocks at the bottom. The background is a lush green bank with more plants and a blue sky with white clouds.

FRESHWATER CHALLENGES

- The Freshwater Living Planet Index shows that freshwater species abundance has declined by up to 81% between 1970 and 2012
- World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2018 cited the water crisis as the 5th largest impact risk to business
- The drivers of the economic and environmental risk are the same, poor management of water (over-abstraction and pollution)
- We work with business to address shared water challenges

IMPACT OF AGRICULTURE

- In many catchments, agriculture is the main driver of freshwater biodiversity loss
- **Over-abstraction:** Globally, agriculture uses 70% of our available freshwater
- **Soil-degradation:** Intensive farming degrades soils and causes river & ocean eutrophication: 1/3 of the world's soil is already severely degraded
- **Diffuse pollution:** Nitrate is the most common chemical contaminant in groundwater aquifers globally, with levels increasing 36% in global waterways from 1990
- Europe's agricultural sector is responsible for 36% of all failures to reach Good Ecological Status under the Water Framework Directive



A scenic photograph of a wide river flowing through a lush green landscape. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, golden glow that reflects off the water's surface. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds, and the overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

WATER STEWARDSHIP: A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING BUSIENSS IN SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

Water stewardship as a framework for engaging business in sustainable water management

Water stewardship
Businesses engage beyond their own operations and supply chains

Influence
Governance

Collective
Action

Internal
Action

Knowledge
of Impact

Water
Awareness

Internal water management
Businesses understand their impact of take action to better manage water in their own operations and supply chains

- Water risks are a result of cumulative water use in catchments
- Internal water management is therefore not sufficient to manage water risks/opportunities
- One business is unlikely to have sufficient influence to significantly affect catchment level drivers of risk or policy. Collectively, businesses have economic and supply chain influence.
- WWF plays a convening role

A water stewardship approach:

- Supports better farming practices & reduce water consumption using supply chain leverage
- Brings stakeholders together to address the catchment level drivers of risk
- Scales up action by improving the governance of catchments

It contributes to:

- Protecting soils and the farming landscape
- A more natural river flow regime
- The protection of freshwater, estuarine and marine biodiversity

THE ROLE OF WATER STEWARDSHIP



WWF-UK's ACTION TO DATE



REPORT



2014

Water stewardship experiences in the Western Cape

26-MAR-18

M&S Water Partnership



- Assessed water risks in M&S's fresh produce supply chain using the Water Risk Filter.
- Identified the Western Cape as key risk hotspot.
- M&S, WWF, Woolworths and AWS kicked off a project in the Breede Overburg catchment.
- The first step was to work with farmers to improve on-farm water efficiency.
- Catalysed a broader multi-stakeholder initiative to address the catchment drivers of risk and improve governance.

Collective action in the UK

Coca Cola partnership

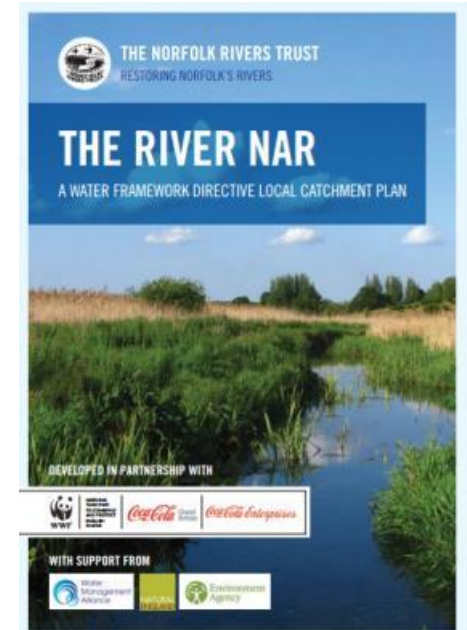
- Deliver environmental improvements through collaborative delivery (Norfolk RT, the NFU, NE)
- Addressing reputational risks associated with diffuse pollution in the sugar supply chain

Actions – River Nar

- Creation of Local WFD Catchment Plan
- Engaged farmers to improve over 2000 acres of land
- Re-meandering channels

EU Life project – WaterLIFE

- Coca Cola match funded
- Drive broader change in East Anglia
- Two agricultural chalk stream catchments:
Cam-Ely-Ouse and Broadlands



SOCIOECONOMIC BENEFITS

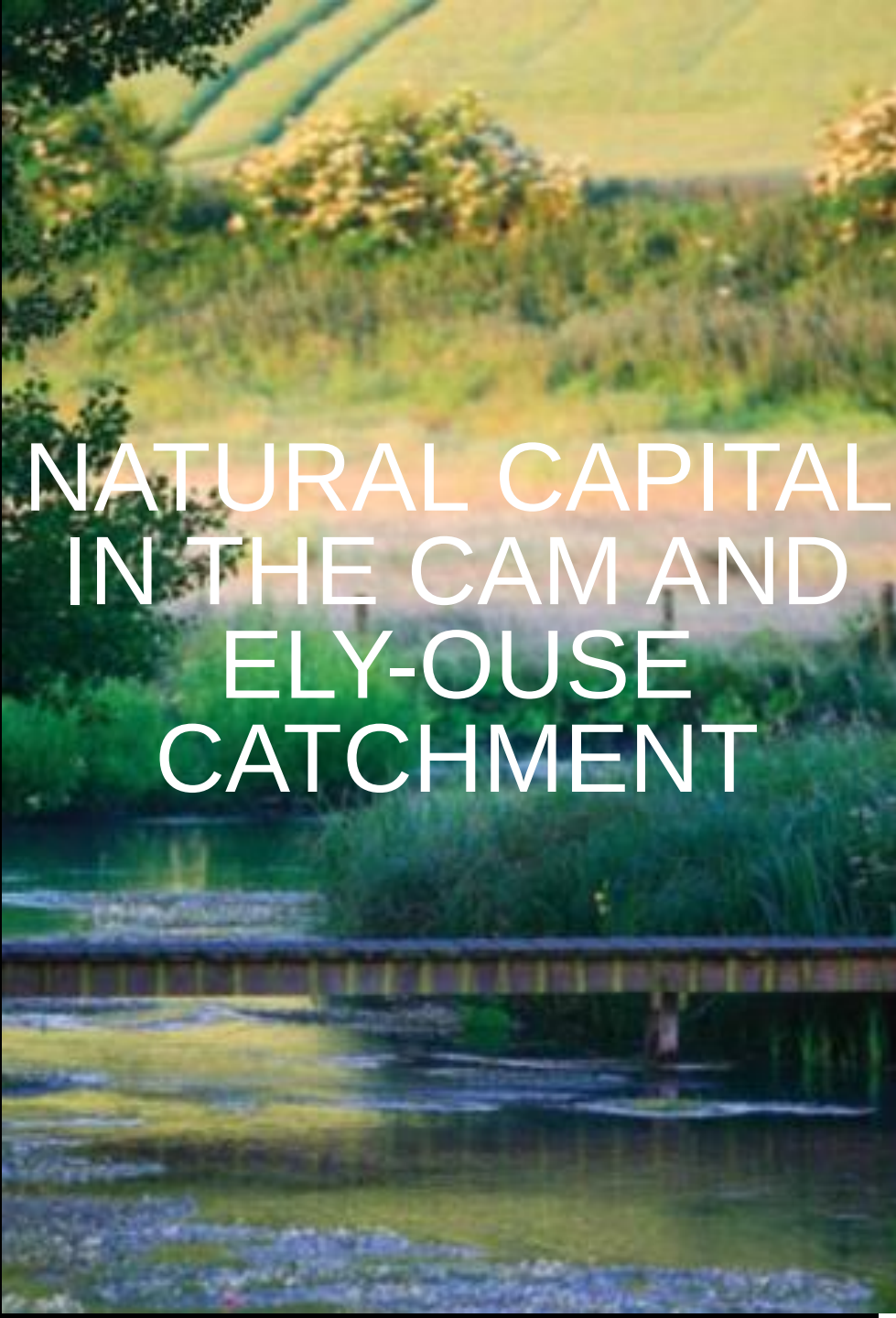


Flood risk alleviation:

- Run-off during peak flood flow can be reduced
- The build-up of sediment is reduced

Improved aquatic habitat:

- By limiting N & P entering the river - the risk of algal blooms is reduced.
- By reducing sediment deposition, riverbed gravels are maintained.

A scenic landscape photograph showing a river in the foreground, a wooden bridge, and rolling green hills in the background under a soft, hazy sky.

NATURAL CAPITAL IN THE CAM AND ELY-OUSE CATCHMENT

Provide evidence to farmers and land managers that implementing water sensitive farming measures will not adversely impact (and ideally increase) the profitability of their businesses

Initial ecosystem services mapping has been carried out to highlight areas regulating the provision of services.

- Phase 1 - Economic analysis of natural capital assets identified within the catchment
- Phase 2 - Detailed economic analysis of two priority natural capital assets within the catchment - soil and water – at the farm or sub-catchment scale

SCALE UP IN THE UK AND GLOBALLY

Courtauld Commitment 2025

- An industry-wide initiative for the UK food and drink sector led by WRAP
- It includes all the major retailers (around 95% of the grocery retail sector) as well as manufacturers, trade bodies and companies from the hospitality and food sector
- Water is one of the focus areas, and the Water Ambition has been launched today
- We have been working with WRAP to develop a new water stewardship target
- This sits alongside an operational water use target.





The water stewardship target:

By 2025, all C2025 business signatories are participating in collective action to improve the quality & availability of water in key sourcing areas

- All of the projects undertaken to meet the target will have to adhere to a set of water stewardship criteria
- The aim is to develop self-sustaining coalitions of businesses and other key stakeholders in catchments
- Address supply chain and catchment water risks and support improved governance to scale up and lock in change



Mapping priority locations



- Worked with Courtauld Signatories to identify key aligned hotspots of water risk in their supply chains
- Created a survey for businesses to feedback their priority risk locations identified by assessing risk across their supply chains using WWF's Water Risk Filter

Results

- Initial countries of collective interest identified were Spain, South Africa, Kenya and the UK
- WWF are leading the developing project plans for international projects
- The Rivers Trust are leading work in the UK

UK Water Stewardship Service

- Led by the Rivers Trust, supported by WWF-UK, Coca Cola, M&S and Tesco
- Enable business to work together and with the 108 catchment partnerships to deliver sustainable solutions for water
- Collective action – delivering practical solutions at scale
- Easy for business – drivers of catchment risk mapped and interventions scoped
- National coverage, local expertise



Rivers Trust - 2016 Delivery



Worked with



233
schools



83
fish barriers eased,
passed or removed



23
wetlands created or restored

IMPACT FROM OUR MEMBER



386km
Km of river opened up to
fish passage



686
pollution incidents
and water quality
improvements made



Assisted 120
communities at
risk of flooding



worked with 928
farms



527km
of river habitat
improved



70
flood risk reduction
projects worked on



4506
volunteers

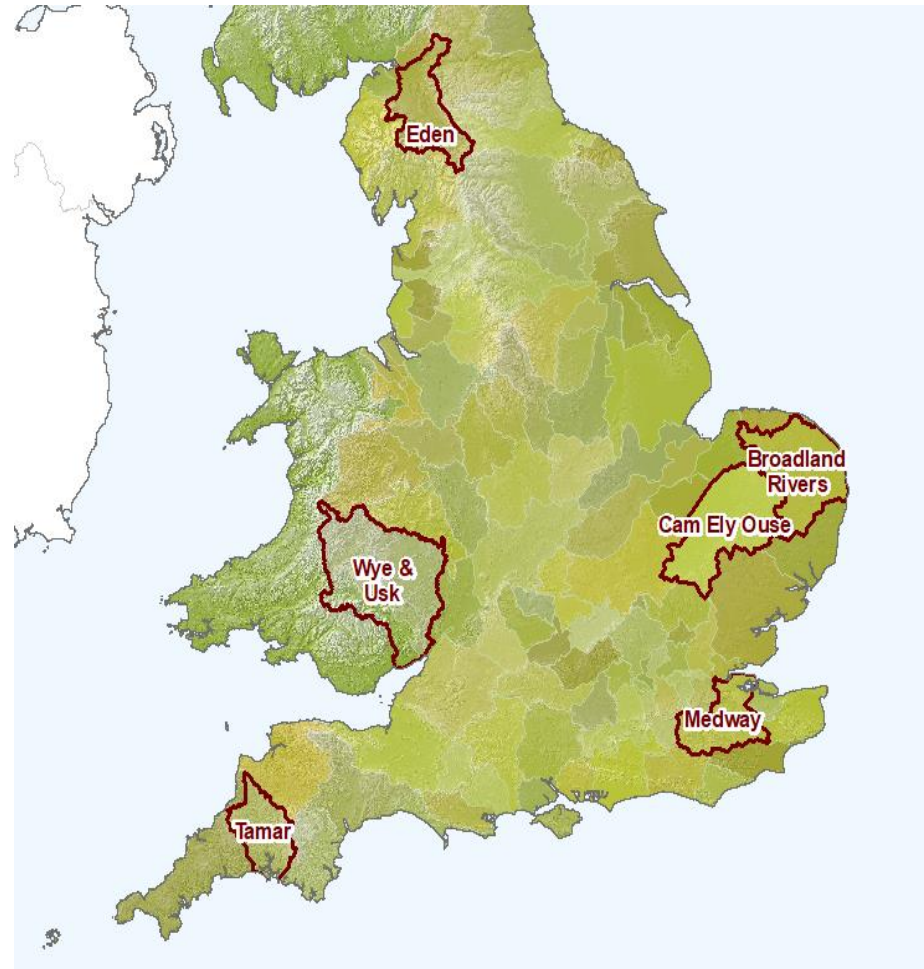
TRUSTS ACROSS THE UK

the umbrella body of the rivers trust movement

where there's **water**, there's **life**

The UK Courtauld Projects

- Delivered by Rivers Trusts Water Stewardship Service
- Stressed & vulnerable catchments
- Key sourcing areas
- Align with existing initiatives, building on best practice
- Mature partnerships able to address known issues
- Demonstrate benefits of collective action





In conclusion

- Poor management of soils and water is affecting freshwater ecosystems and presenting risks to business and communities
- Water stewardship provides a framework for engaging business in sustainable water management
- WWF is taking action to engage business and is supporting the scale up of action, for example through the C2025 Commitment



**DO IT
FOR YOUR
PLANET**

Any questions contact Lucy at llee@wwf.org.uk