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Thirst for change: Securing a water positive future

**Built Environment Sector
Overview**



By Royal Charter



It is estimated that buildings and construction use over 15% of global freshwater use, although it could be much higher, given that concrete production alone is reported to make up around 9% of global industrial water withdrawals¹.

Examples of construction product manufacturing processes that use water include: pre-cast concrete and cement-based products, plastics and resins, rainwater goods, wood panels; ceramics, glass, paint coatings and steel².

Building operations including landscaping are estimated to account for around 12% of total water use in the US³. Meanwhile, in Europe buildings are responsible for the majority of the 21% of abstracted water for public supply⁴. This means there are significant benefits to be realized from water efficiency during construction and operation of built assets.

¹ [Water, energy, and carbon dioxide footprints of the construction sector: A case study on developed and developing economies](#), Pomponi and Stephan

² [Water Efficiency: the contribution of construction products](#), CPA

³ [Green Building 101: How does water efficiency impact a building?](#), LEED

⁴ [Level\(s\) European framework for sustainable buildings](#), European Commission,



Considerations for achieving water efficient buildings ^{5,6}

- Upholding water efficient practices during construction
- Consideration and mitigation of water footprint of materials
- Installing alternative water systems
- Installing water efficient fixtures & fittings
- Metering & sub-metering
- Effective soil management
- Learning from global best practice
- Setting targets within a water management strategy
- Pursuing relevant green building accreditation
- Water efficiency labelling schemes

Read the full list of recommendations and explore best practice examples in [Thirst for change: Securing a water positive future.](#)

⁵ [Green Building 101: How does water efficiency impact a building?](#), LEED
⁶ [Save Water on your Construction Site](#), Construction Leadership Council

