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From vision to action
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BASF Water Stewardship

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Short summary

Water is a vital resource – for both humanity and for the chemical industry. BASF uses water as a coolant, solvent and cleaning agent, as well as in its products. At the same time, BASF offers its customer's solutions that help to purify water, use it more efficiently and reduce contamination.

To promote water stewardship and to increase BASF's resilience towards the resource water we pursue the goal of establishing sustainable water management at all sites in water stress areas by 2020 by applying the European Water Stewardship (EWS) standard. We introduced this voluntary industrial standard at nearly all of our European sites in water stress areas. An external audit in 2013 awarded us gold-level certification for our extensive application of the EWS standard and water management at the production site in Tarragona, Spain. In 2014 also our Verbund site in Ludwigshafen received the EWS standard gold-level certification.

In general the application of the cooperatively developed EWS Standard has many benefits for companies. They receive a clear picture of their water management because risks and areas for potential improvement are identified.

BASF has set corporate global goals of reducing emissions to water of organic substances and nitrogen by 80%; and to reduce emissions of heavy metals by 60% until 2020 compared with baseline 2002.

To avoid unanticipated emissions, BASF reviews the water protection concepts at all production sites. We are constructing plants for the improvement of wastewater analytics at our sites in Ludwigshafen, Germany, and Geismar, Louisiana, which will help us to identify unanticipated emissions at an even earlier stage. The Ludwigshafen plant also contains special online monitoring systems that enable us to catch relevant pollutants in our wastewater even more quickly.

With the introduction of sustainable water management, BASF is also making an important contribution to fulfilling its purpose: "We create chemistry for a sustainable future."

Key words:

Reducing pollution ; Eliminating dumping of hazardouse waste ; Minimising release of hazardous chemicals and materials - achieve sound management of chemicals through their life cycle ; Reducing untreated wastewater ; Increasing recycling and safe reuse ; Protect, restore and sustainable use of inland freshwater related ecosystems ; Prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of alien species ; Reduce economic losses ; Protection of the poor and vulnerable

Issues addressed:

Water resources management (water-use efficiency, integrated water resources management, transboundary cooperation, sustainable extraction and supply of freshwater)

With the European Water Stewardship Standard, businesses can assess and improve their water management based on the criteria water abstraction volumes, water quality, conservation of biodiversity and water governance. Water stewardship is a framework that drives companies to become responsible water users by helping them to understand the value of water and by encouraging them to work with other actors in their areas of operation to improve water management.

Water quality (pollution, dumping of toxic materials, wastewater management, recycling, reuse, restore ecosystems and aquifers)

Improvement of wastewater analytics at production sites (Ludwigshafen, Germany, and Geismar, Louisiana) supports the identification of unanticipated emissions at an even earlier stage.