

Our position on the issue of water scarcity and Boots brand products

Our Product Sustainability Strategy commits us to manage our material resources to reduce environmental and social impacts whilst fully understanding and measuring the opportunities to drive sustainability improvements.

Through our product sustainability assessment process we measure the sustainability impact (product footprint) of Boots brand products. As part of the assessment both product water content and the water requirement of the product in use are considered.

Products with significant water impacts are being identified and opportunities for improvement investigated. This includes consideration of:

- Product water content – implications for water scarcity in raw material / product source locations.
- Water content in Use – implications in the location/s where the product is sold.

Alliance Boots contract manufacturing business, BCM, already has a programme to address water management for in-house manufacturing operations and we have taken steps to reduce the water impact of materials we source, (by using bamboo fibre instead of cotton in our socks, for example)

We continue to seek opportunities to reduce our impact on water scarcity including;

- The development of products using less water intensive raw materials
- The development of products requiring less water in manufacturing, including processing water.
- The development of products requiring less water in use, either through product design or via provision of appropriate use information to consumers.

Position support document

There is a finite amount of freshwater on the planet, (only 3% of total water in the world is freshwater and less than 1% is usable by humans)¹. Rapid growth in human population and accelerating levels of consumption coupled with a greater risk to availability due to climate change mean that the world's water supplies are under increasing stress.

There are great geographical variations in the levels of water stress. Water stressed areas can be classified into areas where there is physical scarcity of water and areas where there is a lack of water distribution infrastructure (economic scarcity).

Water scarcity implications for Boots will mainly concern the products we develop, manufacture and sell. This will be through firstly; the water impact of raw material production and product manufacture, and secondly, the water required in the use of our products by consumers.

¹ WWF / Lloyds Global Water Scarcity Briefing 2010