

Water and Sanitation in the News

Coca-Cola bottling company reduces water use by 70% over five years

Beverage bottling company Amalgamated Beverage Industries (ABI) – the largest manufacturer and bottler of Coca-Cola products in the southern hemisphere – has succeeded in reducing the water required to produce beverages across its five plants by some 70% over the last five years, while also narrowing its energy footprint over the same period by some 45%.

The SABMiller-owned company previously used 2.5ℓ of water to manufacture 1ℓ of soft drink, but had succeeded in narrowing this figure to an average of 1.7ℓ by early this year. Of this, 1ℓ of water was contained within that actual beverage itself, while the remaining 700 ml was used during the manufacturing and bottling process. However, only 10% of the 700ml used along the production line was recycled...

Source: *Engineering News*, 30 March 2015

Context

As the effects of drought and climate change are being felt across South Africa and many parts of the world, big industry role players and water users are urgently seeking ways to reduce their water demand and impacts. Even retailer Woolworths is on a mission to save water and has been changing store designs in its retail store network across the whole African continent. Its stores now include features such as water-saving air-conditioning, kitchens and rest-room facilities and at the same time a few selected properties collect rainwater, while a few others recycle it.

The move to sophisticated water monitoring, revealed a surprising amount of water lost through an extensive matrix of leaks, hidden from view, beneath its stores. At one store in Cape Town, Woolworths discovered leaks, which resulted in the loss of 2.5 million litres of water a month, which is as much as an Olympic size swimming pool of municipal water lost a month. Woolworths now works with property developers and landlords, across the continent to repair leaks and improve water billing...

According to Mike Muller, a member of the National Planning Commission, the logic and importance of reducing water losses has long been recognised by national government. But a systematic water loss control

programme cannot be a standalone campaign. It demands that a set of core municipal functions works well and the amount of water lost provides an objective indicator of municipal performance. This is why recent initiatives could help to transform municipalities, the water sector's contribution to the wider "back to basics" campaign. Two of the main initiatives are:

- Water and Sanitation Minister Nomvula Mokonyane have launched the "No Drop" benchmark, which requires all municipalities to report on their "nonrevenue water". Failure to do so will draw the attention of the auditor-general, who is already querying metropolitan municipalities' accounts that have inadequate information about water loss and steps to control it. The Strategic Water Partners Network, a business-government partnership, has supported the development of the "No Drop" benchmark.
- The South African Local Government Authority has an exciting new programme to finance water loss reduction initiatives. The condition is that they must eventually pay for themselves through water savings. This follows the decision of the country's mayors to put 1% of their annual capital budgets into a revolving fund for water loss reduction...

As municipalities pursue reductions in water losses, they will increase their ability to anticipate failures and plan to replace the infrastructure before its failure becomes a permanent crisis. In doing so, they will save money that can in turn be channelled into infrastructure replacement and expansion. So fixing that leak could truly transform the face of local government.

Source: *Fibre2gashion.com*, 25 March 2015; *Business Day*, 19 March 2015

The **Municipal Assistant™** system facilitates the operations, maintenance (preventive and reactive) and management of water and wastewater facilities and related infrastructure. The system helps ensure that assets and people perform at optimal levels, which reduce service disruptions due to asset failure or human error, thereby reducing future maintenance costs.

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