

LafargeHolcim Approach to Measuring Positive Impact on Water Management

Dr. Maria Rosario Chan, Senior Manager, Global Sustainable Development, LafargeHolcim, Switzerland

LafargeHolcim launched its sustainable development strategy, The 2030 Plan, in 2016 with one overarching objective – generate one third of net sales from more sustainable products and solutions. The plan is anchored on 4 key pillars: climate, circular economy, water and nature, and quality of life of communities and employees.

LafargeHolcim commitment on Water comprises two parts: 1) To improve water efficiency by 30% in cement by 2030; and 2) To achieve positive water index in water-scarce areas where LafargeHolcim operates by 2030. The latter aims to create a more efficient, equitable, and sustainable water resources management in water-stressed areas by “returning back more water to the community and nature than LafargeHolcim consumes” and promote a sustainable use of water resources, through community and watershed projects.

A “water scarce” area is determined by employing the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Global Water Tool: any area with an annual total renewable supply per person of less than 1,000 cubic meters is classified as water scarce. Using a methodology reviewed by the Swiss Development Agency, the Positive Water Index for each site will be assessed through a Water Credit/ Water Debit approach. This approach will consider both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Building on previous experiences, different categories of projects enhancing water sustainability will be deployed. These include:

1. watershed protection and restoration: recharge of natural water sources; construction of check dams to intercept run-offs; and reforestation
2. water access and sanitation: improvement of access to safe water through well; construction and development of sanitation solutions
3. water for productive use: use of treated wastewater for water-efficient irrigation and agricultural practices

The LafargeHolcim WPIM methodology was successfully piloted on two projects, including groundwater recharge and efficient agriculture by Ambuja Cement Ltd, in India.