



## Water Neutral Offset Calculator – for Socially Responsible Travellers Visiting Southern Africa

**Stockholm, August 20, 2008.** An Individual Water Neutral Offset Calculator, a global first, was launched today at the World Water Week.

The idea of the water-neutral concept is to stimulate individuals and corporations who are engaged in water consuming or polluting activities to make their activities 'water neutral'. They do this by reducing water consumption and pollution and by compensating for the negative impacts of remaining water consumption and pollution through investing in water offset projects that promote the sustainable and equitable use of water in the environments and communities that are affected.

The water neutral concept was conceived by Pancho Ndebele, founder of Water Neutral, at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development. The idea was to quantify the water consumed during the conference by delegates and encourage them to make the summit water neutral by purchasing water-neutral certificates to offset their water consumption during the 10-day summit. The offset investment would be earmarked for the provision of water to poor communities in South Africa and for water efficiency initiatives.

To demonstrate the concept's viability, Water Neutral has developed the individual Water Neutral Offset Calculator. This is a scientifically based calculator which quantifies the volumes of water used to produce goods by a socially responsible traveller visiting Southern Africa on a daily basis, either on holiday or business. The calculator is linked to a tool that calculates the offset price necessary for each unit of water footprint.

"Water consumption and pollution can be reduced, for example, by investing in water saving technology, water conservation measures and wastewater treatment. Compensation for negative impacts can be done, for instance, by investing in improved watershed management or by supporting poor communities that do not have access to clean water to set up and maintain their own water supply system", says Dr Ashok Chapagain, co-developer of the individual water offset calculator:

"The concept can be applied in a variety of contexts, such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup or the Olympic Games, that generally have a significant additional impact on local water systems. These can be organised in a 'water neutral' way by minimising water use and pollution by all possible means, and by investing in local water offset projects", says Professor Arjen Hoekstra, co-developer of the individual water offset calculator.

"In the early stages of water neutral we struggled to develop the scientific basis and at the World Summit we had to estimate the volume of water consumed by the delegates. Things have since progressed. Today, we do have the scientific basis and the backbone of the calculator is the water footprint concept developed by Professor Hoekstra" says Pancho Ndebele, founder of Water Neutral.

"Our approach to water neutrality does not mean zero use, but it means reducing the water footprint of an individual (or entity) and balancing (off-setting) the remaining use in a meaningful way," he says

### About Water Neutral

Water Neutral is a not for profit entity registered in South Africa. Its campaign is targeted at individuals, corporations and other organisations keen to contribute to the global water challenge. The funds raised via the 'water neutral' concept are channelled to initiatives aimed at promoting water efficiency and the provision of clean drinking water in water needy communities. The initiative's initial focus is Southern Africa and the long-term goal is to introduce the individual water neutral offset calculator to other parts of the world in partnership with like minded organisations keen to make a difference.

[www.waternerutral.org](http://www.waternerutral.org)

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