General Mills Water Policy

As a food company, we will always depend on clean, abundant water to grow our ingredients and manufacture our products.

Water and climate are inextricably linked, with 90% of climate change impact showing up as water impact, according to a UN Sustainable Development statement. A holistic water strategy supports our climate strategy to address impact in the places and systems we depend on. Because agriculture accounts for 70% of global freshwater withdrawals, per OECD data, the food sector faces increasing impacts on water quality and availability due to the impact of climate change on global and local water cycles and increasing human demands. This underscores the leadership role General Mills and other food companies must take to address water stewardship issues.

General Mills has a track record of leadership in water stewardship. We focus on water use from watershed to production, identify opportunities to increase efficiency, conservation and local water cycle restoration, and continually work to improve performance and enhance resilience. Our vision is a healthy water cycle with clean, abundant water accessible to watershed stakeholders and ecosystems. We are committed to multi-stakeholder collaboration as a foundation of success in implementing this strategy.

To mitigate and adapt to future water risk, we focus in the following areas:

Assessment

- Analyze business risk, opportunity and water impairment in watersheds relevant to all direct materials sourcing and both owned and contract manufacturing, on a three-year cadence. Select watersheds for prioritization and action plan development. This cadence ensures that our prioritization reflects changes in sourcing locations, product mix, external context and improvements in risk assessment tools, and gives us a time-bound period in which to advance progress against context-based goals.
- Continue integrating Science Based Target for Freshwater methodology into our tri-annual water assessment.
- Current priority watersheds (2023 – 2025)

Direct operations (wholly owned)

- Ensure that our direct operations do not encroach on the human right to water and sanitation in the communities in which we operate. This includes providing a safe and healthy work environment, including safe water for drinking and hygiene in our facilities globally as well as setting targets for wastewater discharge in full compliance with local regulations and where needed, treating our wastewater internally before release to the environment. Each plant assesses their operational context and develops an appropriate water treatment plan covering withdrawal, treatment and discharge. Water is tracked at the plant level on a monthly basis in our internal data platform.
- Evaluate certification such as the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) Water Stewardship Standard for facilities that located in priority watersheds. E.g. our plant in Albuquerque, New Mexico (Rio Grande watershed) has been AWS certified since 2021.

Supplier engagement

- Engage suppliers as partners in responsible water stewardship and resilience. We expect suppliers to continually improve their own environmental performance, including optimizing use of water and minimizing water pollution and waste. (See General Mills Supplier Code of Conduct for more details. Our suppliers - General Mills)
- Set clear expectations that our suppliers provide a safe and healthy work environment including safe water for drinking and hygiene and they comply with all applicable environmental laws.
- Within key ingredient supply chains, demonstrate improvements in water stewardship and resilience outcomes, e.g., collaboration with industry stakeholders on regenerative agriculture and water outcomes for almond farms in California and modeling of potential for regenerative agriculture to contribute to water quality goals for Lake Michigan (see p. 52 – 53 of the 2025 Global Responsibility Report for case studies).

Multi-stakeholder water stewardship

- Pursue a long term, multi-stakeholder water stewardship strategy - inclusive of our suppliers, local communities, governments, NGOs, and industry - focused on improving the health of priority watersheds where our operations and growing regions are located. E.g. General Mills participates in the California Water Resilience Initiative as a Basin Leader to galvanize corporate contribution to shared state-wide water targets. We are also collaborating with local stakeholders in Western Kansas toward a collaborative to return the Ogallala Aquifer to stable levels.

Governance

- Ensure responsible governance and oversight of water risk mitigation and adaptation for General Mills operations and sourcing.
- Get input from the General Mills Global Impact Governance Committee (GIGC) at least three times per year to review and approve sustainability strategies, programs and key investments. Led by the CEO, the GIGC includes senior functional, business, and operating leadership. GIGC subcommittees on Climate & Nature and Risks & Regulations convene in the interim to guide progress.
- Review progress with the General Mills Board of Directors through The Public Responsibility Committee which oversees global sustainability efforts.

Investment

- Include water risk considerations in business decisions such as locating new facilities.

Innovation

- Support innovation of practical tools for farmers to support water stewardship through partnership with suppliers, NGOs and industry roundtables such as; our regenerative agriculture pilots with key suppliers, our leadership in the California Water Action Collaborative and our participation in the Science Based Target Network's Freshwater pilot.

To maintain transparency and support an enabling environment for corporate water stewardship, we prioritize the following actions:

Disclosures

- Report progress against goals on an annual basis via our Global Responsibility Report, available on the General Mills website. This includes communication about our progress in implementing our watershed stewardship strategy and our sustainable sourcing efforts.
- Continue participation in Climate Disclosure Project (CDP) water reporting.

Policy engagement

- Advocate for effective and efficient public and industry association policy and action, through actions such as encouraging peers to participate in the CDP water disclosure, signing on to the CEO Water Mandate and to set context-based goals and actions plans in accordance with the Alliance for Water Stewardship standard.
- Collaborate with key federal and state agencies to develop public-private partnerships and advance progress toward shared goals.