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This week, leaders from around the world are attending the first water-focused event hosted by the United Nations in 46 years. It's an opportunity to search for answers as the world struggles with increasingly extreme water challenges highlighted in the recent IPCC report. Water is a precious finite resource, essential for life. For Microsoft, water management is critical to operations such as those needed to cool our datacenters and operate our buildings globally. And that is why, in 2020, Microsoft announced its [commitment to become water positive by 2030](#) and joined the [Water Resilience Coalition](#). Getting to water positive goes beyond reducing water-use intensity and replenishing water sources; it's also about providing people across the globe with access to water and sanitation services, engaging in public policy and driving innovation.

Today, we are excited to share the progress that has been made since the announcement of our commitment in 2020. This includes new details on how we're working with customers and partners to help organizations monitor and manage their water data more effectively, an investment we're making through the Microsoft Climate Innovation Fund to scale replenishment and

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water access projects globally, and a first-of-its-kind leak detection technology replenishment project with FIDO Tech.

The five pillars of water positive

Over the past three years, we've been working across five pillars to guide the actions we have taken and that will continue to influence our future decisions:

1. *Reducing our water footprint across our direct operations*

We take a holistic approach to water reduction across our business, from design to efficiency, looking for immediate opportunities through operational usage and, in the longer term, through design innovation to reduce, recycle and repurpose water. While we have more work to do, this approach has led to progress across our datacenter fleet. We've found success in using direct air instead of water to cool datacenters, harvesting rainwater and procuring reclaimed water from utilities to reduce our dependence on freshwater. Datacenters in cooler environments, such as Sweden and Finland, for example, require no freshwater from municipal sources for cooling. We are also finding efficiencies and driving reductions on our campuses. Our Silicon Valley campus is pursuing net-zero water certification through the International Living Futures Institute (ILFI) and is on track to become one of the first technology campuses to secure this accreditation.

2. *Increasing access to water and sanitation services*

Today, [one in four people on Earth don't have access to safe drinking water and over half of the global population lacks safely managed sanitation services](#). Since 2020, we have partnered with [Water.org](#) to provide microloans for a range of water solutions, such as installation of toilets and taps and improved water storage, to people in India, Indonesia, Mexico and Brazil. **To date, our support has provided more than 1 million people with safe water and sanitation, and we are well on our way to achieving our goal to reach 1.5 million people.** We are excited by this progress and yet we are aware that it is not enough. We will continue to look for new ways to scale our reach in locations where we operate across the globe,

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providing opportunities to those who can't afford microloans. This guiding principle has informed new replenishment investments we're making.

3. *Replenishing* more water than we consume across our operations

Replenishment is a critical component of our water journey as we look for opportunities to return water to its original source. At Microsoft, we are replenishing more than we consume across our operations in 40 priority high-stressed basins where we operate. Since 2019, we have invested more than \$7 million in replenishment projects around the world, ranging from watershed protection to agricultural water efficiency evaluation.

As part of our continued effort to scale investment in water access and replenishment, we're excited to announce that we've reached a preliminary agreement with WaterEquity to be the first investor in the [Water and Climate Resilience Fund](#), subject to execution of final documents. The fund will focus exclusively on investing in municipal-level climate-resilient water and sanitation infrastructure for low-income populations in countries in South and Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Through this fund, WaterEquity will provide financing for eligible projects and companies intended to improve water sourcing, treatment, distribution and reuse. This investment represents our third water-related project advanced through Microsoft's \$1B Climate Innovation Fund.

The global volume of non-revenue water, or freshwater that is lost due to leaks, is [estimated](#) to be 346 million cubic metres per day, amounting to 30% of water system input volumes across the world. Water data and new AI-powered tools can help address this challenge and have a tremendous impact on water solutions like leak detection. **Today, we're announcing a first-of-its-kind leak detection technology replenishment project in London with FIDO Tech that will reduce water lost to leakage in London's ageing distribution network, leveraging FIDO's AI-enabled acoustic leak analysis. This project is expected to save millions of cubic meters of water per year.**

Traditional replenishment projects alone will not meet the scale that the world needs as water challenges continue to worsen around the world. These new initiatives with WaterEquity and

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FIDO Tech represent how we're looking to invest in scaling up our replenishment work through partnership with both non-profit and private-sector entities that are working to solve critical water challenges.

4. Scaling water solutions through *innovation and digitization*

The work we continue to do at Microsoft to manage the water used across our own operations, and through access and replenishment projects, is critical. However, we know that we can magnify our potential impact by investing in – and bringing our technology to – customers and partners building innovative technologies that help the world protect freshwater resources. Innovation and digitization of water data is a critical component of the world's water journey, helping to identify and understand where water stress is emerging.

Today, we're announcing a [joint solution](#) with Ecolab that combines their ECOLAB3D™ digital platform with Microsoft Sustainability Manager to monitor and manage water data, helping organizations to achieve water sustainability goals and accelerate overall sustainability progress. We're thrilled to be working with Ecolab to drive more efficient water management in production processes toward reducing water use, energy use and carbon emissions for our customers.

5. Advocating for effective and innovative *water policy*

We recognize that government engagement in the world's water crisis is a key piece of the puzzle in protecting freshwater resources across the globe. Microsoft has a longstanding history of environmental sustainability action and advocacy, and we will continue to look for opportunities to use our voice to advance the policies that incentivize and scale water reduction and replenishment, and increase access to clean water in water-stressed regions.

What's next

In 2020, we set an ambitious commitment to be water positive and we co-founded the Water Resilience Coalition (WRC), a CEO-led initiative to reduce water stress by 2050. **Today, we**

are building on this strong foundation with the WRC and signing an [Open Call for Water Action](#) to accelerate the collective impact businesses can have in building greater water resilience. This, along with investments and projects announced today, are great examples of our continued commitment to make water a central piece of our environmental sustainability strategy.

In the years ahead we will continue making progress against the five pillars of our water positive commitment. We look to scale our efforts to reduce water use across our operations while increasing procurement from alternative sources, and increase the number of innovative replenishment and access projects that we invest in.

Tags: [climate change](#), [Microsoft Sustainability Manager](#), [net zero](#), [sustainability](#), [Water and Climate Resilience Fund](#), [water positive](#)

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