



Reducing water use in office parks

Old Mutual
Mutual Park, Cape Town

Through process and behavioural changes, Old Mutual has reduced water use by 35%, from 15 000 kl to below 10 000 kl per month.

CaseStudy

Challenge

Old Mutual's Cape Town Office Park is the Southern Hemisphere's largest office building with 9000 employees. The park boasts a 5-star Green Star SA Existing Building Performance rating*. In response to the drought, Old Mutual launched numerous interventions in January 2017 to reduce their water footprint.

Solution

Old Mutual has reduced its water footprint through efficiency and behavioural interventions. Efficiency measures currently include waterless hand sanitizer use, low-flow tap aerator installations, and gymnasium shower access restrictions. Grey water is used for all landscaping and all water fountains have been turned off. The company is also re-using the backwash water from air-conditioners. Smart-water meters monitor water usage rates and detect water leaks and wastage. Water targets have been incorporated into performance management processes. Finally, educational water saving sessions are used to promote the #WaterWise message among staff members.

Business benefits

Through these interventions, Old Mutual reduced water consumption by up to 35% per month from January 2017, at nominal cost.

*The Green Star SA rating is a tool developed by the Green Building Council South Africa assigned on a measured basis of environmental considerations in the property industry.

**SANS 241 is the South African National Standard Drinking Water Specification indicating the requirements for potable water as safe for human consumption

Lessons learned and plans for the future

Old Mutual is installing a water filtration plant to convert all black water (and treated municipal effluent when needed) to potable standards, compliant with SANS 241**. The plant will save between 10 000 kl to 15 000 kl of municipal water per month. An existing borehole will act as a further backup source to remove the park's dependency on municipal water supplies, should treated effluent be unavailable. Old Mutual is also investigating ways to recharge groundwater, such as through rainwater harvesting and permeable paving.

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