Unpolluted fresh water is the basis for the well-being of humans and ecosystems alike. We commit to environmental responsibility and respect the right to water for personal and domestic use (UN Human Right to Water). With our products, we enable our customers to improve water use efficiency and to sustain water quality. A variety of our gases and technologies is used to eliminate harmful substances in drinking water and bodies of water, to treat wastewater and to protect water ecosystems. At the same time, Linde relies on water in its operations. Responsible and considerate use of water is therefore an indispensable part of Linde’s business strategy.

Water use and conservation

At Linde, water is used primarily for steam generation and in manufacturing processes. More than 90 percent of the water used is for cooling purposes and is mainly sourced from water supply companies and surface water sources, such as rivers or lakes, as well as ground water. Most of this cooling water is merely being warmed from the cooling process, and can subsequently be fed back into water systems without the need for treatment. Drinking water accounts for roughly two percent of Linde’s global water consumption.

Where we do generate wastewater, this is either cleaned directly by in-house wastewater treatment plants or discharged into municipal or industrial systems for cleaning. In order to assess and track the impact of these discharges on the environment, we measure emissions such as phosphates, nitrates and organic compounds where we are required to do so by law.

About one tenth of our major production plants are located in regions with a high exposure to water risks, for example in regions where water scarcity is high. While placing a special focus on these sites, we strive towards reducing our water footprint in all our production facilities around the globe – for example by employing closed-loop systems, increasing the efficiency of water pumps and looking for recycled sources.

Our principles

Responsible use of natural resources is part of our global SHEQ (Safety, Health, Environment & Quality) policy. In order to deliver our products in the most sustainable way, we commit to the following principles regarding water use and conservation:

- **Safety:** We preserve the quality of water resources for our local community members. When planning new sites, we follow internationally recognised guidelines, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Biodiversity-Inclusive Impact Assessment issued by the United Nations.

- **Compliance:** We fully comply with all applicable laws and regulations regarding water use and wastewater discharge.

- **Efficiency:** We strive to optimise water use and discharge at our sites by minimising fresh water use and wastewater production.

- **Focus:** We regularly conduct water risk assessments, for example on the basis of the criteria set out by the World Resources Institute in order to focus our efforts on those sites where measures for improvement are most effective.

- **Transparency:** We regularly monitor and disclose water-related key performance indicators (source, use, discharge quality). We openly communicate and engage with our communities regarding our water usage and conservation initiatives.

- **Products:** We constantly evolve our product portfolio, enabling our customers to contribute to water quality.

Our processes

Linde has established a global management system for environmental protection based on defined responsibilities, standards and procedures. We conduct audits at site level to verify that the Group is complying with all regulatory and self-imposed requirements. Water risks are also covered and managed in the framework of Linde’s global risk management system.