

Water for the future: Water Scape builds bridge between nature and business

30 June 2025 | News

Masatoshi Kawasaki, President and Representative Director of Water Scape



Masatoshi Kawasaki, President and Representative Director of Water Scape

As climate change, industrialisation, and population growth place increasing pressure on water resources around the world, the need for innovative solutions for water sustainability is more urgent than ever. In response to this challenge, Suntory Holdings has launched Water Scape Ltd., a company dedicated to advancing sustainable water management through the use of cutting-edge science and decades of research.

In an exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Masatoshi Kawasaki, President and Representative Director of Water Scape, discusses the company's mission, which is rooted in Suntory's extensive expertise in water management. He outlines their ambitious vision to transform how businesses and communities monitor, manage, and secure groundwater resources. Kawasaki also highlights Water Scape's diagnostic technologies and data-driven modelling, explaining how this startup, born from Suntory's internal venture program FRONTIER DOJO, aims to create a lasting impact both in Japan and globally. The goal is to foster a society that lives in harmony with local watersheds.

What inspired Suntory Holdings to create Water Scape Ltd., and what unique role do you see this new company playing in addressing water-related challenges?

Suntory Holdings established Water Scape to address the increasing awareness of various water-related challenges both in Japan and around the world. Suntory Group has conducted extensive research on water, including studies to enhance the function of forests in recharging water resources, at Suntory Global Innovation Centre's Institute for Water Science since 2003. We can effectively tackle these challenges of water resource security and management by leveraging the technology and expertise we have accumulated, such as estimating groundwater recharge at Suntory Natural Water Sanctuaries and developing indicators to assess the environmental impact of water use by considering regional water scarcity.

How does Water Scape plan to leverage the research and expertise from Suntory's Institute for Water Science in its commercial services?

Water Scape aims to leverage and commercialise technologies and insights developed by Suntory's Institute for Water Science for businesses and local communities facing water security and management issues. Water Scape will assist in securing sustainable water supplies by visualising groundwater conditions based on scientific data and evidence from hydrology. Specifically, the company plans to provide diagnostic and monitoring services for groundwater resources and support the formulation of action plans, including investment strategies to secure water supplies sustainably. Initially, Water Scape will start by offering its service to businesses facing challenges in securing groundwater. In the future, the company also plans to support businesses and local communities seeking to enhance their value-added activities by contributing to a sound water cycle.

Could you explain how Water Scape's diagnostic and monitoring services for groundwater resources work, and what kind of data or technology is involved?

Water Scape's diagnostic and monitoring services for groundwater resources start with a thorough understanding of the current situation. Through comprehensive interviews and data analysis, the current state of water sources and facilities is visualised, and a preliminary risk assessment is conducted. In this process, any missing data or analysis necessary for achieving the desired risk assessment results is identified. Following this, a water cycle model is constructed using both public and proprietary data, visualising both current and future water source conditions. This process enables the detailed calculation of available water volumes at business sites and in regions, the probability of anomalies, and scenarios leading to such anomalies. Furthermore, to ensure sustainable business operations, goals and monitoring indicators are designed, and optimal measures addressing identified challenges are planned. Finally, monitoring based on these designed indicators is performed using a proprietary dashboard, with timely reporting and necessary measures being devised. Through this PDCA cycle, effective and sustainable management and utilisation of groundwater resources are achieved.

What are some of the key challenges businesses and local communities are currently facing regarding groundwater security, and how can Water Scape help them address these issues?

In Japan, issues such as disasters caused by ageing water infrastructure, rising water bills, and the deterioration of watershed conservation forests due to a shortage of workers are becoming increasingly serious. Internationally, frequent droughts and heavy rains impact crop yields worldwide, contributing to the rise in raw material prices. In response to these challenges, Water Scape will provide support in mitigating business and operational risks for factories and in constructing action plans. We also offer outputs that assist with reporting and explaining these matters both internally and externally, thereby supporting efforts for sustainable water management.

Water Scape was launched through Suntory's internal venture program, FRONTIER DOJO. How did that process shape the vision and goals of the company?

Frontier DOJO is a program where employees come in with new business ideas and refine them through mentoring by entrepreneurs and other means. Through this program, I learned the importance of thorough customer orientation. As a result, I was able to create a realistic business model that led to the establishment of the company. Meanwhile, the vision of the company has not changed since the beginning. Suntory Group's corporate slogan under its corporate philosophy is sustained by nature and water, and we wanted to spread to society the way of coexisting with water. Therefore, we expressed this desire with the phrase: "Promoting a society where people and nature coexist in harmony within the local watersheds"

Looking ahead, what are Water Scape's ambitions for growth and impact? Both within Japan and internationally?

Through Water Scape, Suntory Group aims to promote a society where people and nature coexist in harmony within the local watersheds by supporting voluntary water sustainability initiatives led by local communities.

Shaddha Warde

shraddha.warde@mmactiv.com