

Boyden Report Highlights Water Scarcity Is a Major Threat to Global Business

Leadership, resources and new skill sets will be essential to mitigate risk and environmental concerns for businesses globally

NEW YORK and LONDON, February 10, 2020 – In line with discussions at Davos 2020 on the need to create a more cohesive and sustainable world, premier global talent and leadership advisory firm [Boyden](#) has released a [new report](#) that finds water security has become a primary concern for NGOs, government and business leaders in developing and developed countries alike.

[Boyden's report](#), entitled "The New World of Water: Growing Scarcity, Complex Hydro-Politics and the Major Threat to Global Business," explores how business leaders across several industries are having to address the impact of this new reality. The report finds that leadership, talent and a change of mindset are the keys to survival of business and humanity. By 2035, the United Nations projects that as much as 40% of the world's population will live in areas facing water scarcity.

The report is based on exclusive Boyden interviews with experts and senior executives from specialist water and industrial companies and private equity firms as well as Boyden partners from across the globe.

From a talent perspective, trends in water sector transformation mean more global searches and a keener focus on multidisciplinary experience, covering geopolitics and diplomacy, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, regulation, technology, investment flows, branding and attracting executives and engineers to tech-driven opportunities.

"Expertise and disruptive innovation will be brought in from other sectors and we have begun to see a wave of acquisitions from bigger corporates to drive solutions and stay ahead," said [Francesca d'Arcangeli](#), Global Industrial Practice Leader and a Managing Partner of Boyden United Kingdom.

"Our search work is increasingly global because we are looking for remote skill sets," added [Allan Marks](#), Managing Partner of Boyden Australia. "As well as sector experience, it is essential that executives demonstrate modern thinking around management. Some high-potential executives come from consulting, others possibly from government, where they have some affinity with energy and utilities."

In water resource management, the lack of data and analytical frameworks to facilitate traditional decision-making and investment is a major challenge. Private equity-backed water tech and agri-tech companies have therefore emerged to recalibrate water management in agriculture, industry and utilities.

"The leadership perspective we look for today is both local and global," said Lidia Messellod, Vice President of HR, Global Supply Chain [Xylem](#), a water technology provider. "Local in terms of regulatory awareness and global in terms of knowing where water could be a problem in a country, and the ability to anticipate issues."

"A major trend is the shift from product to services and added value, as companies operate in more complex areas, both geographically and commercially," added Paola Mazzoleni, Chief Human Resources Officer at [Tenaris](#), a global energy and industrial supplier. "This is changing the whole approach to leadership and talent pipelines, with much broader competencies required alongside technical capabilities."

In addition, the report addresses the following topics:

- Leadership in the new world of water
- Emerging talents
- Limited economic data
- Insufficient funding for water management
- Private equity & tech start-ups
- Public-private partnerships

"Most of the world's water utilities are in the political system, so if you don't understand the politics behind a CEO appointment at a water utility, you will not be able to do your work," explained Former Ambassador Ram Aviram, who served in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and now leads water consultancy [BIT](#).

"Energy, utilities and agricultural companies have complex needs because they operate against a complex socio-political backdrop," added [Anders Lindholm](#), Managing Partner of Boyden Italy. "Therefore, today's leaders need political awareness, technical understanding, and a very keen sense of how and where technology will have the most impact in their business".

Human need, geopolitics, technology and leaders with the determination, knowledge and skills to tackle complex critical issues will continue to transform the water sector. To avoid the threat to business, we must all become ever more sophisticated in understanding this multi-discipline sector.

[Tom Zay](#), Managing Partner of Boyden United States in Houston and leader of Boyden's global energy sector, sums it up: "From the standpoint of business viability, if a company's leaders are not thinking about water availability and wastewater management, they are exposing the company to major risk and environmental scrutiny."

About Boyden

Boyden is a premier talent and leadership advisory firm with more than 65 offices in over 40 countries. Our global reach enables us to serve client needs anywhere they conduct business. We connect great companies with great leaders through executive search, interim management and leadership consulting solutions. For further information, please visit www.boyden.com.

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