BUSINESS PLAN · INDIA

Natural Mineral Water Brand

The premium is paid for a fact about the past of the water, so find the one property that origin leaves behind or stop charging for it

WATER SUPPLY, TREATMENT AND SOLUTIONS

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Natural Mineral Water Brand** bottled at a protected source under **IS 13428**, sold into fine dining, premium retail, subscription and export, alongside an honestly labelled **IS 14543** mainstream line. By Year 3 it bottles **16.47 million litres**, holds **148 hectares of recharge catchment that produce nothing**, and sells **₹22.00 crore**.

> This plan is the eighth in vertical 56 and **inherits the ten anchor rules (a)–(j)** set by the packaged drinking-water plan. That plan covered the packaged-water *plant*; this one is about the *brand*.

Item	Detail	Year 3
What is sold	Natural mineral water in glass to HORECA and in PET to premium retail, a subscription line, institutional and event supply, export and duty-free, and a mainstream packaged-drinking-water line labelled as exactly what it is	**₹22.00cr**
Volume / natural mineral share	8.67 million litres of IS 13428, 7.80 million of IS 14543	16.47m L; 52.6%
PAT / net margin	Brand-heavy, packaging-heavy, and carrying 148 hectares of unproductive land	**₹0.79cr / 3.6%**
ROCE on ₹11.00cr / excluding the catchment	**The catchment costs seven points of return and is the only reason the brand exists**	**16.3% / 23.6%**
Batches carrying an isotope and trace-element signature matched to the source	**No regulation requires this and no Indian brand does it**	**100%, 1,840**
Batches rejected because the signature did not match	Small, real, and every one traced to a cause	7

> **IS 13428 IS NOT A PRODUCT STANDARD. IT IS A STANDARD ABOUT ORIGIN AND ABOUT WHAT WAS NOT DONE — it describes a history rather than a substance. Put a natural mineral water and a packaged drinking water dosed to the same ionic profile in front of a routine laboratory and ask which is which: THE ORDINARY ANSWER IS THAT YOU CANNOT TELL.**

> **SO THE PREMIUM IS PAID FOR A FACT ABOUT THE PAST OF THE WATER, AND THE PAST OF WATER IS NOT ORDINARILY RECOVERABLE FROM THE WATER. Ex-factory, this brand's glass line sells at ₹53.33 a litre against ₹6.60 for its own mainstream line — 8.1 times — and no instrument the buyer possesses can see the difference he is paying for.**

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

A private limited company operating a bottling plant at a protected aquifer in a hill catchment, with glass and PET lines, its own analytical laboratory, and a land-holding and conservation programme over the recharge zone.

Element	Position

Legal form	Private limited company; BIS licence under IS 13428 for the natural mineral line and IS 14543 for the mainstream line; FSSAI; groundwater extraction NOC; state pollution board consent; EPR registration for plastic packaging
Where the money is made	Glass to HORECA and subscription carry the margin; the mainstream line carries the plant's utilisation and is sold at what it is worth
What is different	Every batch carries a measured provenance signature, and the recharge catchment is owned rather than hoped for
Vision	A premium water brand whose premium rests on something measurable rather than on a photograph of a mountain

Why this shape	Reasoning
Provenance analytics on every batch	**The attribute being sold is origin, origin is not a property of the substance, and stable-isotope and trace-element signatures are the nearest thing to a test for it that exists anywhere**
148 hectares of recharge catchment secured	**The source is the entire brand and it cannot be replaced, insured or relocated. Land that yields nothing is the only asset that protects the one that yields everything**
An honestly labelled mainstream line	Plant utilisation at a remote source site is otherwise impossible, and the line is sold as IS 14543 in full, which costs ₹0.92 crore a year in forgone price
Glass into HORECA	The channel where the premium survives, where packaging is returnable, and where the plastic argument does not follow us to the table

3. Promoter & Ownership

Item	Position
Promoter	Eighteen years in beverages, seven of them in packaged water; left after being asked to put the word "mineral" on a pack that did not qualify for it and being told, correctly, that it was common practice
Promoter equity	**₹3.96cr** of the ₹11.00cr project cost (36%), unsecured and not withdrawable during the loan term
Ownership	Promoter family 72%; ESOP and key staff 16%; investor 12%
Governance	**No pack that is not IS 13428 carries the word "mineral" in any form, size or script, and the standard applying to each pack is printed in full on the front of the label. Artwork approval sits with quality, not with marketing**

> Putting artwork approval under quality sounds bureaucratic and is the single most load-bearing sentence in this section. **The word "mineral" is not a claim a marketing team makes deliberately; it arrives in a mood board, survives four rounds of revision because nobody's job is to remove it, and reaches print as a design element. NOBODY EVER DECIDES TO MISLABEL A BOTTLE — IT HAPPENS BECAUSE THE DECISION WAS NEVER ANYBODY'S TO MAKE.**

4. Market Analysis — India

Segment	What drives it	Position taken

Fine dining and premium hotels, glass	Table presentation, list margin, and a guest who is not comparing prices; the channel where premium water is genuinely a premium product	1.65m bottles at ₹40
Premium retail and modern trade, PET	Health positioning, airport and metro convenience, gifting and travel	4.40m bottles at ₹13
Mainstream packaged drinking water	Volume, price, distribution reach; the market's centre of gravity by far	6.00m bottles at ₹6.60
Subscription and home delivery	The only channel where the brand talks to the drinker directly and can explain what it is selling	240,000 cases at ₹110
Institutional, events, export and duty-free	Corporate supply, weddings, and a genuine export niche for Indian mineral water	₹3.08cr combined

The two standards, and what separates them

Attribute	IS 14543	IS 13428
Source	Any	**A specific protected aquifer**
Bottled where	Anywhere	**At source, by law**
Treatment	RO, UV, ozone	**Nothing that alters composition**
Minerals	Commonly added back	**As the aquifer supplied them**
Distinguishable in a routine lab test	**—**	**No**

> **The Indian packaged water market is very large, growing fast, and overwhelmingly IS 14543. Genuine IS 13428 natural mineral water is a small fraction of it, and a considerably larger fraction of packaging uses mountain imagery, spring imagery and the word "mineral" in ways that carry the association without carrying the standard. NONE OF THAT IS NECESSARILY UNLAWFUL, WHICH IS PRECISELY THE PROBLEM THIS PLAN IS ABOUT.**

5. Competition & Position

Competitor type	What they do well	Where the gap is
National packaged-water brands	Distribution no premium brand can match, trusted names, genuine quality systems, real scale economics	IS 14543 with premium-adjacent imagery; the standard is on the pack in six-point type and nobody reads it
Imported mineral waters	Genuine IS 13428-equivalent provenance, established brands, restaurant list presence	Freight, duty and price; and their provenance is asserted rather than measured, exactly like ours until we measured it
Regional premium brands	Local HORECA relationships, glass programmes, sharp pricing into hotels	Source claims with no published hydrogeology and no catchment control
Hotel in-house bottling	Removes the brand and the freight entirely; increasingly common and rational	Sells the table presentation without the provenance, which is honest about what the guest was buying

This brand	Measured provenance, secured catchment, published hydrogeology, and a mainstream line labelled honestly	**Positioned on the one attribute that cannot be seen, in a category built on attributes that cannot be seen**

> **The hardest competitor here is the hotel's own bottling plant, and it is hard for an honest reason. It strips out brand, freight and margin and gives the guest a chilled glass bottle at the table — WHICH IS MOST OF WHAT THE GUEST WAS ACTUALLY BUYING. Any premium water brand that cannot say what the remaining difference is, and demonstrate it, is selling a bottle shape.**

6. Provenance Is Not a Property of the Thing

This is the finding, and it concerns an attribute that does not reside in the product.

What a routine test can establish	Answers the question?
Ionic composition and TDS	**No — it can be dosed to match**
Microbiology	**No**
Heavy metals and contaminants	**No**
pH, alkalinity, hardness	**No — dosed**
Where this water came from	**Not asked by any routine test**

> **India has two standards and the difference between them is real. IS 14543, Packaged Drinking Water: water from any source, treated by reverse osmosis, ultraviolet or ozone, with minerals commonly dosed back afterwards. IS 13428, Natural Mineral Water: it must come from a specific protected underground source, IT MUST BE BOTTLED AT THAT SOURCE, and it must not be treated in ways that alter its essential composition. The second is a genuine legal category carrying genuine obligations, and it commands a genuine premium.**

> **AND IT IS NOT A PRODUCT STANDARD. IT IS A STANDARD ABOUT ORIGIN AND ABOUT WHAT WAS NOT DONE TO THE WATER — it describes a history, not a substance. Set a bottle of each in front of a routine laboratory and ask which is which, and the ordinary answer is that you cannot tell: a packaged drinking water with minerals dosed to a target profile carries an ionic signature indistinguishable from a natural mineral water, BECAUSE MATCHING A PROFILE IS EXACTLY WHAT DOSING TO A PROFILE MEANS. SO THE PREMIUM IS PAID FOR A FACT ABOUT THE PAST OF THE WATER, AND THE PAST OF WATER IS NOT ORDINARILY RECOVERABLE FROM THE WATER.**

> **Except — very nearly, and this is the best idea in the plan. The ratio of oxygen-18 to oxygen-16, and of deuterium to hydrogen, in a body of water is set by where the rain fell, at what altitude, at what temperature and by what path it travelled underground. These are the stable isotope ratios used in food authentication to establish geographic origin, and combined with a trace-element fingerprint from the aquifer's own geology they are THE NEAREST THING TO A PROVENANCE TEST THAT EXISTS FOR WATER — a signature that dosing an ionic profile does not reproduce, because dosing adds ions and does not touch the isotopes of the water molecule itself.**

So every batch is fingerprinted against the registered source profile before release — 1,840 batches, at ₹2,600 each in our own laboratory against about ₹9,500 at a commercial one, which is what the ₹0.88 crore laboratory is for. Seven batches were rejected in Year 3 on signature mismatch and every one was traced: a contaminated inbound tanker, a blending error at changeover, and two instances of an unauthorised top-up. No regulation requires any of this and, to our knowledge, no Indian brand runs it on its own product. GENERAL RULE: WHERE THE PREMIUM IS PAID FOR PROVENANCE, THE PRODUCT CANNOT ORDINARILY CARRY THE EVIDENCE — SO FIND THE ONE PROPERTY THAT ORIGIN LEAVES BEHIND, OR STOP CHARGING FOR IT.

7. The Source Is the Moat and the Single Point of Failure

The second thread is what the same legal requirement does to the balance sheet.

If the source fails	IS 14543 brand	IS 13428 brand
Buy water elsewhere	**Yes**	**Legally impossible**
Bottle at another plant	**Yes**	**Legally impossible**
Blend to maintain profile	**Yes**	**Prohibited**
Keep the brand	**Yes**	**No**

IS 13428 requires bottling at source. Read that as a business constraint rather than a technical one and it says something stark: THIS BRAND IS A SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE AT A SINGLE SET OF COORDINATES. A packaged-drinking-water brand whose borewell fails buys water somewhere else on Tuesday and carries on. A natural mineral water brand legally cannot — no alternative source, no blending, no contingency plant, no insurance product that restores a brand rather than a building. THE THING THAT JUSTIFIES THE PREMIUM IS THE THING THAT MAKES THE BUSINESS UNDIVERSIFIABLE, AND THOSE ARE NOT TWO FACTS BUT ONE SENTENCE READ TWICE.

Which forces an unusual capital decision: money spent buying land that will never produce anything. 148 hectares of the delineated recharge zone are owned, leased or under conservation agreement — 71% of it — at ₹3.41 crore, being 31% of the entire capital employed, AND NOT ONE LITRE IS BOTTLED FROM ANY OF IT. It exists so that nobody builds on the recharge zone, sinks a competing bore into it, or changes the land use above it. Eleven encroachment or land-use events were detected in Year 3 and nine were resolved.

The cost of that decision is visible in one comparison and should be stated rather than smoothed. ROCE IS 16.3% ON ₹11.00 CRORE AND WOULD BE 23.6% ON THE ₹7.59 CRORE THAT EXCLUDES THE CATCHMENT. THE LAND COSTS SEVEN POINTS OF RETURN AND IS THE ONLY REASON THE BRAND EXISTS — a sentence every investor in this category should be made to read twice, because the version of this business without the land looks better on every ratio and has no defensible product.

8. Operations Plan (abstract, bottle, fingerprint, release)

- **Abstract.** Protected borewell within the delineated zone; extraction within the NOC and within the recharge estimate, with static water level logged continuously.
- **Bottle.** At source, as the standard requires; ozonation and filtration only within what IS 13428 permits; glass and PET lines with returnable glass into HORECA.

- **Fingerprint.** Stable-isotope and trace-element signature on every batch against the registered source profile; a mismatch holds the batch before release, not after.
- **Label.** Standard printed in full on the front of every pack; the word "mineral" appears only on IS 13428 packs; artwork signed off by quality.
- **Protect.** Catchment patrolled and surveyed; encroachment and land-use change logged and pursued; hydrogeology and third-party audit published annually.

Step	What is recorded	Why
Abstraction	Volume, static water level, recharge estimate	The source is the whole asset
Batch fingerprint	**Isotope and trace-element signature vs source**	**₹2,600; 1,840 batches; 7 rejected**
Label	Standard, source, batch, lot	Traceable to the fingerprint
Catchment	**148 ha secured; encroachment events**	**11 detected, 9 resolved**
Publication	Hydrogeology, perimeter, audit	Annual, third party

> **The operational hinge is a co-packer forty kilometres from Delhi. Northern demand exceeds what we can economically freight from a hill source, and the co-packer will bottle to our exact specification — our ionic profile, our artwork, our quality system — at ₹1.85 less per litre delivered. On 4.4 million litres of northern demand that is ₹0.81 crore a year, and the water would be INDISTINGUISHABLE IN EVERY TEST A CONSUMER, A RETAILER OR A ROUTINE INSPECTION WOULD EVER RUN. It is also, legally, not our product: bottled anywhere but the source it cannot be IS 13428 and cannot carry the words. THE ONLY THINGS STANDING BETWEEN THIS BUSINESS AND ₹0.81 CRORE A YEAR ARE A STANDARD NOBODY TESTS FOR AND A SIGNATURE NOBODY ELSE LOOKS AT — WHICH IS EXACTLY WHY WE LOOK AT IT.**

The seven rejected batches, and what they were	Batches	Litres held
Inbound tanker contamination on a transfer	2	18,000
Blending error at a line changeover	3	27,000
Unauthorised top-up from a non-source supply	**2**	**18,000**
Total	**7**	**63,000**

> **The last row is the one that matters and it is the reason the programme is worth ₹0.62 crore a year. Two batches were topped up from a supply that was not the registered source — during a shortfall, by people solving a delivery problem, with water that met every quality specification we hold. IT WOULD HAVE PASSED MICROBIOLOGY, HEAVY METALS, TDS AND SENSORY PANEL. IT WOULD HAVE PASSED AN FSSAI INSPECTION. THE ONLY THING IN THE WORLD THAT CAUGHT IT WAS A RATIO OF OXYGEN ISOTOPES, AND WE ONLY MEASURE THAT BECAUSE WE DECIDED TO.**

9. Standards, Labelling & Packaging Compliance (India)

Area	Requirement
Product standards	**IS 13428 for natural mineral water — protected source, bottled at source, no treatment altering essential composition; IS 14543 for packaged drinking water. BIS certification is mandatory for both and the licence is per standard, per premises**

Food safety	FSSAI licence and the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations; both waters are notified food products
Labelling	**Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules and FSSAI labelling requirements; the standard must be declared — and it is declared in small type on the back of most packs in this category while the front carries imagery that does the persuading**
Advertising	Consumer Protection Act on misleading advertisement and unfair trade practice; ASCI codes on implied claims
Water and source	CGWA or state groundwater NOC for extraction; state pollution board consent; land and forest clearances where a catchment sits in or adjoins notified land
Packaging	**Plastic Waste Management Rules and Extended Producer Responsibility targets and registration; the recycled-content obligations tighten on a published schedule and are a rising and forecastable cost**
Labour and tax	Factories Act, Contract Labour Act, EPF, ESI; GST; export documentation and destination-country standards for the export line

What the law reaches	What it does not
Which standard a pack is certified to	**Whether the buyer can tell the difference**
False statements on a label	**Mountains, springs and glaciers on a label**
Bottling at source for IS 13428	Any routine test that would detect a breach
Recycled content and EPR targets	The tension between premium packaging and premium customers

> **The regulatory architecture here is genuinely good: two clearly defined standards, mandatory certification, and a real legal distinction properly drawn. THE ENTIRE GAP IS ENFORCEMENT-BY-TESTING, BECAUSE THERE IS NO ROUTINE TEST THAT DISTINGUISHES THEM — a breach of the bottled-at-source requirement is discoverable by audit of premises and paperwork and by essentially nothing else.**

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Function	Yr 1	Yr 3	Note
Managing director	1	1	Does not approve artwork
Bottling plant crews	28	**42**	**Derived, not assumed: 2 lines × 3 shifts × 7 per line-shift**
Distribution, warehouse and logistics	17	26	Remote source, distant markets
Sales, HORECA and trade	15	24	Glass programme and returns
Catchment protection and land management	10	**16**	**148 ha; 11 encroachment events**
Quality, laboratory and microbiology	9	14	Both standards, both lines
Brand, marketing and D2C	8	12	240,000 subscription cases
Finance, admin and HR	7	10	—
Source works and utilities	6	9	Abstraction and level logging
Provenance analytics and hydrogeology	3	**6**	**1,840 batch fingerprints**

Total	**104**	**160**	**16.47m litres; 148 ha; 1,840 batches**

The 6 people in provenance analytics and hydrogeology are the commitment made flesh. Their salaries are **₹0.18 crore — ₹3.00 lakh average CTC across 6** — with **₹0.30 crore** of instrument running and consumables across 1,840 fingerprints and **₹0.14 crore** for the published hydrogeology and third-party audit. **Fully loaded that is ₹2,600 a batch, or ₹0.38 on every litre this company bottles.**

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Months	Milestone
Source and catchment	0–14	**Hydrogeological delineation, extraction NOC, and land secured BEFORE any plant capital is committed**
Certification	6–16	BIS licence under IS 13428 for the source premises and IS 14543 for the mainstream line
Plant	10–22	Glass and PET lines, ozonation, utilities and warehouse at a remote site
Laboratory and source profile	12–20	**Isotope and trace-element baseline established across seasons before the first batch is released**
HORECA launch	20–28	Glass programme, returnable logistics, list placements
Retail, D2C and export	24–36	Modern trade, subscription, duty-free and first export consignments

Milestone that must not slip	Why
Catchment before plant capital	**Land above a proven aquifer becomes expensive the moment anybody knows why it is wanted; a plant built first is a plant negotiating from need**
Source profile across seasons before first release	**A signature baselined in one season cannot distinguish natural seasonal variation from adulteration, which makes every later rejection arguable**
Labelling policy before first artwork	Retrospectively removing a word from a pack that is selling is a conversation nobody wins
Glass returns logistics before HORECA scale	A returnable glass programme that fails becomes a one-way glass programme, which is the worst economics in this business

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions in Indian rupees, not forecasts or guarantees. Drivers are shown so every number can be changed.

12.1 Revenue build (₹ lakh)

Stream	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Share	GM
Natural mineral water, glass, HORECA (IS 13428)	390	525	660	30.0%	44.0%
Natural mineral water, PET, premium retail (IS 13428)	338	455	572	26.0%	36.0%
Packaged drinking water, labelled IS 14543, mainstream	234	315	396	18.0%	26.0%

Subscription and home delivery	156	210	264	12.0%	48.0%
Institutional, corporate and events	117	158	198	9.0%	30.0%
Export and duty-free	65	87	110	5.0%	40.0%
Total	**1,300**	**1,750**	**2,200**	**100%**	**37.7%**

> **The natural mineral lines are 52.6% of the litres and 73.0% of the revenue, and that ratio is the whole commercial proposition stated as arithmetic. THE COMPANY IS PAID ROUGHLY TWICE AS MUCH PER LITRE FOR WATER THAT DIFFERS FROM ITS OWN MAINSTREAM LINE IN NO WAY A BUYER CAN DETECT — which is either a business or a confidence trick depending entirely on whether the difference is real and whether anybody can show it.**

12.2 What is committed, and what it is measured on

Commitment	Yr 1	Yr 3
Batches carrying an isotope and trace-element signature matched to the registered source	nil	**100%, 1,840**
Batches rejected on signature mismatch, and traced to a cause	nil	**7**
Recharge catchment secured as a share of the delineated zone / hectares	22%	**71% / 148 ha**
Encroachment or land-use change events detected in the zone / resolved	4 / 3	**11 / 9**
Packs using the word "mineral" that do not meet IS 13428	nil	**nil**
Standard printed in full on the front of every pack / hydrogeology and audit published	100% / no	**100% / yes**

> **Seven rejections out of 1,840 batches is 0.4% and looks trivial until the alternative is considered: without the fingerprint all seven would have shipped, and nobody outside this building would ever have known — not the retailer, not the regulator, not the guest at the table. THE VALUE OF A TEST IS NOT ITS FAILURE RATE BUT WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT IT.**

12.3 Profit & loss (₹ lakh)

Line	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Revenue	1,300	1,750	2,200
Cost of goods (packaging, closures, labels, utilities, plant labour, freight)	(810)	(1,090)	(1,371)
Gross profit	**490**	**660**	**829**
Catchment protection, land management and conservation	(42)	(58)	(76)
Provenance analytics, hydrogeology and third-party audit	(34)	(46)	(62)
Labelling discipline and standard disclosure programme	(20)	(28)	(36)
Brand, marketing and trade activation	(76)	(100)	(124)
Plant operations, quality and laboratory	(62)	(80)	(98)
Distribution and logistics	(54)	(72)	(90)
Administration and overhead	(44)	(56)	(68)

EBITDA	**158**	**220**	**275**
Depreciation and amortisation	(76)	(86)	(96)
Finance cost	(78)	(88)	(96)
Other income (scrap, glass recovery, misc)	12	16	22
PBT	**16**	**62**	**105**
Tax (fully taxable business income, ~25%)	(4)	(16)	(26)
PAT	**12**	**46**	**79**
Net margin	0.9%	2.6%	**3.6%**
ROCE on ₹11.00cr	7.5%	12.2%	**16.3%**

12.4 Project cost & funding (₹ lakh)

Use of funds	₹L	%	Source of funds	₹L
Recharge catchment: 148 hectares secured	341	31%	Promoter equity	396
Bottling lines, glass and PET, at source	264	24%	Term loan	440
Source works: protected borewell, collection, ozonation	132	12%	Working capital limit	154
Warehouse, yard and utilities at a remote site	110	10%	Scheme and subsidy support	110
Laboratory including provenance analytics	88	8%	—	—
Brand build, packaging tooling and launch	88	8%	—	—
Working capital margin and pre-operative	77	7%	—	—
Total	**1,100**	**100%**	**Total**	**1,100**

12.5 Sensitivities (₹ crore PAT, Year 3)

Scenario	What changes	PAT
Base case as planned	As above	**₹0.79cr**
Trade-standard practice instead	Label the mainstream and institutional lines "mineral" (+₹0.92cr), bottle near the market instead of at source (+₹1.40cr), hold no catchment and free ₹3.41cr of capital (+₹0.76cr opex, +₹0.31cr finance), close provenance testing (+₹0.62cr) and the disclosure programme (+₹0.36cr), never reject a batch (+₹0.04cr) — but the premium lines are then IS 14543 with premium imagery and lose 12% of price (−₹1.93cr): **revenue ₹20.99cr at 49.8% gross margin**	**₹4.08cr**
The source is compromised or restricted	**Contamination in the protection zone or an extraction cut takes the IS 13428 lines — 73% of revenue — and THEY CANNOT BE MADE ANYWHERE ELSE BY LAW: ₹3.20cr. This is not a bad year, it is the end of the brand**	**(₹1.61cr)**
Premium and HORECA demand down 30%	Discretionary spend and tourism: ₹1.44cr including subscription and unabsorbed capacity	(₹0.29cr)

PET resin and glass +20%	**₹1.10cr. Packaging is the largest single line in the cost of a bottle of water, and the premium format is the heaviest**	(₹0.04cr)
EPR obligations and a plastics levy tighten	₹0.62cr on a published and forecastable schedule	₹0.32cr

> **The trade-standard row is ₹4.08 crore against ₹0.79 crore and it deserves to be read carefully, because it is not a story about dishonesty. Almost all of that gap — bottling near the market, holding no land, testing nothing — IS ENTIRELY LAWFUL AND IS WHAT MOST PREMIUM-POSITIONED WATER IN INDIA ACTUALLY IS. The trade-standard business simply does not claim IS 13428, sells the same imagery, keeps 88% of the price, and has no single point of failure at all.**

12.6 Volumes and unit economics (Year 3)

Line	Units	Ex-factory	Litres	Revenue
Glass 750 ml, HORECA	1,650,000	₹40	1,237,500	₹660L
PET 1 litre, premium retail	4,400,000	₹13	4,400,000	₹572L
PET 1 litre, mainstream IS 14543	6,000,000	₹6.60	6,000,000	₹396L
Subscription cases of 12 × 1 litre	240,000	₹110	2,880,000	₹264L
PET 500 ml institutional / glass export	3,600,000 / 200,000	₹5.50 / ₹55	1,950,000	₹308L
Total	**—**	**—**	**16,467,500**	**₹2,200L**

Derived figure	Working	Result
Glass line per litre	₹40 for 750 ml	**₹53.33**
Mainstream per litre / multiple	₹6.60 for 1 litre; ₹53.33 ÷ ₹6.60	**₹6.60; 8.1×**
Natural mineral volume / revenue share	8,667,500 of 16,467,500 L; ₹1,606L of ₹2,200L	52.6% / 73.0%
Provenance cost	₹0.62cr over 1,840 batches; over 16.47m litres	**₹2,600; ₹0.38/litre**
Catchment cost per natural mineral litre	₹0.76cr over 8,667,500 litres	**₹0.88, or 1.6% of a glass litre**
Plant crew	2 lines × 3 shifts × 7 per line-shift	42

> **At the table the multiple is larger still. A 750 ml glass bottle listed at ₹140 in a restaurant is ₹186.67 a litre against about ₹20 for a litre of mainstream packaged water at retail — MORE THAN NINE TIMES — and the whole of that difference is carried by a claim about where the water was before anybody bottled it.**

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Item	Position
Requirement	**₹11.00cr**: ₹3.96cr promoter equity, ₹4.40cr term loan, ₹1.54cr working capital limit, ₹1.10cr scheme support

The land is good security and bad ROCE	**148 hectares is 31% of the project cost, is the strongest collateral in the file, and produces no revenue whatever — a lender will like it for exactly the reason an equity investor will not**
Security	Mortgage over the catchment and plant land, hypothecation of lines, laboratory and stock; personal guarantee of the promoter
Debt service	Year 3 EBITDA ₹2.75cr against interest ₹0.96cr and scheduled repayment; DSCR above 1.6x from Year 3
Concentration	**Single-site, single-source, single-standard. There is no version of this business with a second plant, and a lender should price that rather than discover it**
What a lender should test	**Not the brand metrics — the share of the delineated recharge zone under legal control, and the seasonal isotope baseline. The first says whether the asset is defensible; the second says whether the premium is provable**

Year	EBITDA	Interest	Repayment	DSCR
Year 1	₹1.58cr	₹0.78cr	Moratorium	—
Year 2	₹2.20cr	₹0.88cr	₹0.52cr	1.57x
Year 3	**₹2.75cr**	**₹0.96cr**	**₹0.76cr**	**1.60x**

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Impact	Mitigation
Provenance is not a property of the thing	India's two standards differ genuinely — **IS 13428 requires a specific protected source, bottling AT that source, and no treatment altering composition; IS 14543 permits any source, RO, UV and ozone, with minerals dosed back. BUT IS 13428 IS NOT A PRODUCT STANDARD — IT IS A STANDARD ABOUT ORIGIN AND ABOUT WHAT WAS NOT DONE, so it describes a history rather than a substance.** Put both in front of a routine laboratory and **you cannot tell which is which, because a water dosed to a target ionic profile matches that profile by definition. THE PREMIUM IS PAID FOR A FACT ABOUT THE PAST OF THE WATER, AND THE PAST OF WATER IS NOT ORDINARILY RECOVERABLE FROM IT** — 8.1× ex-factory, more than nine times at the table	**Find the one property origin leaves behind. THE RATIO OF OXYGEN-18 TO OXYGEN-16 AND OF DEUTERIUM TO HYDROGEN IS SET BY WHERE THE RAIN FELL, AT WHAT ALTITUDE AND BY WHAT PATH IT TRAVELLED — the stable isotope ratios used in food authentication for geographic origin, and combined with a trace-element fingerprint from the aquifer's own geology THE NEAREST THING TO A PROVENANCE TEST THAT EXISTS FOR WATER, because dosing adds ions and does not touch the isotopes of the water molecule itself. Every batch fingerprinted against the registered source profile before release: 1,840 batches at ₹2,600 in our own laboratory against ₹9,500 commercially. 7 rejected and every one traced. No regulation requires it and no Indian brand does it. GENERAL RULE: FIND THE ONE PROPERTY THAT ORIGIN LEAVES BEHIND, OR STOP CHARGING FOR IT**

The source is the moat and the single point of failure	**IS 13428 requires bottling at source, which means THIS BRAND IS A SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE AT A SINGLE SET OF COORDINATES.** A packaged-drinking-water brand whose borewell fails buys water elsewhere on Tuesday; **a natural mineral water brand legally cannot — no alternative source, no blending, no contingency plant, and no insurance product that restores a brand rather than a building. THE THING THAT JUSTIFIES THE PREMIUM IS THE THING THAT MAKES THE BUSINESS UNDIVERSIFIABLE.** A source event is ₹3.20cr and a ₹1.61cr loss	**Buy the land that will never produce anything: 148 hectares, 71% of the delineated recharge zone, ₹3.41cr and 31% of capital employed, NOT ONE LITRE BOTTLED FROM ANY OF IT — so that nobody builds on the zone, sinks a competing bore into it, or changes the land use above it. 11 encroachment events detected, 9 resolved. THE COST IS EXPLICIT: ROCE 16.3% ON ₹11.00cr AGAINST 23.6% EXCLUDING THE CATCHMENT — SEVEN POINTS OF RETURN, AND THE ONLY REASON THE BRAND EXISTS. The version without the land looks better on every ratio and has no defensible product**
Premium and HORECA demand	Discretionary and tourism-linked; a 30% fall is ₹1.44cr and a ₹0.29cr loss	Subscription and D2C reach the drinker directly and churn less; the mainstream line holds plant utilisation through a weak premium cycle; export and duty-free are uncorrelated with domestic dining
Packaging cost	**Resin and glass at +20% is ₹1.10cr; packaging is the largest single component of a bottle of water's cost and the premium format is the heaviest**	Returnable glass in HORECA, which is the format where returns actually work; annual resin contracts; lightweighting within specification on the mainstream line; subscription cases reduce secondary packaging per litre
EPR and plastics regulation	Recycled-content and EPR obligations tighten on a published schedule: ₹0.62cr	Forecastable rather than sudden, so budgeted; glass share rising; recycled-content sourcing contracted ahead; **and the honest acknowledgement that a premium water brand's customers are the demographic most hostile to single-use plastic**
Reach constrained by bottling at source	**Freight from a hill source caps economic reach; a co-packer near Delhi would save ₹1.85 a litre on 4.4m litres — ₹0.81cr a year we do not take**	Glass and premium PET concentrated where price supports freight; mainstream line served regionally; subscription batched; the constraint accepted as the price of the standard rather than argued with
Extraction and land-use regulation	An NOC restriction or a change in the status of catchment land caps or ends production at the only site there is	Extraction within the recharge estimate rather than within the permit ceiling; static water level logged continuously; catchment held in legal title rather than by understanding; hydrogeology published, which makes the company an evidenced participant rather than a surprised one

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
A measured provenance signature no Indian competitor runs; 148 hectares of catchment under legal control; genuine IS 13428 certification; published hydrogeology and audit; an honestly labelled mainstream line that holds plant utilisation; strong collateral	3.6% net margin; ROCE dragged seven points by unproductive land; the commitment costs ₹2.70cr against ₹0.79cr of PAT; single site, single source, single standard; freight-constrained reach; packaging-heavy cost base in a category under plastic pressure
Opportunities	**Threats**

Provenance verification is saleable as a service and as a category standard; export demand for authenticated origin is real and growing; hotels increasingly want a story they can substantiate to guests; the isotope baseline compounds in value every season it runs	A source event, which ends the brand rather than damaging it; lawful premium-imagery competitors with none of the cost; hotel in-house bottling; resin and EPR costs; and the plain fact that a customer paying nine times cannot tell why

> **The honest summary is that this business spends ₹2.70 crore a year and 31% of its capital proving something a customer will never independently check, in order to charge a premium that competitors charge without proving anything. That is only a business if the proof eventually becomes a reason to buy — through hotels that want substantiation, exporters that require it, and a category standard that may one day demand it. IT IS A BET THAT VERIFIABILITY BECOMES VALUABLE, AND IT IS NOT YET WON.**

Where the ₹2.70 crore of commitments goes	₹cr	Per litre bottled
Price forgone by labelling the mainstream lines honestly	**0.92**	**₹0.56, off the P&L**
Catchment protection, land management and conservation	0.76	₹0.46
Provenance analytics, hydrogeology and third-party audit	0.62	₹0.38
Labelling discipline and standard disclosure	0.36	₹0.22
Batches rejected on signature and destroyed	0.04	₹0.02, off the P&L
Total	**2.70**	**₹1.64 per litre**

> **₹1.64 a litre against a mainstream ex-factory price of ₹6.60 is a quarter of that bottle's entire value, and against a glass litre at ₹53.33 it is three per cent. THE HONESTY PROGRAMME IS THEREFORE ALMOST UNAFFORDABLE ON THE CHEAP LINE AND ALMOST FREE ON THE EXPENSIVE ONE — which is exactly why it is the premium brands that could run it and the mainstream ones that never will, and exactly why the premium brands do not bother.**

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

- **Business plan and project report generator** — for the term loan and a project file where land is 31% of the cost.
- **Compliance calendar** — BIS licences under two standards, FSSAI renewal, groundwater NOC, pollution board consent, EPR filings, Legal Metrology.
- **Cost and pricing calculator** — cost per litre by format and channel, packaging as a share of ex-factory cost, and freight-to-market against source distance.
- **GST and invoicing helper** — HORECA and distributor billing, returnable glass deposits, export documentation and zero-rating.
- **Labour and payroll toolkit** — Factories Act shift rosters, contract labour at a remote site, EPF and ESI.
- **Loan and subsidy application helper** — food-processing and rural-enterprise schemes, and a lender file that explains an unproductive land asset.
- **Contract and terms drafting helper** — HORECA supply and glass-return agreements, catchment conservation and lease agreements, distributor terms, and export contracts.

> Every tool above is **free to use on AiSevak and needs no signup to explore.** The toolkit link at the end of this plan opens the whole water set.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- **All financials are illustrative model assumptions, not forecasts, projections or guarantees.** Revenue, volumes, ex-factory prices, batch counts and land costs are editable inputs; outcomes depend on channel demand, packaging costs, regulation and the source itself. Figures are in Indian rupees. **This plan is the eighth in vertical 56 and inherits its ten anchor rules (a)–(j); the packaged-water plant was covered separately, and this plan is about the brand.**
- **The central finding is that provenance is not a property of the thing.** IS 13428 requires a specific protected source, bottling at that source, and no treatment altering composition; IS 14543 permits any source with minerals dosed back. **But IS 13428 is not a product standard — it is a standard about origin and about what was not done, so it describes a history rather than a substance.**
- **Which means a routine laboratory cannot tell them apart,** because a water dosed to a target ionic profile matches that profile by definition. **The premium is paid for a fact about the past of the water, and the past of water is not ordinarily recoverable from the water** — 8.1 times ex-factory (₹53.33 a litre against ₹6.60) and more than nine times at a restaurant table.
- **The remedy is the one property origin does leave behind.** Oxygen-18 to oxygen-16 and deuterium to hydrogen ratios are set by where the rain fell, at what altitude and by what path it travelled underground — the stable isotope ratios used in food authentication for geographic origin. Combined with a trace-element fingerprint they are **the nearest thing to a provenance test that exists for water, because dosing adds ions and does not touch the isotopes of the water molecule itself.** 1,840 batches fingerprinted at ₹2,600 each in our own laboratory; 7 rejected and traced. **GENERAL RULE: WHERE THE PREMIUM IS PAID FOR PROVENANCE, THE PRODUCT CANNOT ORDINARILY CARRY THE EVIDENCE — SO FIND THE ONE PROPERTY THAT ORIGIN LEAVES BEHIND, OR STOP CHARGING FOR IT.**
- **The second thread is that the source is the moat and the single point of failure, and those are one sentence read twice.** Bottling at source is a legal requirement, so **an IS 14543 brand whose borewell fails buys water elsewhere and a natural mineral water brand legally cannot** — no alternative source, no blending, no contingency plant. A source event is ₹3.20cr and ends the brand rather than damaging it.
- **So the plan buys land that will never produce anything:** 148 hectares, 71% of the delineated recharge zone, ₹3.41cr and 31% of capital employed, **not one litre bottled from any of it. ROCE is 16.3% on ₹11.00cr against 23.6% excluding the catchment — the land costs seven points of return and is the only reason the brand exists**, and the version of this business without it looks better on every ratio and has no defensible product.
- **Volumes and unit economics.** 1.65m glass 750 ml at ₹40, 4.40m premium PET at ₹13, 6.00m mainstream PET at ₹6.60, 240,000 subscription cases at ₹110, 3.60m institutional 500 ml at ₹5.50, 200,000 export glass at ₹55 — 16,467,500 litres, of which 8,667,500 is IS 13428. **The natural mineral lines are 52.6% of the litres and 73.0% of the revenue.** Provenance costs ₹0.38 a litre and the catchment ₹0.88 per natural mineral litre. Plant crew is derived, not assumed: 2 lines × 3 shifts × 7 = 42.
- **Compliance and professional advice.** BIS certification is mandatory under both IS 13428 and IS 14543, licensed per standard and per premises; FSSAI licensing and the Food Products Standards regulations; Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Rules and FSSAI labelling, **noting that the standard is declared in small type on the back of most packs in this category while the front carries the imagery that does the persuading**; Consumer Protection Act and ASCI codes on implied claims; CGWA or state groundwater NOC, pollution board consent, and land or forest clearances where a catchment adjoins notified land; Plastic Waste Management Rules and EPR registration with

recycled-content obligations on a published schedule; Factories Act, Contract Labour Act, EPF, ESI; GST and export documentation. **Note the structural gap: the regulatory architecture is genuinely good and the entire weakness is enforcement-by-testing, because no routine test distinguishes the two standards — a breach of the bottled-at-source requirement is discoverable by audit of premises and paperwork and by essentially nothing else.** Professional advice should be taken on BIS licensing scope, label artwork approval, catchment title and conservation agreements, and EPR obligations.