AWS Self-Verification Requirements

Requirements for Implementers of the AWS International Water Stewardship Standard

Version 1.0

July 2015

Contents

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set forth AWS requirements for self-verification assessment against *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard.* Also included is a guide to the AWS claims that may accompany self-verification.

Responsibility for these Requirements

The AWS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is the body responsible for the *AWS Self-Verification Requirements*. The TAC will review the contents of this document on an ongoing basis. A record of amendments is shown below.
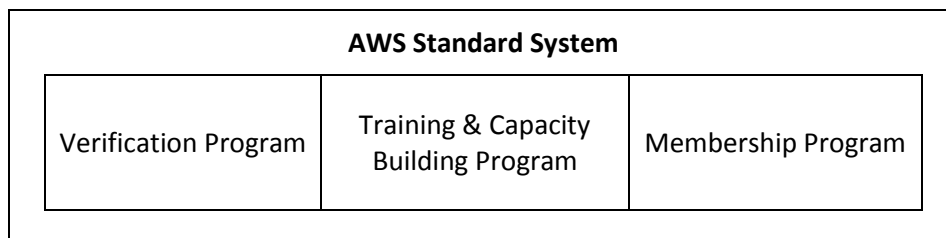
Amendment Record

Version No.	Date of Publication	Description of Amendment
1.0	July 2015	Approved

AWS Standard System

AWS is the standards system owner and keeper of *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard*. As such, AWS is responsible for implementation of the AWS Standard, including standard setting, capacity building, assurance, labelling and monitoring. To achieve these goals, AWS has structured its standards system into three programs: a verification program; a training & capacity-building program; and a membership program (Figure 1). These three programs are complementary. They serve to reinforce one another to ensure that the AWS Standard System provides a credible and robust implementation of the AWS Standard. Please see *AWS Certification Requirements* for a more detailed description of the AWS Standard System and the AWS Standards Framework.

Figure 1. Diagram of the AWS Standard System.

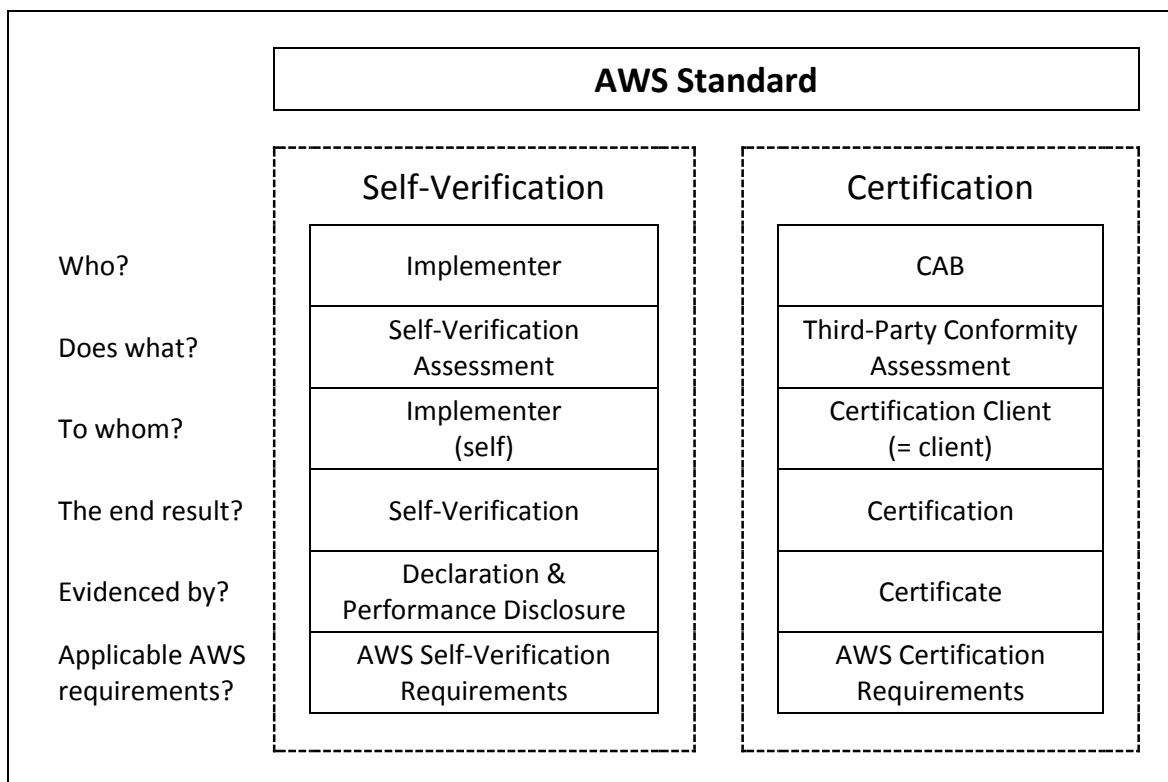| AWS Standard System		
Verification Program	Training & Capacity Building Program	Membership Program

AWS will implement the AWS Standard System in two phases: an initial phase (Phase 1: estimated 2015-2016) will be used work out any kinks and ensure capacity is sufficient to meet system needs. For the second phase (Phase 2: 2017+), AWS will update the AWS Standard System and add improved functionality (e.g. risk aspects, site pairing, etc.) pending AWS member input.

AWS Verification Program

The AWS Verification Program provides for two types of assessment processes: self-verification and certification through third-party conformity assessment. The same standard is used for both processes, i.e., *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard*. However the two processes differ in a number of respects. Figure 2 presents a comparison of the processes and associated terms.

Figure 2. The AWS Verification Program encompasses both self-verification and certification.

	AWS Standard			
	Self-Verification		**Certification**	
Who?	Implementer		CAB	
Does what?	Self-Verification Assessment		Third-Party Conformity Assessment	
To whom?	Implementer (self)		Certification Client (= client)	
The end result?	Self-Verification		Certification	
Evidenced by?	Declaration & Performance Disclosure		Certificate	
Applicable AWS requirements?	AWS Self-Verification Requirements		AWS Certification Requirements	

A   Scope

These requirements apply to any party that wishes to make a claim about conformity with *The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard* based on self-verification assessment.

B   Normative References

The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard, Version 1.0, April 2014

AWS Certification Requirements: Assessment of Conformity with The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard. Version 1.0, July 2015

AWS Interim Accreditation Requirements: Requirements for Conformity Assessment Bodies, Training Service Providers, and Consultants. Version 1.0, July 2015

ISO 19011:2011(E) Guidelines for auditing management systems

AWS Self-Verification and Certification Application Form

C   Associated Guidance

AWS Verification System, Draft for Stakeholder Review, December 2, 2014

D   Terms and Definitions

All terms are defined in the AWS Glossary of Terms

1   Eligibility

1.1   In principle, the AWS Standard can be implemented by any site that uses water.

1.2   AWS has developed 'self-verification' as a tool for those enterprises which meet a basic set of eligibility criteria (see the document entitled "*AWS Certification Requirements*" for a full description).

> 1.2.1 Note: AWS recognizes that these eligibility criteria are provisional and should be used as a guideline during Phase 1 of the AWS Standard System impementation.

1.3   The following is a brief summary of the eligibility criteria:

> 1.3.1   all sites must occur within one catchment;

> 1.3.2   the entity must be operated under a single management system

> 1.3.3   the site or sites must be homogeneous in terms of production system.

1.4   Having established eligibility, the enterprise is then classified by type of operation (see the "*AWS Certification Requirements*" for a description), with AWS recognizing three types:

> 1.4.1   Single site operation;

> 1.4.2   Multi-site operation; and

> 1.4.3   Group operation.

1.5   For the purposes of self-verification, all group operations are assessed as multi-site operations.

> 1.5.1   There are technical reasons for combining groups together with multi-site operations. A key attribute of group operations (unlike multi-site) is that the group runs a system of internal audits in accordance with an Internal Control System (ICS), and groups utilize external auditing (i.e., third-party conformity assessment) to validate the effectiveness of ICS. For certification of groups, the external auditors are allowed to select a sample of sites from the larger pool of members. When self-verification is applied to this structure, however, external audits are removed from the equation and the paradigm begins to break down.

> 1.5.2   From a practical point of view, the key message is that AWS requires a 'full' assessment of every site within the operation (i.e., no sampling is allowed) under a self-verification system.

1.6   The implementer should review AWS eligibility requirements and AWS criteria for classifying the type of operation, and contact AWS if there are questions.

2   Registration

2.1   Before starting, the implementer must register their intent to pursue self-verification by completing the *AWS Self-Verification and Certification Application Form* and submitting it to AWS.

  2.1.1   The application form shall clearly indicate the scope of self-verification, including the type of operation (single site or multi-site; see section 1).

  2.1.2   An administrative fee is due to AWS at the time of application.

2.2   The implementer shall ensure that AWS has current contact details for the representative who is accountable for self-verification.

2.3   Once registration is complete, AWS will issue an AWS Reference Number (see Box 1) for the assessment and the implementer may then proceed with self-verification.

Box 1. AWS Reference Number

AWS assigns a unique AWS Reference Number when a party registers for an assessment. This number is used to track assessments within each catchment over time. AWS Reference Numbers have the following format:

AAA-###-BBB-CCC-DD-EE-FFFF-GGGG

where:

AAA	Applicable Standard	AWS or EWS
###	Standard Version Code	AWS Standard 1.0 (01.0) or EWS version 4.8 (04.8)
BBB	Guidance Document Code	"INT" for international guidance in AWS Standard v1.0 or if applicable country guidance exists use relevant country code, e.g., USA, GBR, GER, JPN…)
CCC	CAB Code	Letter code assigned by AWS ("000" for self-verification)
DD	Industry Sector Code	Number assigned by AWS (pending; "00" currently);
EE	Region Code	01 = North America, 02 = Latin America, 03 = Europe, 04 = Middle East and Central Asia, 05 = Africa, 06 = South Asia, 07 = Asia Pacific, 08 = Northern Asia and China
FFFF	Parent Company Code	Number assigned by AWS
GGGG	Site Code	Number assigned by AWS

Note that a site may have more than one AWS Reference Number (e.g., if the site underwent self-verification before getting certified).

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3   Standard Structure and Indicators

3.1   The AWS Standard has a hierarchical structure as follows:

  3.1.1   four (4) stewardship outcomes outlining the overarching aims of the AWS Standard;

3.1.2 six (6) steps outlining the general adaptive management and continual improvement processes that implementers follow to undertake water stewardship;

3.1.3 a variable number of specific criteria under each step; and

3.1.4 one or more indicators under each criterion.

3.2 Indicators are used to evaluate conformance with the overall outcomes and criteria.

3.3 AWS criteria are classified as either core or advanced-level.

3.3.1 Indicators under the core criteria are called 'core indicators'.

3.3.2 Indicators under the advanced-level criteria are called 'advanced-level indicators'.

3.4 All indicators are applicable to all implementers and all sites. The implementer should not give a response of "not applicable" to any indicator.

3.4.1 When there is doubt about applicability of indicators, the party may contact AWS for further guidance.

4 Points

4.1 Each advanced-level indicator has a specific point allocation associated with it or, in some cases, a specific range of points.

4.1.1 The exact point allocations for each advanced-level indicator are given in the AWS Standard.

4.2 Points are awarded as part of the certification process by CABs performing third-party conformity assessments – not by implementers doing self-verification assessments.

4.3 Notwithstanding clause 4.2, implementers may calculate their point totals against advance level indicators for internal or heuristic purposes. However:

4.3.1 The implementers shall not make public reference to the total point score derived from a self-verification assessment; and

4.3.2 The implementers shall not make claims about conformity in reference to AWS Core, AWS Gold or AWS Platinum certification levels.

5 Assessment

5.1 The self-verification assessment is effectively an internal audit. Therefore AWS recommends that implementers review, and where possible adopt and follow, the structure of widely-accepted auditing practices (e.g., ISO 19011).

5.2   The AWS Standard shall serve as the audit criteria for all self-verification assessments.

5.3   During a self-verification assessment, the implementers must review objective evidence to evaluate conformity with each core indicator of the AWS Standard.

    5.3.1   Note that all core indicators are applicable to all implementers and all sites, and therefore a response of "not applicable" is unacceptable for any core indicator.

5.4   Implementers may also choose to evaluate conformity with advanced-level indicators during the self-verification assessment.

5.5   Implementers must keep a record of the audit evidence that was reviewed in order to make a conclusion about conformity with each indicator.

    5.5.1   Note that audit evidence is defined as "Records, statements of fact or other information, which are relevant to the audit criteria and verifiable."

5.6   Implementers shall prepare a brief report of the self-verification assessment which covers the following:

    5.6.1   description of the process used for self-verification assessment;

    5.6.2   list of person(s) involved;

    5.6.3   assessment date(s) and site(s) visited; and

    5.6.4   a concise summary (e.g., table) of conformity with each core indicator, together with the evidence reviewed.

5.7   Implementers shall submit the self-verification assessment report to AWS together with the information in sections 6 and 7.

    5.7.1   Note: AWS will not publish the self-verification reports. Reports will be kept confidential by AWS. The goal is for AWS to evaluate the consistency of self-verifications during Phase 1 in order to understand how well the system performs and to identify where revisions might be needed.

6   Performance Disclosure

6.1   As part of self-verification, implementers are required to disclose information about the performance of the site in relation to select indicators from the AWS Standard (Table 1).

    6.1.1   Note: a data set fulfilling this requirement is referred to as the 'performance disclosure.'

6.2   Implementers must submit their performance disclosure to AWS for publication on the AWS website.

Table 1. Self-Verification Disclosure Requirements.

Step	Criterion	Indicator and Required Disclosure
1 – Commit	1.1 – Establish a leadership commitment on water stewardship	1.2.1 – Signed leadership commitment that meets requirements
	1.2 – Develop a water stewardship policy	1.2.1 – Water stewardship policy that meets requirements
2 – Gather & Understand	2.1 – Define the physical scope	2.1.4 – Description or map of catchments
	2.2 – Identify stakeholders, their water-related challenges and the site's sphere of influence	2.2.1 – List of stakeholders and summaries of their water-related challenges
	2.6 – Understand shared water challenges in the catchment	2.6.1 – List of shared water challenges
3 – Plan	3.2 – Create a site water stewardship strategy and plan	3.2.2 – A summarized version of the plan with targets
	3.4 – Notify the relevant authority of the site's water stewardship plans	3.4.1 – Evidence of communication of the relevant agency.
4 – Implement	4.1 – Comply with water-related legal and regulatory requirements	4.1.1 – Legal compliance documentation
	4.2 – Maintain or improve site water balance	4.2.1 – Measurement-based evidence showing that targets have been met (need not include sensitive information)
	4.3 – Maintain or improve site water quality	4.3.1 – Measurement-based evidence showing that targets have been met (need not include sensitive information)
	4.4 – Maintain or improve the status of the site's important water-related areas	4.4.1 – Measurement-based evidence showing that targets have been met (need not include sensitive information)
	4.5 – Participate positively in catchment governance	4.5.1 – Evidence of the site's ongoing efforts to contribute to good catchment governance
	4.7 – Provide WASH for workers on-site	4.7.1 – List of actions taken to provide workers with access to safe water, effective sanitation, and protective hygiene on-site.
5 – Evaluate	5.1 – Evaluate the site's water stewardship performance	5.1.1 – Post-implementation data and narrative discussion of performance (need not include risk discussion)
	5.3 – Consult stakeholders on water-related performance	5.3.1 – Commentary by the identified individuals
	5.4 – Update water stewardship and incident response plans	5.4.1 – Summary of modifications to water stewardship plan
6 – Disclose	6.1 – Disclose water-related internal governance	6.1.1 – Summary of governance at the site, including accountabilities
	6.2 – Disclose annual site water stewardship performance	6.2.1 – Summary of site's water stewardship results (need not include sensitive information)
	6.3 – Disclose efforts to address shared water challenges	6.3.1 – Description of actions taken to engage stakeholder and address shared challenges

6.3   The implementer should carefully review the contents of the performance disclosure before submission to AWS to ensure that it does not contain commercially sensitive information.

    6.3.1   Note: During Phase 1, AWS will work to define what constitutes commercially sensitive information (i.e. information that should remain confidential). In the interim, questions about sensitive information should be directed to AWS.

6.4   Implementers must ensure that all core indicators have been fully assessed before submitting the performance disclosure to AWS. AWS will not accept partial or incomplete submissions.

    6.4.1   Note that the implementer is responsible for the content of all submissions - AWS does not review submissions for the quality or accuracy information.

6.5   Once AWS determines that the performance disclosure is complete, AWS will publish it on the AWS website.

7   Declaration

7.1   Self-verification is not complete until the implementer has made a declaration of conformity with all core indicators of the AWS Standard (hereafter referred to as 'the declaration').

7.2   The declaration must specify the following information about self-verification:

    7.2.1   Company name;

    7.2.2   Name and location of site(s);

    7.2.3   Catchment and industry sector;

    7.2.4   Date of completion of the self-verification assessment;

    7.2.5   For multi-site operations, the percentage of the organization that was assessed (e.g., the number of sites that were self-verified divided by the total number of sites operated by the organization);

    7.2.6   Version of the AWS Standard used; and

    7.2.7   AWS Reference Number.

7.3   The declaration must be signed by a representative of senior management of the organization.

7.4   Implementers should submit the declaration to AWS for publication, preferably submitted together with the performance disclosure (also for publication) and the self-verification assessment report (not for publication).

8 Authorization and Restrictions

8.1 After publication of the declaration and performance disclosure, AWS will notify the implementer, and at this time (but not before) the implementer will be authorized to make specified AWS claims (section 9).

8.2 All self-verifications will be published on the AWS website, including the company name (as directed by the implementer), declaration and performance disclosure.

8.2.1 The implementer shall ensure that the site remains in conformity at all times.

8.3 Self-verification is not transferrable.

8.4 If there is a change in ownership, the implementer shall notify AWS of the change within five (5) working days.

8.5 Upon change of ownership, the declaration becomes invalid and the self-verification is terminated.

8.5.1 AWS will publish a notice of termination of self-verification on the AWS website.

8.6 Note: upon change of ownership, the site must undergo a new self-verification assessment, and if successful, prepare a declaration signed by the responsible senior manager.

8.7 The implementer may terminate the declaration of self-verification at any time by providing AWS with written notice at least thirty (30) days in advance of the date of termination.

8.8 AWS reserves the right to terminate the self-verification of any implementer if there are extreme violations of the spirit and intent of the AWS Standard that directly go against AWS's organizational mission.

9 Guidelines for AWS Claims

9.1 Successful completion of a self-verification assessment will confer to the implementer certain rights about claims that can be made with respect to AWS and compliance with the AWS Standard (see the document entitled "*AWS Certification Requirements*" for a full description).

9.2 For single site operations with self-verification, the implementer may use either of the following AWS Claims:

9.2.1 Version 1b: "This site has declared itself to meet the AWS's global standard for water stewardship. www.alliancefowaterstewardship.org"; and/or

9.2.2   Version 2b "Site YYYYY [insert site name], through a self-assessment, meet's AWS's water stewardship standard thereby helping to manage its water resources and contribute to collective efforts within the catchment. www.alliancefowaterstewardship.org."

9.3   For multi-site operations with self-verification, the implementer is referred to the "*AWS Certification Requirements*" for a complete description of the AWS claims that may be used under various scenarios.

9.4   For the avoidance of doubt, under no circumstance is the AWS certification logo permitted on product.

10   Renewal

10.1   Self-verifications expire twelve (12) months after the date of issuance.

10.2   Implementers must renew self-verifications before expiry in order to continue to make AWS claims and to remain on the list of organizations published on the AWS website.

10.3   The implementer may renew the self-verification a maximum of two (2) times.

10.3.1   One year after the second renewal, the self-verification will be terminated and the declaration shall be voided.

10.4   Renewals follow the same processes outlined above for the original self-verification assessment.

10.5   At each renewal, the performance disclosure must be updated to cover the most recent twelve (12) month period.

10.6   A new declaration must be prepared at each renewal.

10.7   The implementer shall ensure that AWS has current contact details for the site representative who is accountable for the self-verification declaration.

10.8   If an implementer fails to renew self-verification before expiry, AWS will send a notice of termination. If no response is received within five (5) business days:

10.8.1   self-verification will be terminated;

10.8.2   the declaration will be voided;

10.8.3   the implementer will be removed from AWS website; and

10.8.4   the implementer will no longer be eligible to use AWS assets or make AWS claims.

11   Pre-Assessment

11.1   Implementers and prospective implementers should be aware of an AWS process called 'pre-assessment'. Pre-assessment is intended to be an informal way for an enterprise to gauge likely conformance to the AWS Standard.

11.2   Pre-assessment is optional. AWS does not require implementers to have a pre-assessment done.

11.3   Pre-assessments are limited in scope and results are confidential

11.4   Pre-assessment may be initiated at any point prior to or during the verification process.

11.5   It is not required to register pre-assessments with AWS.

11.6   Pre-assessments are performed by CABs with AWS interim accreditation.

11.7   The CAB prepares a pre-assessment report for the client which includes:

   11.7.1   a gap analysis against the AWS Standard; and

   11.7.2   a list of potential areas for improvement.

11.8   Pre-assessments may also include an optional benchmarking exercise which identifies performance by indicator, criterion and step.

11.9   Pre-assessment reports are confidential between CAB, AWS and the client unless the client agrees to disclose the report.

11.10   Results of pre-assessments are confidential between CAB, AWS and the client unless the client agrees to disclose information contained therein.

12   Proceeding to Certification

12.1   Certification is voluntary. The decision to proceed with certification is entirely up to the implementer.

12.2   Pre-assessments and self-verification assessments are not prerequisites for third party conformity assessment (i.e., certification). Any party may decide to proceed directly to conformity assessment without having previously done a pre-assessment or a self-verification assessment.

12.3   Conformity assessments can only be performed by CABs holding AWS interim accreditation or applicant CABs which have received prior approval from AWS to initiate such certification assessments.

12.4   Parties seeking AWS certification must enter into a certification agreement with the CAB.

12.5   Certification costs should be agreed between the applicant and the CAB before the certification agreement is signed.

    12.5.1   AWS does not get involved in contractual negotiations or the financial side of third-party conformity assessments.

12.6   AWS recommends that clients obtain several quotes, and consider both price and the CAB's experience and reputation, before selecting a CAB and entering into a certification agreement.