**AWS Technical Committee Terms of Reference**

**Version 1.0**

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**ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP (SCIO)**

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# Introduction

* 1. The Technical Committee is the primary body responsible for providing balanced stakeholder oversight of matters relating to the integrity and quality control of the water stewardship system on behalf of members.  It is responsible for reviewing and approving changes to AWS standards, verification processes, policies for trademark use by third parties as well as guidance material and policy documents.
  2. The committee is also the primary body responsible for resolution of disputes within the water stewardship system and must develop (with the Secretariat) and maintain a dispute resolution process.
  3. The Committee is intended to reflect the broadest diversity possible of AWS members, and if possible should be comprised of seven members balanced between each stakeholder group (public sector, private sector and civil society), with one additional member.
  4. While there are no specific requirements set in terms of gender and regional origin these matters will be considered by the Board Nominations Committee in recommending members for election at the Annual Members’ Meeting.
  5. Members of the Technical Committee serve for a term of three years with half retiring at each Annual Members’ Meeting.  Retiring members are eligible to seek re-election.
  6. The Board will appoint an Interim Technical Committee, consisting of a minimum of three members prior to the first Annual Members’ Meeting.

# Background

* 1. The AWS Board of Directors (BoD) established the Technical Committee (TC) in order to facilitate multi-stakeholder decision making processes in relation to the development of new and revised AWS Policies, Standards, Procedures, Requirements and other normative documents. It is seen as the body responsible for integrity and quality control of the AWS water stewardship system.

# Objective

* 1. The TC acts on behalf of AWS members with respect to all matters related to the development, execution and decision making on all AWS Policies, Standards, Procedures and other normative documents.

# Duties

* 1. The TC acts on behalf of AWS members with regards to the development or revision of AWS Policies, Standards, Procedures and other relevant documents (normative and non- normative).

The above may include:

1. prioritizing processes and projects,
2. developing and approving work plans,
3. selecting and approving members and Terms of Reference of technical bodies, such as AWS working groups, expert teams, committees etc ,
4. providing guidance on which ‘direction’ to take with a policy or standards issue,
5. approving discussion, consultation or final drafts,
6. ensuring compliance with AWS requirements, and
7. working in close collaboration with the Technical Manager.
   1. In periods between Annual Members’ Meetings, the TC will make recommendations to the BoD in whom members have vested their authority for decision making.

# Structure and Accountabilities

* 1. The TC should consist of individual representatives of seven AWS members. To the extent possible, the TC should represent the diversity of AWS members., selected by the Members, based on an application process open to all AWS members.
  2. The term of TC members is three years plus a suitable transition period for the introduction of new members.
  3. The term can be renewed for an additional period.
  4. The TC is supported by and in general interfaces with the Technical Manager. All necessary administrative, minute taking, technical and logistical support will be provided by the AWS Technical Manager.
  5. Under normal circumstances the TC will not be expected to consider any issue or policy, standard etc, unless a formal paper has been prepared and circulated in advance, and is part of the TC workplan.
  6. The TC is accountable to AWS members. In periods between Annual Members’ Meetings, the TC is accountable to the BoD, in whom members have vested their authority for deciding on TC recommendations. All decisions taken by the TC are considered as recommendations to the members, and have to be confirmed by the Annual Members’ Meeting/BoD.

# Member application and selection

* 1. All members are entitled to propose one nomination for membership of the TC. Nominations are to be submitted to the AWS Technical Manager.
  2. The members will consider and make decisions on all applications for TC membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of members.
  3. Between AGM’s, the AWS Board has the power to appoint new members to the TC, should a member resign from the TC.

# Member qualifications and obligations

* 1. There are no prescribed qualifications for TC membership, but as far is feasible, the membership of the TC should reflect a broad range of expertise relevant to water stewardship. Members should demonstrate experience of applying the AWS Standard.
  2. It is the obligation of the TC members:

1. To actively and constructively participate in the TC discussions and make available the time necessary for allowing the TC to duly fulfill its duties as laid down in this document.
2. To participate in a minimum of four meetings annually. Additional meetings may be agreed upon between the TC and AWS.
3. To provide active and timely response by email or phone.
4. To be proficient in English and the use of information technology.
5. To declare in advance any potential conflict of interest, if applicable.
6. To sign the confidentiality and service agreement with AWS upon selection.
   1. The BoD may terminate TC membership if it considers that a member had not fulfilled its responsibilities.
   2. In the event that the TC, due to a need for further expert input, cannot make a decision such expert opinion may be sought so as to inform the final decision of the TC members and a decision deferred until this information is made available.

# General Rules of Procedure

* 1. The TC shall decide on its own leadership, e.g. by appointing a chairperson and vice chairperson, and when necessary develop an annual Work Plan.
  2. Communication will mainly be via email and teleconference. Meetings will primarily be held virtually, i.e. by tele/video conference
  3. AWS Technical Manager is responsible for facilitating communication and decision making of the TC by providing discussion papers, draft documents, administrative, technical and logistical support and taking minutes and requesting decision making as need arises. The AWS Technical Manager is also responsible for the timely communication of all recommendations to the BoD and filing all relevant communications and resulting decisions of the TC.
  4. The TC shall make its decisions by consensus, which is defined as the absence of sustained objection.
  5. If consensus cannot be achieved, the applicable issue or element of a policy, standard, procedure or normative and non-normative document shall be deferred to the BoD for decision making, including reporting on the reasons for, the different positions and the extent of disagreement within the TC. The BoD may refer the decision directly to AWS members
  6. The quorum for a TC meeting is when more than a half of all members, with at least one from each chamber, in attendance
  7. Where a quorum cannot be achieved, discussion of the items on the agenda may proceed, but any issues where a decision is required must be communicated to the rest of the committee to inform them and confirm they have no sustained objection to any recommendations.
  8. The working language of the TC is English.
  9. Membership of the TC will not be remunerated but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed/covered.

# Confidentiality and Service Agreement

* 1. All documents prepared by or presented to the TC are assumed to be public unless identified otherwise by AWS and agreed by the TC.
  2. NOTE: Documents that may be considered confidential include Draft Documents that the TC has not concluded discussion on, prior to consultation, or any commercially sensitive information relating to a service provider, certificate holder or registered site that may be shared with the TC in the course of their work.
  3. The TC operates per Chatham House Rules. So, while members of the TC have full authority to share the non-confidential substance of discussions and papers, they shall not report or attribute neither the comments of individuals nor their affiliations outside of meetings, whether conducted face to face or virtual. The default approach of the IGI Group is that the non-attributable content of discussions and papers is not confidential, unless so specified.
  4. The restrictions in this Confidentiality and Service Agreement shall survive the termination of the entire Agreement between the parties and shall be in addition to any restrictions imposed on the TC member by any contract, statutes, guidelines or standards and policies.
  5. By signing below, the TC member agrees to abide by these ToR, including the clauses relating to confidentiality and service agreement.

**Signatures**

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For AWS TC member