

**AWS Public System Report 2017**

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# Scope and Boundaries of the M&E System

* + A brief description of the scope and boundaries of the organization’s M&E system.
  + *This description could identify the standard system’s intended and unintended effects (outcomes and impacts) and the strategies, standards and/or programmes that will be monitored and evaluated through the M&E system (through performance monitoring and/or outcome or impact evaluations). It may also include defining geographic and time boundaries for the activities of the M&E system.*

AWS’s M&E program is designed to:

* **Assess** the impact of implementing the AWS International Water Stewardship Standard v1.0 (AWS Standard)
* **Understand** how the AWS Standard, regional guidance and programmatic offerings could improve
* Enable a **learn**ing environment where gathered M&E data on water stewardship can contribute to the effective dissemination of knowledge amongst interested parties, in particular AWS members
* **Propel** water stewardship’s effectiveness in driving change

The AWS M&E program is organized around the AWS Theory of Change (See Annex 1). The theory of change hypothesizes that successful water stewardship will only be achieved through actions at both the site and catchment levels. The AWS Standard will certify at the site level only, but also requires actions at the catchment level. The theory of change also outlines how water stewards are affected by and can affect the larger socio-economic context in which they operate. AWS’s supporting strategies will enable a step-wise approach to engaging in water stewardship, aid collective action at the catchment level, promote uptake of the Standard at the site level, and encourage connections to areas outside the traditional water space. To such ends, AWS must monitor and evaluate progress at three levels:

1. The Site

The Site level monitors water stewardship actions from the perspective of a site and evaluates what effect implementation of the Standard has had on site’s resiliency to water risk and opportunities to create shared benefits with others in the catchment. Broadly, AWS needs to assess and understand how the AWS Standard is helping sites meet their water goals within their catchment and use those results to learn where the Standard could be improved and propel uptake with others in the catchment.

1. The Catchment

The Catchment level monitors how collective water stewardship actions (or a lack thereof) translate into improved catchment health and evaluates where additional strategies should be leveraged to increase positive impact.

1. The AWS System

The System level monitors how effective AWS strategies are in specific contexts and evaluates how and where they can be improved.

AWS anticipates data monitoring at all sites followed by in-depth (long term focused) monitoring in at least one sub-catchment. For the first catchment level monitoring program aimed at long-term impact.

As of October 2017, AWS is still in the phase of monitoring data at all sites, as we currently have 9 sites certified and around 40 registered implementers.

# Roles and Responsibilities

* + Description of the M&E team and identification of the person responsible for M&E

The Impacts Programme is part of the Technical Programme within AWS. It is overseen by the Technical Director. At this early stage in its development, AWS does not have any further Impacts Staff. There is a dedicated Impacts Task Force, formed of members of the Technical Committee established in 2017. Their role has been to revise the Theory of Change model and translate that into the Impacts System.

AWS is working with other systems e.g. BCI, academics and NGOs such as WWF, in order to collect the data to measure impacts.

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| Document ID | CP-TP-07-M | | Document Name | Impacts Code (v2) M&E Public Systems Report Outline | | | |
| Version | V01 | Release Date | 29/06/2016 | Owner | Martyn Cole | Editor | N/A |

# Defining the Intended Change

* + Description of intended long, medium and short-term social, environmental and/or economic outcomes of the standard system, as well as the strategies that are expected to contribute to intended outcomes

This section outlines the draft AWS theory of change and the linkages between AWS’s long term goals and sustainability issues to the AWS Standard and supporting strategies. Strategies include: establishing regional hubs; training through foundation to advanced and expert on AWS; Accreditation of CAB’s, consultnacies and trainers to increase capacity for implementation; working with other standards to integrate the AWS standard into existing schemes in target areas e.g. Agriculture.

**Theory of Change**

AWS has developed a theory of change (ToC) for successful water stewardship (see Annex 1). This ToC embeds water stewardship in categories of environmental, social and economic impacts. AWS recognizes that to maximize water stewardship benefits for standard adopters, as well as stakeholders, it is essential to engage with existing schemes and work not only site by site, but across catchments and at government policy level to achieve our mission.

The ToC shows how site level improvements can have an impact on water quality, water governance, water use, and important water related areas. These site level improvements have an impact on the overall catchment’s water quality, governance, scarcity, and important water related areas. All of these actions and impacts are nestled under the broader core desired outcomes of the AWS standard: good water quality status, good water governance, sustainability water balance, and healthy status of important water related areas.

As one of AWS’s strategies, the AWS Standard primarily addresses site-level direct threats to water stewardship as well as some indirect catchment-level direct threats and contributing factors. Additional strategies will be developed to complement the Standard, help alter the status quo and further diminish the direct threats to sustainable water stewardship. The whole of all strategies is termed the “AWS System”.

**Long term goals**

The AWS’s long term goals are that good water stewards will understand their own water use, shared catchment risk in terms of water governance, water balance, water quality and important water-related areas, and then engage in meaningful individual and collective actions that benefit people and the environment. Catchments are managed sustainably with support of the catchment’s stakeholders. Put simply, AWS seeks to have more sustainable water for all.

**Sustainability issues**

The AWS Standard is the cornerstone of a larger AWS System designed to primarily address sustainability of water resources as indicated by the four desired outcomes of water stewardship (good water governance, sustainable water balance, good water quality status, and healthy status of important water-related areas). Achievement of these four desired outcomes through implementation of the AWS Standard address a number of the sustainability issues ISEAL outlines in the code of good practice. In the table below we have noted if the AWS Standard addresses the issue directly or indirectly through the larger AWS system.

**Desired Impact**

The desired impacts for the AWS System are aligned along the triple bottom line for sustainability.

* Environmental: Environmentally sustainable water use maintains or improves biodiversity, ecological and hydrological processes at the catchment level.
* Social: Socially equitable water use recognizes and implements the human right to water and sanitation and helps to ensure human well-being and equity.
* Economic: Economically beneficial water use contributes to mitigated water risk, long-term sustainable economic growth, development and poverty alleviation for water users, local communities and society at large.

### Desired Outcomes

The desired outcomes of water stewardship are four-fold: good water governance, sustainable water balance, good water quality status and healthy important water-related areas. These four outcomes deliver proximate benefits for the environment and ultimately, deliver on social and economic impacts.

It is important to note that these four outcomes are most sustainable **when achieved collectively**. Sites are expected to contribute to these outcomes via on-site management, engagement with others and collective action, but are not responsible for achieving them through individual efforts. Nevertheless, these outcomes underpin the Standard and sites’ actions when implementing it.

Outcomes are not intended to be audited within the AWS Standard *per se*; rather, they are broad, fundamental tenets of water stewardship. The criteria in the Standard are designed to help sites to strive for these outcomes and are verifiable through the indicators.

1) Good water governance

*The state when the political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place, which directly or indirectly affect the use, development and management of water resources and the delivery of water services at all levels of society, promote stakeholder participation, transparency, accountability, rule of law, and equity in a manner that is effective, efficient and enduring, and leads to the desired state of the water resource(s).*

2) Sustainable water balance

*The state when the amount and timing of water use, including whether the volumes withdrawn, consumed, diverted and returned at the site and in the catchment are sustainable relative to renewable water supplies and are maintaining environmental flow regimes and renewable aquifer levels.*

3) Good water quality status

*The state when the physical, chemical and biological properties of water, including whether water quality at the site and within the catchment(s) meets local (and, where applicable, international) regulatory requirements and is fit for the requirements of the range of biotic species present and for any human need or purpose.*

4) Healthy status of Important Water-Related Areas

*The state when the specific, environmentally, socially, culturally, or economically water-related areas of a catchment, which contribute disproportionately to human wellbeing, are in a healthy state.*

# Performance Monitoring

* + Description of the performance monitoring activities that make up the broader M&E system.
  + Link to the list of M&E indicators used in performance monitoring

Indicators are divided into three sections: indicators at the AWS Standard-Site level, indicators at the AWS Standard-Catchment level, and then at the AWS System level (includes all strategies together). The indicators proposed for each section can be found in Annex 2.

##### The more detailed Impacts Program, expands on the information included in this System Report as well as include information on:

##### plans and systems for outcome and impact evaluations

##### how evaluations will be used for internal discussion, learning and capacity building

##### plans and systems for transparency and stakeholder involvement

##### indicators and data sources

1. **Outcome and impact evaluation**
   * Description of the outcome/impact evaluation activities that make up the broader M&E system.
   * Link to the list of outcome and impact evaluations that have been commissioned, conducted, or undergone each year, since the system has been operational or for at least the last 5 years.

The AWS Standard and Assurance system has been only been operational since July 2015. In this 2 year period, some 10 sites have been certified and over 50 sites have registered for future certification. Given that only a small number of sites have been certified to date AWS have not been able to conduct a meaningful evaluation of the data so far collected to assess impacts. A number of catchments are emerging where multiple sites are getting certified and so should be generating the desired catchment level impacts. These include the LA Watershed, California; the Indus, Pakistan; and the Lower Yangtze, China.These catchments will be the focus for our first impacts evaluation due in 2018. AWS is currently collecting data on these catchments to produce a baseline for our work against which to inform future impacts assessments.

Prioritizing the early certified sites and their watersheds for outcome/impact evaluation will gives us the longest stretch of data. For sites that are registered, AWS will pick two or three watersheds that will have more certificates down the road and gather baseline information, before certification. AWS should aim to have a full impacts evaluation done before the next revision (2 year horizon), but in the meantime will be able to establish the baseline needed to assess impacts.

# Improving the Effectiveness of the M&E system

* + Description of the approach and frequency of the revisions, which aspects of the M&E system are reviewed and revised, and how results and learning from performance monitoring and evaluations are used in the revisions.

The AWS Impacts System is currently undergoing a revision process as part of the AWS Standards Review and Revision. The outcome of this process will inform the Standards Revision and help us to align better with the overall Theory of Change for AWS.

Going forward, the Impacts system will continue to be revised as part of the AWS Standards Review and Revision Process, which runs on a 5-year cycle. A copy of the AWS Standards Review and Revision Procedure can be found on our website, including opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the process. Between revisions, AWS will take account of any changes introduced by ISEAL revisions of the Impacts Code.

# Opportunities for engagement

* + A contact point for submission of any comments, questions or complaints about the M&E System
  + Link to procedures and opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the design and revision of the M&E system and the results of these consultations (if these opportunities are available for external stakeholders

For further information or to submit comments, questions or complaints about our Monitoring & Evaluations System, please contact our [Technical Director](mailto:richard@a4ws.org).

The Impacts system will continue to be revised as part of the AWS Standards Review and Revision Process, which runs on a 5-year cycle. A copy of the AWS Standards Review and Revision Procedure can be found on our website, including opportunities for stakeholder engagement in the process.

# Version control

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| **Version** | **Release Date** | **Changes** |
| **V01** | 7th December 2017 | Initial Release |
| **V01** | xxxxxxxxx | Document controlled |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Document ID | CP-TP-07-M | | Document Name | Impacts Code (v2) M&E Public Systems Report Outline | | | |
| Version | V01 | Release Date | 29/06/2016 | Owner | Martyn Cole | Editor | N/A |