



THE CONTEXT

A major agro-export boom in Peru's coastal belt has brought benefits to business, local communities and the country as a whole. Over recent years there has been major investments in high value export crops. Asparagus has been one of the most successful export crops and Peru is now world's largest exporter of asparagus. 83% of Peruvian asparagus is grown in two main clusters – La Libertad and Ica. Yet this success is at risk through unsustainable water use. A collaborative effort is needed to secure the viability of this vital economic sector.

This project seeks to address this major risk factor through multi-stakeholder collaboration driven by the **implementation of AWS water stewardship** in the asparagus sector in La Libertad.

THE PROBLEM

- Peru's agro-export sector is facing a **water crisis**
- Declining water resources and mounting conflicts are attracting **international media attention**
- As a thirsty crop, **asparagus** is at the forefront of water risk in Peru
- To-date there has been no market-based system to engaging all stakeholders in **systematically addressing water risk** in the asparagus sector.

WATER RISK IN ASPARAGUS SECTOR

Unsustainable water use in the asparagus sector is driving risk for multiple stakeholders. **Producers** are exposed to risk related to reduced productivity and loss of buyers. **Retailers** face risk to their supplies and to their reputation as the issue gains international attention. **Workers** are at risk of losing jobs as business suffers the effects of water scarcity. **Regional and national governments** face risks related to jobs losses and resultant social impacts, and financial risks related to loss of revenue from the sector and dependent industries.

WHAT IS THE RESPONSE?

This situation requires a holistic water stewardship response that engages all key stakeholders in the systematic reduction of water risk to the asparagus sector. To that end the project employs a “PUSH-PULL-POLICY” strategy:

- **PUSH:** Asparagus producers apply the AWS Standard as a collaborative and catchment-level response
- **PULL:** Retailers encourage uptake of AWS water stewardship within their asparagus supply chains and with peer retailers
- **POLICY:** Key stakeholders are informed on AWS water stewardship and share lessons within regional and national platforms

WHERE WILL THE PROJECT FOCUS?

The primary focus will be on asparagus producers in La Libertad. The multi-stakeholder platform established by the 2030 Water Resources Group will bring the project to the attention of influential stakeholders at a national level, enhancing the uptake of water stewardship more broadly in Peru. Communications material and activities by participating retailers will bring the lessons of the project to international audiences, including other retailers, helping to reinforce and disseminate learning outcomes.

BENEFITS FOR PROJECT PARTNERS

The **ASPARGAGUS SECTOR** in La Libertad will benefit from increased sustainability and competitiveness

RETAILERS will benefit from increased resilience in asparagus supply chains, reduced reputational risk and strengthened Brand

PRODUCERS will benefit from more sustainable water use in asparagus sector in La Libertad, increased competitiveness, enhanced relationships with local stakeholders and stronger relationships with buyers

POLICY-MAKERS will benefit from multi-stakeholder engagement around critical risk factor and evidence of the positive impact of water stewardship for replication in other ago-export sectors

WHO IS INVOLVED

The project brings together major value chain stakeholders. Founding partners include AWS, Centro de Investigación of Universidad del Pacífico, Marks & Spencer, Coop (Switzerland), Barfoots, IFC/2030 Water Resources Group, DanPer and SGS. The partners are actively seeking to **engage other producers, retailers and policy-makers in the project** to increase uptake of AWS water stewardship in the Peruvian asparagus sector.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN AND BENEFIT

- Commit to promoting AWS water stewardship with your asparagus suppliers in La Libertad/Peru
- Support your asparagus suppliers in achieving AWS certification
- Participate in retailer-to-retailer engagement on AWS water stewardship in the Peruvian asparagus sector

ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP (AWS)

AWS is global partnership that promotes the responsible use of freshwater. The internationally-consistent AWS water stewardship system drives, recognizes and rewards improved water stewardship performance. At the heart of the AWS system is the **INTERNATIONAL WATER STEWARDSHIP STANDARD** (the AWS Standard) which provides a voluntary framework for major water users to understand their water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently for sustainable water management within a catchment context.

The AWS system enables **certification** through credible third-party processes; **accreditation** of specialist service providers to support and assess implementation of the AWS Standard; **capacity-building** to increase uptake and implementation of AWS water stewardship, and **multi-stakeholder governance**, implemented through a membership structure and regional/country affiliates. Please contact adrian@a4ws.org for more details.