

GUIDANCE NOTE

TO COMPLEMENT THE DEFINITION OF 'SITE' IN THE AWS STANDARD 2.0

APPROVED BY THE AWS TECHNICAL COMMITTEE – 25 JUNE 2021

BACKGROUND

AWS has identified the need to develop a new guidance note to complement the definition of "Site" found in the AWS Standard V2.0. The aim of the guidance note is to specify certain types of "sites" that should not be eligible for certification because of their particular nature, as they are not compatible with the intent and objectives of the AWS Standard.

INTENT AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STANDARD

The applicability of the Standard is defined as: *"The AWS Standard is applicable globally to all organisations and industrial sectors, independent of their size and operational complexity, including agriculture, and non-profit sectors. The focus of the Standard is **the operational site and its local water catchment**, but with a broader goal to include indirect water use in the supply chain."*

The Objective of the AWS Standard is defined as: *"The objective of the AWS Standard is to drive water stewardship, which we define as: the **use of water that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial**, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site-and catchment-based actions."* (AWS Standard V2.0)

DEFINITION OF 'SITE' (AWS STANDARD V2.0)

"SITE. For the AWS Standard, the site is the physical area over which the implementing organisation owns or manages land and carries out its principal activities. In most cases it is a contiguous area of land but may also include physically separated but nearby areas (especially if in the same catchment). For a factory, the 'site' is typically represented by the fenced area encompassing all its buildings, parking and storage areas. For farming, it encompasses its fields, buildings and storage areas. Where the organisation operates its own water sources and/or wastewater plant, these should be considered part of the 'site'. For example, for a bottled water factory that operates a physically separate water source (e.g., spring or borehole), this should be considered part of the 'site'. For Group Certification, each organisation should define its own site, except where they share land or facilities with other group members."

GUIDANCE NOTE

1. 'Stand-alone' water sources (for example, spring sites, boreholes, reservoirs) or pipelines are not eligible for certification on their own. A water source can only be certified as part of the implementing organisation that manages, processes and distributes the water coming from the site as its principal activity, or as part of an organisation that uses the water in its own operations. The implementing organisation's own site(s) and operations shall be included in the scope of the certification.

Rationale: The objective of the AWS Standard is to drive water stewardship, which requires a high level of commitment and local engagement by the implementing organisations. Stand-alone water sources have a very narrow range of activities directly linked to them (for example, extraction, transport). Thus, the possibilities for implementing water stewardship on these sites are very limited.

2. Sites that are not linked to a specific catchment(s) (for example, ships, offshore rigs) do not qualify for certification. Sites must be able to clearly identify and map their physical scope, including the catchment(s) that they rely upon and affect.

Rationale: The AWS Standard strongly focuses on catchment-based and collective actions for achieving the water stewardship objectives. Sites that are not connected to specific catchments are not able to meet the level of action and engagement required by the AWS Standard.