

CERTIFICATION REPORT

Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)

Audit Number: AO-000499

SITE DETAILS

Site: **Plantaciones Del Norte**

Address: Av. Los Heroes de la Barranquista Mao,, Valverde, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

AWS Group Reference Number: AWS-G-000007

Site Structure: Multi Site

CERTIFICATION DETAILS

Certification status: **Certified Core**

Date of certification decision: 2023-Aug-15

Validity of certificate: 2026-Aug-15

AUDIT DETAILS

Audited Service(s): AWS Standard v2.0 (2019)

Audit Type(s): Initial Audit

Audit Start Date: 2023-Mar-13

Lead Auditor: Claudia M. Jaime

Audit team participants:

Humberto Checo

Claudia M Jaime, Lead Auditor

Site Participants:

Leocari Gómez, Certifications Manager

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Laure Anne Menke, Merckens development support for AWS

Carlos Ernesto Reyes Espinal, Internal inspector

Marino Trastullo, General Manager

Fernando Belliart, Certification Officer

Jaruil Polanco, Area Manager

Wirmi Minyety, Area Manager

Javier Solano, Area Manager

Elvis Ciprian, Plantations Director

Joseph B. Gómez, Farm Manager

Ivan M. Flores, Farm Manager

Héctor Díaz, Farm Manager

Luis Alcántara, Farm Manager

Carlos Juan Bonilla, Farm Manager

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ADDITIONAL INFO

Summary of Audit Findings: A total of 31 findings were raised during the certification audit, 4 major non-conformities, 19 minor non-conformities, 8 observations. The major non-conformities were of sufficient concern to warrant the categorisation of the non-conformity as major and related to all 5 AWS outcomes.

The Client is requested to perform a root cause analysis and define corrective actions for each of the non-conformities and to submit these to WSAS within 60 days of receipt of the audit report by 03/07/2023.

The major non-conformities must be sufficiently addressed and evidence submitted to WSAS within 90 days of receipt of the report by 03/08/2023.

Minor non-conformities must be closed out by the time of the next annual audit.

The audit team recommends certification of Plantaciones del Norte at Core level pending approval of the corrective actions plan and closure of the major non-conformities.

CLOSURE OF FINDINGS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN:

The Client has successfully resolved the major non-conformity and submitted the corrective action plan addressing all findings.

Proof of implementation has been requested for the Minors and this will be evaluated during the Surveillance Audit. The client is requested to upload evidence of implementation prior to the Surveillance Audit.

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Scope of Assessment: The scope of services covers the Initial certification audit for assessing conformity of Plantaciones del Norte against the AWS International Water Stewardship Standard Version 2.

The company Plantaciones del Norte S.A. (PdN), is a company constituted according to the national laws, is located in Héroes de la Barranquita street, without number, Mao Valverde, Dominican Republic. Plantaciones del Norte S.A. cooperates closely with the company Plantaciones Agrícolas Manzanillo SRL (PAM). This partner company produces bananas that are exported through PdN. They also share many technical departments such as certification, production, plant health, engineering, research and development, auditing and cost and human resources among others. This configuration allows both companies to operate with great efficiency.

For this reason, it was also decided to implement the AWS standard as a multi-site with 2 sites a) Plantaciones del Norte SA (composed of six farms: Finca Billy, Finca Fernandez, Finca Mota, Finca Yaque, Proyecto Limones and Finca Bogaert) and b) Plantaciones Agrícolas Manzanillo SRL (composed of two farms: Finca Villa Copa and Finca Villa Sinda).

The company started its operations in 1997 and has been operating for 25 years. It is a company dedicated to the production and commercialisation of bananas and lemons, its main markets are the USA and the EU, and PdN has 4 banana production units and 2 lemon production units, with a maximum banana production capacity of 2,100 boxes/Ha, in high season 2,400 boxes/Ha and in low season 1,600 boxes/Ha, of which 82.5% are destined for export and 17.5% for the national market. PAM has 2 banana production units.

The facility is located in the Yaque del Norte catchment is the most important catchment in the Dominican Republic, with an extension of 7,053 square kilometres, equivalent to 14.6% of the national territory. It affects 40 municipalities within six provinces in the Cibao Central and Cibao Noroeste region, with a population of about 1.8 million inhabitants.

The audit was conducted onsite on 13-17 March 2023. The onsite site visit included the assessment of 7 farms in which the sites or forms of water supply (well or river), wastewater discharge sites, storage and warehouse, packing houses, toilets, showers and changing rooms, canteens, infirmary and IWRA (if applicable) were visited, the facilities and activities that were visited onsite as part of the audit.

FINDINGS

NUMBER OF FINDINGS PER LEVEL

Observation	8
Minor	19
Major	4

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FINDING DETAILS

Finding No:	TNR-003649
Checklist Item No:	1.2.1
Status:	Closed
Finding level:	Minor
Due date:	2024-Mar-13
Checklist item:	Stakeholders and their water-related challenges shall be identified. The process used for stakeholder identification shall be identified. This process shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inclusively cover all relevant stakeholder groups including vulnerable, women, minority, and Indigenous people;- Consider the physical scope identified, including stakeholders, representative of the site's ultimate water source and ultimate receiving water body or bodies;- Provide evidence of stakeholder consultation on water-related interests and challenges;- Note that the ability and/or willingness of stakeholders to participate may vary across the relevant stakeholder groups;- Identify the degree of stakeholder engagement based on their level of interest and influence.
Findings:	The Site should identify stakeholders and their water related challenges. This process shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inclusively cover all relevant stakeholder groups including vulnerable, women, minority, and Indigenous people;- Provide evidence of stakeholder consultation on water-related interests and challenges.
Corrective action:	A form was developed with the basic questions to apply the survey to the different stakeholders, in order to determine the shared challenges within the basin, this survey began to apply to the different stakeholders from 15/05/2023 and is expected to end on 21/07/2023, at this time it is expected to obtain data on the shared challenges agreed with the stakeholders.

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Finding No: TNR-003650
Checklist Item No: 1.2.2
Status: Closed
Finding level: Major
Due date: 2023-Jul-27
Checklist item: Current and potential degree of influence between site and stakeholder shall be identified, within the catchment and considering the site's ultimate water source and ultimate receiving water body for wastewater.
Findings: The Site should identify current and potential degree of influence between site and stakeholder within the catchment.
Corrective action: A survey of questions to be applied to the different stakeholders was prepared in order to determine their current and potential degree of influence within the basin. This survey began to be applied to the different stakeholders as of 15/05/2023 and is expected to end on 21/07/2023, during which time data is expected to be obtained for analysis and to determine the degree of influence of the most important stakeholders within the basin.

Finding No: TNR-004014
Checklist Item No: 1.3.2
Status: Closed
Finding level: Major
Due date: 2023-Jul-27
Checklist item: Site water balance, including inflows, losses, storage, and outflows shall be identified and mapped
Findings: The Water Balance presented does not have data to be confirmed and the equation is uncertain.
Corrective action: A list or record will be made of the improvements in the quality of the farm's waste water.

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Finding No: TNR-003653
Checklist Item No: 1.3.3
Status: Closed
Finding level: Major
Due date: 2023-Jul-27
Checklist item: Site water balance, inflows, losses, storage, and outflows, including indication of annual variance in water usage rates, shall be quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water balance for people or environment, an indication of annual high and low variances shall be quantified.
Findings: The Site should quantify the water balance at each farm. Also because water scarcity is a water-related challenge the good water balance should quantify annual high and low variances.
Corrective action: A document was elaborated where the data of a complete year was recorded by month and then these data were plotted where the maximum and minimum annual variation of the water balance can be seen.

Finding No: TNR-004018
Checklist Item No: 1.3.4
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Water quality of the site's water source(s), provided waters, effluent and receiving water bodies shall be quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water quality status for people or environment, an indication of annual, and where appropriate, seasonal, high and low variances shall be quantified.
Findings: The site shall include analysis of their effluents in relation to the spray fumigations.
Corrective action: Effluents will be analyzed after spray fumigation has been applied, this analysis will be included in the quantification of water quality.

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Finding No: TNR-004116
Checklist Item No: 1.3.4
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Water quality of the site's water source(s), provided waters, effluent and receiving water bodies shall be quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water quality status for people or environment, an indication of annual, and where appropriate, seasonal, high and low variances shall be quantified.
Findings: The site should maintain records of the quality of all outgoing effluent (after treatment where applicable) and of water bodies that receive the effluent.
Corrective action: A register will be implemented where the results of the water analysis performed at the water intake and effluents will be tabulated.

Finding No: TNR-004015
Checklist Item No: 1.3.5
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Potential sources of pollution shall be identified and if applicable, mapped, including chemicals used or stored on site.
Findings: In the context of water stewardship, it is especially important to identify pollution sources that present a risk to water bodies and water abstraction points (including point sources and non-point sources identification and water bodies at risk). The Site Shall identify as a potential source of pollution the heces from their sheps and cows on their water bodies.
Corrective action: The site will implement the practices set forth in the water stewardship plan to maintain, improve IWRAS on site and within the watershed.

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Finding No: TNR-003688
Checklist Item No: 1.3.6
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: On-site Important Water-Related Areas shall be identified and mapped, including a description of their status including Indigenous cultural values.
Findings: The Site should include the description of on-site IWRA status. As such assessments can be subjective, the site should consider consulting with appropriate experts or stakeholders, such as local conservation NGOs. This will strengthen the credibility of assessment and may be the only true way to understand why an area is important.
Corrective action:

- We will check with the Ministry of the Environment to see if they have any information.
- Also to the NGOs that are working in the Yaque del Norte river basin.
- If we cannot find any information in this way, using the experience obtained with the experts who made the evaluation of the IWRAS of our farms, we will make a tour of the areas or communities near the farms.

Finding No: TNR-004024
Checklist Item No: 1.3.7
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Annual water-related costs, revenues, and a description or quantification of the social, cultural, environmental, or economic water-related value generated by the site shall be identified and used to inform the evaluation of the plan in 4.1.2.
Findings: The Site shall include in the qualification of water related cost data for consultancy, data collection, conservation and others.
Corrective action: The costs will be included in the cost classification documentation.

Finding No: TNR-004025
Checklist Item No: 1.3.8
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Levels of access and adequacy of WASH at the site shall be identified.
Findings: The Site shall warranty that the level of access and adequacy of WASH are satisfactory.
(not all field toilets are clean and the showers don't have curtains).
Corrective action: The level of cleanliness in field bathrooms will be adapted and curtains will be installed in all the farm showers so that workers have privacy when it comes to cleaning.

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Finding No: TNR-004029
Checklist Item No: 1.4.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: The embedded water use of primary inputs, including quantity, quality and level of water risk within the site’s catchment, shall be identified.
Findings: The Site shall quantify the amount of 20-litre jugs (per farm) and how often they buy that amount in order to understand potential water risk within the catchment
Corrective action: The number of jugs of water per farm and the frequency with which these are purchased from the distribution company will be quantified.

Finding No: TNR-003687
Checklist Item No: 1.5.5
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Important Water-Related Areas shall be identified, and where appropriate, mapped, and their status assessed including any threats to people or the natural environment, using scientific information and through stakeholder engagement.
Findings: The Site should assess the IWRA’s status, including any threats to people or the natural environment, using scientific information and through stakeholder engagement.
Corrective action: - The technical team will include threats to people or the natural environment in the next evolution of the IWRAS status.

Finding No: TNR-003691
Checklist Item No: 1.7.2
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Water-related opportunities shall be identified, including how the site may participate, assessment and prioritization of potential savings, and business opportunities.
Findings: The Site should identify how the Site may participate, assessment and prioritization of potential savings, and business opportunities.
Corrective action: Savings opportunities and commercial opportunities will be added to the risk assessment.

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Finding No: TNR-004031
Checklist Item No: 2.3.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: A water stewardship strategy shall be identified that defines the overarching mission, vision, and goals of the organization towards good water stewardship in line with this AWS Standard.
Findings: The Site shall reframe their mision within the catchment.
Corrective action: The mission of the site will be reconsidered and the community members of the surrounding areas of the farms will be included.

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Finding No:	TNR-004032
Checklist Item No:	2.3.2
Status:	Closed
Finding level:	Major
Due date:	2023-Jul-27
Checklist item:	A water stewardship plan shall be identified, including for each target: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How it will be measured and monitored- Actions to achieve and maintain (or exceed) it- Planned timeframes to achieve it- Financial budgets allocated for actions- Positions of persons responsible for actions and achieving targets- Where available, note the link between each target and the achievement of best practice to help address shared water challenges and the AWS outcomes.
Findings:	<p>The Site WSP should include for each target:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- How it will be measured and monitored- Actions to achieve and maintain (or exceed) it- Planned timeframes to achieve it- Financial budgets allocated for actions- Positions of persons responsible for actions and achieving targets- Where available, note the link between each target and the achievement of best practice to help address shared water challenges and the AWS outcomes. <p>It will be relevant to have WSPs for each of the 7 farms, as they have different characteristics and challenges.</p> <p>The site presents its WSP 17 SMART objectives; of which it describes its proposed activities. They mention the department responsible; however the indicator asks them to designate a responsible staff. It does not describe how each of its proposed activities will be measured and monitored.</p> <p>Not all of your proposed activities have an associated budget. Regarding the estimated time to achieve their activities, they are not precise about the dates when they end, for example they mention internal tutorials that do not give a date, that will be impossible to evaluate in the next audit. Every time there is a process, this is not clear either. In general the description is not consistent.</p>
Corrective action:	<p>The water stewardship plan will be divided and adapted for the 7 farms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Within the plan adapted to the 7 farms and the missing columns will be completed (how it will be measured and monitored, actions to achieve and maintain or exceed it, expected deadlines to achieve it, economic budgets allocated to all actions, name of the position of people responsible for the actions and achievement of the objectives).
Evidence of implementation:	please consider "A 162 - Plan de Gestion- new version"

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Finding No: TNR-004033
Checklist Item No: 2.4.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: A plan to mitigate or adapt to identified water risks developed in co-ordination with relevant public-sector and infrastructure agencies shall be identified.
Findings: The Site should identify a plan to mitigate or adapt the identified water risks developed in co-ordination with relevant public sector and infrastructure agencies.
Corrective action: The Water risk Mitigation and Adaptation Plan will be developed and shared with relevant public agencies.

Finding No: TNR-004035
Checklist Item No: 3.3.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Status of progress towards meeting water balance targets set in the water stewardship plan shall be identified.
Findings: The site shall include evidence for each of the activities.
Corrective action: Evidence of the activities carried out to meet the objectives of the water balance will be provided.

Finding No: TNR-003707
Checklist Item No: 3.3.2
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Where water scarcity is a shared water challenge, annual targets to improve the site's water use efficiency, or if practical and applicable, reduce volumetric total use shall be implemented.
Findings: The site should implement annual targets to improve the water use efficiency of each farm with respect to the Water Balance of each farm.
Corrective action: The targets will be identified in relation to the efficiency of the farm's water balance.

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Finding No: TNR-003708
Checklist Item No: 3.4.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Status of progress towards meeting water quality targets set in the water stewardship plan shall be identified.
Findings: The Site should identify the status of progress towards meeting water quality targets set in the WSP for each farm. For each water quality target, the evidence should show: the water body or feature it applies to, the target water quality and planned timescale to achieve it.
Corrective action: The status of progress towards meeting the water quality objectives in the water stewardship Plan for the farms will be identified.

Finding No: TNR-003709
Checklist Item No: 3.4.2
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Where water quality is a shared water challenge, continual improvement to achieve best practice for the site's effluent shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.
Findings: The site should identify the status of progress towards meeting each farm's WSP water quality objectives.
The Site should verify the status of progress of the Plan with respect to "Water Quality Best Practices".
Corrective action: A list or record will be made of the improvements in the quality of the farm's wastewater.

Finding No: TNR-003710
Checklist Item No: 3.5.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Practices set in the water stewardship plan to maintain and/or enhance the site's Important Water-Related Areas shall be implemented.
Findings: The Site should implement practices set in their WSP to maintain and/or enhance their IWRA on site or within the catchment.
Corrective action: The site will implement the practices set forth in the water stewardship plan to maintain, improve IWRAS on site and within the watershed.

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Finding No: TNR-004034
Checklist Item No: 3.6.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Evidence of the site’s provision of adequate access to safe drinking water, effective sanitation, and protective hygiene (WASH) for all workers onsite shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.
Findings: The Site shall provide protective hygiene for field workers’ clothes, install shower curtains to ensure privacy and ensure that the cleanliness of all toilets.
Corrective action: The site will provide protective hygiene for worker clothing, keep restrooms clean, and install shower curtains for worker privacy.

Finding No: TNR-004036
Checklist Item No: 3.7.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Evidence that indirect water use targets set in the water stewardship plan, as applicable, have been met shall be quantified.
Findings: The site should quantify progress towards achieving the target in its WSP.
Corrective action: The % of progress in the achievement of the water stewardship plan goal will be quantified.

Finding No: TNR-004037
Checklist Item No: 3.7.2
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Observation
Checklist item: Evidence of engagement with suppliers and service providers, as well as, when applicable, actions they have taken in the catchment as a result of the site’s engagement related to indirect water use, shall be identified.
Findings: The Site shall identify evidence of engagement with suppliers and service providers to develop actions to promote sustainable water management.
Corrective action: Meetings will be held with suppliers and service providers to promote sustainable water management.

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Finding No:	TNR-003713
Checklist Item No:	3.8.1
Status:	In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level:	Minor
Due date:	2024-Mar-13
Checklist item:	Evidence of engagement, and the key messages relayed with confirmation of receipt, shall be identified.
Findings:	The site should identify evidence of engagement with stakeholders with whom it has shared water infrastructure. (e.g. canals and space on the Mota farm where the pump is located).
Corrective action:	An evidence of communication and signing of the commitment agreement with the neighbor of finca mota will be provided.
Finding No:	TNR-004038
Checklist Item No:	3.9.2
Status:	In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level:	Minor
Due date:	2024-Mar-13
Checklist item:	Actions towards achieving best practice, related to targets in terms of water balance shall be implemented.
Findings:	The Site should provide evidence of the proposed actions towards achieving best practice in terms of water balance.
Corrective action:	The implementation of the proposed actions to achieve the Best Practices in Water Balance will be documented.
Finding No:	TNR-004039
Checklist Item No:	3.9.5
Status:	In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level:	Minor
Due date:	2024-Mar-13
Checklist item:	Actions towards achieving best practice related to targets in terms of WASH shall be implemented.
Findings:	The Site should present evidence of implementation of actions towards achieving best practice related to targets in terms of WASH.
Corrective action:	The implementation of the proposed actions to achieve Best Practices in terms of WASH will be documented.

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Finding No: TNR-003715
Checklist Item No: 4.1.1
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Performance against targets in the site's water stewardship plan and the contribution to achieving water stewardship outcomes shall be evaluated.
Findings: The Site should evaluate it's performance against targets in the site's water stewardship plan (for each of their 7 farms) and the contribution to achieving water stewardship outcomes.
Corrective action: Performance will be evaluated against the objectives of the water stewardship plan and its contribution to the achievement of the 5 expected results of the AWS standard.

Finding No: TNR-003716
Checklist Item No: 4.1.2
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: Value creation resulting from the water stewardship plan shall be evaluated.
Findings: The Site should evaluate the value creation resulting from their WSP.
Corrective action: The value creation of the water stewardship plan will be evaluated and documented.

Finding No: TNR-004027
Checklist Item No: 4.1.3
Status: In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level: Minor
Due date: 2024-Mar-13
Checklist item: The shared value benefits in the catchment shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.
Findings: The Site should identify and where available quantify the shared value benefits in the catchment.
Corrective action: The benefits of the shared value of the watershed will be identified and quantified.

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Finding No:	TNR-004030
Checklist Item No:	5.1.1
Status:	In Progress - CA plan approved
Finding level:	Minor
Due date:	2024-Mar-13
Checklist item:	The site's water-related internal governance, including positions of those accountable for compliance with water-related laws and regulations shall be disclosed.
Findings:	The Site should disclose it's water-related internal governance, including positions of those accountable for compliance with water related laws and regulations.
Corrective action:	Internal water-related governance and those responsible for compliance with water-related laws and regulations will be disclosed.

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Report Details

Report	Value
Report prepared by	Claudia M. Jaime
Report approved by	Lurdes Guerra
Report approved on (Date)	03/05/2023

Surveillance

Proposed date for next audit
2024-Mar-12

Stakeholder Announcements

Date of publication	Location
24/01/2023	AWS web page: https://a4ws.org/certification/stakeholder-announcements/
24/01/2023	WSAS web page: https://watersas.org/stakeholder-announcements/
26/01/2023	Social media: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cn68Ef5O1uw/
28/02/2023	https://merckens.de/es/gestion-sostenible-del-agua-en-republica-dominicana/

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Catchment Information

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The catchment area of the Yaque del Norte River is the largest in the country with 7,053 km² equivalent to 14.6% of the national territory. It can be subdivided into the upper catchment, which runs from its source to Jarabacoa, where it is joined by the Jimenoa with an average gradient of 4.8% and a distance of 42 kilometres; the middle catchment, which runs from Jarabacoa to Santiago where it is characterised by changes in direction with favourable sectors for the damming of its waters, as is the case of Taveras, has a distance of 85 kilometres and an average gradient of 0.54%; and the lower catchment, which runs from Jarabacoa to the Atlantic Ocean, where it is joined by the Jimenoa with an average gradient of 4.8% and a distance of 42 kilometres. 54%; and the lower catchment, which runs from Santiago to the Atlantic Ocean for 169 kilometres with an average gradient of 0.09% in an alluvial plain between the Central and Septentrional Cordilleras, which receives an annual rainfall of between 600 and 1000 millimetres.

The Yaque del Norte catchment is the most important catchment in the Dominican Republic, with an extension of 7,053 square kilometres, equivalent to 14.6% of the national territory. It affects 40 municipalities within six provinces in the Cibao Central and Cibao Noroeste region, with a population of about 1.8 million inhabitants.

The main river that gives its name to this catchment is the Yaque del Norte, the longest in the Dominican Republic, with a course of 296 kilometres from its source in Rusilla, Jarabacoa, in the Central Mountain Range, to its mouth in Montecristi.

In this catchment there are several dam systems comprising Tavera-Bao, Monción, Chacuey and Maguaca. These systems have a storage capacity of 820.7 million cubic metres of water. These dams, together with other sources, are used to provide drinking water to about 1.8 million people, especially through the Cibao Central and Línea Noroeste aqueducts. They also generate up to 488 gigawatts of electricity per year. It also provides water to a thriving industrial sector.

These dams are also mechanisms for regulating extreme events in the hydrological cycle, including flood prevention, as well as storing water to cope with droughts.

Some 70,003 hectares of rice, banana and other crops are irrigated by irrigation systems integrated by the Ulises Francisco Espaillat canals. Monsieur Bogaert and other smaller ones, benefiting some 14,800 producers.

This catchment is also home to a great biological diversity and possesses natural beauty and attractive environmental conditions for the development of ecotourism.

Despite its ecological, economic and social importance, the capacity of the Yaque del Norte catchment to provide sufficient and stable water has been decreasing over the years, due to the degradation of the upper part where the water recharge areas are located.

Deforestation and inadequate crop and livestock farming practices, as well as urban expansion, have reduced the forest cover necessary for rainwater to infiltrate the soils and provide the rivers with the water flows that allow them to maintain stable flows throughout the months of the year, while soil erosion has increased, reducing their productive capacity and causing sedimentation of rivers and dams.

The expansion of the agricultural frontier and population and industrial growth, together with the misuse of water for production and human consumption, are generating a demand that is already approaching the catchment's capacity to generate this precious liquid. INDRHI projections indicate that water pressure in the Yaque del Norte catchment is already close to 100%. This is in addition to the fact that the Dominican Republic as a territory faces a high level of water stress, occupying 34th place among 240 countries evaluated, according to the World Resources Institute.

In addition to this potential crisis for the quantity of water available, there is also an important problem related to the quality of the water bodies in the catchment and the water served to the inhabitants.

Deficiencies in the management and treatment capacities of wastewater, solid waste and inadequate agricultural and industrial practices cause the waters of the catchment to be polluted in a large part of its streams and water bodies. Water pollution has a strong negative impact on people's health and the environment, increasing the cost of water purification processes and reducing the quality of irrigated soils.

Restoring and preserving the capacity of the Yaque del Norte catchment to generate water in

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sufficient quantity and with adequate quality is an imperative challenge that cannot wait to be assumed with responsibility and enthusiasm. The sustainable development and environmental quality of this region depends on it.

<https://fondoaguayaque.org/cuenca-yaque-del-norte/>

Client Description and Site Details

Client/Site Background

The company Plantaciones del Norte S.A. (PdN), is a company constituted according to the national laws, is located in Héroes de la Barranquita street, without number, Mao Valverde, Rep. Dom. and is provided with the National Taxpayer Registry (RNC) 1-01-58943-4.

The company started its operations in 1997 and has been operating for 25 years. It is a company dedicated to the production and commercialisation of bananas and lemons, its main markets are the USA and the EU.

The management of Plantaciones del Norte, S.A. is headed by the company's president, followed by the general management, followed by the departmental directors and managers. The general management together with the directors and departmental managers are responsible for the execution of the necessary operational work for the development of the activities.

The company is certified under the organic regulations (EC) 834/2007 and (EC) 889-2008 for Europe for the USA, GLOBALG.A.P., Fairtrade trader, Grasp and DEMETER. They have been certified organic for more than 20 years.

In the Northwest Line of the Dominican Republic, banana farmers are particularly exposed and vulnerable to problems of water availability and quality, to the effects of devastating floods and droughts, and at the same time depend on a water distribution system that does not meet the needs of their plantations.

In this context, the companies Plantaciones del Norte, Banama, Fruedom, Biotropic and the cooperative Banelino, which produce organic and biodynamic bananas for the European market, are participating in the AWS pilot project.

In total, the plantations of the AWS project cover an area of 2,074 hectares and thus represent about 7.5% of the total banana cultivation area in the country.

<https://merckens.de/es/gestion-sostenible-del-agua-en-republica-dominicana/>

Comment The Site includes in its certificate 7 farms producing bananas; one of them produces lemons.

Summary of Shared Water Challenges

Summary of Shared Water Challenges

Major risks and challenges:




Despite its ecological, economic and social importance, the capacity of the Yaque del Norte catchment to provide sufficient and stable water has been decreasing over the years, to the point of losing 75% of its flow, due to the degradation of the upper part where the water recharge zones are located (Fondo Agua Yaque Del Norte, n.d.).

In addition, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and population and industrial growth, together with the misuse of water for productive and human purposes, are generating a demand that is already approaching the catchment's capacity to generate this precious liquid. Deficiencies in the management and treatment capacities of wastewater, solid waste and inadequate agricultural and industrial practices, cause the waters to be polluted (Fondo Agua Yaque Del Norte, n.d.). (1.5.1, p.2).

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0.1 General Requirements for Single Sites, Multi-Sites and Groups		
0.1.1	<i>Eligibility Criteria</i>	
0.1.1.1	<i>The site(s) occupy one catchment OR an exception has been granted.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The Site (multisite) occupies one catchment.	
0.1.1.2	<i>The scope of the proposed certification shall be under the control of a single management system.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The scope of the proposed certification is under the control of a single management system.	
0.1.1.3	<i>The scope of the proposed certification shall be homogeneous with respect to primary production system, water management, product or service range, and the main market structures.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The Site is homogeneous with respect to its primary production system, water use and management, and the main market structures.	

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0.2 Requirements for Multisite Operations	
0.2.1	<i>Multisite Management Requirements</i>
0.2.1.1	<i>The Multisite operation shall nominate an "AWS Group Representative".</i> ✔ Yes
Comment	The Site has appointed an AWS group representative, the document with the signature of the representative of the 7 farms included in the scope of the Multisite certificate is attached.
0.2.1.2	<i>The name and location of each site within the proposed scope for certification of the Multisite operation shall be clearly defined.</i> ✔ Yes
Comment	The Multisite with two sites: Plantaciones del Norte SA and Plantaciones Agricolas Manzanillo SRL is composed as follows: a) Plantaciones del Norte SA: Finca Mota (It is a farm located in the community of Cerro Gordo, Guayubín municipality, Montecristi province), Finca Billy (It is located in the La Azucarera sector, Cruce de Guayacanes section, Laguna Salada municipality, Valverde province), Finca Yanque (It is a farm located in the community of La Peña Ranchadero, Guayubín municipality, Montecristi province), Finca Fernandez (It is located in the community of Cerro Gordo, Guayubín municipality, Montecristi province) y Proyecto Limones (located in the municipality of Guayubín, Montecristi Province). b) Plantaciones Agricolas Manzanillo SRL: Villa Copa Farm (Located in the community of Villa Copa, Villa Vásquez municipality, Montecristi Province) & Villa Sinda Farm (Located in the community of Villa Sinda, Villa Vásquez municipality, Montecristi Province).
0.2.1.3	<i>Where a new site has been added to the multisite certificate, an onsite audit of the site was conducted prior to it being added to the certificate register.</i> ✔ Yes
Comment	This is a inicial certification audit. The site has register 7 farms under mulltisite.
0.2.1.4	<i>All AWS claims made by the client are managed through the "AWS Group Representative".</i> ✔ Yes
Comment	The claims that will be managed by the client will be conducted by the "AWS Group Representative" , see attachment at 0.2.1.1


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1 STEP 1: GATHER AND UNDERSTAND	
1.1	<i>Gather information to define the site's physical scope for water stewardship purposes, including: its operational boundaries; the water sources from which the site draws; the locations to which the site returns its discharges; and the catchment(s) that the site affect(s) and upon which it is reliant.</i>
1.1.1	<p><i>The physical scope of the site shall be mapped, considering the regulatory landscape and zone of stakeholder interests, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site boundaries; - Water-related infrastructure, including piping network, owned or managed by the site or its parent organization; - Any water sources providing water to the site that are owned or managed by the site or its parent organization; - Water service provider (if applicable) and its ultimate water source; - Discharge points and waste water service provider (if applicable) and ultimate receiving water body or bodies; - Catchment(s) that the site affect(s) and is reliant upon for water.
Comment	<p>The site has prepared a document describing the characteristics of each farm. This document describes the attached files containing the surface areas of each farm and their location.</p> <p>The maps of each farm describe the sites from which each site is supplied with water, whether they have any water storage sites, IWRA-on-site (if any) and the discharge sites. In addition, a map of the catchment has been presented which identifies the 7 farms that make up the multisite.</p>
1.2	<i>Understand relevant stakeholders, their water related challenges, and the site's ability to influence beyond its boundaries.</i>
1.2.1	<p><i>Stakeholders and their water-related challenges shall be identified. The process used for stakeholder identification shall be identified. This process shall:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusively cover all relevant stakeholder groups including vulnerable, women, minority, and Indigenous people; - Consider the physical scope identified, including stakeholders, representative of the site's ultimate water source and ultimate receiving water body or bodies; - Provide evidence of stakeholder consultation on water-related interests and challenges; - Note that the ability and/or willingness of stakeholders to participate may vary across the relevant stakeholder groups; - Identify the degree of stakeholder engagement based on their level of interest and influence.
Comment	<p>The site has identified 36 stakeholders which come from various types of stakeholders such as: government, research, irrigation groups, NGOs/, importer, customer, education (universities) and others.</p> <p>The site has not included in its list of stakeholders other major water consumers within the catchment or other relevant stakeholder groups including vulnerable, women, minority, and Indigenous people, and other producers (including rice producers).</p> <p>The selection of the stakeholder group has been based on internal analysis. They have not presented evidence of stakeholder consultation for the identification of shared water challenges.</p>
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1.2.2 *Current and potential degree of influence between site and stakeholder shall be identified, within the catchment and considering the site's ultimate water source and ultimate receiving water body for wastewater.*  No


Comment The Site has assessed the degree of influence and interest in a grouped manner e.g. NGOs, government institutions, communities, experts, among others. This is not acceptable, because in this stakeholder mapping it is indispensable to assess the relationship that the Site has with each of the actors in the catchment; it is not possible to assess the degree of influence or interest in a grouped way; one by one assessments are required. The Site has included in its list of stakeholders members that are not within the same catchment such as: AWS, importer, consultant, among others.

Finding No: TNR-003650

1.3 *Gather water-related data for the site, including: water balance; water quality, Important Water-Related Areas, water governance, WASH; water-related costs, revenues, and shared value creation.*

1.3.1 *Existing water-related incident response plans shall be identified.*  Yes

Comment The Site has identified an emergency plan (including a contingency plan). In addition they have shown their risk analysis for PDN and PAM and have shown a risk analysis for irrigation water, fruit wash tub water, and post-harvest water: in this list their entire assessment shows mostly low impacts, few medium impacts and a high impact related to water shortages. In general, the company uses the contingency plan of the ministry of agriculture, which addresses the following hydro-meteorological phenomena: tropical cyclones and storms, torrential rains, floods and droughts. The emergency plan for the agricultural sector is also used, which defines the roles, responsibilities and general procedures for reaction and warning, inventory of resources, coordination of operational activities and simulation for training, in order to safeguard life, protect assets and restore the sector to normality as soon as possible after the occurrence of a natural phenomenon. In addition, as specific plans for its farms, the company has site risk analyses (Annexes 37 and 38). sites (Annexes 37 and 38) with a microbiological approach and Annex 39 which is a risk assessment on irrigation and process water management. For risks identified as emergencies, the company proposes a preventive management and response plan in case of occurrence. On the other hand, the company takes actions in case of water stress (droughts or floods) a series of options in order to improve water use and thus avoid further aggravating the situation caused by water stress. These actions have as a priority to protect the fauna and flora in the catchment and around the farms in order to ensure the natural well-being of the species inhabiting the catchment and the IWRAs.

1.3.2 *Site water balance, including inflows, losses, storage, and outflows shall be identified and mapped*  No

Comment The site has presented diagrams that consider the water input (either from wells or from the Yaque river), the irrigation system, the water input from precipitation, and the outputs (runoff, evapotranspiration, infiltration/deep percolation and drainage). In addition, the outflows (runoff, evapotranspiration, infiltration/deep percolation and drainage) are described. In addition, a flow diagram of the water used in the packing houses and toilets is presented. However, there is no data for each of these concepts, so it is not possible to identify the water balance. This applies to the 7 farms: Mota, Yaque, Fernandez, Billy, Proyecto Limones, Villa Copa and Villa Sinda.

Finding No: TNR-004014

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1.3.3 *Site water balance, inflows, losses, storage, and outflows, including indication of annual variance in water usage rates, shall be quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water balance for people or environment, an indication of annual high and low variances shall be quantified.* ✘
No

Comment The Site has calculated the water balance for each farm; however, some data are not consistent.
E.g. Villa Copa Farm
The site shows 18,000 m³/year in its water inputs, to which we can add the rainfall 3250 m³/year; this gives us an input volume of 21250 m³/year in the plantations; this amount is less than what they report for evapotranspiration which is considered in their outputs 24524 m³/year; it is not at all clear why more water is evapotranspired than enters the plantations. Also because water scarcity is a water-related challenge the good water balance should quantify annual high and low variances.

Finding No: TNR-003653

1.3.4 *Water quality of the site's water source(s), provided waters, effluent and receiving water bodies shall be quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water quality status for people or environment, an indication of annual, and where appropriate, seasonal, high and low variances shall be quantified.* ✘
No

Comment The Site has delivered its water quality results for the water entering the vats and the water used for irrigation; these analyses do not show data outside the maximum permitted limit and are available for all the farms.
The farms do not use chemical products in the plantations or in the washing and packing area; however, it would be advisable to have some analysis of their effluents, given that they do spray fumigations and it is important to establish that none of these compounds end up in the drains.
The Farms have demeter certificate; which certify all the producers and processors, who use care and craft, to bring biodynamic food to customers all over the world.
The maximum and minimum annual variations of each variable for each site are not shown.

Finding No: TNR-004018

Finding No: TNR-004116

1.3.5 *Potential sources of pollution shall be identified and if applicable, mapped, including chemicals used or stored on site.* 🔍
Obs.

Comment Since the Site is certified organic, they do not use high-risk chemicals in their processes. This was verified during the site visit of the farms.
They produce their own biofertiliser and compost which they use on their farms.
However, there are an estimated 300 sheep and 60 cows on different farms and the impact of feces on water bodies has not been considered.

1.3.6 *On-site Important Water-Related Areas shall be identified and mapped, including a description of their status including Indigenous cultural values.* 👉
in progress

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Comment The Site has submitted a document in which it is mentioned that the PDN farms share many characteristics among them, they are all located on the banks of the Yaque del Norte River, enjoy the same ecosystem and are nourished by the water coming from this catchment. The protected areas that serve as a buffer between the aquifer source (Yaque del Norte River) and the producing farms are considered natural areas of ecosystemic importance, as they have a diverse number of plant and animal species. The PAM farms share similar forest characteristics, they are not directly close to the Yaque del Norte River; therefore, the plant species that exist there are more attributed to the subtropical dry forest, thorny species that have been forced to evolve in order to withstand prolonged periods of drought. Of the farms in the Limones project, only Bogaert and Baez II have IWRAS, areas of virgin forest with a large number of plant and animal biodiversity. In general, all IWRAS are in good condition. GIZ ecologists supported the company in the evaluation of the IWRAs of the farms on 2 March 2023. The Site has mentioned that they have a report where G. Peña and R. Rivera express the characteristics of each Farm and give an opinion on the state of the IWRAs; however we have not had access to this report.

Finding No: TNR-003688

1.3.7 *Annual water-related costs, revenues, and a description or quantification of the social, cultural, environmental, or economic water-related value generated by the site shall be identified and used to inform the evaluation of the plan in 4.1.2.*


Obs.

Comment The Site has identified in its list of water-related costs:
 Fuel costs
 Pump related costs
 Drainage maintenance
 Operator salaries
 Irrigation equipment maintenance
 Capital investments and depreciation (if applicable)
 Annual water payment to the Board
 Irrigation canal maintenance (if applicable)
 Drinking water costs
 Energy to transport, treat, heat or cool water (if applicable)
 Maintenance of walls
 Water analysis costs
 Maintenance of tube wells
 Maintenance of coal wells
 Fees and taxes related to water costs
 On-site water treatment (if applicable)

The Site has quantified that annual costs related to water as a production input represent between 22% and 53% of the production costs of each farm. It is not readily apparent whether there is data for consultancy, data collection, conservation and others. Other includes costs such as the annual payment to the Junta de Regantes, maintenance of irrigation equipment, purchase of drinking water for workers, and energy costs for transporting, treating, heating or cooling water.

1.3.8 *Levels of access and adequacy of WASH at the site shall be identified.*


Obs.

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Comment The Site has submitted a document summarising the actions it takes to ensure WASH on site.

Description of drinking water supply:
All farms are supplied with treated water from the company XTRA of Santiago de los Caballeros, weekly the company distributes 5 gls demijohns to the farms in trucks.

Description of the effluent treatment system:
The sanitary facilities consist of septic tanks. These facilities receive effluent from the farm toilets.

- Septic tanks are units used for wastewater treatment in areas where there is no public sewerage system.
- Grease traps: these are used for the treatment of effluent from farms that have a kitchen, which retains and separates organic waste from grease.

Hygiene:
Each farm has the following sanitary and hygienic facilities for all employees:

- Toilets and sinks in offices
- Toilets and washbasins in the packing area
- Showers for applicators
- Latrines strategically distributed in the field

Toilets:
Water is brought to the field toilets from the packing house in 5-gallon buckets for hand washing when employees use the toilets. All toilet facilities are in adequate condition for workers. The sanitary facilities comply with the GlobalGap standard. These standards with their production requirements are checked annually by accredited inspection bodies. The certification department (common to PDN and PAM) is responsible for submitting the documentation and results to these inspection bodies.

Photos of the toilets in Annex 91.
The toilets near the packing plants are designed according to the Global Gap criteria and according to the number of employees in the packing plants. For PDN farms such as: Billy, Fernandez and Mota the toilets have 3 toilets, 2 sinks and 1 shower for women, 2 toilets, 1 urinal, 2 sinks and 1 shower for men, this design is the same for the PAM farms: Villa Sinda and Villa Copa, in finca Yaque and Bogaert the design is 1 toilet, 1 shower and 1 sink as these packing plants are small compared to the others. The field toilets are located 500 metres away. In the product mixing areas there are showers which are used by the product applicators.

Cleaning procedure:
Cleaning of toilets and showers: this is done on a daily basis by trained personnel and with appropriate equipment and materials.
Cleaning of latrines: cleaning is carried out sporadically by trained personnel.
Management of solid waste: there is comprehensive management, from the source of generation to final disposal, in accordance with the waste management procedure.
Annex 92 presents the assessment of risks to the health and safety of workers.
However, during the tour of the farms we were able to observe that not all the toilets in the field are clean and that most of the shower areas do not include curtains to protect the privacy of the workers.

1.4 *Gather data on the site's indirect water use, including: its primary inputs; the water use embedded in the production of those primary inputs the status of the waters at the origin of the inputs (where they can be identified); and water used in out-sourced water-related services.*

1.4.1 *The embedded water use of primary inputs, including quantity, quality and level of water risk within the site's catchment, shall be identified.*

 Obs.

Comment The site has identified as its main inputs the 20-litre jugs of water that it buys on each farm to provide drinking water for its workers.
On this issue, they have provided the number of jugs they buy per farm; however, they do not mention how often they buy this volume of water (see Cantidad de botellones).
They also report per farm the application of pesticides for the years 2022 and 2023: For the year 2022 they have reported per farm the amount of water used for spraying.




1.4.2 *The embedded water use of outsourced services shall be identified, and where those services originate within the site's catchment, quantified.*

 Yes

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Comment	The site has identified the virtual water use of the outsourced services and quantified the amount of water used in spraying on each farm during the year 2022.	
1.5	<i>Gather water-related data for the catchment, including water governance, water balance, water quality, Important Water-Related Areas, infrastructure, and WASH</i>	
1.5.1	<i>Water governance initiatives shall be identified, including catchment plan(s), water-related public policies, major publicly-led initiatives under way, and relevant goals to help inform site of possible opportunities for water stewardship collective action.</i>	 Yes
Comment	<p>The site has identified a wide range of policy instruments in the catchment; in some of these projects the site is actively involved, such as the Yaque del Norte Water Fund, which was created on 23 February 2015, as an innovative model of governance and management of water resources that operates through the first philanthropic trust which is managed by a trustee and the resources generated are allocated to preserve the land through conservation, sanitation and environmental education actions.</p> <p>It represents a financial governance and management mechanism that integrates relevant stakeholders to promote water security in the Yaque del Norte catchment through nature-based solutions.</p> <p>In which the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, the Santiago Aqueduct and Sewerage Corporation, the INc Development Association, The Nature Conservancy, ISA University, among others, participate as founding partners.</p> <p>The Yaque del Norte Water Fund is part of the Latin American Alliance of Water Funds, an institution that contributes to water security in Latin America and the Caribbean through the creation and strengthening of Water Funds, based on the principle that large water users such as aqueducts, hydroelectric plants, irrigators, bottling companies, mining companies, companies, among others, voluntarily agree to contribute funds for the conservation of water-producing areas in order to ensure a continuous supply (quantity), support sanitation projects that contribute to improving the quality of this resource. This implies a shared and interesting responsibility in the way the market is used to improve the health of ecosystems, generating benefits for those who live in and depend on these natural areas.</p>	
1.5.2	<i>Applicable water-related legal and regulatory requirements shall be identified, including legally-defined and/or stakeholder-verified customary water rights.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The Site presented a matrix with all legal requirements which include payments for its water concessions, payments to the irrigators' boards, comment on the attached document and strengthen with some comment that you have received from the interviewees. Neither the water balance of the basin nor customary rights are cited.	
1.5.3	<i>The catchment water-balance, and where applicable, scarcity, shall be quantified, including indication of annual, and where appropriate, seasonal, variance.</i>	 Yes
Comment	<p>The site has presented technical studies with the quantification of the catchment's water balance; whose information is based on official reports from external organisations such as FAO, INDRHI, USAID, among others.</p> <p>Water balance</p> <p>Estimates of water availability and demand show that for the year 2015 the balance is negative in the catchment, since at the regional level the demand for water exceeds availability and is estimated at 119% of the actual volume. This situation of water scarcity constitutes a brake on the economic development of the region (Sánchez, 2015). (Annex 128)</p> <p>The critical pressure on the resource in the Yaque del Norte region is rated at over 40%, and far exceeds this threshold with a water pressure of 119%. The agricultural provinces of Valverde and Montecristi present the most extreme figures, with water pressure of 172% and 176% respectively.</p>	

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1.5.4 *Water quality, including physical, chemical, and biological status, of the catchment shall be identified, and where possible, quantified. Where there is a water-related challenge that would be a threat to good water quality status for people or environment, an indication of annual, and where appropriate, seasonal, high and low variances shall be identified.* ✔
Yes

Comment The site has presented the available information on water quality in the catchment. At the national level, more than 90% of wastewater is untreated and directly pollutes groundwater, rivers and coasts. Thus, most of the country's water sources are polluted by urban wastewater, agricultural and industrial discharges, as well as by the accumulation of waste in watercourses. accumulation of waste in watercourses (Annex 141).
The main river of the Yaque del Norte catchment is fed by wastewater from cities, industries and farms. The reasons are deficiencies in the management and poor treatment of sewage and solid waste, as well as inadequate agricultural and industrial practices in the catchment. The discharge of contaminated wastewater into the river poses a significant risk to the environment and agricultural soils, as well as to the health of the catchment's inhabitants (Fondo Agua Yaque del Norte, 2021).
The concentration of pollutants in the Yaque del Norte River increases as it crosses the catchment's cities, including the city of Santiago de los Caballeros, the largest city in the catchment and the second largest in the country. Thus, the total nitrogen in the river water measured at the entrance of the cities is 0.30 mg/l and at the exit 1.0 mg/l, which causes eutrophication of the water. Likewise, the concentration of ammonium in the water, an important indicator of chemical pollution, is 0.28 mg/l before the cities and 2.19 mg/l after the cities.
and 2.19 mg/l at the outflow. The concentration of total phosphorus in the water is also higher than national standards due to agricultural activities. national standards due to agricultural activities in the catchment (Acosta Guzmán, 2017).
On the other hand, livestock farming in the upper part of the catchment has polluted the rivers that supply drinking water to rural mountain communities (Acosta Guzmán, 2017). drinking water to rural mountain communities (Pons, 2019).

1.5.5 *Important Water-Related Areas shall be identified, and where appropriate, mapped, and their status assessed including any threats to people or the natural environment, using scientific information and through stakeholder engagement.* ➔
in progress

Comment The site has identified IWRA in the catchment. However, they have not assessed the status of the identified IWRA.

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1.5.6 *Existing and planned water-related infrastructure shall be identified, including condition and potential exposure to extreme events.* ✔
Yes

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Comment Water infrastructure related to the sites
 For the Plantaciones del Norte S.A. farms (Billy, Fernández, Yaque, Proyecto Limón, Limones Bogaert), there are no water-related facilities.
 Bogaert), there are no water-related facilities; water is extracted directly from the Yaque del Norte river basin with pumps
 the catchment of the Yaque del Norte River with diesel-powered pumps, the pump for water extraction from Finca Mota.
 The water extraction pump at Finca Mota is a shared structure because it is located on a portion of land belonging to another producer.
 The water pump at Finca Mota is a shared structure because it is located on a piece of land belonging to another producer who also benefits from the use of the pump.
 For the farms of Plantaciones Agrícolas Manzanillo S.R.L. (Villa Copa and Villa Sinda), the water used is extracted from the Villa Vásquez canal is extracted from the Villa Vásquez canal, which in turn comes out of the Yaque del Norte river, through a dam mounted on the river at the in the river, which is located in the community of Juan Gómez, Guayubin, Montecristi.
 The canal Villa Vásquez, was built in 1976 in the government of Dr. Joaquín Balaguer. It was built without concrete lining and remains so to date, the length of the channel are about 9.44 km, with a conduction capacity of 16m3, it consists of 4 main laterals and 4 irrigation associations.
 and 4 irrigation associations.
 1- North side, has a length of 24 km, the name of the irrigators association is called Nicolás Pimentel.
 The Villa Copa farm extracts water from this lateral.
 2- Lateral Negro Acosta, it has a length of 7 km, the name of the irrigators' association is is called Negro Acosta.
 3- Lateral Sopalpal, it has a length of 10 km, the name of the irrigators association is called Fello Vidal.
 4- Lateral Caño de los Indios, has a length of 12 km, the name of the irrigation association is General Rice.
 The name of the irrigation association is General Rice.
 The irrigation board that administers the Villa Vásquez canal and its respective laterals is called Horacio Vásquez, with 1996 users, with a total area of 9713.71 ha.
 According to statements made by the manager of the irrigation board, Armando Gómez, in some parts of the "canal", the water no longer arrives through the "canal".of the "canal" the water no longer arrives, so some users have had to change from rice to less water-demanding crops.
 rice to less water-demanding crops.
 According to the information obtained by the manager of the irrigation board, the efficiency of the "canal" is at 50%, and the solution to this problem would be the lining of the "canal" with concrete.
 concrete, but this would be an investment of millions of dollars for the government and would also imply that some producers to stop cultivating while the work is being carried out. As for the floodgates and drains of the canal are in good condition, but maintenance activities (dredging and ditching) must always be carried out. maintenance activities (dredging and some repairs).
 The plans for the "canal" are not available, but Armando Gómez emphasised that it should be very different to the original plan, as with the dredging and landslides it should be much wider and deeper.

1.5.7 *The adequacy of available WASH services within the catchment shall be identified.*



Yes

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Comment According to the 2010 national census results, 84% of households receive water from the country's aqueducts, i.e. they have piped water facilities connected to the public network (Annex 147). The remaining 16% of households are forced to obtain water either from tanker trucks, at a high cost to these poor households, or from other sources, often far from home, leading to school absenteeism or preventing women from engaging in other activities (CESAL, 2016).
The quality of services also leaves much to be desired: lack of maintenance of infrastructures threatens their condition, lack of continuity of service, poor water quality.
Although official figures claim that 84% of households in the Dominican Republic have access to piped water served by a network of aqueducts that boast a high level of potability, the State itself estimates that 91.5% of households buy drinking water in sealed bottles or in bulk in small tanker trucks (Corcino, 2020).
Nationally, 62.9 per cent of the population has basic hand-washing facilities at home. In 2018, 80% of Dominican households were equipped with adequate sanitation facilities (toilets). Approximately 13.5% of the population uses public latrines as a sanitation facility and 2.2% of the Dominican population has no sanitation facilities at all (DR National Statistical Office, 2020).
The quality of drinking water is unreliable. Water from few sewers is treated. In the Dominican Republic there are eight institutions providing PHC services whose nominal capacity to produce drinking water is 62 m³/s and a real capacity of 45 m³/s. The result of the water served is considered 80% as wastewater, which is equivalent to 36 m³/s nominally, although 31 m³/s is the actual flow reported as wastewater input, and of which only 28% is converted into catchment through the existing sewerage networks, i.e. a flow of 8.76 m³/s. Theoretically, there are 104 treatment plants with a nominal capacity of 9.41 m³/s, which require heavy investment for the rehabilitation of WWTPs to regenerate 6.09 m³/s, which in turn represents the treatment capacity of existing WWTPs. In addition, networks are needed to capture and treat 22.24 m³/s of wastewater to eliminate septic and filter problems. The sanitation and sewerage infrastructure is totally inadequate to cope with the volume of solid waste and wastewater produced, more than one million septic tanks in the country, constituting the largest source of diffuse pollution, equivalent to 22 m³/s. This figure does not include latrines that discharge directly into surface and groundwater bodies (Annex 148).

1.6 *Understand current and future shared water challenges in the catchment, by linking the water challenges identified by stakeholders with the site's water challenges.*

1.6.1 *Shared water challenges shall be identified and prioritized from the information gathered.*


Yes

Comment In the analysis presented by the Site of the shared water challenges (A149), 6 issues have been analysed, which can be summarised in general terms as concerns about water quantity and quality in the catchment.
Major risks and challenges
Despite its ecological, economic and social importance, the capacity of the Yaque del Norte catchment to provide sufficient and stable water has been decreasing over the years, to the point of losing 75% of its flow, due to the degradation of the upper part where the water recharge zones are located (Fondo Agua Yaque Del Norte, n.d.).
In addition, the expansion of the agricultural frontier and population and industrial growth, together with the misuse of water for productive and human purposes, are generating a demand that is already approaching the catchment's capacity to generate this precious liquid. Deficiencies in the management and treatment capacities of wastewater, solid waste and inadequate agricultural and industrial practices, cause the waters to be polluted (Fondo Agua Yaque Del Norte, n.d.). (1.5.1, p.2)

1.6.2 *Initiatives to address shared water challenges shall be identified.*


Yes

Comment The Site has included in its analysis (A149) a column with actions/initiatives to contribute to improvements in water-related challenges.

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- 1.7** *Understand the site's water risks and opportunities: Assess and prioritize the water risks and opportunities affecting the site based upon the status of the site, existing risk management plans and/or the issues and future risk trends identified in 1.6.*
- 1.7.1** *Water risks faced by the site shall be identified, and prioritized, including likelihood and severity of impact within a given timeframe, potential costs and business impact.* ✔
Yes
- Comment The Site has identified the following risks:
 1. Use of contaminated surface and ground water for site activities (due to lack of adequate conservation policies, untreated industrial and urban drainage, lack of awareness of the population, use of inputs (fertilisers, pesticides...) (type: physical and reputational).
 2. Failure and insecurity of irrigation water supply caused by poor management of faulty public infrastructure & droughts (type: physical)
 3. Vulnerability to frequent extreme natural events (droughts, floods) due to poor preparedness (type: physical)
 4. Increased production costs (water charges & fuel prices) (type: physical)
 5. Non-compliance with regulations regarding wastewater quality conditions (Type: normative)
 6. Company image affected by excessive water use and high water footprint of sites due to lack of adequate standards regulating water abstraction (type: normative).
 7. Contamination of water bodies (surface and groundwater) due to inadequate storage of inputs on site (type: physical).
 However, they have not given a monetary estimate of the costs.
- 1.7.2** *Water-related opportunities shall be identified, including how the site may participate, assessment and prioritization of potential savings, and business opportunities.* ➔
in progress
- Comment The Site has identified the following opportunities:
 Support institutions that promote environmental education and catchment preservation.
 Provide training for employees on good water management.
 Better planning to deal with hydro-meteorological catastrophes.
 Efficiency of coal wells
 Use of applied water efficiency technologies.
 Develop better strategies to make flood irrigation more efficient.
 In sites analysis it was included whether the opportunities are internal or external and which component is affected.
 What is not included is: how the site may participate, assessment and prioritization of potential savings, and business opportunities.
 (see excel document A150 at 1.7.1)
- Finding No: TNR-003691**
- 1.8** *Understand best practice towards achieving AWS outcomes: Determining sectoral best practices having a local/catchment, regional, or national relevance.*
- 1.8.1** *Relevant catchment best practice for water governance shall be identified.* ✔
Yes
- Comment The Site has identified the following good practices in relation to catchment governance:
 - Finding relevant stakeholders to foster dialogue.
 - Participate in an initiative that supports good water governance.
 Responsible for implementation and verification: Certifications, Research and Development.
 How often compliance will be verified: Every 6 months.
 Every 6 months the Certifications department will supervise the PDN and PAM farms in order to verify compliance with the AWS standard through a checklist, also participate in initiatives to support good water governance through the different stakeholders previously contacted through calls or emails, it will be sought that these stakeholders play a key role within the catchment of the Yaque del Norte River or its tributaries. The research and development department would be responsible for managing the stakeholder dialogues.

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- 1.8.2** *Relevant sector and/or catchment best practice for water balance (either through water efficiency or less total water use) shall be identified.* ✔
Yes
- Comment The Site has identified the following good practices for water balance in the sector or catchment:
- Efficient irrigation using available tools.
- Training of workers on sustainable irrigation water management.
Responsible for implementation and verification: Production, Certifications, Engineering.
How often compliance will be verified: annual trainings.
The production department using weather stations will take the necessary data to measure soil moisture and climate and according to the results obtained, irrigation will be adapted to the conditions found in the data collection, thus being able to determine the irrigation needs of the crop. The Certification department will train the employees of the PDN and PAM farms on the efficient use of water, these trainings will be supported with didactic materials, a list of attendance will be made, photos will be taken and if necessary videos will be taken. The engineering department will verify if it is feasible to implement a technified system for the efficient use of water on the PDN and PAM farms.
- 1.8.3** *Relevant sector and/or catchment best practice for water quality shall be identified, including rationale for data source.* ✔
Yes
- Comment The Site has identified the following good practices for water quality in the sector or catchment:
- Producing ecological-biodynamic bananas that avoid contamination of water bodies by conventional fertiliser and phytosanitary residues.

- To ensure the quality of effluent water, the company has a "Water Quality and Effluent Monitoring Plan" (See Annex 164). In addition to this, the PDN and PAM project farms do annual analyses for:
- Incoming and outgoing irrigation water.
- Water in and out of the fruit washing vats.
Responsible for implementation and verification: Production, Certifications.
How often compliance will be verified: On an ongoing basis.

The site (PdN & PAM) is certified by Demeter International and for this reason the bananas and lemons produced are Biodynamic and organic. The production department is in charge of producing the fruit and the Certification department supervises the compliance of the standards through visits to the farms and review of the records of application of the Biodynamic products.
- 1.8.4** *Relevant catchment best practice for site maintenance of Important Water-Related Areas shall be identified.* ✔
Yes
- Comment The Site has identified the following good practices for the maintenance of IWRAs on site or in the catchment:
- Diversify Biodiversity monitoring and observation activities in the protected areas of the farms.

Responsible for implementation and verification: Research and development, Production and Certifications.
How often compliance will be verified: Annually.

The research and development department, supported by the production department, will create and maintain protected areas within the farms in order to have biodiversity of plants, animals and insects that are beneficial and thus improve the flora and fauna that surround or are within the farms of PDN and PAM, the department of Certifications will supervise the status of these protected areas.
- 1.8.5** *Relevant sector and/or catchment best practice for site provision of equitable and adequate WASH services shall be identified.* ✔
Yes

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Comment The Site has identified the following good practices for the provision of equitable and adequate WASH services on site and/or in the catchment:
- Encourage the maintenance of existing WASH facilities and improve hygiene, privacy and cleanliness conditions in sanitation facilities in cooperation with Farm employees.
Responsible for implementation and verification: Certification Department.
How often compliance will be verified: Every 6 months.
The Certification Department will train employees and their families on good hygiene practices within their community. These trainings will be supported with didactic materials, a list of attendance will be made, photos will be taken and if necessary videos will be taken.

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2 STEP 2: COMMIT & PLAN - Commit to be a responsible water steward and develop a Water Stewardship Plan	
2.1	<p><i>Commit to water stewardship by having the senior-most manager in charge of water at the site, or if necessary, a suitable individual within the organization head office, sign and publicly disclose a commitment to water stewardship, the implementation of the AWS Standard and achieving its five outcomes, and the allocation of required resources.</i></p>
2.1.1	<p><i>A signed and publicly disclosed site statement OR organizational document shall be identified. The statement or document shall include the following commitments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>That the site will implement and disclose progress on water stewardship program(s) to achieve improvements in AWS water stewardship outcomes</i> - <i>That the site implementation will be aligned to and in support of existing catchment sustainability plans</i> - <i>That the site's stakeholders will be engaged in an open and transparent way</i> - <i>That the site will allocate resources to implement the Standard.</i>
Comment	<p>The Site has submitted a declaration that includes all the requirements of this indicator. Evidence of public disclosure is attached. The declaration is under the name: Plantaciones del Norte. Considering that the global name will be Plantaciones del Norte, which includes: Plantaciones del Norte and Plantaciones Agrícolas Manzanillo where the 7 farms are located.</p>
2.2	<p><i>Develop and document a process to achieve and maintain legal and regulatory compliance.</i></p>
2.2.1	<p><i>The system to maintain compliance obligations for water and wastewater management shall be identified, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Identification of responsible persons/positions within facility organizational structure</i> - <i>Process for submissions to regulatory agencies.</i>
Comment	<p>The Site has submitted a structure document where it is mentioned that the Certification Department (Certification Manager), is responsible for Oversight of compliance with the Site's Water Resources Management Plan and legal and regulatory compliance. They also maintain oversight and monitoring of changes to the Site's legal and regulatory framework.</p>
2.3	<p><i>Create a water stewardship strategy and plan including addressing risks (to and from the site), shared catchment water challenges, and opportunities.</i></p>
2.3.1	<p><i>A water stewardship strategy shall be identified that defines the overarching mission, vision, and goals of the organization towards good water stewardship in line with this AWS Standard.</i></p>

Yes

Yes

Obs.


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Comment The site presents as a strategy:
Mission
To promote good water management within our facilities by training our staff, adapting our processes to optimise and maximise the use of natural resources, and at catchment level by supporting environmental education, reforestation and the conservation of ecosystem resources.
Vision
To be a model company in Water Resources Management in the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean, making a technified, rational and sustainable use of water resources in the catchment area of the Yaque del Norte River, in perfect harmony with the environment.
General objectives
- Rational use of the water resources of the Yaque del Norte river catchment, in a socially and economically responsible way, promoting environmental balance in the catchment, ensuring its sustainable use.
- Promote environmental awareness on the efficient use of water within the facilities.
- Preserve water quality by taking care of discharges and effluents.
- Improve WASH conditions within the facilities.
However, the catchment approach is not considered in the mission.

2.3.2 *A water stewardship plan shall be identified, including for each target:*
- *How it will be measured and monitored*
- *Actions to achieve and maintain (or exceed) it*
- *Planned timeframes to achieve it*
- *Financial budgets allocated for actions*
- *Positions of persons responsible for actions and achieving targets*
- *Where available, note the link between each target and the achievement of best practice to help address shared water challenges and the AWS outcomes.*



No

Comment The site presents its WSP 17 SMART objectives; of which it describes its proposed activities. They mention the department responsible; however the indicator asks them to designate a responsible staff.
It does not describe how each of its proposed activities will be measured and monitored.
Not all of your proposed activities have an associated budget.
Regarding the estimated time to achieve their activities, they are not precise about the dates when they end, for example they mention internal tutorials that do not give a date, that will be impossible to evaluate in the next audit. Every time there is a process, this is not clear either.
In general the description is not consistent.
It will be relevant to have WSPs for each of the 7 farms, as they have different characteristics and challenges.

Finding No: TNR-004032

2.4 *Demonstrate the site's responsiveness and resilience to respond to water risks*

2.4.1 *A plan to mitigate or adapt to identified water risks developed in co-ordination with relevant public-sector and infrastructure agencies shall be identified.*


in progress

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Comment The site identifies the risks; however, they have not constructed a mitigation plan in coordination with relevant public-sector and infrastructure agencies

The site described:

1. Use of polluted surface water for site activities: e Non-compliance with regulations regarding waste water quality conditions:
In addition to the usual treatments given to process water, the "Water & effluent quality monitoring plan" point d) "in case of a non-compliance or a risk to the site" will be used to prevent and adapt to future contamination from contaminated water use.
In addition, health trainings for workers will be carried out to teach them how to prevent diseases related to river water pollution (objective of the management plan).
For good hygiene practices on the farms, the hygiene facilities (toilets, washbasins...) have signs with indications to guarantee the hygiene safety of the workers on the farm.

2. Failures and insecurity of irrigation water supply caused by mismanagement of faulty public infrastructure & major droughts
In situations where water supply is not guaranteed, the farm resorts to agricultural practices that allow for improved infiltration and water retention for better use of the resource.
Refer to the Demeter standard and the Annex to the Demeter Plantation Conversion Plan: see chapters on soil quality improvement, best practices to ensure water supply security, healthy and perennial crop growth and production.

3. Vulnerability to frequent extreme natural events (droughts, floods) due to poor preparedness
The main risks facing the site in terms of extreme natural events are droughts and floods that frequently affect the farms throughout the year.
The 2021 Contingency Plan for the Agricultural Sector, prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Dominican Republic, is used. This plan aims to "prevent, mitigate and respond to the destructive effects that could impact on the country from hydrometeorological phenomena (cyclones and tropical storms, torrential rains, floods and drought) through the coordination of actions with all sectoral agencies and bodies involved (National Emergency Commission (CNE), the Emergency Operations Centre (COE) and the Civil Defence, with timely and efficient actions in the agricultural sector". This plan was prepared by the Department of Agricultural Sector Planning, Agro-environmental Management, Risk and Climate Change, the Climate Change Division, the Risk Management Division and the Agro-environmental and Social Division.
However that is not a plan, the activities described in the 1st paragraph a "punto D" but there is no figure or map to understand that "punto D".

Finding No: TNR-004033


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3 STEP 3: IMPLEMENT - Implement the site's stewardship plan and improve impacts


3.1 *Implement plan to participate positively in catchment governance.*

3.1.1 *Evidence that the site has supported good catchment governance shall be identified.*  Yes

Comment The Site in its commitment to support the good governance of the Yaque del Norte River has committed to become a member of the NGO CONORYAQUE (Consejo Noroeste Cuenca Baja Río Yaque del Norte) for an efficient governance that guarantees the quality of life and sustainable development of the territories (Annex 158 membership letter). For CONORYAQUE, its objectives include:

- Implement a programme of co-management of the Lower Yaque del Norte River Catchment that allows for effective governance of the catchment.
- Establish financial mechanisms to support water recharge programmes in the Lower Yaque del Norte Catchment and the constant improvement of water administration, use and management systems.
- Promote programmes that promote the resilience of the Northwest Cibao Region in the face of drought, floods, forest fires, among other phenomena caused by climate change.
- Strengthen local capacities and provide adequate and accessible information to enable efficient and effective management in the administration, good use and management of water in the Lower Yaque del Norte Catchment.





Other entities that are part of CONORYAQUE, Asobanu, Utesa-Mao, Asamsi, SOEVA, provincial Environment and Nature Centre. Annex 159 shows photos of the tour that the CONORYAQUE assembly made on 16/09/2022 with Plantaciones del Norte in the upper zone of the Mao river, belonging to the Yaque del Norte, where they were informed of the work being carried out by Centro Naturaleza, as part of the Cuencas Verdes project for the rescue and good management of the lower Yaque catchment. On 10/02/2023 Plantaciones del Norte took part in the introductory course on integrated watershed management, sponsored by CONORYAQUE, held in the auditorium of INDENOR, which dealt with: concepts of catchment, physical characteristics of a catchment, case: Mao catchment, importance of catchments, catchments as systems, water balance, catchment management, integrated catchment management in the context of climate change, governance: participatory management in catchment management . The training was given by Agronomist Pablo Ovalles (A-159B and C). The NGO Conoryaque aims at environmental education, training on Integrated Management of the Mao River in the Yaque del Norte catchment and raising awareness of the importance of preserving this catchment. The course allows the employees of Plantaciones del Norte to learn more about the catchment and its challenges in order to be better able to face them. In addition to CONORYAQUE and INDENOR, Plantaciones del Norte S.A., the Civil Defence of Mao, the Nature Centre, students from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo (UASD), members of the wind farm, BANELINO and others participated in the activity. In addition, the interviews revealed that there are a series of activities and actors that come together to support good governance in the catchment and it was mentioned that El Sitio participates actively.

3.1.2 *Measures identified to respect the water rights of others including Indigenous peoples, that are not part of 3.2 shall be implemented.*  Yes

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Comment	The farms that belong to the Site have its water use rights legally authorised by the INDRHI (National Institute of Hydraulic Resources) through the irrigation boards corresponding to each of the projects, which issue a certificate ensuring the correct use of the resource; consequently, the water rights of nearby populations are not affected. It should be noted that there are no indigenous populations in the Dominican Republic. The Plantaciones del Norte and Plantaciones Agrícolas Manzanillo farms belong to different irrigation boards, which issue water extraction permits: Finca Billy belongs to the Junta de Regantes Ulises Francisco Espaillat of the municipality of Esperanza province Valverde, the farms Fernández, Mota, Yaque Limón Bogaert and Proyecto limón belong to the Junta de Regantes General Fernando Valerio of the municipal district Las Matas de Santa Cruz and the farms Villa Sinda and Villa Copa belong to the Junta de Regantes Horacio Vásquez of the municipality Villa Vásquez province Monte Cristi.	
3.2	<i>Implement system to comply with water-related legal and regulatory requirements and respect water rights.</i>	
3.2.1	<i>A process to verify full legal and regulatory compliance shall be implemented.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The certification department under the management of the certification department will be responsible for the annual verification of legal and regulatory compliance with all water related issues as defined in 2.2.1.	
3.2.2	<i>Where water rights are part of legal and regulatory requirements, measures identified to respect the water rights of others including Indigenous peoples, shall be implemented.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The site has met the legal requirements related to water rights in its territory. In the Dominican Republic, the existence of indigenous peoples is not recognized.	
3.3	<i>Implement plan to achieve site water balance targets.</i>	
3.3.1	<i>Status of progress towards meeting water balance targets set in the water stewardship plan shall be identified.</i>	 Obs.
Comment	The site presents document 3.3.1-3.3.2 which includes a list of the activities that have been developed, but there is little evidence of the implementation of the activities described: (a) Development of protocols for measuring the water balance on farms. The site presents The water balance related to irrigation in plantations. b) Measurement and calculation of water use for irrigation on site with the adapted material every year. c) Calculation of crop water requirements with the Cropwat software on the farms. d) Installing weather stations to assess crop demand more accurately. e) Rainfall monitoring to make irrigation more efficient. f) On flood irrigated farms: make irrigation more efficient with more sustainable on-farm practices. g) Develop a guide for new irrigation practices for the staff in charge. Annex 155 was identified as a manual for flood irrigation operation. In total there are 13 activities included in all cases the site indicates that it has implemented the activities, but not all of them present evidence of compliance. The site should include evidence for each of the activities.	
3.3.2	<i>Where water scarcity is a shared water challenge, annual targets to improve the site's water use efficiency, or if practical and applicable, reduce volumetric total use shall be implemented.</i>	 in progress

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Comment	<p>The site presents as evidence document 3.3.1-3.3.2, which includes several activities to improve water use in plantations. However, it does not adequately define annual targets, for example: Install meteorological stations to assess crop demand more accurately. Rainfall monitoring to make irrigation more efficient. On flood irrigated farms: make irrigation more efficient with more sustainable on-farm practices: The site should implement annual targets to improve the water use efficiency of each farm with respect to the Water Balance.</p>	Finding No: TNR-003707
3.3.3	<p><i>Legally-binding documentation, if applicable, for the re-allocation of water to social, cultural or environmental needs shall be identified.</i></p>	 Yes
Comment	<p>The site does not have a legal obligation for water reallocation.</p>	
3.4	<p><i>Implement plan to achieve site water quality targets</i></p>	
3.4.1	<p><i>Status of progress towards meeting water quality targets set in the water stewardship plan shall be identified.</i></p>	 in progress
Comment	<p>Site does not identify percentage (%) of current progress. Once your WSP is updated you will need to check the progress status of the Plan with respect to "Water Quality" and show the percentage (%) and water analysis data for each farm.</p>	Finding No: TNR-003708
3.4.2	<p><i>Where water quality is a shared water challenge, continual improvement to achieve best practice for the site's effluent shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.</i></p>	 in progress
Comment	<p>The Site has submitted a document where it mentions that to ensure the quality of effluent water, the company has a "Water and Effluent Quality Monitoring Plan" (See Annex A6). In addition to this, the PDN and PAM project farms do annual analyses for: - Incoming and outgoing irrigation water. - Water at the inlet and outlet of the fruit washing tanks. It will be necessary that the monitoring of water quality monitoring will need to include organic compounds that could be present in pesticide spraying. And that your monitoring programme includes your effluents and not just the water sources and fruit wash tubs.</p>	Finding No: TNR-003709
3.5	<p><i>Implement plan to maintain or improve the site's and/or catchment's Important Water-Related Areas.</i></p>	
3.5.1	<p><i>Practices set in the water stewardship plan to maintain and/or enhance the site's Important Water-Related Areas shall be implemented.</i></p>	 in progress
Comment	<p>The site should identify the status of progress towards meeting the IWRA targets set out in the WSP by farm (see major NC at 2.3.2).</p>	Finding No: TNR-003710
3.6	<p><i>Implement plan to provide access to safe drinking water, effective sanitation, and protective hygiene (WASH) for all workers at all premises under the site's control.</i></p>	
3.6.1	<p><i>Evidence of the site's provision of adequate access to safe drinking water, effective sanitation, and protective hygiene (WASH) for all workers onsite shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.</i></p>	 Obs.

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Comment The site has latrines with hand-washing facilities in the field that are located no more than 5 minutes away from where the on-site workers are located. During the interviews it was possible to validate that workers have sufficient access to drinking water in quantity and quality, both workers in the field and those in the packing houses. There is an adequate number of toilets according to the number of women and men. The site has the opportunity to ensure the hygiene of the clothes that short workers wear, install shower curtains to ensure privacy and ensure that the cleanliness of all toilets (in the field and in the packing houses) are clean, in some exceptions the toilets were not clean.

3.6.2 *Evidence that the site is not impinging on the human right to safe water and sanitation of communities through their operations, and that traditional access rights for indigenous and local communities are being respected, and that remedial actions are in place where this is not the case, and that these are effective.* ✔ Yes

Comment The Site is 100% legally compliant in terms of water use and extraction. The PDN and PAM farms draw directly from the Yaque del Norte river, with the exception of the Limones farm which is supplied by the aqueduct, and do not affect the drinking water and sanitation rights of the communities, as they are supplied by the municipal aqueduct which supplies the entire Línea Noroeste.

3.7 *Implement plan to maintain or improve indirect water use within the catchment:*

3.7.1 *Evidence that indirect water use targets set in the water stewardship plan, as applicable, have been met shall be quantified.* ➔ in progress

Comment The site includes in its sustainable management plan a virtual water-related target that will engage its suppliers in sustainable management practices, The site provided evidence of the involvement of its input suppliers. The site does not include in its sustainable water management plan how the stated objective will be quantified and measured. The site partially meets the requirements of the indicator as it does not quantify progress towards achieving the target.

Finding No: TNR-004036

3.7.2 *Evidence of engagement with suppliers and service providers, as well as, when applicable, actions they have taken in the catchment as a result of the site's engagement related to indirect water use, shall be identified.* 🔍 Obs.

Comment The site is in its initial certification audit, for which the Site has not submitted evidence of commitments to its suppliers and service providers. It is considered relevant that for the next audit the site presents evidence of the commitment of its suppliers and service providers to develop actions to promote sustainable water management.

3.8 *Implement plan to engage with and notify the owners of any shared water-related infrastructure of any concerns the site may have.*

3.8.1 *Evidence of engagement, and the key messages relayed with confirmation of receipt, shall be identified.* ➔ in progress






Comment The site shares irrigation canals with various users and a water pump with the Mota farm. The site does not present a plan to inform and involve the stakeholders of the shared infrastructure about any concerns that may exist at the site. The site should present evidence of interactions with INDRHI and irrigation boards about shared infrastructure (if applicable).

Finding No: TNR-003713

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3.9	<i>Implement actions to achieve best practice towards AWS outcomes: continually improve towards achieving sectoral best practice having a local/catchment, regional, or national relevance.</i>	
3.9.1	<i>Actions towards achieving best practice, related to water governance, as applicable, shall be implemented.</i>	 Yes
Comment	<p>During the interviews, there was evidence of the site's participation in different forums where water-related issues are addressed; there is also reference to the site's economic participation in the solution of some relevant water issues. The site has submitted a letter requesting membership, including photographs, a link to a web page verifying its participation in the governance of the catchment by collaborating with various stakeholders. During the farm visits and interviews, the best practices implemented were verified. https://fondoaguayaque.org/quienes-somos/</p>	
3.9.2	<i>Actions towards achieving best practice, related to targets in terms of water balance shall be implemented.</i>	 in progress
Comment	<p>The site indicates as good practice the reduction of water use on farms and sets out two actions.</p> <p>a) Develop a guide for new irrigation practices for the staff in charge. b) Training of farm staff in sustainable irrigation water management.</p> <p>The site does not provide any evidence of the implementation of the proposed actions. Finding No: TNR-004038</p>	
3.9.3	<i>Actions towards achieving best practice, related to targets in terms of water quality shall be implemented.</i>	 Yes
Comment	<p>The site establishes as a good practice to maintain or improve the quality of wastewater by carrying out several actions:</p> <p>(a) Maintain its certified organic and biodynamic banana and lemons, implies a significant reduction in the use of agrochemicals and the concentration of these compounds in wastewater. b) Develop and implement a plan for water quality management. c) Check the carbon level visually every 4 months. d) Remove solid waste from the wastewater from the packing process with solids traps. Traps were identified at the farms' facilities e) Capture the water impregnated with fungicides used in the post-harvest process and lead it to the activated carbon well, avoiding its discharge into natural water effluents. During the tour, one of the charcoal wells was visited and its proper functioning was verified.</p>	
3.9.4	<i>Actions towards achieving best practice, related to targets in terms of the site's maintenance of Important Water-Related Areas shall be implemented.</i>	 Yes
Comment	<p>The site presents evidence that there is a defined area of IWRA on each of the farms which together have an area of over 300ha, the description and determination of each of them is in process given their size and biological richness.</p> <p>It is important to note that during the visits of the farms it was observed that there is a high commitment to the conservation of their river protection areas, conservation areas, reservoirs and forests (where applicable).</p>	
3.9.5	<i>Actions towards achieving best practice related to targets in terms of WASH shall be implemented.</i>	 in progress

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Comment The site identifies as good practices related to WASH:

- (a) Conduct an annual on-farm worker questionnaire to collect ideas on how to improve the WASH situation on farms, , find out if additional infrastructure is needed, and if appropriate, implement them. The site indicates that this good practice is in the process of being implemented, however no evidence of this activity is presented.
- b) Train workers in good hygiene and water use practices at work and at home every year. The site does not present any evidence of the implementation of this practice.
- c) Create and distribute information supports (brochure) on good WASH practices to the communities around the farms.

The site indicates that two of the activities are in progress and the third is implemented without evidence.

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4 STEP 4: EVALUATE - Evaluate the site's performance.	
4.1	<i>Evaluate the site's performance in light of its actions and targets from its water stewardship plan and demonstrate its contribution to achieving water stewardship outcomes.</i>
4.1.1	<i>Performance against targets in the site's water stewardship plan and the contribution to achieving water stewardship outcomes shall be evaluated.</i> 🚩 in progress
Comment	The site has delivered a series of documentaries presenting the progress made on each farm. Among these advances are mentioned for example the re-building of a wall (Finca Billy), maintenance of drains and canals, drainage mowing and maintenance (Finca Mota), drainage mowing and drainage maintenance (Finca Yaque) etc. It is impossible to see how these advances are linked to the objectives of each farm set out in their WSP, linking these advances to the 5 AWS outcomes. <p style="text-align: right;">Finding No: TNR-003715</p>
4.1.2	<i>Value creation resulting from the water stewardship plan shall be evaluated.</i> 🚩 in progress
Comment	The site presents document 4.1 (see in 4.1.1) which includes information on financial investment in sustainable water management. The site does not present any assessment of the value creation from the implementation of the Sustainable Management Plan. <p style="text-align: right;">Finding No: TNR-003716</p>
4.1.3	<i>The shared value benefits in the catchment shall be identified and where applicable, quantified.</i> 🚩 in progress
Comment	The site presents as evidence the document 4.1 < (see in 4.1.1) that identifies the benefits of shared value in the catchment: Environmental education, Training, Awareness raising. Which would only touch on good governance in the catchment, there is a lack of description of the shared value benefits of water balance, water quality, important water related areas and WASH. In relation to the values identified in the evidence there is a lack of quantification of the benefits of shared value the site should establish metrics for its evaluation and how it will follow up on the actions described. <p style="text-align: right;">Finding No: TNR-004027</p>
4.2	<i>Evaluate the impacts of water-related emergency incidents (including extreme events), if any occurred, and determine the effectiveness of corrective and preventative measures.</i>
4.2.1	<i>A written annual review and (where appropriate) root-cause analysis of the year's emergency incident(s) shall be prepared and the site's response to the incident(s) shall be evaluated and proposed preventative and corrective actions and mitigations against future incidents shall be identified.</i> ✅ Yes
Comment	The site presents documents 4.2.1 and A186 - Risk adaptation plan. They indicate that in the last year there have been no floods, droughts or changes in water quality that have had an impact on the company's farms, but in the event of a possible incident, a risk adaptation plan has been drawn up (Annex 186). The annex is an action plan for the various risks identified.
4.3	<i>Evaluate stakeholders' consultation feedback regarding the site's water stewardship performance, including the effectiveness of the site's engagement process.</i>

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- 4.3.1** *Consultation efforts with stakeholders on the site’s water stewardship performance shall be identified.* 
Yes

Comment The site presents the document "A193-meeting report 09.03.2023" where it narrates the meeting in "Plantaciones del Norte" of the different water stakeholders in the catchment "Rio Yaque del Norte".
In this meeting, the site presented the AWS standard and its implementation by Plantaciones del Norte to a large number of stakeholders. It presents documentary and photographic evidence of the event.
It also presented the shared challenges identified in the catchment.
The effort made by the site to present the standard to various stakeholders should be sustained over time.
Documents related to this indicator:
A193-meeting report 09.03.2023
Photos and list of visitors in Annexes 168 and 169.
Link to a video of the Committee:
https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiTclxrvKUM/?img_index=1

- 4.4** *Evaluate and update the site’s water stewardship plan, incorporating the information obtained from the evaluation process in the context of continual improvement.*

- 4.4.1** *The site’s water stewardship plan shall be modified and adapted to incorporate any relevant information and lessons learned from the evaluations in this step and these changes shall be identified.* 
Yes

Comment The site is undergoing its initial certification audit and is therefore submitting its sustainable management plan for the first time. The site commits to update its sustainable water management plan annually. The Certification Manager (certification department) will be responsible for this work.




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5 STEP 5: COMMUNICATE & DISCLOSE - Communicate about water stewardship and disclose the site's stewardship efforts	
5.1	<i>Disclose water-related internal governance of the site's management, including the positions of those accountable for legal compliance with water-related local laws and regulations.</i>
5.1.1	<i>The site's water-related internal governance, including positions of those accountable for compliance with water-related laws and regulations shall be disclosed.</i> 🚩 in progress
Comment	The site presents as evidence document 5.1-5.5 which includes an organisation chart with the chain of authority and responsibility for water management. It describes the positions of those responsible for compliance with water laws and regulations. Finding No: TNR-004030
5.2	<i>Communicate the water stewardship plan with relevant stakeholders.</i>
5.2.1	<i>The water stewardship plan, including how the water stewardship plan contributes to AWS Standard outcomes, shall be communicated to relevant stakeholders.</i> ✅ Yes
Comment	The site submits as evidence document 5.1-5.5. in which it indicates that it communicated its sustainable management plan via mail. To communicate the sustainable water management plan a mailing was shared with the stakeholders, and it was presented in a 9.03.2023 (see Annex 213).
5.3	<i>Disclose annual site water stewardship summary, including: the relevant information about the site's annual water stewardship performance and results against the site's targets.</i>
5.3.1	<i>A summary of the site's water stewardship performance, including quantified performance against targets, shall be disclosed annually at a minimum.</i> ✅ Yes
Comment	The site submits as evidence document 5.1-5.5, where it is stated that the site's sustainable management summary will be communicated after the first suggestion assessment, which will be carried out on an annual basis. It includes a proposed table of contents for its water management summary.
5.4	<i>Disclose efforts to collectively address shared water challenges, including: associated efforts to address the challenges; engagement with stakeholders; and co-ordination with public-sector agencies.</i>
5.4.1	<i>The site's shared water-related challenges and efforts made to address these challenges shall be disclosed.</i> ✅ Yes
Comment	The Site plans to participate in weekly meetings with the irrigation board; these meetings will be used to communicate about shared water challenges. It is also planned to organise the role-playing game Esperanza agua, which aims to "discuss problems and reflect on actions to improve water management, adaptive capacity and resilience to climate change and to reduce conflicts over water use". The site is in collaboration with the organisers of the game. In addition, the site has shared a presentation on the shared challenges in the Yaque del Norte catchment.
5.4.2	<i>Efforts made by the site to engage stakeholders and coordinate and support public-sector agencies shall be identified.</i> ✅ Yes


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Comment	The site presents as evidence document 5.1-5.5, During the XII International Banana Symposium, during this event the site presented a poster on the AWS standard and its implementation in the Dominican Republic. https://musanet.org/celebrating-banana-organic-production https://musanet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Eposter-Menke_laure_Anne.pdf	
5.5	<i>Communicate transparency in water-related compliance: make any site water-related compliance violations available upon request as well as any corrective actions the site has taken to prevent future occurrences.</i>	
5.5.1	<i>Any site water-related compliance violations and associated corrections shall be disclosed.</i>	 Yes
Comment	The site advised that there have never been any violations or need for corrective actions, which was confirmed by director fo the "junta de regantes"	
5.5.2	<i>Necessary corrective actions taken by the site to prevent future occurrences shall be disclosed if applicable.</i>	 Yes
Comment	No corrective actions have been required by the site regarding water-related compliance violations.	
5.5.3	<i>Any site water-related violation that may pose significant risk and threat to human or ecosystem health shall be immediately communicated to relevant public agencies and disclosed.</i>	 Yes
Comment	There have not been any site water-related compliance violations that have required communication to relevant public agencies and disclosure.	

Photographic Evidence from Audit

		 Yes
Comment	The Pictures are related to the visit of 7 farms in which the sites or forms of water supply (well or river), wastewater discharge sites, storage and warehouse, packing houses, toilets, showers and changing rooms, canteens, infirmary and IWRA (if applicable) were visited.	