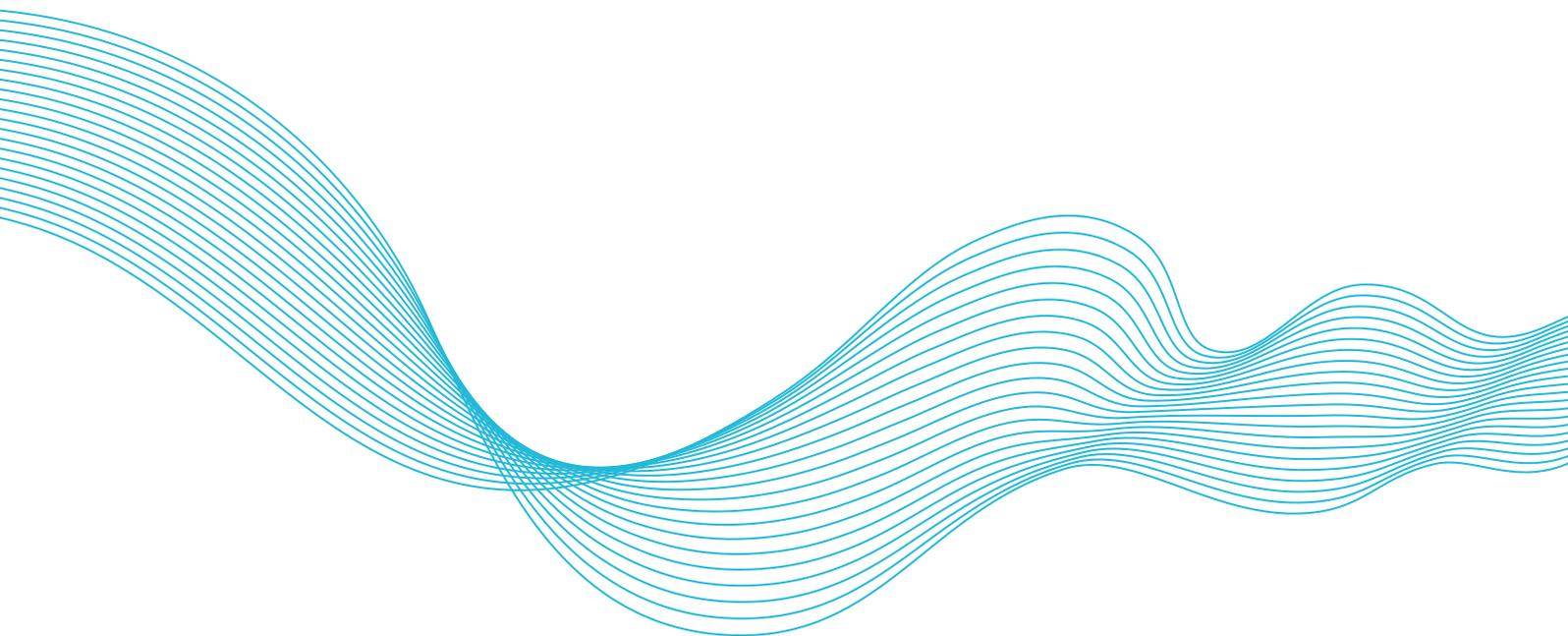# International Water Stewardship Standard
Version 3.0

March 2026

Normative statement
This document contains the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard), consisting of the preamble, introduction, criteria and requirements and glossary. The preamble is informative only but is important to understand the rest of the normative document.

Legal notice
Should any of the AWS Standard's criteria and/or requirements included in this document be in contradiction with local or national law, the latter shall prevail.

Interpretation, disputes and complaints notice
Questions of interpretations of the AWS Standard are addressed through procedures devised by AWS, as scheme owner. When disputes and complaints arise between stakeholders concerning compliance or the interpretation of the AWS Standard, we kindly invite them to use the channel for feedback and complaints available on the AWS website.

Notices on this version
The Alliance for Water Stewardship, as scheme owner, has responsibility for this document and will periodically review and update it. AWS also welcomes comments on this document at any time. Please see the contact information listed below to get in touch with us.

Effective date: 22 March 2026
This version of the AWS Standard is valid from the date of initial publication, 22 March 2026. This version supersedes all previous versions and includes new and changed requirements. Following a one-year transition period, all initial and recertification audits will be conducted against this version on or after 22 March 2027.

Version history

Version no. Date	Description of amendment
V1.0 2014-04-08	First Version. Date Approved: 2014-04-08
V2.0 2019-03-22	Second Version. Date Approved: 2019-01-28
V3.0 2026-03-22	Third Version. Date Approved: 2025-12-15

Language and variation notice
Translations of the AWS Standard and other documents in the AWS System may be provided. If there are differences between the English and other language versions, the English language version shall prevail.

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Contents

Preamble

Water is critical to all life on Earth. It underpins human health, sustains ecosystems and is vital for producing the food we eat and the goods we rely on every day.

Stewardship means taking responsibility for something that we do not own. In the case of water stewardship, it is about caring for a finite natural resource on which we all depend. It recognises that water is a shared resource, and that every water user is part of a wider system – where each decision about water use can affect people, wildlife and ecosystems.

Organisations that practice water stewardship go beyond managing water within their own operations. They consider the broader water context – working collaboratively, thinking long-term and helping ensure their communities and supply chains are resilient to climate-related water impacts. It is a proactive approach that supports social and cultural equity, environmental sustainability and business continuity.

About The Alliance for Water Stewardship

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) was established in 2009 by leading water organisations, including the United Nations, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and research institutes, in response to global water challenges and for the purpose of developing a credible, global standard for responsible water stewardship. Since then, our system has grown and evolved to be a leading membership network and the gold standard for credible water stewardship. Our vision is a water-secure world that enables people, culture, business and nature to prosper, now and in the future.

The International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard) is a framework that helps water users understand their own water use and how it impacts those around them. The AWS Standard can be used at site level by any company, in any industry around the world that wants to work collaboratively and transparently to improve their water performance and contribute to wider water sustainability goals.

Standard development

The Alliance for Water Stewardship is a code-compliant member of ISEAL. In developing the AWS Standard Version 3.0, we followed the principles of the ISEAL Code of Good Practice, consulting with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure the Standard is relevant, transparent and balanced.

In addition to formal consultations, the AWS Standard Version 3.0 was informed by developments within the international water community with an overarching intent that the AWS Standard would make a meaningful contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG6: clean water and sanitation for all.

Similarly, the intent during the Standard development process was that, to the extent possible, the AWS Standard should align with and support other key parts of the international water architecture. This includes, but is not limited to, mandatory reporting requirements (such as the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive), voluntary environmental, social and governance (ESG) and disclosure frameworks (such as CDP) and government endorsed guidelines (such as the Valuing Water Principles and the OECD Water Governance Principles).

The AWS Technical Committee is the stakeholder representative unit of AWS governance that is responsible for developing the AWS Standard Version 3.0. Members of the Technical Committee are elected by AWS Members to represent a sectoral interest group: civil society organisations, private sector and public sector. The Technical Committee is designed to enable multi-stakeholder consideration and, where applicable, decision-making on matters within the scope of its responsibilities, which include the development of new and revised AWS Standard(s), Guidance and Certification Requirements.

The AWS Standard Version 3.0 is the culmination of a transparent and inclusive two-year revision process. The final version was reached after several iterations. It reflects the disposition of thousands of comments that were received through a rigorous review period and two global public consultations on previous drafts. Following approval from the AWS Technical Committee, the final draft of the AWS Standard Version 3.0 was submitted to AWS Members to vote upon. The AWS Standard Version 3.0 was officially approved by AWS Members on 15 December 2025, with over 95% of respondents voting in favour.

Introduction

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is both a global, multi-stakeholder membership alliance of organisations from across the private sector, civil society and the public sector, and a credible standard system for water stewardship. Our mission is to ignite and nurture global and local leadership in credible water stewardship that recognises and secures the social, cultural, environmental and economic value of freshwater.

Our members contribute to the sustainability of local water resources through their adoption and promotion of a universal framework for the sustainable use of water – the International Water Stewardship Standard, or AWS Standard. The AWS Standard is a globally applicable framework for major water users to understand their water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently for sustainable water management within a catchment context.

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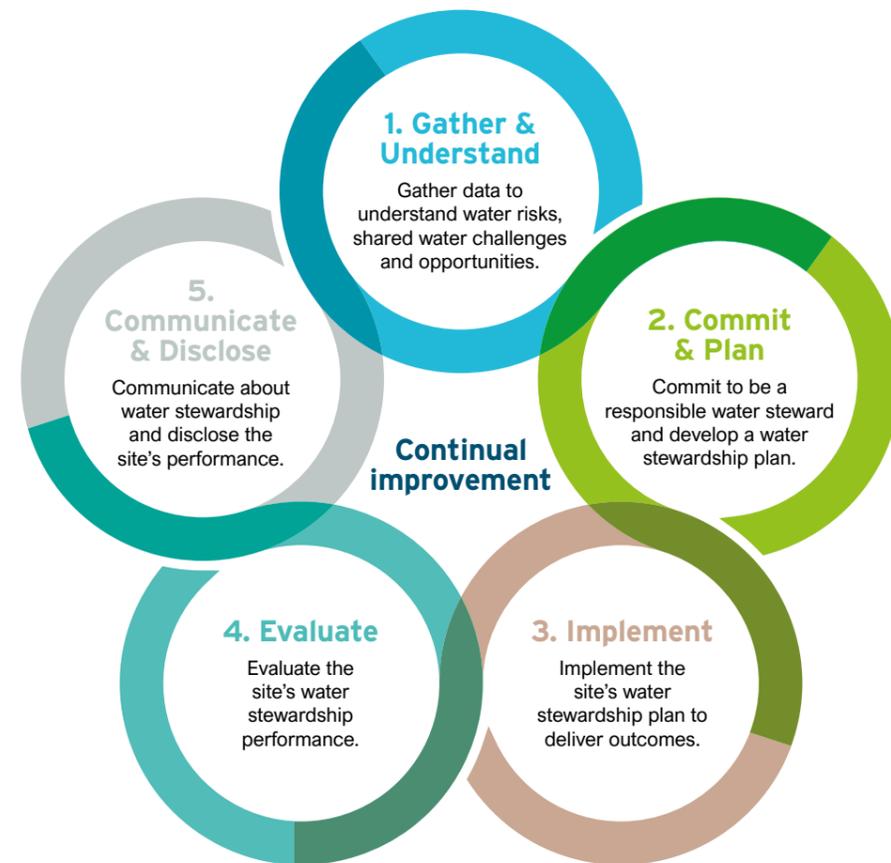
Applicability of the AWS Standard

The AWS Standard is applicable to all organisations and industrial sectors, independent of their size and operational complexity. The focus of the Standard is the operational site and its local water catchment, but with a broader goal to influence indirect water use in the value chain.

The Standard applies to all types of water used by a site in its normal activities. This includes surface water, groundwater, recycled water, desalinated water (from ocean or brackish sources), precipitation and unusual sources such as snow or ice. The scope applies to all water uses whether from private water sources or from third party suppliers. The same applies to wastewater management and treatment.

Structure of the AWS Standard

The AWS Standard is built around five steps.

Each step consists of a number of criteria to be addressed, each criterion having one or more requirements for conformance. There are Core requirements, which represent the essential elements of good water stewardship practice, and advanced Gold and Platinum requirements, which provide a pathway for continual improvement and recognise higher levels of water stewardship performance.

The requirements feature necessary actions for conformance – *Identified, Documented, Mapped, Implemented, Monitored, Quantified, Evaluated* and *Disclosed* – which are noted in italics throughout the Standard and defined in the Glossary, along with other key terms.

The steps are not required to be followed in strict order, and actions associated with specific criteria and requirements may occur in parallel. Implementation of the AWS Standard is an iterative process which is intended to promote continual improvement, such that performance improves over time.

AWS Standard outcomes

Implementation of the AWS Standard is intended to achieve **five key outcomes** for the site, and within the catchment. Each criterion in the Standard has the associated symbol or symbols representing the outcome to which fulfilment of the criterion will contribute:

	Good water governance Encompasses all aspects of how water is managed by governments, regulators, suppliers and users, and ensures responsible sharing of water resources in the interests of users and the natural environment in line with the principles of water stewardship.
	Sustainable water balance The condition whereby ongoing water use in the catchment has no long-term negative impact on the availability of water for the natural environment and other water users.
	Good water quality status Refers to the biological, chemical and physical properties of water, often assessed against a usage standard. Good water quality status is when water is suitable for its intended use, such as drinking water, irrigation or supporting ecosystems.
	Healthy freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity Encompasses lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams, canals, estuaries, groundwater aquifers, several types of wetlands and the rich diversity of species that inhabit these ecosystems. A healthy freshwater ecosystem sustains its ecological structure, processes, functions and resilience within its range of natural variability.
	Safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH) Refers to universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, and access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene.

Collective action

The AWS Standard outcomes typically cannot be fully achieved for a catchment by a single site. Therefore, an important principle of good water stewardship and feature of the Standard is collective action within a catchment, inclusive of the water steward and its relevant stakeholders. Collective action should respect local and Indigenous governance and support and contribute to existing catchment initiatives, not replace or compete with them, so long as they align with the outcomes of the AWS Standard.

Catchment data and stakeholder engagement

AWS recognises that there are many parts of the world where catchment water data are not readily available or are insufficient. Accordingly, if catchment data is not available for a given requirement in the Standard, evidence of the site's efforts to procure the data, including data requests and correspondence, shall be documented. Similarly, it is recognised that sites cannot insist that stakeholders engage and provide feedback on their water stewardship initiatives. Where stakeholders are unwilling to engage or provide feedback, evidence that the site has made a reasonable effort to engage stakeholders and sought feedback, including correspondence with stakeholders, shall be documented.

Certification to the AWS Standard

Certification to the AWS Standard is confirmation of having met the global benchmark for responsible water stewardship. It enables businesses to make credible claims about their commitment to water sustainability and can increase investor confidence, improve brand perception and strengthen customer relationships.

There are three levels of AWS Standard certification that a site may achieve: Core, Gold and Platinum.

To achieve Core certification, sites must conform with all the Core requirements of the AWS Standard. Sites that seek to obtain an AWS certificate at the Gold level must conform with all the Core and Gold requirements. Sites that seek to achieve Platinum certification for one or more of the AWS outcome areas shall conform with all the Core and Gold requirements, plus a distinct set of Platinum requirements associated with the relevant outcome area(s) as outlined in the figure below:

Core

Conformance to all 50 Core requirements

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP
CORE CERTIFIED

Gold

Conformance to all 50 Core + 15 Gold requirements

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP
GOLD CERTIFIED

Platinum

Conformance to all 50 Core + 15 Gold requirements, plus:

Water governance: 3.2.3, 3.7.3, 4.1.3
Water balance: 3.3.3, 3.7.3, 4.1.3
Water quality: 3.4.3, 3.7.3, 4.1.3
Ecosystems/biodiversity: 3.5.3, 3.7.3, 4.1.3
WASH: 3.6.3, 3.7.3, 4.1.3

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP
PLATINUM CERTIFIED

Step 1: Gather & Understand

Gather data to understand water risks, shared water challenges and opportunities.

Intent

To ensure that the site gathers data on its water use and its catchment context and that the site uses these data to understand its water-related impacts and dependencies, water risks, shared water challenges and opportunities. This information informs the development of the site's water stewardship strategy and plan (Step 2) and guides the actions (Step 3) necessary to fulfil the site's commitments.

Criteria		Requirements	
1.1	Gather information to define the site's boundaries and to identify its catchment(s) for water stewardship purposes.	1.1.1	The site shall be *mapped*, including the following elements: • Site boundaries; • All on-site water sources and abstraction points; • Areas and facilities where water is used; • Water-related infrastructure, including wells, piping network and any water treatment, recycling or storage systems owned or managed by the site or its parent organisation; • On-site wastewater and stormwater discharge points; • Potential sources of water pollution.
		1.1.2	The surface water catchment(s) and, where applicable, the groundwater catchment(s) for the site's water stewardship purposes shall be *identified* and *mapped*. The catchment area shall: • Include the location of the site; • Include the location of the site's water service provider (if applicable) and water source(s); • Include the location of the site's wastewater service provider (if applicable) and receiving water body or bodies; • Be at a scale that is equivalent to level 6-10 of the HydroBASINS dataset.
1.2	Identify and engage relevant stakeholders and understand their water-related interests and challenges.	1.2.1	Stakeholders with water-related interests within the site's catchment (1.1.2) shall be *identified*. A list of stakeholders shall be *documented*, which covers all relevant stakeholder groups where present, including but not limited to: • Local authorities, regulators and/or other government agencies; • Water user associations; • Water utilities; • Industrial and agricultural water users; • Local communities; • Site workers, suppliers and service providers; • Indigenous Peoples and their traditional leaders; • Vulnerable groups; • Social and environmental civil society organisations (CSOs); • Academic institutions.
		1.2.2	The water-related interests and challenges of stakeholders shall be *identified* and *documented* through a stakeholder engagement process. This process shall: • Demonstrate the site's efforts to engage stakeholders, with representation from all relevant stakeholder groups outlined in 1.2.1, where present; • Provide justification for the level of stakeholder engagement undertaken based on their level of interest and influence; • Consider factors that may impede the ability of stakeholders to engage.
1.3	Gather and understand water-related data for the site including: water governance, water balance; water use efficiency; water quality; freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and water-related costs and value creation.	1.3.1	The site's water-related internal governance, including the positions of those accountable for compliance with water-related laws and regulations shall be *documented*.
		1.3.2	The site water balance, including inflows, consumption, losses, storage, water reuse, outflows and metering points shall be *mapped*.
		1.3.3	The site water balance, including inflows, consumption, losses, storage, reuse and outflows, shall be *monitored* and *quantified*. The annual site water balance and monthly variance in water usage rates (including high and low variances) shall be *quantified* and *documented*, including an analysis of trends.
		1.3.4	The site water use efficiency (m^3 per unit of output, activity or area) shall be *monitored* and *quantified* at least annually, including an analysis of trends.

Criteria		Requirements	
		1.3.5	Water quality of the site's on-site source(s), provided waters and discharge shall be *monitored* and *quantified*. For discharge, pollutant concentrations and loads shall be *identified* and *quantified*. Annual and seasonal high and low variances shall be *identified*, including an analysis of trends.
		1.3.6	Potential sources of water pollution shall be *identified*. An inventory of all potential sources of water pollution shall be *documented*, including all chemicals, fuels, fertilisers, hazardous wastes or other significant pollutants according to local legislation, which are used or stored on-site.
		1.3.7	On-site freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity shall be *identified*, and *mapped* or *documented*, and their condition assessed, including but not limited to: • Water bodies and wetlands; • Floodplains and aquifer recharge zones; • Threatened and endangered species; • Invasive species.
		1.3.8	Levels of access and adequacy of WASH provision at the site, in comparison to national regulatory requirements or international guidelines where laws and regulations do not exist, shall be *documented* and *monitored*, including: • Availability and quality of water available to workers for drinking, food preparation and washing; • Number of toilets and handwashing stations and a description of location, design, condition, safety and frequency of cleaning and maintenance; • Number of workers that WASH facilities cater to.
		1.3.9	**Gold Requirement** Annual water-related costs shall be *quantified*, and the social, environmental and economic water-related value generated by the site shall be *identified* and *documented*.
1.4	Gather and understand existing water-related data for the catchment (1.1.2), including: water governance; water balance; water quality; freshwater and their biodiversity; water-related climate trends; infrastructure and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).	**1.4.1**	Water governance initiatives in the catchment shall be *identified* and *documented*, including catchment plan(s), water-related public policies and major publicly led initiatives. The relevant goals of the water governance initiatives shall be *identified*, to help inform the site of possible opportunities for participation or collective action.
		1.4.2	Water-related legal and regulatory requirements which apply to the site shall be *identified* and *documented*. A description of how the identified legal and regulatory requirements apply to the site shall be documented.
		1.4.3	Social, cultural and recreational values of water in the catchment shall be *identified* and *documented* through consultation with stakeholders from 1.2.2, including: • Water-related areas that are fundamental for satisfying the basic needs of local communities or Indigenous Peoples; • Water-related areas deemed to have social, cultural or recreational value; • The customary water rights of stakeholders in the catchment, where applicable.
		1.4.4	The water balance of the catchment shall be *quantified* and *documented*. Where there is insufficient data to calculate the catchment water balance, a measure of water stress shall be *quantified*. Annual and seasonal variances shall be *identified* and *documented*, where available, including a description of trends.
		1.4.5	Water quality of the catchment shall be *identified* and *quantified*, including but not limited to the site's water source(s) and receiving water bodies. Physical, chemical and biological parameters of concern shall be *identified*. Annual and seasonal high and low variances shall be *identified* and *documented*, where available, including a description of trends. Where the site uses any desalinated water, water quality of effluent from the desalination process and the receiving water bodies shall be included.

Criteria		Requirements	
		1.4.6	Freshwater ecosystems in the catchment and their biodiversity shall be *identified*, and *mapped* or *documented*, and their condition assessed, including but not limited to: • Protected and conserved areas; • Key Biodiversity Areas; • RAMSAR Wetlands of International Importance; • Environmental flows; • Threatened and endangered species; • Invasive species. • Freshwater ecosystems and species identified as important by catchment stakeholders from 1.2.2; • Common freshwater ecosystems and species showing rapid declines at local or global scales.
		1.4.7	Water-related climate trends for the catchment shall be *identified* and *documented*, including observed and projected changes in precipitation and water-related extreme events. Current and potential future impacts of climate change on water shall be *identified* and *documented*.
		1.4.8	Shared water-related infrastructure in the catchment, which the site depends on or could be affected by, shall be *identified* and *mapped*. A description of the condition of infrastructure and potential exposure to extreme events shall be *documented*.
		1.4.9	Levels of access to adequate WASH services in the catchment shall be *identified* and *documented*, including: • Percentage of population with access to safe drinking water services; • Percentage of population with access to sanitation services; • Percentage of population with access to hygiene services.
		1.4.10	**Gold Requirement** The site shall support and/or undertake catchment-level data collection to the extent that an existing or new data point is improved in terms of accuracy and/or frequency. The catchment data shall be *documented* and shared with relevant catchment stakeholders.
1.5	Understand the site's water-related impacts and dependencies in the catchment and value chain.	**1.5.1**	The site shall *identify* and *document* its water-related impacts and dependencies based on an understanding of the site (1.3) and catchment context (1.4). This shall include: • Identification of at least one impact and one dependency for water balance, water quality and freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity; • Documentation of data sources, assumptions and gaps; • A description of seasonal or long-term trends, where sufficient data is available.
		1.5.2	**Gold Requirement** The site shall *identify* and *document* indirect water use impacts and dependencies in its value chain, including: • The country and catchment of origin and level of water risk for Tier 1 suppliers; • A description of the water use impacts and dependencies associated with the products and/or services sourced from Tier 1 suppliers; • A description of the water use impacts and dependencies associated with consumer product use and disposal.
1.6	Understand water risks faced by the site, shared water challenges in the catchment and opportunities to address them.	**1.6.1**	Water risks faced by the site shall be *identified* and *documented*, based on an understanding of the site's impacts and dependencies (1.5.1). Risks shall be prioritised based on an assessment of likelihood and severity of impact within a given timeframe, as well as potential costs and business impact.
		1.6.2	Shared water challenges shall be *identified*, prioritised and *documented* from the information gathered, including: • Site water risks (1.6.1); • Water-related challenges of stakeholders (1.2.2); • Catchment data (1.4).
		1.6.3	Opportunities to address shared water challenges in the catchment shall be *identified*, prioritised and *documented* including a description of how the site may participate in collective action.

Step 2: Commit & Plan

Commit to be a responsible water steward and develop a water stewardship plan.

Intent

To ensure there is a strategy and plan, and sufficient leadership support, site authority and allocated resources for the site to implement the AWS Standard. It focuses on how a site will act on water risks and shared water challenges to improve its performance and the status of its catchment in terms of the five AWS water stewardship outcomes. Step 2 links the information gathered in Step 1 to the actions implemented in Step 3, by describing who will do what and when.

Criteria		Requirements	
2.1	Develop a water stewardship strategy and commit by having the senior-most manager at the site or, if necessary, a suitable individual within the organisation head office, sign and publicly disclose a water stewardship commitment.	**2.1.1**	The site and/or organisation's water stewardship strategy shall be *documented*. The strategy shall define the overarching mission, vision and goals of the organisation for good water stewardship in line with the AWS Standard.
		2.1.2	The site's signed commitment statement shall be *documented* and communicated internally. The statement shall include the following commitments: • The site will implement and disclose progress on efforts to achieve improvement(s) against the five AWS Standard outcomes; • The site's water stewardship efforts will be aligned to, and in support of, existing catchment sustainability policies and plans; • The site's stakeholders will be engaged in an open and transparent manner; • The site will allocate the necessary resources to water stewardship implementation.
		2.1.3	**Gold Requirement** A commitment statement that meets the requirements set out in 2.1.2, signed by the organisation's senior-most executive or governance body, shall be *documented* and publicly *disclosed*.
2.2	Develop and document a system to achieve and maintain water-related legal and regulatory compliance.	**2.2.1**	The site's system to manage water-related legal and regulatory compliance shall be *documented*, including: • Identification of positions within the organisational structure responsible for compliance; • A process for submissions to regulatory agencies and record keeping; • A process for identifying new or revised legislation.
2.3	Develop a water stewardship plan which contains targets for each of the five AWS Standard outcome areas, which minimise adverse impacts and address site water risks and shared water challenges in the catchment. Review and update the plan annually.	**2.3.1**	The water stewardship plan shall contain targets for good water governance, including: • Metrics for how each target will be measured and *monitored*; • Actions and resources to achieve, maintain or exceed targets; • Planned timeframes to achieve targets, with annual interim targets; • Linkages between each target and water related-impacts, site water risks and/or shared water challenges; • Identification and description of collective actions (where applicable), including the organisations involved, and the role(s) to be played by the site; • If and how the plan has been informed by the results of evaluation (4.1).
		2.3.2	The water stewardship plan shall contain targets for sustainable water balance, including: • Metrics for how each target will be measured and *monitored*; • Actions and resources to achieve and maintain (or exceed) targets; • Planned timeframes to achieve targets, with annual interim targets; • Linkages between each target and water related-impacts, site water risks and/or shared water challenges; • Identification and description of collective actions (where applicable), including the organisations involved, and the role(s) to be played by the site; • If and how the plan has been informed by the results of evaluation (4.1).
		2.3.3	The water stewardship plan shall contain targets for good water quality, including: • Metrics for how each target will be measured and *monitored*; • Actions and resources to achieve and maintain (or exceed) targets; • Planned timeframes to achieve targets, with annual interim targets; • Linkages between each target and water related-impacts, site water risks and/or shared water challenges; • Identification and description of collective actions (where applicable), including the organisations involved, and the role(s) to be played by the site; • If and how the plan has been informed by the results of evaluation (4.1).

Step 2: Commit & Plan

Criteria		Requirements	
		2.3.4	The water stewardship plan shall contain targets for healthy freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity, including: • Metrics for how each target will be measured and *monitored*; • Actions and resources to achieve and maintain (or exceed) targets; • Planned timeframes to achieve targets, with annual interim targets; • Linkages between each target and water related-impacts, site water risks and/or shared water challenges; • Identification and description of collective actions (where applicable), including the organisations involved, and the role(s) to be played by the site; • If and how the plan has been informed by the results of evaluation (4.1).
		2.3.5	The water stewardship plan shall contain targets for safe water, sanitation and hygiene, including: • Metrics for how each target will be measured and *monitored*; • Actions and resources to achieve and maintain (or exceed) targets; • Planned timeframes to achieve targets, with annual interim targets; • Linkages between each target and water related-impacts, site water risks and/or shared water challenges; • Identification and description of collective actions (where applicable), including the organisations involved, and the role(s) to be played by the site; • If and how the plan has been informed by the results of evaluation (4.1).
2.4	Demonstrate the site's responsiveness and resilience to water risks.	**2.4.1**	The site's incident response plan shall be documented. The plan shall respond to incidents related to the water-related risks identified in 1.6.1.
		2.4.2	**Gold Requirement** The site's water stewardship plan (2.3) shall be climate-proofed to build resilience to water risks (1.6.1) associated with climate trends in the catchment (1.4.7). The water stewardship plan shall include: • An indication of the site's vulnerability to water-related climate risks; • The site's adaptation goals, targets and actions.

Step 3: Implement

Implement the site's water stewardship plan to deliver outcomes.

Intent

To ensure that the site is implementing the plans outlined in Step 2, demonstrating progress towards targets, and driving improvements in performance against the five AWS water stewardship outcomes.

Criteria		Requirements	
3.1	Implement system to comply with water-related legal and regulatory requirements, and respect the social, cultural and recreational values of water in the catchment.	3.1.1	The site's system to maintain water-related legal and regulatory compliance shall be implemented and full compliance shall be *documented*.
		3.1.2	The site shall mitigate any adverse impacts (1.5.1) on the social, cultural and recreational values of water in the catchment (1.4.3). Measures to mitigate impacts shall be *documented*.
3.2	Implement the site's water stewardship plan to achieve targets for good water governance.	3.2.1	The site shall participate in water governance initiatives in the catchment (1.4.1). Participation shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.2.2	**Gold Requirement** The site shall actively support water governance initiatives in the catchment (1.4.1). The site's inputs and involvement shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.2.3	**Platinum Requirement | Water Governance** The site shall be actively involved in public policy engagement to improve water governance in the catchment. The's site's contributions shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
3.3	Implement the site's water stewardship plan to achieve targets for sustainable water balance.	3.3.1	The site shall improve its water use efficiency relative to the baseline established in 1.3.4. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
		3.3.2	**Gold Requirement** The site shall reduce its total water withdrawals relative to the baseline established in 1.3.3 or replenish water in the catchment. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
		3.3.3	**Platinum Requirement | Water Balance** The site shall replenish a volume of water in the catchment which is equal to or greater than its total water withdrawals. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
3.4	Implement the site's water stewardship plan to achieve targets for good water quality.	3.4.1	Site water quality shall meet thresholds set in legal and regulatory requirements for all parameters. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
		3.4.2	**Gold Requirement** The site shall reduce the pollutant load of its discharge relative to the baseline established in 1.3.5. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
		3.4.3	**Platinum Requirement | Water Quality** The site shall improve water quality in the catchment for one or more physical, chemical or biological parameters of concern relative to the baseline established in 1.4.5. Progress shall be *monitored* and *quantified*.
3.5	Implement the site's water stewardship plan to achieve targets for healthy freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity.	3.5.1	On-site freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity, which are identified in 1.3.7, shall be protected, conserved or restored. Progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.5.2	**Gold Requirement** The site shall contribute to the protection or conservation of freshwater ecosystems in the catchment and their biodiversity, which are identified in 1.4.6, and mitigate any adverse impacts identified in 1.5.1. Progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.5.3	**Platinum Requirement | Freshwater Ecosystems & Biodiversity** The site shall contribute to the restoration of degraded freshwater ecosystems in the catchment and their biodiversity, which are identified in 1.4.6. Progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*.

Criteria		Requirements	
3.6	Implement the site's water stewardship plan to achieve targets for safe drinking water, effective sanitation and protective hygiene (WASH).	3.6.1	On-site access to adequate WASH shall be provided for all workers in line with national legal and regulatory requirements or international guidelines where laws and regulations to do not exist. Implementation shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.6.2	**Gold Requirement** Where WASH is identified as a shared water challenge, the site shall support access to adequate WASH services in the catchment through direct provision or support for government agencies or civil society partners. Implementation shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
		3.6.3	**Platinum Requirement – WASH** The site shall support access to adequate WASH services in its value chain through direct provision or support for government agencies or civil society partners. Implementation shall be *monitored* and *documented*.
3.7	Implement collective actions from the site's water stewardship plan.	3.7.1	Collective actions from the site's water stewardship plan (2.3) shall be *implemented*, and progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*. The nature of the collective actions and the site's role shall involve, at a minimum: • Participation in collective action initiatives where present; • Sharing of water-related data and information with stakeholders involved; • Bilateral collaboration.
		3.7.2	**Gold Requirement** Collective actions from the site's water stewardship plan (2.3) shall be *implemented*, and progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*. The nature of the collective actions and the site's role shall involve, at a minimum: • Active participation in collective action initiatives, with a clearly defined role; • Consultation with stakeholders to create a shared understanding of water-related interests and challenges to inform decision-making; • Collaboration with sector-based groups.
		3.7.3	**Platinum Requirement** Collective actions from the site's water stewardship plan (2.3) shall be *implemented*, and progress shall be *monitored* and *documented*. The nature of the collective actions and the site's role shall involve, at a minimum: • Convening or co-convening of collective action initiatives; • Establishment of common objectives, responsibilities and decision-making; • Collaboration with multi-sectoral groups.

Step 4: Evaluate

Evaluate the site's water stewardship performance.

Intent

To review the actions taken in Step 3 and evaluate the site's performance against its water stewardship plan, learn from the results – both intended and unintended – and inform the next iteration of the site's water stewardship plan.

Note

The requirements of Step 4 come into effect after one year of implementing the water stewardship plan.

Criteria		Requirements	
4.1	Evaluate the site's performance relative to its water stewardship plan and demonstrate its contribution to achieving water stewardship outcomes.	**4.1.1**	The site's performance against all targets in the water stewardship plan (2.3) shall be *evaluated* annually and the results shall be *documented*.
		4.1.2	**Gold Requirement** Costs, savings and value creation resulting from the water stewardship plan shall be *evaluated* annually. Costs and savings shall be *quantified*, and a description of the social, environmental and economic value generated through implementation of the site's water stewardship plan shall be *documented*.
		4.1.3	**Platinum Requirement** Stakeholder evaluation of the site's water stewardship performance, including efforts to address shared water challenges in the catchment, shall be conducted and *documented* annually through a consultation process. This process shall: • Demonstrate the site's efforts to consult all stakeholders engaged for 1.2.2; • Consider factors that impede the ability of stakeholders to engage; • Provide evidence of stakeholder consultation on the site's water stewardship performance.
4.2	Review the occurrence and impacts of water-related incidents and evaluate the effectiveness of the site's incident response and climate change adaptation plans.	**4.2.1**	The site shall conduct an annual review of water-related incidents. The effectiveness of the site's incident response plan shall be *evaluated* and *documented*, and where necessary, the plan shall be updated to incorporate learning from the evaluation process.
		4.2.2	**Gold Requirement** The site's efforts to build resilience through the water stewardship plan (2.4.2), including progress on implementation and the effectiveness of actions, shall be *evaluated* annually. The results shall be *documented*, and the plan shall be updated where necessary to incorporate learning from the evaluation process.
4.3	Update the site's water stewardship plan to incorporate learning from the evaluation process in the context of continual improvement.	**4.3.1**	Where the annual review of site water stewardship performance (4.1.1) finds that targets have not been met or actions have not been *implemented*, an analysis of results shall be *documented*. The site shall develop and document modifications to the water stewardship plan for all targets that are not met.
		4.3.2	The site's water stewardship plan shall be updated on an annual basis to incorporate learning from the evaluation process (4.1). The updates to the plan shall be *identified* and *documented*.

Step 5: Communicate & Disclose

Communicate about water stewardship and disclose the site's performance.

Intent

To encourage transparency and accountability through communication of performance relative to water stewardship commitments, policies and plans. The communication and disclosure of relevant information builds trust and allows others to develop informed opinions on a site's operations and tailor their involvement to suit.

Criteria		Requirements	
5.1	Communicate the site's water stewardship plan to all relevant stakeholders.	**5.1.1**	A summary of the water stewardship plan (2.3), including all targets and actions, and how it addresses shared water challenges, shall be communicated to all stakeholders from 1.2.2.
		5.1.2	**Gold Requirement** Stakeholder feedback on a summary of the site's water stewardship plan (2.3), including all targets and actions, shall be gathered and *documented* through a consultation process. This process shall: • Demonstrate the site's efforts to consult all stakeholders engaged for 1.2.2; • Consider factors that impede the ability of stakeholders to engage; • Provide evidence of stakeholder consultation on the site's water stewardship plan.
5.2	Communicate and disclose an annual water stewardship summary, including performance against the site's targets and efforts to address shared water challenges.	**5.2.1**	A summary of the site's water stewardship performance, including performance against all targets in the water stewardship plan (2.3) and efforts to address shared water challenges, shall be communicated to stakeholders from 1.2.2 on an annual basis. **Note:** This requirement comes into effect after one year of implementing the water stewardship plan.
		5.2.2	**Gold Requirement** A summary of the site's water stewardship performance, including performance against all targets in the water stewardship plan (2.3) and efforts to address shared water challenges, shall be publicly *disclosed* on an annual basis. **Note:** This requirement comes into effect after one year of implementing the water stewardship plan.
5.3	Maintain open and transparent communication about water stewardship with all relevant stakeholders.	**5.3.1**	A process for receiving and responding to stakeholder feedback on an ongoing basis shall be *implemented* and publicly *disclosed*. This process shall: • Provide a clear procedure for responding to feedback with an indicative timeframe; • Be accessible to all stakeholder groups and consider factors that impede the ability of stakeholders to engage.
		5.3.2	Site water-related legal or regulatory compliance violations, where they occur, shall be immediately communicated to relevant government and regulatory agencies.

Glossary of Terms

Adaptation
The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects. (Source: IPCC, 2022)

Aquifer
Layers of rock, sand or gravel that can absorb water and allow it to flow. An aquifer acts as a groundwater reservoir when the underlying rock is impermeable. This may be tapped by wells for domestic, agricultural or industrial use. A confined aquifer is an aquifer below the land surface that is saturated with water. Layers of impermeable material are both above and below the aquifer, causing it to be under pressure so that when the aquifer is penetrated by a well, the water will rise above the top of the aquifer. A water table – or unconfined aquifer – is an aquifer whose upper water surface (water table) is at atmospheric pressure and thus is able to rise and fall. Water table aquifers are usually closer to the Earth's surface than confined aquifers are , and as such are impacted by drought conditions sooner than confined aquifers. (Adapted from: European Environment Agency, 2000 and United States Geological Survey)

Baseline
An initial set of observations or data against which changes in water stewardship outcomes can be observed and attributed. The baseline may be set at the current status or for a time in the recent past, prior to intervention.

Biodiversity
The variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (Adapted from: Convention on Biological Diversity, 2011)

Catchment
The geographical zone in which water is captured, flows through and eventually discharges at one or more points. The concept includes both surface water catchments and groundwater catchments. A surface water catchment is defined by the area of land from which all precipitation received flows through a sequence of streams and rivers towards a single river mouth, as a tributary to a larger river, or to the sea. A groundwater catchment is defined by geological structure of an aquifer and groundwater flow paths. It is replenished by water that infiltrates from the surface. It has vertical thickness (from a few metres to 100s of metres) as well as area. Depending on local conditions, surface and groundwater catchments may be physically separate or interconnected. Alternative terms are watershed, basin and river basin.

Catchment of origin
Refers to a catchment, distinct from the site's catchment(s), where a product or service is sourced.

Climate change
A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over a comparable time period. (Source: UNFCCC, 1992)

Collective action
A coordinated set of engagements among interested parties playing complementary roles, which pools together knowledge, resources and/or expertise to jointly identify and implement solutions at various geographic scales, with the aim to address shared freshwater challenges. (Source: AWS et al., 2024)

Compliance violation
An instance of not complying with or fulfilling (or only partially complying with or fulfilling) a given legal or regulatory requirement. (Adapted from: Accountability Framework Initiative, 2024)

Criteria
The conditions that need to be met in order to achieve an outcome. (Adapted from: ISEAL, 2013)

Customary water rights
Customary water rights refer to a collection of water allocation rules and traditional practices used by Indigenous communities. It is based on practice, generally recorded orally rather than in written code. (Adapted from: Global Water Partnership)

Dependency
Aspects of environmental assets and ecosystem services that an organisation relies on to function, including provision of surface water and groundwater; water flow and quality regulation; regulation of hazards like fires and floods; and carbon sequestration. (Adapted from: SBTN, 2023)

Desalination
The process of removing dissolved salts and impurities from saline water – such as seawater, brackish water or mineralised groundwater – to produce water that meets specific quality standards for human consumption, irrigation, industrial applications and other uses. (Source: EU Blue Economy Observatory)

Discharge
Effluent, stormwater, runoff and other water leaving the boundaries of the site and released to surface water, groundwater or third parties. This includes point source and nonpoint source discharge. (Adapted from: CDP, 2024)

Disclosed
Information publicly shared by companies. This can include reporting that is available to the public as well as free public sharing of other information such as policies and procedures, commitments, plans and water stewardship performance. Disclosure is a mechanism for transparency. (Adapted from: Accountability Framework Initiative, 2024)

Documented
Having some form of evidence (paper, electronic or other) of conformance. Information presented shall be at a frequency, level of accuracy and over a sufficient time period to enable meaningful conclusions to be reached in relation to the requirement. Documented information is controlled and maintained by the site.

Environmental flows
Environmental flows describe the quantity, timing and quality of water flows required to sustain freshwater and estuarine ecosystems and the human livelihoods and wellbeing that depend on these ecosystems. (Source: TNFD, 2023)

Evaluated
Systematic assessment of the design, implementation or results of an initiative for the purposes of learning or decision-making. (Source: Canadian Evaluation Society)

Freshwater ecosystem
A subset of all ecosystems, characterised by a dynamic complex of plant, animal, and micro-organism communities and the non-living environment dominated by the presence of flowing or still water, interacting as a functional unit. Freshwater ecosystems include lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams, canals, estuaries, groundwater aquifers; and several types of wetlands such as swamps, bogs, peat, paddies and mangroves. A healthy freshwater ecosystem sustains its ecological structure, processes, functions and resilience within its range of natural variability. (Adapted from: UNEP and Alberta Water Council, 2008)

Goal
A high-level statement of ambition that captures a larger more strategic vision that an organisation aims to accomplish within a specified timeframe. (Adapted from: TNFD, 2023 and WWF, 2021)

Groundwater
Water which is being held in, and can be recovered from, an underground formation. Renewable groundwater sources can be replenished within 50 years and are usually located at shallow depths. Non-renewable groundwater has a negligible rate of natural recharge on the human time-scale (more than 50 years) and is generally located at deeper depths than renewable groundwater. This is sometimes referred to as 'fossil' water. (Adapted from: CDP, 2024)

HydroBASIN
HydroBASINS is a data layer that has been generated as part of the HydroSHEDS database. HydroSHEDS is a database that provides high-resolution information on the world's surface water and drainage features. HydroBASINS is a data layer which depicts consistently sized and hierarchically nested sub-basin boundaries at a global scale. There are 12 levels of HydroBASINS – with 1 being continental divides, and 12 being very small sub-sub-catchments. (Adapted from: HydroSHEDS)

Identified
Having established or indicated who or what someone or something is. (Adapted from: ISO, 2023)

Impact
Changes in the condition of freshwater (quantity, quality and ecosystems) which may result in changes to the capacity of nature to provide social and economic functions. Impacts can be positive or negative. They can be the result of an organisation's or another party's actions and can be direct, indirect or cumulative. (Adapted from: TNFD, 2023)

Implemented
A process, procedure or plan is put into effect or practice in order to achieve the intended result(s). (Adapted from: ISO, 2023)

Incident response plan
A written document that outlines the procedures and responsibilities for responding to environmental, health and safety incidents, such as spills, leaks or other pollution events.

Indirect water use
Water used in a site's supply chain, including water that is used in the manufacturing and provision of products and services.

Infrastructure
Built structures and equipment for the abstraction, delivery, storage, treatment and provision of water supply, and for the collection, treatment and discharge of wastewater. It includes boreholes, surface water intakes, reservoirs, pipes, pumps, canals, control systems, water tanks and water treatment systems. It may include wetland treatment systems for wastewater. For municipal supply, it includes the distribution system.

Mapped
Maps should preferably be in a digital format and be of a quality that enables an external party to identify the location, scale and physical properties of the attributes listed. Maps should include a title, scale, legend and compass directions, with relevant name and boundaries clearly indicated. A physical diagram could be accepted when deemed better fit for purpose than a map.

Metric
A quantitative measure of data, relevant to what you are trying to measure or analyse. (Adapted from: SBTN, 2023)

Monitored
Collection and analysis of information at set locations and at regular intervals in order to provide data. Information presented shall be at a frequency, level of accuracy and over a sufficient time period to enable meaningful conclusions to be reached in relation to the requirement.

Outcome
Short-term and medium-term results or changes resulting from the outputs of a scheme or part of a scheme. The five intended outcomes of the AWS Standard are (1) Good water governance, (2) Sustainable water balance, (3) Good water quality status, (4) Healthy freshwater ecosystems and their biodiversity and (5) Safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all (WASH). (Adapted from: ISEAL, 2025)

Pollutant concentration
The amount of a pollutant in a given volume of water, specified in units of mass per volume (for example, mg P/L). (Adapted from: SBTN, 2023)

Pollutant load
The rate at which a pollutant, such as nutrients, is delivered to a receiving water body, specified in units of mass per time (for example, kg P/day). (Adapted from: SBTN, 2023)

Protected area
A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values. (Source: IUCN, 2013)

Quantified
Numerical information presented at a frequency, level of accuracy and over a sufficient time period to enable meaningful conclusions to be reached in relation to the requirement.

Receiving water body
A water body that receives a site's discharge, either directly from the site or indirectly from a wastewater treatment provider. See definition of 'water body'.

Replenish
The act of returning a volume of water to a site's local catchment areas in ways that address the shared water challenges of the site and catchment stakeholders, align with leading practice for corporate water stewardship, are informed by the best available information and catchment context and have a measurable and positive impact on the catchment's water availability, quality and accessibility. (Adapted from: CEO Water Mandate, 2024)

Requirement
A need or expectation that is stated in normative documents such as standards or technical specifications. (Source: ISEAL, 2025)

Resilience
The ability of an individual, institution or system to respond to shocks and stresses and survive and thrive despite the impacts of those shocks and stresses. (Source: Water Resilience Assessment Framework, 2021)

Shared water challenge
A water-related issue, concern or threat shared by the site and one or more stakeholders within the catchment(s). Examples include physical water scarcity, deteriorating water quality and regulatory restrictions on water allocation.

Site
The physical area over which the implementing organisation owns or manages land and carries out its principal activities. In most cases, it is a contiguous area of land, but may also include physically separated but nearby areas (especially if in the same catchment). Where the organisation operates its own water sources and/or wastewater treatment plant, these should be considered part of the 'site'. Stand-alone water sources (for example, spring sites, boreholes, reservoirs) and sites that are not linked to a specific location (for example, ships, offshore rigs) do not qualify for certification.

Stakeholder
Stakeholders are those groups and individuals who affect and/or could be affected by an organisation's activities, products or services and associated performance. This does not include all those who may have knowledge of or views about an organisation. Organisations will have many stakeholders, each with distinct types and levels of involvement, and often with diverse and sometimes conflicting interests and concerns. (Adapted from: AccountAbility, 2015)

Target
A statement that includes a specific, timebound objective and measurable level of performance. Targets capture performance towards achieving a goal. (Adapted from: WWF, 2021)

Tier 1 supplier
A supplier that provides or sells products or services directly to the site or its parent organisation. (Adapted from: CDP, 2024)

Value chain
A value chain refers to the full life cycle of a product or process, including material sourcing, production, consumption and disposal/recycling processes. The value chain can be divided into three 'segments': upstream, direct operations and downstream. Each of these segments involve places where economic activities managed or relied upon by the site occur. (Adapted from: SBTN, 2023 and WBCSD, 2011)

Vulnerable groups
Groups that experience a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion than the general population. Ethnic minorities, Indigenous People, migrants, disabled people, isolated elderly people, women and children often face difficulties that can lead to further social exclusion, such as low levels of education and unemployment or underemployment. (Source: Rainforest Alliance, 2025)

WASH
WASH is an acronym that stands for water, sanitation and hygiene. It refers to the accessibility, availability and quality of water for drinking, washing and domestic activities; the safe removal and management of waste; and the conditions and practices that help maintain health and prevent the spread of disease, including handwashing, food hygiene and menstrual hygiene management. Safe WASH for all refers to universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, and access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene. (Adapted from: WHO & UNICEF, 2025)

Wastewater
Any water that has been affected adversely in quality by human use for domestic, industrial, commercial or agricultural purposes. (Source: Rainforest Alliance, 2025)

Water Balance
An assessment of all water inflows, throughflows, outflows and water storage in a system. In the AWS Standard, it applies to both the site and the catchment. Sustainable water balance is the condition whereby ongoing water use in the catchment has no long-term negative impact on the natural environment and other water users. For a sustainable balance, total net water abstractions must not exceed the natural replenishment of water bodies, while also ensuring that water bodies maintain viable flows and water levels to sustain themselves, and the species that depend on them, in a healthy condition. A condition where outflows are consistently larger than inflows is a non-sustainable water balance.

Water body
A water body is a certain clearly distinguishable part of surface water, such as a lake, a stream, river or a part a stream or river. For groundwater, it is the aquifer. (Adapted from: European Environment Agency)

Water consumption
The amount of water drawn into the boundaries of the site and not discharged back to the water environment or a third party. Water consumption is equal to the volume of water withdrawn minus the volume of water discharged. (Adapted from: TNFD, 2023)

Water governance
Water governance encompasses all aspects of how water is managed by governments, regulators, suppliers and users. It includes water resources management, protection, allocation, monitoring, quality control, treatment, regulation, policy and distribution. Good water governance ensures responsible sharing of water resources in the interests of users and the natural environment in line with the principles of water stewardship.

Water quality
The biological, chemical and physical properties of water, often assessed against a usage standard. Water quality standards are typically defined by national or local regulations and can vary significantly from one country or region to another. Good water quality status is when water is suitable for its intended use, such as drinking water, irrigation or supporting ecosystems. (Adapted from: TNFD, 2023 and UNEP, 2025)

Water risk
The possibility of a site experiencing a water-related challenge (for example, conflicts over water with communities, water scarcity, water stress, flooding, infrastructure decay, drought). The extent of risk is a function of the likelihood of one or several specific challenges occurring and the severity of the challenge's impact. The severity of impact itself depends upon the intensity of the challenge and the compounding effect of experiencing multiple challenges simultaneously as well as the vulnerability of the site. (Adapted from: CEO Water Mandate, 2024)

Water reuse
The process of intentionally capturing wastewater, stormwater, saltwater or greywater and cleaning it as needed for a designated beneficial freshwater purpose such as drinking, industrial processes, surface or ground water replenishment and watershed restoration. Water reuse is also known as water recycling. (Adapted from: WateReuse Association)

Water scarcity
Refers to the volumetric abundance, or lack thereof, of freshwater resources. Scarcity is human driven; it is a function of the volume of human water consumption relative to the volume of water resources in a given area. As such, an arid region with very little water, but no human water consumption would not be considered scarce, but rather arid. Water scarcity is a physical, objective reality that can be measured consistently across regions and over time. Water scarcity reflects the physical abundance of freshwater rather than whether that water is suitable for use. For instance, a region may have abundant water resources (and thus not be considered water scarce) but have such severe pollution that those supplies are unfit for human or ecological uses. (Source: TNFD, 2023)

Water source
Water sources include water withdrawn or captured from surface water, groundwater, precipitation, seawater and atmospheric water. (Adapted from: TNFD, 2023)

Water stewardship
The use of water that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site-and catchment-based actions.

Water use
A general term for water that is withdrawn and used by the site. Consumptive water use refers to water that is evaporated, transpired , incorporated into products or crops, consumed by humans or livestock, or otherwise not returned to the catchment. Water that is returned to the catchment, or a different catchment than the point of withdrawal, is considered non-consumptive water use. (Adapted from: United States Geological Survey, 2019)

Water use efficiency
Minimisation of the amount of water used to accomplish a function, task or result. Water use efficiency is measured by m^3 of water used per unit of output, activity or area. (Adapted from: CEO Water Mandate, 2024)

Water withdrawal
The sum of all water drawn into the boundaries of the site from all water sources for any use. (Adapted from: CDP, 2024)

Well (water)
An artificial excavation put down by any method for the purposes of withdrawing water from underground aquifers. A bored, drilled or driven shaft, or a dug hole whose depth is greater than the largest surface dimension and whose purpose is to reach underground water supplies, or to store or bury fluids below ground. (Adapted from: United States Geological Survey, 2018)

Wetland
Transitional ecosystems with saturated soil that can be inundated by water either seasonally or permanently and can be covered by short vegetation or trees. (Source: SBTN, 2023)

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