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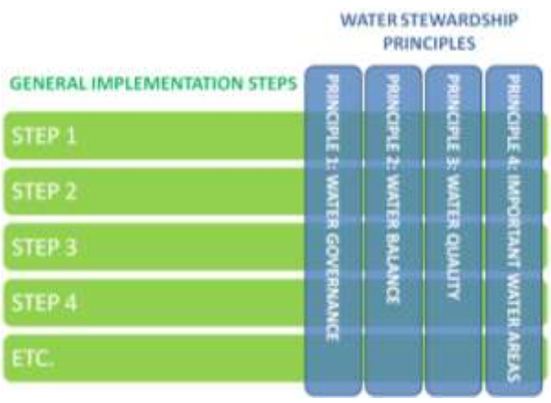
The Alliance for Water Stewardship – Summary of First Draft Standard

The world's water users, from agriculture and industry to cities and citizens, recognize the acute need to more sustainably manage the water resources on which they depend. In parts of the world, water scarcity is threatening the social, environmental and economic health. Decision-making processes around water-related policy are leaving millions without access to their human right to clean water and sanitation. At the same time, the viability of business operations and economic activity is threatened. Shareholders, governments and consumers are increasingly demanding that companies use natural resources in ways that are environmentally and socially sustainable. Water users are also realizing that improving water quality and reducing water consumption can result in significant savings and increased profits.

The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard (the Standard) is designed to be an international, ISEAL-compliant[1], standard that defines a set of water stewardship steps, principles, criteria, and indicators for how water should be stewarded at a site and watershed level in a way that is environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable. The Standard is intended to provide water stewards with an approach for evaluating the existing processes and performances within their sites (or facilities) and watersheds, and ensuring that responsible water stewardship actions are in place.

Structure of the Draft AWS Standard

The Standard is organized around four principles (which denote the broad, overarching areas and intent of water stewardship), criteria (more detailed actions), indicators (specific measures), and targets (specific outcomes by indicator) which, when combined, are designed to mitigate the negative impacts and magnify the positive impacts of water stewardship at the site and watershed levels. These impacts are ultimately evaluated along social, environmental and economic lines.



Furthermore, the Standard is structured as a matrix with the four core principles being crossed over with various steps (Figure 1).The steps are generally designed to reflect a plan-do-check-act cycle, thus allowing for integration into existing site-level management systems (e.g., ISO 14001).

The first draft AWS Standard is designed around a series of steps, which are listed below:

1. **Make a leadership commitment**
2. **Measure the site's water use**
3. **Measure the use of water in the defined area of influence**
4. **Measure the current status of water in the defined area of influence**
5. **Measure the impacts and risks of the site's water use in the defined area of influence**
6. **Measure and manage the site's indirect water use**
7. **Develop plans for rare incidents**
8. **Develop and internally disseminate a water robust stewardship plan or policy**
9. **Remain in legal compliance and respect water rights.**
10. **Improve your water impacts at the site and beyond within the defined area of influence**
11. **Develop and maintain the necessary capacity to undertake water stewardship**
12. **Disclose your water stewardship plans, actions and results**

The Standard has "core requirements" that must be met to become AWS Certified, but also recognizes two additional levels (or tiers) of water stewardship: AWS Gold Certified and AWS Platinum Certified (Figure 2). Currently, criteria are separated into core criteria (all of which must be met to achieve "AWS Certified" status), and bonus credits which reflect the increased range of actions, more challenging actions, and/or higher levels of performance.

Figure 4: Proposed AWS Certification Levels

Level	Meaning	Degree of Effort[2]		
		Site	Watershed	Supply Chain
Platinum Certified	Water stewards are at the cutting edge of stewardship.	**X**	**X**	**X**
Gold Certified	Water stewards are going above a base level to meet additional criteria to become strong leaders.	**X**	**X**	X
Certified	Water stewards are meeting a rigorous base level of criteria and are responsible water stewards.	**X**	X	x

[1] Compliant with the ISEAL Alliance Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards. P005 - Public Version 5.01 – April, 2010
[2] Note: The size of the X in the figure indicates the relative amount of effort.

The Standard is designed to be able to be implemented by all sites, in any region of the planet, and within any sector. While the AWS is exploring the possibility of group certification for very small sites, the Standard is designed to be universally applicable. The Standard applies to all forms of water, including salt water and forms of solid water (e.g., glaciers). The Standard is designed to be implemented at the site level and outside the site (within the watershed) with a defined "area of influence" (Figure 3). The size of this area of influence is determined through a combination of factors and will be discussed further throughout the coming months.

The following pages provide greater detail on all of the above. The document is complemented by a glossary of key terms (Appendix A), regional and sectoral variances (Appendices B&C, which are under construction), and also supported by a guidance document (*AWS Standard Guidance Document*), which is intended to provide greater clarification, detail, and interpretation for the Standard.

Figure 3: A Site's Area of Influence

Development of the first Draft

The AWS International Water Stewardship Standard is being developed through a multi-stakeholder process called the global Water Roundtable. The Water Roundtable is open to all stakeholders and includes a 15 member group called the International Standard Development Committee (ISDC) with representatives from three stakeholder groups (businesses and water service providers, civil society and public sector agencies) across eight regions (Africa, Asia Pacific, Central and Western Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North America, Northern Asia, and South Asia). Launched in 2010, the Water Roundtable publicly solicited ISDC members who were then put in place in June 2011. Since that time, the ISDC has worked both over the phone and via three meetings to pull together the draft AWS Standard and the accompanying Guidance Document.

For more details on the process employed in the development of the Standard, refer to the AWS Water Roundtable Process document.

The Four Principles of Water Stewardship

Principle 1 - Water Governance:
Water Stewards shall strive to achieve equitable and transparent water governance for all water users within the defined area of influence.
The water governance principle addresses how water is governed and managed, both internally within a site, and externally within a watershed, and includes aspects of access, rights, policy and claims. It is heavily linked to the notions of responsibility and accountability.

Principle 2 - Water Balance: ***Water Stewards shall strive to achieve and maintain a sustainable water balance, and help to ensure adequate availability for all users at all times within the defined area of influence.***
The water balance principle addresses the amount and timing of water use, including whether the volumes withdrawn, consumed, and returned at the site and in the basin are sustainable relative to renewable supplies.

Principle 3 - Water Quality: ***Water Stewards shall contribute to the maintenance of good water quality status in terms of chemical, physical and biological characteristics to maintain ecosystems and ensure adequate water quality for all users within the defined area of influence.***
The water quality principle addresses the physical, chemical and biological properties of water, including whether water quality at the site and within the basin are within acceptable local norms.

Principle 4 - Important Water Areas: ***Water Stewards shall identify Important Water Areas at their sites and within their defined area of influence and shall strive to protect, manage and restore such areas as necessary.***
The Important Water Areas principle addresses the spatial aspects of water, at the site and within the basin, and addresses the land forms that are a linked component of water systems, whether for cultural purposes or ecosystem services.

Next Steps

The AWS, via the Water Roundtable, is committed to an equitable, open and transparent standard-setting process, following the ISEAL Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards, and involving stakeholder interests from many different countries and from all parts of the supply chain.

This version of the Standard (v_03_13_2012) will be open to general stakeholder input and feedback until June 15, 2012 (go to *http://www.allianceforwaterstewardship.org/* to provide online feedback) with initial field trials to be completed by Fall 2012. A second Draft will be published for input and feedback in late 2012 followed by a public review period before a final version of the Standard is released in mid-2013.

For more information, please visit: *http://allianceforwaterstewardship.org/* or contact,

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Principles, Criteria and Steps of the First Draft AWS Standard

12 Steps:	4 Principles:	1 Governance	2 Water Balance	3 Water Quality	4 Important Water Areas
1	**Make a leadership commitment**	**1.1** The Implementer shall sign and publicly disclose a commitment by the CEO or another member of the Senior Management team of the implementing entity (or Implementer) to strive to achieve responsible water stewardship. *(See glossary for definition of "responsible water stewardship".)*	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	**Measure the site's water use**	**1.2** The site boundaries and water sources that the site is dependent upon are established. In addition, the responsibility and accountability for measuring the site's use of water (gathering data for 2.2, 3.2, and 4.2) is clearly stated in the description of staff responsibilities or in the budgeting of resources for external provision of these data.	**2.2** Total water withdrawals, return flows and total water consumption shall be quantified by source, use timeframes, and use activity on a periodic basis (e.g., monthly), as well as whenever major changes occur.	**3.2** The effluent discharge quality from the site shall be determined, monitored, and documented for each effluent discharge point, with the quantification of main water quality parameters of concern to the downstream uses of the water.	**4.2** Existing Important Water Areas within the Implementer's property boundaries are identified and justified via a site survey or previously determined and published stakeholder input.
3	**Measure the use of water in the defined area of influence**	**1.3** Stakeholders are identified, and are engaged to establish the area of influence boundaries. In addition, the entity (or entities) responsible for monitoring the use of water in the defined area of influence is documented, and both responsibility and accountability for measuring the use of water (including gathering criteria 2.3, 3.3, and 4.3) in the defined area of influence is documented.	**2.3** The Implementer shall work towards obtaining or modeling total periodic (e.g., monthly) watershed withdrawals in the defined area of influence, listed by activity and water source.	**3.3** The Implementer shall work towards obtaining or modeling total periodic (e.g., monthly) watershed effluent discharged in the defined area of influence, listed by activity and water source.	**4.3** The Implementer shall work towards identifying Important Water Areas in the defined area of influence. In addition, the reliance by all stakeholders upon Important Water Areas in the defined area of influence is described.
4	**Measure the current status of water in the defined area of influence**	**1.4** The entity (or entities) responsible for monitoring the status of water in the defined area of influence is documented, and both responsibility and accountability for gathering water status information for the site is documented.	**2.4** The water flow regime shall be estimated from available information for all sources.	**3.4** The current and desired water quality levels shall be determined, monitored and documented by receiving water body	**4.4** The status of services provided by Important Water Areas, in particular ecosystem services and areas of cultural significance, are described, and if possible, quantified.
5	**Measure the impacts and risks of the site's water use in the defined area of influence**	**1.5** The Implementer has a system in place to measure the impacts and risks of the site's water use, and both responsibility and accountability for gathering information on the site's water impacts and risks is documented.	**2.5** The environmental, social and economic impacts and risks of the site's withdrawals and consumption shall be monitored, evaluated in context and reported upon through a stakeholder engagement process.	**3.5** The environmental, social and economic impacts and risks of the site's effluents discharged to the receiving water body (including sensitive areas downstream) shall be monitored, evaluated in context and reported upon through a stakeholder engagement process.	**4.5** The environmental, social and economic impacts and risks of the site's management of site Important Water Areas shall be monitored, evaluated in context and reported upon through a stakeholder engagement process.
6	**Measure and manage the site's indirect water use**	**1.6** The Implementer identifies all supply chain members located within the defined area of influence that relate to the site's indirect water use, and both responsibility and accountability for gathering this information is established.	N/A	N/A	N/A

7	**Develop plans for rare incidents**	**1.7**	Responsibilities, accountabilities, scenarios and plans are established at the site to evaluate rare incidents as required by criteria 2.7, 3.7 and 4.7.	**2.7**	The potential impacts of rare incidents on water supplies are evaluated by source.	**3.7**	The potential impacts of rare incidents on water quality are evaluated by source.	**4.7**	The potential impacts of rare incidents on Important Water Areas are evaluated by source.
8	**Develop and internally disseminate a water robust stewardship plan or policy**	**1.8**	The Implementer develops an understandable, publicly available water stewardship strategy/plan/policy that covers all core criteria for all principles, includes specific, time-bounded targets, allocation of appropriate financial and physical resources, a commitment to continual improvement, adaptive management, defined roles and responsibilities, an internally-disseminated site-specific action plan, and a cost-benefit analysis, all in relation to Criteria 2.8, 3.8 and 4.8.	**2.8**	The Implementer has a water stewardship plan or policy that takes into account the core criteria required in Principle 2, explicitly considers implications to other issues, includes a risk management plan, and contains a commitment for continual improvement.	**3.8**	The Implementer has a water stewardship plan or policy that takes into account the core criteria required in Principle 3, explicitly considers implications to other issues, includes a risk management plan, and contains a commitment for continual improvement.	**4.8**	The Implementer has a water stewardship plan or policy that takes into account the core criteria required in Principle 4, explicitly considers implications to other issues, includes a risk management plan, and contains a commitment for continual improvement.
9	**Remain in legal compliance and respect water rights.**	**1.9**	The Implementer will have a system in place to identify, document, and comply with relevant water-related legal responsibilities. In addition, the responsibility and accountability for identifying the site's water-related legal requirements shall be established.	**2.9**	Water withdrawals and consumption shall meet legal requirements. In addition, the Implementer shall assess, document, establish and respect water rights and water use rights, of local and indigenous communities, both formal and informal, that are affected by the site's water use.	**3.9**	Effluent discharge shall meet all relevant legal requirements. In addition, the Implementer shall assess, document, establish and respect the quality elements of water rights and water use rights, of local and indigenous communities, both formal and informal, that are affected by the site's water discharges.	**4.9**	Site important water area management shall meet legal compliance (if applicable). The Implementer shall assess, document, establish and respect land rights and land use rights, of local and indigenous communities, both formal and informal, that are affected by the site's water use and discharges.
10	**Improve your water impacts at the site and beyond within the defined area of influence**	**1.10**	The Implementer has an annual action plan underway, as well as individuals assigned as responsible and accountable on progress towards 2.10, 3.10, and 4.10.	**2.10**	The Implementer continually manages water withdrawals and consumption to the point of mitigating actual and potential impacts outside the site.	**3.10**	The Implementer continually manages water quality (effluent discharge) of the site to the point of mitigating actual and potential impacts outside the site.	**4.10**	The Implementer continually makes progress Important Water Areas within the Implementer's property lines until such time as those areas are fully protected, managed and/or restored.
11	**Develop and maintain the necessary capacity to undertake water stewardship**	**1.11**	The Implementer has a system to develop organizational capacity, as well as that of responsible and accountable individuals assigned to ensure progress on 2.11, 3.11, and 4.11. The governance capacity of the entity/entities responsible for water resources in the area of influence shall also be described.	**2.11**	The Implementer's capacity is sufficient to successfully implement the actions identified in Principle 2.	**3.11**	The Implementer's capacity is sufficient to successfully implement the actions identified in Principle 3.	**4.11**	The Implementer's capacity is sufficient to successfully implement the actions identified in Principle 4.
12	**Disclose your water stewardship plans, actions and results**	**1.12**	The Implementer discloses the general governance structure of the site's management, including the names of those accountable for legal compliance with water-related laws and regulations.	**2.12**	The Implementer discloses plans, annual targets, actions and results in relation to Principle 2. In addition the Implementer must publicly disclose any legal violations with respect to Principle 2.	**3.12**	The Implementer discloses plans, annual targets, actions and results in relation to Principle 3. In addition the Implementer must publicly disclose any legal violations with respect to Principle 3.	**4.12**	The Implementer discloses plans, annual targets, actions and results in relation to Principle 4. In addition the Implementer must publicly disclose any legal violations with respect to Principle 4.