Mitigating water risks and harnessing opportunities using a globally consistent approach to water stewardship.

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) was founded in 2009 with the mission to promote water stewardship, primarily through an internationally accepted water stewardship standard. From 2010 to 2014, WWF assisted AWS to convene stakeholders throughout the world in an ISEAL-compliant standard-setting process to create the world’s first global water stewardship standard.

The AWS Standard, which is may be used by sites in any sector anywhere in the world, was released in April 2014, and consists of six steps in a continuous improvement cycle. The standard drives performance in four outcome areas: good water governance, sustainable water balance, good water quality status and healthy important water-related areas. Within this broad framework, there are 30 required core criteria, and an additional 27 voluntary advanced criteria, that promote internal action as well as collective actions at the catchment level.

The AWS Standard is consistent with WWF’s water stewardship steps and provides detailed actions and guidelines for a company’s operations to pursue to address their water risks and challenges. The AWS Standard is supported by a step-wise verification system that recognizes water stewardship leadership and offers 3rd party certification for three achievement levels: Core, Gold and Platinum. AWS also offers a multi-stakeholder membership, and a training program to enhance people’s capacity and tackle local water challenges.
WWF believes that the AWS Standard can play a key role in helping companies mitigate their water risks and help solve shared water challenges. Such a standard can help companies reduce costs, enhance their brands, and create more stable operations. More than this, the AWS Standard, when combined with certification, can provide assurance to interested parties (e.g., investors) that companies are responsibly acting to mitigate their water risks.

For communities, the AWS Standard helps ensure the availability of clean freshwater, safeguard culturally important water areas and support good governance of water resources.

For the environment, the AWS Standard helps deliver not only the quantity and quality of water necessary for species and habitats to thrive, but helps to improve the status of important freshwater areas like wetlands.

Given these benefits, WWF is working throughout the world with AWS, corporate partners, communities, local civil society groups and governments to deliver responsible, globally-consistent water stewardship. Join WWF and other globally-leading organizations and demonstrate your water stewardship leadership by engaging with the Alliance for Water Stewardship.

"Through our work with WWF and AWS, we are expanding our reach beyond our operations and customers to advance sustainable water management practices around the world." – Doug Baker, CEO, Ecolab

"The AWS Standard will enable companies to better assess their performance against a defined set of principles, identify opportunities for improvement and take collaborative steps to improve their water use." – Carlo Galli, Nestlé

For information, visit the Water Stewardship site, panda.org, or the AWS site.