Embedding
PROJECT

WATER

Water Management and Stewardship

A GETTING STARTED GUIDE

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A GETTING STARTED GUIDE

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

This guide is part of our series of Getting Started Guides that supports your company to develop an embedded sustainability strategy. Each guide tackles a specific sustainability sub-issue and explores what your company needs to do to support the resilience of the environmental and social systems around you.

In each guide, we address relevant trends, system thresholds, key concepts, key actors, and key resources. We also offer guidance on how to address the impacts of decisions and activities in your operations and value chains as well as developing credible goals and outlining key corporate actions and internal targets that can help to provide clarity on the work ahead.

We recommend you read the first guide in the series, Getting Started Guides: An Introduction, which explains our overall approach and the value of setting a clear strategy anchored in your company's most material issues. It also explains how you can leverage process-based interim targets to clearly outline and track the specific actions that your company needs to take to achieve its high-level goals.

A complete list of focus areas and sub-issues can be found in our guide Scan: A Comprehensive List of Sustainability Issues for Companies.

This guidebook addresses ***Water Management and Stewardship***, which is part of the broader sustainability issue topic of Water.

Note: The issue topic of water is addressed over four separate guides:

This guide, ***Water Management and Stewardship: A Getting Started Guide***, explains the water management – water stewardship continuum and how this continuum of action informs a credible water strategy. It provides a high-level overview of the current state of water, including social and environmental components; introduces the concept of water catchments that underpin the context in which action is taken; and explains how companies move between water management and stewardship approaches based on the contexts where they and their value chain partners operate.

Water Quantity: A Getting Started Guide addresses supporting water balance through management and stewardship.

Water Quality: A Getting Started Guide addresses supporting water quality through management and stewardship.

The upcoming series of guidebooks on Rights and Resilience in Communities will include ***Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene: A Getting Started Guide***, which will cover water, sanitation and hygiene within the context of supporting community wellbeing.

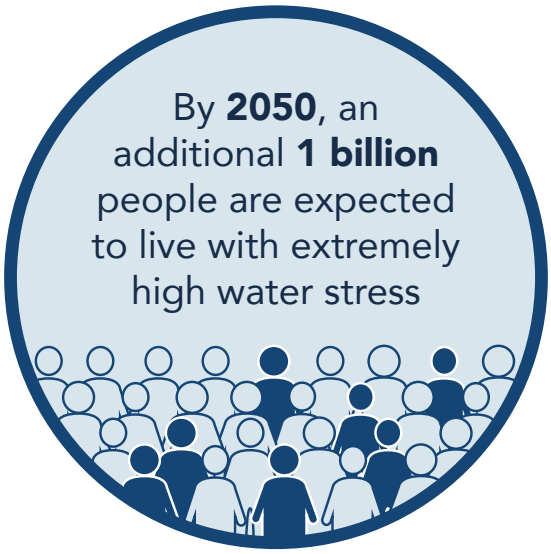
1 SETTING THE STAGE – THE NEED FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

Water has many dimensions of value, playing a significant role in the wellbeing of ecological, economic, and social systems around the world. Crucially, it is a shared resource – its many benefits, uses, and services need to be managed and responsibly allocated across a wide range of needs. That is why the UN recognises that every person has a fundamental right to "sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible, and affordable water".

And yet, around the world, water-related risks and crises are growing, shaped by intertwined challenges of water scarcity, extreme weather events such as floods and droughts, declining water quality, and significant losses of water-related ecosystems. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) reveals that nearly 50% of the world's wetlands have been destroyed resulting in negative impacts on ecosystem services, including water filtration, storm protection, flood control and recreation. Water scarcity is altering essential freshwater systems, affecting biodiversity and soil. Water pollution is harming the health of ecosystems, with current urban, agricultural, and industrial approaches to handling water contributing to harmful algal blooms that destroy essential aquatic ecosystems.

Climate change is worsening these impacts, impacting the hydrologicalal cycle, shrinking glaciers, rising sea levels, and increasing the frequency and intensity of floods and droughts. Higher water temperatures are also eroding water quality by exacerbating water pollution, particularly the accumulation of pathogens and pesticides in water systems.

These challenges to water systems have dire social consequences. Currently, 4 billion people live under conditions of severe water scarcity at least one month of each year and half a billion people experience it year-round. And at current rates of consumption, this is only expected to worsen. Half of the world's population could be living in areas experiencing water scarcity as soon as 2025, and 700 million people are projected to be displaced due to water unavailability by 2030.



Adapted from World Resources Institute

These impacts on water availability and water quality are not felt equally around the world or within societies. Globally, water insecurity has disproportionate impacts on vulnerable and marginalised communities, Indigenous Peoples, and women and children. Unfortunately, climate change, economic development, and population growth all threaten to widen existing inequalities in access to water. By 2030, global freshwater demand is predicted to exceed supply by 40% based on a business-as-usual scenario.

With these growing pressures on water, businesses also face key physical, reputational, and regulatory water risks. The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) explains that "knowing and managing [water] risk[s] can protect a business from significant and unforeseen costs caused by quantity and quality issues, which could also restrict business growth and important socio-economic benefits. In addition to protection from physical risk, good water stewardship can protect an organization from regulatory breaches and negative reputational impacts, as well as offer the potential for positive reputational impact and generation of a net benefit to nature and society."

While companies need to understand their water risks, they also have a responsibility to take urgent action to address their impacts on water resources. Organisations need to become responsible water stewards to ensure that their operations and value chains are not unduly compounding issues and that they are doing their part to ensure their resilience. This means understanding the water risks in catchments where they operate along with their use and impacts, understanding when to prioritise water management and when to invest in water stewardship where they operate, and taking appropriate action to support the resilience of water systems.

2 TAKING ACTION: MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

As outlined by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), corporate approaches to prioritising action on water can be captured on a continuum from water management to water stewardship:

Water resources management, as defined by the World Bank, is "the process of planning, developing, and managing water resources, in terms of both water quantity and quality, across all water uses."

Water stewardship, as defined by the Alliance for Water Stewardship, is 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. Good water stewards understand their own water use, catchment context and shared concerns in terms of water governance; water balance; water quality; important water-related areas; water, sanitation and hygiene, and then engage in meaningful individual and collective actions that benefit people, the economy, and nature."

Water management and water stewardship can be viewed both as a maturity scale for water strategies and as complementing practices and approaches.

Determining whether to use a water management approach versus a water stewardship approach – or where to begin maturing your water strategy from a management to stewardship approach – is based on your understanding and prioritisation of company impacts and your understanding of the water risk in the catchment(s) where you (or your value chain partners) operate. (To learn more about catchments, see the key concepts section below.)

At early stages of their water stewardship journey, companies often focus on water stress and scarcity due to the limited availability of data and their own limited understanding of the issue. Yet, it is crucial for businesses to understand and prioritise based on a broader range of water risks, including water quality, water governance, and the health of important water-related areas, alongside water stress.

The water stewardship ladder, developed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF), can offer a visual for understanding how and when companies might progress from a focus on water management to a more engaged approach to water stewardship.

Adapted from World Wildlife Fund

CONSIDERATIONS AT THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

As you consider how water factors into your corporate strategy, it is important to understand the fundamentally local nature of water and that water is a shared resource. Your strategy needs to consider the external water context in which your company and your value chain partners operate. By identifying the most strategically relevant water-related challenges that your business faces across it value chain, you will be better able to strategically focus your internal resources to create value for your business, your customers, your value chain partners, communities, and the freshwater ecosystems that we all rely on.

Your organisation's water strategy should recognise that water is a shared resource, of which your organisation is a temporary custodian; that water has significant value and uses for other parties outside of your organisation; and that you bear responsibility to the other parties impacted by your management of this resource.

CONSIDERATIONS AT THE CATCHMENT AND SITE LEVEL

Your strategy needs to be operationalised on a site-by-site basis. Each site and catchment faces a unique context and will often require different approaches to tackle the relevant water risks and issues.

In sites and catchments that experience lower water risk and where your business does not have significant impacts, a robust water management approach may be sufficient. This will allow your business to purposefully allocate resources where the need for action is greatest.

In contrast, sites and catchments that face greater water risk (particularly when company impacts contribute significantly to this state) will need to be approached from a stewardship perspective that emphasises the need for best water management practice and robust collective action. These sites and catchments will require immediate water management action to address the negative impacts of the business, as well as external collaboration to address broader catchment-level issues related to water scarcity, access, quality, and more.

Note: *Sustainability issues are generally systemic issues, because they are deeply interconnected and rooted in complex environmental, social, and economic systems. In these guides, a system threshold is defined as the point at which the resilience of an environmental, social, or economic system becomes compromised. This occurs when the total impacts imposed on the system exceed its capacity to assimilate those impacts.*

SYSTEM THRESHOLD

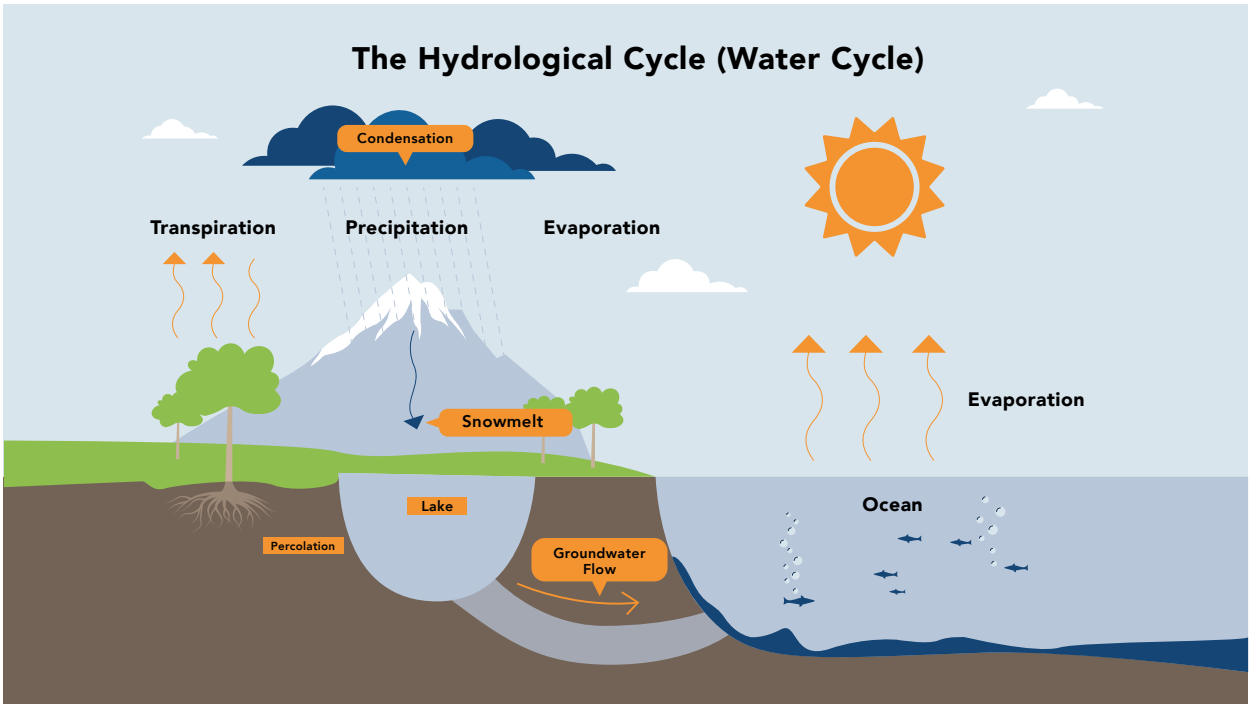
Water is a crucial shared resource, and the resilience of water systems relies on collaborative work to tackle complex challenges that impact the resources we all rely upon. Companies cannot continue to use water in ways that erode the resilience of water systems and restrict the equitable use of shared water resources by communities and other actors. Businesses need to understand their water-related risks and impacts, responsibly manage their own water use, and in catchments that face water challenges, collaborate with communities and governments to support the responsible governance of shared water resources.

KEY TOPICS ASSOCIATED WITH WATER MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

- Water risk
- Water management
- Water stewardship
- Integrated water resources management
- Water governance
- Rights related to water
- Important water-related areas
- Water access, including for community, cultural, and navigation purposes

3 KEY CONCEPTS IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

Understanding the hydrological cycle is crucial to your understanding of current and future stresses and shocks to water systems, both at the strategic and site level. The hydrological cycle outlines the circulation of water through the Earth's natural systems:

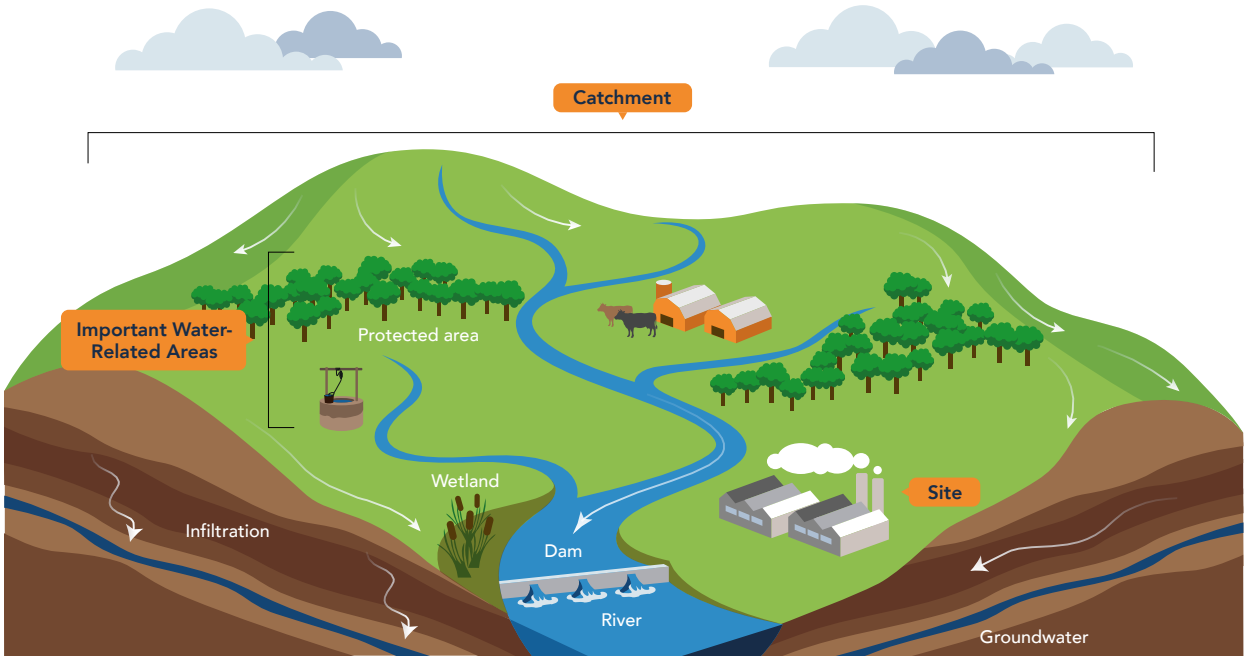


As your water strategy will be underpinned by context, it is also important to define and understand commonly used terms that define the boundaries of action.

A ***catchment***, as defined by the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), is the "geographical zone in which water is captured, flows through, and eventually discharges at one or more points. The concept includes both surface water catchment and groundwater catchment." The terms watershed, basin, and river basin are often used interchangeably with catchment.

An ***Important Water-Related Area (IWRA)***, as defined by AWS, is "an area or feature of high value for humans or nature from an environmental, community or cultural perspective. In addition to formally recognised conservation areas, it includes such features as water wells and springs used for drinking water and features of cultural significance."

A ***site***, as defined by AWS, is "the physical area over which the implementing organization owns or manages land and carries out its principal activities. […] Where the organization operates its own water sources and/or wastewater plant, these should be considered part of the 'site'."



Sustainable water governance underpins water stewardship approaches. Many companies may not be ready to engage at this level when they begin their water strategy – however, understanding what it entails can provide insights into how companies may ultimately mature their practices depending on the needs of the catchment(s) where they operate.

Water governance, as defined by the CEO Water Mandate, is the "political, social, economic, and administrative systems that are in place and which — directly or indirectly — affect the use, development, and management of water resources and the delivery of water service at all levels of society. 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."

Furthermore, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) describes ***sustainable water governance*** as requiring "equitable and transparent management of all water resources within a defined area, ideally an entire basin or catchment. Governance lays out a framework of processes and decision making on how water is managed, and includes aspects of access, rights, policy and claims."

As noted above, a key principle involves adjusting the magnitude of response to align with the magnitude of the challenges faced. Businesses need to calibrate their actions to the water context(s) where they operate, and their approach may (and likely should) vary from catchment to catchment. In catchments facing low water risk, an internally focused water management approach of keeping your house in order through attention to water efficiency and water quality may be sufficient and most appropriate. In contrast, when operating in catchments facing greater water risk, a more collaborative and externally facing approach to water stewardship is likely warranted.

Additional terms and definitions:

Water risk: The possibility of an entity experiencing a water-related challenge (e.g., water scarcity, water stress, flooding, infrastructure decay, drought). The extent of risk is a function of the likelihood of a specific challenge occurring and the severity of the challenge's impact. The severity of impact itself depends on the intensity of the challenge, as well as the vulnerability of the actor.

Water risk is experienced differently by every sector of society and the organisations within them and thus is defined and interpreted differently (even when they experience the same degree of water-related challenges). That notwithstanding, many water-related challenges create risk for many different sectors and organisations simultaneously.

Water risk for businesses: The ways in which water-related challenges potentially undermine business viability. It is commonly categorised into three inter-related types:

- Physical: Having too little water, too much water, water that is unfit for use, or inaccessible water.
- Regulatory: Changing, ineffective, or poorly-implemented public water policy and/or regulations.
- Reputational: Stakeholder perceptions that a company does not conduct business in a sustainable or responsible fashion with respect to water.

Water challenges: Water-related issues that are shared by both corporate actors and other stakeholders within a water catchment. They lend themselves to being addressed in collaborative ways to the benefit of multiple stakeholders and are often called shared water challenges.

Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM): A process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land, and related resources in order to maximise economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment. Sustainable Development Goal 6.5 is focused on the implementation of IWRM by countries.

The four components of an IWRM approach are:

- An enabling environment of policies, laws, and plans for sustainable water resource development and management.
- Institutional arrangements through which to put into practice the policies, strategies, and legislation.
- Management instruments such as data collection and assessments and instruments for water allocation that facilitate better decisions.
- Financing for water infrastructure and ongoing costs of water resources management.

Water balance: Sustainable water balance ensures adequate availability for all users—including nature—at all times. It addresses the amount and timing of water use, including whether the volumes withdrawn, consumed, and returned are sustainable relative to renewable supplies.

Water security: The capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socioeconomic development; for ensuring protection against waterborne pollution and water-related disasters; and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability.

Important water areas: Certain areas of every basin are particularly important for local stakeholders and the ecosystem services that are provided, including those for cultural, spirit, recreational, economic, and biodiversity. These are often riparian areas, vernal pools critical for breeding of important aquatic species, aquifer recharge zones, water-related sites of religious significance, wetlands that provide water purification services, or drinking water reservoirs. These areas should be protected, carefully managed, and restored as necessary.

4 KEY PLAYERS IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is a global membership collaboration that contributes to the sustainability of water resources through the adoption of a universal framework for the sustainable use of water – the International Water Stewardship Standard. The framework helps water users to understand their impacts and offers guidance to achieve good water stewardship practices.

WORLD WILDLIFE FUND

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) engages with businesses on water stewardship, releasing resources and collaborating with companies to integrate water stewardship. The WWF also fosters collaboration between companies, the public sector, and civil society to support transformational change.

CEO WATER MANDATE

The CEO Water Mandate is a commitment platform for business leaders and learners to advance water stewardship, in partnership with the United Nations, governments, civil society, and other stakeholders. The Mandate develops tools and resources, convenes stakeholders, and facilitates partnerships and collective actions that improve conditions in at-risk water systems around the world.

5 COMMITTING TO TAKE ACTION – MID- AND LONG-TERM GOALS

The mid- and long-term commitments that your organisation elects to make related to ***Water Management and Stewardship*** should be based on your identified priorities, areas of greatest impact, and your capacity to undertake the work required. It is important to note that this section does not provide all possible mid- and long-term goals related to this issue, but rather a sample of the goals that were most frequently adopted by companies in our research.

Common mid- and long-term goals and/or commitments on ***Water Management and Stewardship*** include variations of the following:

Long-term goal: Collaborate for positive change in the status of [X] prioritised catchment(s) where we operate by 20[XX]

- Contribute $[X] to locally led water resiliency projects by 20[XX].
- Lend expertise to locally led water resiliency projects, where feasible and relevant.
- Collaborate with governments and other institutions to contribute to effective and equitable local water resource planning and management in the catchment(s) where we operate.
- Engage in advocacy for water policy issues for the catchment(s) where we operate.
- Support the monitoring and evaluation of the state of catchment(s) and important water related areas and/or water sources on site(s).

Long-term goal: Work within an informed understanding of ecological limits, regional issues and the collective demands on water to achieve fair use of water by 20[XX]

- Contribute to the ability of communities and other local water users to enjoy a balance between the social, economic, and recreational and cultural benefits of water resources.

While some companies use the term "net positive water" we caution against the term. While well intended, net positive water targets tend to narrow the focus to water replenishment leading to, for instance, high-level water balances that do not adequately account for the seasonality of water return. Net positive water commitments can also direct attention away from collective action to address key components of shared water challenges in a catchment. This WWF Guidance Note on Net Positive Water further explains some of the drawbacks of the concept of "net positive water" and provides recommendations for how to frame credible commitments and targets.

Are you setting new goals or interested in benchmarking your goals against leading practice? Explore our Sustainability Goals Database for more mid- and long-term goals on Water Management and Stewardship.

6 HOW TO GET THERE – PROCESS-BASED INTERIM TARGETS

Note: *The following proposed timelines are only for guidance and are based on the pace outlined by other companies. The timeframe for actions and work for each step needs to be embedded in your organisational context, which may require different time allocations. While some the work outlined here draws upon the AWS Standard 2.0, companies seeking to align with AWS expectations should consult the latest version of the standard to ensure compliance.*

The sequence outlined below assumes that your company has significant impacts on water within its direct operations and that you will begin by learning and taking action to get your own house in order prior to engaging with your value chain. Whereas, companies with limited direct impacts, where the majority of their water impacts reside within their value chain, may (and likely should) opt to engage with value chain partners at a much earlier stage.

YEAR 1: UNDERTAKE BASIN WATER RISK ASSESSMENTS TO IDENTIFY PRIORITY CATCHMENTS IN YOUR OPERATIONS, VALUE CHAIN, AND INVESTMENTS

Undertake high-level water risk assessments to identify where water is crucially interlinked with your operations, value chains, and investments; water-related impacts and dependencies; and the magnitude of potential water issues. Many companies employ tools such as the WWF Water Risk Filter (WRF), which is a free, practical online tool that helps companies and investors to assess both operational and basin water risks to identify water risk hotspots. Other approaches, such as water footprinting, can also help you understand how water interacts with your operations and value chains.

Leverage the data gathered to identify the extent to which your company has water-related impacts in your operations and/or value chain and to identify priority catchment(s) and site(s) for action. Define which catchment(s) and site(s) will require a water management approach and which sites require a more comprehensive water stewardship approach. This ensures that your company's attention and resources will be allocated to the catchment(s) and site(s) with the greatest risks and impacts.

This understanding of your priority catchments will determine where to focus resources and work in your operations and value chains, guiding all the work at later stages.

Examples of process-based targets for Year 1:

- By 20[XX], we will undertake basin water risk assessments to identify priority catchment(s) in our operations, value chain, and investments.
- By 20[XX], we will identify and understand rights related to water in priority catchment(s).

YEAR 2: GATHER WATER-RELATED DATA FOR THE PRIORITY CATCHMENT(S) WHERE YOU OPERATE AND UNDERSTAND CURRENT AND FUTURE SHARED WATER CHALLENGES

Begin to gather water-related data for the identified priority catchment(s) where you operate, including existing catchment management plans, policies, and initiatives, as well as water-related infrastructure. Also identify Important Water-Related Areas within the catchment(s) and their state. Leverage the collected catchment-level data to understand current shared water challenges in the priority catchments you have identified – this can include water-related issues already identified by communities and local authorities. Beyond current challenges, analyse trends to identify future water challenges, where feasible, including community priorities for the desired future state of shared water resources. This may require additional work, such as a social impact assessment focused on water, to understand how your organisation's actions may impact social crises associated with water.

YEAR 2: IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES

Identify best practice within your industry, including best practice approaches and technologies for water balance and water quality – much of this work will be done concurrently with the work outlined within the ***Water Quantity: A Getting Started Guide*** and ***Water Quality: A Getting Started Guide.*** Explore the components of international standards, such as the AWS Standard. Also look towards relevant catchment best practice, where available, for contextual guidance on specific issues and collective action. Catalogue and benchmark your current approaches against identified best practice to identify where your company may have room to improve.

Examples of process-based targets for Year 2:

- By 20[XX], we will gather water-related data for [X] priority catchment(s) where we operate.
- By 20[XX], we will identify current and future shared water challenges within the priority catchment(s) where we operate.
- By 20[XX], we will identify industry and/or catchment-specific best practice.
- By 20[XX], we will benchmark our current approach against identified best practice.

YEAR 3:SET TARGETS AND DEVELOP A WATER STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY

Develop targets and strategies to tackle water issues within your operations. Embed the principles of water stewardship into strategic level policies, practices, and decision-making to ensure water stewardship is at the core of your water strategy. Action will vary greatly based on the local context and impacts identified in specific catchments – action plans should be focused on identified priority catchments where your company has the highest impacts and work to address the specific challenges faced by each location as well as community priorities for shared water resources. Coordinate efforts with existing public-sector and community action plans or initiatives to ensure you are not duplicating efforts.

Further guidance on developing action plans to address water quantity and quality can be found in ***Water Quantity: A Getting Started Guide*** and ***Water Quality: A Getting Started Guide*** respectively.

CASE STUDY: Intel's water stewardship strategy and goals

Understanding that many of their facilities are water-intensive and are situated in water scarce regions, Intel became the first large technology company to adopt a water stewardship strategy and set targets. The company commits to achieving net positive water use by 2030, conserving 60 billion gallons of water, collaborating to restore more freshwater than they consume globally, and creating technology solutions to benefit how others use and conserve water.

YEAR 3:DEVELOP A PUBLIC POSITION ON WATER

Articulate a clear and credible position on water stewardship to align your organisation's intent and purpose. There is growing pressure on companies to acknowledge and act on water-related risks – it is important to acknowledge your understanding of the issue and the context in which you operate; clarify your role; and outline clear commitments and expectations. A public position statement can be an important pathway to clarify the role water stewardship plays in your organisation and communicate its importance.

YEAR 3:DEFINE SCOPE AND GATHER WATER-RELATED DATA FOR YOUR SITE(S)

To begin taking action within your direct operations, identify the physical scope for your company's water stewardship efforts – the Alliance for Water Stewardship Standard defines this to include: the operational boundaries for the site(s); the water source(s) from which the site(s) use water, the discharge point(s), water-related infrastructure owned or managed by the company, and catchment(s) that sites rely upon.

Gather data such as existing water policies and strategies, Important Water-Related Areas on the site(s) and their current state, annual water-related costs for the site(s), the water-related social, cultural, environmental, and/or economic value generated by the site(s), where possible. Also gather data on site water balance, water quality of water sources, and sources of pollution - this can include installing water metering technology, conducting water quantity and quality assessments, and understanding water intensity. Much of this work will be done concurrently with the work outlined within the ***Water Quantity: A Getting Started Guide*** and ***Water Quality: A Getting Started Guide***. Use this data to establish baselines to ground your efforts and quantify current trends.

Examples of process-based targets for Year 3:

- By 20[XX], we will develop a water stewardship strategy.
- By 20[XX], we will set targets related to water stewardship at relevant sites and catchments.
- By 20[XX], we will develop a position statement outlining our approach to water management and stewardship.
- By 20[XX], we will define the physical water-related scope of our site(s).
- By 20[XX], we will gather water-related data for [X] sites.
- By 20[XX], we will establish water-related baselines for our operations.

YEAR 4: ENGAGE IN WATER STEWARDSHIP IN YOUR VALUE CHAIN

Work with suppliers to establish baselines for water quantity and quality within your value chain. Leverage and share learnings from navigating the water stewardship journey within your operations. Identify key partners that can support the work needed, engage your value chain in conversations about good water management and stewardship, and collaboratively develop an action plan.
Focus on your identified priority catchments and determine the best ways to support preservation or restoration plans for stressed watersheds. Leverage nature-based solutions where relevant, and explore other mitigation measures such as replenishment.

YEAR 4: ENGAGE IN COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP

Partnerships and collective efforts are key to supporting systemic change for water stewardship. Identify sector-specific and multi-sectoral collaborations working on water issues with whom you can partner to further enhance your strategy and scale impact. This should also include engaging with local efforts related to the priority catchment(s) where you (or your key suppliers) operate – for example, supporting efforts of local groups or organisations to improve water availability or quality in your key catchment(s) through funding and/or providing expertise and engaging in advocacy for policies that will improve the status of the catchment.

Also explore linkages between water issues and climate and nature. These issues are inextricably interlinked and aligning on actions that scale positive impacts on overlapping issues can be an important way to support broader change.

CASE STUDY: The Water Resilience Coalition

The Water Resilience Coalition, an industry-driven initiative of the CEO Water Mandate between the UN Global Compact and the Pacific Institute, aims to reduce water stress and achieve net positive water impact in 150 water-stressed basins around the world by 2050. It fosters collaboration to scale action on water crises, spurring industry-wide changes to support water resilience across value chains and communities.

Examples of process-based targets for Year 4:

- By 20[XX], we will work with our suppliers to establish a baseline for water quantity and quality in our value chain.
- By 20[XX], we will identify partners in the water sector to work with to establish roadmaps to address water risk, usage, and quality in our value chain.
- By 20[XX], we will identify industry, multi-sector, and/or local partners with whom we can collaborate to support systemic change to address shared water challenges.

RESOURCES

GUIDANCE

UNDERSTANDING WATER STEWARDSHIP

The Global Assessment of Private Sector Impacts on Water is a comprehensive report from Ceres outlining how industry practices are driving critical threats to global freshwater systems.

Unpacking Water Governance: A Framework for Practitioners from the Stockholm International Water Institute can help you better understand water governance and how to improve it. Although it is an academic paper, the paper outlines a practical framework for unpacking water governance. The authors describe eight core governance functions and their application to different water issues. They then define a set of good governance attributes and outcomes.

TAKING ACTION ON WATER STEWARDSHIP

Putting Water Strategy into Context by the WWF was created to help businesses begin the process of embedding science-based water targets into their operations and strategy. It details six shifts that corporations need to make in the development of their water strategies, and introduces a four-step approach to facilitate this change: 1) assess the foundational components that a water strategy needs to account for, such as risks, opportunities, and corporate monitoring and evaluation criterion; 2) prioritise the areas of strategic relevance relating to inherent and residual water-related risks and/or opportunities; 3) define the context and the related actions that will be focused upon; and 4) set goals and targets that are aligned with and informed by the context.

The world's water resources are under growing pressure, and a growing number of companies are setting catchment-based water targets to help secure water for the growing needs of all users. If your company is ready to address its water impact from a contextual perspective, Setting Site Water Targets Informed by Catchment Context: A Guide for Companies is an excellent starting point. The guide explains fundamental definitions; explains the elements most crucial for setting site water targets that reflect the catchment context; and includes a "stoplight" system for early, high-level assessment of water challenges.

Water Stewardship Maturity Framework from the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) can help you understand how water stewardships applies to the extractives sector. It features a maturity model that outlines five key elements of water stewardship: governance and strategy, risks and opportunities, business planning integration, measurement, and reporting. Within each element there is a set of practices grouped into three levels of maturity (basic, advanced, and leading), enabling you to assess your maturity and identify opportunities to improve. The framework is also aligned with external guidance such as the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

Advancing Water Stewardship Through Supplier Collaboration, a guide developed by WWF, AstraZeneca, and the Embedding Project, can help you to advance credible water action by addressing material impacts on water across your full value chain.

TOOLS

The Water Risk Filter uses 32 annually updated, peer reviewed data layers alongside a risk questionnaire to help you explore, understand, prioritise, and respond to water risks at specific sites. The risk filter suite also includes various reports that may help you understand key water issues.

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) Standard will help you to understand your water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently for sustainable water management and stewardship within a catchment context.

Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance from the OECD was created to support governments and stakeholders in addressing challenges and pressures from megatrends on water demand and supply through more effective governance and institutions. It features two tools to strengthen water policies: the OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework, which is a voluntary self-assessment tool, and 50+ practices that illustrate the OECD Principles on Water Governance. The self-assessment tool was created to support multi-stakeholder dialogue on the performance of water governance systems and will be particularly beneficial to corporations. It takes a contextual, place-based approach that will help you to measure, assess, and take action on water-related goals.

OECD Water Governance Indicator Framework is based on the OECD report Implementing the OECD Principles on Water Governance and was created to support the implementation of the principles. The framework is composed of 36 water governance indicators (input and process) and a checklist containing 100+questions on water governance. It also includes a self-assessment toolkit that can help you to assess the state of play of water governance policy frameworks, institutions, and instruments, as well as their needed improvements over time.

Explore more resources on water management and stewardship here.

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