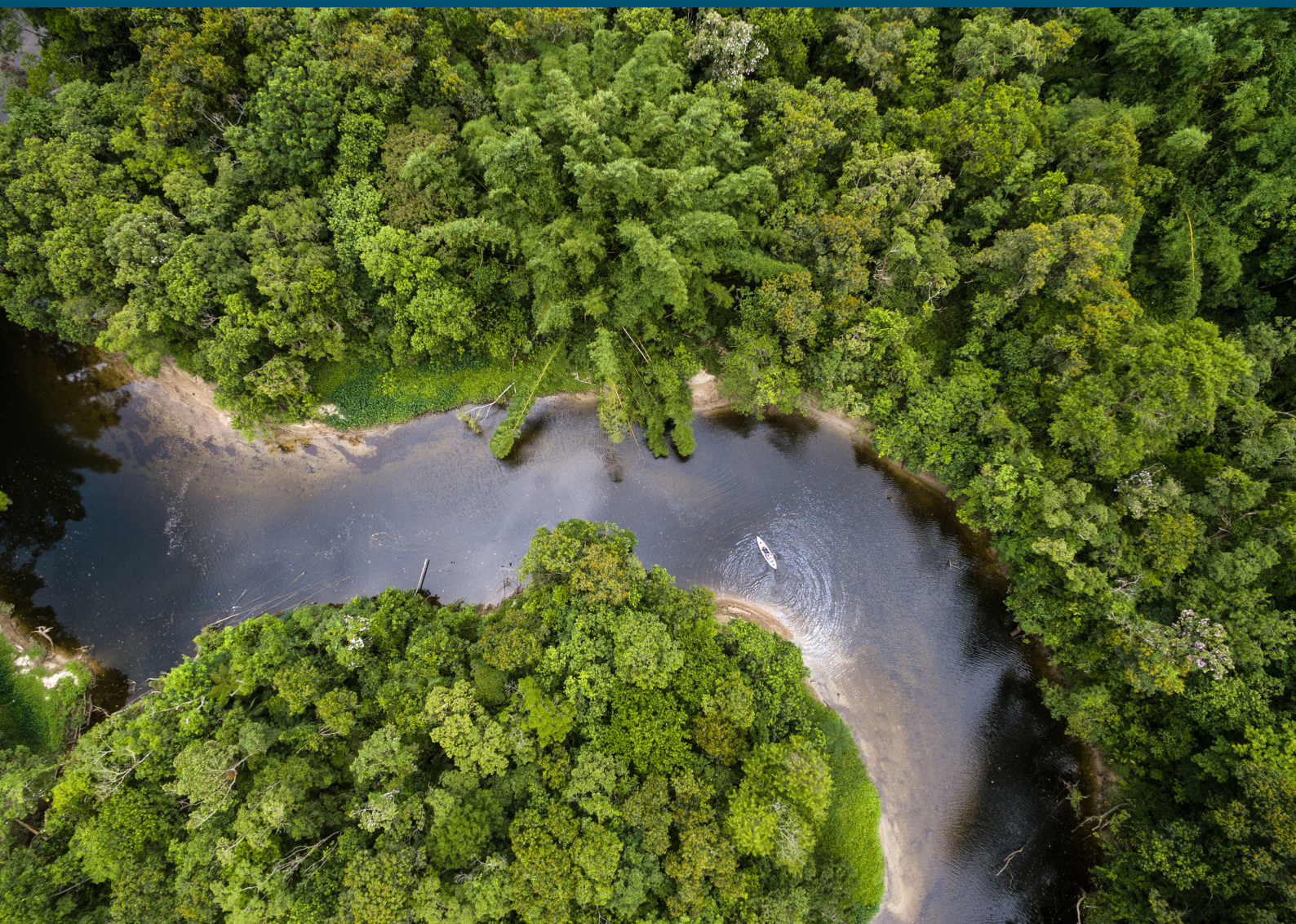
ALLIANCE FOR
WATER STEWARDSHIP

IGNITING AND NURTURING WATER STEWARDSHIP

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP (AWS)

PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2021



CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AWS	Alliance for Water Stewardship
CAB	Conformity Assessment Body
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
GPS	Global Positioning System
ISEAL	International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling Alliance
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals (of the United Nations)
SCIO	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alliance for Water Stewardship's (AWS) vision 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 'Theory of Change' articulates how we see our work bringing about change in the world at scale and driving uptake of good water stewardship practices. It provides the basis for the Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system we have developed to measure the results of our work and progress toward our vision.

This is our second annual Performance Monitoring Report. It presents the 2021 monitoring data on the AWS Standard System, covering Membership, Certification, Assurance and Training. It presents the scope and scale of AWS in 2021 and provides important updates on our activities.

AWS has developed a set of 28 M&E Indicators[1]. This report covers 11 indicators across the three levels, as described below:

i. AWS Standard System Level (SSL) – There are ten SSL indicators, nine of which are covered in this report.

ii. AWS Site Level (SL) – There are ten SL indicators, one of which is included in this report.

iii. AWS Catchment Level (CL) – There are eight CL indicators, one of which is included in this report.

Our story during 2021 is one of growth and development. AWS recorded increases across Membership, Certification and Training, as shown by our performance against key indicators, outlined below.

During 2021:

- We learned the AWS system is resilient despite changes necessitated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, AWS continued to grow, with increases in the number of Members, certified sites and individuals trained in AWS water stewardship.
- We built momentum in creating 'clusters' of AWS certified sites in the same catchments, driven by the increased uptake of group and multi-site certification.
- We demonstrated our commitment to continual learning and improvement by transitioning to a new organisational structure, updating our assurance delivery model and launching Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS), the new mission-driven assurance provider for the AWS System. All these developments were significant undertakings that will ultimately enable us to pursue our mission more effectively.

Our plans for the coming year include:

- Mapping of all AWS sites
- Providing more real time M&E reporting
- Developing a research agenda
- Commissioning the first independent impact evaluation of the AWS System
- Understanding unintended impacts of the System
- Continuing to build research partnerships.

155
MEMBERS
(+5% over 2020)

209
CERTIFIED SITES ACROSS 51 COUNTRIES
(+38% over 2020)

160
REGISTERED SITES

22 MEMBERS
WITH COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENT AND/OR CERTIFY AGAINST THE AWS STANDARD
(+22% over 2020)

275
PROFESSIONALLY CREDENTIALED INDIVIDUALS

227
INDIVIDUALS COMPLETED AWS STANDARD SYSTEM TRAINING IN 2021
(+50% over 2020)

2,762
DOWNLOADS OF THE AWS STANDARD IN 2021

10
CATCHMENTS
WITH MORE THAN ONE AWS CERTIFIED SITE

[1] See https://a4ws.org/download/aws-me-indicator-framework-summary/

INTRODUCTION TO AWS

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is two things: a global Membership collaboration and a sustainability standard for robust, credible water stewardship. AWS Members unite behind a shared definition of water stewardship, and a common approach – the International Water Stewardship Standard, or AWS Standard – that drives, recognises and rewards good water stewardship performance. Figure 1 illustrates the five steps and five outcomes of the AWS Standard V2.0.

AWS defines water stewardship as the use of water that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that includes both site and catchment-based actions.

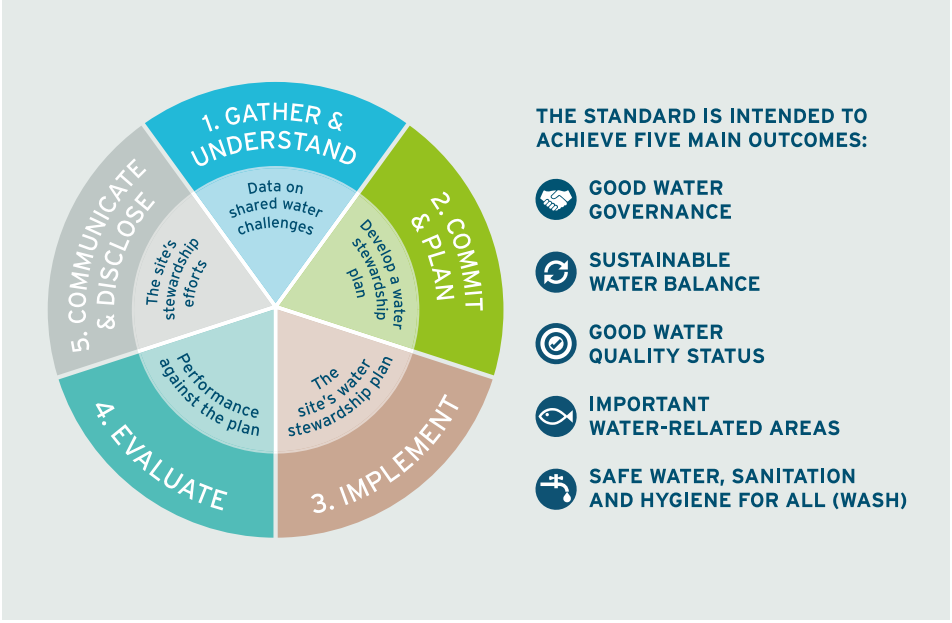


Figure 1: The Five Steps and Five Outcomes of the AWS Standard System

AWS works on three fundamental building blocks of water stewardship:

1. The AWS Standard is globally recognised and respected as defining best practice in collaborative and catchment-focused water use.
2. The AWS Standard is widely used by organisations to help them address water risks and seize opportunities to build a sustainable future.
3. Robust certification and multi-stakeholder processes ensure that the AWS Standard provides a 'safe place' to strengthen relationships and build trust between diverse water users.

AWS Membership connects progressive organisations and different industry sectors in advancing water stewardship. AWS Members include businesses, civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the public sector. Membership is open to any organisation, from any sector, that shares our aim of the responsible use of freshwater. It enables precompetitive collaborations to flourish at different levels.

Organisations join AWS to:

- Access and be part of a global network at the forefront of water stewardship and draw upon experience from peers, water-relevant initiatives and the AWS team.
- Strengthen their water stewardship practices through access to valuable AWS resources, including access for all staff to the AWS Tools Hub, home to the E-Standard & Guidance, webinar recordings, on-demand Online Learning Modules and all the latest AWS innovations.
- Enhance their credibility and performance on water-related goals and sustainability ambitions, through engagement with AWS, our Membership, partners and wider stakeholders.

The AWS Strategy is based on three strategic goals: Influence, Inclusion and Impact. It focuses on strengthening and deepening the AWS System across sectoral engagement in four priority industry sectors while remaining agile and responsive to demand in other sectors. This focus allows AWS to drive increased international commitments and adoption of water stewardship.

Our four priority sectors are:

- Agricultural Supply Chains
- Food and Beverage Manufacturing
- Microelectronics
- Textiles and Apparel

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF AWS

As of March 2022, AWS has 17 staff under the aegis of AWS SCIO[2] International Secretariat. This includes three Regional and National Coordinators located in Latin America and the Caribbean, India and Pakistan. AWS also works with partner Yayasan Aliansi Wali Sumber Daya Air Indonesia (AWS Indonesia). Information on AWS Staff, Board Members and Technical Committee Members is found at: a4ws.org/about

AWS SCIO is registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCO45894)[3]. Last year, 2021, was the sixth full year of the organisation's operations, having been incorporated in August 2015. AWS SCIO is the scheme owner of the International Water Stewardship Standard (AWS Standard) V2.0.

AWS SCIO is an ISEAL Code Compliant Member[4]. This means that the AWS Standard System has been independently evaluated against ISEAL's Codes of Good Practice[5] – a globally-recognised framework for effective, credible sustainability standard systems. The ISEAL Alliance is the global membership organisation for ambitious, collaborative and transparent sustainability standards systems and initiatives[6].

AWS believes in working together for greater benefit and, as such, holds reciprocal memberships with five other sustainability standard organisations: Better Cotton, Bonsucro, GLOBALG.A.P., Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP) and Textile Exchange; as well as the International Water Association (IWA).

AWS transitioned in 2021 to a more streamlined and cost-effective organisational structure. This new organisational structure will enable us to provide greater value to Members and users of the AWS System, enhance oversight over the integrity of the AWS System and optimise delivery against our global strategy. The new structure has moved us away from a regional approach to focus more on our four priority business sectors: Food and Beverage Manufacturing, Agricultural Supply Chains, Microelectronics and Textiles and Apparel. The new structure is made up of three Business Units: Finance and Operations, Outreach and Engagement and System Integrity.

AWS also updated its assurance delivery model in 2021, central to which was the establishment of Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS – watersas.org) as the mission-driven assurance provider for AWS, thereby aligning the goals of assurance with the goals of the AWS System.

As uptake of AWS grows in the coming years, delivery through an assurance provider that is fully aligned to the goals of AWS will help ensure the credibility of AWS certification, and the value this provides for Members and certified sites. The fundamental architecture of AWS assurance, however, remains otherwise unchanged.

Key benefits include:

- Alignment of AWS assurance provision goals with the mission of AWS
- More robust and effective oversight of assurance processes
- Enhanced training and competence development for auditors and audit teams
- Greater consistency in interpretation and reporting
- Stronger alignment between assurance and monitoring, evaluation and learning
- A new digital platform providing a simplified and improved user experience.

Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS) is the mission-driven assurance provider for the AWS System. WSAS shares our vision of a water-secure world and contributes to the AWS mission by providing credible assurance against the AWS Standard.

[2] Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO)
[3] SCIO https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC045894
[4] For more information visit isealalliance.org
[5] There are three ISEAL Codes of Good Practice: ISEAL Standard-setting Code, ISEAL Assurance Code and ISEAL Impacts Code
[6] This report also fulfils ISEAL Impacts Code Clause 8.3 "Performance Monitoring" and Clause 10.4 "Increased Transparency, Public Access and Engagement"

AIM OF THIS REPORT

This is the second Performance Monitoring Report produced by AWS. Its purpose is threefold: to share progress made in relation to our Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system; to report developments to our stakeholders on the AWS System, M&E insights and learning; and to convey our future plans.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

This report is primarily targeted at AWS Members, Partners, those certifying sites against the AWS Standard and AWS SCIO global staff.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

The AWS organisation operates globally, and the AWS Standard applies to all types of freshwater[7] used by an organisation. It is applicable to any type and size of organisation or industry sector in any location around the world. This report covers our work worldwide.

The majority of data presented in this report covers the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021.

The AWS M&E System, the foundation of this report, has been developed to measure and understand change at three levels: system, site and catchment levels.

[7] The AWS Standard applies to all types of water including surface water, ground water, recycled water, desalinised water (from ocean or brackish sources), precipitation, non-renewable reserves (fossil water), as well as snow and ice.

APPROACH

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Our Monitoring & Evaluation System takes a Theory of Change (ToC) approach. A ToC aims to articulate what impact or change an organisation is hoping to achieve and how its work brings about that change. Using this approach requires standards organisations to make their tacit assumptions explicit to reach consensus with colleagues and key stakeholders about what they are trying to do and why. It is best thought of as a compass rather than a roadmap. It is not a static process but one to be revisited.

In 2019, AWS undertook an organisation-wide consultation process to develop its ToC. This is illustrated by the infographic below and is also available at a4ws.org/impacts

AWS views the development of its ToC as an essential and strategic planning management tool. It identifies several strategies (also called interventions) that can be categorised as primary or systematic.

Readers will appreciate that it is not possible nor advisable to undertake all strategies at once. As tempting as this may sound, it would be too costly to undertake and monitor all the ways in which a standard could potentially operate. Strategies need to be prioritised. Many standards systems spend up to 80%[8] of their time recording, organising and processing data to turn it into information, leaving little time for sense-making and learning. Rather, AWS prioritises Membership, Training and AWS Standard implementation as primary strategies to deliver on its vision and mission.

PUBLIC DATA REPORTING

AWS has made further improvements in making its M&E data publicly available and is moving closer to real-time reporting on our website. The following data and information are posted on the AWS website and updated weekly: total number of valid AWS site certificates[9]; audit and certification reports[10]; total number of AWS registered sites[11]; and total number of professionally credentialed individuals, their names and levels[12].

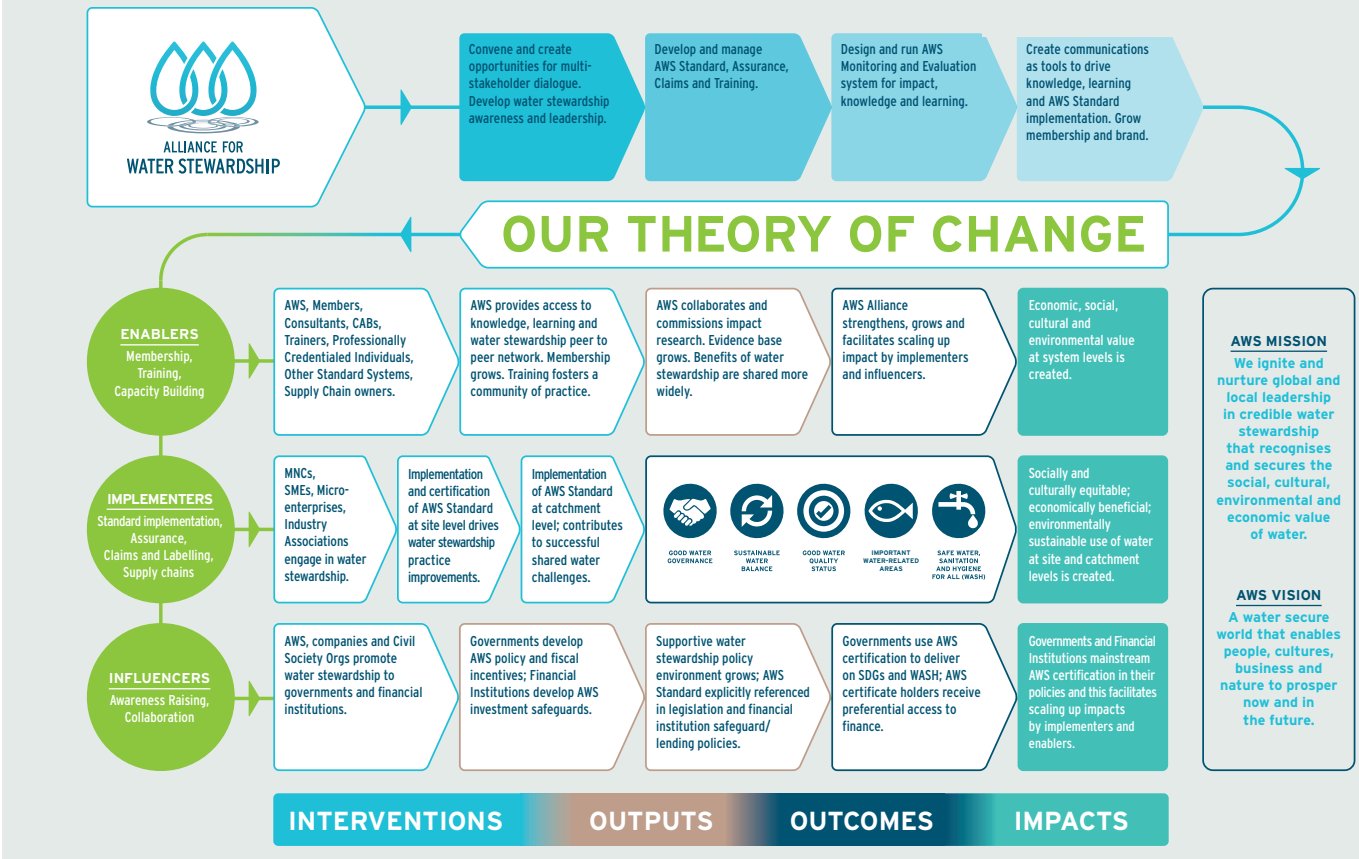
An increasing amount of our M&E data are collected online and automatically uploaded to the AWS Salesforce database, including the site information described above, plus stakeholder announcements for upcoming audits that invite public consultation and input.

BOX 1 A M&E SYSTEM

A Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) system is an ongoing process through which an organisation draws conclusions about its contribution to intended outcomes and impacts. It consists of a set of interconnected functions, processes and activities, including systematic collection of monitoring data on specified indicators and the implementation of outcome and impact evaluations.

BOX 2 AWS THEORY OF CHANGE

The AWS ToC diagram shows three key groups of actors: Enablers, Implementers and Influencers (highlighted as green circles). The 'theory' is that, as each of these key groups set about creating and supporting interventions, outputs and outcomes, the desired positive impacts will be realised in order to deliver on our mission and vision (as seen on the righthand side).



[8] SSSG (2018) Sustainability Standards Specialist Group Newsletter
[9] Valid AWS Site certificates are found here: https://a4ws.org/certification/certified-sites/
[10] Certification and/or Audit Reports are found here: https://a4ws.org/certification/certified-sites/
[11] AWS registered sites are found here: https://a4ws.org/certification/registered-sites/
[12] Our directory of AWS Professional Credentialed Individuals is found here: https://a4ws.org/training/professional-credentialing-directory/


03-5509988
日商輪胎
在地長大
念鄉愛里
莊光禮

M&E SYSTEM

Our M&E System monitors progress toward achieving our vision and mission and evaluates the contribution that the AWS System makes toward achieving long-term positive social, cultural, environmental and/or economic impacts.

AWS monitors its performance and evaluates its contribution to deliver impact to:

- Improve the AWS Standard System and its effectiveness
- Build capacity by learning from experience, not only for the AWS System, but also for sites, Members, Partners and others involved in the System
- Provide accountability to stakeholders and to those who are affected by, and are meant to benefit from, the activities of the AWS System
- Earn credibility through willingness to be open about the results (good or bad) of the AWS System

M&E DATA LEVELS

A Data Collection Pyramid (see Figure 2) helps standard systems to define and communicate about data collection activities. Performance Monitoring data are captured in Level 1 and in part of Level 2 (sampled monitoring).

LEVEL 1

Data that can be collected from all relevant entities, for example, from all Members, all certificate holders or all Professionally Credentialed Individuals.

LEVEL 2

Data collected from a sample of certified entities or other organisations involved in the AWS System (for example, a sample of sites with certificates or a sample of members). If the sample used is representative, Level 2 results can be extrapolated to draw conclusions about the full portfolio of certified entities. Level 2 is useful for collecting information that may be too difficult, time consuming, expensive or sensitive to collect from all certified entities, but is still considered important enough for tracking across the portfolio. Data collection in Level 2 could come through surveys but might also be an add-on module or self-assessment questionnaire applied during the assurance process to a subset of certified entities. Sampling can also be done after data is collected – for example, selecting a sample of audit reports for data entry and further analysis.

LEVEL 3

Level 3 involves more in-depth impact evaluation studies. An impact evaluation is a systematic, objective and in-depth assessment of the medium- or long-term effects; positive or negative, intended or unintended, of the implementation of a standard system. Impact evaluations employ methodologies that are designed to enable the target audience of the evaluation to understand the extent to which an observed change can be attributed to the standard system or another intervention (Adapted from 3ie Impact Evaluation Glossary, 2012 and World Bank).

BOX 3 COMMUNICATING ABOUT IMPACT

AWS is careful about communicating data and information, and aims to do it in a simple and clear way. AWS works to ensure that claims made in reports or statements that it issues about the outcomes and impacts of the AWS Standard System are accurate and linked to actual findings and conclusions from performance monitoring or outcome and impact evaluations. This approach conforms to ISEAL Impacts Code Clause 10.3 "Substantiating Claims".

As a Code Compliant Member of the ISEAL Alliance, AWS defines impact very specifically as: the positive and negative long-term effects resulting from the implementation of a standard system, either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

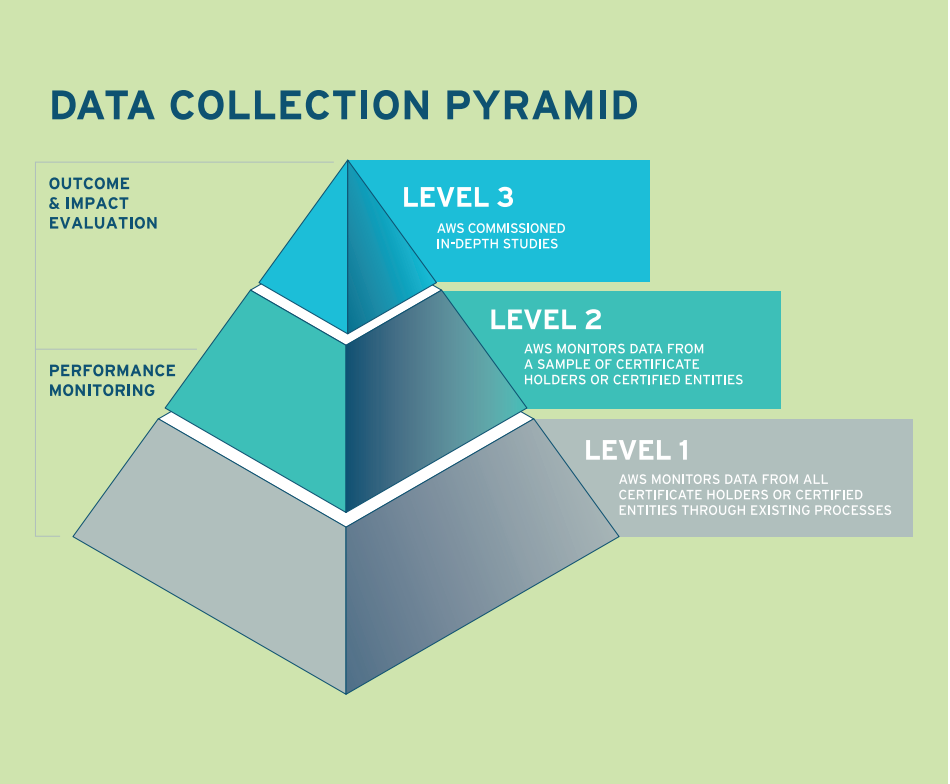


Figure 2: Shows three levels in the Data Collection Pyramid. Adapted from ISEAL Alliance.

M&E INDICATORS

The AWS M&E Indicators form the basis of performance monitoring for the AWS M&E System and this report. The indicators were developed in 2019 through consultation with AWS Staff, AWS Technical Committee Members, AWS Members, AWS Board Members, Regional Coordinators and other water stewardship experts. The indicators were subsequently revised in 2021, partially to reflect changes to the AWS Assurance Model and closer alignment between Assurance and M&E.

AWS has developed a set of 28 M&E Indicators. The full set of M&E Indicators, known as the M&E Indicator Framework, is available at a4ws.org/impacts

This report covers 11 of the indicators across three levels, as described here:

i. AWS Standard System Level (SSL) – There are ten SSL indicators, nine of which are covered in this report.

ii. AWS Site Level (SL) – There are ten SL indicators, one of which is included in this report.

iii. AWS Catchment Level (CL) – There are eight CL indicators, one of which is included in this report.

As we collect an increasing amount of data year-on-year, we will publish annual Performance Monitoring Reports that cover a greater proportion of the indicators, particularly at the site and catchment levels. The new AWS Assurance Model, namely the appointment of WSAS as the mission-driven assurance provider for the AWS System, presents an opportunity to collect a greater amount of data at the site and catchment levels through AWS assurance processes. See Box 4.

BOX 4 ALIGNING AWS M&E SYSTEM WITH ASSURANCE PILOT PROJECT

Some of the monitoring data that we use for M&E purposes can be collected during the assurance process. In 2020, AWS began developing a project to better align its M&E System with its Assurance System. However, with the transition to new AWS Assurance Model, including the development and launch of Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS), the project was put on hold. Now that WSAS has been launched, the project will resume.

The first step in this alignment process has already been taken with the inclusion of two new Clauses 2.11.1.1 and 2.11.1.2, which were added to the AWS Certification Requirements. The next steps will be to decide which indicator data to collect and to develop a template for auditors, and then to undertake a pilot to test the data collection template and indicator protocols during audits with AWS Certified Sites. Pilot testing is planned for Q2 2022.

SDGs AND AWS WATER STEWARDSHIP

Good water stewardship practices can drive progress across all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 3 provides a summary of how the AWS Standard V2.0 outcomes align with Targets for SDG 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all".

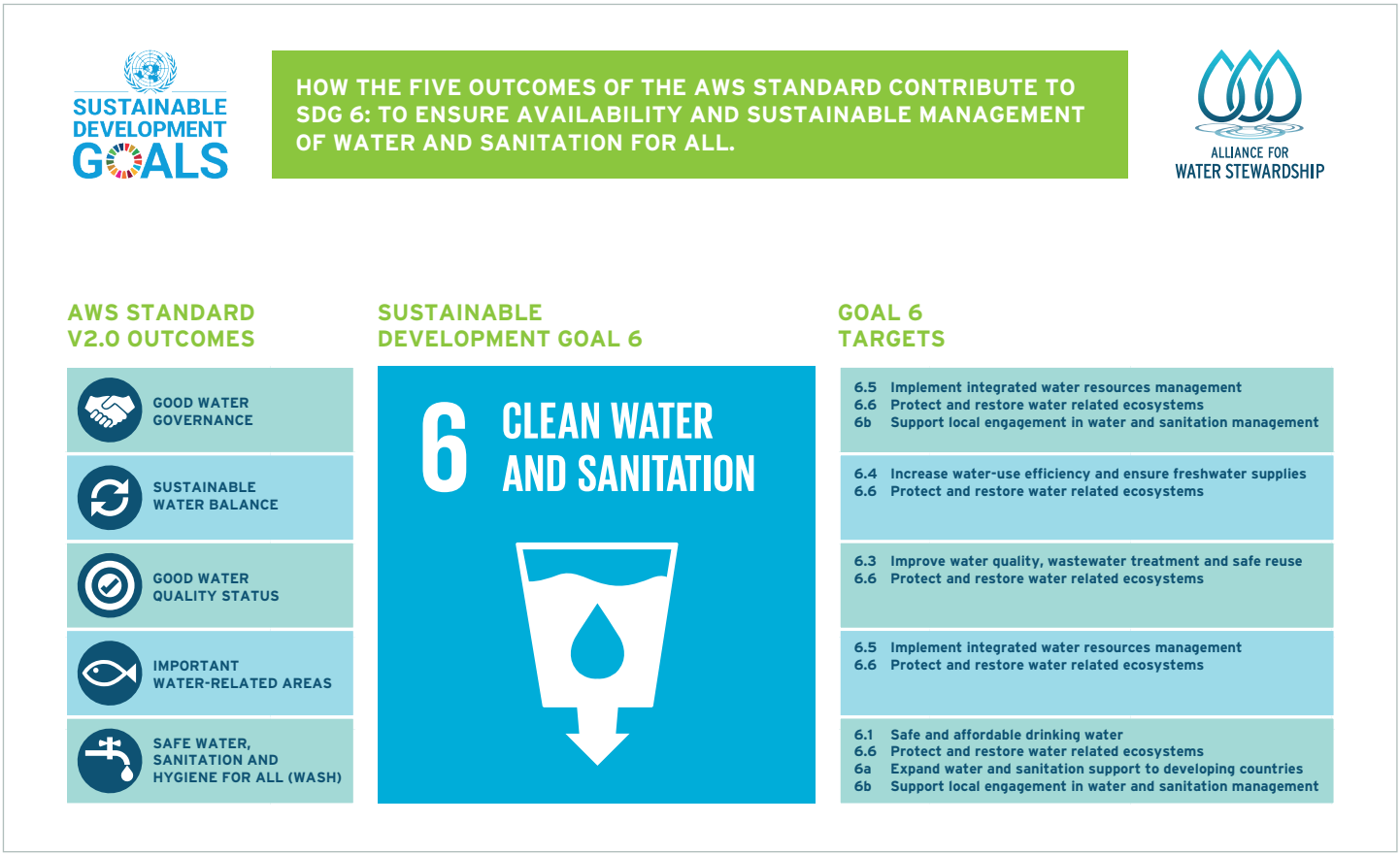


Figure 3: Alignment between AWS Standard V2.0 Outcomes and SDG 6 Targets

AWS COMMUNICATIONS

As AWS continues to grow, so do our efforts to communicate about AWS and water stewardship, and to build a community of practice. In 2021, AWS was mentioned in over 130 articles from conventional global media, including CNBC, Harvard Business Review, The Herald and the Irish Times, among many others. This data was derived from Google Alerts. In addition, we continued to build our online communities across both Twitter and LinkedIn.

From March to December 2021, our LinkedIn channel gained almost 1400 followers and our posts to the channel earned 85.5K impressions. From January to December 2021, our Twitter channel gained 283 followers and received over 1.2 million impressions, including 739K impressions on World Water Day alone. This data was captured using each platform's own analytics. We aim to continue to grow our presence in both traditional and social media in the coming year as we develop a communications strategy that aligns closely with the AWS Strategy 2022-2030.

COVID-19 AND AWS

The Covid-19 global pandemic has impacted AWS's work, necessitating changes in our existing Assurance System, including permitting interim policies that allow for remote initial certification and recertification audits, and requiring a fully remote way of working. However, we have still been able to provide an increased level of service to our Members; certification to the AWS Standard was able to continue under the revised requirements; and our project commitments despite travels restrictions have been largely fulfilled.

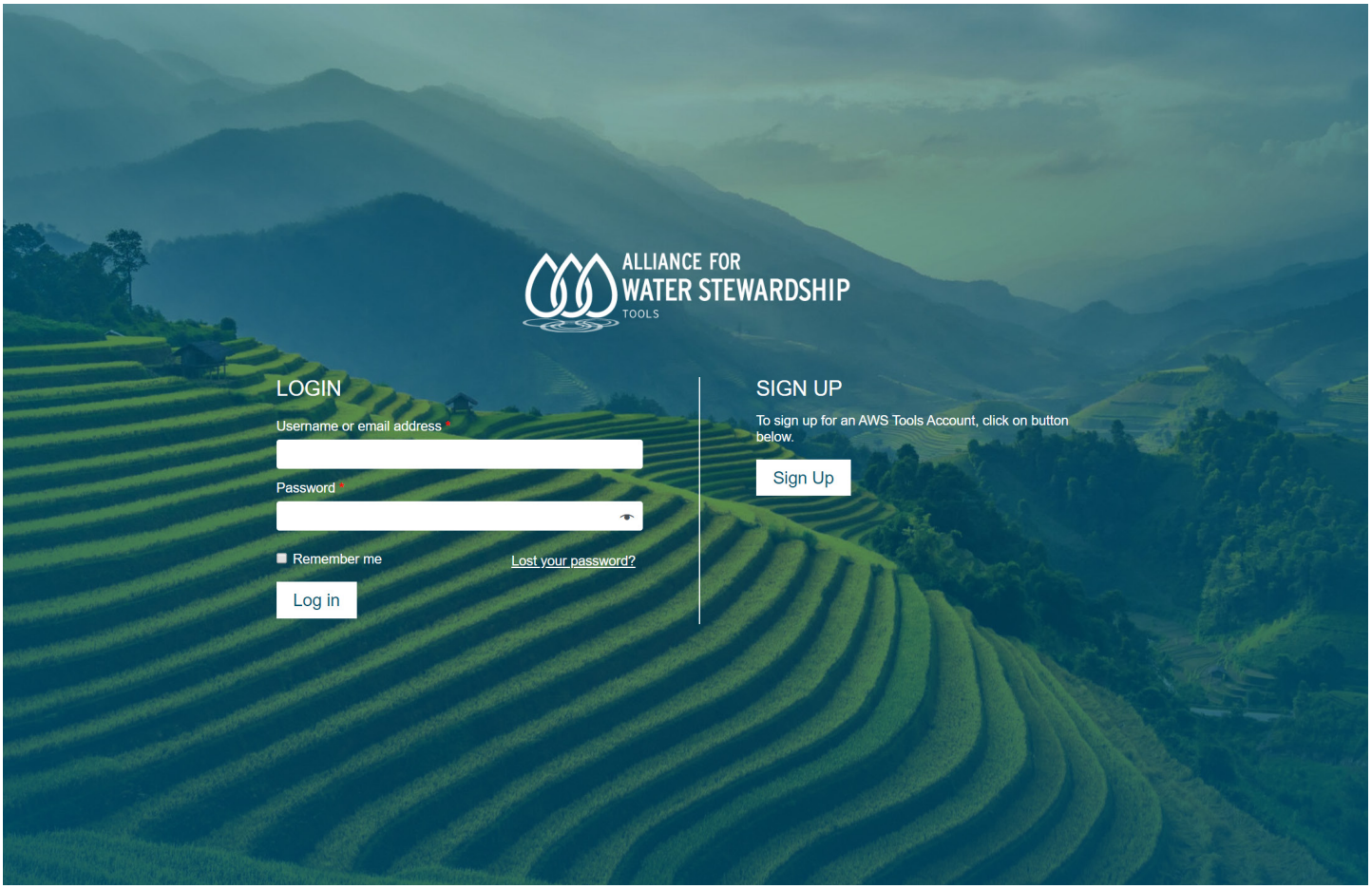
AWS TOOLS

Online Learning Modules are designed to supplement the formal AWS Standard System Training. Modules typically include three short films, with interactive elements to reinforce learning. At the end of each module there is a short quiz.

AWS launched four new Online Learning Modules throughout 2021 to help enable a deeper understanding of key aspects of AWS Standard implementation.

The following modules are available on the AWS Tools Hub (tools.a4ws.org):

- Measuring Water Stewardship Performance (launched February 2021)
- Understanding Important Water Related Areas (launched April 2021)
- Understanding and Measuring Indirect Water Use (launched May 2021)
- Understanding Water Balance (launched August 2021)



PRESENTATION OF M&E DATA

2021 M&E DATA

155
MEMBERS
(+5% over 2020)

160
REGISTERED SITES

275
PROFESSIONALLY CREDENTIALED INDIVIDUALS

209
CERTIFIED SITES ACROSS 51 COUNTRIES
(+38% over 2020)

22 MEMBERS
WITH COMMITMENTS TO IMPLEMENT AND/OR CERTIFY AGAINST THE AWS STANDARD
(+22% over 2020)

227
INDIVIDUALS COMPLETED AWS STANDARD SYSTEM TRAINING IN 2021
(+50% over 2020)

2,762
DOWNLOADS OF THE AWS STANDARD IN 2021

10
CATCHMENTS
WITH MORE THAN ONE AWS CERTIFIED SITE

The following sections present the 2021 M&E data, which is summarised above.

STANDARD SYSTEM LEVEL INDICATORS

Number of AWS Members

AWS Members play a pivotal role in growing and strengthening the AWS System by practicing water stewardship, strengthening knowledge and sharing learning. The ultimate strength of the AWS System lies in the diversity of experience that Members bring to it, and from group sharing of hard won, locally acquired knowledge about how stewardship can tackle water-related challenges. It is this shared insight, born from the multi-stakeholder nature of AWS governance, that gives us and our Members a strong, credible voice on water use and stewardship.

AWS Members benefit from being part of a global network of organisations at the forefront of water stewardship, which facilities knowledge sharing, learning and collaboration. Members also participate in strategic development and governance processes, and gain access to exclusive AWS resources, such as the AWS Tools Hub.

Our Membership programme has grown significantly since being launched in 2016. At of the end of 2021, there were 155 Members across our three membership categories: Civil Society Organisation, Private Sector and Public Sector (see Figure 4). This represents an increase from 148 Members reported in 2020.

Significantly, six of our Members are also Funding Members[13]: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Apple Inc., Azura, EDEKA, Nestlé S.A. and Unilever PLC. For a complete list of all our Members see a4ws.org/membership

In late 2021, the AWS Membership voted to waive Membership fees for civil society and public sector organisations that have a national, rather than transnational, focus. This change was made to enable participation by stakeholders rooted in the places where water stewardship is practiced, and to attract Members from the sectors where we are currently underrepresented, including the public sector and civil society.

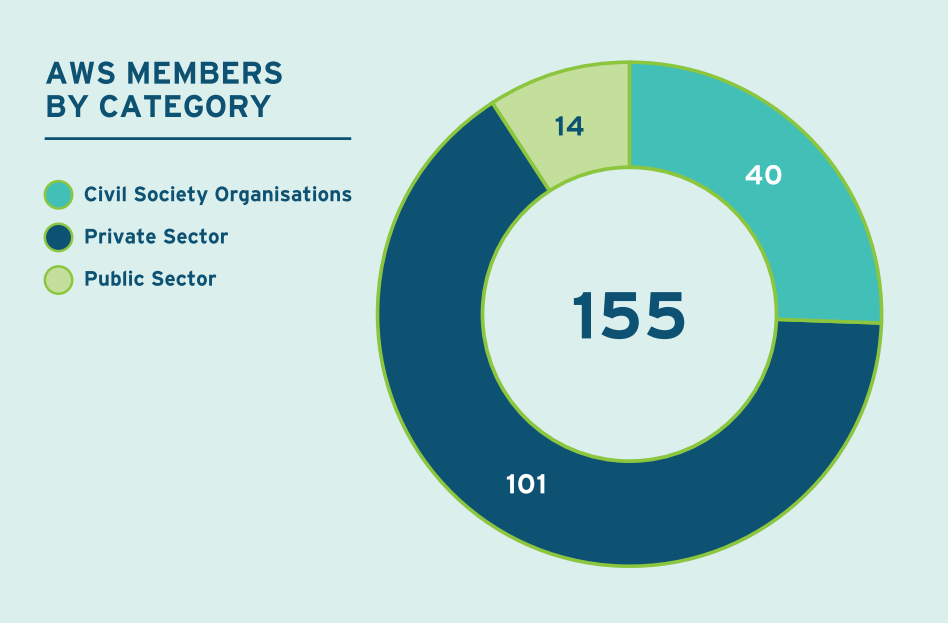


Figure 4: AWS Membership by our three membership categories (data as of 31 December 2021)

[13] AWS Funding Members are organisations which AWS publicly recognises and thanks for their commitment of additional resources to help further the development of the Alliance for Water Stewardship. For further information please visit a4ws.org/membership/apply-aws-membership

Number of AWS Certified Sites

As of the end of 2021, there were 209 AWS certified sites. This represents a 38% increase in the number of certified sites since the end of 2020. Previously, we reported on the number of AWS certificates, but since certificates can be awarded to group and multi-site operations, the number of certified sites is greater than the number of certificates. Therefore, in order to provide a more accurate representation of the scale of AWS certification, this indicator reports on the total number of AWS certified sites across all sectors and regions.

AWS certified sites represent all four AWS priority sectors: Agricultural Supply Chains, Food and Beverage Manufacturing, Microelectronics and Textiles and Apparel. The Food and Beverage Manufacturing sector accounts for the highest number of certified sites with 120 (57%), followed by Agricultural Supply Chains with 33 (16%), 'Other'[14] with 30 (14%), Microelectronics with 22 (11%) and Textiles and Apparel with 4 (2%). See Figure 5.

The AWS Standard is global in its geographical scope. This means it can be applied in any region. As of the end of 2021, the greatest number of certified sites were in Europe, followed by Asia-Pacific and North America.

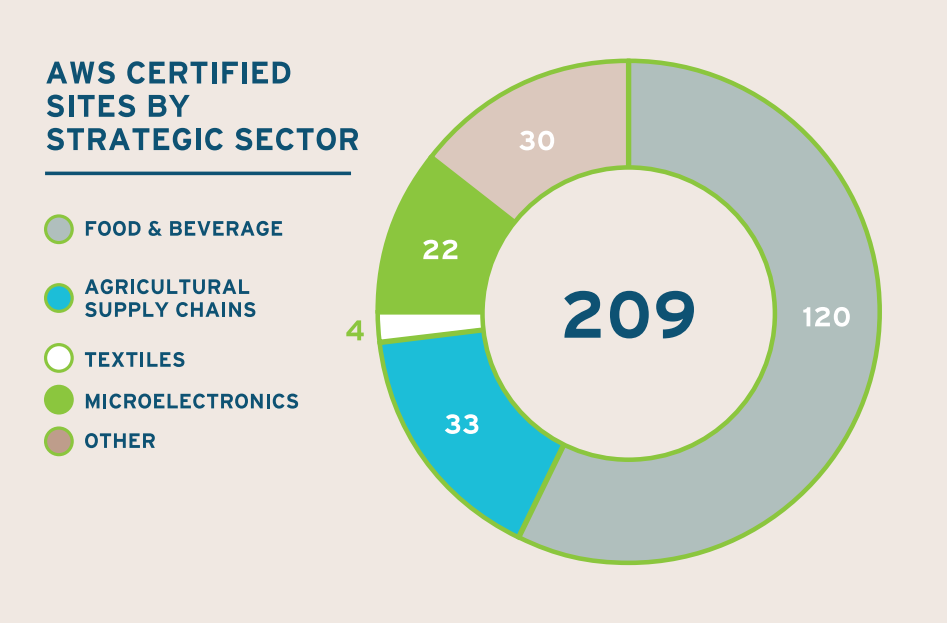


Figure 5: Total number of AWS Certified Sites by Strategic Sector (data as of 31 December 2021)

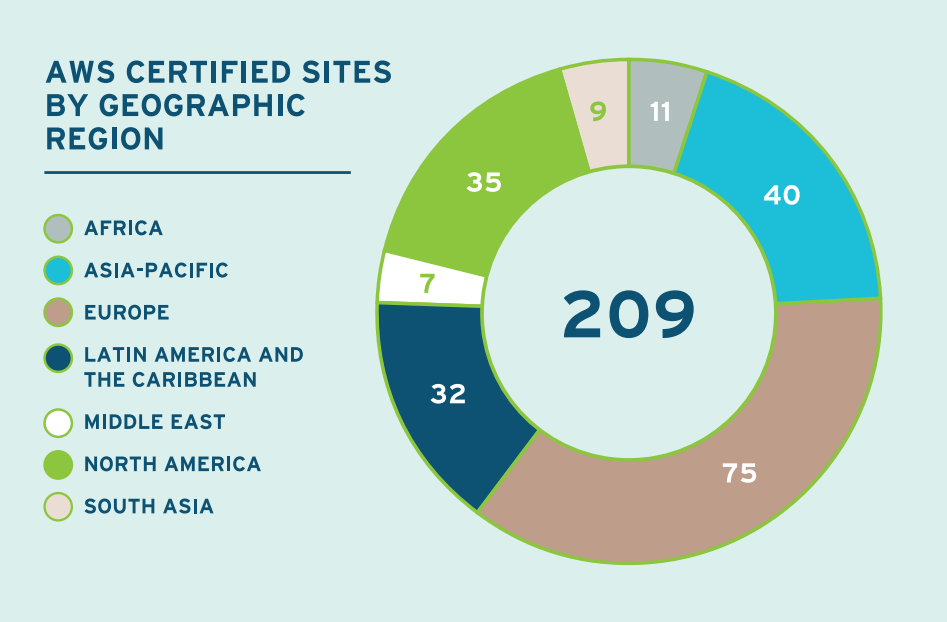


Figure 6: Total number of AWS Certified Sites by Geographic Region (data as of 31 December 2021)

[14] Other' includes sectors such as: Pharmaceutical, Health Care, Chemical & Other Material Production and Tobacco.

Number of AWS Registered Sites

Prior to certification, sites are required to register their intent to implement the AWS Standard and to seek certification. This information is collected using an online form on the AWS website and is publicly available at https://a4ws.org/certification/registered-sites/. The aim of this indicator is to report on the total number of AWS registered sites.

The number of registered sites tends to fluctuate as the status[15] of registered sites change as they progress through the system to become certified, while at the same time more new sites are added to the total as they register online. This indicator gives AWS an idea of the demand pipeline for certification and helps us to plan effectively.

As of the end of 2021, there were 160 registered sites. A breakdown of AWS registered sites by geographic region is provided in Figure 7. The greatest number of registered sites were in Latin America and the Caribbean, although the numbers also indicate a strong demand for certification in Europe, Asia-Pacific, North America and South Asia.

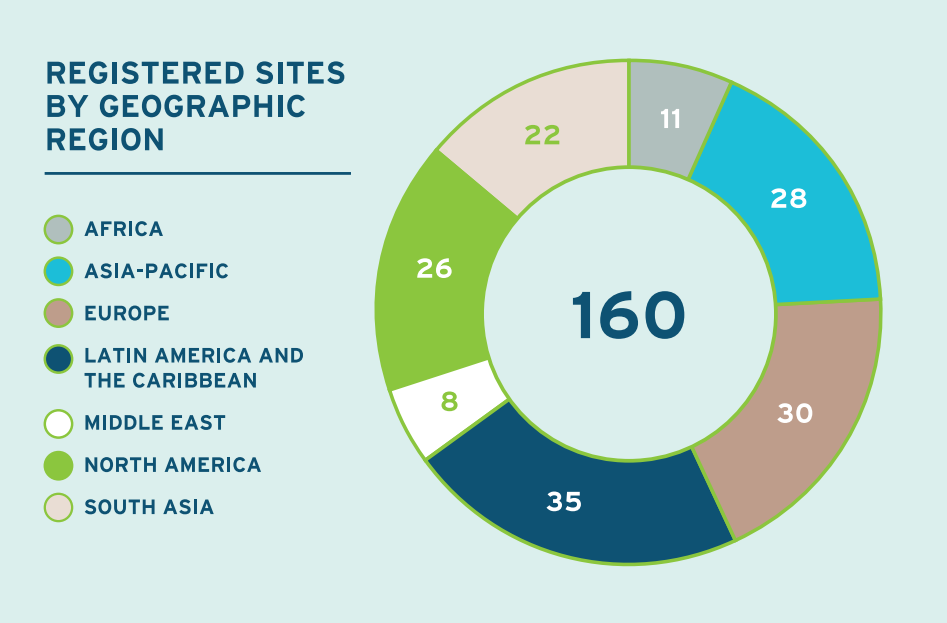


Figure 7: Total number of AWS registered sites by geographic region (data as of 31 December 2021)

Number of Timebound Public Commitments by AWS Members

Leadership is central to our mission and an increasing number of our Members are demonstrating water stewardship leadership by making public timebound commitments to certify their sites against the AWS Standard. The aim of this indicator is to collect and assess the content and growth of these commitments over the year.

Corporate commitments come in different shapes and sizes. It is not a requirement for Members to make a commitment, so this is entirely of their own volition. As of the end of 2021, we have identified 22 AWS Member companies whose commitments can be categorised in one of three ways:

i. Commitment to apply the AWS Standard (7 of 22)
ii. Commitment to certify sites to the AWS Standard (4 of 22)
iii. Commitment to certify a type of site or a certain number of sites to the AWS Standard by a specific date (11 of 22)

This comparison is nuanced as some AWS Members do not have sites per se, rather some work through their supply chains, requiring their suppliers with production sites to become AWS certified. Therefore, this indicator encompasses commitments by AWS Members to certify their own operations, as well as to require sites in their supply chains to become certified.

While commitments to apply or align to the AWS Standard but not pursue certification, are laudable in some cases, they do not help AWS deliver on its mission in the same way that commitments to certification do. Robust certification is at the heart of the AWS System, as it enables sites to make credible claims related to their AWS activity and allows us to better monitor and understand the impact of the AWS System as a whole. Therefore, timebound public commitments to certify a specific type or number of sites to the AWS Standard represent the greatest contribution to the system. See Figure 8.

Overall, AWS Members have committed to certifying over 245 sites to date. Some Members are already close to meeting their commitments, while others are in the early stages. AWS does not monitor or report on Member progress towards meeting commitments, but rather tracks commitments made as an indication of AWS Standard uptake and demand for certification.

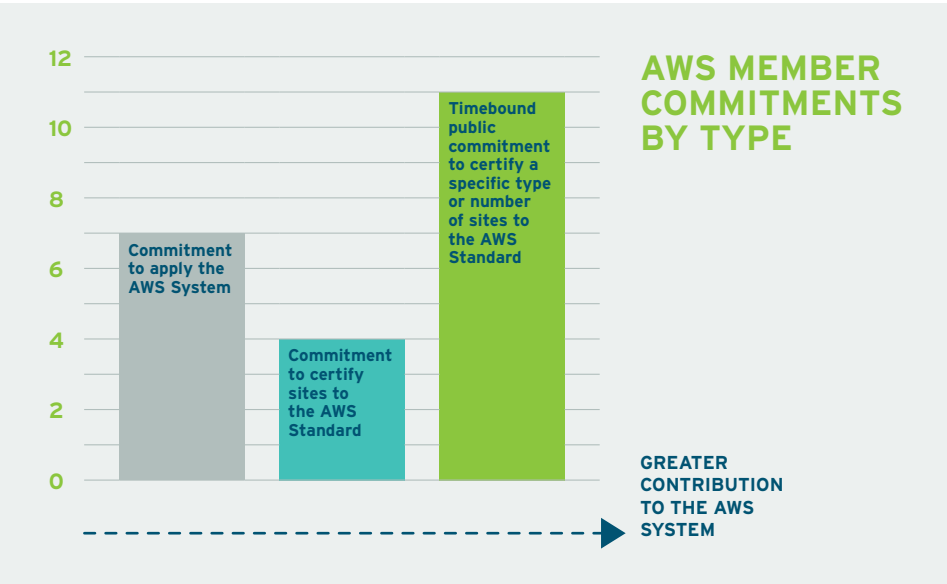


Figure 8: AWS Member Commitments by Type (data as of 31 December 2021)

[15] In the AWS System, sites can be Registered, 'Registered pending Audit', Certified or Withdrawn.

Number of Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs)

Certification against the AWS Standard through robust assurance enables certified sites to make credible claims about their water stewardship practice. This indicator reports on the total number of AWS-accredited CABs providing assurance services to sites seeking certification against the AWS Standard.

The year 2021 marked an exciting development with the launch of the new AWS Assurance Model and the establishment and appointment of Water Stewardship Assurance Services (WSAS)[16] as the new mission-driven assurance provider for AWS. As of the end of 2021, all new contracts for certification services must be established with WSAS. AWS accredited CABs may continue to honour previously existing certification contracts that extend beyond January 2022 (covering a maximum of three years in line with the three-year AWS certification cycle). Therefore, as of the end of 2021, there were six[17] AWS-accredited CABs in addition to WSAS.

There are 275 AWS Professionally Credentialled Individuals

25% of AWS Professionally Credentialed Individuals identified themselves as female

Number of Professionally Credentialed Individuals

AWS launched its Professional Credentialing (PC) Programme in January 2020 to develop and maintain an international cadre of water stewardship professionals to support sites seeking to implement and achieve certification against the AWS Standard. The aim of this indicator is to report on the total number of active[18] AWS professionally credentialed individuals across our Foundation, Advanced and Specialist credentials to understand annual growth in the PC Programme.

The PC Programme provides a mechanism through which AWS trained individuals can continue to develop and enhance their AWS skills and experience and make claims related to their level of credential through marketing and communications. Those credentialed to the Foundation level can advocate for water stewardship and use of the AWS Standard, while those at the Advanced level are able to lead implementation of the AWS Standard within their own organisation, or to assist others implementing the Standard. PC Individuals at the Specialist level have demonstrated an in depth understanding of the AWS Standard and Certification Requirements and are well positioned to offer support services across a range of contexts.

As of the end of 2021, there were 275 professionally credentialed individuals across all three levels of credential. Although the same number was reported in 2020, there have been changes as new individuals have become credentialed, while others are no longer active[19]. Together, these PC individuals speak over 10 languages and are located across at least 43 countries.

Female Participation in Professional Credentialling Programme

The three strategic goals of AWS are Influence, Inclusion and Impact. One way that we understand inclusion in the AWS System is by tracking the extent to which females participate in the AWS Professional Credentialing (PC) Programme. The aim of this indicator is to measure the total number of females who are active[20] AWS professionally credentialed individuals across three levels of Credential: Foundation, Advanced and Specialist.

These data are self-reported. When individuals have completed the AWS Standard System Training and passed the relevant exam(s), they are invited to join the Professional Credentialing Programme. When they open a new account on the PC Portal[21], individuals are asked to answer a number of questions including a question on gender. The four options are 'female', 'male, 'other' or 'prefer not to say'. As of the end of 2021, 69 people (25%) in the PC Programme identified themselves as female, which is a slight increase from 2020. Figure 9 provides a breakdown of the self-reported gender of PC Credentialed individuals.

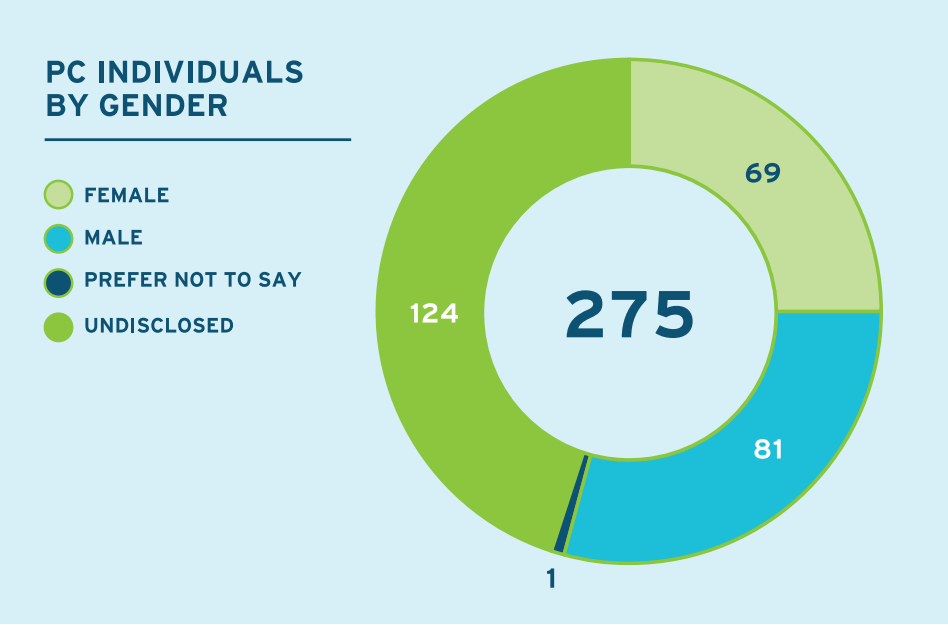


Figure 9: Total number of Professionally Credentialed Individuals by Gender (data as of 31 December 2021)

[16] See https://watersas.org/
[17] Including: Control Union Certifications B.V., Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Inc., EXOVA BM Trada, SCS Global Services, SGS and TÜV Rheinland (Guangdong) Ltd.
[18] Paid annual fees and signed Professional Credentialing Code of Conduct
[19] Paid annual fees and signed Professional Credentialing Code of Conduct
[20] Paid annual fees and signed Professional Credentialing Code of Conduct
[21] The PC Programme operates via the AWS PC Portal online platform - pcportal.a4ws.org

Number of Individuals Trained in AWS Water Stewardship

Training represents the first step in the AWS water stewardship journey for many organisations. It is one of the primary ways that organisations equip themselves to implement the AWS Standard, and it is often crucial to success. The aim of this indicator is to measure the reach of the AWS Training Programme.

Through training, implementers develop a keener sense of what will be required from sites to be certified, and trainees are able to network and build relationships with other sites and AWS Members implementing water stewardship, sometimes in the same region or sector.

We have formalised our AWS Standard System Training offering and require trainees to undertake three levels of training and to pass all three exams with distinction to qualify to be credentialed to the highest level (Specialist). During 2021, 227 individuals undertook AWS Standard System Training across all three levels. This represents an approximately 50%[22] increase from 2020. Trainees represent diverse roles from site managers, individuals from corporate sustainability teams, consultants and implementing partners, to NGO staff and auditors.

AWS also offers tailored training courses for organisations and companies, for which there has been a significant increase in demand. These training sessions are delivered online by AWS Staff using formalised AWS Training curriculum but customised for the client's context. Additionally, AWS delivers project-related training as part of funded water stewardship projects, often targeted at a particular industry sector or region.

During 2021, AWS delivered 26 AWS Standard System Training courses, 6 Tailored Training courses and 2 project-related trainings in six different languages.

26 AWS Standard System Training courses, 6 tailored trainings and 2 project-related trainings delivered in 6 languages.

During 2021, 227 individuals participated in AWS Trainings across all levels which represents an approximately 50% increase from 2020.

Number of AWS Standard Downloads

The AWS Standard is the primary vehicle through which we and our users drive water stewardship. The aim of monitoring the number of AWS Standard downloads from the AWS website is to understand the level of interest in the system, the geographic regions and industry sectors of those downloading the Standard, as well as their intended use of the Standard.

Individuals are required to complete an online form before downloading the Standard, that collects data on their region, industry sector and intended use of the Standard, which is categorised as one of four options: Implementation, Implementation and Certification, Research and Other. This is important as not all uses of the Standard result in certification. Some organisations apply the Standard without pursuing certification, while others use the Standard for research or to support others with implementation.

During 2021, 2,762 standard downloads were recorded. The data on how respondents intend to use the Standard is as follows: Implementation (23%); Implementation and certification (29%); Research (42%) and Other (6%). See Figure 10 below. Importantly, more than half (52%) of users intend to implement the Standard, with the majority of these respondents intending to certify as well.

2,762

DOWNLOADS OF THE AWS STANDARD IN 2021

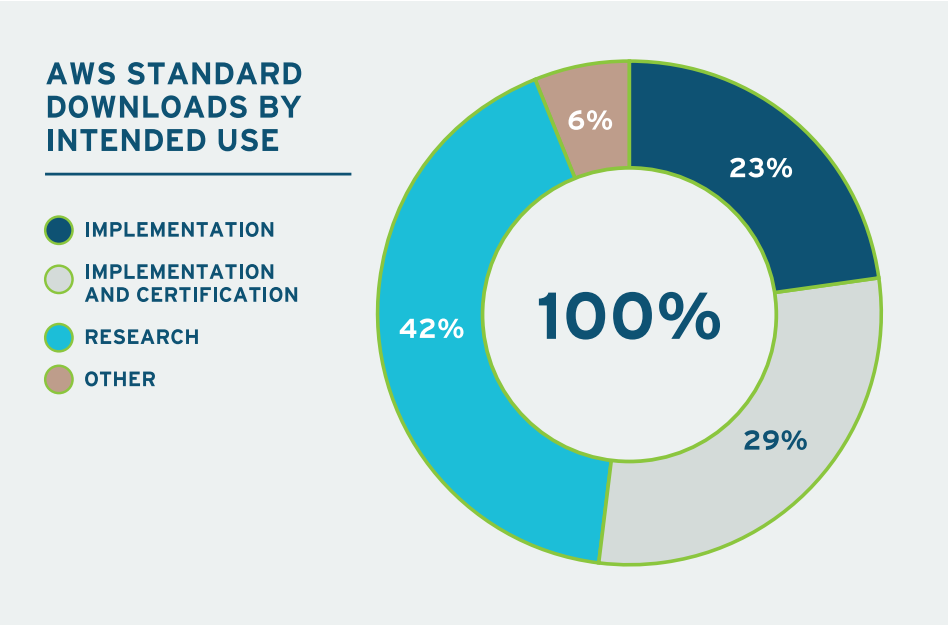


Figure 10: Total number of AWS Standard downloads in 2021 by intended use (data as of 31 December 2021)

[22] This is an approximate figure as the number of individuals trained in 2020 may have been underreported.

SITE LEVEL INDICATORS

This section reports on AWS certified sites by country. As we collect an increasing amount of data through assurance processes, we will report on an expanded list of indicators at the site level, including:

- Value creation
- Participation in catchment water governance
- Water use efficiency and sustainable water balance
- Water quality status
- Size and status of Important Water-Related Areas (IWRAs)
- Improved access to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for workers

AWS Certified Sites by Country

The AWS Standard is a globally applicable framework for credible water stewardship that can be implemented in any sector, in any catchment around the world. The aim of this indicator is to understand the geographic reach of the AWS System.

As of the end of 2021, AWS Certified sites were located in 51 countries across seven geographic regions (see Figure 11), which marks an increase from 48 countries reported in 2020. This demonstrates the relevance and applicability of the AWS Standard as a universal framework to drive contextually appropriate actions on water stewardship across the globe. The United States has the highest number of certified sites at 34, followed by China with 22.

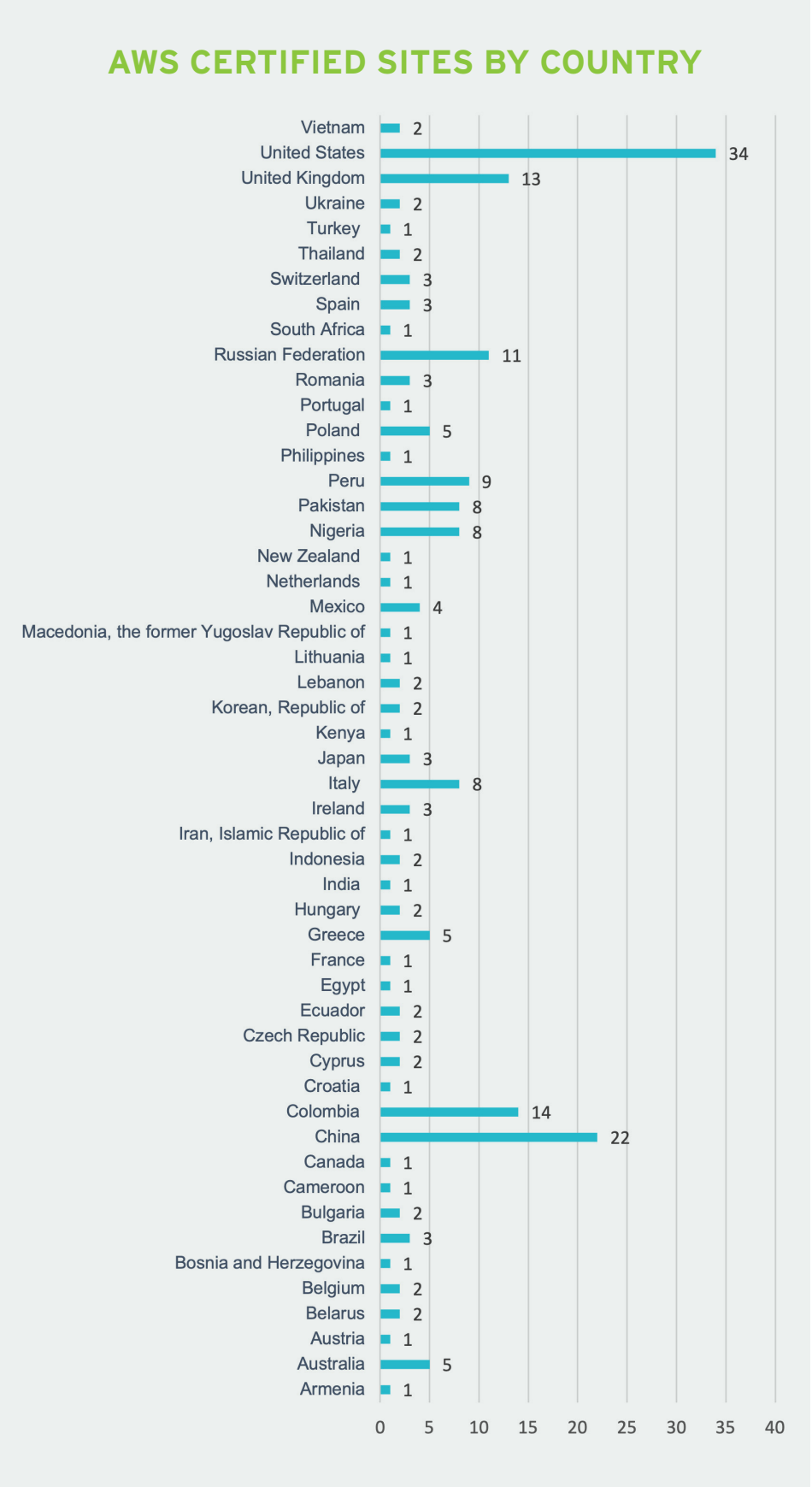


Figure 11: Total number of AWS Certified Sites by Country (data as of 31 December 2021)

CATCHMENT LEVEL INDICATORS

Water stewardship is complex, with a diverse range of stakeholders and issues that can only be understood and addressed at the level of the catchment. Knowing the catchment context is essential for understanding and addressing site risks and shared water challenges effectively.

Use of the terms: catchment, river catchment, sub-catchment, river basin or watershed varies throughout the world. The AWS Standard uses the term catchment. For those wishing to understand how to define a site's catchment, please see the AWS Guidance page 47 Guidance on Special Subject: Catchments (a4ws.org), as well as the Online Learning Module entitled Understanding and Defining Catchments on the AWS Tools Hub (tools.a4ws.org).

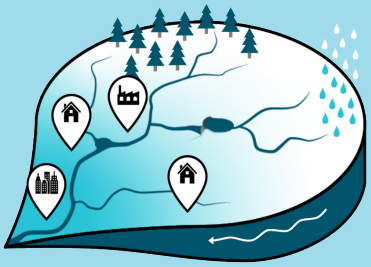
This section reports on AWS certified sites by catchment. As we collect an increasing amount of data through assurance processes and commission independent impact and outcome evaluations at AWS certified sites, we will report on an expanded list of indicators at the catchment level, including:

- Shared values benefits
- Collective action
- Good water governance
- Catchment water balance
- Catchment water quality status

WHAT IS A CATCHMENT?

A catchment is a geographical zone in which water is captured, flows through and eventually discharges at one or more points. The concept includes both surface water and groundwater catchments.

Catchments vary in size from small surface areas to large expanses holding huge volumes of water. They can range from a few square kilometres to many thousands of square kilometres. The larger it is, the more likely it is to include smaller catchments or sub-catchments.



Catchments Where AWS Certified Sites are Located

The aim of this indicator is to measure the total number of catchments containing one or more AWS sites. This serves to measure the 'cluster effect' where more than one AWS certified site is located within a catchment. Knowing the catchment locations of sites serves a multitude of other purposes, including to encourage collaboration (for example, data sharing between sites) and to attract investment in water stewardship actions within the catchment.

Site catchment name data are collected using an online form when an organisation registers a site on the AWS website. The data are uploaded to the AWS Salesforce database. However, because there is no one internationally agreed standard convention on catchment naming, this can be challenging. As such, AWS intends to align with the naming convention adopted by the WWF Water Risk Filter (WRF). This will also support the geospatial mapping of AWS certified and registered sites.

Preliminary data collected and held in AWS's Salesforce database shows that there are ten catchments with more than one AWS certified site, as of the end of 2021. It is expected that the number of AWS certified sites 'clustered' in the same catchments will climb as the uptake of group and multi-site certification continues to grow and AWS rolls out its new 2022-2030 Strategy that focuses on value chain hubs[23].

The data below is 'as reported' by the organisations registering the site and cross-referenced with the audit or certification report. It is acknowledged that the catchments listed in Figure 12 are of a significant total area. In the future, when AWS certified and registered sites are mapped, it will be possible to zoom in to determine the proximity of sites in the same catchment to each other.

NAME OF CATCHMENT	NUMBER OF CERTIFIED SITES
Bajo Magdalena Catchment, Colombia	13
Spey Catchment, Scotland	11
Wusong River Catchment, China	8
Ica River Catchment, Peru	7
Yanshuei River Catchment, China	3
Vistula River Catchment, Poland	3
Dongjang River Catchment, China	2
Indus River Catchment, Pakistan	2
Malir River Catchment, Pakistan	2
Ob River Catchment, Russia	2

Figure 12: Preliminary data on number of catchments with more than one AWS certified site (data as of 31 December 2021)

[23] AWS 2022-2030 Strategy soon to be launched on the AWS website – a4ws.org

INSIGHTS & LEARNINGS

RESILIENCE

The AWS System continued to grow throughout the global COVID-19 pandemic.

With the onset of the pandemic in late 2019, AWS moved all its AWS Standard System Training courses online. Since then, the number of individuals trained in AWS water stewardship has grown significantly, with an approximately 50% increase between 2020 and 2021.

Similarly, the pandemic necessitated changes in our Assurance System, including, for the first time, policies to allow interim remote Initial Certification and Recertification Audits. Despite these challenges, and the economic impact of COVID-19, the demand for certification increased. Between 2020 and 2021, there was a 38% increase in the number of AWS certified sites.

These trends demonstrate the resilience of the AWS System, and the commitment of our Members to responsible water stewardship.

EVOLUTION OF THE AWS SYSTEM

The year 2021 marked a period of evolution for the AWS System. AWS transitioned to a new organisational structure and updated its assurance delivery model, both of which were significant undertakings. These developments demonstrate AWS's commitment to continual learning, improvement and leadership, and will enable us to provide greater value to our Members and users, and to pursue our mission more effectively.

MOMENTUM IN CATCHMENT CLUSTERS

AWS is increasingly focusing its efforts on promoting the concentrated uptake of the AWS Standard by stimulating actions in key value chain hubs. It is believed that 'clusters' of AWS certified sites in the same catchment offer the greatest potential to achieve the benefits of water stewardship at scale. Registered sites in the same catchments as other certified sites may benefit by sharing catchment level information, good practices and lessons learned.

With the increased uptake of group and multi-site AWS certification, the number of catchments with multiple AWS certified sites has grown significantly. It is expected that these numbers will continue to climb.

FUTURE PLANS

MAPPING

AWS aims to map all registered and certified sites worldwide. AWS is already collecting GPS Coordinate site data and these will be transposed using an app on the WWF Water Risk Filter platform. Using a common and aligned list of catchment names will allow a visual image of the distribution and reach of AWS sites. It will also support those organisations with registered sites who are just starting out their water stewardship journey to see if there are other sites working in the same catchment or sub-catchment. Such geospatial data may in the future be combined with polygon data that can create the foundation for greater collaboration between different actors and stakeholders in their respective catchments.

REAL-TIME REPORTING

AWS already provides real-time data internally using Salesforce dashboards for its staff. Currently, the AWS website features weekly performance monitoring data in the form of dashboards in addition to lists of certified and registered sites. In the future, we will move towards real-time reporting on the AWS website.

MONITORING FOR UNINTENDED EFFECTS

AWS recognises the importance of considering the potential for unintended effects (both positive and negative) of the AWS Standard System. This is also a requirement of ISEAL Impacts Code compliance. Negative unintended effects could possibly include policy capture, where decisions over policies are directed away from the public interest and steered towards a specific interest, or the AWS Standard only being viable for well-resourced companies. Positive unintended effects, on the other hand, could include stakeholder awareness and learning about water stewardship, and the creation of new communities of practice focused on related social and environmental issues.

In the coming year, AWS plans to consult with stakeholders to identify any possible unintended effects, including the most significant unintended effects of the standard system's activities and to document and share the results of this consultation in future Performance Monitoring reports.

RESEARCH AGENDA

Learning and continual improvement are at the heart of the AWS System. In 2022, we will develop a Research Agenda to guide and coordinate research, learning and improvement of the AWS Standard System in cooperation with other organisations, including research institutes, other standard systems and AWS Members.

COMMISSIONING IMPACT AND OUTCOME EVALUATIONS

The number, regularity and extent of impact evaluations should be commensurate with the maturity, scale and intensity of the activities of a standards system and the financial resources available. Evaluation studies are costly, and generally take a number of years to complete, as the goal is to see change over time. Thus, standards systems are unlikely to have any fully completed independent impact evaluations until they have been operational for three to five years.

In 2022, we will commission the first independent evaluation of the AWS Standard System across a sample of certified sites to better understand the impacts of our System.

BUILDING RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

Central to all our work is the commitment to collaboration. Throughout 2021, we continued to take important steps to collaborate and build research partnerships.

AWS aims to continue to build partnerships and engage with the research community to explore effective ways to encourage others to carry out research on the AWS Standard System. AWS's participation in research networks and Data Innovation Working Groups convened by ISEAL is critical to this success. Five summaries, which show the range of projects that AWS is currently involved in, are found in Annex A. We update our website regularly to keep stakeholders informed of this growing body of progress and learnings.

AWS strongly encourages researchers and research institutes in their studies on the AWS Standard System and will consider their findings in our AWS M&E System reporting.

LOOKING FORWARD

AWS developed its M&E System to track performance against its mission and to begin to understand and learn about the impacts it is having in the world. The M&E System is intended to help AWS improve its effectiveness, build capacity, inform strategy, be accountable to its stakeholders and ensure credibility. As we collect an increasing amount of data year-on-year, we will continue to publish annual Performance Monitoring Reports, and evaluation studies will be carried out to identify impacts. AWS will update the website regularly and keep stakeholders informed of this growing body of progress and learnings.

ANNEX A

PROJECTS: BUILDING COLLABORATIONS AND AN EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE AWS SYSTEM

The following section outlines a selection of projects with which we are currently involved. AWS welcomes the opportunity to work and partner with research institutes and universities to build an evidence base on the AWS System.

AWS supports independent researchers and research institutes in their studies on the AWS Standard System and will consider their findings in our AWS M&E System reporting. We update our website regularly with case studies and project reports and keep stakeholders informed of this growing evidence base of progress and learnings.

PROJECT 1
BANANA FARMS IN COLOMBIA & AWS GROUP CERTIFICATION

Main objectives and description: The German food retailer EDEKA is dedicated to making positive impacts on the environment and ensuring the sustainability of its food supply chains. EDEKA has partnered with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to achieve its environmental goals, including applying the AWS Standard to drive good water stewardship practices.

Through this partnership, AWS has provided support to EDEKA's suppliers in Europe and Latin America, with a focus on building local networks and capacity. Achievements to date include the first ever AWS group certification in Colombia, undertaken by EDEKA suppliers, CI Técnicas Baltime de Colombia S.A (Tecbaco), who manage 13 privately owned banana farms in Colombia.

EDEKA and WWF also supported AWS to convene an Agriculture Working Group to help scale water stewardship across the sector and in key sourcing locations. The group is comprised of AWS Members and partners with interest in agricultural water stewardship from business, public sector and civil society organisations.

Project Partners: EDEKA, AWS, WWF, Dole Food Company, Tecbaco, South Pole

Project Lead: Sarah Wade, AWS Sector Lead, email: sarah@a4ws.org

Start date/duration: 2016-2022

PROJECT 2
SCALING WATER STEWARDSHIP IN AGRICULTURAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Main objectives and description: In 2019, Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft mbH (DEG) and NEDERLANDSE FINANCIERINGSMAATSCHAPPIJ VOOR ONTWIKKELINGSLANDEN N.V. (FMO) (the Dutch and German development finance corporations) joined forces with AWS, EDEKA and WWF Germany to help scale water stewardship in agricultural supply chains in Latin America. DEG and FMO both invest in agricultural producers throughout the region, and they recognise that water poses a risk to those investments.

Together, we are building a network of water stewards throughout Europe and Latin America, who recognise the value of aligning around a common, independent approach to doing water stewardship at a site and catchment level. Through identification of high water risk sourcing clusters, AWS Standard System Training, the creation of knowledge products such as case studies and good practice guides, and local and global networks to enable collaboration, we aim to ensure that AWS becomes accessible to all who need it. Further details are available at: a4ws.org/priority-sectors/agriculture-partnerships

Project Partners: AWS, DEG, FMO

Project Lead: Sarah Wade, AWS Sector Lead, email: sarah@a4ws.org

Start date/duration: 2018-2022

PROJECT 3
PUTTING WATER STEWARDSHIP TO WORK: TACKLING WATER POLLUTION IN THE TEXTILE AND APPAREL VALUE CHAIN

Main objectives and description: This project scales the adoption of good water stewardship globally to:

- Improve policies, regulation and investment across the Ethiopian cotton and apparel sectors
- Ignite leadership from the global apparel sector to address water challenges faced by SMEs serving international supply chains.

Project Partners: AWS, Aid by Trade Foundation, CDP, Solidaridad, Water Witness

Funding Partner: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

AWS Project Lead: Sarah Wade, AWS Sector Lead, email: sarah@a4ws.org

Start date/duration: 2020-2022

PROJECT 4
BOOSTING SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE AT THE LANDSCAPE LEVEL THROUGH GOOD WATER STEWARDSHIP

Main objectives and description: Strengthening existing landscape and jurisdictional approaches to promote sustainable agriculture practices is essential due to the growing need for water. The project will focus on practical approaches to strengthen performance measurement and guidance for water stewardship implementation in the palm oil and natural rubber sectors. The project will build a community of practice to nurture water stewardship interest, understanding and mechanisms through webinars, online knowledge sharing and training. Further details are available at awsindonesia.org/en/proyek/detail/4

Project Partners: AWS, Yayasan Aliansi Wali Sumber Daya Air Indonesia (AWS Indonesia), Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Global Platform for Sustainable and Natural Rubber (GPSNR), Lingkar Temu Kabupaten Lestari (LTKL)'

Funding Partner: Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) via the ISEAL Innovations Fund www.isealalliance.org

AWS Project Leads: Gracia Plenita Agnindhira, Knowledge & Learning Coordinator - AWS Indonesia, email: agni@a4ws.org and Christine Carey, Chief System Integrity Officer, email: christine@a4ws.org

Project start date/duration: July 2020-July 2022

PROJECT 5
UNIVERSITY OF LEUVEN, BELGIUM

Main objectives and description: The VSS 4 Food & Wood Project intends to provide insights on the sustainability outcomes of Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) in the cocoa, coffee, tea, banana, palm oil and wood sectors. More specifically, the project intends to:

i. Evaluate and quantify the socio-economic and environmental sustainability outcomes and trade-offs of various VSS, at the macro-level (global) and micro-level (Indonesia).
ii. Analyze how these outcomes and trade-offs are shaped by different design and governance attributes of VSS.
iii. Identify opportunities and challenges for optimizing the design and governance of VSS to more effectively contribute to sustainability and minimize sustainability trade-offs.
iv. Stimulate the optimization process through communication with stakeholders in the food and wood sectors.

Following an invitation to contribute to this research project, AWS developed a data sharing agreement with KU Leuven to provide anonymised information on production areas and producers (or producer's organisations) for cocoa, coffee, bananas, palm oil and wood sites that are AWS certified by country, now and in the past.

Project Partners: KU Leuven University, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies

AWS Project contact: Christine Carey, Chief System Integrity Officer, email: christine@a4ws.org

Project Researchers: Prof. Dr. ir. Miet Maertens, Dr. Dalia Fadly, ir. Janne Bemelmans (Division of Bio-economics, KU Leuven); Prof. Dr. ir. Bart Muys, Dr. ir. Bruno Verbist (Division of Forest, Nature and Landscape, KU Leuven); Dr. Axel Marx, Charline Depoorter (Leuven Centre for Global Governance Studies, KU Leuven); Prof. Dr. ir. Nunung Nuryartono (Bogor Agricultural University, Institut Pertanian Bogor, Indonesia.

Project start date/duration: 2020-2023

DISCLAIMER

The monitoring data in this report are based on data collected by AWS SCIO and reported in some cases by organisations and site owners through online forms and the audit process and in other cases by other supply chain actors. AWS SCIO is not responsible for the accuracy of the data. The report has been compiled to the best of our knowledge and is provided for informational purposes only. AWS SCIO reserves the right to update the monitoring data as new information becomes available. The data are provided 'as is' and no warranty of any kind is given for the accuracy and reliability of the data. AWS SCIO will not be liable for any claims or damages related to the quality and completeness of the data, as far as it is permitted under law.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The report's author would like to thank the following people who took the time to review and comment: Christine Carey, Chief System Integrity Officer; and Brenda McIlwraith, AWS Communications Lead

FOR MORE INFORMATION, FEEDBACK & COMMENTS

Contact: Tyler Farrow
Knowledge & Learning Coordinator, Alliance for Water Stewardship
tyler@a4ws.org

ACCESS TO THIS REPORT

This report can be downloaded for free from a4ws.org/resources

APRIL 2022

ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP (SCIO)

2 Quality Street
North Berwick
Scotland, EH39 4HW

a4ws.org