ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP (AWS) IMPACTS PUBLIC SYSTEM REPORT 2019

1 OCTOBER 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

AWS is a global multi-stakeholder network dedicated to advancing and deepening the positive impacts of water stewardship. The AWS Standard and Standard System offers a credible, globally applicable framework for water users to understand their own water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently with others for sustainable water management within the wider water catchment context.

As a Full ISEAL Member, the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) is developing its Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) System in accordance with the ISEAL Alliance 2014 Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards Systems Code of Good Practice - Version 2.0 (commonly referred to as the ISEAL Impacts Code) of which this document summarises AWS's progress.

2. SCOPE AND BOUNDARIES OF M&E SYSTEM

What is included? The AWS M&E System aims to monitor the effects of our new 2019 AWS Theory of Change (ToC)[1] (see Annex 1). A ToC articulates what impact or change an organization, such as AWS, is hoping to achieve in the world and how its work will bring about that change. A ToC requires that the interventions connect with the intended outcomes. AWS interventions cover: standard development and implementation, membership, assurance, capacity building, collaboration, training and awareness-raising.

The scope of the AWS M&E System will monitor intervention effects at three key levels that is, the overall Standard System Level (SSL), Site Level (SL) and Catchment Level (CL).

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[1] The AWS Theory of Change is also found on our website a4w.org/impacts

At present the AWS M&E System monitors one standard, that is, the AWS Standard V2.0.[2]

The geographical scope of the AWS M&E System is global in keeping with the AWS Standard System and organizational ethos. This is consistent with the AWS Standard that can be applied (and thus will be monitored and evaluated) in any country and to any type of organization and industrial sector regardless of size or operational complexity. In practice, AWS focuses on strengthening and deepening the AWS System across six geographical regions[3]: Asia-Pacific; South Asia; Europe; Africa; North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

To deliver on the AWS 2019-2021 Global Strategy there is also an emphasis on deepening sector engagement in four sectors: food & beverage; agricultural supply chains; textiles and micro-electronics.

The AWS M&E System scope will expand in time to include e.g., our stakeholder engagement processes; AWS Complaints and Appeals Procedure and unintended outcomes.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The AWS M&E System is coordinated at the AWS International Secretariat level. The Head of the AWS Knowledge & Learning Business Unit leads on the development of knowledge and learning strategies, systems and projects including the design and establishment of a new IT-based Knowledge Management System that will significantly support the AWS M&E System via data collection and management, dashboards and reporting.

The AWS M&E System is also integrated into the roles of other staff, for example, the AWS Outreach & Engagement Coordinator who works with our membership and others will collect data. The Coordinator contributes to external communications related to M&E reporting and learnings that activates the Alliance to take leadership roles in water stewardship.

In addition, the AWS Accreditation & Training Manager supports and contributes to the M&E System with data collection and data management via the AWS Assurance System. Data is collected from audit and certification reports and by agreements with AWS Service Providers such as CABs, Trainers, Consultants and Professionally Accredited Individuals which is fed into the AWS M&E System and reporting.

For further information please contact: Christine Carey, AWS Head of Knowledge & Learning email:christine@a4ws.org

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[2] To clarify, other scheme owners may have more than one standard e.g. one for SMEs, one for Chain of Custody (CoC), or one for Producers or Retailers.
[3] See AWS (2019) AWS Strategy 2019-2021 Influence, Inclusion and Impact

4. DEFINING THE INTENDED CHANGE

AWS's vision is for a water secure world that enables people, cultures, business and nature to prosper now and in the future. AWS's mission is to "ignite and nurture global and local leadership in credible water stewardship that recognises and secures the social, cultural, environmental and economic value of water."

As noted previously, a Theory of Change (ToC) (see Annex 1) articulates what impact or change an organization is hoping to achieve and how its work brings about that change. Using a ToC approach requires that AWS makes its assumptions explicit and to reach consensus with our key stakeholders about what we are trying to do and why. As such, between 2018 - 2019, AWS undertook a multi-stakeholder consultation process to develop a new Theory of Change. The new ToC takes a broader view than previously and covers the AWS Standard, the whole AWS Standard System (across site and catchment levels) and the AWS organisation's technical and operational activities (see AWS M&E Stakeholder Map Annex 2).

Based on our mission and vision, AWS's long-term organizational desired impacts include:

- Economic, social, cultural and environmental value at AWS Systems Level is created.

- Socially and culturally equitable; economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable use of water at site and catchment level is created.

AWS views the development of its ToC as an essential and strategic planning management tool. To provide comments and feedback please contact Christine Carey, AWS Head of Knowledge & Learning email: christine@a4ws.org

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The AWS M&E System aims to collect data at three levels:

Level 1 data – example of Level 1 data is data collected from all certificate holders e.g. total number of certificates, date of validity, and scores of certificate holders in relation to the AWS Standard requirements.

Level 2 data is collected through sampled monitoring activities such as surveys or e.g. self-assessment questionnaires applied during the assurance process and via agreements with AWS accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs).

Level 3 data involves credible and appropriate in-depth Impact Evaluation (IE) research. IE investigates the changes brought about by an intervention and asks a small number of specific key evaluation questions. IE research can use a range of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. What differentiates Level 3 from Level 1 and 2, is that Level 3 asks these deep focused research questions and is more concerned with attribution.

AWS has developed a set of M&E indicators to measure the effects at three key levels: at the Standard System (SSL) Level, Site Level (SL) and Catchment Level (CL). These will be made available on the Impacts section of the AWS website a4ws.org

In 2019, a revised set of AWS M&E Indicators were developed through consultation with AWS Technical Committee members and AWS International staff. They are currently being further consulted upon by an AWS M&E Task Force.

To save time, effort, and contribute to wider collective impact, the AWS M&E System indicators have also been aligned with sets of other existing indicators such as: United Nations Sustainable Development Goal - SDG 6 Indicators; ISEAL Common Core Indicators; and WWF International Water Risk Filter metrics.

6. OUTCOME AND IMPACT EVALUATION

Between 2017-2018, two research papers have been published by AWS about the impacts of AWS certification. The first by AWS Asia-Pacific and IDEEA (2018). Measuring and Communicating Impacts from AWS Water Stewardship: Applying the SEEA 4 Framework to Two Industrial Parks in China. The second was published by: AWS Asia-Pacific and IDEEA (2017). Linking AWS and the SEEA: Applying Advances in Accounting for Natural Capital to Support the Implementation of AWS. Both reports are available on the AWS Literature Database on the AWS website https://a4ws.org/aws-literature-database/

Eight technical and implementation reports have been published by AWS over the last four years. These are also available on the AWS Literature Database on the AWS website https://a4ws.org/aws-literature-database/

A new project to assess good practices of the AWS Standard System is planned for Q4 of 2019. At present there are no impact evaluation studies underway on the AWS System. However, starting in Q3 2019, AWS and partners will begin a process to identify research projects and funding for an impact evaluation of the AWS System.

AWS as Scheme Owner ensures that claims made in any reports or statements that it issues about the outcomes and impacts of the standards system are accurate and linked to actual findings and conclusions from performance monitoring or outcome and impact evaluations. As such, the AWS Head of Knowledge & Learning is responsible to ensure annually that all AWS staff, AWS Consultants, AWS Regional Coordinators, and AWS Regional Partners are aware of the ISEAL Impacts Code requirements and the importance of making accurate claims about outcomes and impacts in relation to the AWS System. The AWS Head of Knowledge & Learning is available to discuss, review and check claims or statements made by AWS about its outcomes and impacts.

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[4] SEEA - System for Environmental Economic Accounting (SEEA) framework

The AWS M&E System welcomes and supports independent researchers and research institutes in their studies on the AWS Standard System and interventions and will consider their findings in our AWS M&E System reporting.

7. IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE M&E SYSTEM

The AWS M&E System and its approach is intended to promote continual improvement such that its effectiveness improves over time both in terms of our overall strategy and the development of new systems and indicators.

The AWS's 2019- 2021 Global Strategy sets out nine organizational priorities of which one is: "Ensuring that knowledge and learning are fused into the AWS System, and that AWS, our members and partners have access to the knowledge they need to track, understand and communicate the impact of AWS water stewardship." This priority serves to direct improvements in the effectiveness of the M&E System at the Senior Management level.

AWS's M&E System is discussed and reviewed regularly by AWS staff, Senior Management, Technical Committee and at the AWS Board level.

Plans for expansion of M&E System - In 2020, the AWS M&E System will grow to include a further 1 FTE.

8. OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders can send comments directly to Head of Knowledge & Learning via email, or answer surveys designed to obtain feedback on specific reports.

To get in touch, to work together or to fund our impact evaluation research work please get in touch. Contact Christine Carey, AWS Head of Knowledge & Learning email: christine@a4ws.org to submit comments or questions about the AWS M&E System.

ANNEX 1 - ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP 2019 THEORY OF CHANGE

In the diagram below, there are three key groups of actors: Enablers, Implementers and Influencers (see green circles). As each of these key groups sets about creating, contributing and supporting interventions, outputs, and outcomes the 'theory' is that the desired positive impacts will be realized as we move from left to the right to deliver on AWS's mission and vision.
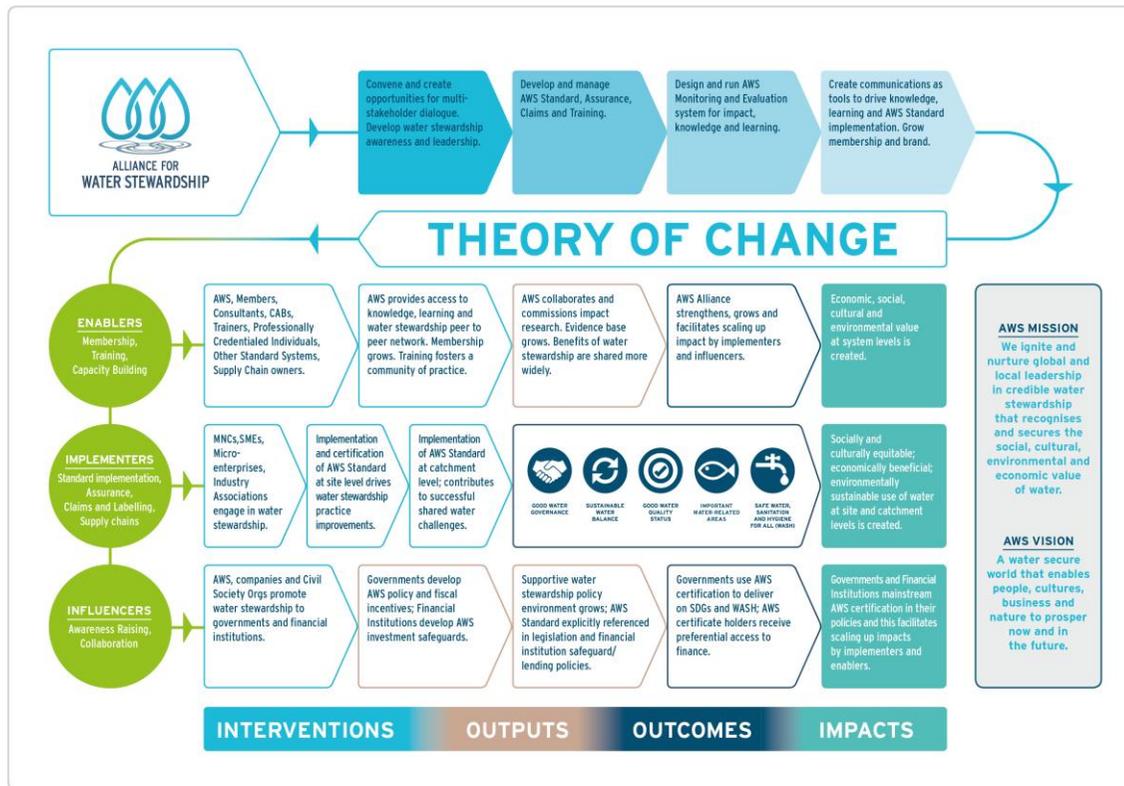
ANNEX 2 - ALLIANCE FOR WATER STEWARDSHIP M&E STAKEHOLDER MAPPING