



Water
Stewardship
Asia Pacific

Water Stewards Verification Programme

Verification and Audit Requirements

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Water Stewardship Australia Ltd (trading as Water Stewardship Asia Pacific, WSAP) is a member-based organisation with a mission to empower organisations and individuals to take collective action for a sustainable and equitable water future through water stewardship.

1. Introduction

Water stewardship means the responsible use of water that is:

- (a) **environmentally sustainable** - in that it maintains and improves biodiversity and ecological processes at the catchment level; and
- (b) **socially equitable** - in that it recognises basic human needs and ensures long-term benefits (including economic benefits) for local people and society at large; and
- (c) **culturally sensitive** – in that it recognises and provides for the importance of freshwater to local indigenous peoples and communities, and
- (d) **economically beneficial** - in that it minimises corporate risk while ensuring that water is available for a multitude of economic benefits and uses over the long-term.

The concept of water stewardship as an objective, measurable target or standard was developed in response to shared water challenges in Australia, which became critical and urgent during the Millennium Drought. Water Stewardship Australia Ltd, now trading as Water Stewardship Asia Pacific, was founded as an organisation as a means of increasing uptake of water stewardship activities and processes.

The work of Water Stewardship Australia was fundamental to the development of the International Water Stewardship Standard (“the Standard”). The Standard is overseen by the Alliance for Water Stewardship. It is a programme developed within the ISEAL framework (International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling) that allows water users to be audited against the Standard’s requirements to become accredited water stewards. It is a credible and robust foundation for the delivery of water stewardship outcomes.

The Programme utilises the Standard, but is designed to be scalable, affordable, flexible, and ambitious yet attainable – all whilst leading to quantitative improvements in outcomes for water dependent ecosystems and communities. Water stewards participating in the Programme move through five main stages of participation: Member, Commit, Implement, Verify, and Advanced Verify (Four-Star and Five-Star).

This document sets out the requirements for attainment of each stage of the Programme and the additional requirements to achieve advanced level verification. It also sets out WSAP’s requirements for Audits, Auditors, and Auditing and optional pre-assessment/pre-verification processes.

2. Scope

This document forms part of the Programme requirements. It should not be read in isolation of other WSAP policy documents or the Standard, which are available through the WSAP Website or on the Membership Portal.

This document applies only to those participating in the Programme as owned by WSAP. Membership of WSAP is a requirement for commencement and completion of the Programme.

3. The Water Stewards Verification Programme

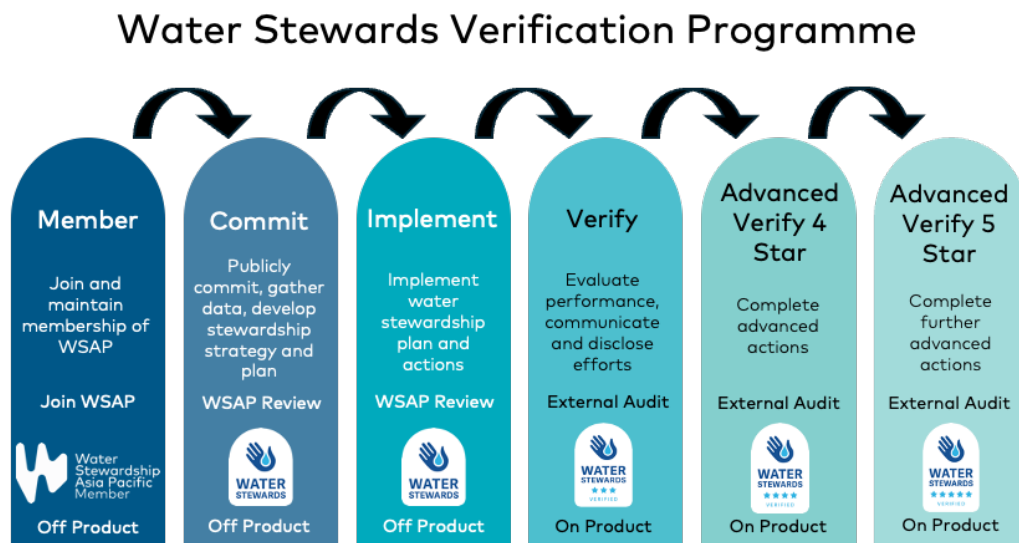
The Programme is a stepwise process through which organisations and companies can demonstrate their commitment to water stewardship and make meaningful improvements in water outcomes. Participants in the Programme can opt to remain and maintain their status at any level of the Programme or may complete the entire Programme through to advanced-level verification status.

Water stewardship is, however, an ongoing process of continuous improvement and review. To maintain a particular programme level status, there are ongoing reporting requirements to WSAP, through the Annual Communication of Progress and/or Maintenance Audits (where applicable).

4. Water Stewards Verification Programme stages

The stages in the Programme are:

1. Member
2. Commit
3. Implement
4. Verify
5. Verify Four-Star and Verify Five-Star



Annual communication of progress is required

5. Optional pre-verification processes

WSAP encourages Participants to complete some optional foundational steps prior to seeking verification through the Programme. These steps will help Participants better understand their water use and management, and their place in their respective catchment.

5.1 Water RoadMap

The Water RoadMap is a strategic diagnostic tool delivered by Water Stewardship Asia Pacific. The Water Roadmap provides organisations with a scorecard and plan to assist them deliver water efficiency, reduce costs, and achieve environmental, social, and governance (ESG) targets.

The Water Roadmap:

- Identifies and prioritises organisations' unique strengths and opportunities.
- Focuses on actions that yield the highest returns with minimal or no investment.
- Co-ordinates elements necessary to enhance and achieve corporate sustainability objectives.
- Undertakes rapid feedback and benchmarking against industry, regional, national, and international benchmarks.
- Includes ESG assessment.

5.2 Catchment assessment

Tailored catchment assessments are available to Water Stewardship Asia Pacific members when they sign up for the Programme. Catchment assessments can help organisations gather and understand the information they need to inform their water stewardship journey and can form the basis of Water Stewardship Plans (see below). Catchment assessments identify:

- Water balance
- Water quality
- Catchment governance
- Challenges
- Risks

5.3 Pre-assessments

Pre-assessment checks are a private process (completed without the oversight or participation of WSAP) between a Site and an Auditor, to determine readiness for a formal audit process. This can be a useful way for Sites to understand where there may be gaps in their processes or systems, or where they have not yet met the verification requirements, without these being identified through the formal audit process as non-conformities.

6. Water Stewards Verification requirements (general)

The minimum requirements for completion of each stage of the Programme are set out below. Each level of Verification (beyond membership) requires completion of steps in the International Water Stewardship Standard. Each step contains criteria to be met and actions to be undertaken, demonstrated through meeting required indicators. The full standard can be found [here](#).

The required actions and steps of the Standard as they relate to each stage of the Programme are set out below.

Water stewardship encourages a process of continual review and improvement. Maintenance Audits and Annual Communications of Progress to WSAP are required to demonstrate Participants' ongoing cycle of doing, checking, reviewing, and improving over time. The Annual Communication of Progress template can be found on the digital members platform.

6.1 Water Stewards Verification Programme Stage One: Member

Financial membership of WSAP is Stage One of the Programme. It is a prerequisite of entry into the Programme and membership must be maintained for all Stages of the Programme. Use of the WSAP Membership Logo is only available to financial members of WSAP.

The requirements for membership are summarised below but may be updated from time-to-time through changes to the Constitution of WSAP. Full details on the membership process are set out in the Constitution, and where there is a conflict between the membership criteria provided here, and in the Constitution, the wording of the Constitution prevails.

Member – minimum requirements:

1. Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. Membership eligibility is open to any person who supports the object of WSAP, which is *the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through the development, communication and promotion of water stewardship in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.*
3. "Person" includes an individual, incorporated body or unincorporated body, and part of an incorporated or unincorporated body, except that an unincorporated body, or part of an incorporated or unincorporated body may only become a member by nominating an individual or incorporated body to be a member on its behalf.
4. Applications for membership must be:
 - a) In writing, stating that the applicant:
 - (i) wishes to become a member of WSAP;
 - (ii) supports the objects of WSAP;
 - (iii) agrees to comply with the constitution and regulations of WSAP; and
 - (iv) undertakes to contribute up to \$10 to WSAP's property, if the company is wound up;
 - b) Accompanied by the first subscription payment; and
 - c) Sent or given to WSAP.
5. If the Board of WSAP prescribe a membership application form, applications for membership must be in the prescribed form. Membership of Water Stewardship Australia Ltd is subject to approval by the Company's Board of Directors. Membership commences at the date of Board approval. More information on membership can be found on the WSAP website: <https://waterstewardship.org.au/membership>
6. Membership is also subject to the payment of fees which are set by WSAP. If the required subscription is not paid by the relevant due date, membership will be suspended until the subscription is paid. Use of the WSAP Membership Logo is prohibited if membership has been suspended or terminated.
7. Membership of WSAP ceases:
 - a) On resignation, expulsion or ceasing to have legal capacity; and

- b) In the case of members nominated to act on behalf of an unincorporated body, or part of an incorporated or unincorporated body who are not members, when another member is nominated.

6.2 Water Stewards Verification Programme Stage Two: Commit

Stage Two of the Programme is the commitment phase. Here, Participants are required to become or stay as members of WSAP; publicly commit to the philosophy, concept, and process of becoming recognised Water Stewards through the Water Stewards Verification Programme; gather and understand information about their Site's water impacts and their catchment as a whole; and then develop a Water Stewardship Strategy and a Water Stewardship Plan.

Commit – minimum requirements:

1. The Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. The Participant must pay a fee to start this Programme
3. The Participant must formally complete the commitment phase of the Programme through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.
4. The Participant must make a public commitment statement to water stewardship (as per the criteria and indicators set in Standard Step 2: Commit and Plan).
5. The Participant must gather and understand shared water challenges and water risks, effects, and opportunities (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 1: Gather and Understand).
6. The Participant must develop a Water Stewardship Strategy (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 2: Commit and Plan).
7. The Participant must develop a Water Stewardship Plan (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 2: Commit and Plan).
8. An Internal Review must be completed by the Participant to the satisfaction of WSAP to demonstrate compliance with the required indicators and criteria (for the Commit stage, as set out above).
9. If the Participant does not wish to continue to Stage Three of the Programme, they must complete an Annual Communication of Progress within 12 months of their Internal Review or submission of their last Annual Communication of Progress (whichever is the most recent).
10. To maintain the Commit level of verification (if not continuing to Stage Three of the Programme), an Annual Communication of Progress must be submitted every 12 months.

6.3 Water Stewards Programme Stage Three: Implement

Stage Three of the Programme is the implementing phase. Here, Participants are required to maintain their membership of WSAP, and implement the actions set out in their Water Stewardship Plan for their Site across the range of water stewardship indicators.

Implement – minimum requirements:

1. The Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. The Participant must formally complete the implementing phase of the Programme through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.

3. The Participant must implement their Water Stewardship Plan¹ (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 3: Implement), covering the following areas: catchment governance; legal and regulatory requirements and the rights of others; water balance; water quality; Important Water-Related Areas; WASH; indirect water use; infrastructure; and progress to related best practice.
4. An Internal Review must be completed by the Participant to the satisfaction of WSAP to demonstrate compliance with the required indicators and criteria (for the Implement Stage as set out above).
5. If the Participant does not wish to continue to Stage Four, but maintain Stage three, of the Programme, they must complete an Annual Communication of Progress within 12 months of their Internal Review or submission of their last Annual Communication of Progress (whichever is the most recent).
6. To maintain the Implement level of verification (if not continuing to Stage Four of the Programme), an Annual Communication of Progress must be submitted every 12 months.

6.4 Water Stewards Verification Programme Stage Four: Verify

Stage Four of the Programme is the verification phase. Here, Participants are required to maintain their membership to WSAP and be audited to verify that they have undertaken the actions set out in their Water Stewardship Plan. They are also required to evaluate the actions taken and their effectiveness, as well as publicly disclosing their efforts.

Verify – minimum requirements:

1. The Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. The Participant must formally complete the verifying phase of the Programme through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.
3. The Participant must evaluate their performance against their Water Stewardship Plan (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 4: Evaluate).
4. The Participant must communicate their performance and disclose their water stewardship efforts (as per the criteria and indicators set out in Standard Step 5: Communicate and disclose).
5. An Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP to demonstrate achievement of the required indicators and criteria (for the Implementing and Verified stages, as set out above).
6. If the Participant does not wish to continue to Stage Five, but maintain Stage four, of the Programme, they must complete an Annual Communication of Progress within 12 months of their last Audit or submission of their last Annual Communication of Progress (whichever is the most recent) in any year that a Maintenance Audit is not completed.
7. To maintain the Verify level of verification (if not continuing to Stage Five of the Programme), a Maintenance Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP once every three years from the date of the first Verify level audit. Such audits will pay special

¹ Water Stewardship Plans should be regularly reviewed and updated. This should be done at an interval no greater than every three years, however ideally it should be completed annually.

attention to any issues raised through the Annual Communication of Progress in the years between audits.

6.5 Water Stewards Programme Stage Five: Advanced Verify Four- and Five-Star

Stage Five of the Programme is the advanced-level verification phase. Here, Participants are required to maintain their membership WSAP, undertake the actions required under the earlier Programme stages, but also complete advanced water stewardship actions and be audited to demonstrate achievement.

Advanced Verify Four-Star – minimum requirements:

1. The Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. The Participant must formally complete the four-star verification phase through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.
3. The Participant must complete the core and advanced Standard indicators to a total of between 40 and 79 points.
4. An Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP to demonstrate achievement of the required indicators and criteria (for the Verify Four-Star stage, as set out above).
5. The Participant must submit an Annual Communication of Progress within 12 months of Audit or last Annual Communication of Progress (whichever is the most recent), unless the organisation decides to carry on to the next Stage of the Programme.
6. To maintain Verify Four-Star level of verification (if not continuing to Verify Five-Star of the Programme), a Maintenance Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP once every three years from the date of the first Verify Four-Star audit. Such audits will pay special attention to any issues raised through the Annual Communication of Progress in the years between audits.

Advanced Verify Five-Star – minimum requirements:

1. The Participant must be a financial member of WSAP.
2. The Participant must formally complete the five-star verification phase through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.
3. The Participant must complete the core and advanced Standard indicators to a total of over 80 points.
4. An Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP to demonstrate achievement of the required indicators and criteria (for the Verify Five-Star stage, as set out above).
5. The Participant must submit an Annual Communication of Progress within 12 months of Audit or last Annual Communication of Progress (whichever is the most recent), unless the organisation decides to carry on to the next Stage of the Programme.
6. To maintain Verify Five-Star level of verification, a Maintenance Audit must be completed by an Authorised Auditor to the satisfaction of WSAP once every three years from the date of the first Verify Five-Star audit. Such audits will pay special attention to any issues raised through the Annual Communication of Progress in the years between audits.

7. Audits, Auditors, and Audit Reports

7.1 Authorised Auditors

1. Only Auditors approved by WSAP may complete audits for the purposes of the Programme. The criteria (qualifications and experience) and process for approving Auditors is to be determined at the sole discretion of WSAP and may change from time-to-time.
2. A list of Authorised Auditors and their contact information is available upon request from WSAP.
3. Authorised Auditors are independent of WSAP and Audits are undertaken as a private agreement between the Auditor and the Programme Participant. Audit costs and fees are to be agreed between the Auditor and the Programme Participant and are to be borne by the Participant. This includes any re-audit checks required to address non-conformities.
4. Auditors are required to provide Programme Participants with a copy of WSAP's Disputes and Complaints policy document.

7.2 Audits

1. Audits should generally follow the structure provided in the ISO19011:2018 Standard Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems. The key elements of Audits are:
 - Audit management
 - Audit preparation
 - Audit process
 - Gathering evidence
 - Evaluation of Audit evidence against Audit criteria
 - Closing the Audit
 - Following up
 - Competence and evaluation of Auditors
2. Audits may be undertaken by a single Auditor or an Audit team, as is appropriate for the scope and scale of the Audit. This is to be determined between the Auditor and Programme Participant.

7.3 Audit documentation

1. All Audits must be completed using the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform. Completed Audit Reports will only be accepted for consideration by WSAP when completed and submitted through the Platform.

7.4 Audit preparation

1. The Auditor shall confirm with WSAP that the Participant is eligible to participate in the Programme (including that the Participant is a current financial member of WSAP and that they have registered as appropriate in the WSAP Members' Platform).
2. The Auditor shall also confirm with WSAP whether the Participant or Site has had their verification approval suspended or withdrawn in the previous two years. If a verification approval has been suspended or withdrawn in that period, then a full Verification Audit must

- be completed before verification approval can be reinstated. Such Audit shall only be undertaken with the agreement of WSAP.
3. WSAP will provide the Auditor with the organisation and/or Site registration number, for use in all Audit documentation.
 4. All necessary documentation, evidence, and information required to meet the requirements of the Programme are to be entered by the Programme Participant in the appropriate section of the WSAP Members' Platform. However, when completing an Audit, the Auditor may require the Programme Participant to provide additional evidence or information in support of their application for verification.
 5. Generally, Audits will require Site visits. However, the scope and nature of such Site visits will depend on the Stage of the Programme which the Participant is pursuing and what information the Auditor requires to assess the accuracy of the information provided by the Programme Participant.
 6. Prior to any Site visit, the Auditor shall:
 - a) Provide the Site with a list of information, documentation, or other materials to be prepared by the Participant prior to the on-Site Audit.
 - b) Agree with the Programme Participant the date(s) and time(s) of the Site visit(s).
 - c) Inform the Site that the Auditor and/or the Audit team requires free and safe access to the relevant facilities at the Site.
 - d) Ensure they have completed any necessary health, safety, and welfare, and biosecurity processes required by the Site, and are aware of any such briefings, trainings, or issuing of protective equipment which may be required by the Programme Participant when the auditor arrives on Site.
 - e) Agree on an Audit agenda with the Site (although this should be led by the Auditor, it may require amendment or adjustment based on the operational or health and safety needs of the Site).
 - f) Determine whether a translator will be required.
 7. Where translators are used, the translators should be independent of the Site and not be a direct employee of the Site, Site owner or subsidiaries of the Site owner being audited. Where translators are used, the Auditor shall record the name(s) and affiliations of translator(s) in the Audit Report.
 8. If the services of a translator who is independent of the Site cannot be procured (for example, due to logistical difficulties), the Auditor shall record the name and affiliation of the translator and justify their use in the Audit Report.
 9. The Auditor shall provide the Site with an estimation of the duration and cost of the verification process.
 10. Prior to the Audit, the Auditor should complete a document review of information submitted by the Site, including as applicable:
 - a) Supplementary materials submitted by the Site at the time of or after engagement of the Auditor;
 - b) Pre-assessment reports or results from pre-assessment work; and
 - c) Other relevant information that has been made available to the Auditor (for example, external stakeholder submissions).
 11. Where a Site has previously undergone a pre-assessment, the Auditor may consider those results but shall not be bound by them.

7.5 Stakeholder announcement

1. At least 28 days prior to an Audit, the Participant shall complete a Stakeholder Announcement setting out the Site's plan to be Audited for the purpose of the Programme.
2. The stakeholder announcement shall be:
 - a) Provided to WSAP for publication on the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific website;
 - b) Published on the organisation or Site's Website and/or social media channels.
3. The Stakeholder Announcement must contain:
 - a) Name of the Site name, Site address, type of Site (e.g., single Site, group operation etc), the name of the Site owner and/or parent company (if applicable).
 - b) Full name of the Auditor, their contact details, and Website address or social media handles.
 - c) Date and location of Audit.
 - d) Information on the type of audit and how it will be conducted.
 - e) An invitation to stakeholders to make submissions to or meet with the auditor(s).
 - f) Information on how stakeholders can make submissions or arrange a meeting with the auditor.
 - g) A statement to the effect that feedback may be provided anonymously to the auditor.
 - h) A statement to the effect that, wherever possible, stakeholders should provide objective evidence to support their feedback or submissions.

7.6 The Audit

1. The Auditor shall gather objective evidence of the Site's conformity with the applicable criteria and indicators for the relevant verification level in the current version of the Standard for every verification and re-verification. The structure of the Audit should generally follow the Auditor guidance given in ISO 19011:2018 - Guidelines for Auditing Management Systems and should follow the audit principles set out above.
2. All Indicators (other than those required to achieve advanced-level verification status) are applicable to all Sites, and the Auditor shall not give a response of "not applicable" to any of these indicators.
3. As part of the Audit, the Auditor shall conduct interviews with representative stakeholders or stakeholder groups to assess conformity of the Site with relevant indicators of the AWS Standard.
4. Interviews shall be conducted with persons or groups representing including but not limited to:
 - a) Catchment authorities;
 - b) Contract suppliers to the Site;
 - c) Civil society organisations;
 - d) Affected communities especially those that use the same water source or are affected by discharge from the Site(s);
 - e) Whenever possible, the local indigenous peoples or communities of the relevant catchment(s) and
 - f) Other identified stakeholders from within the catchment area.
5. The Auditor shall also conduct interviews with Site staff to assess conformity with relevant indicators of the Standard.
6. The Auditor shall raise Non-conformities for advanced indicators if these had been assessed and graded before.

7. The Auditor shall assess (and where needed and possible, visit):
 - a) representative sample of water source locations; and
 - b) a representative sample of water-related discharge locations used by the Site.
8. The Auditor shall record objective evidence of conformity during the audit. Audit checklists, prepared against the Standard, shall be used.

7.7 Grading of audit findings

1. Audit findings shall be assigned (or 'graded') into one of four categories: Conforms, Major Non-conformity, Minor Non-conformity, and Area of Focus.
2. Where the Auditor determines that the Site does not conform with a core indicator, the audit team shall raise a Non-conformity.
3. Non-conformities can only be assigned at the Indicator level. The exception to this is if an Auditor raises multiple Minor Non-conformities to Indicators under the same Criteria during the same Audit. In this exception, the Auditor can assign a Major Non-conformity at the Criteria level.
4. An Area of Focus is defined as an area of concern regarding a process, document, or activity where there is opportunity for improvement.
5. Not meeting an Advanced Indicator means no points are assigned for that Indicator. This may lead to a Site not reaching Four- or Five Star Verification level or being 'downgraded' a Verification level.

7.8 Minor non-conformities

1. Where the Auditor has evaluated an Audit finding and determines the Site does not conform with an indicator, but that the seriousness of the issue does not meet any of the major non-conformity criteria in Section 7.9, the Auditor shall grade the finding as a Minor Non-conformity.
2. The Auditor may recommend the Site for verification stage approval once the Site has submitted an acceptable Corrective Action Plan to address all Minor Non-conformities.
3. The Corrective Action Plan shall include:
 - a) an analysis of the root cause of the Minor Non-conformity;
 - b) the specific corrective action(s) to address the Minor Non-conformity; and
 - c) an appropriate timeframe to implement corrective action(s).
4. For Sites with a verification approval, Minor Non-conformities must be addressed and corrected within 12 months and reported on in the next Annual Communication of Progress.
5. If corrective actions are inadequate to resolve a Minor Non-conformity, the Auditor or WSAP shall upgrade the Audit finding to a Major Non-conformity.

7.9 Major non-conformities

1. The Auditor shall grade the Audit finding as a Major Non-conformity if, in Auditor's evaluation of the seriousness of the issue according to the following criteria:
 - a) the issue represents a systematic problem of substantial consequence;
 - b) the issue is a known and recurring problem that the Site has failed to resolve;
 - c) the issue fundamentally undermines the intent and objectives of water stewardship;
 - or
 - d) the nature of the problem may jeopardise the credibility of WSAP.

2. For each Major Non-conformity identified, WSAP shall require the Site to provide a Corrective Action Plan which includes:
 - a) an analysis of the root cause of the Major Non-conformity; and
 - b) specific corrective action(s) to address the Major Non-conformity.
3. The Auditor shall require that all Major Non-conformities are satisfactorily addressed prior to the relevant stage verification being granted.
4. For Sites seeking first-time verification for the relevant Stage in the Programme, if the Site does not address all open Major Non-conformities within 90 days of the Site being notified accordingly, another full Verification Audit shall be required, following all the steps described in Sections 7.1-7.13 of this document.
5. For Sites already Verified, all Major Non-conformities must be satisfactorily addressed by the Site within 90 days of the Site being notified. If a Major Non-conformity is not addressed within that timeframe, WSAP shall suspend or withdraw the verification approval. Reinstatement shall not occur before another full Audit (for the appropriate stage in the Programme) has been successfully completed. The process for the Audit shall follow all steps as described in Section 7.1-7.13 of this document.
6. WSAP shall review objective evidence for the effectiveness of the Site's corrective actions before closing out or downgrading a major non-conformity.

7.10 Allocation of points

1. Points are allocated for the determination of completion of Verify Four- and Five-Star status.
2. In addition to meeting the requirements for Verification (Stage 4), a total of 1 to 39 points is required to achieve Advanced Verify Four-Star status.
3. In addition to meeting the requirements for Verification (Stage 4), a total of 80 or more points is required to achieve Advanced Verify Five-Star status.
4. The Auditor shall complete the allocation of points within thirty days of completion of the on-Site audit and, in any event, before finalising the audit report (Section 7.11).
5. Prior to allocating points, the Auditor shall review the audit results to confirm that the Site has met, or continues to meet, the requirements of Verification (Stage 4).
6. Where one or more minor non-conformity has been raised against the indicators for Verification (Stage 4), the Auditor should consider the adequacy of corrective action plans (Section 7.8) submitted by the Site when applying clause 7.10.5.
7. Auditors shall award points in accordance with the specific point allocation system given against each of the Advanced Verify indicators. Points are provided for an indicator based on the degree of effort.
8. Verify Four-or Five-Star level shall be determined based on the total sum of points awarded, in any combination, to all advanced-level indicators.

7.11 Audit reporting

1. The Auditor shall prepare a draft Audit Report within six weeks of completing the audit and submit to the Site and WSAP. The audit report shall be considered as final once it is reviewed and approved by WSAP. The Verification decision shall be carried out by a person or group of persons to be determined by WSAP. No Verification can be issued until major non-conformities are resolved in accordance with Section 7.9, above.

2. The Auditor is to lodge the audit report in the Water Stewardship Members' Platform within 12 weeks from the audit date or notify WSAP in writing stating the reason(s) for the delay and the date WSAP will receive the audit report.
3. The specific format of the Audit Report is at the discretion of WSAP and will be available through the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform.
4. The Audit Report shall contain an introductory section which covers the following information:
 - a. all Site name(s), Site address(es), and Site contact details of the appropriate Site or organisation representative;
 - b. name of Auditor and Audit Team members, including names of translator(s) and name of their organisation and/or affiliation, names of technical and/or local experts and their affiliations if used and their contact details, and roles;
 - c. audit date(s), date of audit report approval by WSAP internal process, and date of Verification stage decision.

7.12 Maintenance Audits

1. Maintenance Audits are required to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the relevant steps in the Standard for the appropriate level of attainment or verification (in addition to the submission of an Annual Communication of Progress requirements).
2. Maintenance Audits shall be completed once every three years, unless there are observed patterns of non-conformance, or serious risks identified in an Annual Communication of Progress in which case audit frequency may be brought forward at the discretion of WSAP.
3. Maintenance Audits shall be conducted preferably on-site, however remote Audits may be conducted if all the following apply:
 - a. There are no open Major Non-Conformities and any that were closed previously have been verified by at least one on Site surveillance.
 - b. There are no active Minor Non-Conformities that involve an on-Site aspect where the corrective action can only be verified as closed by an on-Site visit.
 - c. Previous Audits have revealed a high level of commitment and robustness for Water Stewardship and have demonstrated a proven pattern of continuous improvement.
 - d. At least one member of an audit team has been at the Site on a prior audit.
4. In addition, there may be other extenuating circumstance (for example, size and complexity of Site, access, travel restrictions, pandemic, war, or other) that may justify remote maintenance audits. The Participant or an Auditor may make a request for an off-Site Maintenance Audit in extenuating circumstances must be made by Participant Organisation or an Auditor in writing to WSAP. Approval of such a request is at the sole discretion of WSAP.
5. The scope of maintenance audits shall include, at a minimum:
 - a. review and follow-up on all Non-Conformities raised at the previous audit;
 - b. evaluation of known areas of weakness (for example, risk factors);
 - c. a review of shared water challenges; and
 - d. additional areas for review at the auditor's discretion, such that after three periods of maintenance audits, all requirements are evaluated at least once.
6. During each Maintenance Audit, the Auditor shall review, at a minimum, objective evidence for conformity in the following areas:
 - a. leadership commitment;
 - b. a prioritised list of shared water challenges and how these issues are currently being addressed;
 - c. the implementation of the water stewardship plan and performance disclosure;



- d. documentation demonstrating legal, regulatory and rights compliance;
- e. water balance performance;
- f. water quality performance;
- g. performance against the Site's Important Water-Related Areas;
- h. participation in catchment governance;
- i. provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH);
- j. stakeholder commentary on performance; and
- k. transparency of communications relative to water-related legal compliance.

7.13 Maintenance Audit Reports

1. The Auditor shall prepare a draft Maintenance Audit Report within 30 days of completing the audit and submit to WSAP via the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific Members' Platform. The maintenance audit report shall be considered as final once it is reviewed and approved by WSAP or its agent. The maintenance audit report shall cover, at a minimum, the information specified in Section 7.12.5.

Note: WSAP or its agent shall request that the Site responds promptly to all non-conformities by providing root cause analyses and corrective actions and developing an agreed-upon timeline for resolution.

2. The Maintenance Report shall clearly specify the Auditor's overall recommendation as to:
 - a) whether or not the verification should be maintained (in other words, continuing verification); and
 - b) if applicable, the verification stage (Verify, Advanced Verify Four-Star, or Advanced Verify Five-Star) achieved.

8. Suspension and Termination

8.1 Suspension

1. Should a Verified Site fail to resolve Non-Conformities within the required time period(s) as set out above, the Auditor shall prepare a Suspension Report and submit it to WSAP within five working days.
2. Upon receipt of a Suspension Report, WSAP shall suspend the Site's Verification Certificate.
3. WSAP may publish a notice of suspension on the Water Stewardship Asia Pacific website.
4. The Suspension Report shall give a rationale for suspension and provide a description of all unresolved Non-Conformities.
5. WSAP may publish the Suspension Report on its website.
6. No Water Stewardship Brand Marks or related claims commensurate with the verification level that the Site has been suspended from² may be used by any Site with a suspended Verification Certificate.
7. Suspended Sites shall have twelve months to address the cause for suspension before Verification Termination (see section 8.3, below).
8. WSAP shall not reinstate a suspended approval until the Site has successfully undergone another Verification Audit.

² For example, a Site that had achieved Verified level but has had that Verification suspended may still use the WSAP Member Brand Mark.

9. WSAP preserves the right to suspend the verification approval of any Site which violates the spirit and intent of Water Stewardship or the objectives of WSAP and its related companies and organisations. The Verification Certificate holder assumes responsibility for all Sites named on the Certificate, including the actions of a Site which may be added to the Certificate through change of ownership, merger or acquisition.

8.2 Expiration

1. If a Participant has not supplied the required Annual Communication of Progress or completed the required Maintenance Audit within a specified timeframe (set out in relevant stages in section 7 above), the site's Verification Certificate shall expire on the next business day.
2. WSAP may at its sole discretion extend a required submission or audit period beyond the date required. Requests for extension must be made in writing to WSAP.
3. Within 12 months of the date of expiration, a Site may apply for reinstatement of their Verification Certificate with WSAP. WSAP will not reinstate an expired Certificate until the Site has successfully undergone another Verification Audit.

8.3 Termination

1. If the Site has not:
 - a) resolved the cause of suspension within twelve months (as set out in 8.1 above); or
 - b) completed a Verification Audit to have the Verification Certificate reinstated (as set out in 8.2 above);WSAP will terminate the verification and notify the Site that they are ineligible to apply for WSAP verification for a period of no less than 36 months.
2. WSAP may publish the termination report on its website.

9. Verification requirements for groups and multiple Sites

9.1 What is a group?

1. A group is a collection of independently operated Sites that share common characteristics, such as:
 - The Sites **share a catchment**. This could be either the source water catchment (e.g. multiple Sites abstracting water from a single river or lake) or discharge catchment (e.g. multiple Sites abstracting water from two different catchments but discharging into the same receiving water body).
 - There is a **shared governance structure** between the Sites (for instance an overarching water delivery body (such as an irrigation district/company), parent company (e.g. multiple farms owned by one farming company in the same catchment), or an overarching processing body that can exercise an element over control over suppliers).
 - There is a **shared system of water management**. This could be that water is delivered to the various Sites by one delivery organisation/body, or that Sites have come together to manage water allocation together (such as a catchment group that manages water takes during times of low flow/drought).
 - The Sites will have **shared stakeholders** and/or catchment partners.

- The Sites will have a central mechanism through which to participate positively in **catchment governance**. This could be through a parent company, water delivery body, or catchment water management body (such as an incorporated society).
3. Any group of Sites seeking Group Verification must be approved in advance by WSAP.

9.2 Requirements for group verification

The management and governance structure of the Group must be clearly defined to ensure the group meets the requirements for group verification (see 9.1 above).

A water stewardship Group Coordinator (this could be a person or unit) must be established for the group. The Group Coordinator will have responsibility for managing the development, implementation, and conformity with the relevant steps in the Programme across the group's Sites.

The Group Coordinator's responsibilities include:

1. Establishing a water stewardship framework across all Sites that supports the group's commitment to support the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through water stewardship.
2. Ensuring that each Site conforms with the requirements of the relevant stages in the Programme, steps in the Standard, and that the group's Audited Self-Management process ensures the same.
3. Gathering and compiling evidence to demonstrate the compliance of each Site group with the Programme and Standard requirements.
4. Ensuring that all records (including Audited Self-Management documentation, audit reports, regulatory compliance reports, non-compliance records etc) are maintained and kept up to date.
5. Preparing, approving, and reviewing all documents, processes, and procedures to be used by Sites and the group in relation to water stewardship.
6. Ensuring all group members understand and are committed to water stewardship, its aims, and objectives.
7. Carrying out (or providing for an external provider to carry out) the necessary internal audits of Sites.
8. Providing the necessary evidence and documentation to auditors to demonstrate compliance with the relevant requirements of the Programme and the Standard.
9. Ensuring that non-conformities identified during internal and external audit processes are addressed.
10. Ensuring the Audited Self-Management system meets the requirements of the Programme (see section 6) and that Sites within the Group are meeting those requirements.
11. Gathering and providing evidence that Sites are meeting the Programme requirements through the Group Audited Self-Management process.
12. Preparing, approving, and keeping up to date all documents, processes, policies, and procedures for each Site in relation to water stewardship and the Audited Self-Management reporting and monitoring system, and the timing and results of internal audits.
13. Ensuring all relevant staff members and workers have a good understanding of water stewardship, its principles, and objectives.
14. Following up on and having responsibility for ensuring non-conformities identified in external audits and through the internal Audited Self-Management process are addressed.
15. Maintaining an up-to-date list of Sites within the group, including key personnel.

16. Uploading maps of the catchment(s), Sites, and other relevant areas to water stewardship (such as important water related areas).
17. Internal and external audit reports on each Site.
18. Establishing and overseeing internal complaints and whistle-blowing policies and procedures in relation to water stewardship.

9.3 Audited self-management system

The group shall operate an internal audited self-management (ASM) system that meets the requirements of the Standard and the steps required to meet the Programme requirements.

The ASM will include:

1. Clear process and implementation flow from water stewardship strategy to water stewardship plan (which may be at the group or Site level, see above), to water stewardship actions and implementation at the Site level.
2. An internally driven audit system (which may be completed by external contractors to the group) to ensure Sites are compliant with the stages and requirements of the Programme and the relevant steps in the Standard. This will include the necessary processes and procedures being agreed to between the Site and the Group Coordinator to include documented frequency, process, designated responsibility at the Site level, reporting, and an appropriate scoring or grading system.
3. Internal audits at Sites must be completed on an at-least annual basis.
4. If Site audits are to be conducted internally from within the organisation or company representing the group or Group Coordinator, there must be sufficient ethical barriers or walls in place to ensure independence of the audit process and prevent undue influence from either the Site or overarching body on the auditor.
5. Documented description of Site operations relevant to water stewardship, including roles and responsibilities of relevant personnel.
6. Procedures for addressing non-conformities or water stewardship risks and issues identified during business-as-usual operations (that is, outside of internal or external audits).
7. Annual reporting processes for populating the Annual Communication of Progress as required by the Programme.
8. Procedures for addressing non-conformities identified through internal and external audits.
9. An internal appeal process if Site representatives dispute internal audit findings.

9.4 Documentation requirements

1. If the Sites are operationally managed or owned independently from each other, there must be a signed or otherwise confirmed agreement between the Sites and the Group Coordinator agreeing to the group approach to participation in the Programme.
2. If the Sites are not operationally managed or owned independently from each other, the chain of command or hierarchical relationship between the Site, the overarching organisation or company, and the Group Coordinator will be clearly documented, including relevant roles and responsibilities of personnel.
3. Each Site within the group will have (at least) access to the Standard and the *Water Stewards Verification Programme Verification and Audit Requirements*.
4. The agreement will contain at least the following:



- a) A commitment by each group member and the Group Coordinator to support the protection and enhancement of the natural environment through water stewardship;
- b) A commitment to fulfil the relevant requirements of the International Water Stewardship Standard and applicable *Water Stewards Verification Programme Verification and Audit Requirements*;
- c) A commitment to provide the Group Coordinator with all necessary information to meet the relevant requirements of the International Water Stewardship Standard and applicable *Water Stewards Verification Programme Verification and Audit Requirements*;
- d) A commitment to fully participate in audit requirements (both internal and external audit);
- e) A commitment to report non-conformities;
- f) An internal control mechanism that provides for a means of removing the Site from the Programme should the Site fail to meet its water stewardship obligations and/or take necessary corrective actions to address non-conformities.

9.5 Water Stewardship Strategy

1. Step 2.3 of the Standard requires the development of a water stewardship strategy that defines the overarching mission, vision, and goals of the organisation towards water stewardship in line with the Standard.
2. For group verification, one Water Stewardship Strategy may be developed for the organisation, covering all Sites. Where the water stewardship goals for Sites within the organisation differ from each, these must be separately identified within the Strategy.

9.6 Water Stewardship Plan

1. Step 2.3 of the Standard requires the development of a water stewardship plan, which includes for each target area:
 - How it will be measured and monitored
 - Actions to achieve, maintain or exceed it
 - Planned timeframes to achieve it
 - Financial budgets allocated for actions
 - Positions of persons responsible for actions and achieving targets
 - Where possible/appropriate, the links between each target and the achievement of best practice to help address shared water challenges and the water stewardship outcomes.
2. Organisations seeking group verification may elect whether to submit one Water Stewardship Plan for the entire organisation, or separate water stewardship plans for each Site. If one Water Stewardship Plan is prepared for the group, it must have separate sections for each Site with tailored or bespoke actions for each Site.
3. Factors to consider when determining whether one or multiple water stewardship plans should be developed:
 - Whether each Site operates as a discrete business unit or as an operating unit of the larger business. For example, are the Sites branches of a company such as processing plants (in which case a single Water Stewardship Plan may be appropriate), or independently operating businesses such as separately owned farms in a catchment group or irrigation scheme/district.

- Whether the Sites are homogenous in terms of production system.
 - If there are large distances between Sites and whether there are significant differences across the catchment that require different systems and approaches (for example, this could be to do with differing receiving water quality status, the location or state of Important Water-Related Areas, etc.)
 - Whether there are significant differences in the actions and approaches across and between Sites required to meet water stewardship targets.
4. Where multiple water stewardship strategies and/or plans are developed, reporting against the plans and strategies may be done at the group level.

9.7 Annual Communication of Progress

1. The Annual Communication of Progress is a requirement of the Programme and must be submitted to WSAP in years when a full audit is not required.
2. For group operations, one Annual Communication of Progress can be submitted, but the information included must cover all Sites within the operation.

9.8 Addition of Sites

1. If new Sites are added to an operation after commencement of the Programme, the new Site must move through all required steps of the Programme to reach the same level of verification as other Sites in the group, before being included in the group verification.
2. A new Site cannot be “added in” at the same level of verification as the pre-existing Sites within the operation without completing the necessary steps in the Standard or completing the relevant auditing and reporting requirements of WSAP.
3. For example, a farming company owns three irrigated farms in a catchment which have completed the necessary steps to become verified Water Stewards. If a new farm is acquired, the new farm will need to complete water stewardship information gathering, planning, and implementation separately from the other farms before joining the group verification.

9.9 Group-level audits

1. Audits are required at various stages of the Programme. Where an audit is required to meet the requirements of the relevant stage, an audit shall be undertaken of the group operation against the relevant steps of the Standard and the group verifications outlined above.
2. Further, audits against the Standard and requirements shall be conducted of a representative sample of Sites. The number of Sites to be sampled shall be determined according to Table 1 set out below:

Table 1: Group sample size requirements

Number of group members/Sites	Minimum number of Sites to sample
2	1
3-10	2
11-15	3
16-20	4
21-30	6
31-40	8

41-50	10
>50	15

3. The Sites to be audited in the group samples shall be randomly selected by the Auditor, unless the Auditor or Group Coordinator has identified specific Sites require targeted auditing due to identified water stewardship risks or issues (such as in the Annual Communication of Progress), or previous non-conformities. The auditor must document the reasons for any targeted Sites being audited.
4. All Sites within the group must be externally audited at least once within any 10-year period.

9.10 Non-Conformities on group operations

1. WSAP sets a threshold of 5 per cent (%) for the observed major non-conformity rate of members within a group operation, rounded to the nearest whole number. If the threshold is exceeded (that is, the number of non-conforming individual members is equal to, or greater than, this number), then it signifies a systemic problem with the group's ASM process.

EXAMPLE 1. GROUP OPERATION

13 member Sites were sampled, and 1 major non-conformity was identified.

Non-conformity rate: 1 NC per 13 Sites = 7.7% (rounded up to 8%)

Observed rate (8%) is greater than threshold (5%)

Conclusion: Systemic problem with the group's ASM.

EXAMPLE 2. GROUP OPERATION

24 member Sites were sampled, and 1 major non-conformity was identified.

Non-conformity rate: 1 NC per 24 Sites = 4.2% (rounded down to 4%)

Observed rate (4%) is less than threshold (5%)

Conclusion: No systematic problem with the group's ASM.

2. If a systemic problem with the ASM process is found, the Auditor shall raise a major non-conformity against the Group Coordinator and advise WSAP.
3. If the major non-conformity is not addressed by the group within 30 days, WSAP may suspend the current verification until such time as:
 - a) The group has addressed non-conforming individual members;
 - b) The Group Coordinator provides documented evidence/plan of the actions being undertaking to rectify the systemic problem; and
 - c) The group undergoes an audit that includes a follow up on non-conforming Site plus another randomly selected Site, based upon the Auditor's discretion.
 - d) Note that no Water Stewardship labels or claims may be used by any Site with a suspended verification.
4. If a major non-conformity or non-conformities are identified at only one Site within a Group, the Group may still receive a Verification Certificate, but this will only apply to those Sites where there were no major Non-Conformities detected.

9.11 Group operations audit report

1. The reporting requirements for single Sites (as outlined above) shall apply to audits of group operations. In addition to single Site reporting requirements, group operations audit reports shall contain the following information:
 - a) Name and contact details of the Group Coordinator responsible to liaise with WSAP;
 - b) A description of the group structure and relationships; and
 - c) A register of all Sites in the group suitable to be used as a schedule to the certificate with name and complete address and contact details for each Site.
2. The audit report for group operations shall also contain:
 - a) Commentary on the audit team's assessment of the competency and impartiality of the group to maintain conformance with the AWS Standard and the Water Stewards group requirements;
 - b) Commentary on the Auditor's perception of the competency of the internal auditors to undertake internal audits as part of a group operation;
 - c) Commentary on the reliance that can be placed upon the internal auditor's finding of conformance / non-conformance of the group;
 - d) A comparison of the Auditor's findings with the findings made by the Group Coordinator, and the reliance that can be placed upon the Group Coordinator's findings of conformance / non-conformance;
 - e) A copy of the sampling plan used with a justification for use;
 - f) Recommendations for subsequent audits or training, including any sampling that is recommended.

10. Annual Communication of Progress Report

To fulfil the requirements of each stage of the Programme (except for Member level), Participants must submit an Annual Communication of Progress report to WSAP through the Members' Platform, unless the organisation or Site is completing a Verification or Maintenance Audit in that same calendar year.

The full requirements, timing, and a template for the Annual Communication of Progress Report are set out in the WSAP's Annual Communication of Progress Report Policy which is available in the Members' Platform.

11. Statements, branding, and labelling

Members of WSAP and Participants in the Programme may make different marketing and promotional statements and claims as to their progress on the Programme, depending on the level of attainment.

Explanation of the permitted use and rules of water stewardship claims and the use of WSAP's Brand Marks are set out in *Statements, Branding, and Labelling Policy* document, available on the Membership Platform.

12 Disputes and complaints

For information on disputes and complaints, please refer to *WSAP Disputes and Complaints Policy*, available on the Membership Platform.



Verification and Audit Requirements

Version: Final

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Glossary

Alliance for Water Stewardship	Also known as AWS, a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation that developed the International Water Stewardship Standard as a means of objectively determining water stewardship actions and indicators against which organisations can be assessed.
Annual Communication of Progress	A requirement of the Water Stewards Verification Programme that must be submitted to WSAP using the prescribed template, in any 12-month period that an Audit is not completed.
Audit	The process of obtaining and checking records, systems, processes, and actions against specified standards or requirements. In this case, the process of doing so against the requirements of the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Audited Self-Management	An established system whereby sites within a group are responsible for day-to-day implementation of water stewardship actions and planning, but which are subject to group-organised audit processes.
Auditor	Person who performs an audit.
Authorised Auditor	Auditors that have been approved by WSAP to complete audits of Water Stewards Verification Programme Participants and their actions.
Brand marks	Logos associated with Water Stewardship Australia membership and the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Catchment	The physical zone around a Site which provides its water supply (upstream) and where its run-off and wastewater go (downstream). A surface water catchment is defined by the topography of the land. The boundary is the line of highest ground around a river basin, defined from topographical maps or satellite studies. Groundwater is stored in, and moves through, permeable geological layers known as aquifers via interconnected voids or pore spaces (its porosity). Some groundwater catchment boundaries are fixed (by a geological boundary) and some movable. A movable boundary is defined by a 'groundwater divide' whose position can move due to seasonal effects or the impact of water abstractions.
Corrective Action Plan	A planned course of action to eliminate the cause of a detected non-conformity or other undesirable situation.
Criteria/criterion	Criteria are the conditions that need to be met to achieve a water stewardship component.
Group Coordinator	Organisation that will have responsibility for managing the development, implementation, and conformity with the relevant steps in the Programme across the group's Sites.

Group Verification	The Water Stewards Verification Programme process by which an organised body of persons or enterprises that share similar characteristics, are part of a shared audited self-management system, and, for assessment purposes, are considered as a single entity (e.g., groups of farmers, of retail stores, of distributors).
Important Water-Related Area	The specific water-related areas of a catchment that, if impaired or lost, would adversely impact the environmental, social, cultural, or economic benefits derived from the catchment in a significant or disproportionate manner.
Indicator	A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure the achievement of outcomes, to reflect the changes connected to a standards system or to help assess the performance of an organisation. Indicators used in the Water Stewards Verification Programme are those set out in the International Water Stewardship Standard.
International Water Stewardship Standard	The International Water Stewardship assessment standard developed by the Alliance for Water Stewardship.
Maintenance Audit	An Audit completed to demonstrate ongoing compliance with the requirements for a particular stage of the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Major non-conformity	A serious non-conformity determined by an Auditor that meets the criteria for major non-conformities.
Minor non-conformity	A non-conformity determined by an Auditor as not meeting the criteria for major non-conformities.
Non-conformity	Failure of a Programme Participant to conform to any requirement of the Standard or the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Participant	An organisation or company that has joined Water Stewardship Asia Pacific and has formally committed to participating in the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Internal review	A form of internal audit completed internally by a Participant (this could be an employee or contractor engaged by the Participant) to determine compliance against the requirements of the Water Stewards Verification Programme and the International Water Stewardship Standard.
Second-party Audit	An external audit conducted by a relevant interested party outside of the organisation.
Site	A single location, including the building(s) and the property over which the Programme Participant has control, which is using or managing water.
Suspension report	A report setting out the reasons for a site's suspension from the Programme.

Third-party Audit	An external audit done by independent organisations who have no vested interest in the organisation or company being audited. Third-party audits are usually conducted to demonstrate conformity with specific requirement and may result in registration, recognition or licensing if passed. Conversely, failing a third-party audit may result in a sanction or penalty being imposed.
Verification	Process by which a Programme Participant’s water stewardship planning and actions are independently audited as achieving the requirements of the Water Stewards Verification Programme stages.
Verification Certificate	Certificate produced by Water Stewardship Pty Limited and given to Programme Participants to signify that the Participant has reached a particular stage within the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
WASH	Water for sanitation and hygiene. Includes safe drinking water, private toilets, and wastewater treatment. Safe WASH is a prerequisite to health, and contributes to improved livelihoods, school attendance and dignity and helps to create resilient communities living in healthy environments.
Water Roadmap	A strategic diagnostic process and tool delivered by Water Stewardship Asia Pacific which assists organisations and companies to identify and implement effective water and wastewater management practices.
Water Stewards Verification Programme	A stepwise programme owned and operated by WSAP that utilises the International Water Stewardship Standard
Water Stewardship	The responsible use of freshwater that is socially beneficial and environmentally sustainable, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) water use that is <i>environmentally sustainable</i> - in that it maintains and improves biodiversity and ecological processes at the watershed level; and (b) water use that is <i>socially beneficial</i> - in that it recognises basic human needs and ensures long-term benefits (including economic benefits) for local people and society at large; and (c) water use that is <i>economically sustainable</i> - in that it minimises corporate risk while ensuring that water is available for a multitude of economic benefits and uses over the long-term. (d) water use that is <i>culturally sensitive</i> – in that it recognises and provides for the importance of freshwater to local indigenous peoples and communities.
Water Stewardship Asia Pacific	The trading name of Water Stewardship Australia Limited.
Water Stewardship Australia Ltd	Water Stewardship Australia Ltd is a member-based organisation with a mission to work with companies, water users, governments, and communities to protect and

	enhance the sustainability of water resources through water stewardship.
Water Stewardship Plan	A Plan developed by a Programme Participant to set out actions the site will take to address identified water challenges as a requirement of the Water Stewards Verification Programme.
Water Stewardship Pty Ltd	Water Stewardship Pty Ltd is a proprietary company registered in Australia.
Water Stewardship Strategy	A water-focused strategy developed by a Programme Participant that addresses water-related social, environmental, cultural, and financial issues and which connects to the Participant's broader business strategy.