Promoting Water Stewardship 2030

Transformative public, private and citizen action to accelerate achievement of SDG6



Region

Global

Partners

Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS).

Water Witness International (WWI).

Ceres

Background information

Increased competition among different water users and lack of governance frameworks results in overuse and pollution of surface water and over-abstraction of groundwater, which in turn creates public health risks.

Project objectives

Establish credible water stewardship as a globally adopted practice, expected norm and more effective approach to support the achievement of SDG6 targets and water security for all.

Beneficiaries

All major water users: Citizens (incl. women and young people), academic sector, civil society. Countries / governments at national and sub-national level (policy makers and public authorities. Private sector (global and domestic incl. SMEs).

Costs & Duration

Total: CHF 15'077'000
SDC: CHF 3'806'000
2026 – 2028

Contact

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Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC

Water is a key resource with competing uses and users. Addressing shared water challenges therefore needs to be collectively managed and implemented, from basin to global levels. Water stewardship fosters responsible, sustainable and equitable management of freshwater resources, with a particular focus on participation of the private sector. It is a multi-stakeholder approach that contributes to reaching SDG6 targets and water security for all.

The scale and immediacy of the global water crisis, and its significance for social justice and economic progress are striking, and are exacerbated by a warming planet, rapidly escalating demand and difficult governance challenges. Water security has a profound impact on human dignity, health and opportunities for education and economic empowerment. In response to these risks and opportunities, the programme aims to see water stewardship become a truly transformative movement, spearheaded by leading organisations, governments and businesses. Three strategic partners implement individual programmes of work throughout phase III, leveraging respective expertise and audiences (investors and companies for Ceres, corporations as large water users for AWS across four priority industrial sectors – agriculture, food and beverage, ICT and textiles, and civil society for WWI) while building on complementarities and developing joint communication and advocacy. Feedback loops are supported between the local and global levels.

AWS, WWI and Ceres aim to collectively demonstrate the urgent need and align their voices behind a powerful call for change and equip stakeholders with the knowledge needed to trigger both ***change in behavior*** (adoption of water stewardship) and ***change in systems*** (to enable water stewardship through policy, transparent communications, processes, regulations etc.), while tracking evidence to support learning and scaling. As a result, more and more companies, communities, and governments will implement explicit strategies that minimize freshwater abstraction and reduce the discharge of untreated wastewater into the environment. In doing that they will respect the needs of the local society and economy, thereby increasing water security for local communities at the benefit of the most vulnerable people comprising leading businesses, NGOs, public sector agencies and academic institutes. The members unite behind the **Alliance for Water Stewardship** mission, to *"promote the responsible use of freshwater that is socially and economically beneficial and environmentally sustainable"*. The AWS Standard is the only globally applicable framework for major water users to understand their water use and impacts, and to work collaboratively and transparently for sustainable water management within a catchment context. The AWS Standard is consistently recognised as global best practice in water stewardship.

Ceres

As an advocacy organization, Ceres supports investors and companies in their efforts to turn responsible water management into a fundamental business practice, advancing stewardship to address growing demand, wasteful use, and pollution. It is the only organization that specifically supports dialogue between investors and companies on water issues. Despite supporting many investors and multinationals from North America, it has a good outreach in Europe and Asia as well as globally through networks.

Water Witness International

Water Witness International leads action, research and advocacy for a fair water future for all people. It combines detailed on-the-ground research with a strong advocacy mechanism. Operating primarily as a watchdog institution, it works with partners to investigate the impacts of the European consumption and global supply chains on water security in developing countries. WWI combines detailed on-the-ground research with a strong advocacy mechanism, working with partners to investigate the impacts of European consumption and global supply chains on water security in developing countries, and supporting the strengthening of civil society organizations from the Global South.

Additional information:

AWS: https://a4ws.org

WWI: https://waterwitness.org