

Process Guidance Document for a Global Water Roundtable

Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to describe the process of initiating and coordinating a Global Water Roundtable (GWRT). The goal of the GWRT is to develop performance-based standards that reduce to acceptable levels the key environmental and social impacts associated water use and discharge. The water stewardship standards can be the basis for a certification program. They also can be used to benchmark other standards; incorporated into existing certification programs; adopted for government programs; or be the foundation for buyer and investment screens.

Guidelines for developing credible environmental and social standards through a transparent multi-stakeholder process are outlined in the International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labeling (ISEAL) Alliance's Code of Good Practice for Setting Social and Environmental Standards.

The Global Water Roundtable process document, written by Alliance for Water Stewardship, is based on the ISEAL guidelines, WWF's (an AWS facilitator/organizer) extensive experience in creating standards and certification programs, and input from roundtable participants.

The document emphasizes the need for standards to be:

- Built on consensus regarding the most significant impacts
- Focused on reducing those impacts
- Created by a broad and diverse set of stakeholders
- Developed through a transparent process
- Science-based
- Measurable and performance-based

The Global Water Roundtable will further revise and customize this document after the launch of the roundtable.

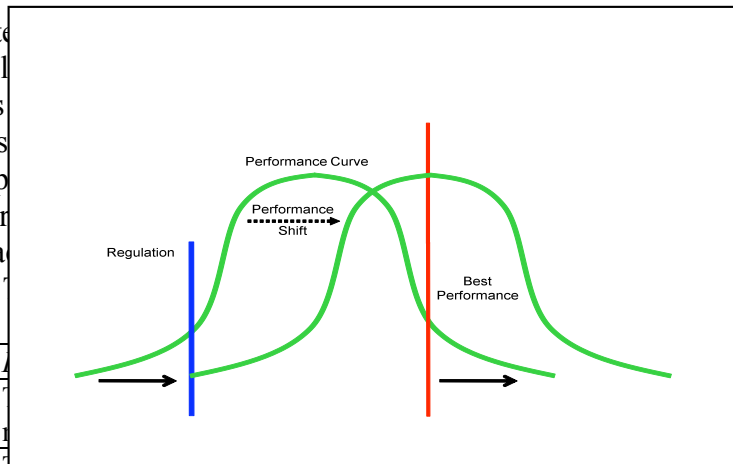
Roundtable Purpose and Timeline

The Global Water Roundtable will be a platform for the development of performance-based standards that reduce to acceptable levels the key environmental and social impacts associated with water use and discharge.

Global Water Roundtable standards will be unique because they simultaneously help transform industry and protect the environment. Standards developed by roundtables are generally the most robust environmental standards available, in large part because they are geared toward the best performers in the industry, as illustrated below. Setting the bar at the "best performer" level will give more credibility to the standards and motivate others in the industry to adopt them. These standards are credible because they are created by a diverse group of the world's leading industry

stakeholders, based on the most current related science, measurable instead of subjective, and have mechanisms for continual improvement.

The Global Water Roundtable will agree on goals and an iterative process referred to as “continuous improvement” and positive impacts will be recognized. Once agreement is reached, the next phase is to implement the previous phase.



Water roundtables have. After participants will follow an iterative process to address social impacts (sometimes referred to as “continuous improvement”). There are both negative and positive impacts. Positive impacts are used for mitigation. Next, the iterative process builds on the previous phase as an example.

			<i>example</i>
<i>Impact</i>			pollution
<i>Principle</i>	The guiding principle for addressing the impact	Maintain a healthy weight	Restore and Maintain Water Quality
<i>Criteria</i>	The area to focus on to address the impact	Food consumption *	Nutrients in effluents
<i>Indicator</i>	What to measure in order to determine the extent of the impact	Calories	Nitrogen concentration in the effluent
<i>Target</i>	The number and/or performance level that must be reached to determine if the impact is being minimized **	< 10 calories/pound of body weight/day	4 mg/L total nitrogen in effluent

*For this example, only one criterion is listed, even though there often is more than one criterion for each principle, as well as multiple indicators for each criterion.

**A number is not necessary when an indicator cannot be measured (e.g., the indicator for the principle “obey the law,” which might be “documentation of compliance with national and local regulations”).

The Global Water Roundtable will strive to develop standards that are simple yet address the major issues related to use. For this reason, the Global Water Roundtable will minimize the number of criteria per principle and the number of indicators per criterion. Although there will be some variation, GWRT participants will agree upon 1-3 criteria per principle and 1-3 indicators per criterion.

There will be one measurable water stewardship target per indicator. The only exception to this may be when standards are created for more than one type of sector (e.g., agriculture vs. beverage companies), but even then there will only be one target per indicator per sector. The specific number of the target, for the specific temperature level, may vary by watershed, as some conditions of the targets in the standard will be set by the receiving body.

When completed, the water stewardship standards will be given to a standards-holding entity, yet to be defined, that will be responsible for certifying water users through a third-party auditing process. The AWS or the GWRT is never responsible for certification. The standards-holding entity will be

required to evaluate and, if needed, amend the standards at least once every 5 years to address new scientific data, or technological advances relevant to industry performance.

The standards also can be used to benchmark other standards; incorporated into existing certification programs; adopted for government programs; and, potentially, be the foundation for buyer and investment screens.

Global Water Roundtable Participants

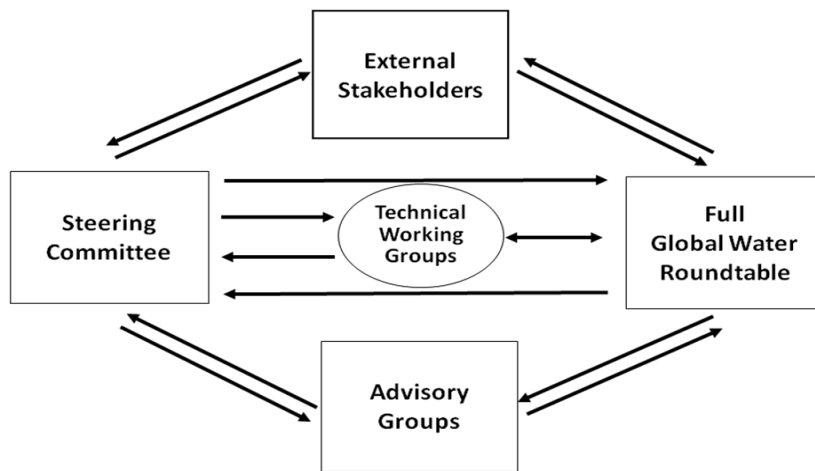
A key aspect of the GWRT is engaging multiple stakeholders to build consensus about the key impacts to be addressed as well as in the process of creating standards. This includes environmental and social non-governmental organizations (NGOs); academics; and major users of water such as water utilities and management authorities, and key sectors such as agriculture, beverage, mining, chemicals, energy, tourism, and others.

Anybody can participate in the GWRT. The decision to do so is voluntary. The only condition is that they support the process. If certain stakeholder groups are not well-represented in a roundtable, the decision-making body for the roundtable should proactively encourage participation from those groups. Factors to consider to ensure that the GWRT includes a mix of stakeholders are:

- **Geography:** Stakeholders will include a mix of people from local, regional, national and international levels, with an emphasis on people from the regions where watersheds are most threatened and water risk is most severe. Roundtable meetings will be held at various locations around the world to encourage participation. If English-speaking people want to attend a meeting in a country where English is not the native language, attempts will be made to provide simultaneous translation.
- **Expertise:** People with different areas of expertise will be involved.
- **Key water users:** As mentioned above, organizations and companies that are major users of water need to be well represented on the GWRT

Role of Global Water Roundtable Participants

Not all stakeholders will be willing or able to participate in the GWRT at the same level. They can participate at one or more of the following levels:



Full Global Water Roundtable: The full group of stakeholders interested in reviewing and commenting on the progress of the GWRT and committed to supporting its goals and objectives.

External Stakeholders: Individuals who do not attend GWRT meetings, but are free to provide input on GWRT documents and participate in GWRT surveys.

Steering Committee: The Steering Committee (SC) will serve as the decision-making body and be made up of approximately 5-15 people. Members of the SC will agree upon and document its decision-making process at the onset of the Global Water Roundtable. (See the “Decision-Making Process” section below for more information about committee structure/roles.) SC members will commit to the funding and time (usually two in-person meetings and six phone meetings per year) to participate in the GWRT. To eliminate confusion when key decisions need to be made, SC members will not represent more than one group (e.g., an NGO and coalition of NGOs).

Technical Working Groups: These groups will be made up of people, such as researchers and scientists and processors, with expertise in a sector. They will provide the Global Water Roundtable with input on technical aspects of water impacts but do not provide input on any political discussions related to the GWRT. Roles of the groups can include delivering policy-neutral advice on the state of research, identifying significant gaps or areas of disagreement, recommending terms of reference for additional research needs, and developing draft standards. They suggest appropriate indicators and performance levels and then justify such recommendations.

Advisory Groups: These groups will be made up of Global Water Roundtable participants who offer advice on particular aspects and results of the roundtable process or provide collective input on their needs as a stakeholder group (e.g., retail advisory committee or government advisory committee).

Global Water Roundtable Coordinator: The Global Water Roundtable will be coordinated by a staff member who is charged with keeping the roundtable process moving forward and in line with ISEAL guidelines for creating standards. Responsibilities of the coordinator will include, but not be limited to, co-facilitating meetings, coordinating technical working groups, publicizing and handling logistics for meetings, being the primary contact on issues related to the roundtable, and

maintaining content on the roundtable website. AWS will have an equal voice in the decision-making process.

The decision to participate in the Full Global Water Roundtable or as an external stakeholder will be made by the individual. Members of the decision-making body will be chosen by GWRT participants. Members of technical working groups and advisory groups will be chosen by the decision-making body. The GWRT coordinator will be chosen by AWS and approved by the GWRT's SC.

The names of GWRT coordinators and the technical working group, advisory group and decision-making body members will be posted on the roundtable website.

Global Water Roundtable and Regional Initiatives

Because water is a local issue, any credible global program must fully address regional aspects of water as well; this will be done through regional initiatives associated with both the AWS and the work of the GWRT. A regional initiative is comprised of stakeholders that are focused on water issues in a specific geographic region (i.e. Latin America or Europe). Once created, a global water stewardship program will need to be implemented at the regional level.

The on-going work of the GWRT will be shared with all the regional initiatives. As the regional initiatives convene their own meetings (regional initiatives may well end up hosting a GWRT meeting too), they will review, vet, and comment upon the GWRT's work, and will report important regional perspectives and local realities back to the GWRT.

All regional initiatives will participate in the GWRT to ensure that the initiatives run on parallel tracks, and that the interaction and communication between the GWRT and the regional initiatives is sufficient to harmonize efforts and avoid confusion.

Other important aspects of the regional initiatives will be

- the piloting of draft standards, e.g. principles, criteria and indicators;
- work on the social and financial cases for water standards;
- work on governance and management system proposals that are developed; and
- work on water footprinting and environmental benefit issues.

Decision-Making Process

The Global Water Roundtable will choose a decision-making body and process for creating standards.

Global Steering Committee:

- 1.) The Full Global Water Roundtable will support the formation of a Global Steering Committee that will serve as the decision-making body for the roundtable.
- 2.) Goals and objectives will be developed by the Global Steering Committee and/or a subset of roundtable participants at the meeting, then presented to the Full Global Water Roundtable for consideration and revision. The goals and objectives will be finalized by the Global Steering Committee with support of the Full Global Water Roundtable.
- 3.) Impacts identified by the Global Steering Committee, with Full Global Water Roundtable input, will be presented to the Full Global Water Roundtable for consideration and revision. Input from the Full Global Water Roundtable will then be used by the Global Steering Committee to finalize the key impacts.
- 4.) Scientists and technical experts will be commissioned by the Global Steering Committee, with input from the Full Global Water Roundtable, to conduct or compile research on key areas of impact relevant to the roundtable. Experts also will participate directly as members of the Full Global Water Roundtable.
- 5.) Draft principles and criteria will be developed by the Global Steering Committee (and, in some cases, advisory groups) using input from technical working groups and/or other roundtables. The initial draft will be presented to the Full Global Water Roundtable for consideration. Input from the Full Global Water Roundtable will then be used by the Global Steering Committee to create the revised draft of principles and criteria.
- 6.) Indicators and standards will be drafted by technical working groups (and, in some cases, advisory groups) based on their expertise and input from relevant technical working group reports, the indicators and standards from other roundtables, and any outreach they undertake. The SC will then accept (or not). Accepted draft indicators and standards will be presented to the Full Global Water Roundtable for consideration as part of a full suite of draft principles, criteria, indicators and standards. Input from the Full Global Water Roundtable will then be used by the Global Steering Committee to create the revised draft of indicators and standards.
- 7.) In accordance with ISEAL guidelines, the full draft suite of principles, criteria, indicators and standards will be posted for two public comment periods. Input received during the public comment periods will be used by the Global Steering Committee to finalize the principles, criteria, indicators and standards.

Decision-making members of the GWRT should be committed to working towards standards that support their respective overall goals as opposed to standards that support specific positions. Global Water Roundtable participants will seek to reconcile and accommodate interests, not rigidly adhere to specific positions.

Reaching Consensus

Regardless of which governing body model is used, the primary process for making decisions is through consensus at the decision-making body level. This approach is in accordance with ISEAL guidelines. The GWRT will use the definition of “consensus” provided by the International Organization for Standardization, which is:

“General agreement, characterized by the absence of sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests and by a process seeking to take into account the views of interested parties, particularly those directly affected, and to reconcile any conflicting arguments. Consensus need not imply unanimity.”

(See Appendix A for an explanation of the terms and phrases in the definition, such as “substantial issues” and “sustained opposition.”)

If consensus is not reached, the GWRT’s decision-making body will develop and document an alternate decision-making process. One option is supermajority voting, as outlined below:

- At least two stakeholder groups will be identified (e.g., profit/not for profit).
- Each stakeholder group will have equal weighting when votes are taken (e.g., if there are two groups, each will have 50 percent of the vote).
- A provision must achieve at least 75% majority in each stakeholder group engaged in the roundtable discussion.
- The decision to move to voting from consensus will be based on a move by one decision-making body member and a second of that motion by a decision-making body member of a different sector.

Conflict Resolution

It is possible that irresolvable conflict may develop at the decision-making body or Full Global Water Roundtable level. All attempts will be made to resolve conflicts internally. However, in case this is not possible, a conflict resolution procedure will be followed. That procedure will be developed and documented by each roundtable. One option is that the GWRT will identify 2-3 professional mediators in advance who can be called on if irresolvable conflict develops. AWS will help identify mediators and the decision-making body will agree on them. The decision-making body will be expected to fund the costs of mediators if conflicts cannot be addressed internally.

Communication/Transparency

Transparency is key to effective engagement in the Global Water Roundtable. To ensure transparency, the GWRT will develop a communications strategy. The strategy will, at a minimum, include the following:

- Meetings will be publicized on the roundtable website and in the roundtable e-newsletter at least two months prior to each meeting.
- An invitation will be sent electronically or by mail to all key stakeholders at least one month prior to each meeting. They will be encouraged to distribute the invitation to other relevant groups/individuals.
- A press release about the meeting will be distributed to appropriate websites and publications at least one month prior to each meeting.
- The meeting agenda and documents to be discussed at the meeting will be disseminated electronically or via mail to meeting participants and posted on the roundtable website at least one week prior to the GWRT meeting.
- Documents that are outcomes of the meeting will be posted on the Global Water Roundtable website within three weeks after each meeting (or four weeks if documents must be translated). At a minimum, this will include the list of meeting participants, presentations made at the meeting, documents reviewed at the meeting, and a meeting summary.
- Each meeting summary will highlight key decisions made, action points created and proposals presented. Meeting summaries will not be verbatim or identify the affiliation of speakers. This is in line with the Chatham House Rule, which states “When a meeting or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other person may be revealed.” Within two weeks after each meeting (or three weeks if documents must be translated), the meeting summaries written by AWS will be provided to all roundtable participants to review. The participants will be given one week to provide feedback to AWS.
- Pertinent draft documents (e.g., draft research reports and draft principles) will be posted on the GWRT website for public comment. The Global Water Roundtable’s decision-making body will specify how comments will be posted, processed and incorporated into the standard development process.
- The draft suite of principles, criteria, indicators and standards will be posted on the GWRT website for public comment. In accordance with ISEAL, there will be two 60-day comment periods, with 30 days in between each comment period to address comments. Each comment, with attribution, will be posted on the GWRT website. Responses from the decision-making body also will be posted. The decision-making body will determine whether to post a response to the body of comments as a whole or responses to individual comments.
- Documents will be made available in English and the primary languages spoken by the stakeholders.

- Each decision-making body will be responsible for reading and responding to all comments related to the roundtable that are raised during the course of the GWRT.
- Within six months after the GWRT begins, a work program will be posted on the GWRT website. It will be updated once every 6 months. The document will include the program name and address; a contact point; a summary of GWRT activities during the reporting period; and upcoming action items for the GWRT. This is a requirement of ISEAL.
- When finalized, the principles, criteria, indicators and standards will be posted on the GWRT website.

The Global Water Roundtable also will rely on other entities, such as local NGOs and government agencies, to disseminate information about the GWRT. This is particularly critical for small-scale producers and others who do not have Internet access or the time/funding necessary to attend GWRT meetings.

Funding

Expenses related to the Global Water Roundtable will include the costs of holding meetings (e.g., food, room rental and paying for the GWRT coordinator's time). These expenses will be paid for by AWS. If these expenses are paid for by another source(s), no more than 25 percent of funds will come from any one stakeholder.

If research related to the GWRT is needed, the decision-making body will determine how to finance that research.

Contributions can be made directly in cash or through in-kind contributions, such as research, terms of reference, time and travel, hosting of meetings, and collaboration on grant proposals.

APPENDIX A

Following is an explanation of several of the phrases used in the International Organization of Standards' definition of "consensus:"

Sustained opposition - Sustained opposition means that an important part of concerned interests has indicated, despite meaningful discussion of an issue that the position or solution put forward continues to be unacceptable to that interest.

Substantial issues- Issues that materially affect the standards or decision being taken as appropriate.

Important part of concerned interests - Clearly recognized representative of a segment of concerned interests that have been engaged in the discussions as a member of the decision-making body, such as all Steering Committee members.

Interested parties - Any party that has participated substantively in the roundtable process, including those outside the Steering Committee, that may present issues for the steering committee to debate and decide.

Directly affected - Includes those whose lives or livelihoods would be altered by the proposed decision or standard financially or otherwise, as well as the affected public.

Consensus need not imply unanimity- Under consensus, one or more parties may not fully agree with a decision, but is able to accept it.