



The CEO Water Mandate

CEO Water Mandate Working Groups

August 2, 2016

Scope and Purpose of Working Groups

One of the ways the CEO Water Mandate engages its endorser base is through Working Groups. The CEO Water Mandate brings together small groups of representatives from endorsing companies to support and contribute to the work of the Mandate Secretariat. Working Group members help shape the direction and design of the Mandate's work by:

- Providing feedback on normative guidance and tools
- Helping to develop relevant resources
- Testing and implementation of Mandate guidance and resources
- Participating in collective action initiatives

Joining the CEO Water Mandate's Working Groups is one of the most significant benefits of becoming an endorser. Through the Working Groups, endorsers are provided with the opportunity to engage in the Mandate's work from the early days of a project through the outreach and socialization phase. Endorsing companies benefit from participating in Working Groups through:

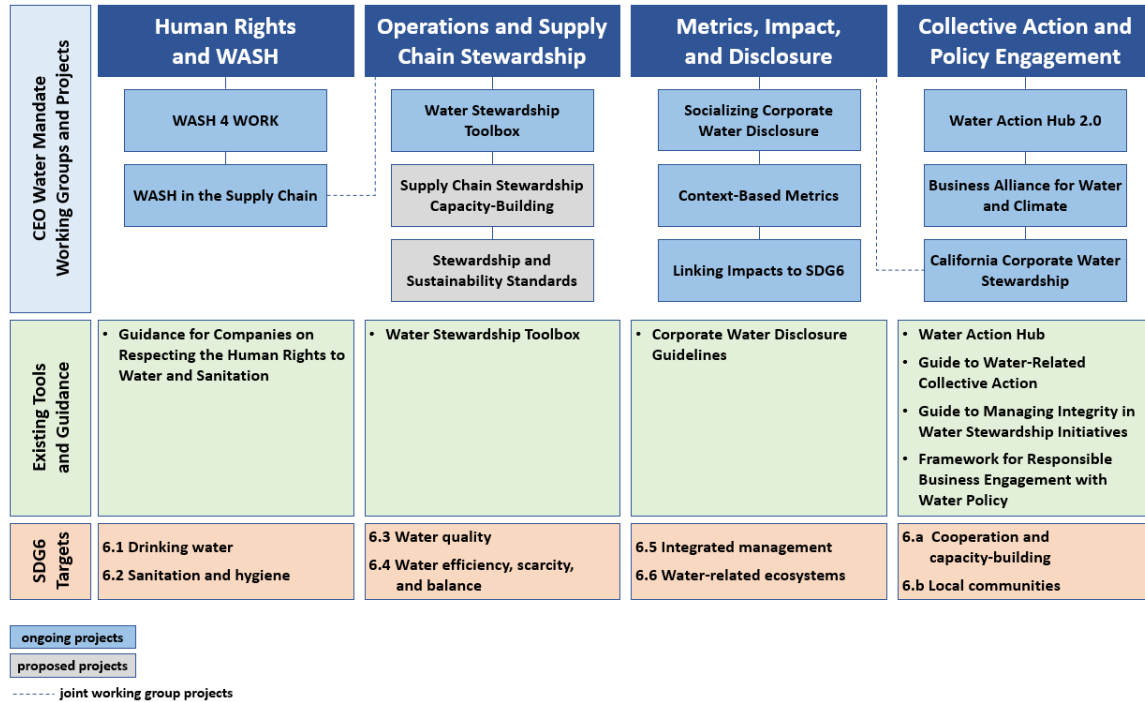
- Shaping the scope of projects so that final outputs enhance or support company initiatives
- Peer learning from best practice sharing
- Strategic insight through Working Group deliberations with key stakeholders
- First access to thought leadership via the development of new projects

The CEO Water Mandate is revamping its Working Groups to more accurately reflect its current strategic priorities and to engage a broader base of endorsing companies in its work program. Proposed changes to the Working Groups, including new descriptions, are captured in this summary document. The Secretariat's intention is to discuss and gather feedback on this amended Working Group structure during the Mandate's endorser-only meeting in Stockholm on the morning of August 30th, 2016.

The Mandate Secretariat proposes the following structure for its four Working Groups:

- Human Rights & WASH,
- Operations & Supply Chain,
- Metrics, Impact & Disclosure, and
- Collective Action & Policy Engagement.

The scope of the Working Groups is at times integrated and inter-related, and the products and outcomes of each Working Group build upon the others. Further, certain projects may be overseen jointly by two Working Groups. The scope of Working Groups is intentionally designed to align with the targets of SDG6. The following diagram illustrates the structure of the Working Groups, their projects, and alignment with SDG6.



Human Rights and WASH

The Human Rights and WASH Working Group (HRWASH-WG) focuses on access to water and sanitation in the workplace, supply chain, and communities.

Previously, this Working Group focused on helping companies deliver on their responsibly to respect the human rights to water and sanitation (HRWS), and when appropriate, to assist them in fulfilling these rights. In 2015, in partnership with the human rights NGO, Shift, and drawing on Oxfam America's extensive subject matter expertise, the Mandate released [Guidance for Companies on Respecting the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation](#), which helps companies translate their responsibility to respect the HRWS into their existing water management systems, operations, and company cultures; and complements efforts to clarify the obligations and responsibility of other actors with regard to the HRWS.

Ongoing Projects

WASH4Work

[WASH4Work](#) brings stakeholders together to coordinate, collaborate, align, and scale efforts to encourage and support business action on WASH to the benefit of both communities and businesses. WASH4Work also works to support governments and the public to enable such business action. WASH4Work will work to increase collaborative research and peer learning, implement local collective action projects, engage in advocacy at the national and global levels, and highlight innovative business achievements. It calls on businesses to take a number of actions including:

- Understanding and responding to impacts that poor WASH in communities has on business operations.
- Ensuring all workers have access to clean drinking water, gender separated toilets in the workplace, and leverage influence to bring about changes in their supply chain.
- Mitigating negative impacts on community WASH
- Working together with governments and civil society to improve WASH for communities
- Working with WASH4Work partners to implement on-the-ground action, learn from others, and share experiences.

WASH in the Supply Chain¹

Though the private sector has made progress in improving water access sanitation and hygiene (WASH), business can play a greater role in realizing universal access. Whilst the workplace has largely been a neglected setting from governments and NGOs, a growing number of companies have committed to implementing the [WASH at the workplace Pledge](#) and are looking to meet their responsibilities to respect the HRWS. For the most part, companies have greater ability and influence to implement WASH services in their owned and operated facilities, but face hurdles when looking beyond into their supply chains where compliance measures can only go so far. Via discussions at a jointly organized seminar by WaterAid, WBCSD, and the CEO Water Mandate at Stockholm World Water Week 2015, companies and other stakeholders identified a number of barriers to implementing WASH.

The objectives of the WASH in the Supply Chain research are to:

- Understand current obstacles to improving WASH in companies' supply chains, particularly in key sectors such as forestry and agriculture
- Explore and develop guidance, tools, and resources needed to help companies leverage improved WASH in their supply chains, including connecting this to the business case for WASH
- Explore the potential for developing and/or utilizing existing collaboration platforms (such as the *Sanitation and Water for All* and the proposed

¹ This project is overseen jointly with the Operations and Supply Chain Working Group

WASH4Work initiative) by key business and WASH organizations to help learning, implementation and measuring impact (e.g. for development of KPIs)

Operations & Supply Chain Stewardship

In many industries, water-related business risks and impacts are more substantial in supply chains than those in direct operations. For example, the water-related impacts of apparel industry activities like cotton cultivation and dyeing textiles occur outside the direct operational control of most brands and retailers. In some cases, water-related risks originate not from on-site activities that farms or manufacturing facilities themselves control, but rather from physical or political conditions outside the direct influence of brands and suppliers. Furthermore, inadequate or inequitable WASH in the workplace or lack of access to WASH services in communities where workers and their families reside can reduce productivity, increase absenteeism or turnover, perpetuate the spread of preventable water-borne illnesses, and create other threats to human health and well-being.

The Operations and Supply Chain Stewardship Working Group (OSCS-WG) will seek to:

- Reduce suppliers' direct and indirect water-related risks and impacts, particularly in key industries and geographies of strategic value to endorsing companies, by expanding the operational tools in the Water Stewardship Toolbox for water quality, efficiency, and WASH in the Supply Chain
- Advance supply chain water stewardship globally by identifying or developing communication tools and guidance materials to build supplier awareness, responsibility, leadership, and collective action capacity
- Improve metrics and performance by seeking input and insights from leading companies, defining core metrics for effective supply chain stewardship programs, and evaluating and improving industry impact data, particularly for key raw materials

Ongoing Projects

Water Stewardship Toolbox

The CEO Water Mandate's [Water Stewardship Toolbox](#) is a collection of guidance documents, discussion papers, online tools, and other resources that can help companies build their water stewardship practice. The Toolbox is structured around the Mandate's [Water Stewardship Progression](#), and allows users to identify what stewardship activities they want to pursue, filter resources by *Purpose*, *Type*, and *Scope*, and select the resources that can help them advance water stewardship.

WASH in the Supply Chain

This project is overseen jointly with the Human Rights and WASH Working Group. Please see above for a description.

Metrics, Impact, and Disclosure

The Metrics, Impact, and Disclosure Working Group (MID-WG) is concerned with helping companies to establish a meaningful dialogue with their stakeholders about their water practices, thereby creating trust, accountability, and effective action. Formerly the Water Disclosure Working Group, this work to date has largely consisted of defining key terms and identifying and promoting harmonized metrics and qualitative approaches that support effective reporting and communication.

In 2014, the Mandate published [Corporate Water Disclosure Guidelines](#) in collaboration with key strategic partners CDP, World Resources Institute, Global Reporting Initiative, and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). This project brought together and built on the experiences of water disclosure-related initiatives to advance a common, globally relevant approach to corporate water disclosure.

Ongoing Projects

Socializing Corporate Water Disclosure

Going forward, the Mandate will continue to work to promote the Disclosure Guidelines and harmonize the framework, key concepts, and terminology with other international and sector-specific indicators and reporting frameworks, including the emerging international indicator sets relating to the six targets underpinning the Sustainable Development Goal on Water and sanitation (SDG6), the GRI G4 Guidelines and the SASB framework. Such a harmonized set of metrics can communicate progress credibly and meaningfully across the private and public sectors and thus can help drive more effective joint action on shared water challenges. The Mandate will also promote the uptake of the Disclosure Guidelines with other reporting initiatives, particularly focusing on the human rights components of the Guidelines. The Mandate is also supporting endorsers' efforts to report against the Disclosure Guidelines in their annual Communications on Progress-Water reports (COP-Waters) and encouraging reporting against profile metrics as part of their COP-Water submissions.

Context Based Target Setting

With partners WRI, WWF, TNC, and CDP, the CEO Water Mandate is developing a science-based approach for setting meaningful and measurable corporate water targets that are in line with the principles of corporate water stewardship and water-related 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The project team is producing a discussion paper that will explore the efficacy of specific, yet somewhat generic cross-sector basin metrics, as well as the value of a decision-tree based framework for meaningful target setting in both operations and supply chains. The working paper will be used to explore options and help drive constructive discussions towards a consensus-based approach to context-based water target setting.

Linking Corporate Water Stewardship Impacts to SDG6

SDG6 includes a set of targets that offers an opportunity to rally Mandate endorsing companies and strategic partners from the public and nonprofit sectors around a set of common endpoints with the support and endorsement of the international development community. In keeping with its role as a UN Global Compact Impact Platform, the Mandate will evaluate the opportunity to align its work with SDG6 targets, consider the potential to report contributions of Mandate endorser-driven collective action initiatives to the achievement of the targets, and build consensus within the water stewardship community around impact metrics/indicators and best practices for monitoring and evaluation against achievement of SDG6.

Collective Action & Policy Engagement

The Collective Action & Policy Engagement Working Group (CAPE-WG) facilitates partnerships and avenues for corporate engagement on water policy towards more sustainable water management in river basins around the world. Work in this area has sought to define key principles for action, assist companies and others in identifying strategic actions, and connect potential partners with shared water goals.

Previous work in this area has included:

- [Integrity in Water Stewardship Initiatives: A Framework for Improving Effectiveness and Transparency](#)
- [Guide to Collective Action](#)
- [Guide to Responsible Business Engagement with Water Policy](#)

Ongoing Projects

Water Action Hub

In 2012, the Mandate launched the [Water Action Hub](#), an online platform that connects businesses, government agencies, and other stakeholders seeking collaborative solutions to global and local water challenges. Hub users can search a global database of water stewardship projects and potential partners. Since its launch, the Hub has attracted interest and participation from a wide range of organizations around the world.

The Water Action Hub is currently undergoing a substantial renovation to facilitate multi-stakeholder collective action initiatives that drive mainstream adoption of best water stewardship practices across the value chain and increase sustainable water management and progress toward SDG6 water and sanitation targets in key regions of strategic interest.

Business Alliance for Water and Climate

Preparing for and adapting to new climate realities will be one of the defining challenges of the 21st Century. Recognizing the considerable environmental, social, and economic value at stake due to worsening water stress and climate change, signatory companies of the [Business Alliance for Water and Climate](#) (BAFWAC) COP21 Declaration have called for water challenges to be integrated into the global climate policy and financing architecture, and pledged to take meaningful action to address water and climate challenges. Thirty companies have joined the Alliance, which is led by the CEO Water Mandate, CDP, and WBCSD. Moving towards COP22, CDP and the CEO Water Mandate will host several webinars and workshops, which will showcase best practices and support companies in tackling risks at the water-climate nexus, and in reporting on progress made against BAFWAC commitments.

California Corporate Water Stewardship

The social, environmental, and economic well-being of the State of California is jeopardized by extreme drought, climate change, groundwater depletion and land subsidence, and a complicated legacy of water rights, allocations, transfers, and other policy decisions. Companies with strategic interest in California increasingly recognize the need to develop new water stewardship initiatives together with diverse stakeholders to improve measurement, management, and stewardship of shared water resources.

In 2016, the CEO Water Mandate is facilitating a statewide collaboration to accelerate [Corporate Water Stewardship in California](#) by engaging interested members of the and others in the business community to identify and explore specific opportunities to make positive contributions to the success of the Governor's [California Water Action Plan](#). This collective action by business leaders, industrial operations, agricultural producers, government agencies, policymakers, urban and rural communities, and water management experts will accelerate the state's progress toward a sustainable water future by addressing chronic water challenges.