

WAVE: Action

NORMATIVE DOCUMENT

Version 1.0

March 2025



Background

The WAVE suite of programs provides a continual improvement methodology for organizations seeking to improve their water stewardship performance and public reporting and disclosure. WAVE: Assess (the original program formerly known as “WAVE: Water Stewardship Verified 1.2”), launched in 2022, provides a five-step approach to assessing enterprise-wide water uses, impacts and risks. Companies that complete WAVE: Assess walk away with a priority list of sites and/or actions on which to focus their mitigation efforts as well as a contextual water policy or commitment statement. Independent verification to the program is required.

The first WAVE program was created in response to market demand and the need to better define, recognize and reward “good” enterprise-wide water stewardship. WAVE remains globally the only water stewardship verification program applicable to an entire enterprise. In a similar fashion, WAVE: Action also responds to a marketplace need to provide additional assurance to stakeholders that organizations are setting appropriate targets and goals responsive to context, materiality and risk. The Water Council’s vision has been to develop a suite of WAVE programs that lead organizations through the entire process of developing a water strategy, with each program requiring increasing rigor of action. WAVE: Action is part of this strategy continuum that leads to greater and greater awareness of water use implications, opportunities and ultimately verified actions and outcomes.

WAVE: Action is designed to take over where WAVE: Assess ends and move organizations toward action. As a result, there is increased rigor with the WAVE: Action framework that drives participating organizations to meaningful water stewardship outcomes and external reporting. While this new framework does not measure or verify outcomes and impacts, it does provide a methodology for setting appropriate targets (inside and/or outside the fence line). Verification ensures the methodology has been followed so that targets are directly responsive to water uses, impacts and risks identified in WAVE: Assess with a publicly disclosed time commitment to achieve targets. It also ensures organizational structures are in place to lead to external reporting.

The WAVE suite of programs, including WAVE: Action, endeavors to align with current leading practices in risk assessment, target setting, measurement and tracking as well as reporting and disclosure. Organizations that complete a WAVE verification program generate the necessary data and information needed to complete CDP and GRI 303, for instance. (Conversely, if an organization is already doing CDP or GRI 303, it has the necessary data and information to efficiently complete a WAVE verification program.) The entire suite of WAVE programs follows the LEAP (Locate, Evaluate, Assess and Prepare) process as embodied within TNFD and other disclosure frameworks.

WAVE: Action and its subsequent actions and outcomes will be endorsed and resourced by the relevant organizational leadership; in other words, those individuals who can support the actions needed to mitigate water risks. Those actions can lead to outcomes that help customers, investors and ratings agencies in making “apples-to-apples” comparisons on organizational water stewardship performance and provide stakeholders with sufficient, credible water-related data and information upon which performance claims can be weighed.



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Organizations that successfully complete a WAVE program are signaling to key stakeholders that they have instituted a strategic and credible approach to water-related risk mitigation across the enterprise that responds to the materiality of water in their value chain. Further, they are publicly signaling to key stakeholders, including customers, investors and analysts, their commitment to engaging with The Water Council on addressing shared challenges and opportunities through actions informed by globally recognized best practices.

Stakeholder Consultation

The Water Council (TWC) conducted one year of stakeholder engagement and consultation leading up to the WAVE: Action roll-out. Many stakeholder groups were consulted representing the private sector, nonprofits and other key groups with an interest in water stewardship as well as ESG and sustainability-related investing and reporting.

Eligibility

Organizations are eligible to participate in WAVE: Action if they achieve WAVE: Assess verification or meet the following pre-requisites:

- Risk assessment and prioritization that generally aligns with WAVE: Assess
- Senior-level commitment statement (or policy) on water

For organizations that did not achieve verification to WAVE: Assess, the risk assessment(s) and commitment statement(s) must be reviewed and approved by TWC prior to implementing WAVE: Action.

Continual Improvement

Good water stewardship is achieved through a process of continual improvement. Included in the cost of participation is ongoing engagement with The Water Council through the period(s) of verification. This includes a required midpoint Surveillance Informational Interview with TWC and SCS Global Services as well as other direct support as needed and mutually agreed. WAVE participants also commit to annual TWC Water Champion membership for each year of WAVE implementation and the subsequent verification period(s).

Innovation & Technology Consultation

At the completion of the WAVE: Action implementation process, either before or after independent verification is sought, organizations will have the opportunity to discuss water innovations and technology solutions that may be pertinent to their operational water use, impact and risk profile. Organizations that completed Step 3 of WAVE: Assess will have developed a prioritized list of sites and/or actions that are responsive to the overall water-related risk profile for the enterprise. All WAVE programs' participants will have up to two hours of free consultative input from The Water Council's vice president of economic development and innovation as well as the chief technology advisor to discuss water innovations and technology solutions that are available to mitigate priority risks either identified in Step 3, WAVE: Assess, or for eligible organizations, priority risks identified independently of that program. Additionally, this consultation includes an overview of the water technology ecosystem and opportunities to connect with solution providers and programs in this space. This is a no-obligation consultation meant to help



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organizations map out practical actions to improve their water stewardship performance and expand their water network.

Independent Verification

Upon successful completion of WAVE: Action, participants are required to seek independent verification from SCS Global Services, an international leader in third-party certification, validation and verification for environmental, sustainability, and food safety and quality performance claims. Upon successful verification, participants will be able to utilize the WAVE seal and claim on official organizational materials subject to guidance provided by SCS Global Services for an initial period of two years. Third-party independent verification is subject to a separate fee. At the end of the verification period, WAVE participants agree to take a confidential survey of water-related impacts, outcomes and other improvements resulting from the program.



Reference Documents

Organizations that commit to WAVE: Action and sign a non-disclosure agreement will receive a comprehensive package of documents to lead them through the entire process. This document outlining the program's steps is considered the "Normative Document." Participants will also receive the WAVE: Action Implementation Guide. SCS Global Services will provide the verification package that includes the Conformity Matrix with relevant indicators and metrics that tracks implementation and prepares organizations for independent verification. SCS Global Services will verify against WAVE: Action's steps and utilize each implementer's Conformity Matrix as part of the overall verification process.



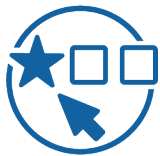
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The conformity elements to implement actions that directly mitigate water-related risks and address water-related challenges and opportunities are:



STEP 1: Implement action(s) that address water-related priorities and/or opportunities outlined in a recent, comprehensive watershed risk assessment initiative

Indicator: List updates to overall risk profile including any short-term risk-mitigating actions and/or opportunities



STEP 2: Set or validate existing enterprise-wide contextual targets and goals directly responsive to the organization's water use, impact and risk profile

Indicator: Report enterprise-wide targets and goals



STEP 3: Prepare for external reporting and disclosure by aligning data gathering, target setting and tracking, and other relevant water-related efforts

Indicator: Report water-related metrics being tracked, requests for data and information, and status of water-related reporting and disclosure



STEP 4: Identify opportunities to collaborate with key stakeholders to address shared water-related opportunities and challenges

Indicator: Report listing key stakeholders in stressed watersheds (with direct operations and/or key sourced inputs or services delivered) where collaboration could positively impact water stewardship outcomes

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About The Water Council

The Water Council (TWC) is a nonprofit global hub dedicated to solving critical water challenges by driving innovation in freshwater technology and advancing water stewardship. Built on more than a century of water innovation, TWC has coalesced one of the most concentrated and mature water technology clusters in the world from its headquarters at the Global Water Center in Milwaukee, Wis., USA. Recognizing the need for smarter and more sustainable use of water worldwide, TWC also promotes water stewardship as a natural complement to water innovation in the effort to preserve freshwater resources in the Midwest and around the world. Today, The Water Council has established itself as a global leader in the water industry and one of America's premier economic development clusters as recognized by government agencies, [Brookings](#) and the [Harvard Business School](#).

About SCS Global Services

SCS Global Services (SCS) has been providing global leadership in third-party quality, environmental and sustainability verification, certification, auditing, testing, and standards development for more than three decades. Its programs span a cross-section of industries, recognizing achievements in green building, product manufacturing, food and agriculture, forestry, power generation retail, and more. SCS is accredited to provide services under a wide range of nationally and internationally recognized certification programs. Consistent with its mission, SCS is a chartered benefit corporation, reflecting its commitment to socially and environmentally responsible business practices.

