AWS AND THE CATCHMENT BASED APPROACH
LINKAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) defines water stewardship as "the use of water that is socially and culturally equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder inclusive process that includes both site- and catchment-based actions."

The Catchment Based Approach embeds collaborative working at a river catchment scale, delivering a range of environmental, social and economic benefits and ensuring that our precious freshwater environment is protected now and into the future.

There are clear synergies between AWS, a global membership alliance built around a common approach to site and catchment level water stewardship, and the CaBA, a national movement to embed collaboration and partnership working at the catchment scale across England and Wales.

AWS is two things:

1. A **global membership alliance** comprised of stakeholders from the private sector, public sector and civil society, working together through a shared vision and a common understanding of water stewardship
2. A **global standard system**: the International Water Stewardship Standard (or AWS Standard) is the global standard for water stewardship. It can be applied by any water user, anywhere in the world as it is responsive to site and catchment context. It takes the implementer through a 5-step process to assess their site and catchment water risks, identify shared water challenges with their stakeholders across the catchments they rely on, and to then act on these risks through implementation of a water stewardship plan.

The AWS Standard can be implemented by any water user, anywhere in the world. Sites that choose to pursue certification, through independent third-party verification, can then make credible claims about their own water stewardship activities and their work within their catchment.

For the CaBA, AWS provides several opportunities:

- The AWS Standard can be used by sites to identify, assess and respond to their water risks at a site and catchment level. This ensures that sites participating in the CaBA have 'their own house in order' and are doing everything they can at a site level to minimise their impact on the catchment.
- Through applying the Standard, sites identify shared water challenges within the catchment(s) they rely on and are then taken through a process of stakeholder identification and engagement within local governance structures to work collaboratively to address their shared water challenges. In the UK, this would lead to a site engaging with their local CaBA to understand work already underway and to work in partnership to further support existing efforts and build new projects and partnerships.

For AWS implementers, the CaBA provides several opportunities:

- It offers a national network of knowledge and learning on site and catchment level activities already underway in an implementer's catchment.
- It provides an existing structure within which an implementer can seek to understand the water challenges facing their catchment(s) and learn from other catchment stakeholders.
- Through applying AWS and engaging with their local CaBA, sites can ensure that they are adhering to globally recognised best practice in water stewardship, embedded within a national network of local expertise.

On World Water Day 2019, AWS will launch the AWS Standard Version 2.0. The revised version of the AWS Standard is based on two years of iterative stakeholder consultation to take learning from users of Version 1.0 and ensure that the AWS Standard remains easy for sites to implement and impactful at the site and catchment level. There are webinars taking place on the 22nd March to introduce the new AWS Standard to stakeholders, find out more here: https://a4ws.org/launch-of-aws-standard-2-0/.