



## EUROPEAN WATER STEWARDSHIP (EWS) GENERAL



The European Water Stewardship initiative (EWS) addresses everyday challenges of water users in and outside Europe. The EWS:

- Provides a practical tool with its standard and certification scheme to evaluate the performance of water users and to acknowledge Water Stewards.
- Delivers guidance tools to address water-related risks in a river-basin context with concrete starting points for continuous improvement.
- Represents a multi-stakeholder platform embracing the experience and expertise of private sector, research, civil society and policy.
- Addresses and serves all water users and sectors with focus on Europe.
- Is endorsed by the European Water Partnership (EWP).
- Covers actual and future European water policy while being supported by European policy decision makers.
- Is embedded in a global context as a Regional Initiative of the Alliance of Water Stewardship (AWS).

### HOW CAN I GET ACTIVE IN EWS?

There are two ways to get directly involved in EWS activities and outreach:

1. Implement the **EWS standard** by pilot testing, pre-screening or certification. For more information see our website: [www.ewp.eu/stewardship](http://www.ewp.eu/stewardship) .
2. Become a EWS member and shape the EWS within its broad stakeholder platform! For more information see the **EWS Membership Fact Sheet** and **EWS Membership Outline**.

### WHAT IS WATER STEWARDSHIP?

EWS commits to the definition of Water Stewardship as:

*“The use of water that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable, and economically beneficial, achieved through a stakeholder-inclusive process that involves site- and catchment-based actions. Good water stewards understand their own water use, catchment context and shared risk in terms of water governance, water balance, water quality, and important water-related areas; and then engage in meaningful individual and collective actions that benefit people and nature.”*

Water Stewardship clearly acknowledges the specific characteristics of water management compared to other natural resources as there are:

- Local impacts linked to water use which require site-specific evaluation and response.
- River basin contexts which force water users to think and act as part of a “user group”.
- Complexities resulting from interlinking local, regional, national and international water legislation and administration.

### MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON EWS

For more information about the EWS program and its activities please see the **European Water Stewardship (EWS) website** with information on wide range of topics or email us directly at [ews@ewp.eu](mailto:ews@ewp.eu).



## EUROPEAN WATER STEWARDSHIP (EWS) GENERAL (Continued)

### EWS GOALS

EWS aims to change behavior and practices of all water users towards integrative Water Stewardship by:

- Providing positive incentives for private action on Water Stewardship.
- Offering guidance through transparent, open, dynamic and representative Water Stewardship standards.
- Assisting water users to communicate their efforts and achievements in water management.
- Shaping public awareness on European water policy.
- Ensuring broad stakeholder involvement as the basis for the roll-out of Water Stewardship in Europe.
- Facilitating exchange of expertise and experience in water management among stakeholders.
- Initiating collective action on water.

### EWS TOOLS IN IMPLEMENTATION

The **EWS standard** and referring guideline provides concrete assistance for water users to become a Water Steward in their river basin. The EWS standard covers physical, reputational and regulatory risks linked to water management. It is based and chaptered in the 4 EWS Principles ensuring: **Sustainable Water Abstraction, Good Water Status, Equitable Water Governance** and **High Conservation Value Area Protection**. Water users having evaluated their performance according to the EWS standard have incorporated all the essential points in their water management strategy for continuous improvement!

Certification based on the **EWS standard** provides an independent third-party approval of water management and visibility on the operational performance for Water Stewardship. Continuous water management improvements can be highlighted by bronze, silver and gold certification as depicted below.



For more information on how water users can communicate their certification please see the **EWS Assets Use and Communication Fact Sheet**.

### WHERE IS THE EWS CURRENTLY APPLIED?

EWS standard requirements are applicable for water users in all sectors throughout Europe and EWS certification comprises a system which makes business sense for its users. EWS has been implemented in industry, agriculture and golf. EWS has established its sector-specific expertise in a variety of sectors including: beverage, chemical production, paper production and airports via pre-screening and pilot studies. For more detailed information refer to completed **EWS pilot studies and EWS certifications**.

EWS is also adaptable for regional differences taking into consideration varying environmental and climatic conditions, regional legislations and river/catchment basin management.