

THE CERES-WWF AGWATER CHALLENGE: FAQ

General

What is the AgWater Challenge?

The Ag Water Challenge is a joint Ceres-WWF initiative that aims to highlight leadership, as well as new, improved commitments on water stewardship, specifically stronger, more transparent targets around agricultural supply chains. Leveraging World Food Day on October 16, 2016, the Challenge will highlight actions taken by companies and will raise awareness of the important role the private sector can play in addressing food and water security.

What does it mean to be a participant in the Challenge?

Participants in the Challenge will have the opportunity to take advantage of numerous benefits: Technical assistance from leading NGOs with expertise on water risk assessment and water management strategies; peer-to-peer learning on best practices for managing water risks; public recognition for demonstrating leadership, and/or making significant new/improved commitments on supply chain water stewardship.

As a starting point, participants will be asked to assess, with Ceres and WWF, their company efforts to address water risk in agriculture supply chains using the AgWater Challenge Checklist. This work will set the stage for company participants to identify areas that are ripe for improvement and action. Some participants will also have the opportunity over the course of the Challenge to publicly share stories that demonstrate how their commitments are making an impact in watersheds around the world.

How much does it cost to be a part of the Challenge?

Participation in the Challenge is free. However, technical advice beyond established Challenge events and meetings is not included.

How much time will this involve?

At a minimum, the initiative will require staff time for Challenge-sponsored events, a one hour initial discussion with Ceres and/or WWF to review the Checklist, and a one hour follow-up to assess progress. Companies may choose to leverage the Challenge to advance and/or add value to existing efforts to address agriculture supply chain water risks, in which case more time may be invested to reap the full potential value of the initiative.

What are the different pathways to recognition?

The Challenge has two different pathways for recognition as an **AgWater Steward**. The first is demonstration of top tier leadership in addressing water risks in agriculture supply chains. The Challenge is defining leadership as attaining or exceeding 40 points (out of a total 75 points) on the Challenge Checklist. Companies that meet this level will be recognized. The second pathway to recognition is through demonstrated improvement and incorporation of Challenge Checklist criteria into sustainability approaches and commitments. Companies that demonstrate a significant change (≥ 15 points) in their baseline assessment using the Challenge Checklist will also be recognized.

Content

What is the basis for the AgWater Checklist criteria?

The Challenge criteria are based on Ceres' "[Feeding Ourselves Thirsty](#)" indicators that relate most directly to agriculture supply chains. In addition, existing water stewardship resources and benchmarks were used to develop a refined, strengthened set of criteria for the

Challenge that would help assess and drive corporate action and commitments likely to have the greatest positive impact on field level water stewardship and watershed sustainability more broadly.

Evaluation

How do you qualify for recognition?

During the course of the Challenge, Ceres and WWF will do two assessments of company actions and commitments via the Challenge Checklist – one in late April/early May and one towards the end of the Challenge in late August/early September. If a company reaches (or exceeds) 40 points out of a total of 75, they will be recognized as AgWater Stewards. If a company misses the 40 point threshold in their first assessment, they can implement new actions/commitments to push them to (or beyond) the 40 point threshold during the final assessment. If at the final assessment, a company's point total yields a 15 point (or greater) change from their baseline assessment (but may still be shy of the leadership threshold), they will be recognized as AgWater Stewards.

Will I get credit for commitments/actions already taken?

Yes. While the intent of the Challenge is to spur improvement and further actions/commitments, we also want to recognize first movers that have already made significant progress to address water risks in their agriculture supply chains.

Who will decide whether or not I meet the criteria/thresholds?

A group of water experts from Ceres and WWF will evaluate Checklist responses and verify point totals.

What if we aren't able to make a commitment in the end or hit the thresholds for recognition?

We hope this won't be the outcome for any Challenge participant. However, there are no negative ramifications for missing thresholds or not being able to announce new commitments by the established timeframes. We hope that the exchanges with Ceres and WWF staff, as well as corporate peers and other NGO leaders, will deliver key insights and value to your water stewardship journey regardless of whether commitments are set or thresholds are reached. The downside will be not taking part in the public communications related to the Challenge.

Communications

What will I need to disclose and how public will it be?

The Challenge is not a certification of good practice. However, the initiative will release a Fact Sheet at its conclusion capturing all actions and commitments taken as part of the Challenge. Companies will be required to report on commitment progress through approved public disclosure channels, e.g. company sustainability reports, CEO Water Mandate annual progress updates, CDP Water Disclosure reports. No sensitive or proprietary company information will be released as part of the Challenge.

Companies that demonstrate their stewardship through leadership or significant actions/commitments will be encouraged to contribute stories that can be told through their own communication channels and as part of the Challenge. These stories will be used to highlight how commitments take shape on the ground and can lead to conservation benefits. Further details on media activities for World Food Day or Challenge-related story packages will be forthcoming.

Companies may also be asked to help call further attention to the importance of addressing water risks in supply chains by recruiting C-suite executives as spokespeople for Challenge communications in the run up to World Food Day.