

## **The Value Independent Certification Brings to Global Water Stewardship**

Global water standards guide companies seeking to assure responsible water governance, sustainable water balance, good water quality, and healthy water-related sites. Third-party certification is essential, providing independent assurance that companies translate these standards into practice. Nestlé Waters, Ecolab and Renmark case studies under the Alliance for Water Stewardship standard discussed.

Fresh water availability is severely threatened by population pressures, resource constraints, geopolitical turmoil, industrial pollution, and climate change. As a result, responsible water management has become an essential component of sustainable business strategy – key to preventing supply chain, distribution, and operational disruptions, and critical for protecting brand reputation. Global water standards, such as the Alliance for Water Stewardship standard, provide needed guidance for water users and managers seeking to assure responsible water governance, sustainable water balance, good water quality, and healthy water-related sites. To be effective, such standards rely on robust third-party certification.

Panelists discuss the role that independent certifiers play in translating the standard into real world situations, ensuring that proper procedures are in place for responsible water stewardship, assuring that stakeholder concerns are considered, and supporting reputable marketplace claims. Nestlé Waters North America, Ecolab, and Renmark speak about challenges faced, opportunities identified, and lessons learned as they underwent independent assessment, and hear their perspectives on the market and larger significance of certification. Additionally, participants dialogue with AWS and SCS Global Services about certification.

### Session objectives:

1. Familiarize audience with the tenets of water stewardship, as defined in AWS standard
2. Familiarize audience with the role and responsibilities of third-party certifiers, and the importance of the certification process to protecting fresh water resources across the globe
3. Create interactive space in which participants can engage firsthand with companies who have submitted to outside review to learn about their experiences and observations

### Anticipated Outcomes

1. Better understanding of what active water stewardship entails
2. Better understanding of what to expect when undergoing third-party certification
3. Better understanding of how stakeholders interact
4. Communicate externally with confidence after scientifically verifying your achievements