

GOVAQUA participant information sheet

We kindly invite you to participate in a **survey on the International Water Stewardship Standard (known as AWS Standard) and water governance in the European context** for the **GOVAQUA project – Governance innovations for a transition to sustainable and equitable water use in Europe**. This information sheet describes the study and what participating entails for you.

About the project

GOVAQUA is a research project formed by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE), Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) and 10 other European organizations. The project is led by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) and funded by the Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Programme of the European Union and the UK Research and Innovation. All project partners are listed at the end of this information sheet. The project runs from February 2023 to January 2027.

GOVAQUA identifies, assesses, develops and validates innovative governance instruments and approaches to support and accelerate a transition towards sustainable and equitable water use in Europe. Collaboration with key stakeholders and experts is at the heart of the project to ensure broad representation of views and practical relevance of the project recommendations and outputs.

More information about the project:

<https://a4ws.org/download/govaqua-project-information-note-may-2024/>

<https://www.syke.fi/projects/govaqua> <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101086578>

The aim of the survey

The aim of the survey is to gather insights from the AWS Registered and Certified Sites and their companies regarding the role of the AWS Standard in supporting good water governance in Europe. Water governance refers to the institutional frameworks and the interaction between different sectors and actors regarding the use, development and protection of waters. As per the AWS Standard, good water governance ensures responsible sharing of water resources in the interests of users and the natural environment in line with the principles of water stewardship and society's goals.

The survey findings will inform the evaluation and development of the AWS Standard and especially the Good Governance Impact area in the EU context, providing insights for EU-wide recommendations for water-related standards and on good practices for companies.

The independent findings will also benefit AWS Members, Certified Sites and implementers by assisting organisations to derive value from AWS Certification and make credible, verifiable claims about the impact of their water stewardship activities in relation to good water governance. This can help to further improve relationships with customers, strengthen social license to operate, enhance brand perception and open dialogue with regulators and policy makers.

Participation in the survey

The survey is open for responses from 24.6.2025 a period of six weeks in the Webropol platform. Before responding to the survey, kindly read through the [privacy notice \(syke.fi\)](#), where we explain how your personal data will be processed. Before starting the survey, we ask you to give your consent in Webropol to participate in the research and to process your personal data.

Participation in the research is voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the research, withdraw from the research or cancel your consent to participate in the research at any point without any negative consequences for you. If you withdraw from the research or cancel your consent the personal data collected of you until then will not be processed as part of the research, but will be erased, if it is possible to remove it from the research data. To withdraw participation or consent, or if you have any questions about the research, contact the project's contact persons below.

Processing of personal data and reporting of results

We only collect personal data on whether you are a site or a company representative, and on the sector your company operates in. All information collected during the research is confidential. The data we receive from you is processed in accordance with the EU's General Data Protection and good scientific conduct. The personal data will be kept during the research on secure servers and services provided by the GOVAQUA partner organizations, so only authorized persons can access and handle the data. We follow strict privacy policies so that you cannot be identified or the information you give us cannot be linked to you when we report research results. The research results will be presented in good practice recommendations regarding water related standards by the GOVAQUA project, and the results and data will be reported in scientific articles. The research will also be presented at scientific conferences and other events. You will find more information about the processing and storage of your personal data in the [privacy notice](#).

Responsible persons and contact information

If you have any questions about the research or processing of your personal data, please contact:

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Partners in the GOVAQUA project

- Finnish Environment Institute (Syke), Finland (coordinator)
- CETAQUA, Spain
- Ecologic Institute (Ecologic), Germany
- French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), France
- International Office of Water (OIEau), France
- National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (INRAE), France
- University of Cordoba (UCO), Spain
- University of Twente (UTwente), Netherlands
- WWF Romania

- The Rivers Trust, United Kingdom
- UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (UKCEH), United Kingdom
- Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), United Kingdom