



Proprietary standard

for water footprint certification

ISO 14046 · AWS · ESRS E3 · GRI 303 · CDP Water

aquafides

AQUAFIDES PROTOCOL v3.2

Annex VIII

Types of certifiable organisations: SP, CS and AP

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VERSION HISTORY

Rev.	Date	Description of changes	Status
v1.0	15/03/2018	Initial release of the Aquafides Protocol	Superseded
v2.0	10/03/2022	Incorporation of AWARE factor and grey footprint	Superseded
v3.0	20/01/2025	Modular rewrite: CORE + compatible modules	Superseded
v3.1	15/09/2025	Incorporation of the M-ESRS E3 module (CSRD)	Superseded
v3.2.0	15/02/2026	Simultaneous coverage ISO 14046 + AWS + ESRS E3 + GRI 303 + CDP Water	ACTIVE

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ANNEX VIII

Certifiable typologies

Productive Systems · Supply Chains · Public Administrations

Document	Annex VIII of the Aquafides Protocol v3.2
Version	v3.2 · 15/02/2026
Status	Binding structural part of the Protocol. Applicable to every Aquafides audit file from its issue date.
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1. Purpose of the Annex

This Annex VIII formalises, within the Aquafides Protocol v3.2, the classification of certifiable entities into three differentiated typologies: Productive Systems (SP), Supply Chains (CS) and Public Administrations (AP). It establishes assignment criteria, the specific documentary requirements of each typology, the particulars of the certification audit and, in the case of Supply Chains, the doctrine of the Aquafides Spread Effect — the differentiating axis of Aquafides' proposal against other water certification standards.

The three typologies are mutually exclusive in their main classification but admit secondary nuances when an entity operates simultaneously under more than one profile. The Aquafides Advisor is responsible for the initial classification, reviewable by the Certifying Auditor during the certification process.

2. Definitions

2.1 Productive System (SP)

Entity that transforms water, totally or partially, into goods or services through a direct physical operation (agriculture, livestock, industry, agri-food, energy, tourism, healthcare, sports, etc.). The weight of its direct water footprint (Scope 1 + 2) is significant and normally accounts for most of its material impact. Examples: agricultural cooperative, beverage factory, hotel, hospital, pulp and paper plant, pig farm, thermoelectric plant.

2.2 Supply Chain (CS)

Entity whose main activity consists of distributing, storing, transporting, intermediating or marketing goods produced by third parties, without significant transformation involving water. Its direct water footprint (Scope 1 + 2) is comparatively smaller, but it manages — and therefore influences — an embedded water footprint (Scope 3) generally far greater than that of any individual SP. Examples: supermarket chain, food wholesaler, logistics operator, e-commerce platform, industrial distributor, large textile retailer.

2.3 Public Administration (AP)

Public entity with full or partial competences over the planning, regulation or management of water in a territory. It ranges from municipal level (city councils, joint local bodies) to national level (ministries, river basin authorities), through intermediate levels (autonomous communities, provincial councils, consortia). The direct water footprint of its administrative operation is marginal, but its influence on the territorial water cycle is maximum through planning, regulation and public investment.

Critical clarification on the meaning of AP in Aquafides. AP in the Aquafides Protocol v3.2 exclusively means Public Administrations. It must NOT be confused with 'Producer Association' or other uses of the acronym. The guiding criterion is the public nature of the certifiable subject and its capacity for regulatory or planning influence over the territorial water cycle.

3. Classification criteria

The Aquafides Advisor classifies the client into one of the three typologies applying, in order of precedence, the following criteria:

3.1 Legal criterion

If the entity is public (State general administration, autonomous communities, local entities, autonomous bodies, consortia and joint bodies under public law), it is classified as AP, unless its actual activity is clearly productive in market regime (in which case it shall be classified as SP).

3.2 Functional criterion

Among private entities, classification responds to the dominant functional role in its business model:

- If it transforms water into a good or service (with direct material consumption) → SP.
- If it distributes or markets third-party goods without material water transformation → CS.
- If the activity is mixed, classification is based on economic and footprint weight: the activity representing > 70% of total water impact determines the main typology.

3.3 Water-scope criterion

When the previous criteria do not allow for an unambiguous classification, the quantitative water-scope criterion applies:

Footprint distribution	Typology	Comment
Scope 1+2 > 60% of total	SP	Clear industrial/productive operation.
Scope 3 > 70% of total and S1+2 < 15%	CS	Pure distribution/marketing.
Intermediate distributions (CS-SP hybrid)	Default SP	Unless expressly justified in B1.
Public entity with territorial water competence	AP	Regardless of direct footprint.

3.4 Borderline cases and subtypologies

When an entity simultaneously has a productive component and a supply-chain component that are materially significant (for instance, an agricultural cooperative that is both a producer and a marketer of its members' harvest), it is classified as main type SP or CS based on economic weight and identified as subtypology "SP+CS". In these cases the Advisor broadens the documentary scope by incorporating the additional requirements associated with the minor component (typically block F and, if CS is the subtypology, part of the Aquafides Spread Effect).

4. Documentary catalogue by typology

The Aquafides audit file's document catalogue varies according to typology. Documents common to all three typologies constitute the core of the Protocol; specific documents reinforce the material aspects of each profile.

4.1 Common documents (core, the 41 base documents)

Blocks A (Governance), B (Scope and Materiality), part of C (Inventory and Data), part of D (Calculation and Impact), part of E (Reports), G (Training), H (Operational Control), I (Audit and Certification), J (Transparency) and K (ESG Mapping) are common to SP, CS and AP, with content adapted to the client's particularities.

4.2 Differential documents by typology

Block / document	SP	CS	AP
D1 — WF Calculation Report (detailed XLSX)	INTENSIVE (plant data)	LIGHT (offices + logistics)	LIGHT (administrative operation)
D2 — AWARE-weighted (M-ISO14046)	Applicable	Applicable (Scope 3 dominant)	Applicable at territorial level

Block / document	SP	CS	AP
E3 — WFRP (Reduction Plan)	Central axis of the file	Important for S1+2, but secondary	Multi-year territorial plan
F1-F4 — Standard Supply Chain	Applicable to water-intensive suppliers	MAIN AXIS of the file	Applicable to own suppliers and aggregate purchases
CS-Spec — Aquafides Spread Effect (new)	Not applicable	MANDATORY	Applicable as green public procurement policy
CS-Spec — Water-intensive supplier inventory	Applies if highly water-intensive suppliers	MANDATORY	Recommended
AP-Spec — Territorial water diagnosis (new)	Not applicable	Not applicable	MANDATORY
AP-Spec — Territorial/municipal Water Plan	Not applicable	Not applicable	MANDATORY
AP-Spec — Public water participation	Not applicable	Not applicable	MANDATORY
L1-L4 — AWS Module (catchment)	Applies if activated	Applies at critical supplier level	Applies at territorial level: AP+AWS is a natural combination

5. Particulars of each typology

5.1 Productive Systems (SP)

An SP's water footprint concentrates in direct physical operation. The advisor focuses on:

- Detailed consumption inventory by product line / process / centre / functional unit.
- Rigorous calculation of the three components (green, blue, grey) with declared data quality tiers (Tier 1/2/3) and AWARE application when M-ISO14046 is activated.
- Water Footprint Reduction Plan (E3) as the commitment axis, with operational measures, budget, deadline and metrics.
- Sub-metering by operational blocks as enabling condition for data-driven management.
- Supply chain treated as Scope 3 with standard templates F1-F4 for materially water-intensive suppliers.

Typical SP functional units: kg of product, L of bottled beverage, m³ of milk, kWh generated, stay·night in hotel, patient·day in hospital, m² landscaped, ha cropped, t harvested.

5.2 Supply Chains (CS)

A CS's direct water footprint is comparatively smaller, but the indirect one (Scope 3) is enormous. The standard S1+2 scheme would be misleading without explicit supply chain requirements. CS certification is therefore governed by a specific doctrine that the Protocol calls the Aquafides Spread Effect, described in section 6 of this Annex.

- Mandatory inventory of water-intensive suppliers following CS-Spec methodology (specific template).
- Multi-year commitment to extend water requirements to the chain, with annual quantitative goals (% suppliers receiving F2 questionnaire, % with F4 clause incorporated, % with own footprint certification).
- Inclusion of F4 clause in ALL new contracts from year 2 of the certificate.
- Non-renewal plan for water-intensive suppliers who, after 3 years, remain unwilling to provide basic water information.
- Active participation in at least one sector-wide collective water certification initiative (M-AWS module or equivalent).
- Simplified S1+2 calculation of own operation (offices, warehouses, logistics centres) — necessary but not central.

Typical CS functional units: € of invoicing, t of goods moved, m³ of storage, number of SKUs marketed, number of end customers served.

5.3 Public Administrations (AP)

AP is not certified for its administrative operation (marginal footprint) but for its responsibility over the water cycle of the territory it manages. Its documentary requirements are specific:

- Territorial water diagnosis: quantitative and qualitative state of water bodies, territorial water balance, competing uses, hydraulic infrastructure of its jurisdiction.
- Territorial/municipal Water Plan with quantitative objectives (reduction of domestic demand, reuse, regeneration, discharge quality) and multi-year horizon.
- Formalised mechanism of public water participation, with basin councils, technical committees and citizen information mechanisms.
- Commitment to green public procurement with water criteria: model clauses for tenders of water-intensive services and supplies.
- Documented coordination with the corresponding basin authority (River Basin Authority).
- Alignment with AWS Standard v2.0 at territorial level: AP+AWS is the most natural and powerful combination.

Typical AP functional units: equivalent inhabitant, m³ supplied per inhabitant-day, m³ treated per inhabitant-day, ha protected, km of channel regenerated, € of water investment.

6. Aquafides Spread Effect — specific doctrine for CS

The Aquafides Spread Effect is the differentiating axis of the Aquafides Protocol v3.2 against other international water certifications with respect to Supply Chains. It establishes that a CS can only be

Aquafides-certified if it assumes the explicit and verifiable commitment to transmit water requirements down its supplier chain.

Fundamental reason. A CS does not consume significant own water. If Aquafides were to certify a CS by examining only its Scope 1+2, it would be certifying between 2% and 10% of its real material footprint. That would be wholly incorrect and would open the door to institutional greenwashing backed by our own seal. Therefore, the Aquafides Protocol v3.2 requires every CS a multi-year, quantitative and verifiable commitment to water extension along its supplier chain.

6.1 Minimum quantitative commitments of the Spread Effect

An Aquafides-certified CS assumes the following minimum binding commitments (which may be expanded by the client):

Commitment	Deadline from issue	Tracking metric
Complete inventory of water-intensive suppliers (CS-Spec criterion)	6 months	% inventory completed
Sending F1 letter + F2 questionnaire to 100% water-intensive suppliers	12 months	% F2 sent
Receipt of completed F2 from ≥ 60% water-intensive suppliers	18 months	% F2 received
Incorporation of F4 clause in 100% of new contracts	24 months	% contracts with F4 clause
≥ 30% water-intensive suppliers with own footprint certification (Aquafides or other recognised)	36 months	% certified
Non-renewal policy for water-intensive suppliers still unwilling to provide basic water information after 36 months	36 months	Yes/No (formal commitment)
Active participation in ≥ 1 sector-wide collective water certification initiative	12 months	Participation minutes

6.2 Water-intensity criterion of the supplier

For Spread Effect purposes, a supplier is considered water-intensive if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Belongs to a sector water-intensive by definition: agriculture and livestock; food and beverages; pulp and paper; textiles and tanning; chemicals; ceramics and glass; mining and steel; water-based energy; water waste management.
- Its supply to the CS represents ≥ 5% of total annual water-intensive purchasing cost.
- Its product/service has an embedded water footprint above 50 L of blue water per € of value.

- Operates in a catchment with AWARE factor ≥ 10 or WRI Aqueduct Overall Water Risk High/Extreme.

6.3 Systemic benefit

Rigorous application of the Spread Effect turns every Aquafides-certified CS into an agent of systemic change. A single relevant retail chain can pull hundreds of SPs onto their own certification path, multiplying the Protocol's impact in a chain of virtuous causalities. Commercially, this turns client CSs into natural prescribers of Aquafides towards their supplier base, a mechanism the Protocol formalises and monetises through a voluntary partner-fee programme that interested CSs may join.

7. Particulars of the certifying audit by typology

The Aquafides Certifying Auditor adapts the conduct of the audit to the entity's profile. The key differences are:

Dimension	SP	CS	AP
Main focus	Physical verification of meters, installations, sub-metering, operational records.	Documentary verification of Spread Effect compliance, supplier sampling.	Verification of coherence between territorial Water Plan, public budgets and indicators.
On-site visit	Mandatory, 1-3 days according to size.	Mixed audit: 1 day on site + verification of 5-10 sampled suppliers.	Technical visit to critical water infrastructure of the jurisdiction + interviews with basin councils.
Interviews	CSH Committee + operational managers + sample staff.	CSH Committee + procurement manager + 5-10 sampled suppliers.	CSH Committee + competent elected office + municipal technicians + citizen representation.
Key documents	D1, D2, E1, E3, H2.	F1-F4 + CS-Spec + Spread Effect indicators.	AP-Spec (diagnosis, water plan, participation) + L1-L4.
Typical lead time	8-10 weeks.	10-12 weeks (due to supplier verification).	12-16 weeks (institutional complexity and administrative timing).

8. Mandatory typology field in all audit file documents

With the entry into force of this Annex VIII, every document in the Aquafides audit file (both master template and client instance) carries in its header and metadata block a mandatory field that explicitly identifies the typology:

Certification typology: SP / CS / AP

For audit files already issued before this Annex VIII enters into force, the responsible Advisor performs retrospective classification and issues a Typology Addendum that is incorporated into the file as a permanent part. The next client audit file (annual renewal) integrates the field from its v2.0 version.

9. Entry into force

This Annex VIII enters into force on 15 February 2026, with publication in the official Aquafides repository and communication to all accredited Advisors. It is a binding part of the Aquafides Protocol v3.2 and, therefore, its compliance is a necessary condition for the validity of any Aquafides certification issued from that date.

Approved in Andorra la Vella, on 15 February 2026.

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— End of Annex VIII —