



Terms of Reference

Expert advice on water stewardship in the building materials sector

Background and context

The building materials sector has a critical role to play in helping to define the sustainable characteristics of tomorrow's cities and developing procedures to ensure that resources are managed and conserved appropriately. From IUCN's perspective, it is critical to engage with industry leaders in the sector to ensure their policies and practices contribute to water stewardship and climate resilience.

In October 2023, IUCN and Holcim signed a three-year collaborative agreement. The overall purpose of the agreement is **to effectively contribute to the achievement of Holcim's commitments on biodiversity, water, climate change and sustainable construction, and demonstrate measurable progress based on the best science and practice.** The objective is to confirm that Holcim's Nature Strategy and approaches in the built environment deliver biodiversity benefits and freshwater conservation and to provide recommendations to enhance positive impacts. Building on this collaboration, both organisations intend to actively engage with the building materials sectors to expand the lessons learned and drive sector wide ambition.

More specifically, the objectives of this strategic collaboration are focused on three components:

1. **Biodiversity management:** committing to a measurable positive impact on biodiversity on Holcim's active and non-active quarries;
2. **Water stewardship:** protecting the availability of freshwater sources through implementing water stewardship programmes within and outside site boundaries – **the object of the present ToRs;**
3. **Greening building standards:** scoping existing building standards and appraising their treatment of biodiversity, using this report to evaluate the need to develop new nature positive building standard(s) and/or the inclusion of biodiversity and nature positive action in relation to existing Standards

These terms of reference outline IUCN's intention to engage 3 external experts to contribute to the thematic area of freshwater by providing independent advice to IUCN and Holcim around optimisation of water stewardship practices in Holcim operations, within and outside site boundaries. The time commitment expected from each expert is 24 days between September 2024 and September 2026.

Deadline to submit expressions of interest: **August 14th, 2024**

Aim and objectives

The overall **aim** of these terms of reference is to complement IUCN in-house expertise with external and independent expertise on water management and stewardship, to advise Holcim on optimising their water stewardship practices in such a way as to enable Holcim to

accomplish their water replenishment commitments and become a leader in the sector, driving sector-wide reform and leadership on water management.

This aim will be accomplished through the following **objectives**:

- Participate in Holcim site visits, engaging with Country staff to build awareness and capacity around water stewardship as well as to better understand implementation of Holcim's replenishment commitments on the ground;
- Review IUCN guidance to Holcim on water stewardship, including around promoting resilient nature-based water solutions (RNBWS) and collective action;
- Advise Holcim sites on implementing collective action for water stewardship and RNBWS.

Adjustments to these objectives and the below deliverables could take place, in agreement with the contracted experts, and based on findings and needs identified in 2024-2026.

Expected results and deliverables

1. Participate in site visits and engage Country staff to build awareness and capacity on water stewardship

In the course of 2024-2026, 5 site visits are expected to Holcim operations in different countries and regions, in order to better understand, provide advice and guidance and build capacity of operational staff around water stewardship and RNBSW implementation as well as collective action engagements. The experts will be expected to participate in these visits and develop guidance and recommendations linked to these. The following activities will be carried out for each visit:

- a) **Prior to the visit** become familiar with the site and country operations, understanding the context and reviewing any materials provided by Holcim, as well as reviewing relevant national and regional information regarding water management and governance;
- b) **During the visit** engage with Holcim staff to better understand site and country challenges and opportunities, as well as help to enhance capacity of staff regarding water stewardship and RNBSW;
- c) **After the visit**, summarise visit and recommendations linked to water stewardship and RNBSW opportunities as well as provide guidance for putting in place collective action engagements.

Main deliverable:

- Report(s) summarising site visit findings, next steps and recommendations.

2. Review IUCN guidance on water stewardship and RNBSW

Based on the review of Holcim tools and policies linked to water stewardship and building on Holcim site visits and existing best practices on these themes, IUCN will lead the development of guidance for Holcim to optimise its water stewardship approaches, especially linked to implementation on the ground and collective action. The experts will engage with this process to:

- a) Provide input and recommendations linked to IUCN-led tools and reports;
- b) Engage in a workshop with corporate staff to discuss opportunities for optimising water stewardship and RNBSW linkages and implementation;
- c) Advise IUCN and Holcim on the aforementioned subject, if further needs are identified and based on time availability.

Main deliverables:

- Input to IUCN-led guidance on water stewardship and RNBSW (written comments, track changes);
- Integration of field visit outputs into guidance and training documents prepared by IUCN.
- Contribute to the development of an externally facing brief for the sector around water stewardship and RNBSW implementation.

3. *Advise Holcim sites on implementing collective action for water stewardship*

In addition to site level water stewardship and replenishment work, and based on needs and opportunities identified during the site visits, IUCN and experts will provide guidance on setting up collective action engagements outside site boundaries, as well as providing further recommendations on the process for establishing these as well as capacity building linked to this to operations.

Main deliverables:

- Memo to sites visited outlining recommendations for collective action linked to stewardship and NBSW (building on replenishment plans and actions);
- Input into general recommendations to Holcim on implementing collective action engagements and partnerships outside site boundaries.
- Support IUCN to establish linkages with local partners and experts for implementing water stewardship actions.

The experts are expected to consider studies, reports, and initiatives linked to corporate water stewardship when drafting recommendations, including, *inter alia*, CEO Water Mandate, 2030 Water Resource Group, AWS, WWF, WRI among others.

Budget & timeline

Budget

Based on the expertise requirements outline below, IUCN envisages contracting 3 experts with diverse and complementary experience and expertise. Each expert would be expected to dedicate approximately 24 days between September 2024 and September 2026, estimated at around 24,000 CHF per expert. Travel arrangements and costs will be taken care of by IUCN directly.

Timeline

The engagement is expected to last two years until October 2026. The work plan will be further discussed and validated at the scoping meeting. Priorities for 2025 and 2026 may be reviewed in quarter 4 of the preceding year.

Activities & deliverables	Time overview	Location	Timeline
Inception meeting with IUCN staff	1-1.5 hrs each = 1.5 days total	Remote	Early September 2024

Carry out 1 st site visit in Europe	3 experts x 3 days = 9 days	Location to be determined	Late September 2024
Carry out 2 nd site visit in LATAM	2 experts x 5 days = 10 days	Location to be determined	October – November 2024
Site visit report & recommendations	5.5 days	Remote	Q1, Q2 2025
Carry out 3 rd site visit	2 experts x 3 days = 6 days	Location to be determined	Q3, Q4 2025
Carry out 4 rd site visit	2 experts x 5 days = 10 days	Location to be determined	Q4 2025
Feedback meeting & expert recommendations	6 days total	Remote	Q1 2026
Carry out 5 th site visit	3 experts x 3 days = 9 days	Location to be determined	Q2 2026
Submit final recommendations focusing on stewardship, RNBWS and collective action	15 days total	Gland / Switzerland	Q3 2026
Number of days total for expert support	72 days		

Qualifications & skills of the expert team

IUCN would like to engage 3 experts with complementary skills relevant to the successful fulfilment of these TORs. Areas of relevant expertise include, *inter alia*, water risk assessment, natural resources management and integrated water resources management, nature-based solutions and water stewardship. Experience on delivering on the ground strategies and collective action engagements is also desirable.

During the inception meeting with IUCN, the team of experts will discuss and agree on the *modus operandi* of the collaboration to ensure efficient delivery, including on the need to appoint task leads. The experts are expected to engage with the IUCN project team and Holcim regularly, based on the workplan which will be put in place on an annual basis.

The below outlines the main requirements for three complementary profiles IUCN deems necessary for the successful fulfilment of these TORs:

Profile 1: Hydrologist, IWRM expertise

- MSc or equivalent training/education on hydrology, integrated water resource management, climate-resilient catchment management or related discipline;
- Strong understanding of freshwater-related challenges and interlinkages with other topics including biodiversity and climate change;
- 5-10 years on-the-ground experience implementing IWRM and/or multi-stakeholder engagements linked to basin management and governance;
- Knowledge of water, climate and/or biodiversity related public and private policy frameworks, approaches and tools at the local, national, and international levels
- Business engagement experience would be an asset.

Profile 2: Water risk management & water stewardship

- MSc or equivalent training/education on water risk management, water stewardship or related discipline.
- Experience working with large, multinational companies to develop policies and practices linked to sustainable water management and water stewardship, including

reduction and replenishment activities and driving the development of cross-company water management plans.

- Knowledgeable about the latest developments linked to water stewardship approaches and water-related metrics.
- Understanding and experience in the strategic development of water solutions and especially resilient nature-based water solutions with stakeholders.

Profile 3: Stakeholder engagement and collective action approaches linked to RNBWS and Water Stewardship

- MSc or equivalent training/education in social science disciplines such as anthropology, geography, international development, international relations and public policy or related disciplines.
- Proven record of accomplishment for cultivating strong relationships with diverse external stakeholders and ability to communicate key messages to leadership.
- Experience and understanding of water risk about extractive sector including a good understanding of collective action and multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships.
- Ability to influence, change and impact decisions with local and external stakeholders and motivate others to work towards a common goal.

General requirements for all three experts:

- Proficiency in English, including excellent writing and analytical skills;
- Knowledge of other languages such as French and Spanish would be an advantage;
- Excellent communications skills;
- Ability to work as part of a diverse and multidisciplinary team and preferably with track record working as a member of expert groups at international level.
- A national and local level network of experts and/or organisations in countries of interest is an advantage.

Expressions of interest:

Individual or consortia of experts are invited to submit their expressions of interest to isabel.wallnoefer@iucn.org including their CV and a summary (0.5 - 1 page) explaining their motivation and fulfilment of the abovementioned requirements.