



SUMMARY REPORT

Edinburgh 26 June 2025

08:00 – 16:30

Convenors: Alliance for Water Stewardship & WWF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 26th, roughly 100 people from over 70 organisations came together for the inaugural WaterLogue in Edinburgh on the back of the AWS Forum. Below is a list of the organisations that were represented at the event:

Agrow	ERM	Nutrien
Agua Segura	FIDO Tech	Pacific Institute CEO Water Mandate
AGWA	Frank Water	Philip Morris International
ALDI SUED KG	Frog Creek Partners	Primark
Alliance for Water Stewardship	Global Water Challenge	Quantis
Anglo American - South Africa	Good Stuff International	Responsible Business Alliance
Antea France	Good Water Stewards (Pty) Ltd	Riverkin
Apple Inc	GSI	SNV
AstraZeneca	GSK	South Pole
Baiada	GWJ	Suntory Holdings Limited
BP	Haleon	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
British Standards Institution (BSI)	Haskoning	Tetra Pak
CDP	IDH	The Nature Conservancy
CEO Water Mandate	Ipieca	The Rivers Trust
Ceres	IUCN	TNC - N4W
Cholamandalam MS Risk Services Ltd	KfW DEG Impulse	University of Oxford
Cisco	Kilimo	Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
Cisco System	Kurita Water Industries Ltd.	Water Security Collective
Diageo	LeafTurtle	Water Witness
Dole plc	LimnoTech	Water.org
DWECE Management Pvt. Ltd.	Murugappa Water Technology and Solutions	WaterAid
Ecolab	Nature Positive Initiative	WWF
EcoMetrics LLC	Nature's Pride	
Equatorial Coca-Cola Bottling Company	Nestlé Waters	

This multistakeholder group spent a day discussing collective action in a series of table discussions broken broadly into three sessions:

- (1) Feedback on the concept of WaterLogues in general.
- (2) discussing the question of “what constitutes ‘credible collective action’ ?” and
- (3) discussing the question of “should we build a collective action/multi-stakeholder initiative database and if so, what should we include?”

The group were broken into 10 tables with table facilitators synthesizing table input into a google doc, which was then used as a structured input into ChatGPT to synthesize the findings and develop the outputs from the WaterLogue.

Key conclusions included:

- While there was broad support for the WaterLogues concept, people raised concerns about representation, purpose and action on the far side. Recommendations included having a clear purpose, developing accountability structures, mechanisms for broad inclusion & accessibility, ensuring impact, adopt flexible formats, and leveraging technology to be inclusive and targeted.
- There were many concepts the fed into credibility of collective action with notions of shared purpose, inclusive governance, clear accountability and roles, highlighted the importance of trust and relationships, required participation and sustainable financing, while also having strong outcome-oriented metrics. Participants were equally clear on what collective action was NOT – bilateral, short-term, lacking in public value creation, and efforts without shared accountability.
- The group achieved broad consensus that mapping collective action at the HydroBASIN 6 catchment level made sense, with a desire to capture different stakeholders, roles, shared challenges and funding needs.

NEXT STEPS:

On the back of the event, WWF & AWS (as the two core co-hosts of the WaterLogue) will be:

1. Convening a group of collective action actors (CEO WM/WRC, WRG 2030, C4W, RWA, GWC, WRAP, TNC, FWF, GWP and WWF) to discuss next steps on the notion of credible collective action and developing a database for mapping collective action.
2. From within this group (plus any others that are interested) developing a working group to further build out and populate the CA Database
3. From within this group (plus any others that are interested) developing a working group to build a draft template for catchment-level collective action (building on the draft principles from this WaterLogue plus other inputs) and then testing this in select locations (likely Dhaka/Bangladesh; Lerma-Chapala/Mexico and possibly other locations).
4. Host a further WaterLogue in Stockholm (August 27th) which will focus on (A) catchment-level collective action metrics/indicators and (B) planning for water stewardship aims at the UN Water 2026 event
5. Lastly, WWF will also be seeking to work with GlobeScan to further survey the community on collective action and explore the development of a financial model for collective action, which may act as inputs to future WaterLogues.

** This WaterLogues event was made possible by the generous financial support from AstraZeneca **

SUMMARIES OF SESSIONS

SESSION 1: Waterlogues concept feedback

This synthesis¹ captures key insights and recommendations from discussions at 10 tables during the event. WaterLogues is an evolving, unfunded initiative, so while feedback will shape future events, some recommendations may exceed current resource capacity.

QUESTION 1:

Do the five principles of the concept of WaterLogues make sense or are these any missing?

- Unclear Purpose & Direction - Many participants were unsure what WaterLogues is for—whether it's about collective action, water stewardship, or broader dialogue. This makes it hard to engage new people or define outcomes.
- Lack of Accountability & Follow-Through - A consistent concern was that discussions don't lead to action. There's no clear ownership, responsible individuals, or continuity.
- Limited Inclusivity & Representation - The process currently excludes key voices, particularly from the Global South, grassroots actors, and non-English speakers. Participation is often limited by cost or access.
- Need for Practical, Action-Oriented Outcomes - Participants want to move beyond theory to tangible results—clear outputs, responsibilities, and momentum from each session.

¹ | Synthesis was developed via ChatGPT using the following prompt using data gathered from the event in a Google Doc: "Synthesize the key insights as well as the key recommendations from these raw notes. The insights and recommendations should not be presented per table but all feedback from the tables should be included in the synthesis. Make the synthesis as concise as possible and use the frequency in which key words or phrases that were used to generate the synthesis and recommendations were referenced within the raw text. Use this raw text: [copy text from GoogleDoc]"

QUESTION 2:

How do we make sure we have the right people in the room while balancing the need to make WaterLogues accessible?

- Representation & Inclusion Are Critical—but Challenging - Frequent concern about who is in the room and who is missing (e.g. Indigenous voices, Global South, technical experts, grassroots actors). Effective participation requires better outreach, diverse perspectives, and addressing financial/language barriers.
- Purpose & Relevance Must Be Clear - Without a clear goal or defined topic, it's difficult to know who should participate and how discussions link to action. People felt disconnected without continuity or a clear "why."
- Structure & Format Need Refinement - Sessions should build on each other, not repeat. Hybrid or regional formats, clear role definitions, and smaller group sizes could improve participation and focus.
- Resources & Coordination Are Key to Sustaining Momentum - Many called out the need for funding, facilitation, and mechanisms to carry learnings forward. Ad hoc efforts with no follow-up aren't effective.

QUESTION 3:

How do we scale this at both a global scale but also more importantly at a local scale?

- Local-Global Balance is Essential - Water stewardship must remain locally driven, but benefit from global learning and shared frameworks. Local ownership was emphasized across almost all tables.
- Clear Purpose and Focus Are Missing - There is a strong need to define WaterLogues' mission, value proposition, and thematic priorities to align participants and avoid confusion or duplication.
- Technology Can Enable Continuity and Scale - Digital tools, including AI, online platforms, and knowledge hubs, are key to addressing gaps in follow-up, accessibility, and scalability.

QUESTION 4:

What mechanism(s) can we use to hold ourselves accountable to any agreed next steps?

- Purpose and Focus Must Be Clear - WaterLogues needs a well-defined goal, purpose, and problem statement to avoid dilution and guide effective dialogue.
- Accountability Is Critical - Participants expect clear action commitments, responsibilities, and follow-up mechanisms to maintain credibility and ensure continuity.
- Structure and Leadership Are Needed - A coordinating body or convener is required to maintain coherence, track progress, and support distributed local chapters or groups.
- Documentation Enables Transparency and Learning - Open access to summaries, outcomes, and processes allows others to learn, replicate, and contribute meaningfully.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are distilled recommendations from the session, prioritized by feasibility given current resources—not by importance.

Action	Description	Prioritisation	Resources
Define a Clear Purpose & Shared Direction	Establish a concise and compelling “why” for WaterLogues, supported by a guiding vision or “north star.”	Short-term	Easy to revisit ahead of next event. Low effort and time and no/limited resources needed.
Create Accountability Structures	Introduce mechanisms (e.g. secretariat, rotating facilitation) to track commitments, ensure follow-up, and support continuity.	Medium-term	This assumes others are willing to participate and help shape this. NEEDS: Additional volunteers and financial resources to cover basic costs
Broaden Inclusion & Accessibility	Make participation more equitable by actively involving underrepresented voices, offering hybrid/online options, and removing cost/language barriers.	Medium-term	This will mostly be realised when these events are scaled to a more local scale. More immediate things can be done with consideration of participants etc. NEEDS: Volunteers to host local events and financial resources to cover IT and other things to help accessibility & inclusion.
Design for Impact	Make each session purposeful focused on action, not just dialogue. Agree on outcomes and who will carry them forward.	Short-term	Easy to revisit ahead of next event. Low effort and time and no/limited resources needed.
Clarify Purpose & Topic Before Each Event	Define objectives and themes in advance to guide participation, ensure relevance, and allow better preparation.	Short-term	Easy to revisit ahead of next event. Low effort and time and no/limited resources needed.
Adopt Flexible, Inclusive Formats	Use hybrid and regional structures, allow asynchronous participation, and ensure communication continues between sessions.	Medium-term	Local delivery of these needs to be owed by others. Plan is to develop a central website to host critical materials to allow transparency. NEEDS: Volunteers to host local events and financial resources to cover IT and other basic infrastructure to facilitate communication
Develop a Clear, Shared Framework	Create and communicate a simple, adaptable framework or “playbook” that defines WaterLogues’ purpose and allows for locally led implementation.	Short-term	Easy to revisit ahead of next event. Low effort and time and no/limited resources needed. This could then be evolved over time.
Build an Inclusive but Targeted Network	Focus on representative participation (not just volume), involving trusted local actors, diverse sectors, and those closest to the issues.	Medium-term	Local delivery of these will partly help to build this out. NEEDS: Volunteers to host local events and resources to help support the build out and maintenance of this network
Leverage Tech for Connection and Continuity	Use AI, digital platforms, and knowledge repositories to connect events, track progress, system for action tracking, role assignment, and reduce administrative burden while enabling scaling.	Short-/Medium-Term	Used of basic AI is already being used to summaries event materials. Plan is to create a website to host these in the future. NEEDS: financial resources to build out IT and other basic infrastructure to facilitate scaling

SESSION 2: What constitutes ‘credible collective action’ ?”

The participants were asked to work through 7 areas that had the potential to support the establishment of “credible collective action”. In each instance they were asked to either Agree, Agree with caveats or Disagree with the category and its role in establishing credibility with respect to collective action and also to explain the choice.

Key Takeaways:

1. Alignment to/Engagement with Public Policy

- Consensus: *Agree but with caveats (AwC)* from all tables.
- Insights:
 - Alignment should not mean blind adherence—public policy can be flawed.
 - Engagement matters more than alignment; influence, don't just follow.
 - Collective action shouldn't depend on good policy environments.
 - Include engagement at multiple scales—local to national.

2. Governance & Representation

- Consensus: Broad agreement, minor caveats (mostly *Agree*).
- Insights:
 - Representation must include diversity (gender, regional, affected groups).
 - Governance systems must be adaptive, transparent, and inclusive.
 - Stakeholder mapping and feedback mechanisms are critical.
 - Clarify whether “governance” implies central control or facilitative leadership.

3. Role Mapping & Clarification

- Consensus: Unanimous agreement across all tables (*Agree*).
- Insights:
 - Essential for accountability, credibility, and conflict resolution.
 - Roles evolve—plan for transitions, re-evaluation.
 - Neutral facilitators, stakeholder connectors, and drivers are key.

4. Outcome Types & Metrics

- Consensus: Mostly *Agree w/ Caveats (AwC)* with a few *Agree*.
- Insights:
 - Outcomes should include co-benefits (e.g., social equity, biodiversity).
 - Metrics must be SMART, contextual, linked to SDGs and stakeholder values.
 - Need to balance ambition with practicality—avoid overburdening CA.
 - Theories of Change and adaptive M&E systems are essential.
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5. Relationship Building & Trust

- Consensus: Mixed—*AwC*, some *Agree*, one *Disagree*.
- Insights:
 - Trust is an outcome and a process.
 - Difficult to measure, but critical (e.g., safe space, transparency, comfort with dissent).
 - Neutral convenors and effective mediation can foster trust.

6. Meetings & Communication

- Consensus: Mostly *Agree* with some *AwC*.
- Insights:
 - Must be transparent, inclusive, and outcome-oriented.
 - Flexibility in formats; communication must extend beyond meetings.
 - Importance of documenting progress, failures, and lessons.

7. Funding Expectations

- Consensus: Mixed—*Agree* and *AwC*.
- Insights:
 - Include broader “resource expectations” (e.g., time, knowledge).
 - Transparency on allocation, usage, and long-term sustainability is critical.
 - Need fair and inclusive funding mechanisms, with shared responsibilities.

What's missing:

- Defined shared objective rooted in catchment needs.
- Planning elements: timelines, geographies, desired outcomes, and workplans.
- Theory of Change and clarity of the *problem being solved*.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation systems.
- Emphasis on transparency, data sharing, and external communication.
- Collective learning mechanisms—peer exchange, knowledge hubs.
- Flexibility and sustainability planning, beyond funding cycles.

What is and is not Collective Action?

What *IS NOT* Collective Action

- One-off, **transactional projects** without shared goals.
- **Compliance-driven or proprietary** initiatives lacking multi-stakeholder engagement.
- **Unilateral or bilateral efforts** without broader engagement.
- No **shared accountability, resource commitment, or catchment benefit**.
- Projects **exclusionary by design** or without transparency or public value.

What *IS* Collective Action

- **Catchment-scale, multi-stakeholder, and goal-driven.**
- Delivers **shared value** to people, nature, and basin health.
- Requires **inclusive governance, clear roles, and measurable outcomes.**
- **Adaptive, transparent, and scalable** in both process and impact.

Synthesised with Integrity guidelines...

Why Collective Action?

- Water challenges are shared solutions must be too
- Fragmented efforts lead to duplication and inefficiency
- Collective action enables scale, legitimacy, and impact
- This framework defines what makes collective action credible and effective

8 Principles of credible collective action at a catchment scale

1. Shared Purpose & Inclusive Governance
2. Inclusive and Transparent Governance
3. Defined Roles and Mutual Accountability
4. Outcome-Oriented with SMART Metrics
5. Trust-Building and Relationship Integrity
6. Meaningful Communication and Participation
7. Sustainable Resourcing and Financial Integrity
8. Learning, Flexibility, and Adaptation

These 8 principles **absorb and integrate** the original categories from your prompt (e.g., public policy, governance, funding, communication), the detail from the **Rubric**, and recommendations across all **Tables 1–10**. They are designed to:

- Be **assessable** yet adaptable to context
- Cover **governance, social equity, outcomes, and strategy**
- Encourage continuous **reflection, refinement, and accountability**

Applying the Principles

- Use the Evaluation Matrix to assess existing or planned initiatives
- Identify gaps, strengths, and opportunities for course correction
- Helps build legitimacy, impact, and scalability

Unpacking the principles:

1. Shared Purpose & Inclusive Governance

- Co-develop a catchment-wide plan rooted in robust evidence and local context, including:
 - A clearly defined shared water challenge
 - A Theory of Change linked to basin-scale and community needs
 - Specific goals, timelines, and an adaptive pathway
 - Use existing public plans where possible and ensure alignment with the SDGs and national/sub-national strategies.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Broad stakeholder endorsement
 - Documentation of challenges, goals, and rationale
 - Shared understanding of scope and scale

2. Inclusive and Transparent Governance

- Establish a representative, fair governance structure with:
 - Gender, age, regional, and minority group representation
 - Roles defined for leadership, facilitation, and conflict resolution
 - Documented procedures for **grievance redress, feedback, and decision-making**
- Avoid "capture" by a single actor through rotation, transparency, and external review.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Presence of governance charter
 - Participation records by group
 - Evidence of inclusive and transparent decisions

3. Defined Roles and Mutual Accountability

- Map actor motivations and clarify:
 - Who is contributing what
 - For how long
 - To what end
- Regularly revisit roles and responsibilities; include neutral facilitation.
- Build in mechanisms for conflict resolution, role evolution, and accountability.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Published role map and responsibilities
 - Documented updates to roles
 - Tracked delivery against commitments

4. Outcome-Oriented with Smart Metrics

- Define specific, measurable, catchment-relevant outcomes (not just outputs), including:
 - Water quantity/quality, biodiversity, resilience, equity, social co-benefits
 - Metrics aligned with both **local needs** and **basin/global standards**
- Monitor and report on performance regularly, with flexibility to adapt.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - SMART indicators linked to ToC
 - Routine reporting and review cycles
 - Evidence of adaptation based on M&E findings

5. Trust-Building and Relationship Integrity

- Prioritize sustained relationship-building based on:
 - Transparency of motivations (especially financial)
 - Comfort expressing dissent, airing grievances, and addressing power imbalances
 - Recognition of cultural, political, and institutional contexts
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Diversity of participation (and engagement quality)
 - Evidence of conflict resolution processes
 - Stakeholder feedback on trust levels

6. Meaningful Communication and Participation

- Design inclusive and adaptive communications strategies:
 - Multiple formats and languages
 - Safe spaces for difficult conversations
 - Clear, co-developed messages and expectations
- Use meetings to align on **next steps**, foster dialogue, and revisit strategy.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Frequency and diversity of participation in meetings
 - Record of shared decisions and disagreements
 - Accessibility and transparency of documentation

7. Sustainable Resourcing and Financial Integrity

- Define and document:
 - Who contributes and controls what resources
 - How funding is used, disbursed, and reported
 - How continuity is maintained beyond single funding cycles
- Explore non-monetary contributions and equitable models for small/local actors.
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Financial transparency and auditability
 - Shared funding models and long-term sustainability plan
 - Return on investment reporting (social, ecological, and economic)

8. Learning, Flexibility, and Adaptation

- Recognize that collective action is dynamic—build systems that support:
 - Continuous learning from successes and failures
 - Adaptation of strategy and metrics based on evolving context
 - Knowledge sharing with the broader water stewardship community
- **Indicators of credibility:**
 - Documented pivots and rationale
 - Health checks, learning logs, M&E adaptations
 - Visibility of learnings beyond the catchment

SESSION 3: Should we build a collective action/multi-stakeholder initiative database and if so, what should we include?”

Summary:

- Session two discussed the notion of developing a multi-stakeholder (collective action) initiative database at the scale of the catchment. The group developed a consensus that HydroBASIN Level 6 made sense (with caveats), that it should link up with other efforts and that it would need a governance structure to support the database creation. Issues around data verification were flagged, as were funding models to maintain the database.
- The materials in this PPT summarize the input, an initial set of recommended multi-relational database fields (for a database schema) and a series of recommended next steps.

1. General agreement on Building a HydroBASIN 6 Database

Position	Tables	Notes
Agree (A)	1, 6, 10	HydroBASIN level 6 is a good operational level; some favor starting big and narrowing focus.
Agree w/ Caveats	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10	Caveats include: - Varying suitability based on scale (local vs global) - Need for layered boundaries - Governance concerns - Data ownership
Disagree (D)	7	Possibly due to scalability, clarity, or governance doubts.

2. Stakeholder Information Needs from a Multi-Stakeholder Initiative (MSI) Database

Stakeholder	Information Needed
Public Sector	Projects in basin, governance structures, integration with national programs
Private Sector	Shared risks, collective action efforts, impact opportunities, key water users, investment leverage points
Funders	Project effectiveness, risk/reward, ESG metrics, project stage, co-funding opportunities, indicators
Civil Society	Issues, actors, data gaps, possible collaborators, legitimacy of data
Communities	Accessible data, local relevance, funding opportunities, project inclusion, language/boundaries
NGOs	Partnerships, risks of duplication, shared goals, funding mechanisms
Academia/Consultants	High-quality data, update logs, local validation, indicators, gaps analysis

3. Required Resources

Category	Description
Funding	Shared funding models (public-private), incentives, long-term sustainability
Governance	Independent host body or trusted third party; professional data management
Technical	Platform infrastructure, data models, mapping tools, backend development
Human Resources	Data entry, verification, stakeholder coordination

4. Governance and collaboration

- Needs clear leadership and mandate to start.
- Consider leveraging existing platforms (Aqueduct, WMO, IPCC tools).
- Include value demonstration/proof of concept for ongoing funding.
- Highlight use-case clarity to avoid redundancy and underuse.

Recommended next steps:

1. **Validate schema with key users:** Confirm this structure meets the needs of 4-5 core stakeholder types. Check on relational vs. non-relational database.
2. **Prototype MVP:** Start with a small, high-quality dataset to test and iterate.
3. **Clarify governance model:** Assign leadership for population, curation, and maintenance.
4. **Plan integration:** Build links to SBTN, Aqueduct, WRI, or AWS data layers.
5. **Draft a financial model for maintenance:** Build a plan for how to pay for the maintenance of the system