



**SBTN Public Consultation for Version 2 Freshwater targets | Webinar Q&A Responses | Sept 11, 2025**

Question	Response
<p>Investors can search the SBTi dashboard to see which companies have adopted SBTi targets. Is there a similar tool investors can use to see which companies have adopted targets for nature?</p>	<p>Investors and any members of the public can view information on the first companies who have disclosed SBTs on the SBTN website here: <a href="https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/company/target-tracker/">https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/company/target-tracker/</a>. This covers only companies that have publicly disclosed their targets, not companies who have successfully validated targets but have not yet disclosed. We anticipate the dashboard growing as more companies adopt SBTs with an update planned during Climate Week NYC.</p>
<p>How are water quality targets set if the same company operates several facilities in the same basin and the facilities exert different levels of pollution pressure?</p>	<p>For nutrients, targets are set as a percent reduction of a company's total load. Reduction percentages can vary across facilities, as long as the cumulative load reduction target is achieved.</p> <p>For pesticides, companies will need to aggregate baseline pesticide impacts in a basin. The 50% pesticide impact reduction target applies to this total baseline basin impact.</p> <p>For point source discharges of toxics, the answer depends upon whether local discharge limits are available that are protective of the environment. If local limits exist, they will dictate the required reduction by facility using whatever allocation scheme is selected by the regulatory authority. If no local limits exist, all facilities in a basin will be required to meet the same effluent concentration target.</p>

<p>Which further toxic chemicals (groups) will be addressed by the SBTN over the next years?</p>	<p>The V2 draft already addresses point source discharges. Our aim is to eventually be able to inform future targets through the combined pressure of chemicals in a basin. In this way, a wider range of chemicals will be covered. Please refer to the draft annex in the V2 draft for a detailed explanation. In addition, we are eyeing future enhancements that may speak more directly to textiles and ZDHC, as well as pharmaceutical impacts, but this is all resource and strategy dependent. And we are open to input on what chemicals or other pollutants to prioritize next.</p>
<p>How does the guidance account for water replenishment initiatives, regenerative agriculture, and atmospheric moisture recycling capacities of vegetation?</p>	<p>Details regarding for target implementation and monitoring will be addressed in Step 4: Act. Resources for Step 4, including answers to frequently asked questions and an initial database water initiatives, which we call response options, can be found here: <a href="https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/companies/take-action/act/">https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/companies/take-action/act/</a>.</p> <p>The public consultation focuses on Freshwater Step 3: Set targets, and is designed to define the reduction targets, e.g., in groundwater use (and/or amount of replenishment required).</p>
<p>Which data(sets) can be used to determine groundwater depletion?</p>	<p>We invite your feedback on indicators we should consider. Please provide your feedback using groundwater question 10 in the public consultation survey.</p>

<p>What is the level of maturity of groundwater depletion models, and what parameters are being used to identify groundwater depletion?</p>	<p>The tool being used to address whether depletion is currently occurring is based on the Global Land Water Storage dataset (GLWS) 2.0: <a href="https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.954742">https://doi.pangaea.de/10.1594/PANGAEA.954742</a>.</p> <p>The indicator can also be accessed in WWF's Water Risk Filter: <a href="https://riskfilter.org/water/home">https://riskfilter.org/water/home</a></p>
<p>Are herbicides included in the pesticide target setting?</p>	<p>Yes, herbicides are included in the definition of pesticides (see glossary of the V2 draft for toxic chemicals) and are therefore also addressed in the pesticide target setting.</p>
<p>What is a groundwater management plan?</p>	<p>A plan developed by a designated basin authority specifically intended to define the actions needed to protect aquifer levels.</p>
<p>Are the new water targets also to be set at the basin level? I.e, any two companies sharing a given basin will use the same thresholds and pressure datasets derived from common global/local basin models to define their target reductions?</p>	<p>Yes, the freshwater targets are to be set at the basin level. Companies sharing a basin use the same thresholds, although the pressures will be company-specific.</p> <p>The Basin Threshold Tool will help ensure consistency among basin-wide targets by pointing to local data identified by the Freshwater Hub or by other target setting companies.</p>

<p>The groundwater guidance extension aims to facilitate the stabilization of groundwater levels. However, what if the groundwater levels are already very low due to over-abstraction over decades?</p>	<p>The approach is designed to address currently over-abstracted aquifers. The target groundwater level for those aquifers will be higher than present-day baseline levels.</p>
<p>Do you have any insight into the preparedness of companies ahead of the inclusion of groundwater in the water quantity targets? Do you expect similar challenges for data availability as in version 1?</p>	<p>The proposed groundwater method builds on the current SBTN Freshwater Step 3 guidance (V1.1) by enabling a globally developed modeling approach to target setting that helps overcome gaps in local data coverage.</p>
<p>Will SBTN remain the owner of the Basin Threshold Tool?</p>	<p>The goal for the BTT V1.0 will be to house, maintain, and update the database in conjunction with existing tools, such as the WWF Risk Filter Suite, the WRI Aqueduct, or other that will remain open source and available for all end users. The future home of the BTT will align with tools that continue to support the SBTN Freshwater technical methods.</p>
<p>Which basins will be covered in the Basin Threshold Tool, and is a pilot of the Basin Threshold Tool planned before the release?</p>	<p>The list of basins that will be covered in the Basin Threshold Tool includes the 100 priority basins and other basins important to Corporate Water Stewardship.</p> <p>If there are specific basins that you would like to see available in the BTT, please add those directly in the public consultation feedback to be added to the list.</p>

<p>How will climate change be accounted for in setting water quantity targets related to groundwater, and what would that imply for companies that want to set targets? E.g., the increased frequency of droughts will reduce flows and groundwater levels in many instances.</p>	<p>The proposed Global-scale Surface-water Groundwater Model (GSGM) uses forward-looking scenarios, including how future climate change will impact groundwater levels.</p>
<p>Is the Alliance for Water Stewardship still considered a recommended framework for certifying SBTN: corporate water stewardship goals? Or, is the new method to validate using the Accountability Accelerator?</p>	<p>The Accountability Accelerator is the only validation service for SBTN targets.</p>
<p>Will the BTT and similar efforts have a pathway to loop back into the global model and the other way around? Work towards Glocal models as discussed in earlier feedbacks?</p>	<p>In the current framework of the Basin Threshold Tool (v.0.1), three decision trees are included: the local path priority basins, local path non-priority basins, and global path. The global path is prescribed only for non-priority basins when no information is readily available. In this framework, the global path is no longer the dominant route, instead, it is the path of last resort. Please review the v.0.1 Framework report for more information and provide comments and questions during this review period.</p>

<p>How is the Blue Water Footprint Tool connected to SBTN, and how can it be accessed?</p>	<p>SBTN’s global freshwater quantity model is an adapted version of the Water Footprint Assessment Tool, which uses blue water footprints as an input.</p> <p>The model can be accessed here: <a href="https://www.acc.waterfootprintassessmenttool.org/?b=sbtn">https://www.acc.waterfootprintassessmenttool.org/?b=sbtn</a></p>
<p>How is bottled water and plastic pollution addressed in the SBTN guidance?</p>	<p>Currently, the impacts of bottled water and plastics are outside of the scope of the freshwater SBT guidance. SBTN may prioritize these challenges in future versions.</p>
<p>How does your work draw from or contribute to the Earth Commission 2.0 work on tipping points and boundaries for freshwater?</p>	<p>The general basis for freshwater science-based targets are ecological thresholds protective of nature. For instance, the freshwater quantity targets are based on environmental flow requirements and dynamically stabilizing groundwater levels.</p>
<p>How is allocation (fair shares) considered in the threshold and target setting process?</p>	<p>SBTN uses an "equal contraction of efforts" approach to allocation. This approach assumes that all water users in the basin will reduce their withdrawals by the same percentage and applies that to their individual baseline pressures to determine their absolute reductions.</p>
<p>How does a company discharging wastewater to public wastewater treatment plants report the pollutant discharge levels?</p>	<p>Indirect point source nutrient and chemical pollutant loads (i.e., situations in which a company’s wastewater is routed to a non-company wastewater treatment plant prior to discharge to the water body) are out of scope for this version of SBTN’s Freshwater methods.</p>

<p>Is it possible to set targets at an asset level like a data centre with freshwater consumption and water discharge quality?</p>	<p>Yes, science-based targets for freshwater are set at a local (basin) level.</p>
<p>Which water quality parameters are relevant for setting science-based targets and should the company consider only local legal thresholds or global benchmarks, regarding pesticides and other pollutants?</p>	<p>Companies are asked to investigate water quality parameters related to the chemicals they are emitting. The V2 draft provides further guidance on pesticides and point source discharges. Due to temporal and spatial variations of pesticide concentrations, the pesticide guidance only asks companies to check with local water authorities for the transgression of local thresholds. For setting point source discharge targets, companies should use local thresholds if available, or they can use thresholds set by international conventions or intergovernmental bodies.</p>
<p>How does the guidance complement companies disclosing and addressing water risks driven by climate change and help them address the impact of their own operations? Additionally, how are the interests of shared basin users, like local communities, considered in the guidance?</p>	<p>By setting and validating freshwater science-based targets through Accountability Accelerator, companies can claim that their targets are in line with the scientific criteria developed by SBTN. The freshwater technical guidance reflects decades of science and efforts by the corporate water stewardship community to promote collective action for restoring freshwater ecosystems and protecting human water security.</p> <p>In Step 1: Assess, Nature's Contribution to People (NCP) indicators and metrics are included that companies should consider use to assess their impacts and dependencies on nature. Within the freshwater guidance, a model selection process is outlined where national and local stakeholders are consulted. SBTN also has local stakeholder engagement guidance to assist companies in target setting:  <a href="https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Stakeholder-engagement-guidance-v1-0.pdf">https://sciencebasedtargetsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Stakeholder-engagement-guidance-v1-0.pdf</a>.</p>