State of systems for drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene

Global update 2025

KEY FINDINGS

glaas
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United Nations
UN WATER

unicef
for every child

World Health Organization

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1. Introduction

This summary presents the key findings from the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) 2025 report. It highlights the current state of drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems, shares examples where there are signs of progress, identifies critical gaps and points towards areas where greater efforts can bolster implementation and performance to achieve national WASH policy goals and targets.

The GLAAS 2025 report examines the status of key components of WASH systems: policies, plans, institutional arrangements and national targets; monitoring, review and use of data for decision-making; regulation and surveillance; human resources; and finance. It also provides an expanded analysis of the two Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 means of implementation (MoI) targets – Target 6.a on international cooperation and capacity-building support, and Target 6.b on local participation – and their indicators. In addition, it includes sections on development partner support and leaving no one behind. With growing recognition of the importance of water supply and sanitation for climate mitigation and adaptation, the report also has a section on climate and WASH, which explores how participating countries and territories are incorporating aspects of climate-related risk, resilience, adaptation and mitigation into WASH systems.

While there have been many global and national reports on WASH progress, few have reported on WASH systems and "diagnosed" challenges and gaps. Ten years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs, and with less than 5 years left until 2030, the GLAAS 2025 report is strategically timed to be used as a key resource. It can support countries that are assessing progress and updating plans and budgets for the final SDG years, as well as provide insights for development partners, international financial institutions and the private sector looking to invest effectively for maximum impact. It will also serve as a crucial input of data and evidence into the global political dialogue on water and sanitation and SDG 6, including for the upcoming United Nations 2026 Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

The analysis in the GLAAS 2025 report provides a comprehensive global snapshot of the valuable information available from the GLAAS 2024/2025 data set. WASH practitioners, researchers, policy-makers, civil society organizations, investors and citizens are invited to explore the data set, conduct further analysis and examine specific details to build greater understanding and contribute towards more effective action to deliver on the collective promise of available and sustainably managed water and sanitation for all.

Globally, 105 countries and territories completed the GLAAS 2024/2025 country survey, comprising 62% of the global population from all SDG regions.[1] In addition, 21 development partners completed the GLAAS 2024/2025 development partner survey.

The full report and complete GLAAS 2024/2025 data set are available on the GLAAS data portal.

[1] Including one territory: the occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem. Statistics in this summary refer to countries and territories.

2. Policies, plans, institutional arrangements and national targets

Most countries have made important progress in establishing policies and institutional arrangements and in setting national targets. A majority of countries have incorporated safely managed service levels into WASH policies/plans and national targets. While lead agencies for WASH subsectors have largely been designated, two thirds of countries reported overlapping functions, indicating institutional fragmentation remains an issue. Lack of sufficient financial and human resources to fully implement WASH policies and plans remains a persistent challenge.

Policies and plans

- **There is widespread adoption of WASH policies and plans**: Nearly 90% of countries have adopted policies for at least one WASH subsector. About 70% of countries reported having a formally approved policy and plan for urban and rural drinking-water and sanitation.

- **Safely managed WASH service levels are included in most policies and plans**: Most countries have included safely managed drinking-water and sanitation services in their WASH policies and plans. Ninety-two per cent of countries have a WASH policy and/or plan that addresses safely managed drinking-water, and 88% have one that includes safely managed sanitation.

- **Resources remain insufficient for implementation of WASH policies and plans**: Fewer than 13% of countries reported having sufficient financial and human resources to implement plans.

Institutional arrangements

- **Lead agencies for WASH have largely been designated**: Nearly all countries have a lead agency for urban drinking-water. However, 9% of countries reported no lead agency for rural sanitation, and 12% had none for hand hygiene.

- **Institutional fragmentation remains a major issue**: Sixty-four per cent of countries reported that different government institutions have roles and responsibilities that fully or partially overlap. This can lead to inefficiencies and uncoordinated efforts. Additionally, over 20% of countries noted that some ministries, such as finance or agriculture, that should be involved in WASH are not currently engaged.

National targets

- **Most countries have set national drinking-water and sanitation targets, but hand hygiene lags behind**: The majority of countries have established national targets for drinking-water (85%) and sanitation (87%). The percentage of countries with a national hand hygiene target is significantly lower (49%).

- **Over half of countries have national targets aligned with safely managed service levels**: Fifty-six per cent of countries reported that their national sanitation target is aligned with the safely managed service level, while 62% reported the same for their national drinking-water target.

- **Urban targets are more likely aligned with safely managed service levels than rural targets**: Sixty-five per cent of countries reported their urban sanitation target aligned with the safely managed service level, compared to 46% for rural sanitation. Similarly, 69% of countries reported their urban drinking-water target aligned with the safely managed service level, compared to 53% for rural drinking-water.

3. Monitoring, review and use of data for decision-making

Most countries have defined national monitoring indicators for WASH policies/plans. National monitoring indicators that are agreed and tracked against baseline data are more common for service coverage, quality and infrastructure than for governance, finance and human resources. Less than one third of countries have national monitoring indicators for affordability and equity. WASH management information systems (MISs) are largely in place. A majority of countries undertake joint sector reviews (JSRs) with development partners, but regularity varies. There are strong positive trends in the use of data for decision-making.

National monitoring indicators for WASH

- **Most countries have defined national monitoring indicators for WASH policies/plans**: Seventy-five per cent of countries have a defined set of national monitoring indicators for WASH policies/plans. Sixty-one per cent of countries indicated there is a process in place to regularly monitor the national indicators and include the results in reviews such as JSRs. Most countries (84%) reported that data were collected at subnational level and consolidated at the national level to monitor one or more of the national monitoring indicators.

- **Few countries track WASH system inputs, affordability and equity**: The most common types of national monitoring indicators that have been agreed and tracked against baseline data include service coverage (63%), service delivery (57%) and infrastructure (53%). Fewer countries have indicators tracked against baselines for inputs such as finance (37%), human resources (34%) and governance (34%). About one third of countries have national monitoring indicators for affordability (33%) and equity (28%), pointing to challenges in tracking efforts to reach underserved and vulnerable populations. The development of a set of core national monitoring indicators for WASH systems could help countries strengthen national monitoring and review systems to cover inputs and processes to outcomes and impacts.

WASH MISs

- **WASH MISs collect data from service providers and subnational governments**: Seventy-one per cent of countries have a national WASH MIS. Of the countries that have an MIS with WASH data, 99% reported including data on drinking-water, 90% on sanitation and only 48% on hand hygiene. The most common types of data were service coverage (94%), drinking-water quality (85%) and water consumption (79%). This aligns with the results showing that national monitoring indicators most often include indicators on service coverage and service delivery and quality. Service providers and subnational governments are the most common data contributors.

Monitoring service provider key performance indicators (KPIs)

- **Countries are monitoring service provider KPIs**: Monitoring the KPIs of service providers is crucial for decision-making to improve service delivery and coverage. Seventy per cent of countries indicated they monitor non-revenue water (NRW) to quantify physical and commercial losses in water supply operations. Sixty-three per cent indicated they monitor the proportion of urban wastewater treated, while 33% monitor the proportion of rural wastewater treated. Fifty-six per cent reported that "service provider staffing per 1000 population" is monitored as a measure of the adequacy and efficiency of human resources for service delivery.

Reviewing progress through JSRs

- **Many countries are conducting JSRs with development partners, but regularity varies**: Seventy-three per cent of countries reported conducting JSRs, bringing together various stakeholders to review progress and set priorities. All countries invited relevant government agencies to participate in the reviews, and 88% invited development partners active in the sector. Most countries use the reviews to set priority actions and assess progress towards national targets. A larger proportion of low- and lower-middle-income countries conducted JSRs at least every 2 years compared to upper-middle- and high-income countries. Thirty-one per cent of countries reported that JSRs are conducted on an ad hoc basis, indicating a lack of regularity.

Data use in decision-making

- **Countries are increasingly using WASH data for decision-making**: For the 44 countries that responded to this question over the GLAAS 2013/2014, 2016/2017, 2018/2019, 2021/2022 and 2024/2025 cycles, the percentage of countries using sanitation data in decision-making for sector review and planning increased from 34% in 2013/2014 to 68% in 2024/2025. Data for drinking-water reflected a more modest increase, starting from a higher baseline. Fewer countries reported use of hygiene data for decision-making related to planning and reviews (40%) and resource allocation (35%). Over half of countries use WASH data to inform public health decisions, such as responding to disease outbreaks and identifying priority health care facilities.

4. Regulation and surveillance

Most participating countries have drinking-water and sanitation regulations and standards. Regulatory authorities are largely in place for urban and rural drinking-water and sewered sanitation, but less so for on-site sanitation. Low-income countries are least likely to have regulatory authorities, especially for sewered sanitation. Ministerial regulation was reported as the most common regulatory model, with far fewer countries reporting regulation by an autonomous agency. The efficacy of regulatory authorities varies, in part due to insufficient human resources. Less than half of countries publish publicly accessible reports on drinking-water quality. Water safety plans are commonly included in policies and regulations, but implementation is limited. There is a gap between mandated surveillance and how often surveillance takes place, with only one fifth of countries undertaking drinking-water surveillance at the required frequency.

Regulation and regulatory authorities

- **Most countries have drinking-water and sanitation regulations and standards**: For drinking-water, nearly 90% of countries reported having standards in place for water quality (89% urban, 88% rural) and more than 75% of countries reported having defined regulations or standards for service delivery requirements (86% urban, 75% rural). For sanitation, countries reported having regulations, standards or guidelines across the sanitation service chain. Eighty-nine per cent of countries reported having minimum requirements for toilets. Regulations related to faecal sludge management (71%) are less common than for sewered connections (84%). Regulations for safe disposal or reuse of faecal sludge and wastewater are least common overall (67%).

- **Regulatory authorities are largely in place for drinking-water, but a gap remains for sewered sanitation in low-income countries**: Most countries reported having regulatory authorities for urban (91%) and rural (83%) drinking-water and for sewered (82%) and on-site (72%) sanitation. Low-income countries are less likely to report having regulatory authorities, especially for sewered sanitation where only 58% of countries reported having a regulatory authority. Countries reported ministerial regulation as the most common regulatory model. Less than one third of countries reported regulation by an autonomous agency.

- **Efficacy of regulatory authorities varies, in part due to insufficient human resources**: Sixty-one per cent of countries reported that urban drinking-water regulatory authorities fully enforce planning and action to address non-compliance. Forty-three per cent of countries reported that regulatory authorities publish publicly accessible reports on drinking-water quality. Only 24% countries reported having sufficient human resources for regulation of drinking-water, and only 19% reported having sufficient human resources for sanitation regulation.

Risk management approaches

- **Water safety plans are commonly included in policies and regulations, but implementation is limited**: The majority of countries include water safety planning or equivalent approaches in policies/regulations for urban (79%) and rural (75%) drinking-water. Of those, nearly half of countries require implementation of these approaches, but far fewer reported implementing risk management approaches for drinking-water at significant scale (28% urban, 16% rural).

Independent surveillance

- **There is a gap between mandated surveillance and how often surveillance takes place**: In urban areas, only 21% of countries reported that drinking-water surveillance is undertaken at 95–100% of the required frequency. Over 50% of countries have no frequency requirements for wastewater or sludge surveillance.

5. Human resources

A shortage of skilled personnel is a limiting factor for key WASH sector functions, especially for sanitation. Efforts to assess needs and strengthen the WASH workforce are under way, but are not yet at scale. Less than one third of countries reported having sufficient human resources to deliver WASH services. Main workforce challenges include unwillingness of workers to live and work in rural areas, availability of funds to pay for staff, availability of trained professionals and the stigma associated with sanitation work. Some countries have initiated actions to attract and recruit skilled workers, such as increasing collaboration with training and vocational institutions. Significant gaps remain in occupational health and safety measures, especially for sanitation workers. Overall, women are underrepresented in the WASH workforce, notably in leadership positions and in low-income countries.

WASH human resources needs

- **Few countries have enough skilled personnel to perform key functions for the delivery of WASH services**: Less than one third of countries reported having sufficient human resources for drinking-water (26%), sanitation (15%) or hand hygiene (18%). Especially for sanitation, few countries have sufficient human resources to carry out key functions such as regulation (19%), management of the design and construction of facilities and networks (17%), operations and maintenance (O&M) (17%) and monitoring and evaluation (16%).

- **Assessment of human resources needs is limited**: Despite the gaps, only one third of countries have conducted a national human resources needs assessment. Of those countries, most conduct assessments on an ad hoc basis. Over three quarters of countries conducting national assessments have used the results to inform national plans and strategies.

Women in the WASH workforce

- **Women's representation in the workforce is growing**: Forty per cent of countries reported women hold at least 40% of government WASH positions.

- **Disparities persist, particularly in low-income countries and in leadership roles**: In low-income countries, only 11% of countries reported that at least 40% of all WASH positions in government were held by women as compared to 66% in upper-middle-income countries. Only 24% of countries reported that women hold at least 40% of leadership positions, such as unit or department managers, directors, executives or other senior officials in government ministries/institutions.

Challenges facing WASH human resources

- **Significant challenges still face the WASH workforce**: Over one third of countries indicated skilled workers do not want to live and work in rural areas. For drinking-water, nearly a quarter of countries indicated there are insufficient resources available to pay for staff. Stigma associated with working in the sanitation subsector was identified as a severe constraint in 11% of countries.

- **There is a shortage of professionals from training institutions to meet workforce needs**: While over 70% of countries have technical and vocational training centres and universities that provide education related to or specific to WASH, fewer than 20% of countries reported that training institutions were able to supply enough trained professionals to meet the needs in any subsector.

Actions being taken to address human resources gaps

- **Some countries use marketing strategies to attract and recruit workers**: About 25% of countries use marketing strategies to attract prospective candidates to the WASH workforce, and 58% of those countries have strategies that specifically target women. Examples include programmes for young professionals, competitive salary packages, performance awards, scholarships for students to enter high-demand fields or disciplines, career fairs and career pathway campaigns to showcase advancement opportunities.

- **Collaboration with vocational and higher education institutions is increasing**: Nearly 40% of countries reported having a national-level collaboration framework with vocational and higher education institutions to attract professionals. These frameworks include activities such as research agreements, specialized training programmes, curricula reviews, continuing education programmes and internship or trainee programmes between the educational institutions and the government, regulators and/or major service providers.

Protecting the rights and safety of workers

- **Measures to formalize WASH employment are often lacking**: Half of countries (51%) have minimum requirements for employer–employee relations such as the provision of health insurance, vaccinations, contractual stability and/or minimum wage. Less than half of countries have measures in place to formalize employment for workers in drinking-water (45%) and sanitation (40%). Over 70% of countries have measures to protect workers' freedom of association.

- **Few countries have measures in place to protect the safety of workers**: Just over half of countries have operational guidelines for worker health and safety and over a third have mechanisms to check compliance. However, only a fifth of countries reported having measures for sufficient equipment to enable safe sanitation operations, which is a significant concern for sanitation workers.

6. Finance

Sufficient funding remains a main obstacle to achieving national WASH targets. Data from 20 participating countries reveal a WASH funding gap of 46% between identified needs and available funding to reach national WASH targets. Most countries have agreed financing plans/strategies for drinking-water and sanitation. Government budgets vary widely, but on average, have been stagnant when adjusted for inflation from 2021 to 2024. Absorbing domestic capital commitments remains a challenge for many countries, leading to underutilization of available funds. Trends in cost recovery decreased from 2021 to 2024. In many countries, this situation is compounded by high NRW levels, which pose a significant challenge to financial viability. On average, total WASH expenditure from all sources (government, users, grants and repayable financing) has increased to keep pace with increasing population and inflation. The share of funding from repayable financing increased from 8% to 14% of WASH funding flows from 2021 to 2024.

Development and implementation of WASH financing plans/strategies

- **Most countries have WASH financing plans/strategies**: Over 75% of countries reported having agreed WASH financing plans/strategies for drinking-water and sanitation to identify funding sources and guide investments. However, only around half reported they are used in at least some decision-making. Financing plans/strategies for hand hygiene, WASH in schools and WASH in health care facilities are less common, although they may be integrated into broader education or public health strategies.

Estimated costs for WASH plans/strategies

- **The majority of estimated annual WASH plan/strategy costs are attributed to urban areas and drinking-water investments**: Across 70 countries representing a population of 4.2 billion people, over US$ 69 billion in annual costs is estimated to implement WASH plans and strategies.[2] Sixty per cent of estimated WASH strategy costs reported by countries are for urban versus 40% for rural WASH investments. Sixty-seven per cent of estimated WASH strategy costs reported by countries are for drinking-water investments, while 33% are for sanitation investments.

- **Few countries have sufficient financial resources to meet national targets**: Fewer than 20% of countries indicated sufficient funding to reach national targets, and fewer than 25% indicated sufficient funding to implement WASH plans. Incremental improvements have been seen from 2018 to 2024. Over that period, the percentage of countries reporting sufficient funding to reach WASH targets doubled for urban and rural sanitation and rural drinking-water, albeit from low numbers in 2018 (from 7% to 14% for sanitation, and from 7% to 16% for rural drinking-water) for 45 countries that participated in both the GLAAS 2018/2019 and 2024/2025 cycles.

[2] Time frames for these plans and strategies ranged from 1 to 30 years and were annualized and converted to United States dollars for comparison purposes. While different governments estimate costs in different ways, the data provide insights into the scope of country strategies and overall WASH investment needs.

- **There is a WASH funding gap**: Quantitative data from 20 countries reveal a WASH funding gap of 46% between identified needs and available funding for WASH to meet national targets. Trend data in eight countries show estimated availability of funds for urban sanitation increasing and funding gaps decreasing from the GLAAS 2021/2022 cycle to the GLAAS 2024/2025 cycle.

- **Countries report funding shortfalls in key areas**: These include: (a) capital for expanding services, (b) O&M, leading to deferred maintenance and (c) limited human resources capacity to implement programmes and services. Additional areas with funding gaps include infrastructure rehabilitation projects, faecal sludge management, institutional capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation efforts, and purchasing equipment and supplies.

National government WASH budgets

- **Per capita budget estimates vary widely between countries**: Governments from 58 countries reported that they budgeted more than US$ 24 billion for WASH-specific expenditure, with an average WASH budget of US$ 10 per capita. The annual government WASH budget per capita for these 58 countries ranged from less than US$ 1 to US$ 1033.

- **On average, national WASH budget trends are stagnant when adjusted for inflation**: Data from 27 countries show that, on average, government WASH budgets have increased at 2.6% per year, but have been stagnant when adjusted for inflation from 2021 to 2024.

- **Government budget allocations are underutilized in many countries**: Sixty per cent of countries reported using less than 75% of domestic capital commitments for urban and rural drinking-water supply and sanitation. This means that, in these countries, more than 25% of budget allocations for WASH remain unspent by relevant ministries. Main obstacles include lengthy and complex procurement processes, irregular funding flows and project delays. Low budget utilization rates limit the ability of governments to increase WASH spending. Higher execution rates of government budget allocations could contribute to reducing the WASH funding gap.

Cost recovery

- **Cost recovery remains a challenge for financial sustainability**: Less than one third of countries indicated that user tariffs and household contributions are sufficient to recover at least 80% of O&M costs. Cost recovery data from common country respondents in the GLAAS 2021/2022 and 2024/2025 country surveys were compared, and in all subsectors, fewer countries reported being able to recover 80% of O&M costs from tariffs and household contributions in the GLAAS 2024/2025 cycle than in the 2021/2022 cycle.

- **Causes and impacts of inefficient cost recovery**: Factors that lead to low levels of cost recovery include the lack of political will to raise tariff rates to cost recovery levels, outdated or no set tariff rates, and tariff rates set too low to maintain affordability. High NRW was cited by some countries as a particularly problematic factor to improving cost recovery. In the GLAAS 2024/2025 country survey, 56 countries reported an average of 39% NRW for their three largest suppliers. Countries cited a wide range of impacts from insufficient cost recovery, including delayed liability payments, delayed maintenance, low workforce investment capacity (for hiring and training), increased response times and delayed household connections.

Total expenditure on WASH

- **Annual aggregate expenditure**: Fifty-eight countries reported an estimated aggregate WASH expenditure of US$ 70 billion (for capital and O&M expenses). These 58 countries represent a population of 2.1 billion, and an average annual WASH expenditure of US$ 34 per capita, inclusive of public expenditure, as well as spending by users (households, commercial and industrial). Total expenditure from all sources comprised an average 0.83% of gross domestic product (GDP). WASH expenditure per capita trends show that, on average, WASH spending has increased to keep pace with increasing population and inflation.

- **Expenditure per capita and as a percentage of GDP varies significantly among income groups**: Per capita WASH expenditure in high-income countries averages almost US$ 230 per capita, whereas low- and lower-middle-income countries average US$ 12 and US$ 22 per capita WASH expenditure, respectively. Conversely average WASH expenditure as a percentage of GDP is higher (1.35%) in low-income countries than in high-income countries (0.50%).

- **Sources of funding for WASH expenditure**: Expenditure data from 40 countries show that user expenditure, through tariff payments and out-of-pocket expenses, contributed to 50% of overall WASH spending, followed by government budget expenditure (33%), repayable finance (14%) and grants (3%). Expenditure data also indicate that funding from repayable financing increased from 8% to 14% of WASH funding flows from 2021 to 2024, for all responding countries.

7. Development partner support for WASH

While development partner support for WASH remains high, water and sanitation official development assistance (ODA) trends continue to decline overall. Nevertheless, the share of ODA commitments to sub-Saharan Africa has increased markedly since 2020. Development partners have recognized the decreasing availability of financial resources and the shifting aid landscape may dramatically reshape their future strategies and priorities for WASH. Many are focusing on leveraging limited ODA resources to mobilize additional funding for WASH.

Water supply and sanitation ODA

- **Water and sanitation ODA trends continue to decline**: Water supply and sanitation ODA overall has continued to decline since peaking in 2018 and 2019. Commitments dropped from US$ 9.4 billion in 2022 to US$ 8.5 billion in 2023 (a decrease of 9%) and disbursements declined from US$ 7.3 billion to US$ 6.9 billion (a decrease of 5.5%) over the same period. ODA commitments for water supply and sanitation decreased much more significantly than total ODA commitments (1.1% decrease).

- **The geographical distribution of aid has shifted markedly since 2020**: In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of water and sanitation ODA commitments increased from 25% in 2020 to 40% in 2023, while Central and Southern Asia saw a decrease from 19% to 11%, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia saw a decrease from 19% to 6% over the same period.

- **The share of ODA to sanitation has declined**: Trend data indicate that the percentage of ODA to sanitation fluctuates between 31% and 40% of allocable ODA, and that it declined from a peak of 40% in 2021 to 34% in 2023.

Development partner WASH strategies, priorities and targets

- **Strategies and targets**: Seventeen development partners reported they have a multiyear strategy specifically for water or WASH, with eight revising their water or WASH strategies in 2024 or 2025 to address climate resiliency in WASH, increase prioritization on WASH system strengthening, add menstrual hygiene management and/or focus on reinventing the toilet. About half of development partners reported specific targets for increasing access to drinking-water and sanitation services.

- **Top development partner priorities**: Four areas emerged as high priorities for the majority of development partners: (a) strengthening policies and institutions for sustainable WASH delivery, (b) coordination and alignment of priorities with recipient governments on water and sanitation, (c) WASH systems strengthening and (d) climate-resilient WASH.

- **Gender equality is a significant component of water and sanitation ODA**: The percentage of water and sanitation ODA disbursements with a significant gender equality component rose between 2010 and 2023, to over 30%. Half of development partners reported gender is a top-five aid priority for their organization, and a quarter noted that menstrual health and hygiene is a high priority or focus for their WASH activities.

Leveraging funds and future focus

- **Leveraging and mobilizing funds for WASH**: Globally, external aid in the form of grants and repayable finance comprises less than 18% of total WASH funding. Recognizing that funding needed to reach national targets exceeds current financial flows and that development aid may become increasingly scarce in the coming years, development partners are seeking to leverage limited resources to mobilize additional funding for WASH from government, commercial finance, the private sector and other donors.

- **Impacts of a shifting aid environment**: Development partners have recognized that the decreasing availability of financial resources may dramatically reshape their strategies and priorities for WASH.

8. SDG 6 MoI Targets 6.a and 6.b

SDG 6 includes two MoI targets (6.a and 6.b), which are measured by indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1, respectively.

SDG 6 target	Indicator
6.a. By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies	**6.a.1.** Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
6.b. Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	**6.b.1.** Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

The World Health Organization (WHO) is a co-custodian, along with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Environment Programme, responsible for monitoring the SDG 6 MoI targets.

International cooperation – SDG Target 6.a

Following a small rebound in 2022, ODA commitments and disbursements for the water sector decreased in 2023. Top aid categories for the water sector include water supply and sanitation, agricultural water resources, hydroelectric power, sector policy and water resources management. Donor alignment with recipient country national plans shows a mixed picture. Low-income countries are more likely to report low funding alignment compared to higher-income countries. The water sector will likely be affected by a less favourable ODA environment in the coming years.

- **ODA commitments and disbursements for the water sector have decreased**: While disbursements showed a small increase in 2022, they declined slightly from US$ 8.9 billion in 2022 to US$ 8.7 billion in 2023. ODA commitments to the water sector decreased more substantially, from US$ 11.4 billion in 2022 to US$ 10.2 billion in 2023, indicating possible future reductions in ODA.

- **Water supply and sanitation received the largest disbursements of ODA across the water sector in 2023**: The disbursements were: water supply and sanitation (US$ 5.2 billion, 61%), agricultural water resources (US$ 1.2 billion, 14%), hydroelectric power (US$ 602 million, 7%), sector policy (US$ 755 million, 9%), water resources management (US$ 300 million, 4%), waste disposal (US$ 305 million, 4%) and river basin management (US$ 214 million, 3%). The ODA disbursement for education and training in water supply and sanitation was US$ 74 million in 2023, less than 1% of water sector disbursements.

- **Four donors contributed 60% of ODA disbursements to the water sector in 2023**: The International Development Association (part of the World Bank Group), Japan, Germany and European Union institutions.

- **Donor alignment with recipient country national plans shows a mixed picture**: In 2024, 30% of countries reported low alignment between donor funding and national water sector plans, with low-income countries more likely to report low funding alignment compared to higher-income countries.

- **ODA to the water sector is likely to decline in the future**: Since 2023, multiple donors have announced broad cuts to ODA. The OECD projects a 9–17% drop in ODA in 2025, on top of reductions in 2024. Some bilateral donors that announced cuts to aid collectively contributed US$ 2.4 billion or 28% of ODA to the water sector in 2023. It is expected that the effects on water sector ODA will start to be visible in the next OECD Creditor Reporting System reporting cycle.

- **Impacts of reduced ODA on recipient countries**: While external aid flows may comprise a low proportion of global expenditure on the water sector, nearly one half of countries reported that at least one government ministry or institution received a significant share (greater than 25%) of its WASH budget from donors.

Local community participation – SDG Target 6.b

Most countries have defined participation procedures for rural drinking-water and water resources management; however, the level of participation varies. Opportunities to participate take different forms and vary significantly by income group. Overall, rural populations in low-income countries are less likely to have access to all types of participation and accountability mechanisms compared to middle- and high-income countries. A significant challenge is the insufficiency of financial and human resources to support user and community participation, with very few countries reporting adequate funding or staffing. Having a designated agency or institution responsible for participatory procedures is strongly linked to higher levels of participation.

- **Most countries have established participation procedures**: Ninety-two per cent of countries reported having defined procedures for local community participation in law or policy for rural drinking-water, and 89% for water resources planning and management.

- **Levels of participation vary by subsector and region**: Almost 40% of countries reported having high levels of community participation for rural drinking-water, and 28% for water resources planning and management. The percentage of countries reporting high levels of community participation in rural drinking-water was considerably higher in Central and Southern Asia (67%) compared to the global average (38%).

- **Opportunities to participate take different forms and vary significantly by income group**: About one third of countries reported their rural populations have access to publicly available information (31%), regular opportunities for public engagement (37%), access to formal feedback systems (36%) and mechanisms to resolve conflicts through regulatory authorities (38%). Rural populations in low-income countries are less likely to have access to all types of participation and accountability mechanisms compared to middle- and high-income countries.

- **Financial and human resources are insufficient to support participation of users and communities**: Only 9% of countries reported having sufficient financial resources to support the participation of users and communities for rural drinking-water and sanitation, and only 11% for water resources planning and management. Similarly, only 13% of countries reported having sufficient human resources to support participation in rural drinking-water or for water resources planning and management.

- **Having a designated agency or institution responsible for participatory procedures is linked to higher levels of participation**: Forty-seven per cent of countries reported having a responsible agency or institution and high levels of participation in rural sanitation and drinking-water, as compared to countries with low levels of participation, where only 2% reported having a responsible agency or institution.

9. Leaving no one behind

The human rights to water and sanitation and the core principle of "leaving no one behind" are widely recognized in national constitutions, legislation and policies. However, measures to monitor progress and allocate financial resources to reach underserved groups are only partially in place. As an integral element of SDG Target 6.1, affordability still lacks an agreed definition, and less than half of countries have set targets or defined indicators. On the positive side, a majority of countries reported having financial schemes such as subsidies or reduced tariffs to make WASH services more affordable, particularly in urban areas.

Human rights to water and sanitation

- **Countries widely recognize the human rights to water and sanitation**: Eighty-seven per cent of countries reported recognizing the right to water in their constitution or legislation, and 83% recognized the right to sanitation.

Affordability of WASH services

- **Less than half of countries have affordability definitions, targets and indicators**: Forty-two per cent of countries have defined affordability of WASH services in policies or plans. Forty-five per cent of countries reported having a national target for the affordability of drinking-water, and 47% have national indicators for affordability. In many cases, the targets or indicators reported establish a threshold based on percentage of disposable household income spent on WASH. Several countries reported using surveys, such as standard of living surveys or household expenditure surveys, to monitor affordability and implement tariff revisions.

- **Financial schemes to make services affordable are more common in urban systems**: Countries are most likely to have financial schemes in place for urban drinking-water (67%) and urban sanitation (63%), less likely to have schemes in place for rural drinking-water (60%) and rural sanitation (56%), and least likely for hand hygiene (40%). Financial schemes such as fee exemptions, subsidies and reduced tariffs contribute to making WASH services affordable for households, especially for rural populations or populations living in vulnerable situations.

Equity measures for vulnerable populations and settings

- **Most countries have measures in policies or plans, but fewer monitor progress or allocate resources**: Most countries reported having sanitation policies and plans with specific measures to reach people living in poverty (85%), persons affected by emergencies and disasters (84%), people living with disabilities (83%), populations in remote or hard-to-reach areas (78%) and Indigenous populations (76%). Progress to extend provision of sanitation services is most frequently tracked and reported for

populations affected by emergencies and disasters (75%) and internally displaced persons or refugees (59%). Less than one third of countries have specific measures to direct financial resources to extend sanitation services to underserved populations and settings.

Measures to reach women and girls

- **Many countries include measures to reach women and girls with WASH in policies and plans**: Countries reported that policies and plans have specific measures to reach women and girls for sanitation (78%), drinking-water (76%) and hand hygiene (70%). Measures are most common in low-, lower-middle- and upper-middle-income countries.

- **Financing measures to target resources to women and girls are lacking for all country income groups**: Few countries reported having and consistently applying specific measures to direct financial resources to women and girls for sanitation (24%), drinking-water (27%) and hand hygiene (24%).

Menstrual health and hygiene

- **A majority of countries include menstrual health and hygiene in WASH policies and plans**: Sixty-three per cent of countries include menstrual health and hygiene in their WASH policies and plans. However, only 25% of countries reported having coverage targets. Menstrual health and hygiene is most often included in policies/plans for WASH in schools and WASH in health care facilities.

10. Climate and WASH

Climate-related issues are progressively being integrated into WASH systems. Eighty per cent of countries address the risks of climate variability and climate change in WASH policies/plans. Efforts are under way to establish and standardize global monitoring indicators. In 2023 and 2024, there has been a marked increase in the number of countries undertaking climate risk assessments to provide evidence for decision-making on policies, plans and programmes. Two thirds of the climate finance applications for WASH are reportedly successful. The proportion of water and sanitation ODA designated for climate change adaptation tripled as a percentage of disbursements from 2010 to 2022.

Definition and policy integration

- **Countries and development partners have diverse definitions of climate-resilient WASH**: Thirty-nine per cent of countries reported having a national definition of climate-resilient WASH, as well as about half of development partners. While there is not yet a commonly agreed definition of climate-resilient WASH, those used by countries and development partners have common elements. Sector-wide efforts are under way to align and use common definitions; the Sanitation and Water for All partnership has developed a common normative definition for climate-resilient WASH.

- **Integration of climate in WASH policies/plans**: Countries are more likely to address the risks of climate variability and climate change (80%) than the climate resilience of WASH technologies and management systems (73%) or climate mitigation (70%). Additionally, climate issues are more frequently addressed in drinking-water and sanitation plans than in institutional WASH plans.

- **Measures to reach affected populations**: Sixty-eight per cent of countries have measures in WASH policies/plans to reach populations disproportionally affected by climate change; however, far fewer countries have measures to monitor (42%) or finance (20%) them.

Climate-resilient WASH risk assessments and monitoring

- **Countries are increasingly assessing WASH climate risks**: Over 50% of countries have conducted climate risk assessments for WASH, of which over 60% were conducted in 2023 and 2024. Countries reported multiple types of climate risk assessments undertaken at different levels: national, subnational, municipal and sector. Additional assessments are conducted for river basin catchment areas, coastal regions and WASH systems.

- **Climate risk assessments are used in the formulation of policies, plans and budgeting**: The need for climate risk assessments was sometimes triggered during the process of formulating national adaptation programmes of action, or during development and revision of WASH sector policies and strategies. Climate risk assessments are used in the formulation of national climate policies and strategies, in disaster risk management policies and in mainstreaming climate resilience in the WASH sector.

- **Lack of standardized indicators hinders monitoring**: The majority of countries do not yet have standardized indicators for routine monitoring of climate-resilient WASH. Climate-resilient indicators for urban drinking-water are most common, with 39% of countries reporting having them. Only 28% of countries reported having climate-resilient WASH indicators for rural sanitation. In 2024, WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund launched a review to identify indicators for enhanced national and global monitoring of climate-resilient WASH.

Climate finance and development partner support

- **Countries are making progress on securing climate finance**: Sixty per cent of countries reported they had applied for climate finance for WASH from an external source. Of the applications submitted, 63% were successful and US$ 2.3 billion has been received. Fifteen countries reported their applications are still in preparation or in the approval process. Countries receive climate finance from climate funds, multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions.

- **Main challenges and barriers to accessing climate funds**: Countries identified the need to develop bankable project proposals, demanding approval conditions from some funding agencies, gaps in human capacity in key government agencies, long processing times, lack of climate data to support project development, high levels of co-financing requirements, low sector prioritization and a lack of coordination among responsible sector ministries as the main challenges and barriers to accessing climate funds.

- **More water and sanitation ODA is designated for climate change adaptation than for mitigation**: In 2023, 31% of water and sanitation ODA disbursements (US$ 2.2 billion) was designated for climate change adaptation as the principal or a significant objective, while 14% (US$ 995 million) was designated for climate change mitigation as the principal or a significant objective. The proportion of water and sanitation ODA designated for climate change adaptation as the principal or significant objective tripled as a percentage of disbursements from 2010 to 2022. However, there was a 5% decline in 2023. The majority of development partners address climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation in their WASH aid/programming, with adaptation being the most popular topic and mitigation being the least.

11. Countries and territories participating in the GLAAS 2024/2025 cycle

Countries and territories (105 total)

Albania, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, occupied Palestinian territory, including east Jerusalem, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Saint Lucia, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turks and Caicos Islands, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Development partners (21 total)

African Development Bank (AfDB), Agence Française de Développement (AFD, France), Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID, Spain), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Austrian Development Agency (ADA, Austria), Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P. (Portugal), European Commission, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ, Germany), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Gates Foundation, IRC WASH (Stichting IRC, International Water and Sanitation Centre), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Osprey Foundation, The Sanitation and Hygiene Fund (SHF), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WaterAid, Water For People, Water.org, World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO).

Sources: GLAAS 2024/2025 country and development partner surveys.

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