

# Building coherence in global- regional-national monitoring

Keynote paper for Topic 6 of “Monitoring Sustainable Service Delivery Symposium”, 9 to 11 April 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper<sup>2</sup> is to introduce Theme 6 of the Monitoring Sustainable WASH Service Delivery Symposium: “Building Coherence in Global-Regional-National Monitoring”. The paper sets out to provide a background for the discussions in this theme and to summarise some of the key issues expected to be raised in the four sessions devoted to this theme.

The objective of this theme is to increase the coherence between different levels of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) monitoring. Specifically it seeks to:

1. Clarify the purposes and improve communications, coordination and understanding of monitoring at different levels to build a more coherent global WASH monitoring framework, especially looking forward to post-2015.
2. Promote coordination and widespread application of generic, high-quality, country analytic assessments for the WASH sector.
3. Provide a platform for a key neglected issue in WASH monitoring - human resource (HR) capacity – and examine ways in which HR can be better incorporated into a comprehensive WASH monitoring framework.

These issues will be addressed in four sessions. Annex A contains the program for these sessions and the list of papers and authors presenting papers.

## The global monitoring landscape<sup>3</sup>

The number of monitoring initiatives has grown significantly in recent years and many of the establishing ones are evolving. At the global level, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)/World Health Organization (WHO) Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) has been the sector’s path-breaking global initiative. Launched in 1990, to measure sector performance, and following the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade, it has become the UN-mandated tool for measuring progress towards the water and sanitation Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), i.e., sector “outputs”. The JMP, now based on data from nationally-representative household surveys, is still evolving to measure new parameters covered (such as water quality), improve its communication tools and address the post-2015 agenda in the WASH sector.

An important new entrant to the WASH monitoring scene has been the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS), which issued its first full report in 2010. GLAAS, which measures “inputs” to sector performance, is analysing the lessons from the 2010 and 2012 reports in preparation for a 2014 report. GLAAS and JMP have become the critical sources of information for the biennial Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting (HLM). Another important global data-base is the International Benchmarking Network for Water and Sanitation (IBNET) managed by the World Bank, which collects data from water utilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The paper benefitted from comments by: Catarina Fonseca, Rolf Luyendijk, Ton Schouten, and Dominick de Waal.

<sup>3</sup> This section draws heavily from a SWA paper entitled: “Towards a shared global monitoring framework: Defining a role for Sanitation and Water for All”. Clarissa Brocklehurst led the preparation of this paper.

The regional SAN meetings (AfricaSan, LatinoSan, East Asian Conference on Sanitation (EASAN), and South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN)) initiated in 2002 are evolving in different ways and at different paces into regional monitoring processes to monitor the implementation of action plans and commitments (such as the eThekweni commitments) made at these regional meetings. Regional political bodies such as the South African Development Council (SADC) and the African Minister's Council on Water (AMCOW) have also initiated regional monitoring activities in the water and sanitation sector.

National monitoring is undertaken by most countries, but its effectiveness varies considerably. Strengthening national and sub-national monitoring will undoubtedly give the greatest and most direct return to improving sector data and monitoring systems.

Pioneered by the Water and Sanitation Programme's (WSP)'s Country Status Overviews in 16 countries in 2006, a number of agencies have produced national analytical tools to measure inputs and diagnose problems. In the late 2000s, the methodology of CSOs was improved and AMCOW co-ordinated an analysis of 32 African countries. WSP is further developing what are now called Sector Development Analyses (SDAs) and gaining experience in their application from Africa, Asia and Latin America. UNICEF has tested and is now rolling out a problem diagnosis tool, mainly focused on the rural sector, that can be adjusted to different WASH sub-sectors; this is known as the WASH Bottleneck Analysis Tool (WASH BAT). IBNET provides a benchmarking service with an analytical capacity for urban utilities. The International Secretariat for Water has produced Blue Books analysing performance in a few African countries. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken country sector analysis in a dozen or more countries in its GOAL-WASH program. Country level analyses such as these are proving to be important tools for identifying strategic areas of action to which all stakeholders can agree, but much remains to be done to improve coordination between different analytic approaches and develop generic tools and approaches.

The emergence of Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) as a sector-wide partnership focusing on improving the evidence base for sector decision-makers offers new opportunities for coordination and rationalisation of monitoring initiatives. SWA also seeks to use sector monitoring to improve global accountability and provide the basis for powerful global advocacy. For SWA's first Partnership Meeting in November 2012, a background paper was prepared with proposals for ways to rationalise global monitoring. It included a "map" (Figure 1) of some of the main current monitoring initiatives, organised by the following categories<sup>4</sup>:

- **Inputs** – money, people, etc. – information on these is often not available or consolidated, and is confounded by the fact that some sector investment is 'off budget'.

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<sup>4</sup> A fifth column, impact, was considered but not added because assessments of changes in health status and other impacts are seldom routine, and are normally carried out independently of the WASH sector.

- **Sector processes** – policy, strategy, government planning, monitoring and evaluation – there is limited information on these ‘foundations’ in the sector and even less analysis of how processes link to outputs and outcomes
- **Outputs** – numbers of schemes, facilities, hygiene promotion programs– monitoring of these is plagued with problems of definitions, data collection, and the fact that no two countries collect data in the same way.
- **Outcomes** – people using improved water supplies and sanitation facilities and practicing improved hygiene – despite a consensus since 2000 that this information will be user-generated (from household surveys) there are still problems with definitions and monitoring instruments.

The map shows areas of overlap and opportunities for streamlining. There are also areas where monitoring efforts still need expanding and strengthening, particularly national level monitoring. Effective national-level monitoring, the basis for sub-national, national and global decision-making, is imperative.

Figure 1 Map of some of the main current monitoring initiatives

	<b>Inputs</b> Public and donor finance, cost recovery (TTT), and human resources	<b>Sector processes</b> Policy, strategy, planning, budgeting, and M&E	<b>Outputs</b> Water schemes, sanitation facilities, sanitation and hygiene promotion, WASH in schools and health facilities	<b>Outcomes</b> People using improved water sources and sanitation facilities, and practicing hygiene
<b>Sub-national</b> (district, province, state)	<b>Sector information and monitoring systems</b> Government agencies in charge of water, sanitation, health, education – urban/rural – line Ministries, etc. Project and programme-based monitoring, waterpoint mapping Development partners, NGOs, etc.			<b>Some large household surveys</b> National statistics offices
<b>Country</b>	<b>Sector information and monitoring systems</b> National agencies in charge of water, sanitation, health, education – urban/rural Joint sector reviews National agencies in charge of water, sanitation, health, education, budgeting, and finance			<b>Household surveys censuses</b> National statistics offices  <i>JMP country profiles can be produced</i>
	AMCOW Country Status Overviews (CSOs) - WSP Bottleneck Analysis Tool - UNICEF			
	<i>GLAAS country profiles possible but not currently prepared</i>		<b>Monitoring of WASH in schools</b> UNESCO Education Monitoring System (EMIS) <i>National level waterpoint mapping?</i>	
<b>Regional</b>	AMCOW Country Status Overviews (CSOs) in Africa - WSP ( <i>now being extended to other regions</i> ) Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS) - WHO ( <i>regional snapshots</i> ) Monitoring of eThekweni Declaration and other regional sanitation conference commitments <i>Others include Asian Development Bank “Water Outlook”, African Union, AfDB, etc.</i>			<b>Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP)</b> WHO and UNICEF
<b>Global</b>	Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Water (GLAAS) - WHO Creditor Reporting System – OECD Monitoring of SWA HLM Commitments - SWA <i>CSOs in the future?</i>		<b>Monitoring of WASH in Schools</b> UNESCO EMIS IBNet utility monitoring - World Bank <i>RegNet? ADB Water Utility Databooks?</i>	<i>Regional snapshots, global data updates</i>
There are additional data collection initiatives not mentioned here that are outside the WASH sector - for example, global monitoring of aid effectiveness catalysed by the Paris and Accra Declarations. There are also global WASH research initiatives such as WASH Cost, implemented by IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (IRC), which provide information on particular aspects of the sector. Donors fund many different monitoring components: GLAAS, JMP, CSOs, bottleneck analysis, water mapping and related global studies such as WASHCost.				

As can be seen from Figure 1, the WASH monitoring landscape is crowded, fragmented, and often duplicative. Duplication occurs both horizontally (across inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes) and vertically (local, national, regional and global). The demand for sector information has increased (frequently driven by donors' needs) and when there is a gap perceived, new and often parallel systems are added. There are indications, however, that valuable data are not fully used; for instance, data collected at a project or program level (such as well inventories or details of systems installed) may not be incorporated into the national data system. A problem also exists in that the timing of data collection is not coordinated. For instance household surveys that provide data for the JMP are carried out every three to five years, while the JMP is issued every two years, and the Country Status Overviews are carried out far less frequently than the biennial GLAAS report, for which the CSO information is very useful.

The current landscape has evolved as a result of a lack of alignment of global and national monitoring. Much of the emphasis has been on creating regional and global products, rather than on using national level monitoring as the bedrock which supports national processes, such as planning and systematic review, and providing these results upwards to global monitoring platforms. A further weakness is that even when the data generated for global reports includes information of relevance at national level, this is seldom fed back into country-level planning.

The abundance of monitoring initiatives indicates that monitoring information is valued – the challenge is to provide a supportive framework that ensures this information is consistent, relevant, reliable, and leads to action. Key to understanding the poor alignment and often poor response to global and regional monitoring at national level is the lack of incentive to align and to value the quality of submissions. The case for why global monitoring is necessary is not clearly made nor appreciated at national levels (and frequently sub-national to national). Overburdened monitoring officers often receive extensive requests from a myriad of agencies for data at national level. No resources are made available to support the costs of gathering this information.

Similarly, the incentives to share information between agencies are slim. Current incentives discourage global agencies from sharing information, since they often compete for resources by demonstrating their exclusive access to information. The global information system is completely unregulated, and there is little attempt to assess what is a reasonable burden for national agencies to bear in providing regional and global data, what their obligations are, and what utility they can expect in return.

Advances in communications and information management technology augur a new era of possibilities for sector monitoring. Waterpoint mapping using Geographic Information Systems (GIS), data-base set-up and management, mobile-to-web data inputs, and new modes of

information dissemination have all transformed concepts of what is possible compared to the early days of sector monitoring.

SWA as a global platform provides a significant opportunity to improve the alignment of global, regional and national monitoring. SWA has a growing influence, the partnership is increasing, SWA already has close working arrangement with GLAAS, and SWA provides a global political platform in biennial High Level Meetings (HLM). The SWA Steering Committee is establishing a Task Team to increase its support to harmonising global monitoring and improving global, regional and national alignment. As a partnership, SWA is seeking to:

- Facilitate consensus on a shared global monitoring framework across the entire sector, and increase coordination of monitoring between development stakeholders who are SWA partners
- Support efforts to find new and improved ways to monitor challenging aspects, such as measuring hygiene, or tracking financing from all sources
- Support efforts to strengthen national and sub-national monitoring and analysis of sector bottlenecks
- Facilitate the development of a shared set of standards for monitoring data
- Support countries to use the results of monitoring to strengthen sector processes, particularly planning
- Encourage donor partners to use credible financial flow and disaggregated access data to better target assistance and assess investment effectiveness
- Use monitoring information to raise the profile and political prioritisation of the sector, and advocate for WASH in global monitoring initiatives, in particular in post-2015 monitoring.

## Key issues addressed in Theme 6

Theme 6 of the symposium: “Building coherence and better aligning global, regional and national monitoring systems”, will focus on the following three issues:

1. Better aligning global, regional and national monitoring systems (sessions 1 and 3)
2. Better aligning country-level sector analytic tools (session 2)
3. Incorporating an assessment of HR issues into sector monitoring at all levels (session 4).

## Aligning global-regional and national monitoring

The scoping of the monitoring landscape suggests that aligning global-regional and national monitoring requires action in the following areas:

- **Same primary source of information:** Strengthen country-led national and subnational monitoring systems and establish the principle that national data sets are consistently used as the primary sources of information for national, regional and global sector monitoring.
- **Clarify data sources:** All levels should clearly distinguish between household level (outcome) surveys and service providers’ administrative data (largely relating to inputs). The different data sources will inevitably result in different data sets for the same country. Neither of these is necessarily wrong – they just reflect different perspectives.

- **Global, regional and national referencing and communications:** At all levels lead monitoring agencies should make a consistent effort to reference their summary data against other levels and to communicate and explain differences. This implies that documents should reference other levels, and reports should seek to align/explain data differences.
- **Coordinate and rationalise regional and global monitoring:** Global, regional and national agencies should work towards consistency and eliminating duplication in sector monitoring. Consistency is needed both on contents and timing of data collection. Parties should explore if there is common ground between global, regional and national reporting cycles. Co-ordinated monitoring will create efficiencies and maximise impact on decision-makers.
- **Regulation** may be needed in the global and regional information market to retain quality, to ensure coordination across agencies and to balance the costs and benefits of data sharing.
- **Incentives and commitment to feed-back:** Common problems in monitoring systems include designing systems without incentives to use the data and not placing sufficient emphasis on “feedback loops” so that data providers get benefit out of supplying data and that all monitoring initiatives are subjected to periodic reviews.
- **Incentives**

## Aligning Country Analytic Methodologies and Approaches

Many countries have undertaken sector assessments and, as discussed above, a number of global agencies have developed methodologies and approaches to country sector analyses. National sector analyses have proven to be effective instruments to build momentum from disparate sector institutions, to provide the basis for national strategies or to track progress against agreed strategies and plans. Their impact can be sector-wide and not only focused on an analysis of a specific project. Quality sector reviews give decision-makers insights as to whether policies are working. Quality sector reviews can also help inform what is need by way of sector reforms and changes of course, and they can help identify bottle-necks or areas of weaker performance. Sector reviews can also be helpful in mobilising and aligning aid, since they provide a common knowledge platform and basis for common action. Some countries undertake reviews, such as Joint Sector Review meetings, regularly to take stock of sector progress or in time to prepare budget submissions.

Key issues in alignment of country sector assessments include:

- **Country leadership:** National authorities should lead country sector analyses. Political and technical leadership is needed so that recommendations can be implemented. Countries often benefit from technical support from national agencies with specialist capacity in methodologies and analytical capacity.
- **Verification process:** Sector analyses have greater credibility and are of better quality where transparent verification or quality control processes are in place (preferably using independent expertise).
- **Common core data set and methodology:** National agencies will clearly want to adjust terms of reference of country assessments to address specific issues. But agreement on a common core data set and standard means of measuring key items would enable comparative analysis. Generic, widely-applied, and high-quality country analytic assessments (which enable comparative assessment) would greatly assist regional and global decision-makers to have a deeper understanding of sector issues and avoid duplication of effort.
- **Expanding coverage:** Expanding the coverage of sector analysis tools, so that compatible assessments are, in the short term, regularly carried out with agency support in each county;

and, in the longer term, are integrated into national systems would greatly assist global understanding of the water and sanitation sector.

- **Improved collaboration between support agencies:** In addition to working from a common platform, in terms of data sets, indicators and methodology, an agreed allocation of country support roles between countries would result in an efficient use of support resources. It would also reduce duplicative support and provide enable global coverage of country analysis. Progress may only really be made in this area when there are clear incentives in place to co-ordinate approaches.
- **Incorporating national assessments into global and regional monitoring:** Standardisation of a core data set, common methodology and coordination between support agencies would enable quality, country-owned national sector assessments to be the primary source of information for global reports as GLAAS. This should reduce duplication of effort and provide high quality and consistent information and improve efficiency both at global, regional and national levels.

## Monitoring human resource capacity

Whilst the numbers of additional health workers or teachers<sup>5</sup> needed to meet global or national goals is generally known, little attention has been given to understanding the scope and nature of human resource (HR) capacity needed to achieve MDG targets for water and sanitation.

At the same time, country sector analyses identify lack of capacity as one of the principle constraints to service development. For example, the AMCOW Country Status Overviews, Regional Synthesis Report found that countries that had best mobilised capacity and resources had the most effective service delivery pathways.

Improved HR information and greater focus on monitoring HR would assist global, regional and national sector leaders in policy and investment decisions needed to build capacity. UN-Water's GLAAS 2012 report<sup>6</sup> made a first pioneering attempt to introduce a focus on capacity in its global assessment. It reported a severe shortage of HR to operate and maintain water (only 40% of countries reported sufficient capacity to manage urban services, and only 20% rural). Over half the countries surveyed did not report the HR status in the sector at all, presumably in large part because the data was not available. For those that did respond, the survey found shortages in available staffing, little incentives offered by employees for continuing education, gender imbalances in staffing patterns, and limited HR planning.

The International Water Association (IWA), with support from UK Department of International Development (DFID), USAID, and AusAID has developed a methodology to collect data on human resource gaps (skills) and shortages (number of workers) at the national level. This methodology goes beyond looking at design/construction, and examines the HR requirements to operate and maintain the systems and mobilise communities. The methodology has been used to perform 15 country assessments (in Africa and Asia) over the last two years. These assessments highlight that human resource shortages and gaps to achieve the MDGs and universal coverage are significant. It is clear that the issue of ensuring an adequate number of skilled people and ensuring that the working environment is

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<sup>5</sup> In 2006, the WHO World Health Report estimated that 4.3 million additional health workers would be needed worldwide to achieve the health related Millennium Development Goals. Subsequently in 2008, UNESCO estimated that 18 million new teachers would be needed to meet the MDG of achieving universal primary education.

<sup>6</sup> WHO, 2012. UN-Water GLAAS 2012 Report.

favourable to the achievement of the national WASH targets requires much more attention than it currently receives. Conclusions from the first studies indicate that:

- Decentralisation is often not accompanied by the necessary transfer of HR.
- Graduates lack practical experience in part due to lack of coordination between employers and educational institutes.
- Low salaries, lack of benefits and poor working conditions in the public sector makes it difficult to attract and retain qualified staff. Public sector institutions also have a high loss of qualified staff to the private sector or other industries.

Issues to be addressed in the session include:

1. **Learning from experience:** The session will review the findings from GLAAS and the IWA studies, especially the country assessments and draw lessons from the results and conclusions.
2. **Methodology:** What are the best approaches and methodologies to gathering HR data at national level? What works best? What are the pitfalls.
3. **Integrating HR information into sector data at all levels:** The key long-term objective is to integrate HR issues into global, regional and national in sector information. Building on the lessons from country level, what short term actions are needed to integrate HR data into existing regional and global instruments.

## Conclusions

Monitoring in the WASH sector is crowded, poorly co-ordinated and there is little consistency or quality control of sector data. Much valuable data is collected but not fully used, and there is considerable duplication of effort. Lack of alignment between global, regional and national monitoring is a significant challenge.

The focus on measuring progress towards the MDGs, increased calls for accountability of commitments, improved information technology and a greater focus on results has resulted in significant improvements to WASH monitoring. The emergence of SWA provides a timely platform to better align global, regional and national monitoring. The sector is well-poised to develop a shared global monitoring framework. Components of such a shared framework might include:

- A shared vision of the **goals and principles** of monitoring.
- An inventory of the **key monitoring initiatives** that make up the framework.
- A menu of the **types of monitoring** (water resources, infrastructure, financial flows, human resources, functionality, equity outcomes, impacts, etc.) which avoids gaps and optimises complementarities.
- A **range of methods** used for data collection and analysis, including new methods supported by mobile technology, and joint efforts to scale up innovation.
- A set of agreed, **common standards** for monitoring information.
- **Shared use of monitoring information** to improve transparency, strengthen accountability for results achieved and advocate for the sector, both within countries and globally.

A greater level of cohesion and collaboration could ultimately lead to agreement within the sector on the identification of an international agency to take on a **regulatory function in global monitoring**. This function could include encouraging monitoring according to agreed-upon standards, benchmarking and reporting on quality of monitoring, facilitating coordination across agencies, tracking the burden put on national agencies by global and regional initiatives, and balancing the costs and benefits of data sharing.

While ambitious, this step would ensure the concept of a shared monitoring framework became an operational reality.

Contributing to the development of this shared monitoring framework, the discussions in Theme 6 “Building Coherence in Global-Regional-National Monitoring” of the Monitoring Sustainable WASH Service Delivery Symposium intend to make progress in three areas:

1. Better aligning global, regional, and national monitoring systems.
2. Better aligning country-level sector analytic tools.
3. Incorporating an assessment of HR issues into sector monitoring at all levels.

## **Annex A: Summary program for Theme 6 Building Coherence in Global-Regional-National Monitoring**

### **Session 1**

#### **Aligning global, regional, and national WASH monitoring**

**Tuesday, 9 April**

**14:00 -15:30**

1. Building a coherent global monitoring system – Piers Cross, IRC/SWA
2. The Pan-African M&E as a High Level Advocacy tool for AU Member States to compare and superior performances – Anselme Vodounhessi, M&E AUC and Rashid Mbaziira, IWRM AUC
3. Harmonized monitoring for SACOSAN and the post 2015 sanitation goals – Archana Patkar, WSSCC
4. Validating WASH monitoring data: Malawi, Kenya and Zambia – Ulemu Chiluzi, Plan Malawi
5. Why different methods generate different numbers: case study from Ethiopia – John Butterworth, IRC

### **Session 2**

#### **Aligning country analytic methodologies**

**Tuesday, 9 April**

**16:00 -17:30**

1. Using SDAs: lessons in methodologies and substance – Antonio Serrano, Manish Kumar, Dominick De Waal, and Susanna Smets, WB/WSP
2. WASH BAT implementation and the lessons learnt from countries - Guy Hutton, UNICEF
3. Applying Sustainability Analysis to RWS – Peter Harvey, UNICEF

### **Session 3**

#### **Next generation global approaches**

**Wednesday, 10 April**

**1400 -15:30**

1. Update on JMP – Didier Allely, WHO /Rolf Luydendijk, UNICEF
2. Role of UN-Water GLAAS in the future of monitoring of WASH – Peregrine Swann, WHO

### **Session 4**

#### **Monitoring human resources in WASH**

**Wednesday, 10 April**

**16:00 -17:30**

1. A reflection on monitoring human resources using the IWA methodology – Kirsten De Vette, IWA