



Understanding Monitoring for SDG6 Across Eastern and Southern Africa: An Executive Brief

SUMMARY

UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) has recognized that, after five years of the SDGs, it is necessary to assess the progress made towards achieving SDG6 and—perhaps more importantly—to assess how well progress is being measured by the member states. The timing of this review recognizes that if progress is behind track or data is not available, now—while there are still 10 years before the SDG deadline of 2030—is the time to put in place course correction measures. Doing so will better position member states to advocate for financing for WASH as part of the SDG midterm review. The first step as part of this ‘SDG6 +5 review’ is a rapid assessment that provides an overview of how well countries understand current levels of access to WASH services and the gap to achieving universal access by 2030. This summary report presents the findings of that rapid assessment and outlines the next steps in the review process.

Background

Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) establishes a commitment to ‘Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.’

The year 2020 marked five years into SDG implementation with the SDG Mid-term review due in 2022/23. UNICEF ESARO recognizes that, after five years of the SDGs, it is necessary to assess the progress made towards achieving SDG6 and assess how well progress is being measured by member states. The SDG6 +5 presented here review takes the opportunity to identify key gaps and opportunities ahead of the SDG mid-term review. Taking action now will

better position member states to advocate for financing for WASH as part of the SDG mid-term review and provide time for required course correction measures to be effective ahead of 2030.

Purpose

The purpose of the SDG6 +5 review was to undertake an inventory of existing institutional monitoring systems and their ability to track SDG 6.1 and 6.2 at the national level. The review also provided regional insights into the extent to which countries in ESAR have advanced in terms of SDG6 localization and implementation and considered the underlying strengths and weaknesses of the enabling environment for

monitoring sustainable WASH programming and post-pandemic recovery in the region.

The SDG6 +5 review will support targeted advocacy and help identify barriers and enablers to securing additional resources and financing for enhanced WASH service delivery. It documents best practices and facilitates knowledge sharing and learning across countries, teams and organizations. The methodology implemented for SDG6 review is intended to be replicated in other regions or periodically when required.

Methodology

The review was conducted as a 'rapid' assessment of country monitoring systems, across all countries in ESAR¹. The assessment considered four aspects of monitoring for SDG6:

1. The strength of the enabling environment for WASH monitoring, based on the SWA building blocks for strong WASH systems, and additional elements linked to localization of SDG6, and use of data in sector processes.
2. The availability of data for monitoring WASH, and alignment with SDG6 indicators.
3. Details on how WASH monitoring systems are structured and managed in countries.
4. How well WASH monitoring links to other priority areas, including integrated water resources management (IWRM), climate resilience, and humanitarian interventions.

¹ Data was initially collected in 20 out of 21 countries. Data on Comoros was collected at a later stage and – although it is

Figure 1: SWA Building Blocks



The findings of the report are available on a regional dashboard

(<https://esaro.mwater.co/#/sdg6>) which allows users to explore the same information included in the report. The dashboard presents unique information on the status of monitoring and achievement of SDG6 in the region.

Strengths and challenges in monitoring SDG6

There are significant gaps in data availability to monitor progress towards SDG6 at a national level. Many countries in the region do not yet have the data to fully understand gaps in WASH service provision and progress towards SDG6. There is a need for better data to help countries understand if they are achieving national targets and where investment is needed to address gaps in provision and ensure that no-one is left behind. No countries have fully included the data needed to report against the JMP indicators for safely managed services in their monitoring systems. Only a few systems are aligned with JMP indicators for SDG basic services, and several countries were found to lack data systems that were designed for the MDG era and indicators. In addition, where monitoring systems exist, there are still substantial challenges in ensuring data collection is frequent and comprehensive—with notable exceptions for those systems managed by the health sector.

included as an annex to this report – did not inform the analysis and narrative of the report.

There are gaps in monitoring across water, sanitation, and hygiene – but hygiene is by far the weakest area. This represents a significant area for improvement, as monitoring hygiene is less demanding (in terms of data collection) than elements of safely managed water and sanitation services.

Most countries have set local targets for SDG 6 – and all the countries which responded to the Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS) have some WASH targets aligned with SDG6 targets. However, no country collects routine data which allows it to fully monitor progress towards the targets it has set. For example, the target may be set for access to basic water services, but there is no information on typical collection times. This means that countries may be reporting progress using misleading data which overstates the progress towards the higher service levels of the JMP ladders for drinking water and sanitation.

Much of the data on WASH collected is not accessible

Where data is collected on progress towards SDG, much of data sits in inaccessible systems or are nonfunctional. As a result, there is a lack of awareness among stakeholders of what data exists, and how it can be used and integrated. The assessment found very few monitoring systems open to all stakeholders: either access was restricted to select users or entirely closed. This can be due to administrative policies and hurdles, or due to the design and implementation of the system not facilitating interrogability and data sharing - for example where data is collated and analyzed in spreadsheets, and there is no clear record of what the most up-to-date information is. This presents a missed opportunity for improving the planning and targeting of WASH.

Only six countries fully integrated utility data into sector monitoring and reporting for SDG6. For example, Uganda Sector Performance Report

(SPR) includes clear data from the National Water and Sewerage Corporation. But too often, utilities were seen as somehow separate from sector reporting processes, and this was found for both UNICEF CO staff and government counterparts.

No country is on track to fully achieve SDG6

No country in the region is on track to achieve universal access to basic services by 2030 for SDG 6 considering the current rates of progress and gaps in access. Only Botswana is on track to achieve universal access to Water. Some countries are on track to achieve some areas of SG6 by 2050 (20 years after the target date) but many will not even achieve this. Some countries, either close to zero or facing declining levels of access to services, **are projected to never achieve SDG6** at the current rate of progress. This is before impacts on access to WASH as a result of the COVID-19 crisis have been reflected in the data.

A strong enabling environment is linked to strong monitoring systems

Perhaps not surprisingly, a clear trend emerged between strong monitoring systems and a strong enabling environment for WASH monitoring. Countries with good data availability had a strong enabling environment, whereas countries that lacked progress on sector policy and strategy, sector financing, JSRs and annual performance reports, elements of a weak enabling environment lacked routine monitoring systems. It was not clear if any aspect of the enabling environment was an essential pre-requisite for strong monitoring systems; rather that broad strength in the enabling environment is a good indicator that monitoring will be strong.

There are still gaps in existing national monitoring systems

The assessment identified 22 monitoring systems across 15 countries – many countries had multiple systems covering different areas of WASH, or

urban and rural areas. The majority of countries rely on some form of MIS with only two countries relying almost exclusively on nationwide surveys to monitor WASH access.

The majority of MIS systems identified were nationwide, but there was substantially more coverage or rural areas than urban. Only 40% of systems covered all areas of WASH – more often there was a split between water (managed by the water ministry) and sanitation and hygiene (managed by the health ministry). There are some positive examples where good coverage and updating frequency of sanitation and hygiene data

has been achieved where this is collected through health MIS systems which are able to leverage extensive health outreach worker networks.

In general, routine monitoring systems have significantly less alignment that JMP data estimates. No country has monitoring data for access to water services which aligns fully with the JMP indicators for safely managed services and 12 countries have no routine monitoring data on hygiene. In both JMP data and routine monitoring systems, monitoring data is absent for water quality data, and elements of fecal sludge management (FSM). Where hygiene data is available in routine monitoring systems it was found there is generally strong alignment with the JMP indicators with seven countries collecting monitoring data which aligns with the JMP indicator for basic services.

Currently, there is only limited data in national systems for WASH in institutions – both education and health care facilities. This is typically collected

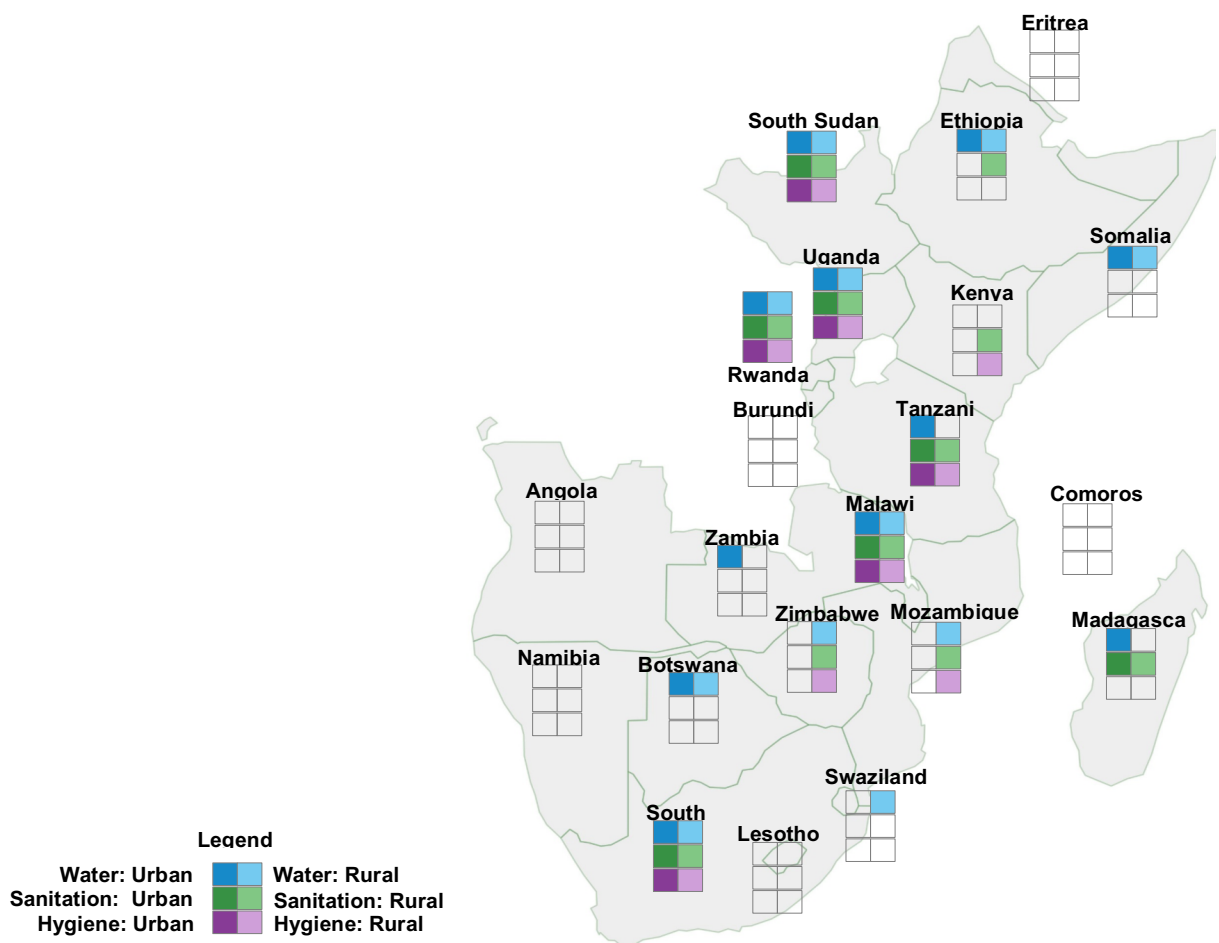


Figure 2: Types of MIS Data Collected Across the countries

through MIS systems managed by the relevant line ministry. For education, only three countries fully align with SDG basic indicators - which includes indicators for water, sanitation and hygiene. In health, out of the 17 countries with some data, only Madagascar's system aligns fully with SDG basic indicators - which includes indicators for water, sanitation, hygiene, waste management and environmental cleaning

But significant improvements can be made rapidly – based on this rapid assessment we have identified four points for action which set out steps that can and should be taken immediately to help strengthen monitoring for SDG6 across East and Southern Africa that includes; 1. **Focus on quick-wins and improvements which can be achieved more easily**, 2. **Build the Enabling Environment for Monitoring**, 3. **Break down Data Silos and make data Accessible and Available**, and 4. **Making the case for improved monitoring for SDG6**.

Recommendations

There are clearly significant gaps in the current systems for routine WASH monitoring. A lack of up-to-date, reliable data aligned with JMP service levels hinders the abilities of countries to understand current progress, identify gaps and investment needs, and advocate convincingly for increased resource allocation.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank DGIS for the support to the analysis. The UNICEF Country Offices and governments within East and Southern Africa Region for their inputs and Support. The authors also extend specific thanks to Samuel Godfrey ESARO WASH Regional Adviser, Anu Paudyal Gautam, Knowledge Management Specialist, UNICEF HQ, Guy Hutton Senior Adviser WASH HQ for their detailed review and comments.

About the Authors

This Learning note was developed by Eve Mackinnon, Euphresia Luseka and Arjen Naafs of ITAD with support from Farai A. Tunhuma, UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office WASH Specialist.

Suggested citation: Mackinnon E., Luseka E., Naafs A. and Tunhuma F. A. (2021). Understanding Monitoring for SDG6 Across Eastern and Southern Africa: An Executive Brief. UNICEF: ESARO.

About the Series

UNICEF's water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) country teams work inclusively with governments, civil society partners and donors, to improve WASH services for children and adolescents, and the families and caregivers who support them. UNICEF works in over 100 countries worldwide to improve water and sanitation services, as well as basic hygiene practices. This publication is part of the UNICEF WASH Learning Series, designed to contribute to knowledge of good practice across UNICEF's WASH programming. In this series:

Discussion Papers explore the significance of new and emerging topics with limited evidence or understanding, and the options for action and further exploration.

Fact Sheets summarize the most important knowledge on a topic in few pages in the form of graphics, tables and bullet points, serving as a briefing for staff on a topical issue.

Field Notes share innovations in UNICEF's WASH programming, detailing its experiences implementing these innovations in the field.

Guidelines describe a specific methodology for WASH programming, research or evaluation, drawing on substantive evidence, and based on UNICEF's and partners' experiences in the field.

Reference Guides present systematic reviews on topics with a developed evidence base or they compile different case studies to indicate the range of experience associated with a specific topic.

Technical Papers present the result of more in-depth research and evaluations, advancing WASH knowledge and theory of change on a key topic.

WASH Diaries explore the personal dimensions of users of WASH services, and remind us why a good standard of water, sanitation and hygiene is important for all to enjoy. Through personal reflections, this series also offers an opportunity for tapping into the rich reservoir of tacit knowledge of UNICEF's WASH staff in bringing results for children.

WASH Results show with solid evidence how UNICEF is achieving the goals outlined in Country Programme Documents, Regional Organizational Management Plans, and the Global Strategic Plan or WASH Strategy, and contributes to our understanding of the WASH theory of change or theory of action.

COVID-19 WASH Responses compile lessons learned on UNICEF's COVID-19 response and how to ensure continuity of WASH services and supplies during and after the pandemic.

Readers are encouraged to quote from this publication but UNICEF requests due acknowledgement. You can learn more about UNICEF's work on WASH here: <https://www.unicef.org/wash/>

www.unicef.org/wash

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The statements in this publication are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or the views of UNICEF.

United Nations Children's Fund
3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA

For more information, please contact: WASH@unicef.org