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UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water

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Improving monitoring of the Means of Implementation for water and sanitation

A strategic assessment of opportunities through 2030 and towards "post-2030"

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Preface

When we first discussed this assessment at the end of 2023, it seemed far too early to start thinking beyond 2030. However, taking a moment to take a step back and reflect on what can be done better now, and beyond 2030 has proved to be a beneficial and timely endeavour.

While sufficient 'means of implementation' are critical to achieve of all the 2030 Agenda's sustainable development goals, monitoring of the means of implementation targets and indicators of SDG 6 are often overlooked. This effort was sparked by conversations with other SDG 6 indicators teams in the context of the UN-Water Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6 on what more could be done to make monitoring of the Means of Implementation (MoI) indicators 6a.1 and 6b.1 more meaningful and useful for countries and global SDG 6 dialogue.

Over these past months, we've had an opportunity to engage with the major water and sanitation "thinkers and doers" - the people whose daily work is to accelerate progress on SDG 6 and improve global monitoring and reporting globally, regionally and at country level. Their insights, practical experience and recommendations are infused into this white paper. We are immensely thankful to the key informants and reviewers for their valuable contribution (see annex A).

The interviews and follow-up conversations undertaken in the context of this paper have helped to identify synergies and triggered follow-up actions. In fact, some recommendations are already turning into tangible actions, including through the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and its Collaborative Implementation Plan, the Align to Accelerate Initiative, among numerous other fruitful collaborations and partnerships.

WHO remains fully committed to unlocking the full potential of global monitoring and analytical instruments such as the GLAAS Survey and WASH Accounts and engaging through frameworks like the UN-Water SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework to support Member States to address the vital topic of mobilizing the "means of implementation" for SDG 6 and effectively tell the story of the substantial actions that countries are taking to accelerate progress.

The collective efforts required to achieve SDG 6 by 2030 are significant and can only happen through a revitalised commitment to mobilizing the necessary means of implementation as set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As we close in on 2030 - and look beyond - fulfilling the promise of water and sanitation for all remains as urgent as ever.

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Introduction

When United Nations Member States adopted the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in September 2015, they expressed their determination "to mobilize the means required to implement" it.[1] Given the central importance of sufficient "means of implementation" to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Member States adopted 43 Means of Implementation (MoI) Targets under Goals 1-16 denoted by letters and a dedicated Goal 17: *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development*. The MoI Targets were further supported and complemented by the Third Financing for Development Conference that resulted in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.[2] Subsequently, indicators were developed to monitor and measure all the SDG targets in the *Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda*.[3]

MoIs for SDG 6. While the notion of "MoI" is quite comprehensive (see box 1), its translation into the SDG global monitoring framework is narrowed to a few specific MoI areas per Goal. For SDG 6: *Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all*, two of the eight targets are formulated as MoI Targets: Target 6.a addresses international cooperation, and Target 6.b focuses on local participation to improve water and sanitation management. The World Health Organization (WHO), through the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), is responsible for global monitoring and reporting on the indicators for Targets 6.a and 6.b, 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 respectively, in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Box 1. The notion of ***'Means of implementation'*** describes the interdependent mix of financial resources, technology development and transfer, capacity building, inclusive and equitable globalization and trade, regional integration, as well as the creation of a national enabling environment required to implement the new sustainable development agenda, particularly in developing countries.
Source: TST Issues Brief: Means of Implementation; Global Partnership for achieving sustainable development, 2014.

This commitment by Member States to include the "means of implementation" in the 2030 Agenda and its SDG global monitoring framework brings a welcome focus on the factors that enable countries to drive progress towards outcome targets. However, in practice, the definition of indicators for the two SDG 6 MoI targets and the monitoring thereof has proved difficult. For example, the translation of the multi-faceted MoI targets into measurable indicators has been problematic. And, unlike the SDG 6 outcome targets (6.1-6.6), the SDG MoI targets and indicators apply across all areas of SDG 6 which span the entire water and sanitation cycle and, in principle, encompass all water-relevant sectors including agriculture, energy, urban development/municipal, industry, and the environment.

Halfway to 2030. At the mid-point of Agenda 2030, the world is not on track to achieve the SDG 6 targets by 2030. Advancements are falling short of achieving all eight targets of SDG 6, and in certain regions and for specific indicators, progress is not only lacking but also regressing.[4] In response, Member States have called for the upcoming 2026 United Nations Conference on Water to support further concrete action and initiatives to enhance means of implementation and partnerships to accelerate achievement of SDG 6.[5]

With five years remaining to 2030, it is a timely and strategic moment to ask key questions:

- **What can be done better now:** *How can SDG 6 MoI monitoring be improved up to 2030? Can monitoring and reporting be made more meaningful and relevant to national and international policy and decision-making to accelerate progress on SDG 6?*
- **What can be done better next time:** *How can MoI-type monitoring for water and sanitation be improved in the next United Nations sustainable development agenda framework (e.g., "post-2030")?*

[1] United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," adopted on 25 September 2015. URL: https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1.
[2] Kamau, M., Chasek, P., & O'Connor, D. (2018). Transforming Multilateral Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Sustainable Development Goals (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429491276.
[3] United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/313, "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Annex. Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda" adopted on 6 July 2017. URL: https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/313.
[4] UN-Water, 2024. Summary Brief: Mid-term status of SDG 6 global indicators and acceleration needs. Version: August 2024. Geneva, Switzerland.
[5] United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/Res/78/327, Modalities of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, adopted on 6 September 2024. Paragraph 4(d). https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/78/327.

Objective. This paper aims to provide a concise, forward-looking analysis of opportunities to further develop and improve monitoring of the means of implementation for water and sanitation (SDG 6) through 2030 and in preparation for the negotiations of the next United Nations sustainable development agenda, which will be referred to in this paper as "post-2030". Part 1 addresses improving monitoring of SDG 6 MoI indicators up to 2030. Part 2 provides a look forward to preparation for post-2030 and offers reflections for potential approaches and topics for future MoI-type monitoring. While initially prepared as an input to GLAAS strategic planning processes, the content is relevant to a much wider audience. The recommendations from the paper can be used to inform and facilitate dialogue and enhance collaboration among SDG 6 indicator teams, custodian agencies for other Goals, as well as policy and decision-makers, development partners, and other relevant stakeholders.

Methodology. The methodology consisted of a desk review of documents and semi-structured key informant interviews with a diverse group of subject matter experts from governments, the United Nations, and development partners (see annex A). This assessment also included a review of the other MoI targets and indicators in Goals 1-16 and Goal 17, including the formulation, metadata and global reporting for all SDG MoI targets and indicators with a focus on those targets and indicators most closely related to 6.a (international cooperation, finance, capacity building) and 6.b (governance and participation).

Global monitoring of the SDG 6 MoI indicators to date

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 ODA for water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes 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.** Percentage of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

The subject of Target 6.a reflects the ambition of the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Plan to strengthen international cooperation for the implementation of the SDGs. This broad target is measured by only one indicator, 6.a.1, which tracks the amount of water- and sanitation-related ODA that is part of a government coordinated spending plan.[6] *Donor countries* report annually on the amount of ODA they provide for water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes to the OECD Crediting Reporting System (OECD-CRS). *Recipient countries* report on indicator 6.a.1 through the GLAAS country survey in the question on 'External Financing'. The GLAAS 2024 country survey asks recipient countries to report on the total donor expenditures/ disbursements and the percentage of total donor expenditure/disbursement that is on-budget (see annex B, Figure B.1 Question D9). Due to differences in the methodology and granularity of the available data, the funding lines between the two datasets cannot be matched; therefore, at present only the data for "total amount of water and sanitation related ODA" is reported to the United Nations Statistics Division for the UN-mandated annual SDG progress reporting. The additional data collected through the GLAAS country survey are presented in GLAAS reports and reported on in SDG report storylines. The latest 6.a.1 data are available on the SDG 6 data portal. The 6.a.1 storyline from the 2024 Extended report for SDG 6 is included in annex C for reference. Five other Goals have similar MoI targets for 'international cooperation' that track ODA flows to the sector using the same data source.[7]

Target 6.b. focuses on supporting and strengthening the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management. Participation is a principle of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.[8] The target is measured by one indicator, 6.b.1.[9] Due to lack of reliable global data sources from local

[6] The metadata for Indicator 6.a.1 is available here: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-06-0A-01.pdf
[7] See MoI targets under Goals 2,4,7,16, and 17. United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," adopted on 25 September 2015. URL: https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1.
[8] De Albuquerque C. Realising the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation: A Handbook by the UN Special Rapporteur, Introduction, p. 31 (2014).
[9] The metadata for Indicator 6.a.1 is available here: https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-06-0B-01.pdf

administrative units, indicator 6.b.1 is currently being measured by "Proportion of countries with clearly defined procedures in law or policy for participation by service users and communities in planning programs" and "Proportion of countries with a high level of users and communities participating in planning programs" for six sub-sectors: (a) urban sanitation, (b) rural sanitation, (c) urban drinking-water supply, (d) rural drinking-water supply, (e) hygiene promotion and (f) water resources planning and management. At present, the data for two representative sub-sectors are reported to UNSD to be included in the SDG global database: rural drinking-water supply and water resources planning and management. The data is collected through the GLAAS country survey section on 'Governance' (see annex B, Figure B.2 Question A13). The 6.b.1 storyline from the 2024 Extended report for SDG 6 is included in annex C for reference. The latest 6.b.1 data are available on the SDG 6 data portal. Target 6.b is the only SDG target that addresses public participation in the management of services; however, participation and contribution to decision-making is captured in indicator 14.b.1 and several targets and indicators under SDG 16 address right to information, user satisfaction with public services, and other aspects of accountable institutions.

Box 2. Resources for more information on SDG 6.a/6.a.1 and 6.b/6.b.1:

- UN Statistical Division (UNSD) metadata information for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 explains the monitoring methods.
- UN-Water SDG 6 Data Portal presents the latest data for all SDG 6 indicators. The latest UN-Water SDG 6 Progress reports are available for specific SDG 6 indicators and synthesized analysis of overall progress and acceleration needs.
- The GLAAS data portal provides policy- and decision-makers at all levels with reliable, easily accessible, comprehensive data on WASH systems, including on governance, monitoring, human resources and finance. Analysis of data and trends for Indicators 6a.1 and 6.b.1 are reported in the UN-Water GLAAS 2022 report.
- OECD Water website and OECD Creditor Reporting System database provides the latest data for indicator 6.a.1.
- The UNSD 2024 SDG Progress Report reports global progress on all SDG targets and indicators. It includes annexes with the SDG Extended Report 2024: SDG 6 and UNSD Statistical Annex 2024.

Box 3. Limitations of SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators:

Since the onset of SDGs, global monitoring and reporting on the means of implementation targets and indicators for SDG 6 has proved challenging. Main limitations and challenges include the following:

SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators are not comprehensive. The current MoI targets and indicators for SDG 6 only scratch the surface of the actual 'means' required to achieve SDG 6 (see box 1).

Translation of the multi-faceted MoI targets into meaningful, measurable indicators is problematic. Indicator 6.a.1 monitors ODA flows through government spending plans, which covers a very small fraction of the outcome expressed by Target 6.a related to international cooperation and capacity building. Target 6.b. combines strengthened participation and improved management, but the indicator 6.b.1 measures only the aspect related to policies and procedures for participation at the local level.

Indicators lack directionality making meaningful data aggregation and interpretation difficult. There is a lack of agreement and clarity on the direction of movement for the indicator that represents "progress". For example, for ODA flows in Indicator 6.a.1, on one hand the financing gap for SDG 6 is massive and it is beneficial for ODA to increase to fill the gap; on the other hand, as a country's income-level increases, the need for ODA should reduce and thus ODA flows would go down. Furthermore, it's been observed that large increases in ODA are most frequently associated with response to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies where the overall water and sanitation situation in a country is worse off. Target 6.b. has a similar problem, in that the presence of participation procedures and high participation do not necessarily lead to improvements in access; those countries that are at near universal access often do not have high levels of participation, unless there is a serious failure.

Unlike outcome targets (6.1-6.6) and respective indicators, the SDG MoI targets and indicators apply across all areas of SDG 6. MoI targets should be relevant and support progress across the other outcome targets, which requires a different type and degree of coordination and collaboration between the MoI custodian agency and other SDG outcome indicator groups (6.1 to 6.6) in order to monitor effectively.

The 2018 *npj Clean Water* article, *Policy review of the means of implementation targets and indicators for the sustainable development goal for water and sanitation,* concluded that, "There is generally weak evidence linking the MoI targets and indicators to outcomes; they are imperfectly conceptualised and inconsistently formulated; and tracking of their indicators will be difficult because many are not quantitative" (Bartram, et al.,2018, pg.1). Specifically, the authors noted that the "SDG 6 MoI targets and associated indicators could be substantively improved," and proposed recommendations to revise the targets and indicators for 6.a and 6.b.

Additional analysis and discussion of the limitations of the current MoI targets and indicators 6.a/6.a.1 and 6.b/6.b.1 and proposed recommendations to reformulate them are discussed in-depth in the Bartam et al. article and are not the focus of this paper.

Sources: Bartram, J., Brocklehurst, C., Bradley, D. et al. Policy review of the means of implementation targets and indicators for the sustainable development goal for water and sanitation. npj Clean Water 1, 3 (2018). https://doi.org/10.1038/s41545-018-0003-0.

Main findings and recommendations

Centrality of the means of implementation for SDG 6: concept vs. practice

This section provides a brief general discussion of common themes that emerged from the key informant interviews related to perceptions and observations from experience relevant to SDG 6 MoI monitoring.

Means of implementation underpin SDG achievement. It was broadly agreed by key informants that 'means of implementation' underpin the achievement of sustainable development outcomes; and therefore, understanding and monitoring of MoI is central to improving implementation to accelerate progress on water- and sanitation-related SDG targets, notably SDG 6.

Gaps and misconceptions of SDG 6.a and 6.b. Nevertheless, at the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, it was found that within the SDG 6 community there remain significant gaps in understanding and misconceptions of the current SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators, and the efforts undertaken to globally monitor and report on them. Some informants expressed that the SDG 6 MoI targets are currently considered as two of eight distinct SDG 6 targets, rather than as cross-cutting targets that underpin the six SDG 6 outcome target areas.

Current formulation of SDG 6 MoI indicators was found to be sub-optimal. There was a perception that the formulations of the SDG 6 MoIs reflect 'old fashioned' MDG-era notions. Several key informants also perceived that the current 'packaging' of the MoIs seem to be influenced by Millenium Development Goal[10] Target 7.c and the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation, favoring 'WASH' aspects (e.g., 6.1 and 6.2) of SDG 6 over the whole 'water cycle' covered by the Goal. Additionally, numerous key informants raised the issue that ODA accounts for only around 10% of the financial flows to the water and sanitation sector, far below the amounts of domestic resources invested, including user contributions.[11] And, despite agreement on the overall importance of MoI for the achievement of the SDGs, it was conveyed by several country-level key informants that data and information generated from monitoring and reporting on MoI indicators SDG 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 have not been particularly useful to inform policy or decision-making in their national context (see box 4).

Box 4. National Water leaders on the relative difficulty of achieving SDG Targets 6.a and 6.b:

The *Global Water Policy Report 2021: Listening to National Water Leaders* includes the results of national water leaders being asked about their experience of the relative difficulty of achieving each SDG 6 target, including the MOIs, and where they found this to be 'impossible' or 'challenging', the reasons for this.

In aggregate globally, the 'strengthening local participation' target (6.b) was rated as 'impossible' or 'challenging' by national water leaders of 46% of the 88 surveyed countries (28% for high income countries and 50-56% for upper-middle, lower-middle and low income countries). The most frequently cited reason for this overall was 'governance problems', though for low income countries, 'lack of financing' was the most often cited reason, with governance close behind. For the 'international cooperation and capacity building support' target (6.a), national water leaders of 47% of countries considered development assistance to be not adequate. However, national water leaders of 70% of donor countries considered their countries were doing enough towards this target.

Source: Water Policy Group, 2021. *Global Water Policy Report 2021: Listening to National Water Leaders. Water is essential to every element of the economy, environment and social fabric of every country across the world*. Available at: http://waterpolicygroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2021-Global-Water-Policy-Report-4-Feb-2022.pdf

Lack of champions for the implementation of Targets 6.a and 6.b. Key informants noted that Targets 6.a and 6.b have "lacked champions" globally and at country level to drive implementation and monitoring. Several informants mentioned that there is not a natural "home" within line ministries or national institutions for monitoring these targets and indicators, and as such they tend to receive less attention and resources than other SDG 6 targets. There is a disconnection between the strong push by Member States to include MoI targets and indicators within the SDG Framework during the negotiations process, versus the tepid uptake of the actual SDG 6 MoI targets into national SDG monitoring and review processes. This reflects the many challenges associated with monitoring enabling environment / means of implementation-type indicators.

The concept of SDG 6 MoIs should be extended beyond two proxy indicators. Many key informants indicated that SDG 6 MoI monitoring and reporting can be more meaningful for water and sanitation sector dialogue by

[10] MDG target 7c was defined as "By 2015, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation." *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 55/2, adopted on 18 September 2000. Available at: https://docs.un.org/A/RES/55/2.

[11] Strong systems and sound investments: evidence on and key insights into accelerating progress on sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene. UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS) 2022 report. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

taking a broader view of monitoring 'means of implementation for SDG 6' beyond the strictly defined global reporting for the two current indicators 6.a.1. and 6.b.1. Given the need for dramatic SDG 6 acceleration, it was emphasized that addressing the broader scope of MoI-related topics is imperative, notably those contained in the five UN-Water SDG 6 global accelerators: financing, data and information, capacity development, innovation and governance.[12] It was stressed that key messages for Targets 6.a and 6.b should be actionable for decision-makers at country-level to inform national policy dialogue and action on MoI-related aspects of SDG implementation.

[12] UN-Water, 2020, The Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework, Geneva, Switzerland. URL: https://www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-global-acceleration-framework.

Part 1. Improving monitoring of SDG 6 MoI indicators up to 2030

This section provides an assessment of a) potential collaborations and processes to improve monitoring of SDG 6 MoI indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 for the remainder of the 2030 Agenda and b) improved technical methods.

A. Potential collaborations and processes to improve monitoring through 2030

1. Give higher profile to the 'means of implementation' for SDG 6 through a dedicated report.

Currently, the progress of the SDG 6 MoI indicators is reported in several places: annually in the United Nations Secretary-General's Progress Report on the SDGs, every two to three years as part of the GLAAS report, and in SDG 6 synthesis reports. Additionally, the latest data are continuously available on the UN-Water SDG 6 Data Portal, GLAAS Data portal, and OECD Water site. However, despite the use of these different reporting platforms, it was found that the information and key messages about SDG 6 MoI indicators are not effectively reaching the full SDG 6 community. Key informants expressed the need for a dedicated place where SDG 6 MoI issues can be elevated and discussed to improve understanding and better communicate results of data analysis to inform decision-making for a "whole of SDG 6 audience" including targeting policy-maker audiences with key messages.

Recommendation 1. Develop a standalone indicator report and/or policy brief for current SDG 6 MoI targets (6.a and 6.b together) and associated indicators drawing on data and information collected by the GLAAS country and development partner surveys, UNEP IWRM SDG 6.5.1 survey, UNECE/UNESCO SDG 6.5.2 survey and WASH accounts. The standalone indicator report and/or policy brief could incorporate qualitative examples and quantitative analysis from other SDG 6 indicator groups, and cover the broader picture of MoI aspects for SDG 6 (see box 5).

Box 5. Possible data sources for a dedicated report on monitoring the means of implementation for SDG 6:

- **GLAAS Survey.** The Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) is a UN-Water programme implemented by WHO and UNICEF. The objective of GLAAS is to provide policy- and decision-makers at all levels with a reliable, easily accessible and comprehensive analysis of WASH systems (6.1, 6.2), including on governance, monitoring, human resources and finance, to make informed decisions for sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene. It consists of a "country survey" that is completed through a government-led stakeholder process and an "development partner survey". Additionally, GLAAS, in collaboration with OECD and UNEP, monitors the MoI indicators 6.a and 6.b. Additional information is available on the GLAAS Data Portal.
- **SDG 6.5.1 Survey.** Indicator SDG 6.5.1 measures the "Degree of integrated water resources management" (IWRM). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the custodian for indicator 6.5.1. The data for reporting on the indicator are collected through a policy-related questionnaire to stakeholders. There are four sections to the questionnaire: enabling environment; institutions and participation; management instruments; and financing, which are combined together to provide a composite score or "degree". It builds upon an existing survey instrument which was developed by UNEP-DHI and monitors different aspects of the policy framework for integrated water resource management. This indicator lies somewhere between an outcome indicator and an MoI indicator. A full website and summary of the SDG 6.5.1 monitoring is on the UNEP-DHI Integrated Water Resource Management Portal.
- **SDG 6.5.2 Survey.** Indicator 6.5.2 tracks the percentage of transboundary basin area within a country that has an operational arrangement for water cooperation. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are the custodians of indicator 6.5.2. The indicator is monitored through a national survey. Additionally national reporting under the 1992 Water Convention serviced by UNECE and the Protocol on Water and Health serviced by UNECE and WHO-Europe could also provide additional complementary inputs for a dedicated MoI-focused report.
- **WASH Accounts.** Building on the experience of the national health accounts, which have been used in the health sector for several decades, WHO has developed a methodology to track financing to WASH that supports the collection and mapping for WASH financial flows, in a comprehensive and comparable manner, based on standard classifications. To date, 40 countries that have developed or in the process of developing WASH accounts.

2. Communicate a 'bigger picture' narrative about SDG 6 MoIs beyond the existing indicators.

The targets and indicators for 6.a and 6.b alone provide a limited picture of the "means of Implementation" required to achieve SDG 6. The political process for Agenda 2030 agreed on targets with multiple elements, but

ultimately only one indicator per SDG 6 MoI target was adopted in the global monitoring framework.[13] However, the key informants expressed the view that reporting on a SDG target should go beyond what can be captured by the indicator alone. The reporting and sector policy dialogue on SDG 6 MoI does not have to be limited to only those indicators officially included in the SDG monitoring framework. As such, the MoI for SDG 6 can be interpreted as much broader than just two targets and two indicators. The indicator can be considered as just a "hook" to elaborate on the MoI-related topics for water and sanitation in greater breadth and detail.

Recommendation 2. Frame the 'MoIs for SDG 6' in the broader effort to accelerate the implementation of SDG 6. Communicate more strategically about how the current SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators fit in and contribute to SDG 6 acceleration drawing on data and reporting from GLAAS, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 surveys, and WASH accounts; and communicate more deliberately about the "means of implementation" for SDG 6 in United Nations political processes and high-level water and sanitation sector events (see box 6).

Box 6. Opportunities for further exploration:

- Communication about the SDG 6 MoIs can be more closely linked with the UN-Water SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and its five accelerators that aims to unify the international community's support to countries for SDG 6. This framework was launched as part of the "Decade of Action" on Sustainable Development and is well established in SDG 6 global policy dialogue.
- MoI aspects can be incorporated more visibly into the analyses undertaken for the SDG 6 country acceleration case studies, SDG 6 synthesis reports and other SDG 6 acceleration initiatives and publications.
- Build on the report prepared by UN-Water in 2015 to coincide with the Third International Financing for Development (FfD) Conference in Addis Ababa, "Means of Implementation: A Focus on Sustainable Development Goals 6 and 17".
- The upcoming political processes related to the 2030 Agenda, 4th Financing for Development Conference in 2025, HLPF in-depth review of SDG 6 in 2026, Pact for the Future follow-up at HLPF in 2027, as well as the water-related processes including the Water Action Decade, Water Action Agenda, and forthcoming United Nations Conferences on Water in 2026 and 2028 are vital opportunities to position key messages about the MoI for SDG 6.

3. Strengthen national monitoring and review mechanisms for MoI-type indicators.

National monitoring systems for water and sanitation typically track water and sanitation outcomes, such as the percentage of the population using safely managed services (indicators SDG 6.1.1 and 6.2.1), but often do not systematically track inputs, systems and processes such as finance flows, the human resources workforce, data availability, coordination and institutional arrangements, etc., that constitute the "means of implementation" necessary to attain and sustain water and sanitation outcome targets. As such, global reporting for MoI-related information often relies on primary data collection through country survey questionnaires designed to report on specific global indicators. Taken together cumulatively, the reporting exercise for countries can be time and resource intensive. Incorporating MoI-type indicators systematically into national routine monitoring and review systems could dramatically improve data availability and increase use of MoI-type data in national and sub-national policy and decision-making processes.

[13] United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/71/313, "Work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Annex. Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda" adopted on 6 July 2017. URL: https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/313.

Recommendation 3. Invest in country-level efforts to strengthen national monitoring and review systems and data collection 'pipelines' for priority MoI-type areas for SDG 6 acceleration (see boxes 7 and 8).

Box 7. Opportunities for further exploration:

- The Align to Accelerate initiative co-led by WHO and UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank to develop a set of core indicators for monitoring the strength and performance of WASH systems (6.1, 6.2).
- The SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme under the guidance of UNEP in close collaboration with Global Water Partnership (GWP), UNDP CAP-Net and other partners assists governments in designing and implementing country-led responses based on SDG indicator 6.5.1.
- The SDG Water Quality Support Hub supported by UNEP GEMS/Water provides technical support to countries to help countries strengthen data collection and management systems.
- Link-up with regional intergovernmental monitoring and reporting initiatives such as the WASSMO platform (Water Sector and Sanitation Monitoring) managed by the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) and reporting processes by Parties and other States to the Protocol on Water and Health serviced by UNECE and WHO-Europe to strengthen these regional monitoring systems and country-level data collection processes.

Box 8. Examples of national MoI-type monitoring initiatives by countries:

- **South Africa.** The Department of Water and Sanitation produces DROP reports: Blue Drop Report which provides an assessment of drinking water quality, and the full No Drop Report which focuses on water losses and non-revenue water in all municipalities in the country, as well as the Green Drop Progress Assessment Report to provide an update on the performance of wastewater management systems at municipal level. The Blue, Green and No Drop Certification programmes are aimed at improving municipal drinking water quality, wastewater management as well as water conservation and demand management. The reports keep the public and stakeholders informed and updated with credible data and information about the state of water and sanitation services in the country.
- **Brazil.** in 2019, the Agência Nacional de Águas e Saneamento Básico (ANA) launched the first edition of the report "SDG 6 in Brazil: ANA's Vision on Indicators". In 2022, ANA presented the second edition of this publication. The new edition contains updates to the historical series of indicators for the eight SDG 6 targets and improvements in their calculation due to methodological improvements and new available data. The ANAS SDG 6 interactive dashboard reports national data on SDG indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1, as well as other SDG 6 indicators, at national and sub-national level.
- **Uganda.** The Ministry of Water and Environment produced a "*Guide to Monitoring of Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Indicators: definitions, methodology and calculations*" to serve as a performance measurement framework to incorporate water quality monitoring, good governance, human right to water and sanitation, climate change, sector specific SDGs and the National Development Plan (NDP II) objectives. It includes MoI-type indicators on external funding, civil society organisation (CSO) contributions, women's participation and leadership roles in management committees and a customer satisfaction index.

4. Harness complementarity of SDG data collection processes in future cycles.

Given the multi-sectoral nature of water and sanitation, monitoring and reporting for the means of implementation across all SDG 6 targets necessarily involves collecting data from different ministries and stakeholders. Data collected by the GLAAS survey could be complemented by synergies with future data collection exercises undertaken by other SDG 6 indicator groups. Additionally, data collection opportunities could be explored with other Goals, for example through surveys undertaken for institutions-related aspects of SDG 16 and other MoI-type indicators monitored under SDG 17.

Recommendation 4.1. Explore potential opportunities to incorporate relevant aspects of survey questions for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 into country surveys that monitor other SDG 6 indicators as part of future data collection cycles (see box 9 and 10).

Box 9. What could be done for 6.a.1 across SDG 6 targets:

While it is unlikely that OECD purpose codes will change up to 2030, explore possibilities to expand data coverage on the alignment of ODA with national plans for additional water and sanitation sub-sectors in collaboration with other SDG 6 indicator groups.

During the period up to 2030, data collection could be pilot tested in a few countries, and findings reported on qualitatively or as case studies. Explore potential to incorporate GLAAS question "D9. External Financing" into the SDG 6.5.1 IWRM Survey Pillar 4 on Financing – ODA alignment with national IWRM plans.

Box 10. What could be done for 6.b.1 across SDG 6 Targets:

Monitoring of 6.b.1 could be expanded to other 'water and sanitation sub-sectors' in the future if there were data collection pipelines. During the period up to 2030, data collection could be pilot tested in a few countries, and findings reported on qualitatively or as case studies.

Areas currently collecting 6.b-related data but wrapped in index scoring:

- For 6.5.1, data are already collected through specific questions on "public participation in water resources, policy, planning and management at national level" (Q2.1c), "… at local level" (Q2.2b), as well as "participation of vulnerable groups in water resources planning and management" (Q2.2c), and "gender mainstreaming in water resources management" (Q2.2d) in Pillar 2(s).

New sub-sectors for further exploration: Several opportunities across SDG 6 were identified:

- **Ambient water quality**. For indicator 6.3.2 on ambient water quality, public participation is via participation in data collection and citizen science initiatives such as FreshWater Watch.
- **Irrigation schemes and water tenure.** For agriculture, the participation of water users in irrigation schemes and water tenure could potentially be monitored. This could be linked to FAO's Global Dialogue on Water Tenure initiative that will undertake national and local assessments.
- **Environmental conservation and management of protected areas**. Public participation could be monitored in relation to indicators 6.6.1, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and other multilateral environmental agreements.

Recommendation 4.2. Explore adding an SDG 6-related question into the SDG 16 Survey to get a population view on equity and quality of services and whether there is sufficient access to participatory processes (see box 11).

Box 11. What could be done for 6.b.1 together with SDG 16:

Explore adding an SDG 6-related question into the SDG 16 Survey to get a population view on equity and quality of services and whether there is sufficient access to participatory processes.

- The SDG16 Survey Initiative jointly developed by UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR provides a high quality, well tested tool that countries can use to measure progress on many of the survey-based indicators under SDG 16.
- The specific survey module for SDG 16.6.2 asks respondents to rate their satisfaction with public services on five specific attributes. Currently it covers three sectors: health care, education and government services. It asks public service users questions related to the accessibility, affordability, quality, equal treatment for everyone and effective delivery of the service.

5. Energize engagement and strengthen partnerships at all levels to promote implementation and monitoring of the 'means of implementation' for SDG 6.

The assessment identified numerous initiatives and partnerships designed to support countries to strengthen their national enabling environment and enhance mobilization of the means of implementation for SDG 6. Collaboration with these initiatives and partnerships could bring greater attention and action on SDG 6 MoI Targets 6.a and 6.b and make the critical link between country-level implementation, monitoring and review with global SDG monitoring and reporting processes.

Recommendation 5. Strengthen alliances with MoI-oriented water- and sanitation-related initiatives that support country-level diagnostics, systems strengthening, implementation, monitoring, evidence generation, knowledge management and learning (see box 12).

Box 12. Opportunities for MoI-related alliances and partnerships at global and regional levels:

At global level:

- The UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and its "Collaborative Implementation Plan 2025-2028" can provide a platform for coordinated action on the MoIs for SDG 6 at all levels of the UN system.
- OECD Water Governance Initiative is an international multi-stakeholder network and its periodic Policy Forums could provide a platform for sharing lessons and good practices.
- Country support programmes for SDG 6 monitoring such as SDG Water Quality Hub (6.3.2), Aquastat E-learning platform (6.4), SDG 6 IWRM Support Programme (6.5.1), UNECE Water Convention reporting and UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2, and as part of the overall IMI-SDG 6 support to SDG 6 country focal points and monitoring teams.
- Initiatives led by UN DESA and UN-Water related to the Water Action Agenda, Water Action Decade 2018-2028, and its associated Dushanbe Water Process convened by Tajikistan.
- SDG 6 Policy Support System (SDG-PSS) initiative coordinated by UNU-INWEH and UN Office for Sustainable Development to produce national-level evidence on the enabling environment to achieve SDG 6.
- World Bank Global Social Inclusion department is developing a new Operational Effectiveness and Efficiency Dashboard Indicator on "Quality of Civic/Citizen Engagement". The proposed indicator measures how meaningfully citizens and civil society actors are engaged and to what extent their voices are reflected in development decision-making and oversight. This effort could provide insights to improve monitoring of SDG 6.b.

At regional level:

- Europe: UNECE/WHO Protocol on Water and Health is a multilateral agreement ratified by 29 countries.
- Africa: AMCOW's Water and Sanitation Sector Monitoring System (WASSMO) and AIP-PIDA Scorecard adopted by the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD in February 2022.
- Latin America: Water and Sanitation Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean (OLAS).
- Arab Region: ESCWA Monitoring Application for Reporting on SDGs (MARS).

B. Technical methods for more efficient and meaningful monitoring

6. Keep current formulation of the SDG 6 MoI indicators as no immediately feasible changes were identified (e.g., no issues to be included in the 2025 Comprehensive review).

No immediate changes to the formulation of the indicators were identified that are feasible to implement within existing processes and available resources. Noting that only one GLAAS data collection cycle remains before 2030,[14] changes to the indicators at this late stage would not add significant benefit to tracking progress on Targets 6.a. and 6.b. over such a short timeframe before the 2030 deadline. As such, there are no issues that were recommended to be included in the upcoming Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) 2025 Comprehensive Review.

Recommendation 6. Maintain the current indicators for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 to ensure continuity over the remaining SDG reporting cycles up to 2030. Supplementary analysis and reporting can be further developed, as indicated below in recommendations 7 and 8.

7. More disaggregated analysis and reporting using existing data sets for 6.a.1 can further improve understanding of ODA-trends for water and sanitation.

Official reporting on Indicator 6.a.1 is often limited to the top headline figure for ODA amount and whether the trend is up or down. However, much more analysis is currently done by GLAAS using additional data available in the OECD Creditor Reporting System (OECD-CRS) to analyse additional trends in ODA sources, type of aid, and flows to water and sanitation sub-sectors that is not necessarily published or widely disseminated. While the OECD purpose codes are not aligned to SDG 6 targets and indicators, there are some close linkages which could be further explored. Additionally, the OECD-CRS currently tracks 11 markers to help the international community track the inclusion of specific policy objectives in development cooperation activities.[15] A better understanding of ODA-trends could inform policy dialogue and decision-making on international cooperation and strengthen

[14] GLAAS cycle 2027/2028.

[15] The CRS currently tracks 11 markers, as follows: gender equality; nutrition; Inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities; democratic and inclusive governance; reproductive, maternal, new-born and child health (RMNCH); the environment; as well as aid targeting the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)– climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation; Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR); Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

aid effectiveness. Additionally, Goal 17 has targets and indicators that measure other aspects of financing for development, some of which could include data relevant for Goal 6 such as domestic resource mobilisation, debt sustainability (relief and restructuring), private sector participation, and capacity-building, among others.

Recommendation 7. Analyse and report disaggregated data for ODA flows by a) water and sanitation sub-sectors and show results where feasible by SDG 6 indicator and policy marker (see box 13), b) donor perspective, and c) type of aid and channels for how aid is provided (see box 14).

Box 13. What could be done for 6.a.1- Links with SDG 6 targets, Rio Conventions and gender equality:

DAC purpose codes have been assigned to 13 water and sanitation-related sub-sectors which are summed together to measure the total ODA (gross disbursements) for water supply and sanitation reported for 6.a.1 to UNDS. The detailed purpose codes are provided in Annex C. Disaggregating OECD-CRS data for ODA by 'DAC purpose code' can provide a better understanding of how ODA flows are distributed between different water and sanitation sub-sectors. While there is not full alignment between the purpose codes and SDG 6 targets and indicators, there are some broad correlations between the individual purpose codes and SDG 6 target areas.

- **Capacity-building.** Address the capacity-building component of Target 6.a, data could be analysed for purpose code 14081, 'education and training in water supply and sanitation' which tracks ODA for 'Education and training for sector professionals and service providers.
- **Wastewater treatment.** ODA flows for the purpose code 'Sanitation - large systems' (14022) relates to 6.3.1.
- **Water Resources Management.** ODA flows for purpose codes on Water Sector Policy (14010) and River Basin development (14040) relate to Target 6.5 indicators; however, there is no disaggregation for ODA for transboundary arrangements.
- **Water resources conservation.** ODA flows for Water Conservation (14015) relates to data collection on water resources, conservation and rehabilitation of inland surface waters and prevention of pollution could be related to indicators 6.6.1 and 6.3.2.
- **Aid targeted to 'Rio Conventions' and gender equality.** Water- and sanitation-related ODA flows that target the three United Nations Rio Conventions (UNFCCC, CDB, and UNCCD) can be tracked using the four CRS "Rio markers": climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, biological diversity and desertification. Additionally, donors can report on how their ODA contributions target 'gender equality' as a principal or significant objective. The GLAAS 2022 report provides analysis of the water- and sanitation-related ODA flows to the four Rio Convention "markers" and gender equality.

The data set and graphical charts for ODA flows by water and sanitation sub-sector are currently available on the SDG 6 data portal and OECD Water webpage and will soon be available on the GLAAS data portal.

Box 14. What could be done for 6.a.1 – Donor perspective and quality of international aid flows:

Provide more analysis on ODA flows directed to the water and sanitation sector from a donor perspective, highlighting alignment of aid flows with national plans and the type of aid/ finance and modalities.

- Put greater attention on findings and trends concerning the alignment of aid flows with national plans through analysis from donor perspective as well as recipient perspective to inform policy dialogue and decision-making on international cooperation and to assess aid effectiveness in the water and sanitation sector.
- Disaggregate OECD-CRS data for ODA by 'channel code' for aid delivery, 'type of finance', 'type of aid', and other categories to increase visibility and understanding of the type of ODA flows and the modalities by which ODA flows are provided by donor to recipient countries, to the extent possible within the limitations of the data.
- Disaggregate data and analyse trends in the GLAAS country survey data collected on external financing, in particular on the 'alignment of donor funds with national plans' (Question D9 – 2021/2022; 2024/2025). The analysis of this data by income group and SDG region can provide insights about trends in international cooperation practices from a *recipient perspective*.
- Include an analogous question to 'D9' from the GLAAS 2025 country survey in the forthcoming GLAAS development partner survey to be enable cross comparison of results from both donor and recipient perspectives on the 'alignment of donor funds with national plans'.
- Explore analysis of country programmable aid (CPA), which refers to ODA that is subject to multi-year planning at the country or regional level and over which partner countries could have significant say. CPA is much closer than ODA to capturing the flows of aid that go to the partner country.

8. Qualitative reporting on MoI targets and indicators can complement existing quantitative methods by providing examples and meaningful insights and case studies that demonstrate country-level efforts to improve the effectiveness of international cooperation and participation for SDG 6 progress.

Means of implementation-type indicators largely monitor inputs, systems and processes and their outcomes. Efforts have been made to quantify the data collected to be aggregated for global reporting; however, the associated qualitative information is highly relevant for understanding how progress was achieved, success factors and constraints. This type of qualitative information can be beneficial for cross-country and sector-wide learning.

Recommendation 8. Develop case studies to showcase good examples and learn lessons related to Target 6.a - international cooperation and capacity-building (see box 15) and Target 6.b - local participation and improved management (see box 16).

Box 15. What could be done for 6.a:

Share examples on how international cooperation and ODA flows are contributing to accelerated progress towards SDG 6 targets.

- Analyse qualitative data collected in GLAAS cycles related to external financing.
- Explore availability of qualitative data or any case studies related to ODA/external financing collected by OECD-CRS, IWRM Survey for 6.5.1, or transboundary cooperation survey for 6.5.2 or other sources.
- Examples could highlight specific water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies that were specified in Target 6.a.

Box 16. What could be done for 6.b:

Share examples of how strengthened participation of local communities is leading to improved water and sanitation management. Qualitative reporting would provide an opportunity to highlight not only processes but also the outcomes. Emphasis could be placed on themes such as inclusivity of affected populations, women and girls, Indigenous Peoples, and other groups facing vulnerability and/or marginalization, as well as examples of multi-stakeholder approaches. Case studies for six countries have already been developed in collaboration with SIWI in 2017. Additional examples could be drawn not only from WASH and IWRM sub-sectors, but also other water and sanitation sub-sectors that have local participation modalities such as irrigation district committees, citizen scientists involved in ambient water quality monitoring, etc.

Explore availability of qualitative data or any case studies related to 'participation' from sources such as:

- Existing SDG 6 country surveys: GLAAS, IWRM 6.5.1 and UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2.
- Other internationally agreed monitoring mechanisms for water and sanitation: United Nations Water Conventions and UNECE/WHO Protocol for Water and Health, Ramsar Convention on wetlands.
- Human rights reporting mechanisms including the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council and the reports by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.
- Citizen/user surveys such as Afrobarometer's latest survey in 39 African countries.
- MoI-oriented water- and sanitation-related support initiatives such as the OECD Water Governance Initiative.

Part 2. Preparing for the future – a look forward to post-2030

What will come next for water and sanitation in the global sustainable development agenda after the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs?

To respond, three central questions stand out:

- *Can we visualize what will be needed for the water and sanitation sector in the future? What will be required to reach the next set of 'goalposts' in 2045 and beyond?*
- *How will 'water and sanitation' be positioned in the post-2030 global sustainable development agenda? Will there be continuity of "SDG 6" or a different approach?*
- *How will the 'means of implementation' be reflected in the post-2030 agenda and consequently in the global monitoring framework?*

While it is still too early to answer these questions, and it is well outside of the scope of this paper to anticipate or propose potential scenarios for the United Nations "post-2030 agenda", it is not too early to start thinking about and preparing for it.

With five years remaining until 2030, and given the challenges encountered in measuring, monitoring, and reporting on the current SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators, an early start to prepare for post-2030 processes can be beneficial to contribute timely, evidence-based analysis and facilitate dialogue among key stakeholders on the MoI for water and sanitation at strategic moments during the preparatory process.

This section provides a snapshot of lessons learned from the post-2015 processes and offers reflections for potential approaches and topics. It also proposes a roadmap for an engagement strategy for GLAAS and its partners to support and contribute to the development of water and sanitation MoI targets and indicators for the post-2030 global sustainable development agenda.

Lessons learnt from the preparatory process for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs

Prior experience with the preparation of the 2030 Agenda, which was known at time as "post-2015", has shown that technical inputs are needed early in the process to determine what data are collectable, useable and to develop proof of concept for potential indicators.

Historically, from MDGs to SDGs there was a huge shift from quite limited sub-targets on improved drinking-water and sanitation (7c) to a dedicated Goal (SDG 6) covering the full water and sanitation cycle. Significant technical inputs to the process were provided by the United Nations system coordinated by UN-Water. The WHO/ UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) that was responsible for monitoring and reporting on MDG sub-targets 7C was involved in the process from the onset.

Advice received from key informants involved in the post-2015 process for water and sanitation include:

- **Get an early start.** For the post-2025 process, the JMP organized its first consultation meeting in 2011.
- **Join forces to build sector-wide common positions.** JMP established multi-stakeholder working groups to develop consensus on technical recommendations related to water supply, sanitation and hygiene.
- **Engage early with interested Member States.** The negotiation and adoption of the sustainable development agenda is done by Member States. Member State champions are needed to promote and support water and sanitation issues throughout the political processes.
- **Consolidate learning and evidence.** During the process, it will be necessary to share possible candidate targets and indicators with technical justifications based on evidence and lessons learned from the current cycle.
- **Understand the political processes and their timelines.** The political process can be complex and fast-moving. It is important to identify the key moments for technical inputs from the UN system.

Table 1. Timeline for post-2015 framework development and negotiations

Month/ Year	Key event or United Nations process
December 2009	Modalities for Rio+20 process adopted by UNGA
June 2012	Rio+20 formally put the post-2015 negotiation process in motion Member States adopted the outcome document "The Future We Want" to launch SDGs development
March 2013	Open Working Group meetings start to develop a proposal Member States with UN system inputs via Technical Support Team
July 2014	UNGA adoption of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and Targets
June 2015	First Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) meeting on indicators
July 2015	Addis Ababa Action Agenda – Financing for Development
Sept 2015	UNGA adopted 2030 Agenda (17 SDGs)
July 2017	Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Global political processes for "post-2030" - what we know so far

Many factors over the coming years will shape the international consensus for the post-2030 agenda, including a complex array of evolving national policy positions, international relations and geopolitical issues. Already several articles have been published that provide proposals and insights on possible approaches[16,17] including one paper that proposes to extend and bolster the existing SDG framework "*Extending the Sustainable Development Goals to 2050- a roadmap".*[18] This section provides a snapshot of what is known so far (and not) at the time of the writing of this report[19] about the relevant United Nations processes, including in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and other key events that will shape the "post-2030" agenda. As the political landscape for the "post-2030" process is continuously evolving, it will be necessary to update this analysis periodically.

United Nations Member States will negotiate and eventually adopt a future post-2030 sustainable development agenda through a United Nations General Assembly Resolution. Intergovernmental processes related to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs will remain the main framework for discussions related to the current and future United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda. The Summit of the Future that took place on 22-23 September 2024 during the High-level week of the United Nations General Assembly in New York officially "started the clock" on the preparatory process for the discussion on the sustainable development agenda "beyond 2030" through its outcome document, the Pact for the Future.[20] Under Action 12(b), Member States decided to "*invite the high-level political forum, under the auspices of the General Assembly, to consider in September 2027 how we will advance sustainable development by 2030 and beyond, as a priority and at the centre of our work*." Water and sanitation are reflected in three actions in the Pact (see box 17).

Additionally, Member States have decided that the next in-depth review for SDG 6 will take place during the 2026 High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development (HLPF) with the theme of "*Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all*". The other Goals to undergo in-depth review are Goals 7, 9, 11, and 17. The coincidence of the review of SDG 6 and 17 could provide an opportunity to showcase the MoI-related interlinkages between SDG 6 and 17. The next SDG Summit linked will take place in 2027.

The United Nations Financing for Development processes are closely intertwined with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development that took place in 2015. The Financing for Development Forum and

[16] The world's goals to save humanity are hugely ambitious - but they are still the best option. Nature. 2023 Sep;621(7978):227-229. doi: 10.1038/d41586-023-02844-7. PMID: 37700047. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-023-02844-7.
[17] The Sustainable Development Goals are failing. Science can do more to save them. Nature. 2023 Jun;618(7966):647. doi: 10.1038/d41586-023-01989-9. PMID: 37340131.
[18] Fuso Nerini F, Mazzucato M, Rockström J, van Asselt H, Hall JW, Matos S, Persson Å, Sovacool B, Vinuesa R, Sachs J. Extending the Sustainable Development Goals to 2050 - a road map. Nature. 2024 Jun;630(8017):555-558. doi: 10.1038/d41586-024-01754-6. PMID: 38886551. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-024-01754-6.
[19] As of 27 March 2025.
[20] United Nations General Assembly Resolution 79/1 adopted on 22 September 2024. Available at: https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/1.

annual reports by the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development, High-level Dialogues on Financing for Development and other on-going initiatives are the main platform for discussions on financing sustainable development. In 2023, the United Nations Secretary General launched an "SDG Stimulus" initiative that included a SDG Stimulus Plan and a policy brief on Reforms to the International Financial Architecture that was prepared as an input to the Summit of the Future.

Box 17. Water and sanitation in the Pact for the Future:

On the occasion of the Commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations, Member States pledged to strengthen global governance and reinvigorate multilateralism for the common future of present and coming generations. As a follow-up, Member States agreed to convene a "Summit of the Future" in September 2024 to forge an international consensus on delivering a better present and safeguarding the future. On 22 September 2024, world leaders adopted the *Pact for the Future*, which is an action-oriented document comprised of 56 actions organized under five themes: (1) Sustainable Development and financing for development; (2) International peace and security; (3) Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation; (4) Youth and future generations; and (5) Transforming global governance.

Water and sanitation are referred to in the *Pact for the Future* under four sub-actions:

- **Action 6(f).** Address and promote the prevention of water scarcity and build resilience to drought to achieve a world in which water is a sustainable resource and ensure the availability and sustainable management of clean and safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all;
- **Action 10(b).** Take ambitious action to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and its ecosystems, and conserve and sustainably use and restore seas and freshwater resources, as well as forests, mountains, glaciers and drylands, and protect, conserve and restore biodiversity, ecosystems and wildlife;
- **Action 10(d).** Accelerate efforts to address the pollution of air, land and soil, fresh water and the ocean; and
- **Action 21(a).** Ensure that science, technology and innovation contribute to our efforts to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and hunger, and to reduce inequalities, in addition to areas such as food security and nutrition, health, education, social protection, water and sanitation, energy, climate and environment.

Source: United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/1, *Pact for the Future*, adopted on 22 September 2024. Available at: https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/79/1.

The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development will be held in Spain from 30 June to 3 July 2025. The first draft of the outcome document (version dated 10 March 2025) calls for a renewed global financing framework for sustainable development and includes two references to water and sanitation - a commitment to close financing gaps for essential public services (paragraph 8) and to support developing countries, particularly LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, to develop quality, reliable, resilient and sustainable infrastructure (paragraph 17). This Conference will also consider issues relevant to water and sanitation financing including reform of the international financial architecture and debt relief. Other major United Nations Summits and Conferences will also shape the vision and trajectory for the United Nations sustainable development agenda, including the Second World Summit for Social Development in Qatar in November 2025.

Water issues at the United Nations are currently being discussed in the framework of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 (Water Action Decade) that was adopted by UNGA resolution 71/222. As a follow-up to the UN 2023 Water Conference, Member States adopted General Assembly resolution 77/334, that decided to convene two more water conferences: UN Conferences on Water in 2026 and 2028, requested the United Nations Secretary General to prepare a UN system-wide strategy for water and sanitation, and requested a final report on the Water Action Decade during the 81st session of the General Assembly.

United Nations General Assembly resolution 78/327 for the *Modalities of the 2026 United Nations Water Conference to Accelerate the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all* (2026 UN Water Conference) was adopted on 6 September 2024. The 2026 UN Water Conference will take place 2-4 December 2026 in the United Arab Emirates. The outcomes from the 2026 UN Water Conference and the subsequent *United Nations Conference on the Final Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028* that will take place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan will play a pivotal role in building the global consensus on water-related sustainable development issues.

In addition to the SDGs, water and sanitation issues are also being discussed by Member States as part of other global and regional inter-governmental processes for UN treaties and conventions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and United

Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR); United Nations frameworks (e.g. Sendai); multilateral environmental agreements (e.g. UNEA); and other platforms such as the New Urban Agenda, the Committee on World Food Security, among others. Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties of these treaties and conventions, alongside other high-level conferences and summits will also feed into the sustainable development agenda discussions. The Doha Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and the processes related to LDCs, SIDS, and LLDCs, including the recent Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS will certainly contribute to the discussions of the specific challenges faced by developing countries to mobilize the means of implementation. There will also be important high-level events related to other SDGs such as the 2025 UN Ocean Conference that supports the implementation of SDG 14 Life Below Water, the 2nd UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake (UNFSS+4), and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. These 'non-water focused' high-level meetings and conferences provide a strategic opportunity to elevate water and sanitation issues across the global sustainable development, climate, environment and human rights agendas.

Additionally, there has been an uptick in discussions on water as part of the meetings of Informal Groups, notably the recent meetings of the G7 and G20,[21] that can potentially contribute policy recommendations and political support for water and sanitation in the post-2030 agenda. In the framework of the South Africa's G20 Presidency, the African Union Commission, the Government of South Africa, and the Africa Water Investment Programme (AIP) High-Level Panel on Water Investments in Africa are planning a AU-AIP Water Investment Summit (August, 2025). Regional meetings and processes will also contribute to shaping the global dialogue on water and sanitation and sustainable development. The African Union (AU) and AMCOW are leading discussions on the post-2025 Africa Water Vision and Policy that will likely be endorsed by Heads of State at the AU Summit in 2026.

Between now and 2030, a number of significant high-level international water and sanitation-related events are planned such as the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) Sector Ministers Meeting (2025), high-level international meeting to support preparations for the 2026 UN Water Conference (Senegal, 2025), Fourth Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference (Tajikistan, 2026), 11th World Water Forum (Saudi Arabia, 2027), among others including regional and global 'water week' events (e.g., Africa, Cairo, Singapore, Stockholm). These are additional opportunities within the "international water and sanitation community" to convene discussions and develop proposals for the post-2030 agenda for water and sanitation.

A. Improving the MoI approach in the post-2030 framework - options to consider

The current structure of SDG 6 has been highly beneficial for fostering a coherent and integrated approach to planning, implementing and monitoring across the full "water and sanitation cycle" and positively impacting all three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental. Significant coordinated joint efforts of the SDG 6 custodian entities to develop rigorous methods and build national capacity to monitor the SDG 6 indicators has resulted in a strong uptake and localisation into country systems and global political dialogue on water and sanitation. At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, United Nations Member States, on average, had data for around two thirds of the 12 SDG 6 global indicators.[22]

While there is a strong technical case for maintaining the SDG 6 outcome targets and indicators, for example with an extended timeline beyond 2030, there could be an opportunity to improve the two MoI targets and/or indicators to be more useful and meaningful for countries going forward.

Based on the experience of monitoring the SDG 6 MoI indicators during the 2030 Agenda, this assessment started with the basic question:

- *How could the approach to monitoring MoIs for water and sanitation be better designed to be more useful and meaningful in the sustainable development agenda post-2030?*

[21] Documents resulting from the G20 Development Ministerial Meeting - Rio de Janeiro, 22nd and 23rd of July 2024. G20 Call to Action on Strengthening Drinking-water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Services. Available at: Link.

[22] UN-Water. (2023). Blueprint for Acceleration: Sustainable Development Goal 6 Synthesis Report on Water and Sanitation 2023. Available at: https://www.unwater.org/publications/sdg-6-synthesis-report-2023.

This assessment identified several considerations for the design of a future approach to "MoIs" within the post-2030 sustainable development framework both in general for the whole sustainable development agenda, as well as specifically for water and sanitation.

1. Better formulation of MoI targets and indicators

Within the context of SDG 6 or a water and sanitation-related goal, there are three different levels for potential changes that could be considered: a) adopting different MoI targets, b) adopting different or improved MoI indicators, or c) adopting different or improved MoI indicator metadata. These three issues are different conceptually and in terms of processes and political constraints to change them.

Based on lessons learnt from current SDG MoI monitoring efforts, some characteristics of "good" or at least "better" MoI type targets and indicators have been identified. It was generally agreed by key informants that MoI targets and indicators to measure them should address areas that are "drivers of change" and/or main obstacles to progress, useful for policy dialogue and decision-making at national and international levels, "net positives" for the sector (not adding negative burden elsewhere) and forward looking towards where the sector should strive to be in '2045' and beyond.

Country focal points added that the MoI targets and indicators should focus on areas that are gaps and need correction through policy action or additional resources. Country focal points also recommended that MoI indicators should be designed such that progress on the indicator should be visible if action is taken within a monitoring cycle so that there is a positive feedback loop between action taken and results achieved. MoI targets and indicators should also have a clear 'home' for the designated responsible focal point in country – same as for example a Sanitation Department for SDG target 6.2 and indicator 6.2.1(a). This would facilitate clearer linkages and accountabilities across the cycle of setting baselines and targets, planning, budgeting implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Box 18. Possible criteria for the selection of future MoI targets and indicators:

Function

- Central to accelerating progress, be a "driver of change," reasonable predictors of achieving success for different typologies, supported by evidence
- Useful for decision-making in national policy-making and international levels (consider political dimensions)
- "Net positive" for sector, not adding negative burden elsewhere
- Has "forward-looking" relevance for the sector (what will sector look like in 2045?)
- Is an area where measurable progress and incrementable improvements can be made in the timeframe of post-2030 (re-consider binary indicators that can be stagnant for long periods)
- Have a clear results target, which is necessary for transparency. Need to be able to monitor and report on where we are relative to where we need to get to.
- Reporting over time will produce a country-level and sector-wide progress narrative. Can inform discussions on how to "move the needle."
- Indicator should be responsive actions countries are taking towards their target
- Can be aggregated across countries and comparable for benchmarking
- Is relevant and can be contextualized for different settings – income level, SDG region, water resources context (water rich vs. water scarce), etc.
- Go beyond basic to provide not only a minimum but also more ambitious, aspirational levels

Form

- Credible, objective, independently verifiable sources
- Includes baseline/target values to provide a "direction of travel" for the sector to aim for and measure progress towards
- Simplify, avoid compound indicators that are impossible to decouple
- Small number of proxy indicators
- Should not revolve around use of any specific methods or "tools"

Feasibility

- Maturity of indicators – tested and validated for country-level monitoring
- Pipeline for data availability and quality from national monitoring systems (collectable via different typologies of governance models, e.g. centralized and decentralized governance models)
- Collected through routine monitoring, measured in "real-time"
- Should have a small error bar
- Data can be aggregated at national level for global reporting

Many key informants emphasized that MoI indicators should have clear targets and baselines to facilitate monitoring and reporting on "where we are relative to where we need to get to" with a clear "direction of travel" for the sector to aim for and measure progress towards. To the extent possible, data should be able to be collected through routine national monitoring systems. A more comprehensive list of possible criteria for the development and selection of future candidate MoI targets and indicators is presented in box 18.

2. Stronger relationship between MoI (letter) targets and indicators with outcome (number) targets and indicators across Goal 6

Key informants strongly agreed that the means of implementation, which are inputs and processes, are only meaningful to monitor when linked to sustainable development outcomes and impacts. Goal 6 covers a vast spectrum of water- and sanitation-related areas spanning the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environmental. As such, monitoring SDG 6 indicators necessarily involves engagement with a range of government ministries and focal points. The formulation of a "goal-wide indicator" that is measurable and meaningful poses an inherent challenge, as does developing a 'universal' methodology to monitor and report on it.

Several key informants suggested that some MoI indicators could be re-positioned to be embedded within the 'numbered' Outcome Targets. This approach would mainstream issues of policies, plans, and other acceleration areas under Outcome Targets and indicators areas (e.g. SDG 6.1-6.6). The GLAAS survey and WASH accounts already support this approach for SDG Targets 6.1 and 6.2 and the 6.5.1 survey for SDG targets 6.3 to 6.6. Linkages could be strengthened between monitoring efforts with country diagnostics/assessments and other support programmes to inform decision-making for implementation to accelerate.

Possible "cross-goal topics" could be MoI building blocks or the five SDG 6 global accelerators. This approach has been piloted to some extent in the IMI-SDG 6 progress reports which included "Key acceleration needs" using the five SDG 6 global accelerators: financing, capacity development, data and information, innovation, and governance. The Water Policy Group survey results (2021, 2023) found that governance and finance were leading reasons for non-achievement of all SDG 6 targets. This finding suggests that it could be useful to have MoI-type indicators that are designed to address these specific areas for each outcome target. One cautionary advice for this approach, offered by a country focal point, was to ensure that MoIs retain their status as "Targets" on equal footing with the outcome targets and indicators to ensure accountability for MoIs and that they are not "lost" as secondary sub-indicators if mainstreamed across outcome targets. Going forward, improved clarity on the relationships between MoI indicators and the achievement of outcome targets would strengthen the coherence and utility of the global monitoring framework for SDG 6.

3. More coherent approach to 'means of implementation' across the Goal Areas

There is inconsistency in the formulation of MoI 'letter' indicators across Goals 1-16 and then there is some repetition of similar topics in Goal 17. The targets for Goal 17 are organized into five groups: finance, technology, capacity-building, trade and systemic issues which includes sub-groups on policy and institutional coherence, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and data, monitoring and accountability.

MoI-related topics can be a common ground for analysis, dialogue and learning between Goal Areas on how to implement and accelerate progress of sustainable development actions. Increasing coherence in the MoI approach and formulation of targets and indicators across the Goal Areas could be a good way to increase the prominence of the MoIs across SDGs. For example, a relevant set of Goal 17 targets and indicators related to MoI building blocks could be proposed as cross-cutting indicators for all Goals 1-16. This could allow for more inter-sectoral dialogue nationally and internationally on the MoI for sustainable development.

4. Improved alignment between statistical classifications and codes for data collection and post-2030 framework

Greater alignment between international statistical frameworks and purpose codes with the post-2030 framework could vastly improve data collection 'pipelines' and reduce reporting burden for countries. The SDG 6 community can identify opportunities to coordinate engagement and provide inputs into processes to revise central statistical frameworks and classification systems to improve alignment with SDG 6. Currently, the UN Statistical Division is coordinating the revision of the Classifications of Functions of Government (COFOG) to improve alignment with the updated biodiversity and climate change frameworks and other areas of emerging policy interest for governments. Additionally, it could be beneficial to engage with the OECD Creditor Reporting

System (CRS) to improve alignment of purpose code classifications with SDG 6 targets and indicators to better disaggregate data about international finance flows by water and sanitation sub-sectors.

B. Possible topic areas for MoI targets and indicators for water and sanitation

Key informants generally shared the common view that global MoI monitoring should focus on a limited number of issues that drive progress across water- and sanitation-related targets and more broadly, across Goal areas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda. The topics should have the potential to significantly 'move the needle' towards the achievement of the goals and targets over the timeframe[23] of the new agenda. The topic areas and potential candidate indicators should build on evidence and learning from the UN-Water SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework and global water and sanitation monitoring efforts, notably those coordinated by IMI-SDG 6, and align with other water and sanitation initiatives that are actively defining indicator domains and core indicators for national monitoring systems such as Align to Accelerate (A2A) initiative led by UNICEF and WHO in collaboration with the World Bank, among others.

Three broad topic areas of interest for future MoI-type monitoring were highlighted: (i) financial flows for water and sanitation, (ii) other drivers of progress of sanitation, and (iii) interlinkages across the sustainable development agenda.

1. Financial flows for water and sanitation

Tracking funding and financing for water and sanitation were identified by most key informants as the most useful topic for future global MoI monitoring for water and sanitation. It is widely recognized that there are major funding shortfalls to achieve SDG 6 by 2030. A recent World Bank report provided an estimated annual spending gap of $138 billion for achieving universal access to safely managed water supply (6.1) and sanitation (6.2) services by 2030; on average, countries will need to increase annual spending between 2.7 to 3 times the current level to bridge this spending gap to meet the targets.[24]

In addition to the focus on 'financing flow', key informants also emphasized the importance of expanding SDG reporting on 'finance flows beyond ODA' captured by 6.a.1. Member States are the primary actors responsible for financing water and sanitation in their own countries. As mentioned previously, recent GLAAS data estimates that external aid accounts for only around 10% of the financial flows to the water and sanitation sector.[25] Many key informants noted the declining trend of ODA to water and sanitation over the SDG period thus far as another factor which further reinforces the case to focus on financing flows more broadly than just ODA flows.

At present, credible data sources for government expenditure data at global level is limited for all sectors, including water and sanitation. Several options for the development of potential candidate indicators and possible data pipelines are the following:

- *Tracking international cooperation financial flows beyond ODA.* Relatively "easy" to expand the current indicator that reports on ODA flow to report on all international financial flows tracked in the OECD-CRS data base including *Other official flow* and *private flows*. Additionally, the on-going efforts to develop Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD), an international standard for measuring the full array of resources to promote the sustainable development of developing countries, will provide a coherent, comparable, unified system to track SDG-related investments.
- *Tracking all financial flows.* A big step would be to breakdown all sources of expenditure (taxes, tariffs paid, transfers, user fees/self-supply). The most extensive data set is WASH Accounts with 40 countries having completed or in the process of developing the exercise, and there are other promising efforts to track water sector finance such as the OECD Scorecard that assesses the enabling conditions for investment in water security, AIP-PIDA water Investment Scorecard that tracks priority water related investments indicators and assist senior leaders to improve accountability, monitoring, and response to the water investments gaps; and the System of Environmental-Economic Accounts for Water (SEEA-Water) that is an integrated approach to water monitoring linked to the System of National Accounts. The SDG 6.5.1 survey also collects data on

[23] The MDG and SDG timeframes have both been 15 years: 2000-2015 and 2026-2030, respectively.
[24] Joseph, George, Yi Rong Hoo, Qiao Wang, Aroha Bahuguna, and Luis Andres. 2024. "Funding a Water-Secure Future: An Assessment of Global Public Spending." World Bank, Washington, DC.
[25] Strong systems and sound investments: evidence on and key insights into accelerating progress on sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene. UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS) 2022 report. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

financing for infrastructure and management (both investments and O&M), though the comprehensiveness of the responses varies significantly between countries, depending on the maturity of accounting in the country. Additionally, the GLAAS country survey includes questions on 'Finance' that covers how well WASH funds are absorbed, who funds WASH, the amount and sufficiency of funding and the types of services funded. This thematic area also covers processes that facilitate and support distribution of financial resources to the WASH sector such as planning, budgeting, financial tracking and reporting. The World Bank has established an interactive dashboard on water sector spending. It is the first publicly available database documenting global public spending on water, spanning subsectors such as water supply and sanitation, irrigation, water transportation, and hydropower, where data are available, and includes data on annual spending, funding requirements, financing gaps, budget execution rates, and total factor productivity.

2. Other drivers of progress for water and sanitation

Many respondents concurred that a key criterion for the selection of MoI-type indicators should be evidence that they are "drivers of progress" or "accelerators" for water and sanitation, of which finance in point 1 above is the most prominent. Understanding the key factors that drive the pace of country progress, alongside the main challenges that hinder it, and aligning across government and partners to take action to address them, can lead to the transformational changes required to put the sector on course.

Several efforts have been aimed at identifying these main challenges that hinder progress and, conversely, vital factors that are drivers of progress. According to analysis of the GLAAS 2021/2022 country survey data, better performing countries are more likely to have: (1) higher utilization of domestic capital commitments and recovery of operations and maintenance (O&M) costs from tariffs; (2) regulatory authorities that carry out key regulatory functions; and (3) human and financial resources in place to implement their WASH plans.[26]

The Water Policy Group "*Listening to National Water Leaders*" surveys identified the greatest challenges faced at country-level according to the experiences and perspectives of national water leaders. The greatest 'challenges' faced by water leaders of the 93 countries reported in the 2023 Report were 'Inadequate infrastructure', 'Inadequate and inaccessible data and information' and 'Fragmented water institutions' in that order (based on the top three of the ten choices). In the 2021 Report, of 88 countries the greatest challenges in the same 'top three' terms were more evenly rated with the three above as well as 'conflicts between user groups', 'inadequate public water awareness', 'fragmented water institutions', 'inadequate infrastructure', 'water being a low priority in the government' and 'inadequate laws and regulations' all featuring as major concerns.

Numerous efforts have been made to identify and highlight pathways of achieving accelerated progress on SDG 6 at national level such as UN-Water Country Acceleration Case Studies, developed by UN-Water in collaboration with the respective governments and IMI-SDG 6 indicator groups.

Some of the possible topics suggested by key informants during the review include the following areas, some of which are already captured to some extent by existing global monitoring efforts:

- **Governance:** Some examples include government leadership and political prioritization of water and sanitation, effectiveness of intersectoral coordination and joint review processes, availability of standards and regulatory frameworks. These are areas already monitored to some extent through SDG 6.5.1 survey components on 'Enabling environment', 'Institutions', 'Management instruments' and through the GLAAS country survey (for 6.1 and 6.2) that covers national policies, plans and targets; existence of regulatory frameworks; roles and responsibilities of government and coordination mechanisms.
- **Capacity development:** Possible topics include institutional and human resources capacity and 'capacity building support', building on efforts led by UNESCO and the UN-Water SDG 6 Capacity Development Initiative, and assessments of the water and sanitation workforce such as those undertaken by the International Water Association, "Human Resource Capacity Gaps Study" and World Bank's Equal Aqua platform in the flagship publication, "Women in Water Utilities: Breaking Barriers." The SDG 6.5.1 survey contains a question on capacity development (Q2.1e) and the GLAAS country survey includes questions on human resources plans and strategies, the sufficiency of human resources to meet needs, training institutions/programmes for WASH and workers' rights and safety. The SDG indicator framework includes

[26] Strong systems and sound investments: evidence on and key insights into accelerating progress on sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene. UN-Water global analysis and assessment of sanitation and drinking-water (GLAAS) 2022 report. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

MoI indicators for the health workforce (3.c.1 - Health worker density and distribution) and education workforce (4.c.1 Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level.

- **Innovation and technology:** New applications of existing technology and techniques have great potential to increase the efficiency of existing water and sanitation systems.[27] A technology readiness indicator is under consideration in the UN-Water Innovation Task Force. The development of unconventional water resources was also identified as an area where great progress is being made by Member States to address the water demand-supply gap[28] but is not well captured by Target 6.4 on water use efficiency and water stress.
- **Data availability and quality**: At the mid-point of the 2030 Agenda, on average countries are reporting data on 8 out of 12 indicators for SDG 6. For example, '*confidence interval*' on outcome indicator figures has become a vital benchmark developed by the SDG Water Quality Hub for tracking data quality for SDG indicator 6.3.2.
- **Human Rights and "leave no one behind"**: Build on indicator 6.b.1 to define structural, process and outcome indicators of progress towards the realisation of the human rights to water and sanitation.[29] Monitoring progress to close equity gaps, particularly to reach communities that are vulnerable, marginalized and to meet obligations to Indigenous Peoples, was highlighted as an important policy priority. The SDG 6.5.1 survey contains a question on participation mechanisms for vulnerable groups (Q2.2c). The GLAAS country survey includes questions on 'equity' which cover measures to improve and extend WASH services to different population groups and settings. This thematic area also includes monitoring of measures to extend services as well as if financial resources are targeted to specific populations and settings.

Several key informants shared the view that MoI for water and sanitation is much more than "two indicators" and that it would be better to have a set of core MoI indicators that could be applied across all targets – for example a set of MoI-type indicators could be applied across SDG 6. For example, indicators for the five SDG 6 global accelerators could be applied across the six outcome Targets 6.1 to 6.6. Additionally, the Align to Accelerate initiative led by WHO and UNICEF in collaboration with the World Bank aims to develop a set of core indicators that could be potential candidate indicators for future MoI-type monitoring for drinking-water supply, sanitation, and hygiene.

3. Interlinkages between actions towards achieving the SDGs

Capturing interlinkages between actions towards the achievement of the SDGs more systematically was identified as an important element for consideration in post-2030 discussions. One main theme from the 2030 SDG Summit is the interlinked nature of the SDGs. While the Goals themselves tend to be centred on 'sectors' or 'silos', the emerging narrative is that the interconnectedness and interactions between them are essential to consider, in order to deliver sustainable development outcomes using a systems approach. The 2023 Global Sustainable Development report developed by independent experts highlighted key transitions that are necessary for sustainable development. It also identified a group of SDGs, including SDG 6, that are highly synergistic and the need to understand potential 'trade-offs'. UN-Water produced a publication in 2016 on the *Water and Sanitation Interlinkages across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* that highlighted the links and interdependencies between the targets of SDG 6 on water and sanitation and those of other Goals, including the main synergies and potential conflicts.[30]

Gender (SDG 5) and climate action (SDG 13) were highlighted by numerous key informants as essential cross-cutting areas for SDG 6 (see box 18). Interlinkages with water-related goals and targets that are part of other inter-governmental processes have also been highlighted as an important consideration, particularly in relation to the Rio Conventions – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and United Nations Convention on Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

From a global monitoring perspective, for example, the development of common targets and indicators for SDG 6, SDG 13 and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change could support increased policy

[27] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2023: Ensuring Safe Water and Sanitation for All A Solution through Science, Technology and Innovation. New York, USA. URL: https://unctad.org/publication/ensuring-safe-water-and-sanitation-all-solution-through-science-technology-and
[28] UN-Water, 2020: UN-Water Analytical Brief on Unconventional Water Resources. Geneva, Switzerland. URL: https://www.unwater.org/publications/un-water-analytical-brief-unconventional-water-resources-0.
[29] De Albuquerque C, 2014. Realising the Human Rights to Water and Sanitation: A Handbook by the UN Special Rapporteur, "Monitoring compliance with the human rights to water and sanitation," URL: https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Water/Handbook/Book5_Monitoring.pdf.
[30] https://www.unwater.org/publications/water-and-sanitation-interlinkages-across-2030-agenda-sustainable-development.

coherence and strengthened monitoring systems at national level. To bring in an MoI angle, tracking ODA allocated through 'climate finance' channels and linking it to SDG targets could also be an interesting new angle to highlight interlinkages between investment in water and sanitation towards the achievement of the Paris Agreement and multiple sustainable development outcomes.

Recommendation 9. Generate evidence, document lessons learned and synthesize technical recommendations on water and sanitation drivers of progress and good practices for monitoring MoI-type targets and indicators. Develop and test potential candidate MoI-type targets and indicators for water and sanitation.

Box 18. Interesting examples for consideration:

- **Gender:** IMI-SDG6 is currently developing approaches for the 'gender contextualization' of the SDG 6 global indicators to support gender-relevant, evidence-based policymaking in countries. JMP and GLAAS partnered with Emory University to identify priority gender-specific indicators for monitoring under SDG targets 6.1 and 6.2. The SDG 6.5.1 survey collects data on "Gender mainstreaming in water resources management" (Q2.2d).
- **Climate resilience:** The process underway through the UAE-Belém work programme on indicators for measuring progress achieved towards the water and sanitation targets of the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience, a central instrument for guiding the achievement of the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA). Joint submissions have been made by UN-Water coordinated by UNICEF and SWA with potential candidate indicators. WHO/UNICEF JMP and GLAAS have launched a review to identify indicators for enhanced national and global monitoring of climate-resilient WASH.
- **Biodiversity.** Discussions are underway between SEEA, UNEP and CBD on linkages between monitoring of SDG 6.6.1 and indicators A.2 and D.1 in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**.**
- **Interlinkages across all SDGs:** Water4allSDGs is a tool developed by the French Water Partnership that assesses the contribution to SDGs by a project, policy or action in water-related fields.

Engagement strategy for the "post-2030" preparatory process

GLAAS and its partners, in close collaboration with IMI-SDG6, Member States and other key stakeholders can provide valuable support and make a unique contribution to the development of water and sanitation MoI targets and indicators for the post 2030 global sustainable development agenda.

Some of the areas identified where WHO, GLAAS and its partners can add value to the post-2030 preparatory process are the following:

- Generate evidence, document lessons learned and synthesize technical recommendations on water and sanitation drivers of progress and good practices for monitoring MoI-type targets and indicators. Develop and test potential candidate MoI-type indicators for water and sanitation.
- Communicate MoI-related evidence and technical recommendations at strategic points in the preparatory process to support policy and decision-making by Member States.
- Facilitate inclusive and multi-stakeholder dialogue and build consensus around MoI-related topics for water and sanitation.
- Convene a forward-looking group to visualize the water and sanitation sector in '2045 and beyond' and to forecast major emerging issues.

Given the nature and magnitude of the post-2030 process, engagement will be needed over the coming years with a complex network of processes, platforms and partners. An engagement plan can be structured around and between key milestones such as the upcoming United Nations Water Conferences in 2026 and 2028, the next in-depth review of SDG 6 during HLPF 2026, and other major intergovernmental processes and events such as the Fourth Finance for Development Conference (2025), next SDG Summit and follow-up on the Pact for the Future (2027), as well as the Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties of United Nations treaties and conventions for climate (UNFCCC), biodiversity (CBD), drought and desertification (UNCCD) among others.

Recommendation 10. Map and track the processes related to the development of the United Nations "post-2030" sustainable development agenda and key milestones where water and sanitation are on the international agenda. Prepare an engagement plan to strategically position timely technical inputs in these global and regional processes.

Next steps

This assessment has identified ten recommendations on how to improve monitoring of the "means of implementation" for water and sanitation up to 2030 and post-2030, summarized in Table 2 below.

Implementing these recommendations will require a sector-wide effort. Collaboration between the IMI-SDG6 indicator teams, alongside strengthening partnerships and alliances will be required to bridge monitoring efforts across the 'whole water and sanitation cycle' covered by SDG 6 and to strengthen systems and the enabling environment through improved monitoring at all levels: from sub-national to global. The UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation and its collaborative implementation plan can also provide a useful platform for the UN system and its partners to further develop these initial reflections and proposals.

Most importantly, to reach the ambitious sustainable development outcomes for water and sanitation, countries are at the centre. The aim of future global monitoring efforts must above all be responsive to national monitoring priorities and support the successful achievement of water and sanitation outcomes nationally.

As an immediate next step, the findings and recommendations from this paper can be disseminated as an input to catalyse sector discussion on "SDG 6 MoIs" and trigger early thinking on approaches to MoIs in the post-2030 sustainable development agenda. In the near term, the upcoming preparatory process for the 2026 UN Water Conference will offer a strategic opportunity for continuing these reflections through multi-stakeholder dialogue and advance those which can be most impactful up to 2030 and beyond.

Table 2. Summary of Main Findings and Recommendations

No.	Finding	Recommendation
1	Give higher profile to the 'means of implementation' for SDG 6 through a dedicated report.	Develop a standalone indicator report and/or policy brief for current SDG 6 MoI targets (6.a and 6.b together) and associated indicators drawing on data and information collected by the GLAAS country and development partner surveys, UNEP IWRM SDG 6.5.1 survey, UNECE/UNESCO SDG 6.5.2 survey and WASH accounts and incorporating qualitative examples and quantitative analysis from other SDG 6 indicator groups, and that covers the broader picture of MoI aspects for SDG 6.
2	Communicate a 'bigger picture' narrative about SDG 6 MoIs beyond the existing indicators.	Frame the 'MoIs for SDG 6' in the broader effort to accelerate the implementation of SDG 6. Communicate more strategically about how the current SDG 6 MoI targets and indicators fit in and contribute to SDG 6 acceleration drawing on data and reporting from GLAAS, 6.5.1 and 6.5.2 surveys, and WASH accounts; and communicate more deliberately about the "means of implementation" for SDG 6 in United Nations political processes and high-level water and sanitation sector events.
3	Strengthen national monitoring and review mechanisms for MoI-type indicators.	Invest in country-level efforts to strengthen national monitoring and review systems and data collection 'pipelines' for priority MoI-type areas for SDG 6 acceleration.
4	Harness complementarity of SDG data collection processes in future cycles.	Explore potential opportunities to incorporate relevant aspects of survey questions for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 into country surveys that monitor other SDG 6 indicators as part of future data collection cycles.
		Explore adding an SDG 6-related question into the SDG 16 Survey to get a population view on equity and quality of services and whether there is sufficient access to participatory processes.
5	Energize engagement and strengthen partnerships at all levels to promote implementation and monitoring of the 'means of implementation' for SDG 6.	Strengthen alliances with MoI-oriented water- and sanitation-related initiatives that support country-level diagnostics, systems strengthening, implementation, monitoring, evidence generation, knowledge management and learning.
6	Keep current formulation of the SDG 6 MoI indicators as no immediately feasible changes were identified (e.g., no	Maintain the current indicators for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1 to ensure continuity over the remaining SDG reporting cycles up to 2030. Supplementary analysis and reporting can be further developed, as indicated below in recommendations 7 and 8.

	issues to be included in the 2025 Comprehensive review).	
7	More disaggregated analysis and reporting using existing data sets for 6.a.1 can further improve understanding of ODA-trends for water and sanitation.	Analyse and report disaggregated data for ODA flows by a) water and sanitation sub-sectors, show results where feasible by SDG 6 indicator and policy marker, b) donor perspective and c) type of aid and channels for how aid is provided.
8	Qualitative reporting on MoI targets and indicators can complement existing quantitative methods by providing examples and meaningful insights and case studies that demonstrate country-level efforts to improve the effectiveness of international cooperation and participation for SDG 6 progress.	Develop case studies to showcase good examples and learn lessons related to Targets 6.a (international cooperation and capacity-building) and 6.b (local participation and improved management).
9	Prior experience with the preparation of the 2030 Agenda (e.g., "post-2015") has shown that technical inputs from the UN system are needed early in the process to determine what data is collectable, useable and to develop proof of concept for potential indicators.	Generate evidence, document lessons learned and synthesize technical recommendations on water and sanitation drivers of progress and good practices for monitoring MoI-type targets and indicators. Develop and test potential candidate MoI-type targets and indicators for water and sanitation.
10	The political process can be complex and fast-moving. It is important to identify the key moments for technical inputs from the UN system.	Map and track the processes related to the development of the United Nations "post-2030" sustainable development agenda and key milestones where water and sanitation are on the international agenda. Prepare an engagement plan to strategically position timely technical inputs in these global and regional processes.

Annexes

A. Acknowledgement of key informants and reviewers

B. Methodology for global monitoring of SDG indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1

C. SDG 6 Expanded Report 2024 - storylines for 6.a.1 and 6.b.1

D. Review of MoI Targets and Indicators in other Goal Areas

E. Existing questions on 'public participation' in UNEP IWRM 6.5.1 Survey and UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2 Survey

Annex A. Acknowledgement of key informants and reviewers

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Key Informants

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Annex B. Methodology for global monitoring of SDG indicators 6.a.1 and 6.b.1

Indicator 6.a.1 - Overview of monitoring methods and reporting

Indicator definition:	Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan
Metadata*:	https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-06-0A-01.pdf

*Details on the methods for monitoring SDG indicators are available in the UNSD SDG indicator Metadata repository. For each SDG indicator it provides the information on the definitions and concepts, data sources and collection method, methodological considerations including the rationale, limitations, method of computation, data availability and disaggregation, comparability, references and documentation.

Amount of water and sanitation-related ODA. *Donor countries* report annually on the amount of ODA they provide for water and sanitation related activities and programmes using the OECD Creditor Reporting System (OECD-CRS). Data are disaggregated by "purpose codes". GLAAS analyses and reports on the OECD-CRS database purpose codes for water and sanitation related areas to UNSD. This includes DAC/CRS codes in series 140 "Water Supply and Sanitation", 23220 Hydro-electric power plants; 31140 Agricultural water resources- see details for each DAC/CRS code below in Table B.1.

Table B.1. DAC 5 and OECD-CRS purpose codes used for reporting on indicator 6a.1

Updated in March 2024 for reporting on 2023 flows			http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/purposecodessectorclassification.htm
DAC 5 CODE	**CRS CODE**	**DESCRIPTION**	**Clarifications / Additional notes on coverage**
140		**Water Supply & Sanitation**	
	14010	Water sector policy and administrative management	Water sector policy and governance, including legislation, regulation, planning and management as well as transboundary management of water; institutional capacity development; activities supporting the Integrated Water Resource Management approach (IWRM: see box below).
	14015	Water resources conservation (including data collection)	Collection and usage of quantitative and qualitative data on water resources; creation and sharing of water knowledge; conservation and rehabilitation of inland surface waters (rivers, lakes etc.), ground water and coastal waters; prevention of water contamination.
	14020	Water supply and sanitation - large systems	Programmes where components according to 14021 and 14022 cannot be identified. When components are known, they should individually be reported under their respective purpose codes: water supply [14021], sanitation [14022], and hygiene [12261].
	14021	Water supply - large systems	Potable water treatment plants; intake works; storage; water supply pumping stations; large scale transmission / conveyance and distribution systems.
	14022	Sanitation - large systems	Large scale sewerage including trunk sewers and sewage pumping stations; domestic and industrial waste water treatment plants.
	14030	Basic drinking water supply and basic sanitation	Programmes where components according to 14031 and 14032 cannot be identified. When components are known, they should individually be reported under their respective purpose codes: water supply [14031], sanitation [14032], and hygiene [12261].
	14031	Basic drinking water supply	Rural water supply schemes using handpumps, spring catchments, gravity-fed systems, rainwater collection and fog harvesting, storage tanks, small distribution systems typically with shared connections/points of use. Urban schemes using handpumps and local neighbourhood networks including those with shared connections.
	14032	Basic sanitation	Latrines, on-site disposal and alternative sanitation systems, including the promotion of household and community investments in the construction of these facilities. (Use code 12261 for activities promoting improved personal hygiene practices.)
	14040	River basins development	Infrastructure-focused integrated river basin projects and related institutional activities; river flow control; dams and reservoirs [excluding dams primarily for irrigation (31140) and hydropower (23220) and activities related to river transport (21040)].
	14050	Waste management/disposal	Municipal and industrial solid waste management, including hazardous and toxic waste; collection, disposal and treatment; landfill areas; composting and reuse.
	14081	Education and training in water supply and sanitation	Education and training for sector professionals and service providers.
232		**Energy generation, renewable sources**	
	23220	Hydro-electric power plants	Including energy generating river barges.
311		**Agriculture**	
	31140	Agricultural water resources	Irrigation, reservoirs, hydraulic structures, ground water exploitation for agricultural use.

Amount of water and sanitation related ODA that is part of a government coordinated spending plan. *Recipient countries* report on indicator 6.a.1 through the GLAAS country survey in the questions on 'External Financing'. The GLAAS 2024 country survey asks recipient countries to report on the total donor expenditures/ disbursements and the percentage of total donor expenditure/disbursement that is on-budget.

- Latest GLAAS 2024 survey Question ***D9 (d): Alignment of donor funds***
  - Per cent (%) of donor funds aligned with national WASH plan(s)
  - Per cent (%) of donor funds aligned with national plan(s) for the water sector
  - A national plan for the water sector would have a broader scope than a national WASH plan and cover elements in addition to WASH relevant to SDG 6, such as water quality, water-use efficiency, water resources management, and water-related ecosystems.

Figure B.1. GLAAS 2024 Country Survey – Question D9d. External Financing- Alignment of donor funds

GLAAS 2024 country survey

EXTERNAL FINANCING

D9. **External funding: How are donor funds channelled to the WASH sector?** *See the survey guidance for additional information.*

	External support for drinking-water, sanitation and hygiene
a. Time period (e.g. financial year) for donor expenditures shown in (c) below	
b. Currency/units for donor expenditure shown in (c) below	
c. **Total donor expenditure/disbursement**	

i. What per cent (%) of total donor expenditure/disbursement is **on-budget**?
Note: On-budget funding is provided for specific expenditures or lines in national budgets.

Less than 50%	Between 50% and 74%	Between 75% and 94%	Between 95% and 100%
☐	☐	☐	☐

ii. If less than 50% of donor funding is on-budget, what are the contributing factors? Please describe.

d. **Alignment of donor funds**

	Less than 50%	Between 50% and 74%	Between 75% and 94%	Between 95% and 100%
i. Per cent (%) of donor funds aligned with national WASH plan(s)	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Per cent (%) of donor funds aligned with national plan(s) for the water sector[22]	☐	☐	☐	☐

Due to differences in the methodology and granularity of the available data, the funding lines between the two datasets cannot be matched; therefore, at present only the data for "total amount of water and sanitation related ODA" is reported to the United Nations Statistics Division for the UN-mandated annual SDG progress reporting. The additional data collected through the GLAAS country survey are presented in GLAAS reports and reported on qualitatively in SDG report storylines.

Indicator 6.b.1- Overview monitoring methods and reporting

Indicator definition:	Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management
Metadata*:	https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/files/Metadata-06-0B-01.pdf

Indicator 6.b.1 is currently being measured by "Proportion of countries with clearly defined procedures in law or policy for participation by service users and communities in planning programs" and "Proportion of countries with a high level of users and communities participating in planning programs" for six sub-sectors: (a) urban sanitation, (b) rural sanitation, (c) urban drinking-water supply, (d) rural drinking-water supply, (e) hygiene promotion and (f) water resources planning and management. The data are collected through the GLAAS country survey section on 'Governance'. The GLAAS country survey also includes an additional question on whether the "law or policy specifically mentions women's participation" and the "extent to which women participate."

At present, the data for two representative sub-sectors are reported to UNSD:

- Are there clearly defined procedures in law or policy for participation of service users/communities in planning programmes for (1) rural drinking-water supply and (2) water resources planning and management, and respective levels of participation (low/moderate/high).

For the SDG 6 data portal and for other reports, GLAAS has reported on the number of subsectors with clearly defined procedures.

Figure B.2. GLAAS 2024 country survey- A13. Community and user participation - 6 sub-sectors

GLAAS 2024 country survey

COMMUNITY AND USER PARTICIPATION

A13. Participation procedures established at the national level: Are there clearly defined procedures in laws or policies for participation[16] by service users (e.g. households) and communities and what is the level of participation?

Levels of participation are defined as below:

1: None/very low – No communication: No communication between government and users/communities on policy, planning and management.
2: Low – Communication: Information on policy, planning and management is made available to users/communities.
3: Medium low – Occasional consultation: Government authorities occasionally request information, experiences and opinions of users/communities.
4: Medium high – Regular consultation: Government authorities regularly request information, experiences and opinions of users/communities.
5: High – Collaboration and accountability: Regular opportunities for users/communities to formally take part in relevant policy, planning and management processes. Processes are documented and acted upon by the responsible entities.
6: Very high – Representation and accountability: Formal representation of users/communities in government processes contributing to joint decision-making on issues and activities, as appropriate. Processes are documented and subject to redress if responsible entities fail to act accordingly.

	Procedures defined in law or policy[17]		*If yes,* does law or policy specifically mention women's participation?		Extent to which **users / communities** participate (*None / Very low → Very high*)						Extent to which **women** participate (*None / Very low → Very high*)					
	Yes	No	Yes	No	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
a. Urban sanitation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Rural sanitation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Urban drinking-water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Rural drinking-water	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Hand hygiene	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Water resources planning and management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

GLAAS 2024 country survey

A13. *(Continued from previous page)*

h. Government resources for public participation: To what extent are there sufficient human and financial resources to support participation of users and communities, and are there agencies/institutions responsible for monitoring participatory procedures?

	Urban sanitation and drinking- water				Rural sanitation and drinking-water				Water resources planning and management			
	Less than 50% of what is needed	Between 50 and 74% of what is needed	Between 75 and 94% of what is needed	Between 95% and 100% of what is needed	Less than 50% of what is needed	Between 50 and 74% of what is needed	Between 75 and 94% of what is needed	Between 95% and 100% of what is needed	Less than 50% of what is needed	Between 50 and 74% of what is needed	Between 75 and 94% of what is needed	Between 95% and 100% of what is needed
i. Are there sufficient financial resources in place to support participation of users and communities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
ii. Are there sufficient human resources to support participation of users and communities?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

iii. Are there agencies/ institutions responsible for monitoring the extent of and effectiveness of participatory procedures?	Urban sanitation and drinking- water		Rural sanitation and drinking-water		Water resources planning and management	
	Yes ☐ No ☐	*If yes,* what is the name of the agency/institution?	Yes ☐ No ☐	*If yes,* what is the name of the agency/institution?	Yes ☐ No ☐	*If yes,* what is the name of the agency/institution?

Annex C. Extended SDG 6 Reports for Indicators 6a.1 and 6.b.1 (storylines)

Target 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

Indicator 6.a.1 Amount of water- and sanitation-related official development assistance that is part of a government-coordinated spending plan

Water sector ODA increases to 8.5 billion USD but reaches a historical low as a percentage of sector allocable ODA across all sectors

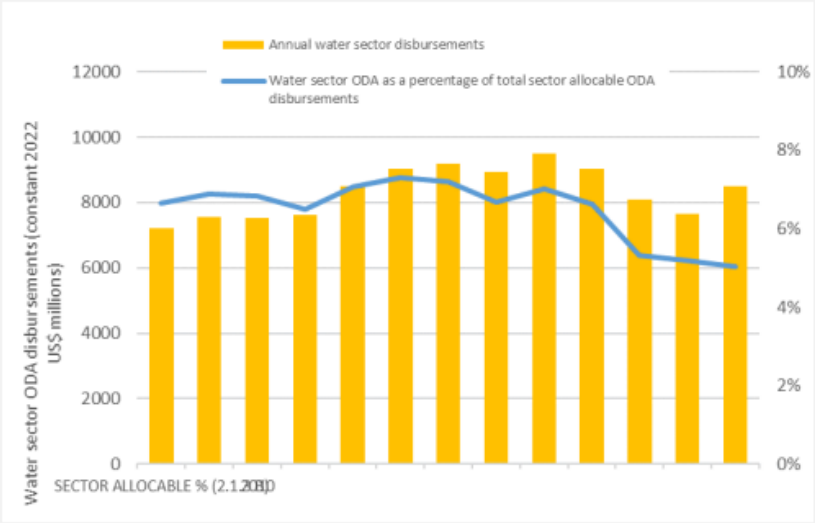
Official Development Assistance (ODA) disbursements to the water sector increased between 2021 and 2022 by 10% to 8.5 billion USD, reversing a declining trend seen over the past five years. ODA commitments also showed an increase of 15% to 10.8 billion USD. The increase in water sector disbursements between 2021 and 2022 are due to increases in support to large and basic water supply and sanitation projects (increase of 489 million USD), sector policy (increase of 284 million USD), and hydro-electric power plants (increase of 142 million USD), and were due primarily to increases in ODA loans (by 12%) rather than grants (increase by 7%).

While total ODA has increased in response to crises, water sector ODA disbursements as a percentage of sector allocable ODA across all sectors has decreased to 5.0% in 2022, a historical low, continuing a declining trend accelerated since 2020 and the COVID pandemic. The aid sectors/areas that have seen large increases between 2021 and 2022 include support for refugees in donor countries (154% increase, by US$ 19.7 billion), government and civil society (57% increase, by US$ 9.3 billion), and general budget support (49% increase, by US$ 6.5 billion).

Donors with increasing levels of ODA since 2015 for the water sector include France (554 million to 836 million constant 2022 USD), EU institutions (744 million to 968 million constant 2022 USD), and the International development association (1.48 billion to 1.62 billion constant 2022 USD). Emerging donors for the water sector include the Central American Bank for Economic Development (0.5 million in 2020 to 128 million constant 2022 USD in 2022), Kuwait (65 million in 2015 to 167 million constant 2022 USD), and the Green Climate Fund (5 million in 2017 to 75 million in 2022). With the exception of EU institutions and the Green Climate Fund, over three quarters of the ODA being provided by these donors is in the form of ODA loans.

Regional ODA disbursements to Western Asia and Northern Africa showed the largest increase between 2021 and 2022 from 1.3 to 1.8 billion USD, a 41% increase. Latin America and the Caribbean (531 million USD to 769 million USD) and Sub-Saharan Africa (2.37 billion USD to 2.55 billion USD) also saw substantial increases in ODA disbursements over the same time period, while Central Asia and Southern Asia (1.5 billion USD to 1.3 billion USD) and Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia (1.1 billion USD to 1.0 billion USD) showed substantial decreases. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to hold the largest regional share at 30% of water sector ODA disbursements.

Water sector ODA disbursements: total and as a percentage of sector-allocable ODA



Storyline authors(s)/contributor(s): Marina Takane (WHO); Mark Hoeke (WHO); Yasmin Ahmad (OECD); Elena Bernaldo de Quiros (OECD)

Custodian agency(ies): WHO, OECD

Target 6.b Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

Indicator 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

In 2022, the majority of countries define procedures for local community participation in law or policy for rural drinking-water and water resources management, but far fewer report high levels of community participation.

Strengthening community participation is fundamental to adapt and sustain SDG 6 solutions to local community contexts and to ensure no one is left behind. Participation may range from users having access to information to more formal representation of users or communities in government processes for joint decision-making on issues surrounding WASH and water resources management. In 2022, 87% of countries define procedures for local community participation in law or policy for rural drinking-water. However, only 31% of countries report high levels of community participation.

Similar results were found for participation in water resources management. In 2022, 85% of countries define procedures for local community participation in law or policy. However, only 28% of countries report high levels of community participation in water resources management.

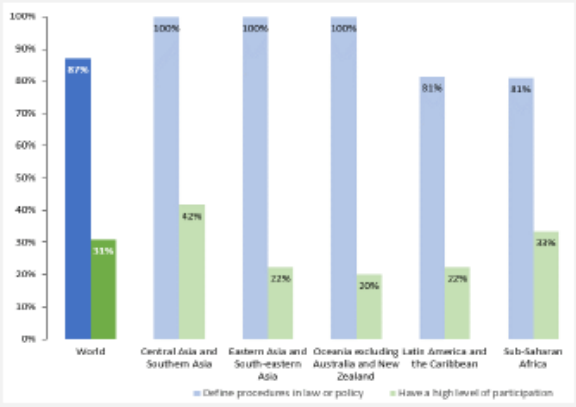
Since 2016, the percentage of countries having procedures for local community participation defined in law or policy has remained high (over 70%) for both rural drinking-water and for water resources management; however, the percentage of countries with high levels of participation remains consistently low (under 40%).

In three regions (Central Asia and Southern Asia, Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand)), over 90% of countries define participation procedures in law or policy for rural drinking-water. The percentage of countries reporting high levels of community participation was highest in Central Asia and Southern Asia (42%).

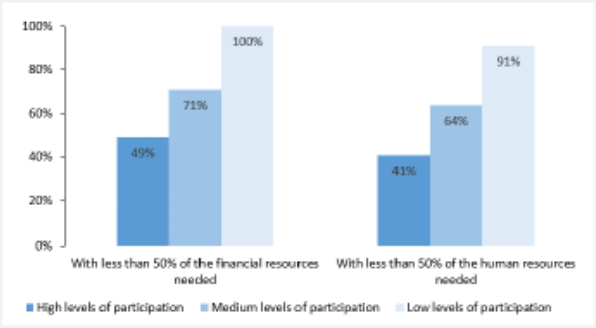
In two regions (Eastern Asia and South-eastern Asia, Western Asia and Northern Africa), over 90% of countries define participation procedures in law or policy for water resources management. The percentage of countries reporting high levels of community participation was highest in Central Asia and Southern Asia (50%) and in Western Asia and Northern Africa (47%).

Participation of users and communities is constrained by a lack of financial and human resources. Only 14% of countries have sufficient (over 75% of the) financial and human resources needed to support the participation of users and communities for rural drinking-water and sanitation. Similarly, for water resources management only 17% of countries have sufficient resources. Countries with fewer financial and human resources to support participation also reported lower levels of community participation for rural drinking-water, overall.

Per cent of countries that define proceduresin law or policy and have a high level of participation (%), 2022, by region



Per cent of countries with insufficient human and financial resources (%), 2022, by level of community participation



Additional resources, press releases, etc. with links:

- UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-water (GLAAS) 2022 Report: Strong systems and sound investments: Evidence on and key insights into accelerating progress on sanitation, drinking-water and hygiene: https://glaas.who.int/glaas/un-water-global-analysis-and-assessment-of-sanitation-and-drinking-water-(glaas)-2022-report
- GLAAS data portal: https://glaas.who.int/
- SDG 6 data portal: https://www.sdg6data.org/en

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Custodian agency(ies): WHO,OECD

Annex D. Review of MoI Targets and Indicators in Other Goal Areas

This assessment included a review of the other "MoI targets and indicators" in the other Goals 1-16 and Goal 17. The review examined the formulation, metadata and global reporting for all SDG MoI targets and indicators with a focus those targets and indicators most closely related to 6.a (international cooperation, finance, capacity building) and 6.b (governance and participation).

SDG Indicators similar to 6.a- International Cooperation, Capacity-building & Financing

SDG Target	SDG 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 ODA for water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes that is part of a government coordinated spending plan

The main findings from the review related to Target 6.a and Indicator 6.a.1:

- Most Goals include an MoI target and indicator that track international cooperation through international financial flows. Several goals have similar indicators to 6.a.1 that measure ODA for the sector as whole, or for specific purposes or sub-sectors within the sector (e.g. research, scholarships, technology, technical assistance). Different indicators report different streams of data: gross vs. net disbursements vs. commitments.
- A few Goals also have targets and indicators that measure 'other' international financial flows (Agriculture, SDG 2) + other flows (Energy, SDG 7) + private flows (Infrastructure, SDG 10). Climate Finance flows reported by Parties voluntarily as part of Paris Agreement (SDG 13).
- National financial flows are included in MoI-type indicators related to government expenditures, government revenues, budget allocations, and systems to track budget allocations. These indicators are included in SDG 1 and SDG 5; however there is limited data availability for global reporting.
- Goal 17 has targets and indicators that measure other aspects of financing for development, some of which could include data related to aspects of Goal 6:
    - Part of country-owned results framework, similar intent to "part of a government coordinated spending plan" SDG 17.15.1.
    - SDG 17.17.1 - Private Participation in Infrastructure (PPI) database includes water and sanitation – could provide another financial flow for SDG 6 and track private sector participation over time.
    - 17.7.1 on Environmentally Sound Technologies (ESTs) - Amount of tracked exported ESTs (Millions of current United States dollars).
    - Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) is an international standard for measuring the full array of resources driving sustainable development in low and middle income countries, whether official, private, or mobilised through official means, and including indirect contributions to global public goods.
- Several other targets also refer to 'capacity-building' (17.8, 17.9, 17.18, 17.19); however, only one indicator 17.9.1 measures Total ODA (gross disbursements) for technical cooperation. Target 4.b. *to expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries for enrolment in higher education* is measured by Indicator 4.b.1 which reports the volume of ODA (gross disbursements) for scholarships using data from the OECD-CRS database analysed by purpose code.
- The SDG indicator framework includes MoI indicators for the health workforce (3.c.1 - Health worker density and distribution) and education workforce (4.c.1 Proportion of teachers with the minimum required qualifications, by education level).

SDG indicators similar to 6.b – Local Government and Participation

SDG Target	SDG Indicator
6.b. Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management	**6.b.1** Percentage of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of local communities in water and sanitation management

There are only a few indicators related to "participation in governance processes" and "local government" in the current SDG Monitoring Framework. Of these indicators, few reported data in the latest 2024 SDG Progress report statistical annex.[31]

The main findings from the review related to Target 6.b and Indicator 6.b.1:

- Only one other Indicator 14.b.1 has one sub-question that asked government to report on the existence of an advisory/consultative body where stakeholders (in this case fishers/fish workers) can participate and contribute to decision-making.
- A limited number of Goals have targets and indicators related to 'local government'.
    - There is one common indicator, "1.5.4/11.b.2/13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies;" however no data was reported in the 2024 SDG Progress report statistical annex.
    - Indicator 5.5.1 "Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments" report data in 2024 that was collected and reported by UN-Women, in collaboration with UN regional commissions.
- **SDG 16** Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions includes three "number" indicators related to "build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels," that capture several aspects related to participation, right to information and citizen experiences and satisfaction with services:
    - Indicator 16.6.2 Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience of public services;
    - Indicator 16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group [External political efficacy]; and
    - Indicator 16.10.2 Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information (right to information - inseparable with right to participation and expression).

[31] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/files/report/2024/E_2024_54_Statistical_Annex_I_and_II.pdf.

Annex E. Existing questions on 'public participation' in IWRM 6.5.1 Survey and UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2 Survey

Figure E.1. IWRM 6.5.1 Survey – Question Pillar 2[32]

The full survey, which also includes questions on vulnerable groups, gender mainstreaming, is available here: https://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/Documents/English/SDG651_2023_IWRM_Survey_EN.docx

Q2.1c

c. Public participation[12] in water resources policy, planning and management at national level. Score XX	**No information** shared between government and the public on policy, planning and management of water resources.	**Information** on water resources, policy, planning and management is made available to the public.	**Communication:** Government authorities **request** information, experiences and opinions of the public in relation to policy, planning and management of water resources.	**Consultation:** Government authorities regularly **use** information, experiences and opinions of the public in relation to policy, planning and management of water resources.	**Collaboration: Mechanisms**[13] established, and regularly used, for the public to take part in relevant water resources policy, planning and management processes.	**Representation:** Formal representation of the public in government processes contributing to decision making on important issues and activities in relation to water resources.
Status and progress: xxx [E.g. mechanisms for public participation in water resources management, types of groups that participate or any significant ones that do not, examples of degree of participation. Consider progress since previous reporting rounds.]						
Way forward: xxx [E.g. planned or recommended activities to improve public participation; barriers and enablers; draft interim targets where appropriate.]						

[11] Relates to coordination between the government authorities responsible for water management and those responsible for other sectors (such as agriculture, aquaculture, energy, climate, water supply and sanitation, tourism, municipal use, mining and industry, environment etc.) that are dependent on water, or impact on water (including surface water / groundwater considerations).
[12] 'The public' includes all interested parties who may be affected by any water resources issue or intervention. They include organizations, institutions, academia, civil society and individuals. They do not include government organizations. The private sector is addressed separately in the next question, and vulnerable groups are addressed separately in question 2.2c.
[13] Mechanisms can include policies, laws, strategies, plans, or other formal operational procedures for public participation.

Q2.2b

b. Public participation[21] in water resources policy, planning and management at the **local level.**[22] Score XX	**No information** shared between government and the public on policy, planning and management at the local level.	**Information** on water resources, policy, planning and management is made available to the public at the local level.	**Communication:** Government authorities **request** information, experiences and opinions of the public.	**Consultation:** Government authorities regularly **use** local level information, experiences and opinions of the public.	**Collaboration: Mechanisms**[23] established, and regularly used, for the public at the local level to take part in relevant policy, planning and management processes.	**Representation:** Formal representation of the public in local authority processes contributing to decision making on important issues and activities, as appropriate.
Status and progress: xxx [E.g. mechanisms for public participation, types of groups that participate or any significant ones that do not, evidence of degree of participation, geographic differences across country. Consider progress since previous reporting rounds.]						
Way forward: xxx [E.g. planned or recommended activities to improve public participation at the local level; barriers and enablers; draft interim targets where appropriate.]						

[18] At the basin/aquifer level, please include only the most important river basins, lake basins and aquifers for water supply or for other reasons. These basins/aquifers likely cross-administrative borders, including state/provincial borders for federal countries. The basins may also cross national borders, but this question refers to management of the portions of basins within each country. Question 2.2e refers specifically to transboundary management of basins/aquifers shared by countries.
[19] Could be organization, committee, inter-ministerial mechanism or other means of collaboration for managing water resources at the basin level.
[20] For the definition of 'capacity' in this context, see footnote 13. Beyond having the capacity, authorities must also actually be leading the implementation of these activities.
[21] 'The public' includes all interested parties who may be affected by any water resources issue or intervention. They include organizations, institutions, academia, civil society and individuals. They do not include government organizations. The private sector is dealt with separately in question 2.1d.
[22] Examples of 'local level' include municipal level (e.g. cities, towns and villages), community level, basin/tributary/aquifer/delta level, and water user associations.
[23] Mechanisms can include policies, laws, strategies, plans, or other formal operational procedures for public participation.

[32] UNEP, UNEP-DHI, and GWP. 2024. IWRM Data Portal: tracking SDG 6.5.1. URL: https://iwrmdataportal.unepdhi.org/data-collection.

Figure E.2. UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2 Survey – Section II Question 13[33]

13. Are the public or relevant stakeholders involved in transboundary water management in the basin, sub-basin, part of a basin or group of basins?

Yes ☐/No ☐

If yes, how (please tick all applicable)?

Availability of information to the public ☐

Consultation on planned measures or river basin management plans[4] ☐

Public involvement ☐

Involvement in the joint body or mechanism *(please tick all applicable)*:

	Observer status	*Advisory role*	*Decision-making role*
Intergovernmental organizations	☐	☐	☐
Private sector organisations or associations	☐	☐	☐
Water user groups or associations	☐	☐	☐
Environmental non-governmental organisations or groups	☐	☐	☐
Women organisations or groups	☐	☐	☐
Indigenous peoples' organisations or groups	☐	☐	☐
Youth organisations or groups	☐	☐	☐
Academic or research institutions	☐	☐	☐
Other non-governmental organisations	☐	☐	☐
General public	☐	☐	☐
Other please describe: [fill in]	☐	☐	☐

Figure E.3. UNECE/UNESCO 6.5.2 Survey – Section II Question 2(d)[34]

(d) What topics or subjects of cooperation are included in the agreement or arrangement?

Procedural and institutional issues

Dispute and conflict prevention and resolution ☐

Institutional cooperation (joint bodies) ☐

Consultation on planned measures ☐

Mutual assistance ☐

Topics of cooperation

Joint vision and management objectives ☐

Joint significant water management issues ☐

Navigation ☐

Human health ☐

Environmental protection (ecosystem) ☐

Water quality ☐

Water quantity or allocation ☐

Cooperation in addressing floods ☐

Cooperation in addressing droughts ☐

Climate change adaptation ☐

Promotion of equality and inclusion, e.g. gender equality, inclusion of indigenous people, youth or other minority groups ☐

[33] UNECE, UNESCO 2024. Reporting on global SDG indicator 6.5.2 TEMPLATE of the third reporting exercise. https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/SDG652Template_reporting_3rdExercise_ENG.docx.

[34] UNECE, UNESCO 2024. Reporting on global SDG indicator 6.5.2 TEMPLATE of the third reporting exercise. https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/SDG652Template_reporting_3rdExercise_ENG.docx.