Using data collected through GLAAS: Making the most of the GLAAS process

Introduction

The UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS), implemented by the World Health Organization, monitors components of WASH systems, including governance, monitoring, finance and human resources, necessary to sustain and extend WASH services to all, and especially to the most vulnerable population groups. GLAAS collects information on WASH systems directly from national governments and development partners through surveys.

While data collected through GLAAS are used in regional and global monitoring, participating in GLAAS is also beneficial to countries. The data generated during the GLAAS process can be used in national planning, monitoring and review processes. Ninety five percent of countries participating in the GLAAS 2021/2022 cycle reported making use of the data collected through GLAAS.

This document highlights how countries have made the most of previous GLAAS cycles and used the data collected through GLAAS.

For more information about the GLAAS process and the GLAAS 2024/2025 cycle see:

- The GLAAS 2024/2025 webpage[1]; and
- the GLAAS data portal at https://glaas.who.int/.

Suggestions for making the most of the GLAAS process

Below are suggestions on how to make the most of the GLAAS process based on country experience in past GLAAS cycles.

Connect the GLAAS process with national priorities as well as ongoing or upcoming processes: At the beginning of and throughout the GLAAS cycle, think about how the data collected during the GLAAS process can contribute to ongoing or upcoming sector work, priorities and processes. Identify current and future national processes that can be informed by GLAAS. Consider what information is needed for each process, and how best to share data and information collected through GLAAS with the specific audience. For example, is there a joint sector review coming up? If so, could the GLAAS process be part of it? Or could data collected through GLAAS feed into the joint sector review?

Include influential stakeholders in the GLAAS process from the onset: Consider which actors are playing influential roles in these national processes and work out ways for these actors to have access to and understand the GLAAS process and data collected; consider including them in meetings during the GLAAS process or brief them on it. This can help ensure that the data collected through the GLAAS process are used.

[1] https://www.who.int/teams/environment-climate-change-and-health/water-sanitation-and-health/monitoring-and-evidence/wash-systems-monitoring/un-water-global-analysis-and-assessment-of-sanitation-and-drinking-water/2024-2025-cycle

Develop a plan to take learnings from GLAAS forward: Reflect on the GLAAS process and data collected and develop a plan to take forward priority actions that emerged. For example, were any gaps in the WASH sector identified? If so, how could those gaps be filled?

Examples of countries using the GLAAS process and data

Different countries have used data collected through the GLAAS process differently depending on the status of their WASH sector, national processes and priorities, but when looking at examples of how countries have used the GLAAS process and data, the following areas emerged across countries:

- Enhance sector coordination,
- Formulate policies, plans, regulations and programmes,
- Advocate for funding/financing for WASH,
- Strengthen national monitoring and review systems, and
- Contribute to international and regional reporting.

Below are specific examples from countries as reported in the GLAAS 2021/2022 country survey feedback form.

Enhance sector coordination

Coordination in the WASH sector is important as many different actors are involved in WASH. Countries frequently report that the GLAAS process is a way to enhance sector coordination, especially if other coordination mechanisms are lacking.

Azerbaijan: The GLAAS process has facilitated the exchange of information between the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, Azersu Open Joint Stock Company, the State Statistics Committee, the Ministry of Education and others.

Bahrain: The GLAAS process has linked national processes together and made every stakeholder aware of the work done by other stakeholders.

Barbados: The GLAAS process facilitated sharing information with non-health agencies including water and sanitation and environmental protection.

Montenegro: The GLAAS process is currently the only platform for connecting different ministries regarding water and sanitation issues.

Morocco: The multiple meetings of the members of the GLAAS committee made it possible to update the available data and to share data between the different ministries involved.

Namibia: The GLAAS process brought WASH national stakeholders together and enabled them to realize the extent of gaps and successes in the WASH sector. It added value in realizing the strengths and weaknesses of the WASH systems which helped us to improve.

Solomon Islands: GLAAS cycles have brought government and nongovernmental organizations together to discuss concerns related to WASH in rural areas.

South Africa: This GLAAS process has assisted in inter-governmental relations and exchanges on how WASH is managed in other sectors. It has provided a platform for collaboration going forward.

Formulate policies, plans, regulations and programmes

Policies, plans and programmes guide the development of the WASH sector. The GLAAS process can provide the impetus to update or develop new sector policies and programmes, and the data collected can inform their content and design.

Albania: Among the shortcomings identified by the GLAAS survey was the lack of water safety plans (WSP). Albania has now approved the WSP Guideline for Small Scale Water Supply Systems and the National Roadmap for its implementation and piloted WSPs in three rural water supply systems.

Bangladesh: GLAAS data were used in developing three national WASH strategic documents: the National Strategy for Water Supply and Sanitation 2021, the Pro-poor Strategy for Water and Sanitation Sector in Bangladesh 2020 and the Sector Development Plan for WASH 2011-2025.

Democratic Republic of Congo: The data generated in the GLAAS process contributed to the development of the National Water and Sanitation Policy.

Fiji: The Department of Water and Sewerage used data from GLAAS to inform their National Water Resources Management and Sanitation Policy.

Madagascar: The GLAAS process triggered the initiation of the revision of the water code in 2015, the revision of the sectoral policy in 2020, and more recently, the development of the National Water Quality Plan (PNQE).

Mauritania: The shortcomings identified in the previous GLAAS cycle (2018) were considered in the 2022 update of the National Strategy for Sustainable Access to Water and Sanitation by 2030.

Pakistan: The data generated through the GLAAS process are used for designing national WASH programmes and have informed relevant policies, such as the National Climate Change Policy 2021, the Drinking-Water Policy and the National Sanitation Policy.

Zambia: The data from GLAAS are used to inform the development and revision of policy and national strategies and standards including the guidelines on WASH in Health Care facilities and Safely Managed On-site Sanitation Regulations.

Advocate for funding/financing for WASH

Funding and financing are crucial to providing WASH services. In some countries, the GLAAS process has helped governments advocate for additional funding.

Guinea: The GLAAS process created an opportunity to advocate for a budget line from the government for financing rural sanitation.

Liberia: The GLAAS process has been helpful in national advocacy to improve WASH service delivery. The collected and interpreted GLAAS data have supported advocacy with national decision-makers (Ministry of Finance, national legislature and the executive) to increase the allocation in the national budget for

WASH. There are now more funds from the national budget to address open defecation in Liberia and external support has been secured for the provision of safe drinking-water supply to urban Monrovia and to end open defecation in five out of the fifteen counties in Liberia.

Strengthen national monitoring and review systems

The GLAAS process provides an opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of national monitoring systems. When collaborating across sectors to generate national data for the GLAAS country survey, gaps in data availability and deficiencies in data quality are often highlighted. The collaborative nature of the GLAAS process means that all the actors required to bring about improvements in national monitoring are involved.

Botswana: Following the GLAAS process, the country intends to establish a WASH executive team whose functions will include GLAAS data validation, convening regularly to plan, reviewing reports from technical teams and advising the government. This will lead on to establishing a WASH sector review forum.

Brazil: The GLAAS process guided the design of the new national information system on basic sanitation (SINISA), especially the financial data. Learning from the GLAAS process, the country intends to include data on the resilience of WASH infrastructure and services to climate change and public health emergencies (COVID-19) in the upcoming PLANSAB review.

Lao People's Democratic Republic: The GLAAS process has complemented the country's sector review processes. Additionally, data collected through GLAAS have been used to update baseline indicators for setting WASH targets.

Nepal: The GLAAS process was used to update the national monitoring system (NWASH) and plan for the Joint Sector Review. A local-level governance assessment survey is being developed based upon GLAAS survey questions.

Nicaragua: The GLAAS process made it possible to identify information gaps which will allow new indicators to be included in national monitoring systems and new financial data to be disaggregated.

Philippines: One of the key reform agendas under the Philippines Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan is Managing Data and Information, which focuses on ensuring the availability and accessibility of reliable water supply and sanitation data. The GLAAS process contributes to the pooling of necessary information and data, particularly on drinking-water and sanitation.

Serbia: The GLAAS process was used to identify gaps in sanitation, especially in on-site sanitation. It initiated further project activities on data collection on the safe management of on-site sanitation facilities.

Tajikistan: With participation in GLAAS and considering the data generated, it was possible to improve the methodology for monitoring and assessing the existing status of water supply, sanitation and hygiene.

Contribute to international and regional reporting

WHO, through GLAAS, is a co-custodian for monitoring the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 targets on means of implementation (6.a and 6.b). When countries participate in GLAAS, they fulfill their reporting on SDG targets 6.a and 6.b. Additionally, governments use the GLAAS process for other international and regional reporting.

Belarus: The 2018 GLAAS results were used for the baseline analysis for the Protocol on Water and Health. In 2022, the GLAAS survey was conducted concurrently with the preparation of the summary report for the Protocol on Water and Health. The data generated were used for the development of a set of measures to implement the commitments made by Belarus under the Protocol on Water and Health until 2030.

Burkina Faso: The GLAAS process brings together all the actors involved in WASH to nurture dialogue between these actors. As a result, it complements the monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the sectoral dialogue framework "Environment, Water and Sanitation" as well as initiatives from the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW).

El Salvador: The data from the GLAAS process have been used as information on water and sanitation indicators to measure progress on SDG 6 and identify what additional resources, national and international, should be mobilized to achieve the targets towards universal access to WASH services.

Honduras: GLAAS is an important reference for the reports to be presented at the Latin American sanitation conferences "LATINOSAN" that take place every three years, as well as reports for the meetings of Finance Ministers under Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) and for the Central American Forum on Drinking Water and Sanitation "FOCARD-APS".

Tunisia: The information from GLAAS is very useful for several other initiatives on water and sanitation that are underway such as the "Water in the World We Want" initiative to report on SDG 6 and the sector study led by the Task Force initiated by several Arab donors on Water and Sanitation (TFEA) supported and coordinated by OECD.

Zimbabwe: The SWA country monitoring champion found the data gathered through GLAAS to be very useful as the country kickstarted the process to complete the 2022 SWA Self-Assessment.

Additional resources

The following resources are available to help countries make the most out of the GLAAS process and the data collected. If you have any questions about GLAAS, please contact glaas@who.int.

- The **GLAAS data portal** (https://glaas.who.int): On the GLAAS data portal, users can explore, visualize and download data collected through GLAAS surveys since the GLAAS 2013/2014 cycle, selecting data/datasets by topic(s), indicator(s), year(s) and location(s), and by key findings.
- **GLAAS country highlights**: After participating in a GLAAS cycle, WHO prepares GLAAS country highlights summarizing the majority of the GLAAS country survey for each country. The GLAAS country highlights are available on the GLAAS data portal.
- **GLAAS information modules**: These four modules provide additional information about GLAAS, the GLAAS process, international and regional monitoring and the GLAAS 2024 country survey. They can be used during the GLAAS process in countries.