

European Union Water Initiative

**MONITORING INSTRUMENTS FOR ACCESS TO WATER SUPPLY
AND SANITATION**

Outcome of a workshop held in Brussels, 19–20 May 2003

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1. Summary recommendations

The following recommendations are presented for consideration at the 8th Multi-Stakeholder Forum in Athens, June 2003.

- The European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) should not aim to establish a new global monitoring regime, but work with the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) to enhance its work in connection with Millennium Development Goals.
- The EUWI should consider supporting the JMP in the pursuit of capacity building monitoring at country level
- The EUWI should establish some guiding principles for monitoring of Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) within normal project management and implementation.
- The EUWI should work with professional networks to support training workshops aimed at capacity building.

2. Introduction and background

Within the framework of the European Union Water Initiative (EUWI) launched at the Johannesburg Summit in August 2002 the European Commission is interested in developing a “monitoring component” for the water supply and sanitation programmes funded by the EU in partner regions / countries. The Commission’s intention is to build upon the work already done inside the Multi-Stakeholder Forum (MSF) of the EUWI and during the session held during the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, see box.

Main lessons from the Kyoto session

Six categories of stakeholders representing some 22 institutions expressed their views

- International and UN organisations (UN, WWC, WSSCC, GWP)
- Countries (Uganda, Mali, South Africa, India, Eastern and Central Europe)
- Water practitioners (IWA, Eureau)
- NGOs
- Local governments, municipalities
- Donors (World Bank, EU, DFID, AFD)

There was agreement that:

- enhancement of monitoring is essential to reach the Millennium and WSSD goals,
- national data should be disaggregated to incorporate relevant decentralised data,
- networking of the existing systems and partners should be given high priority.

There was a convergence of views on the following:

- Share attainments and experiences, through networking and enlarging existing partnerships.
- Develop permanent bottom-up information and data flows based on relevant indicators defined with the cooperation of local beneficiaries.
- Improve and simplify the water-related information communicated to the public, the media and the politicians, to make it easier to understand.
- Ensure the relevant and sustainable funding of each of the elementary steps for monitoring: participatory elaboration of indicators, data collection, transmission and process, national and local capacity building, NGOs' involvement, building and operation of the databases and reporting systems, etc.
- Address the sanitation and hygiene challenge – major goal of the WSSD – that represents about ¾ of the capital investment needed by 2015 and which does not deliver financial profitability and raises far less interest than water supply from countries or donors.
- Correct the unfair concentration of water related ODA, (eight African countries receive 80% of the total ODA to Africa, wealthiest areas attract more funds, urban population centres are favoured over rural or semi-urban areas).
- Support the creation of regional monitoring structures (e.g. Blue Plan/Mediterranean) to co-ordinate the decentralised networks and stimulate the national reporting systems.

Source: Olivier Bommelaer

The general objective of this component can be divided into three elements.

- Enhance the efficiency and the accountability of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) Programmes of the European Union, and possibly of other donors, by introducing and supporting a monitoring component in view of their future assessment.
- Assist the partner regions /countries (primarily Africa) in the measurement of their progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for WSS through capacity building.
- Contribute to the strengthening of the existing global monitoring instruments managed by the UN institutions (notably the Joint Monitoring Programme of WHO and UNICEF).

A workshop organised by Eureau and IWA, in collaboration with the European Commission was held in Brussels on 19 and 20 May 2003. The aims of the workshop were,

- to exchange information about existing monitoring instruments,
- to consult major stakeholders concerned; international institutions, member states, donors and financial institutions, partner regions, local governments, water practitioners, NGOs, about their needs, expectations and possible contributions in monitoring instruments, and to
- explore the role that the European Union could play with respect to monitoring.

An agreement has been signed at political level between the EU and a number of national governments in Africa for the implementation of the EUWI. The initial focus of the monitoring component will therefore be on Africa.

This paper briefly reviews the main points discussed during the workshop and presents recommendations for possible action. Background papers are available from the organisers.

3. Working group sessions

The participants in the workshop focussed on the particular questions and issues given below.

- What monitoring instruments are needed?
- What do the different stakeholders expect from the information system on water supply and sanitation?
- What should be monitored to follow the progress towards the MDGs and at what geographic scale?
- What other benefits can be derived from an improved monitoring system (e.g. transparency, community participation, etc)?
- How to address those needs?
- How to build upon existing instruments?
- How to adapt the system to the variability of situations, while ensuring comparability at regional / global level?
- How to define the range of levels of service?
- Who will decide about what level of service is deemed appropriate?
- Quality criteria for the information system (reliability, accessibility, simplicity, independence, recognition by stakeholders?)

The expert views expressed have been incorporated into the remaining sections of this paper and given in the conclusions.

4. Objectives of monitoring

Monitoring is an essential part of any project or programme to gauge the progress in achieving the initial targets and in correcting and adapting interventions as new challenges occur. As regards the provision of WSS, monitoring can be used to demonstrate achievement of the MDGs and is essential in demonstrating the benefits to health and economic development. Monitoring should be seen as a useful tool (or set of tools) for stakeholders, whether consumers, beneficiaries, service providers, planners and development agencies, to simply measure and assess whether adequate water supply and sanitation services are being provided.

Properly undertaken monitoring can,

- Improve the visibility of WSS interventions and their impacts on human development
- Allow accurate planning and implementation of the MDGs and WSSD (Johannesburg) goals
- Prioritise improved access to water and sanitation into poverty reduction and sustainable development
- Secure and enhance sectorial ODA in water supply and sanitation.

Successful and useful monitoring is achieved by,

- defining relevant & comparable data, levels of service, indicators and indices
- improving collection & treatment at all levels (databases)
- mobilising bottom-up & participatory approaches

- communicating and reporting in a meaningful way to the public
- aggregating local data with the disaggregation of national data
- providing reliable pictures at global and regional levels

5. Definitions

Progress on achieving the MDGs with respect to Water Supply and Sanitation requires common understanding of the actions to be taken, and agreement on the terminology used. There is much debate upon the definition of such terms as “access”, “improved supply/sanitation”, “basic sanitation”, etc. This in turn determines whether the indicator is measured directly or by an appropriate proxy. Monitoring is not an easy task and the number of indicators used needs to be kept to a minimum. Research needs to continue on the selection of appropriate indicators and their unbiased measurement. Difficult issues remain in the determination of effective use of WSS facilities. For example the existence of infrastructure does not mean satisfactory or beneficial use.

JMP delivered a definition of access but this is open to discussion guided by evidence – in terms of health it works but has yet to be finalised for WSS.

There is a real need to improve visibility of the sector at the global level; as well as to make locally based monitoring and information systems that can relay information back to local communities while transmitting to higher national and global monitoring systems. Information needs must be tempered with consideration of what is possible and reasonable to collect in terms of finance and skills. Better definitions, more clarity and precision from donor/funding agencies in what they want is required.

Joint Monitoring Programme: an overview

The Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) was launched in 1990. It aims at building national capacities, monitoring sector status and informing policy makers. By means of questionnaires to countries and households surveys data were collected and analysed by WHO, UNICEF and LSHTM. The results were presented in the 2000 global water supply and sanitation assessment report.

- There are still 2.4 billion people without access to improved sanitation facilities (i.e. connection to public sewer or septic tank, pour-flush latrine, simple pit latrine, ventilated improved pit latrine, but not service or bucket latrine, public or shared latrine, open pit latrine), and
- There are 1.1 billion people still without access to improved water supply (i.e. household water connection, public standpipe, borehole, protected dug well or spring, rainwater collection but not vendor provided or tanker truck provided water).

Africa appears to have the lowest percentage of water coverage (62%), whereas Asia has 81% and Latin America and the Caribbean 85%. However this can hide huge disparities, between rural and urban areas.

Beyond water coverage there is a need to monitor the quality of the water (‘are people drinking safe water?’) and hygiene. Moreover further data disaggregation has to be carried out in order to reveal the disparities as regards the access to water and sanitation.

The present survey does not provide information on quantities or adequacy nor is water quality verified. Reliability, time and distance are not measured. Sanitation facilities were often not visited nor was there information on the use of facilities.

In future, the JMP is going to focus on:

- Consistent and comparable indicators
- School sanitation
- Broader partnerships
- Household water security and water quality
- Hygiene behaviours

*Source: Vanessa Tobin in “Evaluating & monitoring the access to water supply and sanitation”,
25 April 2003, World Water Forum, Kyoto*

6. Conclusions

Despite commendable efforts by the UN system, information on the access to WSS remains globally unsatisfactory. At the macro level, no real improvement has been achieved since the second World Water Forum in The Hague, March 2000, in terms of evaluating the financial requirements of the sector to reach the MDGs and the further commitments of the Johannesburg WSSD. While there is a general consensus regarding the minimum population targets, there are still many diverging opinions regarding technical options, acceptable levels of services, scales of institutional, legal and other supporting programmes required – such as capacity building – and their related unit costs. This directly threatens actual feasibility of implementing the WATSAN goals. This is notably due to the general underestimation of the budget necessary for monitoring, at all levels, including the global level (UN). As a result, global financial figures quoted by the media are confusing in their definitions, notably concerning their integration of operation & maintenance costs, or evaluation of the specific sanitation target. Acquiring better visibility of the sector and reliability will require greater expenditure of effort, where the EUWI could provide a key contribution, in linking with existing global instruments such those of the OECD/DAC and the UN.

The aim of the component should be to **establish some guiding principles for monitoring for WSS** as a mainstream activity, i.e. within normal project management and implementation.

It will be important not to develop a new series of indicators but to gather and use existing information, research results and experience. There is a considerable amount of existing information on assessing levels of service and access. ISO have already launched working groups to produce standardised definitions; those should be investigated and supported by the EUWI. IRC and PSEau offered to collect relevant reference material and make this available to the working group and the MSF of the EUWI (possibly by an Internet based database?)

To be successful and meaningful, monitoring will require financial and skilled staff support. While monitoring requires financial and human resources to collect data and more importantly to analyse such data it does yield the benefit of understanding what is happening in the sector and in identifying shortcomings and inequities in service provision.

Skill transfer and capacity building could be enhanced by greater linkages and liaison with partner countries and through appropriately timed workshops and the establishment of networks. IWA is holding its Congress in Marrakech in September 2004, to which a monitoring workshop could be incorporated. Arrangements could also be made to hold workshops and establish and reinforce regional links with, for example, the East and South African Region (ESAR), and with the Water Utility Partnership (West Africa). Such workshops could be held earlier than the Marrakech Congress.

Closer links and contacts with the African Water Task Force should be established.

EUWI's focus should be to positively monitor progress in achieving the goals set in the MDGs. Such activities are best implemented at the country (national) level. It was recognised that monitoring should be incorporated into the thinking and plans of other working groups within the EUWI, for example, the working group on Africa and IWRM.

It was agreed that the EUWI should not establish an independent global monitoring system. The need to establish a strong link with the JMP, and support and enhance its work, was emphasised. It is recommended that the EUWI seek to be represented on the JMP Advisory Board. While JMP's work on monitoring at a global scale, and the introduction of work on capacity building, should be supported, it was recognised that new requirements for monitoring will be costly and appropriate funding proposals will be required and agreed. Wherever possible existing indicators should be used and the data collection burden should be minimised.

Monitoring at national level, particularly, if based in local government, will require enhanced capabilities in management and governance, (likely to be new capabilities and skills). This should be the focus of the training workshops.

Research studies on linkages between the provision of WSS and hygiene and health should continue. Studies like those undertaken by LSHTM in Kenya are of particular value in improving and standardising indicators especially in the assessment of hygiene.

Recommendations for action

The Workshop participants supported the establishment of a monitoring component within the EUWI and recommended that action should be focussed upon the following points.

- The EUWI should nominate a representative to the advisory committee of the Joint Monitoring Programme.
- The EUWI should use its catalytic role in supporting projects that would add value to the JMP.
- The African Water Task Force should be consulted about the support that is needed by African national and local governments, to raise awareness and strengthen capacities in monitoring water supply and sanitation services.
- Existing good practices in monitoring WATSAN in developing countries should be identified , with a view to promote them where relevant.
- Taking advantage of the next meetings on water planned in Africa, side events on monitoring should be organised with the support of professional associations and experts.
- Financial resources should be reserved to support permanent monitoring activities in recipient countries, who in turn should commit themselves to proper monitoring of the water and sanitation sector, as a basis of sound Poverty Reduction Strategies.
- Indicators should be kept simple, with a priority on the mapping of poorly served populations.
- As a follow up of the workshop, a budget should be reserved to appoint experts so as to review current practice in monitoring among development agencies of the EU and member states, propose a coherent set of principles to coordinate these activities and evaluate the associated costs.

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