

Global Framework for Action on Sanitation and Water Supply (GF4A)

"FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS"

Working Document
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General

1. Why do we need the GF4A?
2. What is the GF4A and how does the GF4A work?
3. Who is developing the GF4A?
4. What is the level of CSO involvement?
5. How do countries or organisations indicate their support to the GF4A?
6. How is GF4A different from other global meetings and coordination mechanisms?
7. Will there be any new declarations?
8. How does GF4A complement other initiatives in the sector?
9. How does the GF4A work at both global and national level?

Components

10. What are the main components of the GF4A and how do they fit together?
 11. How do existing reporting mechanisms (i.e. GLAAS, CSO and JMP) fit into the GF4A?
 12. Will the GF4A have a funding mechanism and what will it look like?
 13. What is the focus of the annual HLM?
 14. What is the added value of HLM?
 15. How can we be sure that the HLM will be attended by the top decision makers including Ministers of Finance from developing countries?
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1. Why do we need the GF4A?

Despite the pivotal role of sanitation and water supply in meeting all of the MDGs, the sector remains a low priority on the international and many national agendas. Sanitation is the most off-track of all the MDG targets, and sub-Saharan Africa the most off-track region. While aid for sanitation and water supply has been increasing, it is not well targeted. According to a recent OECD report only 23% of aid for the sector went to the countries most in need (least-developed countries) between 2002 and 2007

Although a number of programmes and funds have been established to increase access to sanitation and safe water, their success has been piecemeal, and they have thus far failed to address key bottlenecks in the most off-track countries - *most notably the lack of sector capacity to plan, implement and monitor for sustainable results*. The fragmentation and lack of coordination that characterises the sector is preventing international efforts from having the greatest impact. Ultimately, progress must be made at country level, led by national governments. However, donors, developing countries and other development partners can improve coordination at a global level in order to ensure the necessary tools are available at the national level.

Insufficient political prioritisation of water and sanitation by both developing countries and donors underlies many of the sector's key problems. Unlike in other sectors, there is no platform to hold donors and developing countries accountable for the commitments they have made. The GF4A will play this role.

2. What is the GF4A and how does the GF4A work?

The Global Framework for Action is an international partnership of national governments, donors, civil society organizations and other development partners working together to galvanise political commitment to increase global access to sanitation and water. The partnership will serve as a platform to:

- ❖ Put sanitation and water firmly on the global agenda at the highest political levels
- ❖ Improve ODA targeting and effectiveness through harmonisation and alignment
- ❖ Assist in identifying outstanding financing gaps and the sources of finance to narrow those deficits
- ❖ Mobilise additional resources through increased utilization and effectiveness of existing resources
- ❖ Engage all stakeholders on issues of global importance
- ❖ Improve information for better decision-making
- ❖ Promote mutual accountability between aid agencies & recipient governments and between governments & their people
- ❖ Enable national plan development and implementation

The GF4A aims to raise the performance and effectiveness of the water and sanitation sector at large within a framework of mutual accountability, in order to achieve MDG7 and sustain progress towards higher targets in the post-2015 period.

GF4A Objective	GF4A Activity
Strong, actionable national plans with implementation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for national planning & capacity building
Improved information for decision-making: annual data and analysis on the sanitation & water supply sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS)
Mutual accountability between aid agencies & recipient governments & between governments & their people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Level Meeting (HLM) & Regional Meetings
Better targeting & mobilisation of funding. As part of a broad international effort, the aim of the GF4A is to ensure that no credible national plan should fail for lack of finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aid effectiveness & financing modalities • GLAAS Report with gap analysis

Activities

- **Support for national planning and capacity building:** Enables off-track countries to develop actionable national plans and build implementation and absorptive capacity by linking them with development partners and sources of preliminary funding. The GF4A aims to help strengthen the capacity of governments to effectively utilise all forms of finance and improve the targeting and delivery to least developed countries. As part of a broad international effort, the aim of the GF4A is to ensure that no credible national plan should fail for lack of finance.
- **UN-Water Global Annual Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS):** Responds to the need for an annual comprehensive source of information and analysis on sanitation and water supply. Building on relevant existing global and national data and information, GLAAS – led by WHO - puts together a comprehensive picture of progress towards the MDG target, including drivers and bottlenecks in key areas such as institutional capacity, national budget allocations, and funding flows.
- **Annual High Level Meeting (HLM):** Provides a global platform to galvanise political will, coordinate action and ensure accountability. The HLM and the regional meetings leading up to it will use the GLAAS findings to identify obstacles to progress and work to secure the necessary commitments to resolve them. Those commitments can then be used to monitor and hold governments accountable. The first HLM will be hosted by UNICEF in the Spring of 2010.
- **Aid effectiveness and financing modalities:** Ultimately, aid-effectiveness must occur at the country level. However, the GF4A will work to **improve the targeting of existing aid flows through better donor coordination and harmonisation at the global level and enabling off-track countries and fragile states to fully and effectively utilise and leverage available and new forms of capital flows** . The GF4A will not create a large vertical fund, although a small ‘pump-priming’ fund to support national planning is being discussed.

3. Who is developing the GF4A?

The GF4A is currently led by the Interim Core Group, comprising: AMCOW, DFID, DGIS, End Water Poverty, UNICEF, UN-Water, WaterAid, WSSCC, WHO, and World Bank/WSP. Other regional bodies and nations are expected to join the Core Group in order to provide a balanced geographic representation. Stakeholders interested in joining or contributing to the Interim Core Group or the Working Groups (Aid-Effectiveness and Finance Modalities, GF4A Governance and Political-Communications Strategy) are encouraged to speak with current members or contact Cindy Kushner (ckushner@unicef.org).

4. What is the level of CSO involvement?

Civil society participation in the GF4A is fundamental to the GF4A’s success. End Water Poverty, an umbrella for 150 NGOs around the globe, and WaterAid, a leading water and sanitation NGO, are founding partners of the GF4A and have been integrally involved in the initiative’s development and all decision-making. The African Civil Society Network on Water and Sanitation (ANEWS) has also now joined the GF4A as a partner.

5. How do countries or organisations indicate their support to the GF4A?

The GF4A is currently open to participation from national governments, donors, civil society and other development partners wishing to be involved. As the initiative is evolving, there are not yet any formal procedures for supporting the GF4A.

6. How is GF4A different from other global meetings and coordination mechanisms?

A key milestone in the international community's understanding of the status of WSS MDGs was the 2006 UN Human Development Report (UNHDR), which concluded that politics are at the heart of the problem as well as the solution and that resources are poorly allocated in the sector. The Global Framework for Action initiative aims to address the need to link international or global events to more concrete action at national level for drinking water and sanitation. There is currently no other global sector mechanism serving this purpose. The GF4A intends to be the senior international focal point for the water and sanitation sectors.

GF4A is a framework that advocates for and monitors financial and political actions and commitments from both countries seeking to achieve the MDG targets for their own populations as well as and donor countries.

7. Will there be any new declarations?

To date, the sanitation and water sector has made minimal progress in implementing many of the objectives laid out in Paris and Accra. Further, 58 countries are off-track to meet the MDG for sanitation and 23 are off-track for the water MDG. The sanitation and water sector requires a more concerted effort to revisit past overarching commitments and translate them into understandable, time-bound, achievable pledges.

The GF4A aims to translate existing commitments – such as the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action – into sustainable actions and results for the sanitation and water sector. Any new declarations made under GF4A will take the general commitments in existing statements such as Paris, Accra and the MDGs and translate the broad objectives into tangible and measurable commitments to achieve the sanitation and water MDGs and beyond.

8. How does GF4A complement other initiatives in the sector?

General principles such as improved aid-effectiveness and mutual accountability have been globally agreed upon through instruments such as the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action. The GF4A addresses an important gap that is currently not filled in the sector. It provides a global platform to translate the broad commitments into concrete results within the sector and ensure that donors and developing countries fulfil their commitments.

The GF4A will build on existing initiatives and reinforces regional and national processes. GLAAS will draw on existing data and information sources such as the JMP, CSOs and OECD to highlight where countries are not receiving the external support they need (such as in fragile states that attract limited donor activity) and where specific groups within countries are being left behind (such as the urban poor or vulnerable groups). The High Level Meeting will utilize the GLAAS findings to address the structural problems of the sector that cannot be resolved by sector professionals alone.

Ministers of Finance or Development Cooperation and others will therefore be targeted for the HLM, accompanied by Ministers responsible for drinking water and sanitation. Commitments can be made at the HLM and those commitments can then be used to monitor and hold governments accountable.

At country level, GF4A will not create new institutions but rather work to strengthen existing mechanisms and capacities by linking local actors with the resources that they themselves define as lacking.

9. How does the GF4A work at both global and national level?

The GF4A will work to place drinking water and sanitation high on the political agenda by advocating for greater concerted actions and resources for the sector, providing evidence for better decision making, and holding governments accountable to their commitments. These activities will play out globally through the GLAAS report and the annual HLM primarily.

At national level, the development community – led by the national government and in partnership with in-country donor, CSO and other development partner representatives – will utilize their existing coordination mechanisms to push for progress on the GF4A aim of achieving the MDG 7 targets and beyond. The GF4A will support that process by 1) gaining the attention of donor governments at the highest level so that what is required at country level is prioritized within donor and development partner leadership and 2) facilitating access to required technical and financial resources, as defined by the country level. The GF4A will not define in-country processes but rather will provide guidance and support which can be accessed when desired by those in-country.

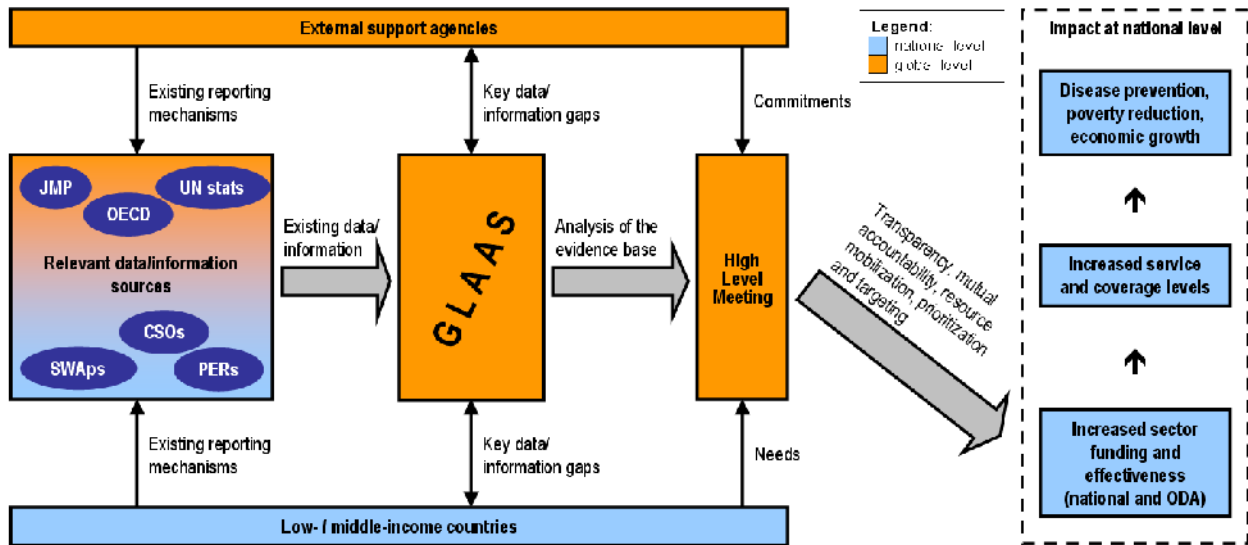
The GF4A will also link the global and national level activities by

- 1) Commitments made at the global level (HLM) will be able to be monitored at country level, assisting those who are in-country with advocacy efforts to increase resource flows to the sector.
- 2) The evidence presented in the GLAAS findings can be used in-country to understand trends and make better decisions.
- 3) Donor harmonisation and alignment will be pushed for globally so that global decisions at the highest levels match country needs, particularly targeting resources to off-track countries and those most in need.

10. What are the main components of the GF4A and how do they fit together?

The main components of the GF4A are: the UN-Water Global Annual Assessment on Sanitation and Drinking Water (GLAAS), an annual global monitoring report; the annual High Level Meeting; aid-effectiveness and financing modalities which will be developed collaboratively over the next year; and support to the development and implementation of national plans for drinking water and sanitation. All the components are linked and aimed at increasing the resources and efforts at the national level to achieve the MDG targets for water and sanitation.

In preparing GLAAS, existing reporting mechanisms, including the national sector reviews and OECD and UN statistics, will be used. The GLAAS results will then be a resource for preparing the regional and global High Level Meetings. The participants at the first global HLM will be based on the countries included in the GLAAS, aligning the annual report with the HLM. It is important to stress that this will be an evolving process, with an increasing number of countries to be included in the annual GLAAS assessments and, thus, also at the HLM.



11. How do existing reporting mechanisms (i.e. GLAAS, CSO and JMP) fit into the GF4A?

The UN-Water GLAAS (led by WHO) is the annual report for GF4A that analyses sector capacity and effectiveness. The GLAAS findings build on the evidence from existing reporting mechanisms, including the national sector reviews, JMP, CSOs, the OECD and UN statistics, but also on a specific data and information gathering to fill in critical knowledge gaps. GLAAS is the only global resource that brings together information from donor agencies and recipient countries looking at the four dimensions of service levels, institutional capacity, human resource capacity and financial system capacity.

GLAAS is also a resource for preparing briefs for regional consultations and global High Level Meetings. The participants at the first global HLM will be drawn from the list of donor agencies and recipient countries participating in the GLAAS, aligning the annual report with the HLM. The selection of countries for GLAAS is an evolving process with an increasing number of donor agencies and recipient countries to be included in future years, and thus, also at the HLM.

12. Will the GF4A have a funding mechanism and what will it look like?

A Working Group has been convened on Aid-Effectiveness and Finance Modalities. The first order of business is to develop mechanisms which can be agreed upon and serve donors and developing countries alike. Inputs from both are essential to defining a successful mechanism.

Existing global funding mechanisms are being analysed to determine the options for ensuring the aims of the GF4A (i.e. improved utilization and targeting of funds) are met. The Working Group will ensure that lessons from countries where harmonisation and alignment are working well through strong national plans, as well as from other sectors, are taken on board and feature prominently. Preliminarily, it seems that establishing a large vertical fund is not desired. However, a small 'pump-priming' fund to support off-track countries to develop credible, actionable plans may be a possibility. Any mechanism established by the GF4A will have wide-ranging support from donors, developing countries, civil society and other development partners.

13. What is the focus of the annual HLM?

The HLM will function as a platform where the Ministers for finance, water and health from developing countries, and Ministers for development cooperation from donor countries meet, discuss, prioritise and agree on actions, all within a culture of mutual accountability and shared responsibility to increase the performance and effectiveness of the sector.

In 2010, the HLM will focus on off-track countries, especially those in Africa. In future years, the focus may vary.

14. What is the added value of HLM?

The HLM aims to garner political support at the highest and most influential levels, namely ministers of finance and ministers of development cooperation. Only by establishing a dialogue directly with those responsible for budgets can the sector garner the require attention and resources. The drinking water and sanitation sector has many existing meetings; however, there are fundamental problems in the sector that require support and commitment from outside the sector and the HLM aims to address this gap.

15. How can we be sure that the HLM will be attended by the top decision makers including Ministers of Finance from developing countries?

For the HLM to be one where decisions are made on reallocating resources to and within the sector, the meeting should be attended by staff from governments, UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector at the highest level. This should mean finance ministers from developing countries, development ministers from donors, head of UN agencies and chief executives from NGOs and private sector organisations.

The first HLM is slated to take place in spring 2010, hosted by UNICEF, and will coincide with the Spring Meetings of the World Bank and the IMF, where Ministers of Finance will already be in attendance. The GF4A Core Group is working to engage a widely respected host for the meeting that will have strong convening power.