



# Interlinking Monitoring Actions

**MAKING MONITORING WORK FOR DEVELOPMENT**



# WATER MONITORING ALLIANCE

The Water Monitoring Alliance is established to facilitate information and knowledge exchange and to enhance monitoring capacities at all levels, and to provide a better access to data needed for a better water resource and service management.

## 1 - Why a Water Monitoring Alliance?

Monitoring goes hand in hand with action for development. The diversity of interventions in the water sector and the many institutions involved has led to a profusion of monitoring activities. Many monitoring programmes have been implemented by different organisations initiated at different levels (local, national, regional and international), each for its own purpose, with its own objectives using its own methodologies and specific indicators.

The availability of reliable data is, however, essential to the ability of local and national governments, water service providers, multilateral agencies and donors to effectively support progress toward a sustainable water management, and toward the Millennium Development Goals. Reliable monitoring activities allow these institutions to re-assess their policies, action plans and budget allocations. But, these data are also needed for user groups, communities and civil society organisations to enable them to participate and react in an informed way in investments in and management of water infrastructure programmes.

The profusion of monitoring programmes is questionable because financial resources for monitoring are limited. Data collection of good quality is expensive and requires medium or long-term programmes to be really helpful. Thus, interlinking of these programmes could enable their coordination between, and, at the same time, increase the quality of the data collected, facilitate access to these data and reduce their costs. This would, in turn, provide added value for the programmes themselves and for their users.

## 2 - What is the Water Monitoring Alliance?

The WMA is established in 2005. It is created to enhance interlinking of and exchange between monitoring programmes at all levels and to facilitate access to their outputs for a wide variety of users.

The objectives of the Water Monitoring Alliance are to:

- Provide stakeholders access to information on monitoring systems/programmes and their data;
- Enable an exchange of information on monitoring activities and methodologies;
- Contribute to a coordination between ongoing monitoring programmes;
- Encourage partnership creation between actors;
- Facilitate support for the development of local and national capacities for monitoring.

WMA is a programme aiming at creating new partnerships for actors from various areas sharing the views of the WWC that synergies between monitoring programmes need to be increased and facilitated. Two types of partnership are envisaged:

- Partnerships between actors at the international level to interlink their programmes or organisations and to create knowledge resource pools. For example OECD data on Official Development Aid (ODA) could be linked to the data of the Joint Monitoring Programme of WHO-UNICEF on water supply and sanitation coverage.

- Partnerships between actors at different levels (local, national and international) to strengthen monitoring processes at the local and national levels, by facilitating access to methodologies, tools, knowledge centres and monitoring expertise.

WMA facilitates this by providing a Web portal, where information on monitoring programmes related to water is available.

**Water Monitoring Alliance**

Contact us | Partners | Select a partner... | English | Français | Search | OK

Home

**Welcome to the Water Monitoring Alliance Website!**

The Water Monitoring Alliance is made up of organisations involved in the collection, analysis, reporting and dissemination of information on water in all its uses.

Its objectives are to enhance a greater exchange and sharing of information amongst the organisations and programmes involved in the collection and dissemination of water data and to provide a better access to the information for the decision makers, the media and the public at large. The Alliance is a cooperative partnership among organisations working at the international, regional, national and local levels.

The Water Monitoring Alliance is currently under development. Information on this website will be improved in the coming months. Please feel free to [contact us](#) if you have comments to make or if you would like to join the Alliance.

**How to find water-related information**  
Water data in different regions and for different themes can be searched for within a list of

**Monitoring sessions at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico: Come to join our discussions!**  
With following theme "Local Actions for a Global Challenge", the 4th

**In Focus**

**The Millennium Development Goals**  
At the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, world leaders placed development at the heart of the global agenda by adopting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).  
[Read more about how the MDGs are monitored](#)

**In Focus**

**The 4th World Water Forum**  
Targeting, monitoring and implementation assessment is one of the important subjects

**Background WMA**  
How to use the WMA?

**Key Concepts**

**Monitoring and Related Activities**

**Tools & Methods**

**Capacity Building**

**Resource Library**

**News**

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**In Focus**  
MDG's  
4th World Water Forum

### 3 - Water Monitoring Alliance: How it works?

#### Establishing links

The WMA facilitates inter-linkages of monitoring programmes. The first step in this process is the identification of existing monitoring programmes. Mapping monitoring programmes is important in order to understand their characteristics and potentials for the interlinking, especially the added value it can give for other monitoring programmes and their users. An assessment will be made of their activities (Box 2), and with their permission these data will be made available in the web database accessible for all.

Monitoring programmes can either be linked upon their request or, as a result of an active search, they can be requested to be linked with the WMA and become partners.

#### Database and search tool

The mapped out monitoring programmes are entered into the WMA database. The purpose of this database is to facilitate the search for water-related information on the international, regional and national levels. The partners also feed this database with information on their activities, and provide direct access to their own databases and published documents.

For each entry of the WMA, a «fact sheet» is completed, supplying a characteristic profile of the programme (or method). Information includes a detailed description (creation date, type, scope, region, keywords), a list

of organisations involved in the programme (or method), the methodology used for data collection as well as a description of the indicators used and data available. When possible, a link is provided to access the data. Links to related documents are supplied in addition to contact information.

A search for information can be carried out within the following categories:

- **Monitoring & Related Activities:** Under this category, all kinds of monitoring, reporting and observation programmes that collect and publish data (in the form of databases or reports) can be found. To facilitate a systematic search, activities have been sorted according to their geographical scope (international, regional & national), type of activity (targeting, observation & reporting) and keywords (e.g. water supply, sanitation, MDG's, environment/ecosystem, agriculture, health, etc.).
- **Tools & Methods:** This section presents an overview of different monitoring methods, such as household surveys or composite indices. Detailed information can be found on methodology as well as indicators and data used by the method.
- **Capacity Building:** Under this point, programmes and organisations performing capacity-building activities in the monitoring sector are presented. This relates to training, research and resource centres at the international and regional scale.

The **Resources Library**, **News** and **Events** sections provide background documents on monitoring and information on recent developments, workshops or meetings on water monitoring.

### **The platform**

Once the tools are completely operational, the platform will be established. Through this platform, WMA facilitates information sharing and experience exchange between its partners, and initiation of actions to enhance the monitoring programmes, and to develop local monitoring initiatives. Through this platform, the partners can directly access the database of the other partners, and can compare methods and tools. This will lead not only to an easy access to information and data, but also to a better understanding of the relationships between them. Consequently, the possibilities obviously increase to improve linkages and to initiate partnerships between.

The platform also enables a “peer to peer” learning process through the provision of technical assistance to actors in most need by facilitating the development of relations between them and monitoring experts. Thus, national actors from these countries can learn from the others, who have developed sound monitoring systems. They also can develop/redefine their methods and/or refine their tools, with regard to those developed the others. This aspect is expected to considerably contribute in strengthening local and national capacities for monitoring.

### **Other features**

The WMA also aims to strengthen monitoring actions worldwide by providing reliable information to orient various stakeholders, with regard to their requests (questions, choices, training opportunities, funding possibilities, etc.). In this context, following features are under development:

- Elaboration and provision of country profiles. These documents are helpful for national authorities in developing their country modelling tools, and for multilateral agencies / donors in getting reliable information on countries.
- Multi-criteria search from the website. This feature will enable to refine the search on monitoring actions.
- Development of a glossary on indicators (including all sectors). The glossary is expected to enhance the understanding and to help the users in developing and using suitable indicators, accordingly with targets to be implemented and monitoring system requirements.

## **4 - Some challenges for water monitoring**

1. Targeting is critical, especially when looking at the MDGs: the global targets need to be translated into targets that make sense at the local level. MDGs require implementation plans and clear targets before sound monitoring programmes can be established.

2. There is a need to strengthen the local and the national level monitoring programmes that are critical for progress. In many cases, monitoring is however a top down process, for which demand at the local level is either lacking or unclear. Awareness of the importance of monitoring and the ownership of monitoring processes must be raised, especially at the local and national levels.

3. The fact that water is essential to achieving most of the MDGs makes the inclusion of data from other sectors (like health, demography, etc.) necessary.

4. Interlinking and coordination are therefore highly needed especially because financial resources available for such programmes are limited and because these programmes make sense only in the medium or long run. However, interlinking and coordination are difficult because of the different rationales of the actors, and probably because data and information represent some power. Facilitating dialogue and information sharing will stimulate interlinking processes.

### **Box 1: Why is the coordination between monitoring programmes difficult?**

Monitoring coordination in the water domain is difficult firstly because of the variety of issues dealt with: water resources availability and quality, water use, water service provision, water financing, water institutions and management are among others the main topics addressed through monitoring programmes.

**In addition, these programmes often comprise a part of monitoring activities, which are:**

- Targeting is the process through which objectives and targets are agreed upon. It should encompass all process of orienting political choices, setting achievable targets, defining policies, and establishing sets of tools and clearly identifiable indicators to monitor progress toward these targets.
- Observing and measuring are the procedures enabling the collection and the analysis of data.
- Assessing and reporting correspond to the activities of implementation / progress assessment based on the analysis of the observations, and of information circulation to decision makers and others stakeholders including the public.

Most programmes focus on data collection and observation, while a few others are mainly focussing on assessing and reporting by making use of the data collected by others. Targeting is an issue that is under the responsibility of politicians, decision makers or project managers that is essential to appropriately define the indicators needed. It is not as such a monitoring activity but is often important to make water work for development and to appropriately design the monitoring programmes.

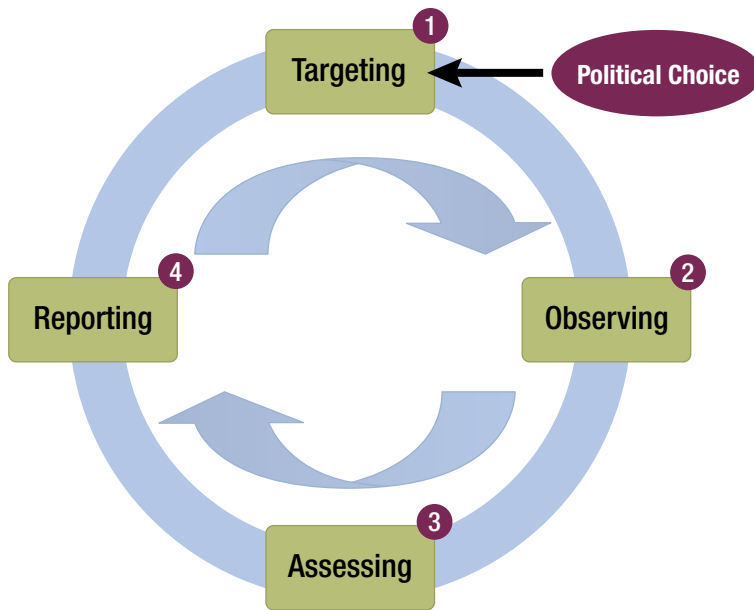
**Finally monitoring programmes obey to four main different rationales:**

- The global rationale is that of international organisations supported by international donors; this group needs an overview of the situation and a relatively small number of data per country showing what the situation is and what progress is accomplished at a rather short time step (1 or 2 years).
- The government rationale is that of local and national institutions that need to define and implement policies at the country or municipal level. Ideally permanent of character with established criteria on observation, assessment and reporting.
- The project rationale is that of all organisations funding or implementing projects on the ground. The aim within this rationale is to evaluate the efficiency of project implementation. Programmes that work under this rationale are not institutionalised and temporary in nature.
- The service provision rationale: ideally permanent of character providing the information necessary to take decisions on service delivery policies, investments, and corrective actions.

These rationales respond to different needs and are often based on comparable indicators but their outputs cannot be compared in general. For instance, the data obtained from all projects implemented in a given area could not be summed up to provide a precise picture of the situation in that area. Nevertheless if made available to the local people in charge of water management, the information available through these projects could be valuable.

In the Water Monitoring Alliance web site, all programmes are described according to the type of activity they conduct, the type of data they collect and the rationale they obey to.

## Sequence of activities involved in “monitoring”



## Types of relationships between monitoring programmes

COMMUNICATION	INTERLINKING	COORDINATION	COOPERATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exchange of information on:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objectives</li> <li>Activities</li> <li>Methodologies</li> </ul> </li> <li>Mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mutual access to data and information</li> <li>Exchange of data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint programming</li> <li>Agreed areas / focus</li> <li>Exchange and use of data from others</li> <li>Networking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definition and/or use of common methods and data</li> <li>Common methods to enhance exchangeability allowing benchmarking</li> <li>Selected common indicators</li> </ul>
WMA provides a Web portal, where information on monitoring programmes is available	Additionally, WMA provides platform for information sharing, knowledge and experience exchanging, interlinking monitoring programmes, debate and action initiatives such as partnerships, peer to peer learning process, etc.		Through its platform, WMA could facilitate adoption of enhanced networking, and of benchmarking, and to redefine methods and to refine tools
Example: Water Monitoring Alliance (WMA)	Example: OECD data on Official Development Aid (ODA) could be linked to the data of the Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) of WHO-UNICEF on Water Supply and Sanitation coverage	Example: Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) on Water Supply and Sanitation coverage of WHO and UNICEF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needed at country level</li> <li>Difficult but useful at international level</li> </ul> Example: World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS)

## Box 2: Mapping of the monitoring activities: an ongoing process

The first task of the WMA is to map out the various monitoring programmes according to their scales, rationales and types of data collected. The figure below shows how programmes are presented in WMA Web portal.

The screenshot displays the WMA website interface. The main content area is titled 'World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP)'. It includes a navigation menu on the left with categories like 'Background WMA', 'Key Concepts', and 'Monitoring and Related Activities'. The main content area has tabs for 'Description', 'Organizations', 'Methodology', and 'Indicators and Data'. The 'Description' tab is active, showing details such as 'Creation date: 2000', 'Type: Monitoring, Reporting', 'Scope: International', and 'Region:'. The right sidebar contains a 'Documents' section with links to 'The UN World Water Development Project 2003 - Water for People, Water for Life' and 'Water Security: A preliminary assessment of policy progress since Rio'. A 'Contact' button is located at the bottom right of the sidebar.

- So far 105 monitoring programmes have been identified. Out of these programmes, 58 have already been analysed, and their description available in the website. Many of these (35) are international ones, 17 are regional, and 6 concern the local/national level. The work is progressing, focusing especially on Africa in order to go deeper in the regions and in the countries.
- By analysing these programmes, more than 300 water-related indicators were already listed. They will be further described and included in the glossary on indicators, under development.
- As concerns the monitored sectors, these programmes focus mostly on water resources (46%) and environment/ecosystems (41%). Fifteen programmes are involved in monitoring water quality, 9 are dedicated to water and sanitation, and 7 to agriculture. Only 2 programmes among the mapped ones monitor climate / floods / droughts.
- If 47 monitoring programmes follow the global rationale, 7 can be listed within the project rationale and 4 within the national rationale. In addition, 20 programmes carry out the whole monitoring process, while the others (38) concentrate their efforts only on observing, assessing and/or reporting activities. Among these, 11 programmes are active on observing and reporting.

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