

The Measurement and Monitoring of WASH Affordability

Key Concepts, Findings and Recommendations from a Global Consultation

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Why Measure and Monitor WASH Affordability?

- It is one of the **normative criteria** of the human rights to safe drinking-water and sanitation
- Explicit mention in the **SDG WASH targets** – affordable water and equitable sanitation/hygiene
- When seeking to close financing gap, we need to know the **implications for poor and vulnerable households** of increasing tariffs
- Measurement helps identify those needing **financial assistance**, and informs decisions about how assistance can be targeted

We will not achieve the SDG targets
if we do not take into account affordability

Global Initiative on How to Measure and Monitor WASH Affordability

Goal

To develop a common vision and accepted methodology for monitoring WASH affordability globally for the SDG period and beyond

- ✓ Multi-stakeholder involvement
- ✓ Actionable monitoring plan

Process

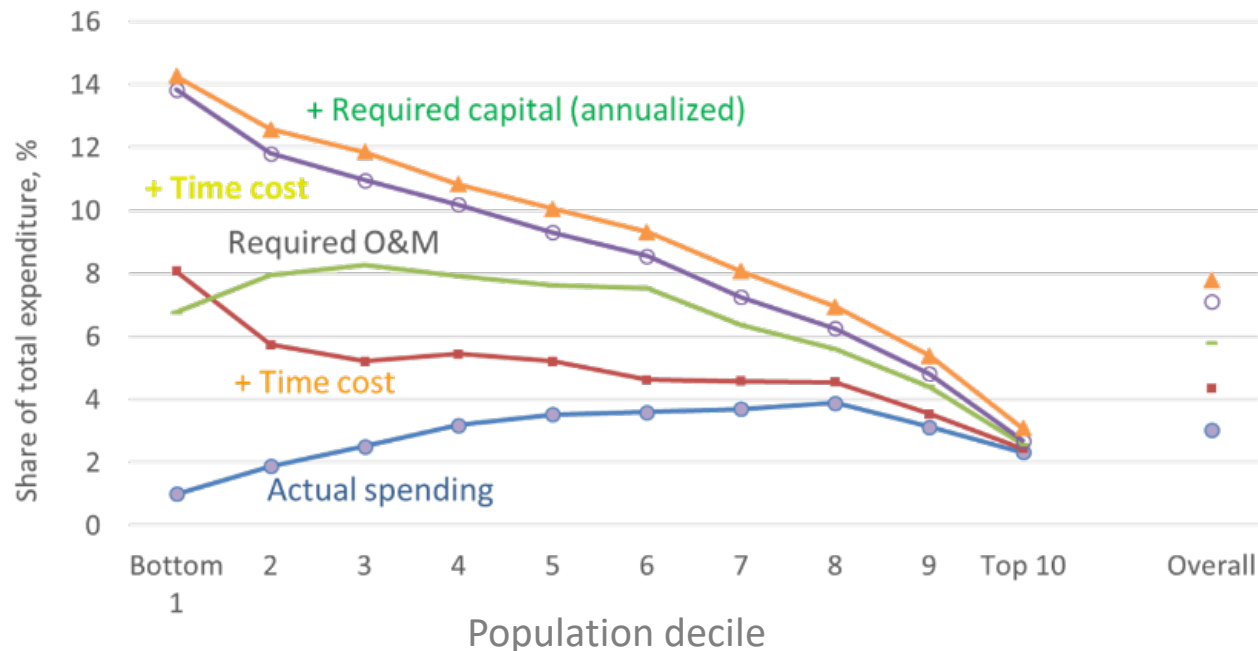
- ✓ Engaged experts from >20 international organisations, academia and national bodies over 3 years
- ✓ Conducted 6 country case studies
- ✓ Collected inputs from conference sessions and global webinars (Stockholm world water week, RWSN, SWA)



Report released in May 2021

Major Findings Published in Global Affordability Report

Illustrative case study, Ghana (GLSS6 survey)



Measuring actual household spending (on cost categories typically captured in household surveys) fails to indicate what affordability issues might be faced by a household

Main Conclusions

1. Measuring actual spending (on cost categories typically captured in household surveys) fails to indicate what affordability issues might be faced
2. Low expenditures are observed often because of low service level, and/or because full expenditures not well captured by one-time broad-spectrum surveys
3. The time costs indicate the value that (rural) households might place on their time and effort to access a basic service or below, + the gender and child dimensions
4. Insufficient data and experience with other assessment methodologies to conclude definitively on their utility for national monitoring (-> promise of utility databases)
5. Some aspects of affordability, including the evolution of policy responses and how it impacts what people access and what they pay, need to be examined through more detailed country-based studies

Key Recommendations

1. Initiate global monitoring on what households are spending on WASH, compared with total expenditures, using globally available data sets

- ✓ 50 countries with national expenditure surveys since 2016
- ✓ Adjust estimates: add time costs and fill service gaps
- ✓ Provide key disaggregations (by service, by service level, household categories)
- ✓ Tabulate by cut-offs (0-1%, 1-2% etc, of income spent on WASH) for countries to make own interpretations

2. Explore developing databases on country cost norms

- ✓ Different major categories of technology / levels of service
- ✓ Overlay data on subsidies and financing options
- ✓ Incorporate issues of sustainability and climate resilience

Key Recommendations

3. Strengthen country data for affordability assessments

- ✓ Formulate full list of standard questions for WASH costs on expenditure and affordability aspects, with prioritization for core questions
- ✓ Promote (additional) WASH questions in large-scale household surveys
- ✓ Promote small area application of WASH affordability survey in vulnerable populations
- ✓ Promote utility databases to incorporate standard costs nationally and globally, including strengthening the regulatory function
- ✓ Motivate and support more in-depth country studies on affordability, using full range of local data sources available

Key Recommendations

4. Promote and lead the policy dialogue on affordability

- ✓ Prepare policy briefs, drawing on the evidence
- ✓ Utilize surveys such as GLAAS to engage in active dialogue on response options
- ✓ Track changes in finances allocated to deserving populations

5. Engage in cross-sectoral dialogue on affordability thresholds

- ✓ Deepen analytical work on WASH affordability thresholds (by W, S, H; by household characteristic; by social welfare benefits)
- ✓ Engage with those responsible for poverty analyses and advocacy for public spending in other sectors, in international organizations and in countries

Next Steps

1. Development of a **guideline** underway to support countries in conducting national and sub-national assessments of WASH affordability (UNICEF & WHO)
2. Rollout of guideline on how to develop a **national WASH finance strategy**, including assessment of affordability when considering different financing options (UNICEF, IRC, SWA, AFD)

Thank You!

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