

Target number: 6.3

Indicator Number and Name: 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality

Agency: United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment)

Has work for the development of this indicator begun? Yes

Who are the entities, including national and international experts, directly involved and consulted in developing the methodology/and or data collection tools?

Experts from the UN Environment Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Water) Global Programme Coordination Unit, Capacity Development Centre (University College Cork, Ireland) and Data Centre (Federal Institute of Hydrology, Koblenz, Germany) as well as the UNEP-DHI Centre for Water and Environment and WHO Task Team were directly involved or consulted in the methodology development. Additionally, national experts from five proof-of-concept countries within the UN-Water coordinated Project Monitoring Water and Sanitation in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (known as GEMI; Senegal, Jordan, Uganda, Peru, Netherlands) and external reviewers were consulted in testing and revising the methodology.

Following consolidation of the reviews from the proof of concept the current first version was published and rolled out to 193 countries in a water quality baseline data collection drive in April 2017. Both data and feedback from countries on methodological and process aspects gained from this experience will be evaluated and considered in a future revision of the indicator.

What is the involvement of or how do you plan to involve National Statistical Systems in the development of the methodology?

Representatives of the NSS are part of the national monitoring teams of the GEMI proof-of-concept testing and refining the methodology according to national capacities and organizational structures.

Please briefly describe the process of developing the methodology for the indicator

The methodology has been adapted from a global water quality indicator previously developed by GEMS/Water in order to facilitate global comparability without putting avoidable excess burden on resources in any country. It allows countries to monitor and report according to their respective capacities and step-wise improve monitoring and indicator reporting coverage as capacities evolve (ladder approach). The methodology was tested and refined through consultation with the GEMI proof-of-concept countries in 2016.

Following the baseline data drive in 2017 the indicator methodology will undergo a revision based on the data, technical and process feedback from countries that have implemented the methodology and reported data. More than 25 countries have been consulted, either bilaterally or through workshops conducted by the GEMS/Water task team experts, on their experience in implementing the methodology or their capacities to do so in future. Specific multi-country consultation workshops are in the final stages of planning for Q4 2017 (Delft) and Q1 in 2018 (planned to take place in Brasilia associated to the World Water Forum).

Please indicate new international standards that will need to be proposed and approved by an intergovernmental process (such as UNSC) for this methodology.

No new standards will need to be proposed or approved in the context of indicator 6.3.2.

When do you expect the methodological work on this indicator to be completed?

GEMS/Water is an ongoing programme that works continuously with countries encouraging water quality monitoring and data sharing in the GEMStat database. GEMS/Water experts will continue to also inform the monitoring and reporting of the SDG indicator 6.3.2 on ambient water quality. Through this work and in the final stages of the GEMI Project feedback that will enhance the methodology will be obtained particularly in 2018 and in some detail on an on-going basis. The latter speaks particularly to the process of countries stepping up towards higher rungs on the monitoring ladder in terms of technical capacity and data. The next revision of the methodology is anticipated in the 1st half of 2018.

Are data and metadata already being collected from the National Statistical System for one or more components of this indicator?

Yes

If yes, please describe:

Data are being collected in the context of the 2017 baseline data drive. The data are in most cases provided by institutions and line ministries. National Statistical Offices are required to authorize the data submission.

As of end of September 2017, data for indicator 6.3.2 has been submitted to UN Environment by 33 countries and more countries are expected to submit by the end of the year.

In the 2017 baseline data drive, reporting for both indicator 6.3.2 and 6.6.1 (water related ecosystems) has been aligned to collect data not only at the national level but also disaggregated by reporting basin districts that consist of one or more river basins and by water body types. The metadata collected provides information on the reporting basin districts, the number of monitoring locations and measured water quality values as well as the water quality target values used to assess the quality of water bodies.

How do you plan to collect the data?

- x Send questionnaire(s) to country
- Obtain data directly from country database/website
- x Joint survey/compilation with national agency and international entity
- Satellite images, remote sensing
- x Other: the main data source are nationally collected in situ water quality monitoring data; globally technology and scientific development will show as to what level detailed water quality information can be supplemented over time by remote sensing information

If the indicator involves multiple components from different data sources, please describe how each individual component of the indicator will be collected here.

N/A

With what frequency is data expected to be collected?

On a three year basis

Is there a process of data validation by countries in place or planned for this indicator?

Yes

If yes, please briefly describe:

Water quality data that institutions and line ministries provide to the NSS are expected to have undergone local and national data validation processes; data being made available to the UN Environment Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Water) Programme undergo rigorous QA/QC checks by the Data Centre at the Federal Institute of Hydrology.

Please note:

Under the UN-Water umbrella, a joint and collaborative monitoring effort under the GEMI Project has been established which involves relevant UN entities and aims to ensure coherence in implementation of global monitoring and reporting for SDG 6 (namely targets 6.3 to 6.6) including “ambient water quality” indicator 6.3.2.

The 2017 baseline data drive is currently taking place through the GEMI project.

The indicator 6.3.2 methodology builds on international standards and many countries are collecting the required information albeit not always on a regular basis, the required spatial resolution or spatial extent. The methodology is conceptually clear, but will undergo a revision based on the experience from countries implementing the methodology in the on-going data drive. GEMS/Water is planning (financial support allowing) to also reestablish the international Performance Evaluation experiments which based on laboratory intercalibration have proven to be very instrumental in QA/QC.