

HYGIENE

UN-WATER GLAAS FINDINGS
ON NATIONAL POLICIES,
PLANS, TARGETS AND
FINANCE

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KEY MESSAGES

Understanding how governments and external support agencies (ESAs) are addressing hygiene is critical during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to be so after. Approaches to increase handwashing with soap and provide infrastructure for hygiene, as well as activities to promote and complement hygiene practices, contribute to improved public health. Therefore, it is important to understand what actions are being taken by governments to enable hygiene promotion, facilities and handwashing with soap. This highlight summarizes data collected by the UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking-Water (GLAAS) initiative led by the World Health Organization on how governments and ESAs are supporting hygiene.

1. Countries have national policies and plans for hygiene; however, they lack the financial and human resources to fully implement them.

Only 9% of countries with costed hygiene plans reported having enough financial resources to implement the plan. While policies and plans are important for hygiene, they need resources behind them.

2. Governments report insufficient funding for hygiene to achieve national targets.

Only 4% of countries reported having sufficient financial resources to achieve national hygiene targets. While governments report having insufficient funding for national hygiene targets, hygiene comprises 4% of government water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) budgets.

3. Household expenditures are high compared to government expenditure.

While a lack of consistent, comparable hygiene data impedes analysis, results from five countries show that household expenditure on hygiene is likely a significant portion of all household WASH expenditure.

4. Hygiene data are limited in availability and quality.

While data on hygiene policies, plans, targets, budgets and expenditures do exist, these data need to be improved. Only 9 of 38 countries were able to provide current coverage data for their hygiene targets. Only 18 countries reported hygiene budgets, and 17 countries reported hygiene expenditures, though few countries were able to provide expenditure data covering multiple sources of hygiene funding. In the GLAAS 2018/2019 ESA survey, only two ESAs provided partial data on aid flows for hygiene.

5. The lack of an internationally agreed-upon definition of hygiene provides challenges for reporting on and comparing hygiene data.

Without an agreed-upon definition of hygiene, it is often unclear what is included in data on hygiene. For example, the data could refer to only handwashing, hygiene promotion activities, food hygiene or some combination of those topics. Without a clearer definition of hygiene, comparability of country data on hygiene is limited.

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