

Regional Initiative for Establishing a  
Regional Mechanism for Improved  
Monitoring and Reporting on Access to  
Water Supply and Sanitation Services  
in the Arab Region (MDG+ Initiative)

**Supporting the move from the MDGs  
to SDGs in the Arab Region**



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## Water for Sustainable Development



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The international community continues to demonstrate support for purposing universal access to human rights and basic needs necessary for development, which is consistently echoed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

*“A world where we reaffirm our commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and where there is improved hygiene; and where food is sufficient, safe, affordable and nutritious. A world where human habitats are safe, resilient and sustainable and where there is universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy”*

**Source:** United Nations, *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (Draft outcome document of the United Nations Summit for the Adoption of the post-2015 Development Agenda), September 2015.



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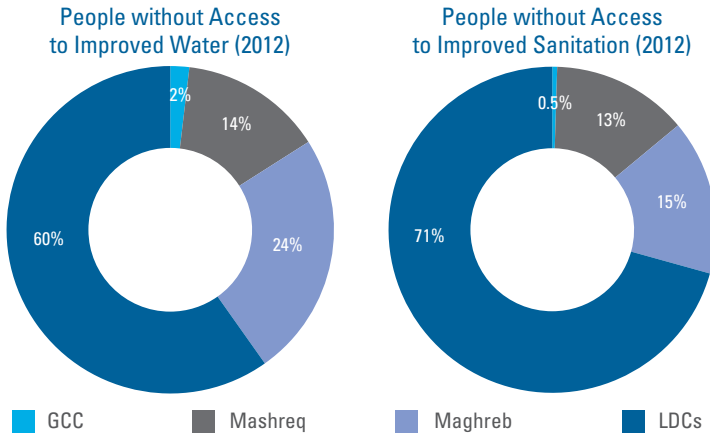


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## MDGs: Targeting Improved Access to Drinking Water and Sanitation

Out of an Arab population estimated at 363 million people in 2012, roughly 15%, or 55 million people, did not have access to improved drinking water sources, and 18% percent, or 66 million people, did not have access to improved sanitation facilities. Some Arab states achieved, or were on track to achieve, the global Millennium Development Goal 7 that seeks to halve the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, while others were not able to do so.

### Sub-Regional Distribution of People without Access to Improved Water and Sanitation in the Arab Region - 2012



**Source:** Calculations by ESCWA, based on national data sets available on the online database of the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (2014), available at: <http://www.wssinfo.org>.

However, achieving the MDG target does not reflect regional factors that affect the regularity, quality or affordability of these services, such as water scarcity, rapid population growth and urbanization, service intermittency, insufficient investment in water-related infrastructure, costs, ongoing conflicts and water quality concerns. These issues are currently being considering in the development of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to achieve universal access to water and sanitation for all.

## The MDG+ Initiative



The MDG+ Initiative was launched to inform and foster understanding about access to water and sanitation in the Arab Region. The initiative is based on a set of regional specific indicators that take into consideration the challenges associated with accessing these basic services in Arab states.

The MDG+ Initiative is an outcome of a series of resolutions adopted by the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) since its first ministerial session June 2009, which request ESCWA to coordinate with ACWUA and partners the establishment of a regional mechanism for improved monitoring and reporting on water supply and sanitation indicators in the Arab region.

### The MDG+ Initiative aims to:

#### **Foster a Regional Approach**

- Regional indicators can help to monitor regional-specific conditions affecting access to water and sanitation, such as the challenge of intermittency and water scarcity that affects the provision of water services in many Arab States.
- Global indicators, methodologies and monitoring mechanisms may ignore regional and national contexts, such as the ways in which access to water services are managed and monitored. Health ministries and statistical offices may not have regular access to information that is otherwise generated or reported by ministries responsible for water or water utilities in the region.

## Establish Institutional Mechanisms

- Inter-agency cooperation and communication is essential to secure the information needed regarding access to basic water services, as well as the quality and affordability of those services at the community level.

## Inform a Regional Policy Perspective

- Strengthening regional dialogue and reporting country-level information provided by Arab governments on water and sanitation contributes to the policy dialogue surrounding discussions on the water-related SDGs.

### The MDG+ Initiative is thus comprised of four main components, namely a:

- **Data component** – that collects information on a set of region-specific water supply and sanitation indicators based on an approved questionnaire template. Pilot field surveys are also conducted to complement the national datasets.
- **Training component** – that included the preparation of training materials and an e-tool for supporting data collection in a harmonized manner.
- **Institutional component** – that is centred on the set-up of National Monitoring Teams led by National Focal Points.
- **Policy component** – that examines the MDG+ Initiative indicators and monitoring mechanism in light of the current negotiations on the SDGs.



## MDG+ Initiative: Regional Specific Indicators



The following is a description of the MDG+ Initiative set of region-specific indicators that take into account the challenges affecting access to water and sanitation services in the Arab Region.

### MDG+ Indicators on Water Supply

Water Consumption	The total amount of water consumed daily by an average member of the population (liters/capita/day) for domestic use. The amount of water consumed varies widely from one Arab country to another, and also varies between rural and urban areas within the same country. It reflects the extent of water availability used to cover domestic water demand, and can help define the need to adjusted supply and demand management policies.
Continuity of Supply	The proportion of the population using water from a house connection or stand pipe who receive their water either daily, 3-4 days weekly, once a week, biweekly, or less than biweekly. This indicator highlights the need for supplemental water supply to households, or the need for household water storage. Increased demand due to growing urban populations, limited water resources, and aging infrastructure are some of the factors contributing to discontinuity of supply. Tracking frequency of water delivery to consumers could prompt utilities to investigate reasons for low service levels.
Water Quality	The proportion of the population using water from a house connection or stand pipe that has been disinfected at the source. Although this indicator does not measure water quality at the consumer end, it is a major improvement compared to current practice where water quality simply is not monitored or reported.
Distance to Source	The proportion of the population obtaining their water from a water source located within a 1,000 m round trip distance from the source in rural areas, or who spend 30 minutes or less collecting water in urban areas. This could be useful information in highlighting the need for additional water sources in rural areas, and additional water distribution networks in urban areas.
Tariff Structure	The proportion of population connected to a house network and billed either a flat tariff, or a volumetric tariff. This indicator can help clarify the affordability of water services for consumers, and the financial sustainability of water supply utilities.
Affordability	The financial burden associated with the cost of water in proportion to income. Since access to water is a human right, and water and sanitation must be affordable for society's poor, this indicator to measure the affordability of water is necessary.

## MDG+ Indicators on Sanitation

<b>Treated Quantity</b>	The proportion of the population connected to sewer networks, with collected wastewater receiving treatment prior to discharge. This indicator indirectly provides valuable information on the pollution load on the environment from wastewater disposal.
<b>Treatment Type</b>	The proportion of the population connected to a sewer network that receives primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment before reuse or direct discharge. Wastewater treatment and the level of treatment vary widely throughout the Arab region due to factors such as the associated expense and rapid population growth.
<b>Reuse Utilization</b>	The proportion of the population connected to a sewer network with collected wastewater reused without treatment or with primary, secondary or tertiary treatment. With the aim of quantifying the amount of treated wastewater being reused, this indicator highlights the role treated wastewater can play as a reliable water resource in the region.
<b>Reuse Type</b>	The proportion of the population connected to a sewer network with collected wastewater reused, with or without treatment, for agricultural, municipal or groundwater recharge purposes. Information on the type of reuse for collected wastewater is an extremely valuable resource for planners and decision makers when thinking of environmental policies and strategies for integrated water resource management.
<b>Tariff Structure</b>	The proportion of the population connected to a sewer network and billed either a flat tariff or a volumetric tariff. The type of tariff structure impacts the quantity of wastewater produced, and the overall sustainability of sanitation services.
<b>Affordability</b>	The financial burden associated with the cost of connection to a sewer network in proportion to income. This indicator can show to what extent the sanitation services are affordable, particularly for the poorest segment of society, while attempting to maintain adequate cost recovery for the sanitation sector.

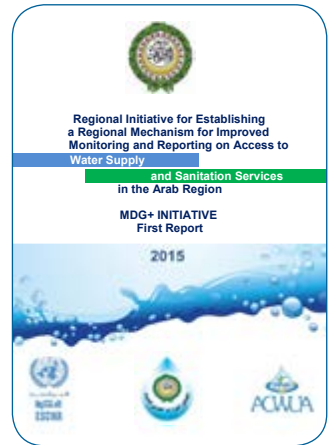
<b>Enhancing regional and national monitoring capacity</b>	<b>Pilot field surveys</b>
To date, 18 National Focal Points have been nominated and 18 National Monitoring Teams have been established to collect and examine data on the MDG+ indicators at the national level.	<p>Pilot field surveys are being conducted with RAED to provide local insights that complement the national datasets.</p> <p>The survey questionnaire contains:  39 main questions  125 sub-questions</p>



# MDG+ Initiative First Report 2015

The first MDG+ Initiative periodic report was endorsed by the Arab Ministerial Water Council in May 2015 and presents data on the water supply and sanitation indicators for the following Arab States:

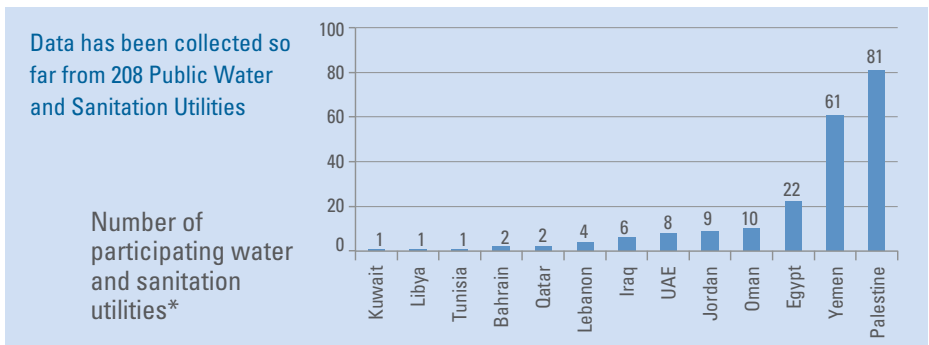
Bahrain	Egypt
Iraq	Jordan
Kuwait	Libya
Oman	Palestine
Qatar	Tunisia
UAE	



The first report also presents results from the pilot field surveys conducted in the following:

Mauritania	Sudan	Palestine	Yemen
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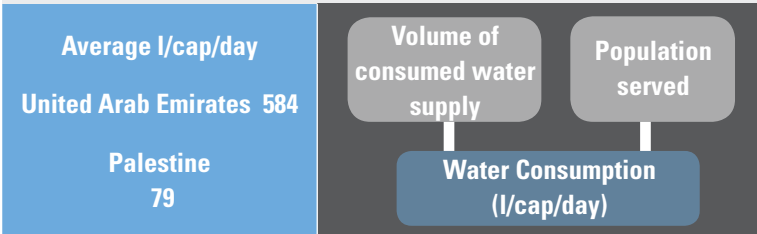
The MDG+ Initiative is financially supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)



\*Utilities providing data for the MDG+ Initiative First Report 2015 and the forthcoming 2016 MDG+ report and representing nearly all public sector water and sanitation utilities in the noted countries.

## Water Supply Indicators

Average water consumption from piped water networks varies between Arab countries and between urban and rural areas within the same country

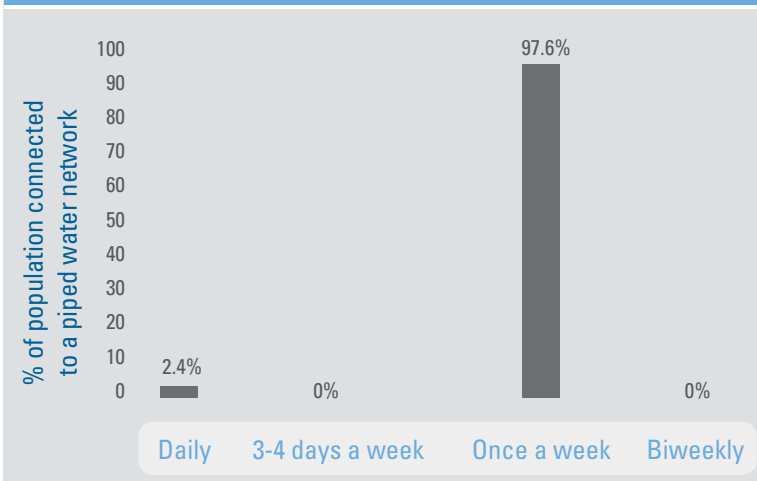


Source: MDG+ First Report (2015)

Continuity of water supply indicator highlights the variations in water supply between Arab states and thus points out the need for supplemental water supply to households, or the need for household water storage.

In Jordan, 97.6 % of population connected to a piped water network receive their water once a week.

### Continuity of water supply: Jordan

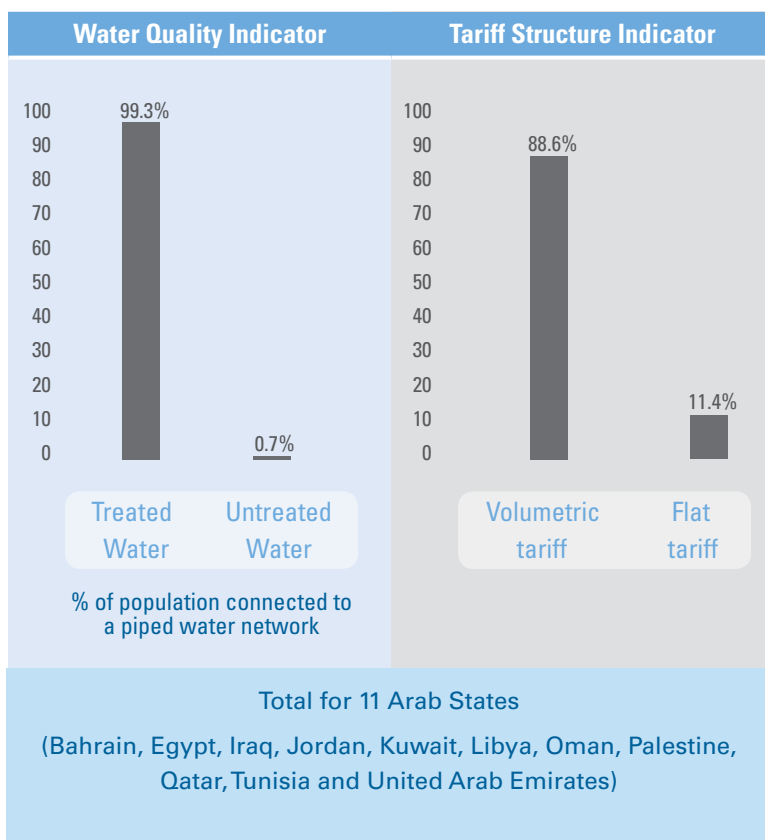


Source: MDG+ First Report (2015)

## Water Supply Indicators

In the 11 Arab States contributing to the 2015 MDG+ Report, 99.3% of the population is connected to a piped water network and are supplied with treated (disinfected) water.

In the 11 Arab States, 88.6% of population connected to a piped water network pay for water services based on a volumetric tariff rate.



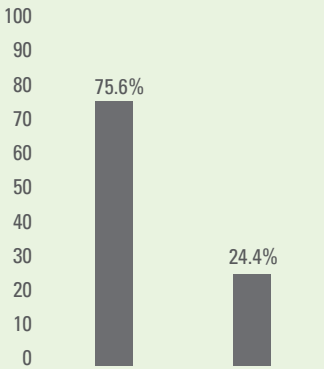
Source: MDG+ First Report (2015)

## Sanitation Indicators

In the 11 Arab States, 75.6% of the wastewater volume collected annually by piped sewer networks is treated.

In the 11 Arab States, 52.1% of wastewater volume collected annually by piped sewer networks is subject to secondary treatment.

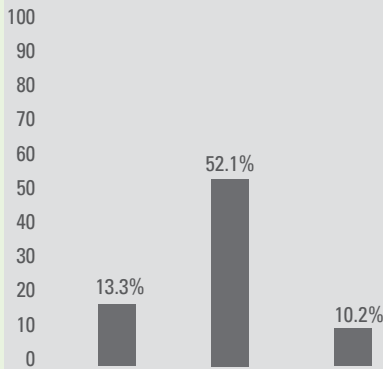
### Treated Wastewater Quantity



Treated Wastewater    Untreated Wastewater

% of the annually collected wastewater volume by piped sewer networks

### Treatment Type indicator



Primary Treatment    Secondary Treatment    Tertiary Treatment

% of the annually collected wastewater volume by piped sewer networks

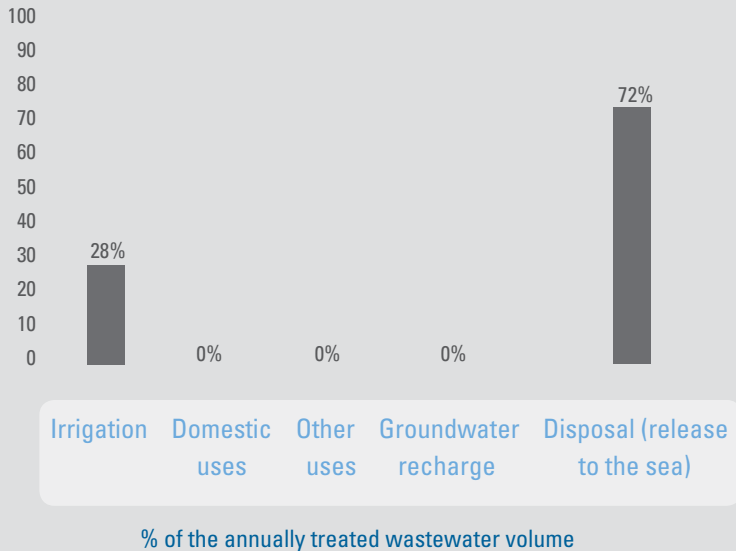
### Total for 11 Arab States

(Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates)

## Sanitation Indicators

The reuse of treated wastewater indicator provides important information on the potential environmental impact of wastewater disposal, it also highlights that treated wastewater can be a reliable water source that needs to be incorporated within the overall management of water resources, especially in the water-scarce Arab region.

### Wastewater reuse: Bahrain



In Bahrain, 28% of the annually treated wastewater volume is reused for irrigation.

Source: MDG+ First Report (2015)

# Looking Beyond 2015: Informing the SDGs

## The adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

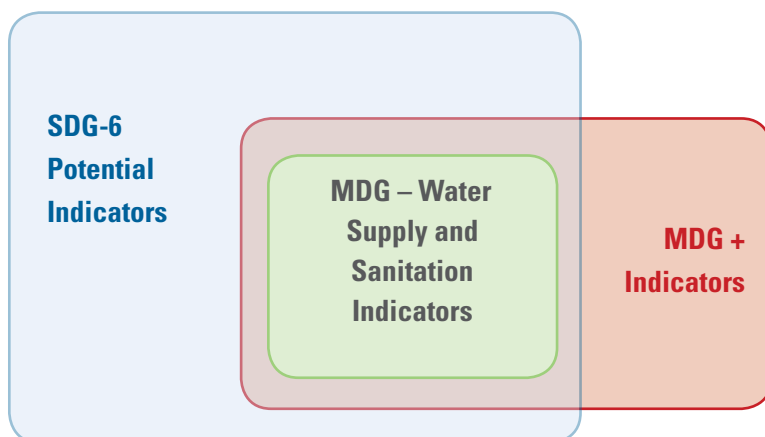
- 17 SDGs (Goals), and 169 Targets were approved by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015.
- SDG 6 on Water and Sanitation, with 8 Targets on Water Supply and Sanitation and Water Resources.
- At least 10 other SDGs explicitly or implicitly address water-related issues.

## SDG-6: Ensure Availability & Sustainable Management of Water & Sanitation for All

6.1   by 2030	Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
6.2   by 2030	Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all, and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
6.3   by 2030	Improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater, and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally
6.4   by 2030	Substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity, and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity
6.5   by 2030	Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate
6.6   by 2020	Protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes
6.A   by 2030	Expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies
6.B   -	Support and strengthen the participation of local communities for improving water and sanitation management

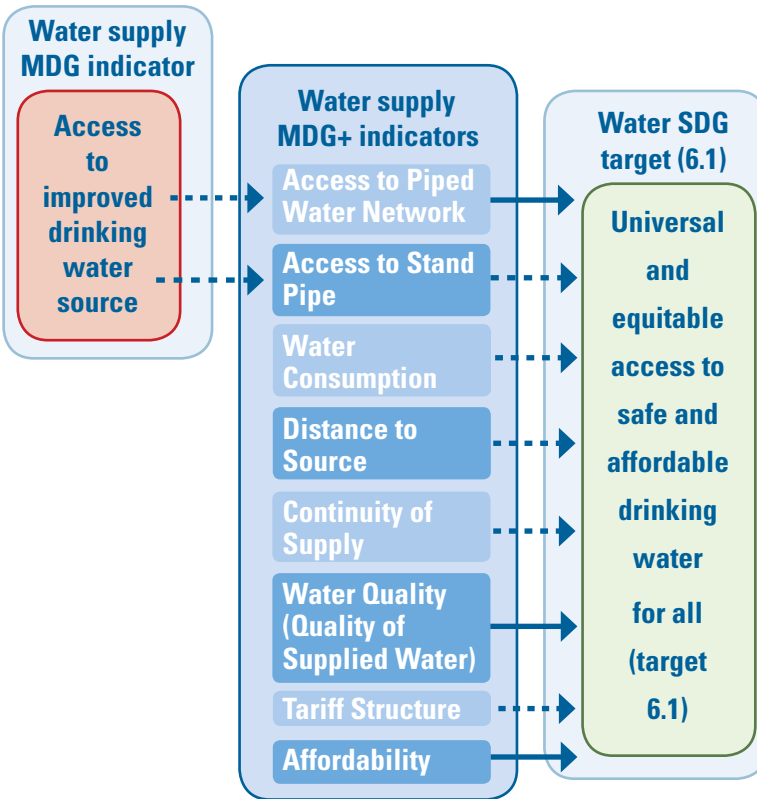
## SDG-6: Ensure Availability & Sustainable Management of Water & Sanitation for All

The water-related SDGs and targets under consideration are more comprehensive and integrated than those put forth in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and include targets that take into consideration some of the concerns raised by Arab governments and articulated in the MDG+ Initiative.



There are common potential water related indicators between the MDG, the SDG and those of the MDG+ Initiative.

## Potential interconnection between MDG+ water supply indicators and the Water SDG target 6.1



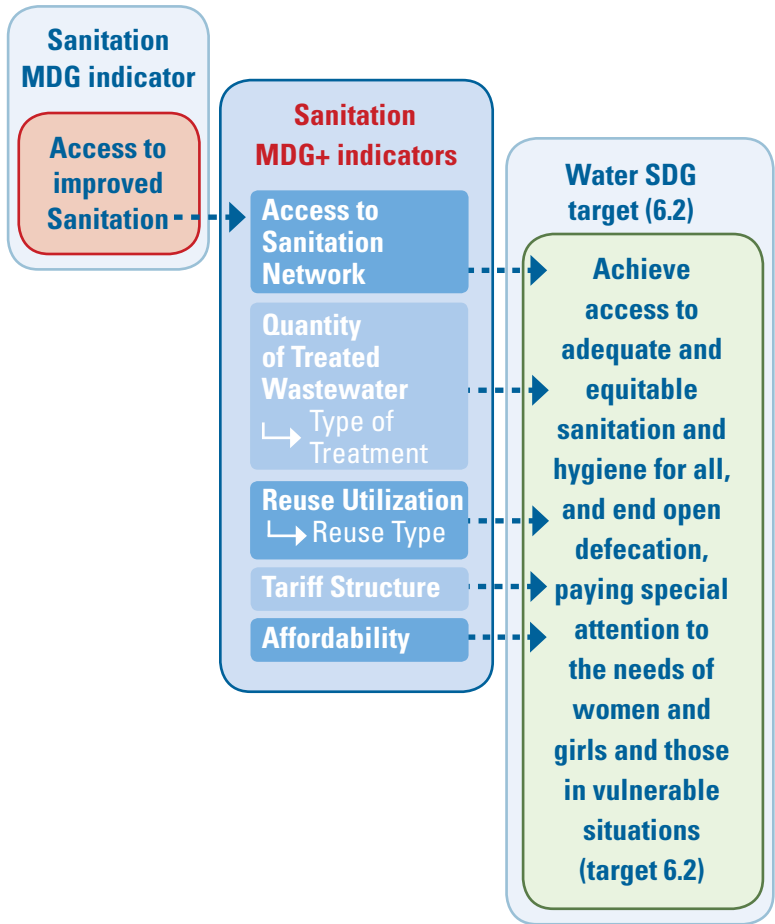
—→ Contribute directly to the evaluation of the SDG target

- - - → Potential to contribute to the evaluation of the SDG target

All the water supply indicators of the MDG+ Initiative could be of use to evaluate the Water SDG target (6.1). In addition, some MDG+ indicators such as affordability and water quality could be directly used to evaluate the “*access to safe and affordable drinking water*” included in the Water SDG target 6.1.



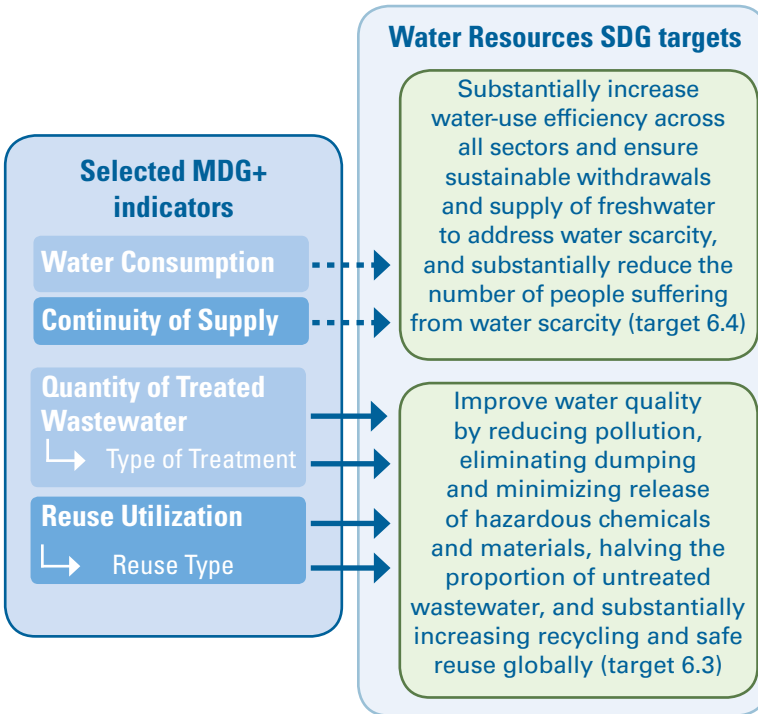
## Potential interconnection between MDG+ sanitation indicators and the Water SDG target 6.2



---> Potential to contribute to the evaluation of the SDG target

All the sanitation indicators of the MDG+ Initiative could contribute to the evaluation of the Water SDG target 6.2.

## Potential interconnection between selected MDG+ indicators and the Water SDG targets 6.3 & 6.4



—> Contribute directly to the evaluation of the SDG targets

- - -> Potential to contribute to the evaluation of the SDG targets

The water supply and sanitation indicators of the MDG+ Initiative could be of use to evaluate other water SDG targets, for example, water consumption and continuity of water supply indicators could contribute to the evaluation of the Water SDG target (6.4). In addition, some MDG+ sanitation indicators related to wastewater treatment and reuse could be directly used to evaluate the “proportion of untreated wastewater” and “increasing recycling and safe reuse” included in the Water SDG target 6.3.

## MDG+ Initiative Partners

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UNITED NATIONS  
 الإسكوا  
**ESCWA**



**League of Arab States**



**Arab Ministerial Water Council**



**Arab Countries Water Utilities Association**



**Centre for Environment and Development of the Arab Region and Europe**



**Arab Water Council**



**Arab Network for Environment and Development**



**World Health Organization**

## Donor

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**Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)**

For more information, visit the MDG+ Initiative website: <http://www.acwua.org/mdg+>

