

The 2017 JMP Thematic Report on Safely Managed Drinking Water

What does it mean for rural water services?

The 2017 JMP report contains a wealth of data on WASH services at the global, national and subnational level and provides a baseline for monitoring the SDGs. Below are some of the highlights of the report with a focus on rural water services; for more information please see the full report and the data on <https://washdata.org/>.

Access to water services

71% of the global population is estimated to have safely managed water services, while 2.1 billion people do not use a safely managed drinking water service. The global estimate of the population serviced by safely managed water services is the weighted average of the population using safely managed services in rural (55%) and urban (85%) areas (Figure 1).

- *Technical note: Safely managed drinking water service is a new JMP indicator defined as an improved water source (piped water supply, well or borehole, protected well, protected springs, and packaged or delivered water) located on premises, available when needed and free from fecal or chemical contamination. (see Figure 2)*

89 per cent of the global population (6.5 billion people) uses at least a basic water service.

- *Technical note: The JMP continues to track the population using basic water services, which has been defined as an improved source within 30 minutes' round trip to collect water (including queuing time). (see Figure 2)*

844 million people still lacked basic drinking water services. This includes 263 million people who spent over 30 minutes per round trip to collect water from an improved source (constituting a limited drinking water service), 423 million used unimproved sources (such as unprotected wells and springs) and 159 million people who still collected drinking water directly from surface water sources, more than half of whom lived in sub-Saharan Africa. In 22 countries, over 10 per cent of the population still relies on untreated surface water. Of the 161 million people using untreated surface water (from lakes, rivers or irrigation channels), 150 million live in rural areas.

Figure 1: Number of people using different levels of water services in 2015, urban & rural (each unit represents 100 million people) (Source: JMP, 2017)

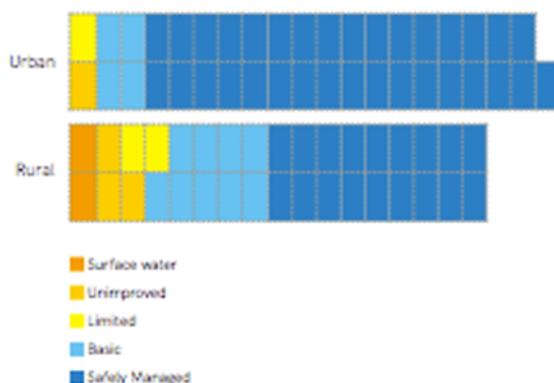


Figure 2: JMP definitions for tracking water services for the SDG (Source: JMP, 2017)

SERVICE LEVEL	DEFINITION
SAFELY MANAGED	Drinking water from an improved water source that is located on premises, available when needed and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination
BASIC	Drinking water from an improved source, provided collection time is not more than 30 minutes for a round trip, including queuing
LIMITED	Drinking water from an improved source for which collection time exceeds 30 minutes for a round trip, including queuing
UNIMPROVED	Drinking water from an unprotected dug well or unprotected spring
SURFACE WATER	Drinking water directly from a river, dam, lake, pond, stream, canal or irrigation canal

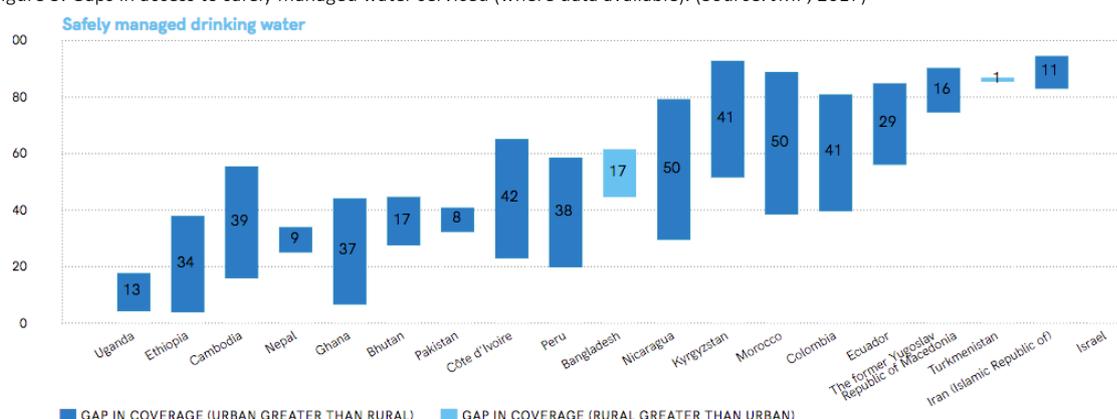
Note: Improved sources include: piped water, boreholes or tubewells, protected dug wells, protected springs, and packaged or delivered water.

Inequalities in access to water services

Urban / rural divide in access to safely managed water: Globally, two out of three people using safely managed drinking water services live in urban areas. The greatest disparities in water service levels between urban and rural areas relate to accessibility and quality, which are 25 and 34 percentage points higher, respectively, in urban areas. In almost all countries where data are available, there are large gaps between urban and rural coverage of safely managed water services. (Figure 3)

Inequalities in access to basic services: 4 in 5 countries below 95% coverage are NOT on track to achieve universal basic water services by 2030. The Solomon Islands have made the least progress since 2000, while 15 countries are on track to achieving universal access to basic services by 2030, including Lao PDR, Morocco, Mongolia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bolivia and Turkmenistan. Inequalities in access to basic water services tend to be the greatest in countries with the largest spread between the richest and the poorest. Data also shows inequality in access to basic water services at the subnational level through new estimates derived from household surveys and censuses. Populations living in fragile and conflict-afflicted areas are four times as likely to lack basic drinking water as populations in non-fragile situations.

Figure 3: Gaps in access to safely managed water serviced (where data available). (Source: JMP, 2017)



M&E and data gaps for tracking water services

Estimates for safely managed drinking water were available for 96 countries (representing only 35 per cent of the global population), and for four out of eight SDG regions. There was insufficient data to estimate safely managed water services in Oceania, Western Asia and Northern Africa, Eastern Asia and South-Eastern Asia, and Australia and New Zealand. The JMP found that data for monitoring safely managed drinking water are more readily available in urban than in rural areas; where these data were not yet available, the JMP only reported the population using at least a basic level of service.

Other JMP data and indicators of interest to the RWSN community

Reliance on packaged and delivered water: In 15 countries, at least 20% of the population drink bottled water (and use an improved source for other purposes); and in 18 countries, more than 5% of the population relied on water delivered by tanker trucks.

- *Technical note: packaged water and delivered water (including bottled and sachet water, and water delivered by tanker trucks) were previously treated as unimproved, but will be treated as improved and classified them as limited, basic or safely managed based on the criteria outlined in Figure 2 (accessibility and distance). This has only had a minor impact on global statistics, because the JMP previously counted bottled water as improved when the source of water used for other purposes was improved, which is nearly always the case.*

Handwashing: In 34 out of 38 African countries (where data was available), less than 50% of the population used basic handwashing facilities in 2015 (defined as people living in households that have a handwashing facility with soap and water available on premises). Coverage of basic handwashing facilities was lower in rural areas in all regions with data available in 2015.