

# WHAT PROGRESS LOOKS LIKE

## GHANA – DRINKING WATER

### (SDG TARGET 6.1)

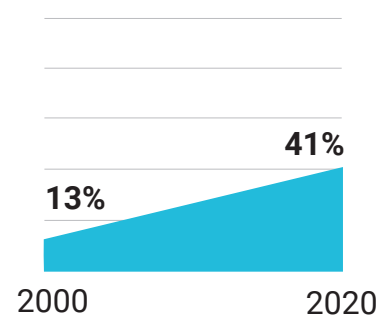


**Progress indicator:** SDG 6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services

**Level of impact:** National (32 million people and \$169 billion in gross domestic product)

**Result:** Coverage of safely managed drinking water services increased by 28 percentage points, totalling 41% of the population. In the same period, coverage of at least basic drinking water services increased by 22 percentage points from 64% in 2000 to 86% in 2020.

**Progress 2000–2020:**



## SITUATION

Target 6.1 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 is to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water by 2030. This means people using a safely managed drinking water service, which is an improved drinking water source available on premises and when needed, and that is free of faecal and priority chemical contamination. Examples of improved drinking water sources include piped water, boreholes, protected dug wells and springs, and packaged or delivered water. If the improved source does not meet the criteria for accessibility, availability or quality, but less than 30 minutes are required to collect the water, the service is referred to as basic.

Since 2000, Ghana has seen the fastest improvement in coverage of safely managed drinking water services in Sub-Saharan Africa, with coverage increasing by 1.4 percentage points per year. In 2020, 41 per cent of the population had access to such services, compared to only 13 per cent in 2000. The current improvement rate is however not enough to achieve universal access by 2030.

While 92 per cent of the population used improved drinking water sources in 2020, only 85 per cent had water that was available when needed, only 55 per cent had water that was free from contamination and just 41 per cent had water accessible on premises. As such, accessibility is the limiting factor for safely managed drinking water in Ghana.

Ghana's national drinking water target is to achieve universal access to basic services by 2030. With coverage rising from 64 per cent in 2000 to 86 per cent in 2020 (i.e. a yearly increase of 1.1 percentage points), the country is almost on track to achieve this target (which requires a yearly increase of 1.4 percentage points).

However, disaggregated data on the coverage of basic services reveal inequalities between urban (96 per cent) and rural areas (72 per cent), between the richest (99 per cent) and poorest (48 per cent), and between different subnational regions (98 per cent in the capital area of Greater Accra and 44 per cent in the northern Upper East region). Between 2000 and 2020, Ghana was able to reduce the gap in coverage between the richest and poorest population groups, but the northern parts of the country remain challenged by water scarcity and high levels of fluoride in the groundwater.



Examples of other challenges include law enforcement in water source protection areas, land ownership disputes, water services delivery (e.g. network leakages, illegal connections, poor operation and maintenance), regulation of water services providers (utilities and CSOs, private sectors) and regulation of increasing groundwater withdrawals.

## PROGRESS MADE

High-level political support has been key for improving the coverage of safely managed drinking water services. Examples of this are national target-setting, Ghana's active role in the regional African Ministers' Council on Water, and the President's engagement in the global water agenda.

Over recent decades, Ghana has focused on improving water governance, for example through integrated water resources management and water basin boards tasked with monitoring and evaluation. The Water Resources Commission regulates and manages the country's water resources and coordinates related government policies, including the National Water Policy approved in 2007 and the Water Sector Strategic Development Plan approved in 2014. Nevertheless, gaps remain in the regulatory framework and institutional arrangements for drinking water.

Drinking water services in urban areas (circa 94 supply systems) are provided by one company, Ghana Water

Company Limited. The Community Water and Sanitation Agency coordinates the provision of drinking water services in rural areas (circa 1033 supply systems), implemented by several different actors including the public sector, local communities, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations. Standards exist for both drinking water quality (implemented in 2021) and delivery requirements (implemented in 2005 for urban areas and 2010 for rural areas). While the Ghana Water Company Limited is regulated by the Public Utility Regulatory Commission, the regulation of the Community Water and Sanitation Agency is still unclear. Both in urban and rural areas there are also many self-supplied point sources that are not regulated at all.

While public investment has typically focused on larger cities and towns, non-governmental organizations, charities and the private sector have been central to financing work in small villages and remote areas. A mechanism exists for cross-subsidies from wealthier communities to poorer ones, which is especially important for sanitation. The government and development partners also provide small subsidies to help households install toilets and piped sewage systems, enabling a sanitary environment and indirectly protecting local drinking water sources.

Most government planning processes, including resource allocation for new water projects, are grounded in decisions made based on available data.

### KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

- High-level political support with national target-setting and engagement in regional and global processes
- Strong policy basis and evidence-based planning
- Centralized responsibility for the provision of drinking water services in urban areas
- Financing from several different actors including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, charities and development partners

### LEARN MORE

- [National Water Policy and Water Sector Strategic Development Plan](#)
- [WASH data from WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme](#)
- [Country survey on WASH systems and investments, GLAAS report 2022](#)
- [Overall progress on SDG 6 in Ghana](#)