



Mutual Accountability Mechanism

FAQ

Making a commitment

How are commitments defined?

Governments are expected to engaged with the SWA's Mutual Accountability Mechanism (MAM) through submitting commitments (strategic targets) that, through multi-stakeholder dialogue, are drawn from national plans. SWA partners from all constituencies are expected to rally behind by making commitments that reflect their own role in achieving these national targets.

What if my government has not made any commitments?

Whether partners should or should not make commitments before the government is a decision to be made by the constituency – and is likely to have different answers in different contexts. For instance, there are countries where the MAM has become an advocacy tool for CSOs: NGOs made commitments first, and then used the global exposure provided by the partnership to pressure the government to follow suit. At the same time, there are countries where CSOs have chosen not make a commitment before the government, based on the understanding that the state is the duty bearer and has legal obligations of progressively realizing the human right to water and sanitation.

Should international organizations also make commitments at the national level?

Absolutely. The effort of strengthening multi-stakeholder platforms and mutual accountability at the national level also includes global partners that operate at the country level, such as UN and multi-lateral agencies, INGOs and international research and learning institutions. These organizations are expected to present global commitments through their headquarters as well as national level commitments through their country offices.

What are SMART commitments?

Commitments should be Specific (is it sufficiently detailed?), Measurable (quantitative or qualitatively), Actionable (does it contribute to change behavior?), Relevant (does it help to fix an issue?), and Time-bound (by when?), such that progress can be reviewed and reported upon.

The Secretariat is available to support partners to ensure their commitments are SMART. When a commitment is ready, it must be officially submitted to SWA via this [link](#). Within 24 hours, it will be visible in the country's dedicated page in the [SWA website](#) (see "Our Partners").

Top 5 commitment pitfalls: • too short time frame; • not anchored in national plans; • not inclusive/ lacking multi-stakeholder consultation; • too ambitious, or not clear how it will be achieved; • incomplete or complex statements, or many commitments in one.

Reviewing commitments

Who is responsible for reporting on commitments?

The organization (lead body) that made the commitment is responsible for periodically reviewing and reporting its progress to national development partners and to SWA. This stage is just as important as making the commitment, as it is what will ensure that mutual accountability happens in practice.

How often should a commitment be reported upon?

As SWA wishes to avoid creating parallel processes and adding to partners' workload, the periodicity in which commitments are reviewed depends on what is relevant for national processes: reviews may happen during Joint Sector Review meetings, or during a WASH forum, or while countries prepare for SWA's high-level meetings. It is important, however, that commitments are reviewed in a multi-stakeholder manner, involving as many constituencies as possible – ideally in meetings or workshops and, when not possible, through interviews or the online circulation of reports for feedback.

How do we measure our progress?

Depending on the content of the commitment, its assessment can be qualitative or quantitative, and its judgement depends on the conclusions reached through multi-stakeholder discussions. The 'SMARTer' a commitment is, the easier it will be to monitor and report upon it.

The most important aspect of the commitments' cycle is that it adds value to national level processes: the MAM's objective is to promote a culture of collaboration in decision-making and action, and to prompt behaviour change amongst the relevant actors.

Reporting your progress

Do we need to inform SWA about our progress?

Once a commitment has been reviewed, the organisation responsible for it is expected to inform the broader partnership of its progress. *To do this, a simple online form must be filled. To receive this link or an offline form, please get in touch with the Secretariat.*

What kind of information must we provide?

When filling in the progress report form, you will be asked to give a short description of the progress achieved, including challenges, bottlenecks, successes; and to inform how much has been achieved: no progress, limited progress (25-49%), some progress (50-74%), almost fully achieved (75-99%) and fully achieved (100%). You are also invited to attach supporting evidence.

Will the SWA Secretariat review our performance report?

Partnerships must be underpinned by trust. For mutual accountability, it is internal mechanisms (e.g. self-assessment, peers) rather than external compulsion that are central to ensuring compliance.

Progress reports received will be read by the MAM and Country Engagement teams and, if necessary, follow up questions will be sent for clarification. After that, the Secretariat will work

to ‘name and fame’ partners that are observing their commitments, engaging well with the MAM and promoting accountability in the WASH sector. We will showcase your work through publishing articles, social media posts, newsletters and the MAM Global Report (the first report will be published in November 2021), as well as through our webinars and high-level meetings.

And if we haven’t fully achieved our goals?

A commitment does not need to be fully achieved before it can be reported upon. Sharing information about your difficulties in achieving targets may result in further support from the partnership, and the lessons learned are always useful to other countries facing similar challenges.

For SWA, mutual accountability is a disciplined way of achieving goals quicker, rather than a process that will bring negative consequences to the partners.