

Table 2 Recommendations about using water from different sources ^a

Water use	Water source Piped water (not desalinated)	Water delivered by tankers (desalinated water from treatment plants)	Piped water desalinated at home	Bottled water	Rooftop-harvested rainwater ^b
Main problems	High in salt, nitrates and TDS; unknown levels of pesticides and radiation; limited data about heavy metals	Microbial contamination occurs due to non-hygienic handling of the water during distribution; water is low in minerals	Quality varies as domestic desalination units are often not regulated	Uncertainty about microbiological contamination ^c	Not commonly used at the household level; risk of microbial contamination
Consumption	Should not be consumed	Should be consumed only if water safety can be ensured by disinfecting and storing safely	Should be consumed only if water safety can be ensured by disinfecting and storing safely	Can be consumed but must be properly disinfected due to the risk of microbiological contamination ^{***}	Currently not used for consumption, but may be considered for consumption if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely
Hygiene	Can be used for hygiene needs, but use will probably be limited in areas where the water is too salty	Can be used for hygiene needs but with awareness that water coming from this source might contain microbiological contaminants	Can be used for hygiene needs but with awareness that water coming from this source might contain microbiological contaminants	Can be used for hygiene needs but is likely to be unaffordable for these uses	Currently not used for hygiene needs, but may be considered for hygiene needs if treated appropriately (with filtration plus disinfection) and stored safely
Amenities	Can be used for this category	Can be used for this category	Can be used for this category	Not applicable	Currently not used for amenities, but should not be a problem for this category, if possible turbidity is acceptable to the consumer
Production	Can be used for production, but use as drinking water for animals will be limited if it is too salty	Can be used for production	Can be used for production	Not applicable	Can be used for production
Irrigation	Can be used depending on the plants/vegetables, but in general will be too salty	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable (it is assumed that this category produces only a small amount of water)

^a Water use has been categorized into five types: consumption (drinking and cooking), hygiene (including basic needs for personal and domestic cleanliness), amenities (such as car washing, lawn watering), production (such as, for raising animals or small-scale horticulture, or for construction); irrigation (agriculture that needs water).

^b Rainwater is not a significant source of domestic water but could be considered as a potential alternative source.

^c There are uncertainties regarding the quality of bottled water. There is not enough evidence to document the quality of bottled water currently distributed and consumed in the Gaza Strip.