



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Management Response

Evaluation Title:	Evaluation of UN Development Account Project 1415-AF "Strengthening Governments' and Water Operators' Capacity to Ensure Equity of Access to Water and Sanitation in Countries with Economies in Transition in the UNECE Region, with a Particular Focus on Small-Scale Water Supplies and Sanitation in Rural Areas"		
Period of Review:	December 2014 - December 2017		
Date of Evaluation Report:	March 2018		
Approved by:	Chief, Programme Management Unit	Date	Signature
		24.5.18	
Cleared by:	Director of Division Marco Keiner	15.5.18	
Prepared by:	Manager of the evaluation, Chantal Demilecamps	14/05/2018	

Recommendation 1:

- As part of the Protocol on Water and Health work programme 2017-2019, UNECE should consider to extending the Project (similar scope, activities, outcomes, etc.) to other countries that are either signatories, Parties and are considering ratifying the Protocol.
- More emphasis should be directed towards addressing issues and inequities and challenges of small-scale sanitation systems, including the challenge of financing sanitation systems, wastewater and sewerage infrastructure. With the Water Safety Plans, it recommended to include sanitation into the overall concept of water and sanitation safety planning

Management Response: The recommendation is fully accepted.

The Protocol on Water and Health work programme 2017-2019 adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at the occasion of its 4th session (Geneva, Switzerland, 14-16 November 2016) includes planned activities under Programme area 4 "Small-scale water supplies and sanitation" and Programme area 6 "Equitable access to water and sanitation: translating the human right to water and sanitation into practice" which will ensure the continuity of the activities undertaken under the UNDA project 1415-AF. In particular, as detailed in the programme of work, it is planned to:

- under Programme area 4: (i) Organize 2 subregional workshops and 2 national consultations/workshops on small-scale water supplies and sanitation; (ii) Support situation analysis (e.g., rapid

assessments) of small-scale water supplies and sanitation in one selected country as a basis for target setting and developing improvement strategies; (iii) Support a field project on integrated water safety and sanitation safety plans in rural areas; and (iv) Support regional networking and intercountry collaboration through study visits.

- under Programme area 6: (i) Support equitable access self-assessment exercises in up to 3 countries; (iii) Support the definition of equitable access action plans in up to 3 countries; (iii) Organize up to 2 meetings of the expert group on equitable access to water and sanitation; and (iv) Organize 1 regional workshop on good practices for the development of equitable access action plans.

Work on the development of a guidance document on sustainable financing of small-scale water supplies and sanitation in English and Russian has also been including in the 2017-2019 Programme of Work of the Protocol, and a first meeting of the Expert Group on that topic is planned in June 2018.

Some activities have already started (for example an equitable access assessment what launched in Bulgaria in January 2018, a meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access was held in Budapest in September 2016 and another one will be held in Paris in June 2018). However, several additional countries have requested support to carry out such national activities (for example Georgia, Belarus, Serbia) but funding is not secured. The issue of financing was discussed at the occasion of the 20th meeting of the Bureau of the Protocol but funding of planned activities under the programme of work remain a critical challenge. Therefore, it is very likely that only a limited part of the activities listed below will be implemented until end 2019.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Look for additional funding opportunities to implement activities of the 2017-2019 Programme of Work of the Protocol on Water and Health, by organizing meetings with potential donors (for meeting with SDC planned in May 2018), writing letters inviting contributions (by end 2018) and inviting donors to country activities implemented under the Protocol (on-going): UNECE, WHO/Europe, Bureau of the Protocol on Water and Health (Responsible: Nataliya Nikiforova and Francesca Bernardini), on-going efforts
- Develop a guidance document on sustainable financing of small-scale water supplies and sanitation: WHO/Europe, by the next session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2019

Recommendation 2:

- As number of the countries that participated in the Project have highlighted that they would like to continue with the Project activities, such as developing additional Action Plans to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation, Water Safety Plans, amongst others, hence this should be considered in future work projections. For the country missions/consultations, they should be budgeted with an additional budget for organizing a country workshop / consultation meeting in the targeted countries and some national consultancy support (to draft a country profile).
- For any future similar technical cooperation programme/projects, the inclusion of a component for developing and implementing pilot projects (i.e. monitoring small-scale water supply (treatment, distribution) and small-scale sewerage/wastewater systems, Water Safety Plans in a few small-scale sites) to gain local experience would provide added value.
- The guidance Taking policy action to improve small-scale water supply and sanitation systems. Tools and good practices from the pan-European Region should be officially translated into other

languages, such as Albanian, Armenian, Serbian. Consideration should be given to translating guidance into beneficiary country languages in future (similar) projects.

- UNECE should consider holding workshops, meetings in locations outside of capital cities to ensure a wider participation beyond capital cities.

Management Response: The recommendation is partially accepted.

Serbia completed the Equitable Access assessment in December 2017, with support of the UNDA project. On that basis, a second phase of the activities, to support the development of an Action Plan to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation, will start in June 2018, thanks to the financial contribution of the French Ministry of Solidarities and Health to the Protocol on Water and Health.

In addition, several activities to support the development of equitable access action plans and their implementations will be supported thanks to the on-going European Union Water Initiative + project implemented by UNECE:

- In Azerbaijan: a national consultation is planned in May 2018 to discuss the findings of the Equitable Access assessment
- In Armenia: the EUWI+ project will support the implementation of an analysis of the water legislative framework and identification of the legislative barriers for ensuring implementation of the equitable access to water and sanitation, and progress in the implementation of the National Equitable Access Action plan will be reviewed at the next meeting of the National Policy Dialogue
- In the Republic of Moldova: Support to Equitable Access to water and Sanitation is also a priority of the National European Union Water Initiative + project.

All these activities include support to national consultant to prepare / follow up the above mentioned meetings and processes.

The Guidance document *Taking policy action to improve small-scale water supply and sanitation systems* is already available in English and Russian. Albanian, Armenian, Serbian are not official languages of UNECE or WHO/Europe. Therefore, such translation will be possible only if specific fund is mobilized for this specific project.

Both UNECE and WHO/Europe often suggest organizing national workshops outside of capital cities to ensure a wider participation of local stakeholders. However, as many activities are organized with logistical support from local UNDP offices, they often prefer to hold meetings in capital (for ex. to facilitate the distribution of DSA to participants). In addition, representatives from the Ministries based in capitals (Ministries of Health and of Environment) are often reluctant to travel outside of the capital for several consecutive days. Whenever possible, activities are planned outside of capital cities (for example, the final consultation meeting for the development of the Equitable Access Action Plan in Serbia is planned in Kragujevac).

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Follow up planning of country activities on equitable access to water and sanitation (in Serbia – Support to the development of an Equitable Access Action plan to start in July 2018, to be completed by January 2019, funded by the French Ministry of Solidarities and Health;

Azerbaijan – finalization of the Equitable Access Assessment planned in May 2018, integrated and funded under on-going EUWI activities in Azerbaijan; Bulgaria – finalization of the Equitable Access Assessment planned in June 2018, funded by the French Ministry of Solidarities and Health as confirmed for 2018-2019 as well as Georgia and Belarus pending confirmation of funds – project proposal to be submitted by the NGO Women in Europe for a Common Future and UNECE by 15 May 2018 to implement activities in Georgia) and coordinate with EUWI+ project activities: UNECE (Responsible: Chantal Demilecamps, Diane Guerrier and Alisher Mamadzhanov)

- Implement planned actions on Water Safety Planning, pending confirmation of funds: WHO/Europe.

Recommendation 3:

- Continuation with similar Project implementation arrangements and the personnel who managed and executed the Project at the UNECE and WHO/Europe (and other Implementing Organizations).

Management Response: The recommendation is fully accepted.

The secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health is jointly serviced by UNECE and WHO/Europe and both organizations work in close collaboration for the planning, implementation and follow up of activities under the Protocol on Water and Health.

However, while the UNDA project included some joint missions of the secretariat (UNECE and WHO/Europe) to carry out some preliminary assessment of needs in countries, such country missions had to be discontinued due to the shortage of funds in both organizations after the closure of the UNDA project. Intergovernmental meetings under the framework of the Protocol are used by countries to voice their needs, but also report on their progress.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Coordination of activities implemented by UNECE and WHO/Europe: on-going process of coordination between UNECE and WHO/Europe for the implementation of all activities under the joint secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health (Responsible: Nataliya Nikiforova)
- Fund raising efforts to be carried out in 2018 (cf recommendation 1)

Recommendation 4:

- The UNECE and WHO/Europe should continue its efforts in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation/small-scale water and sanitation and continue its good cooperation with other Implementing Organizations, IFIs, donors and other stakeholders, such as the Balkan WASH network.
- Increased emphasis should be placed on identifying and securing funding to finance measures, i.e. water supply, wastewater and sewerage infrastructure, which are planned in, for example Action Plans, to improve equitable access to water and sanitation.
- Such project approaches as establishment of the multi-sector stakeholder engagement and twinning on the one hand, and the development of action plans and Water Safety Plans to ensure safe and equitable access to water and sanitation should be replicated in any follow-on work

Management Response: The recommendation is fully accepted

Efforts in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation/small-scale water and sanitation continue with several country projects being implemented (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Serbia, Bulgaria, cf recommendation 2) as well as regional exchange of experience with the organization of meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation (next meeting planned on 26-27 June 2018 in Paris). Implementing Organizations, IFIs and donors are invited to collaborate both in the frameworks of country activities and regional activities.

The question of securing funding for the implementation and sustainability of action plans is given emphasis in-going work on equitable access to water and sanitation. This is addressed through an exchange of experience between country representatives and competent stakeholders and a dedicated section in the publication "Capitalizing findings and lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health" being currently developed, which will contain a chapter on "Financing equitable access to water and sanitation). In addition, dedicated publication on "Sustainable financing of small-scale water supplies and sanitation" is foreseen to be finalized by end 2019.

In most countries where Equitable Access Assessment have been finalized, support to multi-stakeholders' processes for the development of Equitable Access Action Plans are being / will be supported by the secretariat of the Protocol and through activities planned under EUWI funded National Policy Dialogues. For example, such work is on-going in Armenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and will be launched in July in Serbia.

Follow up actions and responsibilities:

- Coordinate the development of the publication "Capitalizing findings and lessons learnt from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health" including a section on Financing: UNECE (Responsible: Chantal Demilecamps) to be finalized by November 2019.
- Coordinate the development of the publication "Sustainable financing of small-scale water supplies and sanitation": WHO/Europe to be finalized by November 2019.
- Support the implementation of the Equitable Access Action plan in Armenia (Responsible: Alisher Mamadzhanov, on-going), the adoption of local Equitable Access Action plans in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Responsible: Eva Barrenger, on-going) and in Serbia (Responsible: Diane Guerrier, to start in July 2018 and to be completed by January 2019)

