

# Self-Assessment Score-Card Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation

Armenia Country Report





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## Background

Access to drinking water and sanitation which are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and safe is a human right. The right to safe drinking water and sanitation for all is set out in the Constitution, laws and regulations of Armenia. The Constitution of Armenia indeed provides for “the right to live in an environment favourable to his/her health and well-being” (art. 33.2).

Armenia is not yet a Party to the UNECE-WHO/Europe<sup>1</sup> Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. However, Armenia has already set draft targets under the Protocol and recognizes the importance of the Protocol. One of the main objectives of the Protocol is the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to everyone, with special consideration to ensure equitable access to these services for all members of the population.

In November 2013, Parties to the Protocol adopted the Equitable Access Score-card<sup>2</sup>, an analytical tool that can help Governments and other stakeholders to establish a baseline measure of the equity of access to water and sanitation, identify related priorities, discuss further actions to be taken and evaluate progress through a process of self-assessment.

Armenia announced its intention to apply the Equitable Access Score-card at the national level during the seventh meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health in November 2014 and the State Committee of Water Economy requested support from the UNECE secretariat to carry out the equitable access assessment exercise in July 2015.

The launching workshop for ensuring the early involvement of the different stakeholders and explaining the rationale, objectives, process and expected outcomes of the self assessment exercise was organized on 15 December 2015, back to back with a consultation meeting on small scale water supply and sanitation systems and a meeting of the Steering Committee of EUWI NPD. This workshop helped to identify additional stakeholders that later were involved in the exercise. The “findings workshop” to present interim results, gather additional information, identify reform options and discuss possible recommendations was held on 7-8 July 2016. The workshops were chaired by the Deputy Head of the SCWE under the Ministry of Agriculture.

Following the first workshop, UNECE and the main national stakeholders constituted a Project Team, consisting of national consultants with expertise and experience in the main fields covered by the Protocol on Water and Health, including a representative of the NGO “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment” (AWHHE), and supported by an international consultant appointed by UNECE and a UNECE staff member. This team compiled the information needed and produced the drafts of the situation analysis and score-card in Armenian and English which were then considered by the SCWE.

At the second workshop Armenia announced its intention to develop an action plan on ensuring access to water supply and sanitation to be approved by the government and beneficiary ministries.

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<sup>1</sup> Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization

<sup>2</sup> Publication The Equitable Access Score-card: Supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation is available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032>

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## List of Acronyms

<b>ADB</b>	<b>Asian Development Bank</b>
<b>AMD</b>	Armenian Dram
<b>AWHHE</b>	Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment
<b>AWSC</b>	Armenian Water and Sewerage Company
<b>CDCP</b>	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
<b>EBRD</b>	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>EMRW</b>	Extended maintenance and repair work
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EUWI</b>	European Union Water Initiative
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>HH</b>	Households
<b>JBIC</b>	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>JMP</b>	Joint Monitoring Program
<b>KfW</b>	German Development Bank
<b>LLC</b>	Limited Liability Company
<b>LWSC</b>	Lori Water and Sewerage Company
<b>MA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MDGs</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>MES</b>	Ministry of Education and Science
<b>MF</b>	Ministry of Finance
<b>MJ</b>	Ministry of Justice
<b>MLSA</b>	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
<b>MoH</b>	Ministry of Health
<b>NAC</b>	Nor Akunq Company
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NPD</b>	National Policy Dialogue
<b>NSS</b>	National Statistical Service
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PSRC</b>	Public Services Regulatory Commission

<b>RA</b>	Republic of Armenia
<b>SCWE</b>	State Committee of Water Economy
<b>SNCO</b>	State Non-Commercial Organization
<b>SWSC</b>	Shirak Water and Sewerage Company
<b>TCCSS</b>	Territorial centers for complex social services
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNECE</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>YDC</b>	Yerevan Djur Company

## I. Introduction

One of the main objectives of the Protocol on Water and Health is the provision of safe drinking water and sanitation to everyone, with special consideration to ensure equitable access to these services for all members of the population.

Published in 2012, *No One Left Behind - Good Practices to Ensure Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation in the pan-European Region*<sup>3</sup> showed that current water governance frameworks are often “equity blind”, and that ensuring equitable access requires a results-oriented action plan building on country-situation analysis and context-specific equity indicators. A self-evaluation analytical tool, *the Equitable Access Score-card*<sup>4</sup>, was then developed under the Protocol to help Governments and other stakeholders in establishing a baseline measure of the equity of access, to discuss further actions to be taken and to evaluate the progress in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation through a process of self-assessment. The Score-card has been conceived as a tool to support the progressive realization of the human rights to water and sanitation.

Three critical factors<sup>5</sup> in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation are: reducing geographical disparities, overcoming the barriers faced by vulnerable groups, and addressing affordability concerns.

*Objectives* of the self-assessment of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation in Armenia were: to achieve a better understanding of the situation and challenges related to equitable access to water and sanitation to facilitate the identification and prioritization of problems to be considered for the setting of targets under the Protocol; to identify relevant stakeholders and create links with them; to raise awareness among stakeholders on equity issues; to develop a comprehensive overview of the existing policy measures to address.

Armenia is a unitary, multi-party, democratic nation-state. Modern Armenia occupies 29 743 km<sup>2</sup> and as of 2014, had a population of 3 010 600. Gross domestic product per capita amounted to EUR2 720. The population living below the poverty threshold constituted 30%, 17.6% of the population was unemployed. 63.5% of total population lived in urban areas, 36.5% in rural areas. Safe drinking water was available to 98.3% of the population. Population without access to wastewater collection constituted 31.5%.

Despite general progress in access to safe drinking water and sanitation, both social and geographical inequities still remain in Armenia (100% of access to safe water in urban areas against 99% in rural areas; 96% of access to improved sanitation in urban areas against only 78% in rural areas, JMP report, 2015<sup>6</sup>). Such inequities hamper the full realization of the human right to water and sanitation. However, stakeholders in Armenia are not fully aware of the situation of equity of access to water and sanitation and lack capacity to address the challenges related to ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.

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<sup>3</sup> The document can be consulted at: [www.unece.org/index.php?id=29170](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29170)

<sup>4</sup> The document can be consulted at: [www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34032)

<sup>5</sup> As identified in the publication *No One Left Behind: good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation*, available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29170>

<sup>6</sup> The document can be consulted at: [http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx\\_displaycontroller\[type\]=country\\_files](http://www.wssinfo.org/documents/?tx_displaycontroller[type]=country_files)



## II. Methodology

The Score-card includes a brief country profile (which focuses on quantitative data) and lists policy options covering the four sections: (1) Steering governance framework to deliver equitable access to safe water and sanitation; (2) Reducing geographical disparities; (3) Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups and (4) Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all. Each section is divided into action areas.

The quantitative information was mainly collected from the official statistical sources for 2014. The short version of the completed Score-card is presented in Annex 1.

### Scoring methodology

- Progress under each Area of Action was measured through qualitative questions. The number of questions varied between 2 and 6.
- Each question required one answer from four possible answers. The Table 1 below provides guidance on how to interpret each possible answer.
- Each answer had its justification.
- The reliability of each answer was self-evaluated (see below Table 2).
- One summary score was calculated for each Area of Action. This score was calculated taking into account the score for each question as well as the number of questions under each Area of Action. Only answers with a high or medium degree of reliability were considered when calculating the summary score.
- The summary score had to be reproduced in the summary sheet.

Table 1. Scoring methodology and justification

Score	Interpretation
No - 0	No or very little evidence supporting a positive answer is available, either at national or local level.
To a limited extent - 1	There is some limited information at local level supporting a positive answer. There is some limited information at national level partly supporting a positive answer.
To a large extent -2	There is extensive information at the local level and some at the national level supporting a positive answer.
Yes - 3	There is enough evidence available at national level fully supporting a positive answer.

### Reliability assessment methodology

Each of the experts self-evaluated reliability each of the answers in terms of the process of gathering and reporting the data (see Table 2).

Table 2. Reliability of answers

HIGH: Very reliable	Medium: Reliable	Low: Unreliable
<p>There is a coherent and easily accessible set of documents that identifies responsibilities for data gathering, treatment and quality control.</p> <p>The data can be traced to a formal source that is accessible to any interested person.</p> <p>The data have been formally validated.</p>	<p>Responsibilities for data gathering, treatment and quality control have been identified.</p> <p>The data can be traced to a source.</p> <p>The data have been validated.</p>	<p>Responsibilities for data gathering, treatment and quality control have not been identified.</p> <p>Not all the data can be traced to a source.</p> <p>Not all the data have been validated.</p>

### III. Main findings

The scores listing policy options covering the four sections are summarized in the Table 3. The least point of the score was 1 and maximum was 3. The least average score was identified for the section Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Table 3: Equitable access Score-card by sections

Nr.	Equitability section	Average score
1	Steering governance framework to deliver equitable access to safe water and sanitation.	1.95
2	Reducing geographical disparities.	2.02
3	Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups.	1.58
4	Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all.	1.99

Problems related to management of water resources, water supply, sanitation and health are distributed across different policy sectors in Armenia and call for close cooperation among various authorities at the policy as well as the management levels.

With the adoption of the new Water Code a new institutional system was introduced, in accordance with which the management of water sector is implemented by the following authorities:

1. Water Resources Management Agency of the Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia, which implements the management and protection of water resources;
2. State Committee of Water Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia, which implements the management of state-owned water systems, their safety and protection;

3. Public Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of Armenia, a body created by the Law of the Republic of Armenia “On the Regulatory Authority of Public Services”, which implements tariff policy in the water sector.

One of the serious challenges with water supply is the need to find a solution to the problem relating to water supply of 579 rural communities (from total 993 settlements) that are not provided with the centralized water supply services and not serviced by water companies. The problems of access equality caused by the geographical location have been repeatedly discussed and are the center of attention, but the actions to overcome the problems are being implemented slowly.

Although, during the past ten years, Armenia has recorded significant legislative and institutional achievements in terms of water resources management and protection, access gaps were identified relating to almost all vulnerable and marginalized groups. Thus, changes are required in the legal framework to improve the access for separate groups.

The information on water supply and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups is less available.

Water supply is also a significant problem in rural educational facilities, because they rely on scarce state funds for the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure. Schools, especially in rural areas, often have a drinking water supply and sanitation system in place, but many of them are not operational.

Despite some positive steps taken by the Government of Armenia in 2014 and the existence of legislation laying down clear requirements for physical accessibility, the majority of public buildings remain inaccessible to persons with mobility impairments in Yerevan and especially in the provinces of Armenia.

One of the main factors in the effective functioning of the drinking water supply sector is the proper tariff policy. At present, different tariffs are set by the Public Services Regulatory Commission (PSRC) for the companies providing water supply and sanitation services. However, starting from January 1, 2017, one company will operate under the lease and one single tariff rate will be set.

## Overview of Results

The summary score was summarized in the Table 4.

Table 4. Summary sheet

Section	Area of Action	Score	reliability
Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation	1.1 Strategic framework for achieving equitable access	1.67	high
	1.2 Sector financial policies	1.67	medium
	1.3 Rights and duties of users and right-holders	2.5	high
Reducing geographical disparities	2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas	1.8	medium
	2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas	2.25	medium
	2.3 Geographical allocation of external support	2	high
Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups	3.1 Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	1.2	low
	3.2 Persons with special physical needs	1	medium
	3.3 Users of health facilities	1.6	medium
	3.4 Users of educational facilities	2.2	high
	3.5 Users of retirement homes	2.2	medium
	3.6 Prisoners	2.4	high
	3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centers	1.8	medium
	3.8 Homeless people	1	medium
	3.9 Travelers and nomadic communities	NA	NA
	3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation	1.4	medium
	3.11 Persons without access to safe drinking water and sanitation in their workplaces	1	medium
Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all	4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability	1.8	medium
	4.2 Tariff measures	2.5	high
	4.3 Social protection measures	1.67	medium

## IV. Recommendations

The recommendations were developed based on situational analysis and final workshop discussions (see Table 5).

Table 5. Recommendations by sections

Section	Recommendations
Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing in more detail the legislation, identifying the positive and negative aspects, drawing a comparison between the Score-card components and laws to identify legislative gaps in order to contribute to the solution of the problems</li> <li>Inclusion of the section on “Access to water supply and sanitation” by beneficiary ministries, as well as provision of separate information in reports about the water supply and sanitation activities and the expenditure on water supply and sanitation</li> <li>Developing an action plan on ensuring access to water supply and sanitation to be approved by the government and beneficiary ministries</li> </ul>
Reducing geographical disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collecting data on the current situation of communities not serviced by specialized water supply and sanitation companies</li> <li>Improving sanitation services with a special focus on regional disparities</li> <li>Assessing motivations for inclusion of around 570 communities not serviced by specialized water supply and sanitation companies into the area serviced by water companies</li> <li>Developing recommendations on improvement of access to water supply and sanitation both for serviced and non-serviced communities</li> <li>Developing investment projects and, if possible, implementing them according to the priorities in the communities where water is fetched or the distribution network is lacking or there is no sewage system</li> </ul>
Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enshrining legally the right of vulnerable groups to water supply and sanitation in the developed sector policy</li> <li>Implementing a pilot project in accordance with the S core-card components, such as, for example, identifying the features of separate vulnerable groups due to the geographical location</li> <li>Conducting engineering and hydrological studies with a view to providing access to water supply from neighborhoods where access to water supply is available</li> <li>Assessing the situation with respect to persons living in housing without water supply and sanitation and developing an improvement project proposal</li> <li>Raising public awareness on the human right to access to water supply and sanitation</li> </ul>
Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducting a study on options to address affordability concerns through tariffs</li> </ul>

## V. Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation

The realization of the right to water and sanitation requires political commitment and long-term vision. Access to drinking water and sanitation which are available, accessible, affordable, acceptable and safe is a human right. The right to safe drinking water and sanitation for all is set out in the Constitution, laws and regulations of Armenia. The Constitution of Armenia indeed provides that “Everyone shall have the right to live in an environment favourable to his/her health and well-being” (art. 33.2).

### Area 1.1 Strategic frameworks for achieving equitable access

The legal documents that currently are in force are the Law “On the National Water Program” (adopted on November 27, 2006) and the Water and Sanitation Sector Strategy and Financing Programme, approved by Annex to the No. 38 Protocol Decision of the RA Government Session of August 13, 2015.

The framework of the state - water supply utility - customer with respect to their powers and responsibilities is enshrined in the Republic of Armenia legislation.

The targets set are as follows: increase of water supply duration, development of a strategy on ensuring sustainable water supply and sanitation in the communities not serviced by water companies, water loss reduction in water supply and sanitation, application of a single tariff in case the services improve.

The Target 10, point 2 of the MDG 7 is aimed at increasing access to safe drinking water in rural areas.

The draft targets under the Protocol on Water and Health were set in May 2014. The targets on equitable access mainly related to the improvement of water and sanitation services, with a special focus on rural areas.

Additional targets for equal access to water and sanitation may also be set with regard to vulnerable and marginalized groups.

### Area 1.2 Sector financial policies

Under the new lease contract, the government envisages to require the lessee to provide the extended maintenance and repair work (EMRW) fund at its own expense, amounting to 5 million US dollars annually (2.5 billion AMD annually, 37.5 billion AMD for 15 years). This amount will directly be provided by the single lessee and added to the investment funds.

The Long-Term Development Strategy Program of the Republic of Armenia for 2014-2025 envisages the continuation of the reforms of drinking water systems in order to enhance the reliability and effectiveness of the operations of these systems and improve the quality of water supply and sanitation services, at the same time focusing on mitigation of regional disparities. Drinking water systems will continue to be a priority for public investment.

The targets for the investment policy will be the duration of rendered services (according to a preliminary assessment, the level of the proposed investments will allow increasing the average rate by 0.5 hours per year), improvement of the quality of these services and mitigation of the existing regional disparities. The investment policy should also aim to enhance the efficiency of drinking water systems, focusing particularly on water loss reduction.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia continues to seek grants through the SCWE from various international organizations (such as the EU, USAID, UNDP, JICA) to invest in water supply and sanitation sector. Often these grants are only available for technical assistance or pilot projects to test a new technology.

New targets can be set for improving the quality of sanitation services with a special focus on regional disparities.

### Area 1.3 Rights and duties of users and other right-holders

The beneficiaries of the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Strategy and Financing Program are the customers of water and sanitation services, the communities that are currently not serviced by any water company, and the physical and legal entities that shall be provided with these services in the future.

Draft laws shall be subject to public discussion. The principles of public debate are publicity, accessibility, transparency and openness to all interested individuals and legal entities.

The RA Law on Freedom of Information regulates the relations connected with freedom of information, defines the powers of persons holding information, as well as the procedures, ways and conditions to get information.

The monthly and annual reports of water supply companies are posted on their websites, where detailed information is presented about the implemented works and the future plans, as well as on water quality, water connections, schedule of water supply interruptions, etc.

The Law also regulates the payment of compensation to the right holders and implementation of actions to correct the situation. Customers of water supply and sanitation services are often not aware of their rights. One of the new targets can be aimed at raising awareness among the customers.

## VI. Reducing geographical disparities

Access to drinking water and sanitation in urban areas (99.7% and 94.9%, respectively) is higher than in rural areas (95.5% and 16.5%, respectively).

### Area 2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas

The investment policy of the Long-Term Development Strategy Program for 2014-2025 of the Republic of Armenia is aimed at reducing the gap in access conditioned by the geographical location. The state strategy includes a special approach also to the around 570 rural communities, where water supply is not provided by specialized organizations possessing the relevant permits for water supply services provision. Limited data are available about the situation of these communities.

Various programs are carried out by international organizations on water supply and sanitation in communities that are not serviced by water supply companies, as well as on water supply and sanitation of the neighboring rural communities.

A new target can be set for collecting information about the current situation in communities that do not receive any specialized water supply and sanitation services.

### Area 2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas

The PSRC has set different tariffs for the Yerevan Djur Company (YDC), Armenian Water and Sewerage Company (AWSC), Lori Water and Sewerage Company (LWSC), Shirak Water and Sewerage Company (SWSC) and Nor Akunq Company (NAC). From the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2017, one operator will assume the obligations and one single tariff will be set.

State subsidies have been provided to water supply companies (except for YDC, which operates under a lease contract) for filling the financial shortfall in supply of drinking water services due to the increase in the principal amount of loans and electricity tariffs in 2015.

### Area 2.3 Geographical allocation of external support for the sector

The Medium-Term Expenditure Framework of the Republic of Armenia for 2015-2017 details the international financial assistance to water and sanitation sector. Programs are designed to ensure equitable access conditioned by the geographical location.

Although the problems of access equality caused by the geographical location have been repeatedly discussed and are the center of attention, the actions toward overcoming the problems are being implemented slowly.

## VII. Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups

In 2014, the people with access to safe drinking water constituted 98.3%. Data on access to drinking water supply and sanitation for individual groups are not always accessible or available. For example, there exist no data on the number of water supply and sanitation facilities for public use by persons with disabilities. The same applies to data on persons lacking a permanent place of residence. This means that the number of persons is not clear with respect to those for whom access to safe drinking water and sanitation is provided through public institutions.

The legal framework of different groups is regulated by Laws and Government Decisions of the Republic of Armenia. The state provides funds for the provision of drinking water and sanitation services, but not all accounts address the water supply and sanitation issues separately.

A detailed statement of support to various social groups is posted on the website of the RA Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MLSA), but the financial resources spent in ensuring access to water and sanitation for these groups are not presented separately. Since the mentioned problems relate to almost all the groups in this section, the targets proposed for all groups are as follows:

- collecting information on water supply and sanitation;
- providing separate information in reports about the water supply and sanitation works and the expenditure on water supply and sanitation;
- making changes in the legal framework to improve the quality of services for separate groups.

### Area 3.1 Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups

Basically, all legal documents include articles / items on water supply and sanitation services for vulnerable or marginalized groups, but information on drinking water supply and sanitation for separate groups is limited. Therefore, one of the targets can refer to the collection of information on water supply and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups and improvement of implementation.

### Area 3.2 Persons with special physical needs

The Law on “Social protection of disabled people in the Republic of Armenia” (adopted on June 9, 1997) sets out the legal, social, economic and organizational basis for the social protection of persons with disabilities, and the basic provisions of public policy about the provision of the most favorable conditions and privileges for the persons with disabilities for the realization of their rights and abilities with a view to ensuring equal opportunities for them like the rest of other citizens of the country.

Despite some positive steps taken in 2014 by the Government of Armenia and the existence of legislation laying down clear requirements for physical accessibility, the majority of public buildings remain inaccessible to persons with mobility impairments in Yerevan and especially in the provinces of the Republic of Armenia.

### Area 3.3 Users of health facilities

Information on safe drinking water and sanitation in health facilities is partly available at the companies providing drinking water supply and sanitation services. The information relates to the last month’s water consumption (in cubic meters) and availability of sanitation. At the same time, information on water consumption includes the figure “0”, which gives rise to interpretation problems, such as, for example, drinking water is not available or the structure does not work, etc.

The Annual Budget Reports are posted on the website of the Ministry of Health (MoH). Utility costs are included in a separate line, encompassing the drinking water supply and sanitation costs. Health System Modernization Project is currently being implemented with support from the World Bank (WB). The project aims to improve the physical infrastructure of medical institutions in the regions and the city of Yerevan.

### Area 3.4 Users of educational facilities

Data on safe drinking water and sanitation are available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia (MES), except for the duration of water supply. The state funding allocated for the repair work of educational institutions also includes funds for the provision of access to safe drinking water and sanitation for the users of educational facilities.



According to the monitoring results implemented by the RA Ombudsman's Office in specialized educational institutions, some water supply systems are old or sanitation is poorly implemented, thus contributing to the spread of stench.

### **Area 3.5 Users of retirement homes**

In 2014, there were 8 organizations in Armenia providing social services to the elderly and disabled people, of which 4 were state (2 in Yerevan, 1 in each of Gegharkunik and Shirak provinces) and 4 non-state (2 in Lori province, 1 in each of Kotayk and Syunik provinces) organizations.

The provision of water supply is ensured: 5 retirement homes have centralized 24-hour water supply, 1 retirement home has centralized and scheduled water supply, and 2 retirement homes have their own water source. With regard to sanitation, 7 retirement homes are connected to the central sewerage system, 1 retirement home has its own local system.

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation for the users of retirement homes is provided by the RA Government Decisions. State funding for the renovation of nursing homes also includes funds channeled to ensuring access to safe drinking water and sanitation activities.

### **Area 3.6 Prisoners**

According to the data of 2015, all criminal executive establishments are provided with water supply. Nine of twelve criminal-executive institutions are connected to a centralized sewerage system. The statement of the Ministry of Justice (MJ) of the Republic of Armenia on financial and economic activities also encompasses the expenditure on water supply and sanitation.

According to the monitoring results implemented by the RA Ombudsman's Office in prisons, some water supply systems are old, there is no hot water or sanitation is poorly implemented, thus contributing to the spread of stench.

### **Area 3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centers**

In Armenia there is one special temporary accommodation and five hostels for refugees, all of them are provided with drinking water and sanitation systems. The centers differ in their structure. A separate bathroom and a toilet are designed for one or more families.

### **Area 3.8 Homeless people**

Data on the level of access to safe drinking water and sanitation for homeless people are mainly unavailable. They are available only about the persons living in temporary shelters.

For example, thanks to financial support from the Yerevan Municipality and the support from the Danish-Armenian "Hans Christian Kofoed" Charitable Foundation, homeless people were not only provided with shelter but also with food, hygiene items, primary care and other means.

### **Area 3.9 Travelers and nomadic communities**

There are not any nomadic groups in the Republic of Armenia.

### **Area 3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation**

During the 2011 Census, data were collected on access to water and sanitation for households. In part, these data refer to the level of access to safe drinking water for those households who live in neighborhoods with access to drinking water. The regulations of this issue are included in the Water and Sanitation Sector Strategy and Financing Program.

### **Area 3.11 Persons without access to safe drinking water and sanitation in their workplaces**

There are no data on the lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation for workers. The safety and health issues of workers are regulated by the Labor Code of the Republic of Armenia.

## VIII. Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all

At present, different tariffs are set by PSRC for the companies providing water supply and sanitation services. However, starting from January 1, 2017, one company will operate under the lease contract and one single tariff rate will be set.

### Area 4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability

The affordability of drinking water supply and sanitation services is included in the Law “On Fundamental Provisions of the National Water Policy”, according to which it is necessary to ensure the affordability of water in adequate quantity and acceptable quality to meet the basic needs of population, especially of vulnerable groups.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia provides state subsidies for the reimbursement of energy costs, as well as implements co-financing of loan programs.

There is a need to carry out a study to identify affordability concerns and options.

### Area 4.2 Tariff measures

At present the following types of tariffs set by PSRC are used: wholesale tariffs (a water system use permit possessed by water supply companies for providing services to other individuals or communities) and retail tariffs (for providing services to consumers) for water supply and sanitation (wastewater treatment). Tariffs should be affordable for low-income households.

From June 1, 2016, the lessee will not be subsidized by the State budget of the Republic of Armenia. The tariff to be set for a lessee shall include all the expenses and reasonable profit of the company.

### Area 4.3 Social protection measures

Social protection is one of the priority directions of the state policy of the Republic of Armenia. The state policy on social protection and social assistance implements highly specific and targeted policies of social security and insurance, aimed at reducing poverty in the country, mitigating inequality, ensuring a dignified old age, expanding opportunities for vulnerable groups of the population and providing certain social guarantees for them, and improving the demographic situation.

Local social programs are developed with support of TCCSS based on community social needs assessment done by the mayors of the communities.

During the new program period, the tariff policy will be aimed at gradually increasing the level of tariffs cost recovery, taking into account the affordability for households in the lowest income group.

The results of the final seminar were included in the situation analysis and priority areas were identified. The identified priority areas were as follows:

- Area 1.1 Strategic framework for achieving equitable access
- Area 3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation
- Area 4.2 Tariff measures