

# **Information note**

## **Consultation**

### **on small-scale water supply and sanitation and equitable access to water and sanitation in relation to the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Serbia**

Belgrade, 8 December 2014

#### **Background**

In March 2014, Serbia requested financial and experts' assistance to support the process of setting targets and target dates under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) Protocol on Water and Health (hereinafter "the Protocol").

The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project "Strengthening Governments' and water operators' capacity to ensure equity of access to water and sanitation in countries with economies in transition in the Economic Commission for Europe region, with a particular focus on small-scale water supplies and sanitation in rural areas" aims to contribute to reducing inequities in access to drinking water and sanitation, especially in rural areas, mostly supplied by small-scale systems, in order to improve the implementation of the Protocol in the region. The project is jointly implemented by UNECE and WHO/Europe.

In particular, the project aims at strengthening capacities of national governments to develop policies to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation and to address specific challenges of small-scale water supply and sanitation systems.

In this context, UNECE and WHO/Europe proposed to organize a one-day consultation focusing on small-scale water supply and sanitation and equitable access to water and sanitation. The consultation will take place back-to-back with a national workshop on target setting under the Protocol (9 December 2014) as well as a capacity building training seminar on global monitoring programs (10-11 December 2014).

#### **Objective**

The objective of this consultation is to review, together with relevant national stakeholders, the evidence base on the situation of small-scale water supply and sanitation services as well as access to water and sanitation in terms of equity in Serbia. The consultation will aim at identifying particular challenges related to small scale water supply and sanitation and equitable access to water and sanitation in Serbia and at developing country-specific recommendations on possible issues to be considered in the context of the ongoing target setting process under the Protocol.

#### **Key stakeholders**

For both thematic areas, the following stakeholders should be consulted during the mission: representatives from (1) Ministry of Health and/or the Institute of Public Health; (2) Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection; (3) Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs; (4) Ministry of Finance (optional); (5) Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure; (6) relevant non-governmental organizations (NGOs); (7) water and sanitation service providers and/or relevant associations such as the Inter-institutional Professional Network in Water Sector of Serbia (IPM).

## **Guiding questions for the consultation**

### **1. Assessment of the situation of small-scale water supply and sanitation systems**

Discussion with key stakeholders will aim to:

- a. Review the evidence base on the situation of small-scale water supplies and sanitation in Serbia: nationally defined/standardized categories for “small-systems”; prevalence and population coverage served by small-systems; prevailing supply and sanitation technologies; assessment of microbiological and chemical quality of water supplied by small systems, and their sanitary conditions; disease outbreaks related to small systems;
- b. Identify knowledge/data gaps that hinder a comprehensive assessment of the situation and potential health risks;
- c. Review of regulatory requirements and institutional responsibilities related to public health and water quality surveillance (i.e. monitoring and inspection), specifically for small-scale systems;
- d. Review of specific challenges related to small-scale water supplies and sanitation, as well as the capacity of the government to address these;
- e. Review of existing and/or planned policies, programs and/or initiatives aiming at improving the situation of small-scale water supply and sanitation systems.

### **2. Assessment of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation**

Discussion with key stakeholders will aim to:

- a. Review the situation of access to water and sanitation in terms of equity (based on available data and experience) and identify key challenges in ensuring equitable access in Serbia: geographical disparities, affordability concerns, and accessibility by vulnerable and marginalized groups etc.;
- b. Review existing national strategic framework for achieving equitable access to water and sanitation (i.e. legal frameworks and specific policies);
- c. Collect information on existing and planned concrete measures/projects aimed at enhancing equitable access to water and sanitation;
- d. Map the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in defining policy frameworks and implementing measures (i.e. roles of the different ministries, national and local authorities, civil society organizations, service providers etc.).

## **Expected outcomes and possible follow up**

A good overview of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation, as well as small scale water supply and sanitation in Serbia, including an understanding of the support needs to address prevailing challenges.

Possible next steps and follow up activities will be identified based on the outcomes of the country mission and the specific needs expressed by Serbia. Such activities might include:

- The organization of a national or sub-regional workshop to increase capacities and provide guidance to policy- and decision-makers and other concerned actors to develop policies and measures to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation and/or improve the situation of small-scale systems;
- Support to the application of the Equitable Access Score-card in Serbia;
- Undertaking a rapid assessment of the prevailing conditions of small-scale water supply systems towards establishing a representative baseline analysis.