

Self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation in Armenia

Draft terms of Reference

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 favorable to his/her health and well-being” (art. 33.2).

Armenia is not yet a Party to the UNECE¹-WHO/Europe² Protocol on Water and Health. 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.

Three critical factors³ in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation are: reducing geographical disparities, overcoming the barriers faced by vulnerable groups, and addressing affordability concerns.

In November 2013, Parties to the Protocol adopted the *Equitable Access Score-card*⁴, 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 of the Ministry of Agriculture requested support from the UNECE secretariat to carry out the equitable access assessment exercise in July 2015.

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

² Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization:

³ 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>

⁴ 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>

Objectives of the self-assessment of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation in Armenia

- 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;
- Identify relevant stakeholders and create links with them;
- Raise awareness among stakeholders on equity issues;
- Develop a comprehensive overview of the existing policy measures to address inequities in access to water and sanitation.

Organization of the equitable access self-assessment exercise and communication of the results

1. Create a country core team to lead the equitable access self-assessment exercise

The self-assessment exercise will be implemented by a project core team. The project core team will include (cf. Table 1):

1) Project leader: Mr. Volodya Narimanyan, State Committee of Water Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture, will lead and coordinate the self-assessment exercise

2) The following experts will ensure the complementary of expertise and contacts necessary to complete the self-assessment:

- Ms. Armine Arushanyan, State Committee of Water Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture
- Ms. Emma Anakhasyan, NGO Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE)
- Ms. Nune Bakunts, Ministry of Health
- Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, independent expert

The country core team will therefore include a balance of stakeholders (government, service providers, users, civil society organizations) as well as a balance of fields of expertise (urban water services, rural water services, vulnerable groups, affordability issues).

Table 1: composition of the country core team

Experts	Responsibilities for doing analysis and making recommendations
Ms. Armine Arushanyan, State Committee of Water Economy of the Ministry of Agriculture	- Overall coordination - providing data on information on status of access to water and sanitation services and on-going projects to improve access to water and sanitation, governance framework for access to water and sanitation
Ms. Emma Anakhasyan from the NGO Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment (AWHHE)	- Coordination and compilation of different inputs - Providing data on water tariffs and affordability, social disparities: vulnerable and marginalized groups
Ms. Nune Bakunts, Ministry of Health	Providing information on policies to ensure access drinking water and sanitation, data on vulnerable and marginalized groups, water quality issues
Mr. Vahagn Tonoyan, Independent expert	Providing human rights information and information on water-related problems. Providing information on the condition of water supply system in geographically remote areas

The country core team will be responsible for delivering the final output, as well as for preparing the workshops and the draft situational analysis. The country team will be supported by the UNECE secretariat as regards advice for the elaboration of the analysis and reports, and planning and facilitation of the workshops.

2. Organize a launching workshop

To ensure the early involvement of the different stakeholders, a launching workshop explaining the rationale, objectives, process and expected outcomes of the self-assessment exercise will be organized on 15 December 2015, back to back with a consultation on small scale water supply and sanitation systems and a meeting of the Steering Committee under the National Policy Dialogue. This workshop will help identify additional stakeholders that should be involved in the exercise.

Table 2 presents stakeholders that will be included in the self-assessment exercise, therefore invited for the launching workshop.

Table 2. Examples of stakeholders to be involved in the self-assessment exercise	
Ministries and other public authorities of the Republic of Armenia	Ministry of Health Ministry of Nature Protection Ministry of Agriculture Ministry of Economy Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs Ministry of Urban Development Ministry of Finance Ministry of Justice Ministry of Transport and Communication Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources Ministry of Territorial Administration and Emergency Situations State Committee of Water Economy
NGO Civil society	Consumer associations Civil society organizations working with vulnerable and marginalized groups Foundations Trade unions Academics Independent experts Yerevan Water Users' Association Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment NGO Ecological Fund of Armenia "Shogher Union" NGO Ecological Survival Greens Union of Armenia Socio-Ecological Association Youth Ecological Group Armenian Ecologists Union Ecological and Biological Security Academy / Armenian Branch
Service providers	"Lori-water canal" "Chirac-water canal", JSC "Nor Akunq" "Armenian Water and Sewerage CJSC " "Yerevan Jur"

3. Filling the Equitable Access Score-card and drafting a situational analysis

The score-card lists policy options covering the four dimensions of sector governance, geographical disparities in access, access by vulnerable and marginalized groups, and affordability issues. The project core team is expected to provide and justify a score that

summarizes the degree to which a number of selected policy options are being used. The score-card also calls for quantitative information to contextualize the findings and describe the level of access to safe drinking water and sanitation. If possible, the source of quantitative information should be official statistics.

4. Organize a “findings workshop”

It is then essential to hold a “findings workshop” to present interim results, gather additional information, identify reform options and discuss possible recommendations. Such a workshop could take place over two days (or one day with parallel working sessions dedicated to the different sections of the score-card) to provide enough time for discussion and allow all stakeholders to intervene meaningfully. The different topics could be presented by the experts that have led the preparation of the different chapters or sections of the document under discussion. It is important that the workshop is perceived as a technical event where stakeholders can feel safe when voicing their concerns and opinions.

5. Presenting the results of the score-card and using the results for strategic evaluation and priority-setting.

It is recommended to prepare a situational analysis of about 10 pages that summarizes the main findings of the score-card and outcomes of the final workshop discussions, provides examples of progress, identifies priority areas for urgent action, and suggests specific recommendations.

A shorter policy summary of less than four pages would be a useful communication to reach top government officials and for communicating the results to the public through the mass media.

The results of the self-assessment exercise can be used to design targets and target dates under the Protocol on Water and Health, as well as to identify which individual measures should be prioritized for follow-up and for future evaluation of progress.

Timeline

The exercise will last for about one year and include:

- selecting a project leader and setting up a “core team” (November 2015);
- organizing a launching workshop (15 December 2015);
- collecting data and filling the score-card, completing a report with the preliminary findings (January 2016 – May 2016);

- organizing a workshop to discuss the findings (June 2016);
- organizing a policy event to present the outcomes of the self-assessment exercise and debate the consideration of the findings in the policy process (September 2016).

Output

The final output of this self-assessment exercise will be a country report that will include:

1. A situational analysis of equitable access to water and sanitation
2. Options available to achieve equitable access in the specific context
3. A summary of workshop discussion and recommendations

Expected results

The project is expected to contribute to the achievement of the human right to water and sanitation and to reduce inequities in access to water and sanitation in Armenia.

- A situational analysis of equitable access to water and sanitation is owned and shared by key sector stakeholders;
- The baseline analysis for the target setting process under the Protocol on Water and Health takes into account equity issues;
- The profile of equitable access issues is increased among key water and sanitation sector stakeholders and other relevant parties;
- The capacities of government agencies and other relevant actors to undertake a self-assessment and to identify opportunities for improvement are increased;
- The basis for establishing a permanent process of self-assessment, policy dialogue, and accountability is laid out; draft targets set under the Protocol include target(s) to improve the equity of access to water and sanitation;
- The momentum for the development of a results-oriented action plan is created.