



Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Working Group on Water and Health

Tenth meeting

Geneva, 15 and 16 November 2017

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**Safe and efficient management of water
Supply and sanitation systems**

INFORMAL DOCUMENT

Concept note

Sanitation scoping study for the pan-European Region

Safe sanitation is required to protect human health and the water environment. Although the pan-European region has high rates of improved sanitation coverage, it has failed to meet the MDG sanitation target. The new targets of the SDGs have broadened the focus of attention from mere access to improved sanitation to the entire sanitation cycle. SDG targets 6.2 and 6.3 explicitly call for safely managed wastewater and sanitation services.

So far, work under the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, did not explicitly address sanitation. However, complementary activities under programme area 3 (institutional water, sanitation and hygiene) and programme area 4 (small-scale water supplies and sanitation) already highlighted the need for prioritizing sanitation and developing a better understanding of the sanitation situation in countries and in the region.

At the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Geneva, 14-16 November 2016) of the Protocol on Water and Health, a new programme of work for 2017-2019 was adopted. Under programme area 5 (safe and efficient management of water supply and sanitation systems), which is led by Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Netherlands and IWA, focusing policy attention and technical efforts on sanitation has been identified as a key priority. Under this area of work, a sanitation scoping study for the pan-European region has been foreseen as an activity.

The present concept note has been prepared by the joint secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health in consultation with the lead parties of programme areas 5, 3, 4 and 7 (increasing resilience to climate change). The Working Group on Water and Health is invited to provide comments on the concept note and to support the collection of data and sanitation policies.

Aim

- To develop an understanding of the sanitation situation in the pan-European region and identify gaps and priorities for policy and technical action under the Protocol on Water and Health.

Objectives

- To explore and map the sanitation situation and its health impacts and environmental consequences with significance for health.
- To identify and cluster existing challenges and practices in sanitation management, including reuse, throughout the pan-European region, from the policy, institutional, technical and financial perspectives.

Scope

- Based on the definitions provided in the Protocol on Water and Health¹, for the purpose of this study, “sanitation” will be considered as an umbrella term to describe the full chain from toilets/latrines (‘user interfaces’), through the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of human waste (e.g. faecal sludge) and wastewater (i.e. black and grey water), including industrial wastewater (i.e. from economic activities), whether through collective systems or by installations serving a single household or undertaking. In the context of this study, it does not refer to solid waste (e.g. from households) and hygiene promotion measures.
- Sanitation in institutional settings shall be excluded from the scope of this study; for schools this topic has already been subject to an extensive review in the pan-European region².
- The scoping study aims to gain an understanding of the sanitation situation in the pan-European Region, consisting of geographic Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, it is not realistic to review policies of and conduct interviews with experts from more than 50 countries. Instead, it is suggested that 15 countries are chosen to be subject to a detailed, review. Such countries will be selected to represent a good sample of the different social, economic, environmental and institutional conditions in the whole region. The selection should include countries from the entire pan-European region, illustrating different and specific challenges, including basic access to sanitation, collection and treatment of wastewater, management of sludge from wastewater treatment plants, reuse of wastewater in the context of water scarcity and droughts, stormwater overflow issues, alternative sanitation solutions and advanced wastewater treatment solutions. In the selection of countries, data availability will be an important criterion.

¹ Art. 2 (8) “Sanitation” means the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of human excreta or domestic waste water, whether through collective systems or by installations serving a single household or undertaking.

Art 2 (9) “Collective system” means: (a) A system for the supply of drinking water to a number of households or undertakings; and/or (b) A system for the provision of sanitation which serves a number of households or undertakings and, where appropriate, also provides for the collection, transport, treatment and disposal or reuse of industrial waste water, whether provided by a body in the public sector, an undertaking in the private sector or by a partnership between the two sectors.

² Available at: http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/322454/Situation-water-sanitation-hygiene-schools.pdf

Methods

- The methodology of the scoping study will follow a dual approach. It draws on a systematic literature review of scientific and grey literature on the one hand and follows a case-study methodology (including expert interviews, where appropriate) on the other hand. The results from the review will be complemented with published and unpublished data of international organizations and European institutions.

Data sources

- Possible data sources include but are not limited to a systematic search and review of scientific and grey literature in English and Russian³, including UNECE Environmental Indicators⁴, OECD and UNECE Environmental Performance Review reports⁵, WHO/UNICEF JMP data (incl. “raw” data), GLAAS⁶ (incl. “raw” data), the 2017 World Water Development Report, EEA data, FAO Aquastat, OECD data, national policy documents, EU policy/working documents, national Protocol on Water and Health summary reports, reports of development and UN agencies, as well as activity reports of NGOs that are available in the public domain. While the systematic literature could cover the entire region, the review of specific policies and country information should be limited to 15 countries, as outlined above.

(It might also be interesting to explore if “shit flow diagrams” can be obtained for 2-3 cities in the pan-European Region (e.g. through GIZ/SuSanA).)

Draft outline (envisaged length: ca. 50 lay-outed pages)

- **SECTION A – Overview of sanitation practices in the pan-European region (ca. 10 pages in word)**

This section addresses, but may not be limited to, the following aspects: What types of sanitation facilities are people using in the pan-European region? What is known about untreated wastewater (origins, quality, quantity, etc.) and its fate in the environment? What types of collection and treatment systems are used? In which areas of the region does waste water reuse play a role and how?

- **SECTION B – Impacts of current sanitation practices (ca. 10 pages in word)**

Health and environmental impacts of current sanitation practices: Summary of the outcomes of the systematic review of evidence on health and environmental impacts (including economic valuation whenever possible) of current sanitation practices in the pan-European Region, including future perspectives in light of climate change and climate variability impacts.

³ The WHO library proposes approaches for systematic literature reviews including grey literature.

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/env/indicators.html>

⁵ Countries which have participated in a recent UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR): Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan. Countries which have participated in a recent OECD EPR: Austria, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

⁶ Countries that participated in the 2013/14 or 2015/16 GLAAS cycle: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine

- Background and methods
- Impacts on human health
- Impacts on the environment
- Impacts on other sectors
- Conclusions [and recommendations]: What are, in terms of health and environmental impacts, the most important sanitation challenges in the pan-European region?

• **SECTION C – Sanitation policies and practical implementation (ca. 20 pages in word)**

Access to sanitation:

- **Policy**
- **Implementation**
- **Capacity (finance, human resources)**
- **Conclusions [and recommendations]**

Collection, treatment and disposal:

- **Policy:** How are waste water collection and treatment regulated in the region (both domestic and industrial)? What about stormwater overflow? What about small-scale sanitation systems? Are there specific regulations for innovative approaches?
- **Implementation:** To which extent are existing policies/laws on waste water collection and treatment complied with?
- **Capacity (institutional, financial, human resources)**
- **Conclusions [and recommendations]**

Reuse:

- **Policy:** Which policies on wastewater reuse exist (both domestic and industrial) (including focus on sanitation safety planning)?
- **Implementation:** In which countries is wastewater reused? For which purposes (potable, non-potable; direct and indirect) and to which extent?
- **Capacity (institutional, financial, human resources)**
- **Conclusions [and recommendations]**

Conclusions and recommendations

Outline of research activities, proposed share of work

Section A	Section B	Section C
Systematic review of scientific literature: RIVM	Systematic review of scientific literature: RIVM	
Review of grey literature and data sources: Consultant	Review of grey literature and data sources: Consultant	Review of policies and data sources: Consultant
		Obtain complementary information through questionnaires or interviews, if necessary: Consultant
Writing-up: Consultant	Writing-up: RIVM	Writing-up: Consultant

UNECE/WHO-Europe: overall coordination, conceptual inputs throughout the process, review of drafts

Proposed timeline

Indicative time frame	Activity
By 30 June 2017	Joint secretariat: Agreement on draft concept note to be shared with RIVM
By 31 July 2017	RIVM: Proposal of search strategies for systematic review and feedback on advanced version
31 August 2017	Joint secretariat, RIVM and partners: Sanitation event at Stockholm World Water Week, presentation of sanitation scoping study project
20 October 2017	Joint secretariat: Finalization of concept note, incl. consultation of Protocol lead parties for small-scale systems, institutional sanitation and climate change
15-16 November 2017	Lead parties: Present progress with sanitation scoping study project at Working Group on Water and Health
By 31 January 2018	RIVM and consultant: Undertake literature search, as described above, and produce a first extended outline (including information gaps)
February 2018	RIVM, consultant and partners: revision of the extended outline and identification of possible need for questionnaires/interviews that can be facilitated by the secretariat
30 April 2018	Consultant, with the support of partners and facilitated by the secretariat: additional data gathering (interviews/questionnaire/?) if necessary
By 31 May 2018	First full draft
30 June 2018	Feedback and input by partners
15 September 2018	Second full draft

Resource needs

- Working time of RIVM researchers in RIVM working on the scoping-study
- Working time of the consultant working on the scoping-study
- Working time of reviewers
- Funds for possible translations of policies and other documents from national languages into English

- Funds for translation into Russian, editing, layout and printing (printing could be covered by UNECE regular budget)