



SELF-ASSESSMENT OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	4
LIST OF TABLES	5
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	5
INTRODUCTION	6
SUMMARY	8
1. BASELINE ANALYSIS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION	12
Assessment method	12
Republic of Belarus profile	16
Vilejka district profile	18
Mosty district profile	18
International obligations on water and sanitation	20
PART 1. STEERING GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS TO DELIVER EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION	22
Area 1.1. Strategic framework for achieving equitable access	22
Area 1.2 Sector financial policies	23
Area 1.3 Rights and duties of users and other right-holders	27
PART 2. REDUCING GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES	30
Area 2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas	34
Area 2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas	34
Area 2.3 Geographical allocation of external support for the sector	35
PART 3. ENSURING ACCESS FOR VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS	36
Area 3.1 Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	36
Area 3.2 Persons with special physical needs	36
Area 3.3 Users of health care facilities	37
Area 3.4. Users of educational facilities	38
Area 3.5 Users of retirement homes	38
Area 3.6 Prisoners	40
Area 3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centres	40
Area 3.8 Homeless people	40
Area 3.9 Travellers and nomadic communities	42
Area 3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation	42
Area 3.11 Persons without access to safe drinking water and sanitation in their workplaces	42
PART 4. KEEPING WATER AND SANITATION AFFORDABLE FOR ALL	44
Area 4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services	46
Area 4.2 Tariff measures	48
Area 4.3 Social protection measures	49
Final score	51
2. BELARUS: NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS	52

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WSS – Water Supply and Sewerage

Vilejka DEC – Vilejka district Executive Committee

WWWS – Water and Waste Water Services

WHO-Europe – World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe

GI – Governmental institution

EBRD – European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

UN ECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

HUS – Housing and Utilities Services

HUI – Housing and Utilities Infrastructure

MART – Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade of the Republic of Belarus

IBRD – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

MCS – Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus

MoH – Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus

MNREP – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus

PA – Public Association

LSDP – Location-sensitive development passport for Vilejka district (Minsk region)

WSP – Plan to ensure water safety

CMR – Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus

DUUE – District utility unitary enterprise

DUE – District unitary enterprise

TR – Technical regulations

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Answers to questions by areas of action

Table 2: Answer reliability criteria (individual and cumulative)

Table 3: Socioeconomic and sector data

Table 4: Quantitative information on geographical disparities

Table 5: Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all: quantitative data

Table 6: Final score by areas of action

Table 7: Recommendations by subject areas

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Republic of Belarus map

Figure 2: Vilejka district in Belarus map

Figure 3: Mosty district in Belarus map

INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared in the course of case study of equitable access to water and sanitation in the Republic of Belarus at national and district levels. The case study has been conducted using equitable access assessment tool developed under the Protocol on Water and Health of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. The assessment has been performed at the national and district levels. The pilot regions for the assessment were Vilejka district (Minsk region) and Mosty district (Grodno region).

The work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health has identified three key dimensions that should be considered by countries to enable them to provide equitable access to water and sanitation: i) reducing geographical differences in the services provided; ii) preventing the discrimination or exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the provision of services; and iii) ensuring financial affordability by users.

The Equitable Access Score card, developed under the Protocol on Water and Health, was used for the assessment, this is a tool for global review of existing governmental policy measures aimed at solving problems with inequitable access to water and sanitation¹.

The self-assessment was carried out by a group of experts each of whom researched specific aspects:

Mr. A.B. Bahmat, economist: assessment of tariff affordability;

Ms. Yu.V. Yablonskaia, group coordinator: assessment of state governance and geographical difference;

Mr. A.N. Gankin, expert on access for vulnerable or marginalized groups.*

To collect information, we researched available statistical data, interviewed stakeholders and analyzed programmes and regulations. After assessment of the information obtained the experts filled in the Score card. The data collection and analysis period were from July to August 2019.

The assessment findings enabled to draw conclusions on the current situation with regards to equitable access to water and sanitation.

This report includes seven chapters describing the assessment mechanism and a filled Score card providing information on «Country/Vilejka and Mosty districts profile», results of the area «Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe water and sanitation»; «Reducing geographical disparities»; «Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups» and «Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all» and «Final Score» sections.

* In the context of this document, vulnerable and marginalized groups include homeless people, nomads, people with disabilities, schoolchildren, hospitalized patients, prisoners and refugee camps, and persons deprived of a guaranteed income.

¹ «The Equitable Access Score-card supporting policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation» Protocol on Water and Health. UN. Geneva. September 2014



SUMMARY

«The self-Assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation in the Republic of Belarus» report (hereinafter referred as «the Report») has been prepared using equitable access assessment tool developed under the Protocol on Water and Health of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe. To fully realize the human rights to drinking water and sanitation, it is necessary to develop policies considering equity aspects. Ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation implies that they are available, affordable (physically and financially), acceptable and safe. The self-assessment has been performed at the national and district levels. The pilot regions for the assessment were Vilejka district (Minsk region) and Mosty district (Grodno region).

The Report is divided into three sections:

- 1) The basic analysis of equitable access to water and sanitation, which includes the methodology description, profiles of the Republic of Belarus, Mosty and Vilejka districts, the international commitments of the Republic of Belarus and the key findings of the four score-card areas: steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation; reducing geographical disparities; ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups; keeping water and sanitation affordable for all.
- 2) The next steps and opportunities to use the self-assessment results. This section includes major conclusions and recommendations in four studied areas.
- 3) Stakeholder comments on the results of basic assessment expressed at the stakeholders' workshop held on 29 October 2019 in Minsk.

BASIC ANALYSIS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

For data collection and analysis, we used the *equitable access score-card*². This tool includes a brief country profile with quantitative data to facilitate consideration of results in respective context, and four sections outlining the four thematic areas related with equity issue. These four sections are further subdivided into areas of action to improve equitable access.

The four sections of the Score-card:

Section 1. Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Section 2. Reducing geographical disparities. Section 2 includes three areas of action:

Section 3. Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups. It includes eleven areas:

Section 4. Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all. Section 4 includes the following areas of action.

Progress estimation in each area of action is score based. Total score is presented at the end.

² Page 28-57, «The Equitable Access Score-card supporting policy development processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation» Protocol on Water and Health. UN. Geneva. September 2014

Data collection for the report was performed by studying the published statistics, by enquiry and by exchange with interested governmental bodies. Information collection and assessment have been performed from July to August 2019.

In each area of action, a summary has been prepared and the average score and reliability levels have been calculated. Estimated results are given in the final score at page 51.

The key findings of the present analyses are as the following.

- There is a comprehensive legal bases ensuring access to water and sanitation including the laws of the Republic of Belarus «On Drinking Water Supply» and «On Local Governance and Self-Governance in the Republic of Belarus». Local authorities are responsible for arrangement of water supply and sanitation services on their territories. However, the established obligations mostly deal with centralized services. It is not identified how water supply and sanitation is provided in case of centralized supply is not available.

- A planning of measures in the area of water supply and sanitation is made at national level by adopting a state program «Comfortable Housing and a Favorable Environment 2016-2020» State Program (Clear Water sub-program). However, the current program only addresses the issue of water supply.

- The situation with access to centralized water supply has steadily improving. In 2019 the rate of urban population having access to centralized services is 98,7%, for rural population – 83,5 % (only for agro towns).

- There is a considerable difference in access to sanitation services in urban and rural areas as for 2019: 89,8% and 29,7 % (only for agro towns) respectively.

- A lack of awareness and understanding of the notion of equal access was observed both at national and local level.

- There is no definition of the marginalized groups of people and lack of understanding that their particular needs shall be addressed as well.

- A tariff system for water supply and sanitation ensures high level of affordability. Along with these subsidies are provided to certain groups of people.

- There is a concern about financial sustainability of water companies as capital costs are not included into tariffs.

NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

We have developed recommendations to improve equitable access to water and sanitation in each of the four thematic areas.

1. Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The key recommendations include awareness raising of local authorities and other stakeholders, paying a particular attention to the issue in national and local plans and assuring access to available international financial support.

2. Reducing geographical disparities. It is recommended to improve data collection on situation in rural settlements, to incorporate issue of sanitation into a national planning and to establish a support mechanism for construction and operation of local water supply and sanitation systems.

3. Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups. It is recommended to make a clear identification of vulnerable and marginalized groups, vulnerability levels/categories, perform a more detailed study of access to water and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups and establish a monitoring system. Local sustainable development strategies and sectoral policies shall be reviewed respectively.

4. Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all. It is recommended to take measures to increase financial sustainability of water companies which includes full cost recovery tariffs, tax exemption, differentiation of tariffs depending on water quality and etc. A tariff policy shall be developed considering citizens' ability to pay, financial situation of enterprises and organizations in the territory being serviced. To introduce of targeted subsidies to all registered families eligible to receive non-cash housing subsidies.

STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS ON THE RESULTS OF BASIC ASSESSMENT

During the workshop held on 29 October 2019 in Minsk, the results of the the assessment were discussed with the stakeholders and it was agreed to submit the key findings and recommendations to relevant national authorities.

1. BASELINE ANALYSIS OF EQUITABLE ACCESS TO WATER AND SANITATION

This report has been prepared based on the analysis of the self-assessment findings in the four areas of ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation, both at national and district levels. The research has been performed using the equitable access assessment tool developed under the Protocol on Water and Health of UNECE and WHO-Europe. The pilot regions for the assessment were Vilejka district (Minsk region) and Mosty district (Grodno region). Information collection and assessment have been performed from July to August 2019.

Assessment method

Activities performed during the assessment:

- collection of data available from local authorities in the pilot regions. Meetings in Vilejka and Mosty executive committees were held (30/07/2019, 26/08/2019);
- basic analysis of collected official data, publicly available information and existing information from experts;
- expert project design of basic analysis of delivering equitable access to water and sanitation in Belarus (baseline analysis) using the assessment tool from the Protocol on Water and Health.

To discuss assessment results, a multi-stakeholder workshop was organized in Minsk (on 29 October 2019).

The following state administration bodies were involved in the assessment:

at the national level:

- Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus (MoH);
- Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus (MCS);
- Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade of the Republic of Belarus (MART).

at the district level:

- Mosty district executive committee;
- Vilejka district executive committee;
- representatives from Mosty district Deputy Councils;
- water supply and sewerage service providers («Vilejsky Vodokanal» DUUE, Mosty DUE HUI);
- district hygiene and epidemiology centres («Mosty district hygiene and epidemiology centre» GI, «Vilejka district hygiene and epidemiology centre» GI);
- representatives from district education departments and from social service centres of Vilejka and Mosty districts;
- public organisations (Mosty district branch of «Belarusian society of the disabled» PA, «ZOVİK» PA (Vilejka district)).

Year 2010 was selected as baseline, and we estimated progress as of 2018.

For data collection and analysis, we used the *equitable access score-card*³. This card includes a brief country profile with main focus on quantitative data to facilitate consideration of results in respective context,

Page 28-57, «The Equitable Access Score-card. supporting policy development processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation» Protocol on Water and Health. UN. Geneva. September 2014

and four sections outlining thematic areas. These four sections are further subdivided into areas of action which mainly focus on actions taken to improve equitable access.

The four sections of the Score-card:

Section 1. *Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.* Section 1 includes three areas of action:

- 1.1 Strategic framework for achieving equitable access.
- 1.2 Sector financial policies
- 1.3 Rights and duties of users and other right-holders.

Section 2. *Reducing geographical disparities.* Section 2 includes three areas of action:

- 2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas.
- 2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas.
- 2.3 Geographical allocation of external support for the sector

Section 3. *Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups.* It includes eleven areas:

- 3.1 Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups;
- 3.2 Persons with special physical needs;
- 3.3 Users of health care facilities;
- 3.4 Users of educational facilities;
- 3.5 Users of retirement homes;
- 3.6 Prisoners;
- 3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centres;
- 3.8 Homeless people;
- 3.9 Travellers and nomadic communities;
- 3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation;
- 3.11 Persons without access to safe drinking water and sanitation in their workplaces.

Section 4. *Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all.* Section 4 includes the following areas of action:

- 4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services;
- 4.2 Tariff measures;
- 4.3 Social protection measures.

Progress estimation in each area of action is score based as follows:

- quantitative questions to each area. The number of questions varies from 2 to 6.
- There is one answer from four possible to each question: No / To a limited extent / To a large extent / Yes). Answers are presented in Table 1;
- Each answer was justified. To do so we used qualitative and quantitative information from regulatory documents, guidelines and instructions, analytical reports, reviews and other similar sources.
- Each answer has a degree of reliability: high (very reliable), medium (reliable) or low (not reliable). Reliability criteria (presence of procedures, ability to track and confirm) are shown in Table 2. Total reliability level is identified for each area of action (Table 2);
- One final score calculated for each area of action. This final score was calculated from estimation scores for each question and the number of questions for each area of action. Only High and Medium

reliability answers were taken into consideration upon calculation of the final score. Score calculation system is shown in Table 1. Total score is shown in final score (page 36).

TABLE 1. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS BY AREAS OF ACTION AND SCORE CALCULATION SYSTEM

ANSWER	SCORE	VALUE
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 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.

TABLE 2. ANSWER RELIABILITY CRITERIA

THE AGGREGATE LEVEL OF RELIABILITY FOR AN INDIVIDUAL AREA OF ACTION		
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 formally 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>
THE AGGREGATE LEVEL OF RELIABILITY FOR AN INDIVIDUAL AREA OF ACTION		
High	Medium	Low
If all the answers in the Area of Action are classified as High	If no answer is classified as Low and at least one answer is classified as Medium.	If at least one answer is classified as Low.



Republic of Belarus profile

The Republic of Belarus is a state in Eastern Europe. The population is 9.492 million people, the area is 207,595 km². It stands 93rd by population and 84th by area in the world.

The capital and the largest city – Minsk has 1.992 million people. The share of urban population is 78,09%, rural population takes 21,91%. The share of rural population is tending to decrease. According to World Bank's data (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>), GDP per capita is Euro 5 517,49 person. There are seven big rivers longer than 500 km in Belarus: the Zapadnaya Dvina, the Neman, the Viliya, the Dnieper, the Berezina, the Sozh and the Pripyat. Fresh water renewable resources are 7.04 million m³ per capita per day.



Figure 1: Republic of Belarus map



TABLE 3. SOCIOECONOMIC AND SECTOR DATA

INDICATOR	2010	2018	SOURCE
Population (inhabitants, thousand people)	9 500	9 492	http://www.belstat.gov.by/
Extension (km ²)	207,6	207,6	
GDP per capita (€ per capita)	4754,92	5517,49	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=EE-KZ-RU-RO-BY-GE-UA-MD
% of population below national poverty line	27,39	23,88	http://www.beroc.by/webroot/delivery/files/PP_Poverty_N°68_Mazol.pdf
% of population unemployed	6,06	5,71	https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.ZS?locations=BY
Share of urban population (percent)	74,50	78,09	http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/ssrd-mvf_2/natsionalnaya-stranitsa-svodnyh-dannyh/naselenie_6/dinamika-chislennosti-naseleniya/
Share of rural population (percent)	25,50	21,91	
Renewable freshwater resources (million m ³ per capita per day)	7,04	7,04	MCS
% of population without access to safe drinking water*	18	7,2	Brief report on the Protocol on Water and Health.
% of population without access to waste water collection *	32,5	20,9	Brief report on the 2010 Protocol on Water and Health.
% of population without access to waste water treatment (any level)	26	21,9	MCS
Public financial resources spent on the water and sanitation sector	No data	No data	
Public financial resources spent on ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation	No data	No data	
Please provide the definition of safe drinking water if different from the one described in chapter 2	No difference	No difference	

* 2008 data presented instead of 2010.

Vilejka district profile

Vilejka district is an administrative district in the north-west of Minsk region. Its administrative centre is Vilejka. District area is 2453.8 km². There are several large rivers in the district including the Viliya, the Servech, the Iliya, the Uzlianka. Vilejka water storage was built in 1974 to the east from Vilejka, its area is 63,3 km². The water storage supplies water to several districts of Minsk city. Population of the district is 47 349 persons including around 26 760 persons in Vilejka(56.52%). In general population of the district has decreased by 4 483 in 2010-2018 (by 10%). There are 407 settlements total in the district. .

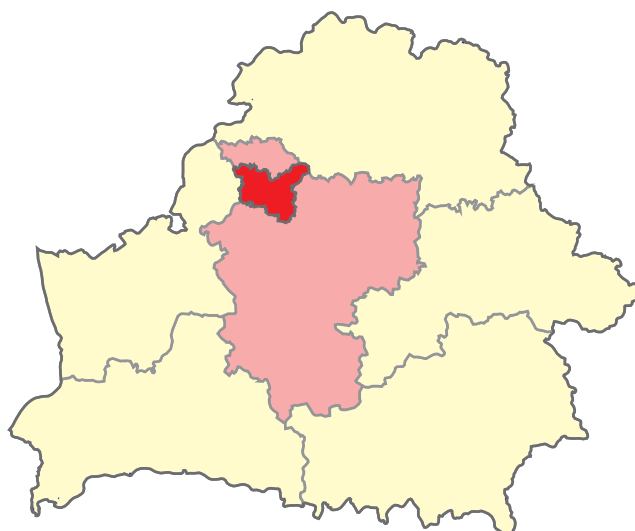


Figure 2: Vilejka district in Belarus map

The share of urban population tends to increase as compared to the rural population. Unemployment in Vilejka district is 0.7%⁴. According to data provided by Vilejka DEC the availability of central water supply systems for urban population is 99.9 %, and 72% for rural population, and the availability of centralized and local sewerage systems for urban and rural population is 93% and 84%, respectively.

Mosty district profile

Mosty district is an administrative unit in western Grodno region. Mosty is its administrative centre. Population of the district is 27,739 persons including around 15,783 persons in urban settlements (56.9%). There are 154 rural settlements total in the district. In general population of the district has decreased by 5,817 in 2010-2018. Unemployment is 0.6%.⁵ According to data provided by Mosty DEC the availability of central water supply systems for urban population is 100%, and 74.5% for rural population, and the availability of centralized and local sewerage systems for urban and rural population is 70.6% and 13.9 %, respectively.



Figure 3: Mosty district in Belarus map

⁴ According to national statistics, calculation method is different from internationally accepted.

⁵ According to national statistics, calculation method is different from internationally accepted.



International obligations on water and sanitation

The Republic of Belarus is a party to the Convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes (Helsinki, 17 March 1992) aimed at international cooperation in protection of transboundary water bodies from pollution. The Republic of Belarus has an observer status under Helsinki Convention on the protection of the Baltic Sea (Helsinki, 17/01/2000).

Since July 21, 2009 the Republic of Belarus has been a party to the Protocol on Water and Health under the Convention on the protection and use of transboundary watercourses and international lakes. The Protocol is the first document setting mandatory legal requirements to prevention and control of water-related diseases by improving and coordinating the water management activities.

Belarus takes active part in the work of the Protocol and has been elected for the chairmanship of the Protocol for the period 2019-2021.

To satisfy the Protocol the Republic of Belarus has developed approved target indicators on implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health (MoH Resolution 116 of 04/12/2013).

The following indicators have been set in target area III «Access to potable water»:

availability of central water supply for population:



98,5 %

for regional and district centres, cities of regional subordination and for urban-type settlements



83,5 %

for agricultural settlement population⁶

According to the Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus, this indicator has been reached as of the beginning of 2019 and it makes



98,7 %

for regional and district centres, cities of regional subordination and for urban-type settlements



83,5 %

for agricultural settlement population

The following indicator has been set in target area IV «Access to water sewerage»:

Availability of centralized and local water sewerage systems



92,5 %

for urban population



32,5 %

for rural population

According to MCS this indicator has not been reached as of the beginning of 2019 and it makes:



89,8 %

for regional and district centers, cities of regional subordination and for urban-type settlements

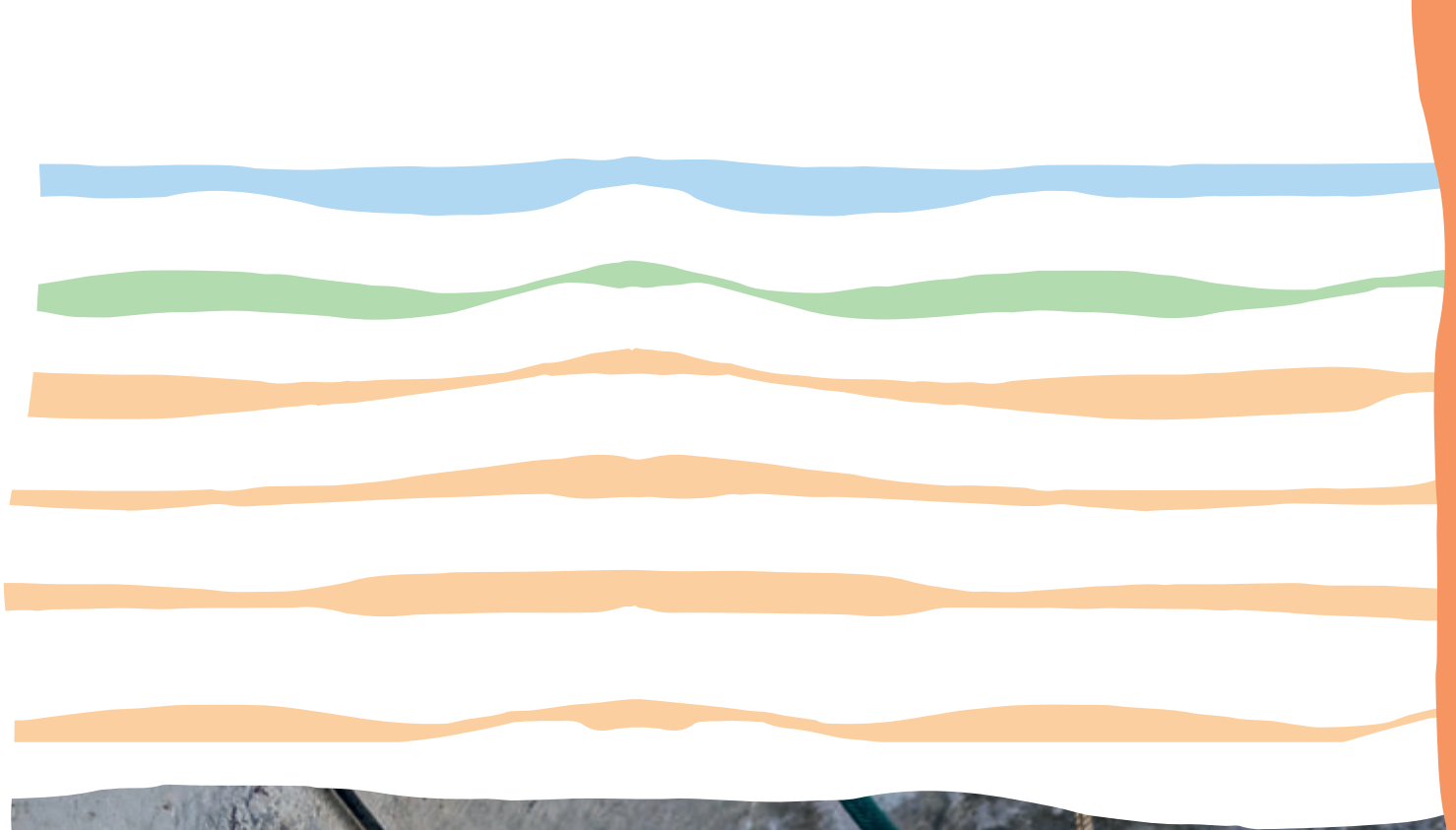


29,7 %

for rural population

In 2019 there was a revision of the national targets undertaken. Based on the assessment of the achievement of previously established targets and taking into account current situation there were new targets, indicators and activities for their attainment formulated. Draft targets were discussed with a broad range of stakeholders at the workshop and revised according to remarks got. It is planned to adopt new targets in 2020.

⁶ An agricultural settlement is an improved rural settlement with industrial and social infrastructure to ensure minimum state social standards for local population and residents of adjacent areas



Part 1. Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

To realize the human rights to water and sanitation it is necessary to develop appropriate policies. Ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation implies that these services are available, affordable (physically and financially), acceptable and safe.

Area 1.1. Strategic framework for achieving equitable access.

The main national enactments regulating relationships in water protection, water supply and sewerage are:

The 1994 Constitution of the Republic of Belarus (as amended in 1996 and 2004);

The Water Code of the Republic of Belarus of 30/04/2014 No. 149-3 (09/01/2019 revision);

The Republic of Belarus Presidential Directive 7 of 04/03/2019 «On improvement and development of national housing and utilities infrastructure»;

Law of the Republic of Belarus «On protection of environment» 1982-XII of 26/11/1992 (09/01/2019 revision);

Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 271-3 of 24/06/1999 (09/01/2019 revision) «On potable water supply»;

Law of the Republic of Belarus «On sanitary and epidemiological well-being of citizens» No. 340-3 of 7/01/2012 (30/06/2016);

Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 300-3 of 05/07/2004 (18/07/2016 revision) «On architectural, urban planning and construction activities in the Republic of Belarus».

Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 108-3 of 04/01/2010 (30/12/2018 revision) «On local governance and self-governance in the Republic of Belarus»;

Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 405-3 of 16/07/2008 «On protection of rights of housing and utilities services consumer»;

Law of the Republic of Belarus No.300-3 of 18/07/2011 «On the Appeals of Citizens and Legal Persons».

The Constitution of the Republic of Belarus guarantees right to favorable environment and compensation for harm sustained from violation of that right (Article 46).

The key enactment regulating relations in use and protection of open water is the Water Code which sets provisions on waste water discharge into the environment including legal frameworks for protection and usage of water resources, defines the functions of state bodies and local authorities, rights and obligations of water users, as well as the rules governing water intake and waste water discharge.

Water Code Article 39 stipulates that open and underground water bodies may be used for drinking needs, water quality which must meet the hygienic requirements to water safety of water bodies for drinking needs set in accordance with the legislation on drinking water supply and sanitary and epidemiological welfare of the population.

The Water Code and other enactments do not have direct provisions on the human rights of citizens to sanitation.

In accordance with the Law «On drinking water supply» (Article 18), «...consumers have right to be supplied with potable water in accordance with this Law and other enactments on drinking water supply as well as with water supply services agreements». Meanwhile according to the Law consumer is an individual person who is a consumer of water supply services provided by water and sewage utilities organizations

based on water supply service agreements to satisfy household and other needs not related to business activities. The new revision of the Law does not contain provision on the consumers' right to drinking water supply from non-centralized drinking water supply systems in accordance with drinking water quality standards and drinking water allowance standards. Thus, the right to drinking water emerges if there is a drinking water supply service agreement. The Law does not provide for an unconditional right for drinking water for all residents, it only sets forth this right for those for whom centralized water supply services are available.

The Law «On drinking water supply» sets that local executive and administrative bodies are responsible for drinking water supply and sewerage. In particular, local authorities implement the following key functions related to water supply and sewerage for citizens in their territories:

- arrange the development and implementation of target regional programs and plans of actions for establishment, maintenance and development of drinking water supply systems, drinking water quality improvement and its sustainable use, protection of drinking water sources from pollution, contamination and exhaustion, and protection of drinking water supply systems from damage;
- arrange provision of consumers with drinking water in accordance with drinking water quality and rationing standards;
- arrange works on drinking water supply to individuals in emergency situations and in difficult to access and remote settlements which do not have permanent or seasonal natural sources of drinking water, in accordance with regulatory requirements.

The responsibility for the arrangement of water sewerage and provision of drinking water in respective areas is also stipulated in the Law «On local governance and self-governance in the Republic of Belarus» (Article 41).

The Republic of Belarus Law «On Environment Protection» sets general provisions on environment protection including provisions related to water intake for supply needs, and on waste water discharge into the environment.

The Law «On sanitary and epidemiological well-being of citizens» contains provisions on the right of citizens for «favorable life environment» (Article 27), on provision of sanitary and epidemiological well-being by setting sanitary and hygienic requirements imposed to, inter alia, water bodies, drinking water supply, water use for household and drinking and other needs of citizens, to water use places etc.

The Republic of Belarus Law «On architectural, urban planning and construction activities in the Republic of Belarus» No. 300-3 of 05 July 2004 sets standards related to construction procedures including for water supply and sewerage systems, water treatment facilities, and procedures for development of technical regulations in this area.

There is a comprehensive legal bases ensuring access to water and sanitation. Local authorities are responsible for arrangement of water supply and sanitation services on their territories. However, the established obligations mostly deal with centralized services. It is not identified how water supply and sanitation is provided in case of centralized supply is not available.

Area 1.2 Sector financial policies

The Republic of Belarus Presidential Directive «On improvement and development of national housing and utilities infrastructure» sets the target of 100% provision with quality drinking water for consumers by 2025 (clause 1.3); Also the Directive sets measures to provide social protection of citizens upon payment for Housing and Utilities Services (HUS) and to improve the tariff policy, including non-cash housing allowances for low-income and socially vulnerable population for partial payment for HUS (clause 2.2).

«Comfortable Housing and a Favourable Environment 2016 - 2020» State Program (hereinafter «the State Program») is the key programme document in water supply and sewerage. The objective of the State Program is to ensure comfortable living conditions and a favourable environment, mostly by increasing efficiency and reliability of Housing and Utilities Infrastructures (HUI) facilities and reducing expenses related to provision of housing and utilities services.

To provide citizens with quality and affordable HUS, the sub-program 1 «Ensuring quality and affordability of services» stipulates solving the following tasks: optimize HUS costs, improve HUI management efficiency, improve HUI quality, ensure HUI affordability. The timeliness and completeness of HUS payment by consumers indicate HUS affordability, which is related to target payment collection rates for utility services rendered to natural persons and legal entities (at least 90% by 2020). Also a system of non-cash housing subsidies is provided to partially compensate HUS payments for low income citizens.

The State Program includes sub-program 5 «Clear Water». Regional executive committees and Minsk city executive committee have been appointed as customers for the sub-program.

As a result of the program implementation the availability of centralized water supply systems for urban population has decrease by 1% to 98.7% (2015 - 2018), for rural population it makes 62.52% except for agricultural settlement residents where the availability is higher and makes 83.5%. The availability of centralized and local household sewerage systems is 89.8% for urban residents and 29.7% for rural residents.

At the same time in the year 2015, 83.7% consumers were using centralized water supply with water meeting drinking quality. This is why the priority objective of Clear Water program is improving drinking water supply quality, and its target indicator is the availability of drinking quality water supply to consumers. In accordance with «Clear Water» sub-program, it is planned to implement this objective by building about 500 water de-ironing stations and by providing residents of Minsk with drinking water from underground sources. As a result of the program's implementation, 100% population with access to water supply will be provided by water of drinking quality till the end of 2020.

The funding for the State Program is to come from the national and local budgets, from enterprises, from citizens and from loans. BYN 327.6 million is allocated for implementation of Clear Water sub-program. Sub-program funding sources are subject to annual adjustment.

It should be noted that the objective to ensure 100% availability of drinking quality water under the State Program only applies to citizens to whom centralized water supply is available. The development of de-centralized water supply systems used when it is impossible to connect centralized water supply lines (in rural localities for example) is not provided for.

A significant shortcoming of Clear Water program is the absence of tasks and activities on development of water sewerage system i.e. there is no budgetary funding for this area. Also, there are no provisions for the development of local water sewerage systems when it is impossible to connect to centralized sewers.

The development of districts and also the development in terms of water supply and sewerage is in many instances determined by activities of the local authorities and the scope of budgetary funding allocated for implementation of planned target indicators of district social/economic development. With the decreasing budgetary funding, a number of issues related to local development require new mechanisms and tools. To strengthen the motivation and initiative of citizens, Location-sensitive development passport (LSDP) has been developed in Vilejka district. With regard to water resource management the LSDP stipulates the implementation of a pilot project on construction of an innovative local treatment facility and de-ironing units.

In the framework of the EU project «Public Participation and Efficient Water Management 2019-2021» implanted in Mosty district: Plans to ensure water safety (WSPs) recommended in WHO Guidelines on ensuring drinking water quality have been developed. WSP development is based on risk assessment and implies





involvement of the public and stakeholders. It is going to be the first experience of using this tool in the Republic of Belarus. Implementation of WSPs will start in 2020.

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

The Law «On protection of rights of housing and utilities services consumers» has been passed to protect housing and utilities services consumer's rights including the services of water supply and sewer. In accordance with Article 6 of this Law the consumers entitled to:

- satisfaction of their needs of housing and utilities services;
- safety of housing and utilities services;
- information about service provider and its housing and utilities services;
- choice of provider of housing and utilities services provided on a competitive basis;
- education about consumer rights in the area of housing and utilities services;
- proper quality of housing and utilities services;
- recovery of losses and damage to consumer's life, health and/or property inflicted by the service provider due to improper provision or non-provision of housing and utilities services;
- defence of rights provided by the State, including judicial remedy.

According to Article 7 of the Law, the right for satisfaction of primary needs in housing and utilities services must be at least equal to consumption standards (allowances) stipulated by local executive and administrative bodies (HUS standards/allowances).

The Article 8 provides that the consumer has the right to safety of housing and utilities services, including prohibition on use of products, materials and technology hazardous for the consumer's life, health and/or property and for the environment, in provisions of such services, with the account for both daily and long-term interests of the consumer. The concealment by the service providers of facts and circumstances that are hazardous for consumer's life, health and/or property upon provision of housing and utilities services is prohibited.

The Law stipulates the material terms and conditions for HUS agreements which also include obligations of HUS consumers.

The Law «On the Appeals of Citizens and Legal Persons» sets the mechanism for citizens' appeals and for responses to them. The Law provides that citizens of the Republic of Belarus have right to appeal to organizations by submitting written, electronic or oral appeals, and to address individual entrepreneurs by putting their feedback in the log of comments and suggestions.

Moreover, the Article 4 of the Law «On local governance and self-governance in the Republic of Belarus» provides that to improve the work with citizens and legal entities the Councils, executive and administrative bodies shall, within their competence and in accordance with procedures stipulated by legislation:

- consider citizens' appeals including those by individual entrepreneurs and legal entities (hereinafter appeals of citizens and legal entities), also on field visits and shall keep logs of comments and suggestions;
- take measures necessary for comprehensive, objective, in-depth and timely consideration of appeals of citizens and legal entities in respective regions, including participation in control of timely and quality resolution of issues raised in appeals of citizens and legal entities, by governmental bodies and other governmental organizations;

- arrange personal appointments of citizens, including individual entrepreneurs and representatives of legal entities (hereinafter – personal appointments of citizens and representatives of legal entities);

Special attention is paid to matters of access to ecological information and to public participation in making environmentally significant decisions in the Republic of Belarus. First of all, this is caused by the fact that the Republic of Belarus is a party to the Aarhus Convention which came into effect on 30/10/2001 for Belarus. As international treaties take precedence over national legislation, much work has been done in Belarus to integrate Aarhus Convention provisions into the national legislation.

In accordance with Article 34 of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus citizens are guaranteed with the right to obtain, store and disseminate full, true and timely information on activities of governmental bodies and public associations, on political, economic, cultural and international life and on environmental conditions.

The Law «On Environment Protection» sets that the right of citizens for favorable environment is ensured by the following, including provision of full, true and timely environmental information according to procedures stipulated by the Law and other enactments of the Republic of Belarus including international treaties of the Republic of Belarus;

The Law «On Environment Protection» sets the composition, sources and types of environmental information and the forms of its provision and dissemination (Article 74).

In the Republic of Belarus, public participation in decision-making on environmental matters exists in the following forms: public discussion; public environmental assessment and public councils.

The Law «On Environment Protection» provides that citizens and legal entities have right to participate in public discussions of environmentally significant decisions (Article 15-2), the procedure of public discussions is set by resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 458 of 14 June 2016 «On approval of Regulation on procedure of arrangement and holding public discussions on environmentally significant decisions, strategic environmental appraisal reports, environmental impact assessment reports, consideration of taken environmentally significant decisions and on amendments to certain resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus». The procedure of public environmental assessment is stipulated in resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 1592 of 29/10/2010 «On approval of Regulation on procedure of public environmental assessment».

Today Belarus has no enactments regulating establishment and activities of public councils attached to governmental bodies and no enactments stipulating the mechanism for public participation in development and implementation of state plans, programs and enactments. There are public councils under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus (MNREP) and the Ministry of housing and utilities infrastructure. In 2019 the first Water Council was founded under the Mosty district executive committee and the Council members are stakeholders and civil society representatives. The Council focuses on improving the efficiency of water resource management in the district.

In July 2019 the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus (CMR) «On procedure of providing information in the area of drinking water supply» was adopted, it stipulates:

- the methods of information provision;
- the list of information types provided by local authorities;
- the list of information types provided by Water and Waste Water Services (WWWS) enterprises, which includes compliance with drinking water safety standard, drinking water preparation methods, water sources in settlements etc.;
- that information must be provided within 30 days from its obtaining and changing.



PART 2. REDUCING GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES

TABLE 4: QUANTITATIVE INFORMATION ON GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES

<p>PROVIDE THE OFFICIAL DEFINITION OF RURAL, URBAN AND (IF APPLICABLE) PERI-URBAN AREAS IN YOUR COUNTRY/REGION</p>	<p>In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Belarus No. 154-3 of 05/05/1998 «Administrative and territorial division of the Republic of Belarus» the urban category includes:</p> <p>The city of Minsk – the capital city of Belarus. The status of Minsk is set by the Law;</p> <p>Cities of regional subordination – settlements with at least 50 thousand residents which are administrative, large business and cultural centers with developed industrial and social infrastructures. In specific cases, settlements with population below 50 thousand which are administrative, large business and cultural centers of great industrial or historical significance and good perspectives for further development and growth of population may be categorized as cities of regional subordination;</p> <p>Cities of district subordination – settlements with at least 6 thousand residents where there are industrial organizations and social/cultural and household service organizations. In specific cases, settlements with population below 6 thousand with good perspectives for further development and growth of population where industrial organizations, social/cultural infrastructures and household service organizations are located may be categorized as cities of district subordination.</p> <p>The urban-type settlement category includes:</p> <p>Urban settlements – settlements with population of at least 2 thousand with industrial, utility, social/cultural, trade, catering and household service organizations;</p> <p>Resort settlements – settlements with population of at least 2 thousand with resort and health improvement organizations and trade, catering, household service and cultural/educational organizations. In specific cases settlements with population below 2 thousand with good perspectives for further development and growth of population where industrial organizations, social/cultural infrastructures and household service organizations are located may be categorized as resort settlements.</p> <p>Industrial settlements – settlements with at least 500 residents located in the vicinity of industrial organizations, power plants, construction sites, railway stations and other facilities.</p> <p>The rural settlement category includes:</p> <p>agricultural settlements – improved rural settlements with industrial and social infrastructure to ensure minimum state social standards for local population and residents of adjacent areas;</p> <p>small towns, villages – settlements with industrial and social infrastructure which do not belong to agricultural settlements;</p> <p>farmsteads – settlements which do not belong to agricultural settlements, villages or small towns.</p>
---	--

	2010	2018	SOURCE
Rate of access to safe drinking water in urban areas (%)	No data	98,7	Clear Water 2011-2015 state program MCS
Rate of access to safe drinking water in rural areas (%)	No data	62.52 (83.5 in agricultural settlements)	Clear Water 2011-2015 state program MCS
Rate of access to sanitation in urban areas (%)	No data	89,8	Clear Water 2011-2015 state program MCS
Rate of access to sanitation in rural areas (%)	No data	29,7	Clear Water 2011-2015 state program MCS
Public financial resources spent in reducing geographical disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation (million EUR)	No data	No data	
Public financial resources spent in reducing geographical disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation (EUR per capita)	No data	No data	
in reducing geographical disparities in access to safe drinking water and sanitation (% of budget spent on water and sanitation)	No data	No data	

The geographical disparities in access to water and sanitation in the Republic of Belarus are the disparities between urban and rural areas. For instance, as of end of 2018 the rate of access to centralized water supply for urban population was 98.7 %, the rate of access to centralized and local water sewerage systems was 89.8%. At the same time the share of rural residents with access to these services were respectively 83.5% and 29.7%. Only agricultural settlement residents are counted as rural population. This level of access was not reached in other rural settlements. The biggest disparity is observed in the access to sanitation.

This trend is also present in Vilejka and Mosty districts.

According to the data provided by Vilejka Executive Committee (DEC), in Vilejka district: :

The rate of access to centralized water supply for urban population where water meets drinking quality standards is:

2010 year **99,9 %**

2018 year **99,9 %**

The rate of access to centralized water supply for rural population:

2010 year **65 %**

2018 year **72 %**

The rate of access to centralized and local water sewerage systems for urban population:

2010 year **80 %**

2018 year **93 %**

The rate of access to centralized and local water sewerage systems for rural population:

2010 year **80 %**

2018 year **84 %**

According to the data provided by Mosty Executive Committee (DEC), in Mosty district:

The rate of access to centralized water supply for urban population where water meets drinking quality standards is:

2010 year **76,8 %**

2018 year **100 %**

The rate of access to centralized water supply systems for rural population where water meets drinking quality standards is:

2010 year **48 %**

2018 year **50,7 %**

The rate of access to centralized and local water sewerage for urban population where water meets:

2010 year **n/a %**

2018 year **70,6 %**

the rate of access to centralized and local water sewerage systems for rural population:

2010 year **n/a %**

2018 year **13,9%**



Area 2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas

As a result of the implementation of state programs related to water supply, we observe a certain progress in improving access to water services both in urban and in rural contexts, as well as in reducing disparities in access levels. From 2010 to 2018 the disparity between level of access to central water supply in urban and rural areas has decreased from 18% to 15.2%. However, a number of problematic issues remain.

In the Republic of Belarus, there are disparities in access to water and sanitation between urban and rural areas but the biggest disparity is related with access to sanitation. There are disparities in the countryside which depend on rural settlement types. According to «Comfortable Housing and a Favorable Environment 2016 - 2020» State Program (Clear Water sub-program) the activities to ensure 100% availability of standard quality water are aimed at improving existing water supply systems i.e. they are carried out in urban type settlements and in agricultural settlements.

The existing disparities are due to the lack of funding for construction/reconstruction of water supply and sewerage systems in rural settlements which is caused by the unbalanced demography in the countryside. Also, the WWWS (HUI) enterprises in small district centers have difficulties in accessing to loans from international financial institutions due to the small number of consumers.

A significant shortcoming of Clear Water program is the absence of activities aimed at developing water sewerage system i.e. there is no budgetary funding for this area.

Also, there are no provisions for the development of local water sewerage systems when it is impossible to connect to centralized sewers in underpopulated rural areas. The establishment of a financial tool to develop water supply and sewerage systems at local level would improve rural residents' access to these services.

It should be noted that the existing disparity tends to decrease in water supply but the measures being taken are insufficient. At policy level, there is a lack of understanding of equitable access and especially of aspects related to reducing geographical disparities.

Area 2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas

Water and sanitation tariff system is uniform throughout the country. Citizens pay for water supply and sewerage services at rates subsidized by the state (subsidized tariff) which is the same in all regions. Today the subsidized tariff is on average 96-98% of tariff ensuring full compensation of service costs. There is a difference in full cost compensation tariffs; this difference is caused by the fact that the technical conditions of water extraction, transportation and cleaning are different between the regions and require additional costs for construction of de-ironing plants.

The values of subsidized tariffs are prescribed by regional executive committees and by Minsk executive committee after coordination with the Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade before the beginning of financial year in accordance with the Republic of Belarus Presidential Decree No. 550 of 05/12/2013 «On regulatory issues of tariffs for communal services (public utilities) and amendments to certain Republic of Belarus Presidential Decrees».

The increase in state-subsidized tariffs/prices for housing and utilities services for the population is carried out annually on 1st January based on the permissible growth of public payments for such services in the amount equivalent to five US dollars per family of three, living in a one-bedroom apartment with total area of 48 m².

⁷ State-subsidized tariffs (prices) of housing and utilities services for citizens are tariffs (prices) of maintenance and capital repairs of residential houses, of water supply and sewerage (sanitation), gas/electricity/heat supply, of elevator usage, of evacuation, decontamination and processing of municipal solid waste, when costs are partially compensated for from the budget and/or other sources.

The costs of housing and utilities services without sources of financing through government-subsidized tariffs (prices) for such services for citizens or through tariffs (prices) for utilities services for legal entities stipulated by the law on the national budget for the next fiscal year, shall be compensated from subsidies from local budgets calculated based on the volume of rendered housing and utilities services and subsidy standards per unit of housing and utilities services determined by the law.

Area 2.3 Geographical allocation of external support for the sector

The Republic of Belarus realizes the importance of access to external financial resources for small WWWS (HUI) enterprises. To solve this problem, WWWS regionalization was launched to consolidate enterprises which give them a wider access to investment finance. This process is integrated into investment projects and decisions on consolidation of WWWS enterprises decided by region executive committees. The implementation of investment projects in WWWS is financed by the World Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus proactively facilitates implementation of these projects.



PART 3. ENSURING ACCESS FOR VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS.

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

In the context of this document, vulnerable and marginalized groups include the homeless, nomads, the disabled, school children, hospitalized patients, people living in prisons and refugee camps, and people without secure tenure.

The state guarantees the protection of rights in the area of drinking water supply by providing potable water which meets hygienic standards in terms of safety, to each citizen in the amount specified by the system of state social standards on servicing of the population (social standards are scientifically justified taking into account the practice of application depending on the availability of access to centralized water supply, connection to hot water supply, availability of bath etc.). The problems and needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups are not separately identified, they are reflected in strategies and measures for particular groups of population.

Problems and needs related with access to drinking water and sanitation are more or less addressed in a number of strategies and measures (programs) aimed at particular groups of population and are implemented by the relevant departments (health, social protection, etc.). Sub-program 4 «Barrier-free living environment for disabled and physically impaired persons» of «Social protection and facilitation of employment 2016-2020» State Program approved by resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus 73 of 30 January 2016 (National Register of enactments of the Republic of Belarus, 2016, No. 5/41675, <http://www.pravo.by/main.aspx?guid=3961&p0=C21600073>), Law of the Republic of Belarus of 14/06/2007 No. 239-3 (revision 2017) «On state social benefits, rights and guarantees for specific categories of citizens».

There are guidelines to identify the needs in social services of citizens in administrative-territorial units but consultation with experts emphasizes the need for wider use of data from the special studies (including social studies) on the needs of these groups to considered their conclusions. Furthermore, their representatives should be involved in the design and implementation of activities.

Data on budget financing are available for certain items of the state budget, or through funding of targeted programs. But there are no specific data on financing of water supply and sanitation for particular target groups. There are no data about a particular target investment (e.g. improvement of access to quality drinking water for educational and medical institutions).

Given the high social importance of access to drinking water and sanitation recognized at the national level, the provision of water services and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups is being solved through close cooperation between agencies and organizations (mandatory Ministry of Health, the involvement of the Ministry of labor and social protection, other stakeholders). Bodies and institutions of state sanitary supervision monitor the compliance of water provided to population in general on a regular basis through supervisory activities and by orders in the process of production supervision.

Area 3.2 Persons with special physical needs

There is no systematic data on access to safe drinking water and sanitation for persons with special physical needs. There are some assessments on accessibility of buildings including residential houses and apartments, recreation and touristic objects as well as health care institutions on their adjustment for people with disabilities but without particular assessing of access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Such assessments have not been made at the local level (data not available).

The Republic of Belarus has ratified the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by the Law of the Republic of Belarus of 18 October 2016 «On ratification of the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities» (National Legal Internet Portal of the Republic of Belarus, 21/10/2016, 2/2422) (in effect for the Republic of Belarus from 29 December 2016).

The National Action Plan for implementation of the Convention in the Republic of Belarus 2017 - 2025 approved by CMR 451 of 13/07/2017 includes Objective 2 «provides conditions for integration of persons with disabilities into all areas of the life of the society». In the course of solving the task it is planned to expand the accessibility of environment, services and information for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with other citizens in all aspects of social life, to education, to improve health and social care, rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, to provide state support and social protection for persons with disabilities, to improve conditions for the participation of the disabled in the cultural and sports life of the country).

Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 73 of 30/01/2016 (revision 25/06/2019) sets the State Program for social protection and employment of citizens 2016-2020, Objective 1. Improve the statutory and methodological framework and create conditions for unimpeded access of disabled and physically handicapped persons to high priority sites in the priority spheres of life. Sub-program 4 «Barrier-free living environment for disabled and physically impaired persons» is aimed at forming a barrier-free environment for disabled and physically handicapped persons at high priority sites in the most important spheres of life in 2016-2020. High priority spheres of life means healthcare, social protection, education, physical culture and sports, culture, public transportation, housing stock, trade, public catering and service sector. High priority sites in the relevant priority sphere of life means public buildings and facilities most important for the disabled people, and also residential buildings selected with participation of representatives (at least three) of public organizations of disabled persons;

Accessible site means a site optimized for the abilities of wheelchair persons sight and hearing-impaired persons and meets requirements of Technical Code 45-3.02-318-2018 (33020) «Environment for physically handicapped persons. Construction design standards» with comprehensive approach starting from 2016.

The comprehensive approach under the sub-program 4 means creating a barrier-free environment at a site in accordance with the requirements of technical regulations by the arrangement of the following: the routes/paths to the site from the nearest public transport stop and the territory adjacent to the site/plot, building entrance/entrances, routes/paths of movement inside the building (including emergency exits), building intended use areas/the purpose visit to the site, restrooms, information systems at the facility (visual, acoustic and haptic devices, means of information and communications).

Access for this category of citizens to social infrastructures is provided but water and sanitation are not singled out as they are part of a comprehensive approach.

The law provides for the creation of conditions for unimpeded access of disabled persons to social infrastructure. The planning and development of settlements, design, construction and reconstruction of facilities without adjustments for disabled people are not permitted. There are regulations on design and – Technical Code 45-3.02-318-2018 (33020) «Environment for physically handicapped persons. Construction design standards».

Area 3.3 Users of health care facilities

The legislation recognizes the need to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation for users in health care facilities as the sites of high epidemiological significance and because there are people with reduced immunity. This is provided for in the Sanitary standards and rules «Sanitary and epidemiological requirements healthcare providing organizations including the requirements to the arrangement and holding of

sanitary and anti-epidemic measures for prevention of infectious diseases in these organizations», approved by resolution of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus 73 of 05/07/2017.

The funding to support access to safe drinking water and sanitation for users of health care facilities has no a separate item of expenditure but is a part of a comprehensive approach within the costs for construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of buildings and structures to ensure compliance of specific institutions with construction regulations and legislation on sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens. Besides, there are hygiene expenses (soap, sanitary accessories).

The need to equip these facilities with separate toilets for men and women, the need for toilets for women in healthcare organizations under construction/reconstruction and the need of hygiene cabins for women is stipulated in existing technical regulations on design and construction and on sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens. At the same time there are no systematic assessments and statistical data on this matter. There are individual fragmented assessments under sectoral on-demand monitoring.

Area 3.4. Users of educational facilities

Requirements to sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens and construction regulations and standards specify the need for access to safe water and sanitation in educational facilities; without this access an educational facility will not be put into operation at the beginning of the school season. The Ministry of Health (bodies and institutions of state sanitary supervision), Ministry of Education and local authorities stringently control this matter.

According to resolution of Belarus MoH 206 of 27/12/2012 (revision of MoH resolution 35 of 17/05/2017), to arrange the drinking regime of students in educational institutions it is necessary to use still water packaged in containers, industrially produced or taken from centralized water supply system after its purification via manufactured local filters, and/or boiled water. This requirement is mandatory both for educational facilities equipped with centralized systems of drinking water supply, and for those facilities that are provided with drinking water from de-centralized water sources; drinking water must meet sanitary standards and regulations which set requirements to the quality of water from centralized supply systems. At the same time the quality of bottled water is doubtful because its storage conditions and periods are not observed. Moreover, the bottled water is purchased for money from students' parents.

Local executive and administrative bodies provide funding under general financing of construction, reconstruction, repair and maintenance of buildings and structures to ensure compliance of specific institutions with regulations, standards and legislation on sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens. The mechanisms are specified in regional programs/plans for strengthening of the material-technical base of educational facilities including bringing the sanitary units to proper sanitary and technical condition and repair of water supply and sewerage systems. There is no separate expenditure item for maintaining access to safe water and sanitation by users of educational facilities.

In educational institutions there are separate toilets for men and women, and no female hygiene cabins in secondary educational institutions; their necessity in sanatorium boarding schools and hostels of educational institutions is stipulated. At the same time there are no systematic assessments and statistical data on this matter. There are individual fragmented assessments under sectoral monitoring on demand.

Area 3.5 Users of retirement homes

Requirements to sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens and construction regulations and standards specify the need for access to safe water and sanitation in all social service centers; without this access a social service facility will not be put into operation at the beginning of the school season. The Ministry of Health (bodies and institutions of state sanitary supervision), Ministry of Labor and Social Protection



and local authorities stringently control this matter. The need for separate toilets for men and women is prescribed in the applicable technical regulations on design and construction and on sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens.

The funding comes from the national and local budgets allocated for the implementation of state programs in healthcare and social protection. At the same time, there is no separate expenditure item for state funding for the access to safe drinking water and sanitation and it is not envisaged in the comprehensive approach.

Area 3.6 Prisoners

There is no data on user access to safe water and sanitation (centralized systems of water supply and sanitation) in detention facilities

Area 3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centres

Due to the geographical location and cultural traditions in our country this aspect is not relevant, data were not found. Access to water and sanitation for these groups of users is not defined in the legislation, separate funding is not provided due to the low relevance for the country.

Area 3.8 Homeless people

Persons with no fixed abode are citizens of the Republic of Belarus, persons without citizenship who are not registered at the place of residence or place of stay in the Republic of Belarus and have lost social and family ties, involved in vagrancy and/or begging and not having a permanent source of income and means of subsistence. The Republic of Belarus imposes requirements to improve the recording of persons with no fixed abode: there is a determined procedure for registration and record keeping of persons with no fixed abode in the territory of the Republic of Belarus at the place of their stay; there is data on the number of persons with no fixed abode at the local levels, and there is no such official data at the national level. However, the question of how truly this information reflects the real number of persons with no fixed abode remains open and accordingly the data on their access to water and sanitation does not exist. Upon accommodation of persons with no fixed abode in special residential facilities designed for their temporary residence, they have access to water and sanitation.

At the same time homeless people can use services of Preventive disinfection centers where they are examined for pediculosis and undergo full decontamination (including shower and haircut). For instance, in Minsk, homeless people can visit Preventive disinfection Centre and use all above services once a week. Not all homeless people use this opportunity indeed. In Gomel, internal affairs office in cooperation with Red Cross Gomel office, Central outpatient health center and Gomel regional center of preventive disinfection annually hold 'Right to health' preventive campaigns as part of which the militia actively seek homeless people and sends them to preventive disinfection center where they have medical examination, fluorography to reveal tuberculosis, can take a shower, have their clothes disinfected, get a haircut and be shaved. It should be noted that not all examined persons agree to have shower. Campaigns like this are held in many places but not everywhere.

Specific governmental funding to ensure access to water and sanitation by homeless people is not provided, the activity is carried out under the registration of persons with no fixed abode and the provision of housing for temporary residence.



Area 3.9 Travellers and nomadic communities

The terms «travellers» and «nomadic communities» are not defined in the laws of the Republic of Belarus due to its geographical and cultural situation, this area is not relevant for the country and data is not found.

As to the term «travellers», the analysis shows that major lines allow them to use paid shower and toilets (mainly in hotels) and toilets at gas stations. However, these facilities are much more scarce than in European countries and are insufficient so far.

Today there is the Master scheme for development of motorway service at national motorways up to 2020 approved by Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade of the Republic of Belarus resolution 13 of 24 March 2016. The Master scheme encompasses existing facilities and facilities under construction and design as well as sites offered for investors for new construction. The Master Scheme includes three facility levels. Level 1 facilities are recreation sites with improved sanitary facilities, Level 2 are same recreation sites with catering facilities. Level 3 facilities require a gas station. Still the Ministry does not limit this list and each owner may expand it by adding hotel services or maintenance facilities for example. Apart from construction of gas stations, the existing scheme provided construction of 67 accommodation facilities, 156 catering facilities and 31 camping sites. According to data from the Ministry, as of 2019 there were 414 petrol stations and 159 LNG/LPG stations, 72 hotels, 45 car washes, 101 guarded parking lots and 586 catering facilities along Belarusian roads. Today the Master Scheme of road service improvement 2025 is being developed.

Meanwhile camping sites are underdeveloped. There are insufficient sanitary areas near the major points of interest. To increase tourist flow, camping sites /camper parking lots chain development were launched, also as part of «Hospitable Belarus 2016-2020» State Program approved by resolution of the Council of Ministers 232 of 23 March 2016. Camping sites are also being built as part of various projects. As of today, there is already a number of camping sites and camper plots, some of which offer communal areas, showers and bio portable toilets without access to sewage, and allow to discharge bio toilet content. However, in some sites it remains a problem, especially in winter.

Area 3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation

The National Statistical Committee has data on the share of total residents without water supply, hot water supply and sewerage, and on the share of households with no access to these services. However, it is impossible to point out a population segment deprived of basic supply, at the location of housing in areas where there is access, considering illegal tenure, low quality of rented residence, unauthorized seizure and discrimination of national minorities.

To our opinion this aspect is irrelevant as access to safe water is priority, as a basic service. A basic service is an improved drinking-water source within a round trip of 30 minutes to collect water (according to WHO).

The existing system implies availability of at least non-central water supply source within accessible limits.

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

The requirements for sanitary and epidemiological welfare of citizens determine that the sanitary conditions at workplaces must comply with regulatory requirements. The control of workplace compliance with regulatory requirements is performed by agencies of state sanitary supervision.

The general requirements to labor protection by employers set that employees should be provided with a sufficient number of shower rooms, wash rooms and toilets in accordance with sanitary regulations. Men and women must have separate showers and wash rooms (or separate use, separate toilets or separate use for women). In reality, especially in crisis times and at small enterprises (of municipal and private property) the compliance and monitoring are often absent.



Part 4. Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all

Comfortable Housing and a Favorable Environment 2016 - 2020 «State Program stipulates that «...to ensure implementation of the main areas of state policy on social support and welfare of citizens and to reduce budget expenditures, the State Program sets the target to reduce the cost of providing HUS services to the public under conditions comparable to previous period of at least 15 percent in 2016 and further annual reduction of 5 per cent. The cost and availability of services for consumers depend on the results of expenditure reduction.

The timeliness and completeness of HUS payment by consumers indicate HUS affordability, which is related to target payment collection rates for utility services rendered to natural persons and legal entities (should be 90% by 2020)».

Despite the tariff policy being pursued in the Republic of Belarus up to now, water supply and sewerage tariffs are still affordable for all groups of citizens. This chapter specifies the arguments to support this idea.

Table 5 shows tariff affordability calculated from the following formula:

$$DT = \frac{\sum \Pi}{\Gamma D_{cp}}$$

DT – water and sanitation tariff affordability for a household (family), %;

ΣΠ – annual payment amount for water and sanitation services (conditional units);

ΓДср – family average annual income (conditional units)

IBRD experts think that water and sanitation tariffs should not exceed 3% of family income, EBRD experts think they should be 3% to 5% (with account for growth of water and sanitation tariffs caused by loan servicing in this bank).

Water supply and sewerage service affordability indicator calculated on a subsidized tariff (average throughout the Republic of Belarus) has decrease from 0.18% to 0.48% within the period; meanwhile affordability of water supply and sewerage at subsidized tariffs for citizens under the poverty line has decreased from 0.68% to 1.5%.

At an economically feasible tariff the indicator of water supply and sewerage service affordability (average throughout Belarus) would be 0.45% in 2010 and 0.57% in 2018 respectively. The affordability of water supply and sewerage services at an economically feasible tariff for citizens under the poverty line in this model would be 1.68% (2010) and even 1.78% (2018). In many instances this situation is explained by growth of tariffs for water and sewage services for citizens. The level of compensation of housing and utilities services by citizens has increased from 30 to 75.6% within the period in question. We plan to reach 100% payment by 2021.

**TABLE 5. KEEPING WATER AND SANITATION AFFORDABLE FOR ALL:
QUANTITATIVE DATA**

INDICATORS	UNITS	YEARS	
		2010	2018
State (budgetary) subsidy for partial compensation of water supply and sewerage expenditures	EUR million*	59	80**
Share of low-income citizens (citizens with available per capita resources below minimum subsistence wage)	%	5,2	5,9*
Average income per capita (EUR per month)	euros	241	266*
Nominal accrued monthly average salary (EUR)	euros	308	377*
State-subsidized water supply tariff (EUR/m ³)	euros	0,010	0,33
State-subsidized water supply tariff (EUR/m ³)	euros	0,06	0,26
Value of payment for water supply for people under the national poverty (subsidized tariff), (EUR/m ³ , subsidized tariff)	euros	0,10	0,33
Payment for sewerage service for citizens below the poverty line (subsidized tariff) (EUR/m ³)	euros	0,06	0,26
Only operational costs are fully reflected in the economically feasible tariff for water supply services (EUR/m ³)	euros	0,218	0,38
Only operational costs are fully reflected in the economically feasible tariff for sewerage services (EUR/m ³)	euros	0,173	0,32
Affordability of water supply and sewerage services to citizens (average for the Republic of Belarus) under the subsidized tariff for citizens	%	0,18	0,48
Affordability of water supply and sewerage services to citizens below the poverty line under the subsidized tariff for citizens	%	0,68	1,50

Affordability of water supply and sewerage services to citizens (average for the Republic of Belarus) under the economically feasible tariff for citizens	%	0,45	0,57
Affordability of water supply and sewerage services to citizens below the poverty line under the economically feasible tariff for citizens***	%	1,68	1,78
Water use per capita of citizens with access to water supply (estimated)****	m ³ /year	43,0	37,0
Minimum salary in the Republic of Belarus	Euro	83,3	121,4

* – 2010: EUR = BYN 0.3954, 2017: EUR = BYN 2.1831, 2018: EUR = BYN 2.4052. (Average official exchange rate of Belarusian rouble to euro calculated as arithmetic mean value).

** – Datadata from 2017, no 2018 data in the National Statistical Committee. Input: <http://www.minfin.gov.by/upload/bp/doklad/yd2011.pdf>

*** – calculation based on the assumption that people below the poverty line will start paying for water supply and sewerage services at the economically feasible tariff

**** – household water usage per capita. http://www.belstat.gov.by/ofitsialnaya-statistika/makroekonomika-i-okruzhayushchaya-sreda/okruzhayushchaya-sreda/sovmestnaya-sistema-ekologicheskoi-informatsii2/c-vodnye-resursy/s-4-bytovoe-vodopotreblenie-v-raschete-na-dushu-naseleniya/index.php?sphrase_id=619125

Initial data: <http://www.minfin.gov.by/upload/bp/doklad/yd2011.pdf>, letter of Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade of the Republic of Belarus No13-02-13/616K pf 12 September 2019.

Today none of existing Belarusian laws and regulations on pricing allow WWWS (HUI) enterprises to include investment loan debt servicing costs into water and waste water processing tariffs. Today WWWS enterprises which implement investment projects with international financial organizations cannot include principal debt payments and loan interests into target prime cost upon calculation of water and waste water service tariffs, as they are limited by the Procedure of planning and calculation of expenses for individual HUS services approved by resolution of Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus 13 of 15 April 2016. At the same time, due to the statutory restriction of profitability of water and waste water services by virtue of resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus 329 of 11 April 1997 'On pricing for communal services for legal entities' the net income of WWWS/HUI enterprises is insufficient not only to cover the reimbursement of the principal debt and interest but also to cover the development/reconstruction costs of WS systems.

Area 4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services

The Republic of Belarus puts a strong emphasis on support of affordable HUS tariffs including those related with water and sanitation.

The Ministry of Communal services of the Republic of Belarus (MCS) and the Ministry of anti-monopoly regulation and trade of the Republic of Belarus (MART) regularly collect information on water and sewerage tariffs (net cost) from WWWS/HUI organizations throughout the country. Reporting is the key initial data to determine the affordability of water and sewage tariffs in WWWS/HUI organizations: the state statistical

reporting and departmental reporting, approved by MCS order of 30/11/2018 No. 98. Departmental reports include information about the operation of water and sewerage facilities, reports on net cost pricing of water/sewerage services, loss and profit statements, statements of financial results.

«Comfortable Housing and a Favourable Environment 2016 - 2020» State Program, sub-program 1 «Ensuring quality and affordability of services»; the Concept for HUI development and improvement up to 2025 approved by CMR 1037 of 29/12/2017, Republic of Belarus Presidential Directive 7 of 04/03/2019 «On development and improvement of national housing and utilities infrastructure, and CMR 239 of 12/04/2019 «On implementation Republic of Belarus Presidential Directive 7 of 04/03/2019» provide the regulation to ensure tariff affordability by reducing HUS expenses (also in water and sanitation service) by means of non-cash subsidies, uniform procedure of pricing for housing and utilities services for citizens and legal entities.

Today there is a uniform subsidized tariff in the Republic of Belarus, this tariff is priced based on the citizens income growth. The expenditures for public housing and utilities services including water and sanitation which the citizens do not defray through subsidized tariffs must be reimbursed by subsidies from local budgets calculated from the volume of HUS delivered and from HUS per unit subsidy standards determined in accordance with the law.

The affordability of water supply and sanitation services is supported in the Republic of Belarus within the general system of affordable tariffs support for all housing and utilities services. The system includes:

- decrease in the payment of housing and utility services to certain categories of users. The procedure of granting benefits for payment for housing and utility services is regulated by the Law of the Republic of Belarus 239-3 of 14 June 2007 «On state social benefits, rights and guarantees for certain categories of citizens» (Article 4 clause 16 «Benefits in payments for maintenance, use of residential premises and housing and utilities services»);

- housing allowances for low income users. State support including non-cash subsidies is provided when the cost of housing and utility services exceed 20% of disposable income (15% for rural residents). Only the amounts exceeding this limit are eligible for subsidy. «Comfortable Housing and a Favourable Environment 2016-2020» State Program stipulates the implementation of a non-cash housing subsidies system for partial reimbursement of housing and utility services to low income citizens. Under this program and in accordance with President Decree 322 of 29/08/2016 «On non-cash housing allowances» in 2016 pensioners and disabled persons began to receive subsidies if they are identified. In accordance with President Decree 225 of 07 June 2018 «On non-cash housing allowances» the list of major recipient groups for this support are pensioners, unemployed disabled people; persons who live in the Republic of Belarus, citizens who care of children under 3; citizens who care of disabled children under 18 and receive respective allowances. Starting from 01 January 2019 the subsidy is not provided for capable citizens who are not involved in the economy: they are obliged to pay for housing and utilities services at full tariffs irrespectively of consumption. Other citizens may be eligible for the subsidy upon application;

- subsidy for housing and utilities infrastructure enterprises (HUI), water and waste water services enterprises (WWWS) to cover the gap between tariffs for citizens and water and waste water service expenditures;

- the use of cross-subsidization for domestic users (households) by charging higher tariffs for other categories of users (legal entities – industrial enterprises etc).

Within the period in question from 2010 to 2018 state (budget) subsidy for partial compensation of water supply and sewerage services to citizens expenditures have increased by 35.5%. At the same time, the proceeds from sale of products, goods, work, services by sectors (water supply; waste collection, processing and disposal, decontamination activities) in euros have dropped by almost 8% from 2010 through 2018. In

Grodno and Brest regions in 2014-2015, cross-subsidization of tariffs for water and sewage services for citizens at the expense of legal entities was abolished, the partial compensation of costs from water supply and sewerage services rendered to citizens is covered from budget subsidies from local authorities.

For the provision of housing and utility services the Law on budget 2019 provides for funding of this sector in the amount of 102,421,066.0 rubles including 9,742,618.0 for HUS and 91,913,448 rubles for the «Other matters in the area of housing and utility services».

In addition, the availability of water services and sanitation to citizens of several regions of the Republic of Belarus is only achieved at the expense of higher tariffs for other consumers (legal entities). In particular, the tariff for water and sewage services for legal entities in a number of regions (Minsk, Gomel, Mogilev, Grodno) in addition to the costs depending on the scope of rendered services includes applicable statutory taxes and non-tax payments, standards of profitability, as well as the costs associated with providing to citizens these services at subsidized rates not covered by tariffs and other sources.

The ratio of water tariff for legal entities and subsidized water tariff for citizens in Lida district has reached 1.4 as of 01/08/2018 as compared to 17.1 in 2013. The ratio of sewerage tariff for legal entities and subsidized sewerage tariff for citizens was 1.5 as of 01/08/2018 while in 2013 the tariff for legal entities was 19.5 higher than the subsidized tariff for citizens.

In a number of districts of Minsk region in 2016, industrial enterprises used to pay for water on average 3-3.5 times the value of subsidized tariff for citizens, and 6-6.5 times for sewerage services which contributed to increase of prices for their products. As a consequence, a number of large industrial enterprises (for example, Slutsk cheese plant JSC etc.) began to extract water for industrial needs from their own wells which impaired the financial situation of local HUS enterprises (in particular the municipal unitary enterprise Slutsk HUI PUC and others).

However, it should be noted that the Republic of Belarus pursues a purposeful policy to create a single tariff for water and sewage services both for citizens and for industrial enterprises (other consumers). It is planned that by 2021 water and sewerage services tariffs will be the same for all consumer categories. In particular, according to the anti-inflation program for the development of housing and utilities sector including water sector in Belarus, the following activities are planned:

- staged reduction of cross subsidies for citizens in the tariffs/prices for energy resources for the real sector of the economy with the reduction of tariffs/prices for energy for business entities in order to ensure the competitiveness of domestic products on the market of the EAEU and third countries, starting from 2019;
- reducing the costs of housing and utilities services in 2018-2020;
- development and implementation of a mechanism for maintaining 100% compensation of housing and utility services expenditures. There is a deadline for the development of this mechanism: May 2019; and starting from 2020 it is planned that Belarus citizens will come to a 100% cost compensation for housing and utility services including water and sanitation. .

Area 4.2 Tariff measures

Water and sanitation tariff system is uniform throughout the country. From October 1, 2011 through March 1, 2019, differential tariffs existed for water and sewage services for citizens in the country, depending on the volume of water consumption (consumption above the established limit was paid for at full compensation rates).

From March 1, 2019 payments for water and sanitation at subsidized tariffs in premises equipped with water consumption meters have not depended on the water consumption as subsidized tariff for water and sanitation is now almost equal to full compensation tariff (circa 96-98% of economically feasible water supply and sewerage expenses).

Citizens pay for water and sewage services at subsidized rates regardless of consumption. Starting from March 2019 capable persons not involved in the economy cannot pay for HUS at subsidized tariffs – they are obliged to pay utility bills at full (economically feasible) rates.

The value of state-subsidized water and sewerage tariff for citizens is the same throughout all Belarus regions. The average water tariff in the Republic of Belarus has multiplied 3.3 times in euro equivalent within the 2011 – 2018 in question. From 2010 to 2018 the average sanitation tariff for citizens has increased 4.3 on average.

In the Republic of Belarus, there is a procedure for increasing subsidized tariffs based on citizens' income growth. Currently the policy is aimed at increasing the level of compensation of utility service expenditures (including water supply and sewerage) from tariffs for citizens. According to the anti-inflation program for the development of the HUI sector of Belarus it is planned to develop and implement a mechanism for maintaining a 100% compensation of housing and utilities services expenditures. It is planned that in 2020 the citizens of Belarus will reach 100% compensation of HUS expenditures, including water supply and sanitation services. In terms of achieving full compensation of HUS expenditures, it is very important to implement efficient social protection tools for low income citizens which are discussed in the next section (area 4.3).

Water and sewerage tariffs for legal entities are differentiated by consumer categories. For instance, tariffs for organizations which manufacture spirits, soft and refreshment drinks and beer are higher than tariffs for other organizations. On the other hand, the list of organizations and companies which pay for water and sewerage services at reduced rates includes: dry cleaning and laundries in public institutions; horticultural societies; organizations subordinate to the Ministry of housing and utilities with regard to services of baths, physical culture and health improvement services, services of growing agricultural products; persons (including individual entrepreneurs) who use departmental housing, and a number of other organizations.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 329 of 11/04/1997 «On pricing for communal services for legal entities» stipulates that the utility service tariffs for legal entities, in addition to expenditures depending on the volume of services provided to them, shall include costs associated with the provision of these services at reduced rates to citizens and not covered by tariffs and other sources.

Area 4.3 Social protection measures

There are additional support tools available to support certain population groups:

- preferential tariffs;
- non-cash subsidies;
- non-cash subsidies.

Population pays for water supply and sewerage services at subsidized tariffs, regardless of the volume of consumption. Since 2019, some categories of unemployed people («social parasites») are obliged to pay for utility services at full rates.

The support based on preferential tariffs is a subsidized tariff reduced by 50%. However, there are limits on utility services volume paid for at reduced rates, the excess volumes are paid for at initially set subsidized tariffs. The following categories of citizens can pay for utility services at preferential tariffs:

- veterans of the Great Patriotic War (WWII) and war invalids;
- disabled people of the 1st and 2nd groups, who do not have working family members who are legally obliged to support them, and who live alone or only with the same disabled people and (or) with non-working pensioners;

– non-working pensioners from among the military, officials and personnel of the internal affairs authorities, the Investigative Committee, the State Committee for Forensic Expertise, emergency situations bodies and divisions, financial investigation bodies of the State Control Committee who have become disabled due to injury, contusion, injury or an illness acquired in the performance of military service duties. The third type of support including non-cash subsidies is provided when payment for HUS exceeds 20% of disposable income (15% for rural residents). Only the amounts exceeding this limit are eligible for subsidy.

«Comfortable Housing and a Favourable Environment 2016 - 2020» State Program envisages the following activities: 1) introduction of a non-cash housing subsidies system for low income citizens for partial compensation of housing and utilities payments; and 2) reduction of the cost of housing services for citizens by 5% per year. Under this program and in accordance with President Decree 322 of 29/08/2016 «On non-cash housing allowances» in 2016 pensioners and disabled persons began to receive subsidies if they are identified. In June 2018 under President Decree of 07 June 2018 225 «On non-cash housing allowances» the list of major recipient groups for this support has been expanded:

- pensioners and unemployed disabled people;
- persons who care of children under 3;
- persons who care of disabled children under 18 and receive respective allowances.

State support including non-cash subsidies is provided when the cost of housing and utility services exceed 20% of disposable income (15% for rural residents). Only the amounts exceeding this limit are eligible for subsidy.

The above documents are complemented with systematic efforts to ensure that the poorest strata of population referred to as 'households in need' in the policy documents are able to cover their housing expenses.

Final score

TABLE 6. FINAL SCORE BY AREAS OF ACTION


SUBJECT AREA	AREA OF ACTION	AVERAGE SCORE	RELIABILITY
Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.	1.1 Strategic framework for achieving equitable access	1,5	Medium
	1.2 Sector financial policies	1,67	Low
	1.3 Rights and duties of users and other right-holders	2	Medium
Reducing geographical disparities	2.1 Public policies to reduce access disparities between geographical areas	1	Medium
	2.2 Public policies to reduce price disparities between geographical areas	2	Medium
	2.3 Geographical allocation of external support for the sector	1	Low
Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	3.1 Меры государственной политики по .1 Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	1,6	High
	3.2 Persons with special physical needs	2	Medium
	3.3 Users of health care facilities	2,2	High
	3.4 Users of educational facilities	2,6	High
	3.5 Users of retirement homes	2,2	High
	3.6 Prisoners	0	Medium
	3.7 Refugees living in refugee camps and centres	1,8	Medium
	3.8 Homeless people	1,3	Medium
	3.9 Travellers and nomadic communities	0	Medium
	3.10 Persons living in housing without water and sanitation	0,4	Medium
	3.11 Persons without access to safe drinking water and sanitation in their workplaces	1,3	Medium
Ensuring affordability of water and sanitation	4.1 Public policies to ensure affordability of water and sanitation services	2,2	Medium
	4.2 Tariff measures	2,75	High
	4.3 Social protection measures	3	High

2. BELARUS: NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO USE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

TABLE 7: RECOMMENDATIONS BY SUBJECT AREAS

SUBJECT AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access to safe drinking water and sanitation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Raise awareness of national and local authorities, WS enterprises and public organizations about equitable access to water and sanitation. – Take into account equitable access to water and sanitation integrated approach in water supply and sewerage national and local plans. – Review international financial support opportunities and make sure application procedures are available and clear.
Reducing geographical disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Collect and analyse information on access to safe water and sanitation in rural settlements not covered by centralized water and sanitation. – Include access to sanitation improvement activities into the «Comfortable Housing and a Favourable Environment» State Program. – Develop and implement a support mechanism for households not covered by centralized water supply and sanitation, to establish and operate local systems of water supply and sanitation (advisory, technical, financial etc. support). – Continue the process of regionalization of WWWS enterprises to improve access of small WWWS/HUI enterprises to investment resources.
Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Update the integrated approach of relevant national bodies in the area of equal and equitable access to water and sanitation (to consider all aspects of equal access). – Identify vulnerable and marginalized groups that face barriers in access to water and sanitation in the Republic, identify vulnerability levels/categories, adopt or review existing solutions of social security for the purpose of recognition. – Carry out a more detailed study assessing the status of access to water and sanitation of vulnerable and marginalized groups (for example, travellers, homeless people, users in detention facilities) for instance, as part of activities under the Protocol on Water and Health. – Establish a monitoring and accounting system for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of people from vulnerable and marginalized groups with no access to safe drinking water and sanitation; • the number of socially marginal individuals who use social support for equitable access; • public funds annually spent for equitable access benefit from each category in vulnerable and marginalized group – Upon development of national statutory, regulatory and legal acts take into account the need to ensure equitable and fair access to water and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups. – Review the local sustainable development strategies and sectoral policies (healthcare, social policy, education, law enforcement) to enable equitable and fair access to safe drinking water and sanitation for vulnerable and marginal groups to the target levels, develop projects to achieve the goals and indicators. Ensure participation of vulnerable groups representatives in consideration of respective matters in the area of equitable and fair access to water and sanitation (awareness raising on development of strategies and documents via associations, media, focused involvement).

SUBJECT AREA	RECOMMENDATIONS
Public policies to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review the use of packaged potable water in educational facilities, water from final treatment systems via industrially manufactured local filters and/or boiled water (identify optimal approaches to guaranteed provision of drinking water safety in the modern context). – Discuss the possibilities to implement drinking fountains accessible for anyone. – Make actual the comprehensive approach of relevant national bodies in the area of equal and equitable access to water and sanitation (to consider all aspects of equal access) and take it into account upon development of the national strategy for water resources management and social protection strategy, the development of national programs to improve citizens' access to safe water and sanitation, upon basic analysis and development of targets under the Protocol, especially in the largest vulnerable groups. Upon the development of national documents (enactments, technical regulations): take into account vulnerable groups' access to water and sanitation. – Ensure the participation of representatives of vulnerable groups in the representative bodies working on access to water and sanitation related issues – Review the local sustainable development strategies and sectoral policies (healthcare, social policy, education) to enable access to safe drinking water and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups to the target levels, develop projects to achieve the goals and indicators. – Adopt or review the existing decisions on social protection with the aim to define all vulnerable and marginalized groups relevant for Belarus, and determine the levels/categories of vulnerability. Review the approach to the mandatory use of bottled drinking water and water from purification systems using local filters and/or boiled water in educational facilities.
Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Reform the mechanism for setting tariffs for water supply and sanitation (sewage) services for the population in order to decentralize the decision-making process and achieve cost recovery for all user groups; – Increase the independence and accountability of the water utilities; Provide the opportunity for local governments to establish contractual relationships with water utilities. – Implement a best practice assessment system based on benchmarking of WWWS/HUI enterprises activity with calculation of key performance indicators (production/technical indicators; financial/economic indicators; labour force utilization efficiency indicators; HUI enterprise tariff policy efficiency indicators; environmental indicators; social indicators). – Introduce a system of charges for wastewater discharge based on load and increase the efficiency of their use; – Consider exemption of environmental facilities from taxes for emission of contaminants (methane) as waste water processing with generation of gaseous matter is constant, natural and determined by processing technology (the National level); – Consider elimination of real estate tax on water supply utilities (the local level); – Calculate the required amount for targeted subsidies to all registered families eligible to receive non-cash housing subsidies. – Prepare social videos and booklets on drinking water saving and sustainable use.



A self-assessment of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation in Belarus was carried out at the request of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus by applying the Equitable Access Score-cards developed under the UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health.

UNECE/WHO-Europe Protocol on Water and Health

<https://www.unece.org/env/water.html>

UNECE / WHO-Europe Protocol National Focal Point on Water and Health

https://rspch.by/ru/protocol_water_and_health
