

**BRIEF REPORT ON THE PROGRESS UNDER THE PROTOCOL
ON WATER AND HEALTH**

GEORGIA

2022

Executive summary

Georgia is not a party to the Protocol. During the reporting period, targets under the protocol were not set, special programs or action plans were not developed for their implementation. However, the Government of Georgia has approved a number of national strategic policy documents and action plans for 2019-2023 and the next 10 years (see below).

It should be noted that access to safe water supply and sanitation, improvement of the drinking water quality control system and prevention of water-related diseases are integrated into the above strategic documents, which are in line with the principles of the Protocol: Water, Health and Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 (Goal 6).

With these documents, the country committed itself to developing policies and practical measures for their implementation. They set not only goals and objectives to ensure a safe environment for public health, but also the need to identify specific priorities and identify problems, the solution of which will greatly contribute to: improving the state of water supply and sanitation; the level of access to these systems and improved health systems; reduction of diseases and epidemics, including those associated with water; organizational and financial issues. Mechanisms for coordination and cooperation at the international and national levels are defined, as well as the need to refine national legislation. This type of integration will help meet the protocol requirements in terms of sustainable development goals.

It is noteworthy that the implementation of state strategies, action plans and programs during the reporting period, as well as the implementation of several dozen major projects, have gradually improved water supply infrastructure, sanitation services and quality drinking water supply. Financing of state programs for monitoring the quality of drinking water has been expanded. The system and organization of laboratory water quality control has been improved, their technical condition has improved.

The scale of microbiological analysis of drinking water and surface water bodies has increased. However, the technical condition and quality of drinking water systems are on the agenda.

Significant progress has been made in the monitoring and control of diseases, including those associated with water, and outbreaks.

In the future, by 2025, it is planned to carry out work to further improve the infrastructure of water supply and sanitation in 150 settlements with a population of more than 360 thousand people, including 220 thousand people who have never had a centralized water supply. In addition, standard 24-hour water supply is planned in all cities of Georgia by 2025, and from 2030 population full access to standard water supply will be provided to all parts of the country.

With the development of the water supply infrastructure, the most important standards will be observed, including the development of a network of water quality control laboratories, their provision with appropriate equipment and the introduction of modern technologies, staff training, etc.

The Third National Environmental Protection Program (2017-2021) and the National Environmental and Health Action Plan (2018-2022) have been successfully implemented and have made a significant contribution and positive impact on the country's current environmental and health status.

In accordance with the Association Agreement with the EU, relevant legislative and institutional changes are being carried out in the country. During the reporting period, the law “On Aquaculture” was adopted, the draft law “On Water Resources Management” and a package of technical regulations for its implementation were developed.

This report aims to assess the current state of affairs in the implementation of the requirements of the protocol in Georgia. At the same time, the report will serve as a source of concise but useful information, which will allow to assess terms and stages of progress in the implementation of the requirements of the Protocol in general, and to determine future guidelines, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goal for 2030.

The report is compiled in the form of short reports. For each issue (and purpose), general indicators are used to illustrate progress on various issues, including the requirements of the relevant sections of the Protocol.

The report is not without a number of limitations, since certain topics and issues in the developed sources were not equally and deeply covered. The data available to measure progress and create appropriate sets of some indicators were in some cases limited. In some cases, the indicators are too general. In order to assess progress in some areas in both the long and short term, it is necessary to have more specific data for each goal.

The analysis of the presented data allows: to create a real framework that will help identify and discuss problems related to water resources management, water supply, sanitation and health, which intersect with different policy sectors; To create a platform for harmonization and integration of different sectors within the protocol; consolidate stakeholders to implement the Water and Health Protocol.

As for the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals until 2030, the country has established specific measures to achieve them. Tasks and indicators translated into the national context of sustainable development goals are reflected in sectoral strategies and program documents. A Council on Sustainable Development Goals and distinct thematic groups have been established across government. The Matrix and Structure of the Sustainable Development Goals have been elaborated. The 6th goal of the matrix relates to water supply and sanitation. An online monitoring and suitability system have been established. The monitoring system is designed for government agencies (internal platform/workspace), and the online system is designed to inform the public.

Part one

General aspects

Since the Protocol was not ratified by Georgia, no targets for 2019-2021 were set or published.

In accordance with the memorandum on the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management, in order to coordinate work at the national level, a national coordinating committee was established, which included representatives of ministries and departments, other stakeholders and non-governmental organizations. Convening meetings and coordinating the work of the committee were carried out by official written invitations. The 7th meeting of the Steering Committee was held on March 5, 2020. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) within the EU Water Initiative Plus (EUWI+) project. Issues related to integrated water resources management were discussed: Implementation of planned reforms in the field of water resources management, Harmonization with EU water legislation and introduction of the principles of integrated water resources management, Cooperation within the framework of the work programs of the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and Achieving the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 6.5).

Despite the fact that in 2019-2021 no targets were set, no special programs or action plans were developed to implement them and support the achievement of goals. The Georgian government approved a number of nationwide strategic program documents and action plans for 2019-2023 and subsequent years, including:

- Strategy of socio-economic development of Georgia "Georgia-2020";
- Strategy for the development of villages in Georgia 2017-2020.
- Regional Development Program of Georgia in 2018-2021.
- Program for the development of pilot regions of Georgia in 2020-2022.
- On measures for the Implementation of measures for the development of pilot regions of Georgia. Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 628 of December 20, 2019.
- Basic data and direction of Georgia for the period 2020-2023 (Final version);
- Strategy for the development of high-mountainous settlements in Georgia for 2019-2023. (Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 343 dated July 18, 2019 (2019));
- 10-year plan of socio-economic development of Georgia for the period 2021-2031;
- 10-year plan for the integrated development of the regions of Georgia for 2021-2031.

The documents reflect: the need to define specific priorities and identify problems, the solution of which will contribute to improving the state of water supply and sanitation; contributing to the reduction of infectious diseases and epidemics, including those related to water; financial issues, etc.

In accordance with the strategies of socio-economic development of short and long-term programs, the country has committed itself to developing policies that ensure a safe environment for public health, including in the field of water supply and sanitation, the implementation of which constantly increases the number of people with access to these systems.

The Third National Ecological Program (2017-2021) and the National Environment and Health Action Plan (2018-2022) were successfully implemented, which made a significant contribution and had a positive impact on the current state of the environment and public health.

It should be noted that the issues of water supply and sanitation presented in the strategic program documents echo both the principles of the UNECE protocol "water and health" and the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. (Goal 6.).

Situation analysis is systematical undertaken to facilitate the identification and discussion of water, sanitation and public health issues that intersect with different policy sectors.

These documents are:

- Basic data and directions of the State for the period of 2020-2023;
- The program for the development of the regions of Georgia in 2018-2021;
- Comprehensive plan for the development of pilot regions for 2020-2022;
- 10-year plan of social and economic development of Georgia for the period of 2021-2031;
- 10-year plan for the integrated development of the regions of Georgia for 2021-2031;
- 10-year development plan for selected industries for 2021-2031.

Georgia is a party to the "Aarhus Convention", respectively, all government agencies, academic circles, and NGOs participate in the development of the final version of state social and economic documents.

Consequently, the State institutions of Georgia consider public awareness in the decision-making process in various fields as a guarantee of making the right decision.

This applies to both the environment and public health and other areas. Improving the integration of environmental and other standards is achieved through their reflection in various projects, including health policy and other sectoral strategies and plans for the development of other sectors and spheres of the state.

It should be noted that public participation in the decision-making process is not new to Georgia; The country has an experience in this area. An important role in this regard is played by the Center for Environmental Information and Education of the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture. It acts as an intermediary between the environmental policymaking community and its implements, providing strategies, legislation or governance policies for target groups, and providing information in a simple and appropriate format.

Besides:

- In all ministries and departments, special services have been created that work with the public and the media;
- All ministries and departments have created web pages on the Internet, which publish current and planned activities carried out by government agencies;
- The state electronic program "Codex" and "Legislative Bulletin" were created, where all legislative acts and bylaws are published.

The report uses materials from the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture of Georgia (Department of Water Resources; National Food Agency, National Environment Agency), Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection (National Center for Disease Control), Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Municipal Development Fund, National Energy and Water Supply Commission, National Statistics Office (GeoStat) Georgia et al.

On Federal level, Government of Georgia is the main body in charge of elaboration and implementation of Environment and public health policy, water supply and sanitation as well as respective ministries and state institutions, while local self-government bodies are in charge on local level.

- Government elaborates and approves social-economic development strategies, projects, plans and programs in the country, including water supply and sanitation, also takes the necessary decisions in funding construction and rehabilitation works of these systems.
- The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture develops policy, including the water sector, monitors the quality of surface and drinking water, as well as prepared relevant information and carries out public awareness.
- Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia elaborates the rules and regulations on infectious diseases, including water related diseases and monitoring of epidemic outbreaks, control and registration of data, supports strengthening laboratories potential on national, regional and local level, prepares brochures on existing situation and carries out public awareness campaigns.
- The United Water Supply Company implements projects for the construction of water supply and sewerage systems at the regional level, and also monitors the quality of drinking water in the serviced area.
- Ministry of Economy and sustainable development supports the management of programs;
- Ministry of Finance provides the funding for social-economic development projects;
- The National Energy and Water Supply Regulatory Commission carries out licensing of water supply operators, regulates tariffs. Develop rules for evaluating investments in these areas and conducts public awareness;
- The Municipal Development Fund conducts construction and reconstruction of water supply and sewerage systems;
- Local governments are responsible for local water supply and sanitation.

Part two

Targets and target dates set and assessment of progress

I. Quality of the drinking water supplies (art. 6, para. 2 (a))

Considering that Georgia hasn't ratified the protocol, target indicators in years 2019-2021 were not set. Despite this, it is noteworthy to present information on the history of this issue.

With the country's strategies, action plans and programs implemented in the reporting period, the condition of supplying the population with qualitative drinking water was significantly improved. The state program of monitoring drinking water has extended and funding of measures has increased. Drinking water quality control system as well as the organization of laboratory analysis was improved. The range of microbiological research of drinking water has been expanded.

All this ensured the maintenance of quality of drinking water at one level, in 2019-2021. However, the technical condition of the infrastructure still-remains on the agenda, which creates the problem of drinking water quality. To improve the situation, construction and rehabilitation projects for water supply systems are underway. It is expected that in the next few years, the microbiological contamination of water will decrease.

Taking into consideration that the quality of drinking water supplied to the population is a matter of social importance, it is a priority of the government. It is essential to maintain the target indicators related to the drinking water quality and technical measures for their achievement on the agenda for the years 2021-2023.

Regarding the implementation of the sixth goal of sustainable development and the requirement of the water and health protocol, it should be noted that Georgia will continue to work in these areas. This process, within the framework of cooperation between the UNECE and Georgia, taking into account the work program for 2021 and beyond, will be an important element of the post-pandemic work. This also echoes the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia and the implementation of the provisions of the association agenda. This will facilitate active sectoral cooperation.

It should be noted that due to the importance of this topic, by 2030, Georgia has entered the 6 goal of the matrix for achieving the target indicators. "The safety of all people with sufficient quantity, quality drinking water and sanitary conditions“.

According to this target (6.1-6.8) the measures for achievement of sufficient amount and drinking water quality and sanitary conditions, have been integrated in state policy documents, strategies, programs and plans, including the “Second National Action Plan of Environment and Health” (2018-2021), Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy 2021-2027, “Strategy of socio-economic development of Georgia-Georgia-2020”; "Development strategy for villages in Georgia 2017-2020." "Program for Regional Development of Georgia in 2018-2021", "Program for the Development of Pilot Regions of Georgia in 2020-2022", "Basic data and directions of Georgia for the period 2020-2023 (Final version)";"10-year plan of socio-economic development of Georgia for the period 2021-2031" "10-year plan for the integrated development of the regions of Georgia for 2021-2031".

- Security of safe drinking water of population on national level, including institutions;
- Improvement of Water quality (From X to X1%);
- Number of population without access to drinking water (%);
- 3.9 - 3.9.2: Indicator of dangerous water, sanitary conditions, lack of hygiene and WASH services as well as diseases and epidemic outbreaks (reduction from Y to Y 1%);
- 6.-6.1. Ensure universal and equal access to safe and accessible drinking water for all, by 2030.

It should be noted that the Parliament of Georgia already in 2018, committed itself to the implementation and monitoring of the sustainable development goals, which is reflected in the Action Plan of the Parliament for the period of 2018-2019.

Based on the plan, an appropriate strategy and Action Plan of the Parliament of Georgia for 2019-2020 was developed to promote and monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The results of the implemented activities are reflected in the 2021 “Report on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the Parliament of Georgia for 2019-2020 for the Implementation and Monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals”.

A document on National Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations and a Document on the Nationalization of Sustainable Development Goals have been developed, which sets out the priorities of the UN Global Goals on Sustainable Development at the national level.

The purpose of this document is to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the implementation of evidence-based national policies in accordance with the 2030 Agenda.

Decree #2328 of the Government of Georgia of November 12, 2019, approved the National Document on Sustainable Development Goals. This document defines 17 nationalized goals, 93 nationalized tasks, as well as performance indicators and their annual monitoring system.

In addition, an agreement has been signed between the Government of Georgia and the UN for 2021-2025. In accordance with which, the Government of Georgia and the UN undertake to: Carry out joint work on national development priorities, sustainable development goals and to fulfil obligations under conventions and other internationally agreed documents.

The second assessment of the compliance of national and subnational documents prepared with UN support with the Sustainable Development Goals showed that the National Strategies and the Association Agreement of Georgia (AA) with the EU together, cover 93% of the issues. Thus, supporting the Association Agreement serves the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Access to drinking water (art. 6, para.2 (c))

Despite the fact that Georgia has not ratified the protocol and has not set targets in 2019-2022, it is appropriate to provide information on the history of this issue.

Georgia is rich in water resources. 11% of the country's territory is covered by water. In this regard, it is interesting to indicate some estimates of international organizations.

According to EPI 2020, Global metrics for the environment: Ranking country performance on sustainability issues (<https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2020/country/geo>. Table 5-1., 5-2., 9 -2., 11-2., 13-1., 14-1.):

- in terms of water resources, in the global ranking, Georgia ranks 40th among 180 countries, and first place in the regional ranking with 46.6 points;
- on drinking water and sanitation in the global context it ranks 79th, in the regional context it is in 7th place and was awarded 51.6 points;
- for ecosystem services in the global ranking it takes 25th place, in the regional context - 6th place and was awarded 78.0 points;
- on climate change issues in the global context takes 94th place, in the regional context - 6th place and was assigned 50.1 points;
- in the global agriculture ranking it takes 163 place, in the regional context - 12 place and 16.9 points were assigned.

These data show some progress in both the global and regional context.

Rich water resources (especially underground) contribute to the peculiarity of water supply to the population of the country, which is reflected in the fact that most of the water is taken from underground sources of good quality. Every year, the population of the country uses 450-500 million m³ of water for household and drinking needs, of which 90% is used by the urban population and 10% by the rural population.

According to the National Commission on Energy and Water Supply and the National Statistics Service of Georgia, in 2019-2021, 9 licensees operated in the water supply sector, including 1 state enterprise, 4 - municipal and 4 – private entities. It served over 70 cities and 400 villages. General characteristics of water supply systems of licensed operators are present in table №1.

Table №1.

General characteristics of water supply systems of licensed operators

System Description			Water supply systems		Population		Licensees
System category	System size	Population	Quantity	%	Quantity	%	
I.	Very big	> 100 000	4	6.15	1 762 522	71.99	GWP, BWC, UWSCG-Kutaisi, RWC
	Big	25 000-100 000	5	7.69	180.266	7.36	
II.	Average	5000 - 25000	37	56.92	457.401	18.68	UWSCG, MWC, KWC, SWC
III.	Small	500-5000	16	24.62	47.649	1.95	UWSCG, MVWC
	Very little	< 500	3	4.62	578.0	0.02	UWSCG, SOGURI
Total			65	100.0	2.448 416	100.0	9

As of January 1, 2021, the population of Georgia was 3,716,900. Water supply provided to 65.9% of the population (2,448,416 people) of the country, and 34.1% of the population (1,268,484 people) is provided by water supplies belonging to local governments.

In 2019-2021 The provision of the population with improved drinking water increased by an average of 9.0%, which accordingly amounted to more than 114,000 subscribers (in 2018 the total number increased by 1.8% and amounted to 17,715 subscribers, in 2019 - by 6%, which amounted to 60,240, and in 2020 year by 3.5%, which amounted to 36 552 subscribers). More specifically, according to GeoStat (Environmental Indicators C-5.2021), in 2018-2020, there was an increase in the population connected to water supply systems. If in 2018 the number of people connected to water supply systems was 2,450,000 (65.8%) people, then in 2019 this figure increased by 2.8% and amounted to 2,520,000 (67.7%) people. In 2020, compared to 2018, this figure increased by 5% and amounted to 2,570,000 (68.9%) people. And the population connected to the water supply, without connection to the sewer network in 2020 amounted to 0.70 million people, or 27.3%. (Environmental indicators C-14. GeoStat 2021).

It should be noted that 20 cities have uninterrupted water supply (Tbilisi, Batumi, Mtskheta, Rustavi, Tianeti, Khoni, Mestia and others), the rest of the cities are provided with water on schedule due to the low technical condition of the systems.

According to the National Commission on Energy and Water Supply, in 2020, per capita drinking water consumed in Georgia ranges from 136 to 290 litres per day. If in 2017 an average of 169 litres of water was consumed per person per day, then in 2018 it was 196 litres, and in 2020 an average of 213 litres per day. At the same time, the schedule for the supply of drinking water has also improved.

However, in some cases, users who have less frequent access to drinking water regularly consume more water, for example, the average water supply schedule in the KvemoKartli region is 10 hours, and the water consumption per person is 158 litres per day. In the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, where there is a 22-hour water supply, the per capita water consumption is 124 litres per day. This can be explained by the fact that water supply schedules and frequent interruptions in drinking water force consumers to resort to various measures, including the creation of drinking water supplies, which increases the volume of water consumption.

According to Georgia MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Findings Report (2019)(https://www.unicef.org/georgia/sites/unicef.org.georgia/files/2019-11/wash_ge.pdf) and JMP 2021 Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene "WHO / UNICEF joint monitoring programme for water supply, sanitation and Hygiene" 2000-2020 (<https://www.unwater.org/app/uploads/2021/07/jmp-2021-wash-households-LAUNCH-VERSION.pdf>) compared to 2015, in 2020, there was some progress in the provision of drinking water to the population, as the share of the population with access to drinking water increased by 1%. Annual growth and changes in the base indicator at the national level is 0.18%, at the city level -0.04%, and at the rural level - 0.30%. However, it should be mentioned that the share of the population with at least basic water supply services over the last (2000-2021) 11 years has increased from 85 (almost 15%) to 100%. Coverage of the population using improved and safe drinking water services was 66%. This indicator coincides with the indicator of the National Energy and Water Supply Commission of Georgia (2021).

According to the data of the above international organizations, the access of the urban and rural population to the improved sources of water supply, available at the premises, upon necessity and free from pollution was as follows:

- in the city -100%, and in the countryside 95-97%;
- access, upon necessity, at the level of cities - 85%, in rural areas - 70%;
- free from pollution in the city 97-98%, and in rural areas 42-43%;
- population coverage with basic water supply services at the national level is 98-100%. At the urban level -99%, and at the rural level 94%;
- basic drinking water was provided to 91% of the poorest population;
- basic drinking water was provided to 100% of the richest population.

The ratio: the richest population to the poorest is 1.01

Summary data on access of population of the country to drinking water of improved quality are presented in Table № 2.

Table №2.

<i>Percentage of the population with access to better drinking water</i>	<i>Initial value (2018)</i>	<i>Present value (2020)</i>
Total	98	98.5
Urban population	100	100
Rural population	95	97

According to World and national data, maps and ratings (<https://knoema.ru/atlas/Proportion-of-population-served-with-at-least-basic-water-2020>) indicators of the proportion of the population provided with at least basic water supply, tap water, access to water that does not provide sanitary safety standards and consumes surface water, are presented in table No. 3.

Table № 3.

Proportion indicators of the population with access to the minimum basic water supply, piped water, water below necessary safety standards and consumption of surface water:

№	National level		Urban level	Rural level
1.	Percentage of population with at least basic water supply	97.3	99.0	94.3
2.	Proportion of total population with piped water	82.5	96.4	62.0
3.	Percentage of the population with access to water that does not meet sanitary safety standards	2,6%	1.0	5,7
4.	Proportion of the population consuming water from surface water sources	1.0	1.0	1.0

It should be noted that according to the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure in 2019-2020 construction and rehabilitation work across the country was carried out at 150 locations. At the same time, several large projects for the construction and rehabilitation of water supply systems have been completed, including in the cities of Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Chiatura, Csnori, Ureki and the high-mountain resorts of Gudauri, Bakuriani. As a result, the population of the cities of Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Chiatura, Csnori, Ureki with a total population of more than 270,000 people are provided with high-quality 24-hour water supply. And in the high-mountain resorts of Gudauri and Bakuriani, a complete rehabilitation of water supply and water chlorination systems was carried, while the volume of intake and the limit for the supply of drinking water increased in Gudauri by 120%, and in Bakuriani by 118%.

Considering that central water supply is inaccessible to the majority of the population of mountainous settlements, improving these systems and improving access to services for the local population was a priority for the Georgian government in 2019-2021. According to the 9th task of the Regional Development Strategy of Georgia for 2019-2023, in 2022-2023 it is planned to build water supply systems and improve the access of the population to relevant services (Regional Development Strategy of Georgia for 2019-2023).

According to the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Georgia (2021-2027) and the Action Plan for 2021-2023 of this strategy (Goal 1.5. - Increasing the level of access to infrastructure and services. Paragraph 1.5.7., Program №5608/2504) in 2021, 100 km of the water supply system, 4 heads and treatment plants were built and rehabilitated. In 2022-2023, it is planned to build and rehabilitate 310 km of the water supply network and 19 head and treatment facilities.

In the long term, by 2025, it is planned to carry out work to improve water supply in 150 settlements with a population of more than 360 thousand people, including 220 thousand people who have never had a centralized water supply, will receive high-quality.

In 2025, a round-the-clock standard water supply is planned for all the cities of Georgia, and in 2030 there will be full access to the standard water supply in all parts of the country. With the development of the water supply infrastructure, the most important standards will be observed, including the development of a network of water quality control laboratories, their equipment and the introduction of modern technologies, personnel training and the development of quality monitoring.

As stated in the first part of the report, despite the fact that in 2019-2021 no targets were set, no special programs or action plans were developed to implement them and support the achievement of the goals, the government of Georgia approved a number of nationwide strategic program documents and action plans for 2019-2023 and for the next 10 years. These documents set out both legal/regulatory and financial /economic, informational/educational and managerial issues to improve the state of access to drinking water. By adopting the Law on "Water Resources Management", appropriate management reforms in the water sector will be carried out.

With regard to the question of financing, funding for the construction and reconstruction of water supply and sewerage systems increases from year to year. Over the past eight years, more than 1 billion 200 mln GEL or \$387,7096,774 have been spent on the construction and rehabilitation of water supply systems, as a result, 52% of cities have been transferred to round the clock water supply. At the beginning of 2021, funding for the construction and rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation systems increased by 55% and amounted to 340 mln GEL, or 110 mln. \$.

Projects for the construction and rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation systems are being implemented in 150 locations, including 26 cities. 177 projects have been completed and 216 projects are underway. The Municipal Development Fund launched 101 projects in 2021. The United Water Supply Company of Georgia carried out works worth 443 mln. GEL, or 147 mln. \$. In 2021, 348 mil. GEL, or 116 mil. \$, was spent, and in the next 10 years, 9 billion GEL, or 3 billion \$, will be spent for these purposes.

Considering that central water supply is inaccessible to the majority of the population of mountainous settlements, improving these systems and improving access to services for the local population was a priority for the Georgian government in 2019-2021. According to the 9th task of the Regional Development Strategy of Georgia for 2019-2023, in 2022-2023 it is planned to build water supply and sanitation systems and improve the access of the population to relevant services.

Thus, the presented data show that in recent years, in general, significant improvements in terms of access to drinking water have been recorded. Financing of construction and reconstruction of water supply systems and improvement of access of population to quality water supply increases from year to year. Nevertheless, the problem of access to drinking water does not lose its urgency not only in some cities, but also in rural areas, as evidenced by the implementation of a number of projects in this area. Water supply is also a serious problem for the population of the highland areas of the country.

However, it should be noted that the implementation of strategic policy documents adopted by the Government of Georgia will greatly contribute to the fulfillment of these tasks.

Water supply is also a serious problem for some educational institutions in both urban and rural areas of Georgia (Public Advocate Special Report, 2018. WASH - Policy Analysis and Recommendations for Leadership in Georgia. 2018. 2020. pandemic and general education in Georgia. Georgia Department of Education, Science, Culture and Sports. 2020).

If the current rate of funding for construction and rehabilitation of water systems continues from 2022 to 2025, it is projected that by the end of 2025 the population of all cities in Georgia will be fully supplied with 24-hour, high-quality drinking water, and in 2030 there will be full access to a standard water supply in all areas of the country.

Given all the above mentioned, and the fact that providing the population with an adequate sanitation is an issue of social importance and a priority for the government of Georgia, it is imperative that goals to improve the current situation and technical measures to achieve them remain on the agenda for the next 2021-2025.

As the water supply infrastructure develops, compliance with critical standards, including the development of a network of water quality control laboratories, equipping them with appropriate equipment and introducing modern technologies, training personnel and developing quality monitoring will greatly contribute to achieving the 2030 development goal.

Regarding the issue of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, it should be noted that, due to the importance of this topic, measures to achieve sufficient quantity and quality of drinking water and sanitation have been integrated into state policy, strategy documents, programs and action plans. These documents overlap both with the principles of the UNECE Protocol “Water and Health” and with the UN Sustainable Development Goals until 2030 (Goal 6.).

Due to the importance of the topic, according to task 6 (6.1-6.8) of the matrix for the implementation of sustainable development objectives, the Third National Action Plan for Environmental Protection (2018), the Second National Action Plan for Environment and Health (2018-2021), the Strategy for the Development of High-Altitude Settlements of Georgia (2018), etc. is provided for:

- Changes in national policy and regulations in the field of water supply in accordance with WHO recommendations;
- At the national level, provide the population with adequate safe water supply, including in institutions;
- 6.1.1 6.2.1: increase the population using safe drinkingwater (100%);
- 3.9 3.9.2: Improve indicators of water quality, sanitation, lack of hygiene and WASH services, and disease and outbreaks Improve indicators of water quality, sanitation, hygiene and services, disease and outbreak rates (decrease from Y to Y 1%).

As the water supply infrastructure develops, the most important standards will be observed, including the development of a network of water quality control laboratories, their appropriate equipment and the introduction of modern technologies, personnel training and the development of quality monitoring, by this the development goals will be achieved until 2030.

Target Indicators in this field, were not set in years 2019-2021 according to the protocol, but they have been included in different strategies and operation plans of the country.

Access to drinking water population during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the pandemic, the Coordination Council for the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic was created under the Cabinet of Ministers. At the meeting of the council, issues related to ensuring access to water and sanitation for vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population, were constantly considered, and appropriate decisions were made.

Particular attention was paid to and strict control was introduced to ensuring uninterrupted water supply and sanitation of kindergartens and secondary schools, retirement home and the elderly, in covid hotels, penitentiary institutions, organizations for other diseases of contingents and socially vulnerable groups of the population.

Due to the need caused by the pandemic, sanitary facilities were repaired in 725 secondary schools. And in the cities of Tskhaltubo, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Mtskheta, up to 3000 families of internally displaced persons are provided with a continuous water supply and sanitary services.

It should be noted that in connection with the deterioration of the socio-economic situation caused by the new coronavirus, as well as the entry into force of a new increased consumer tariff for water supply and sanitation services from January 1, 2021 (will be valid until the end of 2023), the Government of Georgia has recognized issue of particular importance and focused on supporting the availability of financial services for water supply and sanitation for the population of the cities of Tbilisi, Mtskheta and Rustavi.

Considering this, 2020-2021 government adopted several resolutions (No. 220.03.02.2020; No. 655.30.10.2020; No. 4.12.01.2021; No. 87.05.03.2021 "On approval of the rules and conditions for subsidizing utility bills"; On amendments to the Resolution of the Government of Georgia dated October 30, 2020 No. 655 "On the Approval of the Rules and Conditions for Subsidizing Utility Tax".

Subsidy for these services, financed from the state budget of Georgia for the years 2020 and 2021 in connection with the detection of the socio-economic situation caused by the new coronavirus ". While the (Covid-19) pandemic has significantly diverted political attention and financial resources to other aspects of the pandemic (such as improving health systems and mitigating socio-economic impacts), in these conditions, equal access to water and sanitation is of particular importance in the daily life of the population.

In this regard, the Government of Georgia, in parallel to strengthening the capacity of medical services, has given a special political incentive to the uninerrupted operation of water supply and sanitation services.

Due to the fact that severe restrictive measures are taken in the social life of the population during the pandemic, the Government of the country as signed the status of socially important service providers to personnel and organizations providing services in the field of water supply and sanitation, as well as to the operators of treatment facilities, etc.

Consequently, despite the imposed restrictions, the corresponding benefits were given to them, with the possibility of uninterrupted movement. As a result, the country's entire water and sanitation industry has worked hard to ensure that the high quality service for the population.

In addition, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection has developed and approved a number of recommendations to prevent the spread of infection (COVID-19), including the following:

- “Recommendations for the prevention of the spread of infection (COVID-19) caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in the workplaces of workers in the power supply, accumulation / treatment / distribution of water and waste management (Appendix 6. Order No. 01-227/O 29.05. 2020);
- Recommendations for early childhood and preschool educational institutions in connection with the infection (COVID-19 caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Order of the Minister for Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection dated August 31, 2020 No. 01-431/.

It should be noted that the pandemic significantly contributed not only to the concentration of budgetary funds, but also to the attraction of significant financial resources from both the European Union and other international donors and financial institutions. Financial resources were allocated to economic sectors to implement recommendations from WHO and other international organizations, including eliminating disruptions in service delivery to expand equitable access to water and sanitation.

IV. Access to sanitation (art. 6, para.2 (d))

Target Indicators in this field, were not set in the years 2019-2021 according to the protocol, but they have been included in different strategies and operational plans of the country. However, it is advisable to provide information on this issue.

It should be noted that the research results of different organizations on the issue are different. According to the national statistics of Georgia (GeoStat 2020 and 2021. Environmental indicators C-14), the number of people connected to sanitation systems is increasing every year. In 2015-2016, this indicator was 44.2 and 46.5%, in 2017 -47.9%, in 2018 -48.6% (or 1,810,000 people), 2019-49. 3% (or 1,830,000 people) and in 2020 -50.1% (or .862170 people). The population connected to the sewer network, without wastewater treatment, in 2020 amounted to 0.51 million people (13.6%).

According to Georgia MICS Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Findings Report (2019) and JMP 2020 Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene "WHO / UNICEF joint monitoring programs for water supply, sanitation and Hygiene" 2000-2020) There is some progress in providing the population with sanitary conditions, since according to the JMP, in 2020 the share of the population with access to sanitary conditions was 87% of the total population of the country. However, the proportion of the population with at least basic sanitation services in 2020 compared to 2010 increased from 80 (18%) to 98%.

The share of the urban population with access to sanitation is 95%, and the rural population is 72%. The annual growth and changes in the basic indicator at the city level are insignificant and amounted to 0.08%.

According to the above organizations, the indicators of urban and rural population access to safe services and improved sources of sanitation are as follows:

- Coverage of the population with improved sanitation (excluding general) in 2020 was 34%;
- Coverage of the population with basic sanitary conditions at the national level is 86%. At the city level - 95%, and at the rural level -72%;
- Basic sanitation is provided to 80% of the poorest population;
- Basic sanitation is provided to 100% of the wealthiest population.

The ratio: the richest population to the poorest is 1.3.

The proportion of the population using improved sanitation facilities (including general ones) with the connection of sewerage systems at the national level in 2020 was 61%. At the city level, 96%, and at the rural level, 8%. Annual growth and change in baseline (2015) at the national level was 0.03%.

According to the World and national data, maps & rankings (<https://knoema.ru/atlas/Proportion-of-population-served-with-at-least-basic-water-2020>), indicators of providing the population with sanitary conditions given in table No. 4

Table № 4.

Providing the population with sanitary conditions in %

№	National level	Urban level	Rural level	
1.	Percentage of population with at least basic sanitation	85,8	94,8	72,5
2.	Percentage of population served by open defecation or no sewerage	1,0	1,0	1,0
3.	The proportion of the population served by general sanitation services	1,0	1,4	1,0
4.	Proportion of population with unimproved sanitation	12,2	2,8	25,5

Given the lack of sewerage systems in high-altitude settlements, improving these systems and improving services for the local population has been a priority for the Georgian government in 2019-2021. According to the 9th goal of the Regional Development Strategy of Georgia for 2019-2023, in 2022-2023 it is planned to build sewer systems and improve access to related services (Regional Development Strategy of Georgia for 2019-2023).

With regard to the issue of hygiene, it should be noted that as of 2020 at the national level, the share of the population with access to basic hygiene conditions was 92%. At the city level, 97-98%, and at the rural level, 88-90%. It should be noted that according to the above-mentioned studies, 82% of the poorest population are provided with basic hygiene, and 58% with basic WASH hygiene. While 98% of the richest population is provided with basic hygiene, and 100% of the richest population is provided with WASH basic hygiene.

Regarding the connection of the sewerage system of the population to wastewater treatment plants, it should be noted that according to the data of GeoStat for 2021, in 2018, 36.0% of the population

was connected to wastewater treatment plants, and in 2019-2020 this figure was 36.5% (Table № 5).

(Table № 5).

The number of people connected to the wastewater treatment plant (%)

Title of component	Years		
	2018	2019	2020
Connection to the cleaning structure	36.0	36.5	36.5
Connection to mechanical cleaning structure	31.0	0.5	0.4
Connection to Biological cleaning structure	4.7	5.0	5.2
Connection to complex cleaning structure	0.2	30.9	30.9

Considering that one of the priorities of the Georgian government is the improvement of sanitation services, a number of state strategies, programs, and action plans were adopted in 2018 and subsequent years (see part one general aspects. Paragraph 4.), the main directions of which are the continuation of the construction and rehabilitation of water supply and sanitation systems in cities and rural areas.

As stated in the first part of the report, although there were no 2019-2021 targets, specific programs or action plans to implement and support the goals, the Government of Georgia has approved a number of statewide strategic policy documents and action plans for 2019-2023 and the next 10 years. These documents outline both regulatory, financial, economic, informational, and managerial issues to improve sanitation services. According to these documents, funding for construction and reconstruction of both water supply and sanitation systems is increasing year by year (see section III.).

Considering the above mentioned, it can be stated that in the reporting period, the implementation of government strategies, action plans and programs led to a significant improvement in the infrastructure of sanitation systems, as well as the availability of these systems for the population. It should also be noted that appropriate measures have been taken to improve infrastructure, including preschool and school facilities.

However, despite the fact that the population of the country is gradually receiving improved sanitation conditions, a certain part of the population does not yet have access to improved sanitation. Therefore, the technical condition, rehabilitation and construction of sanitary infrastructure remains on the agenda.

Considering the above, as well as the fact that ensuring adequate sanitation for the population is a matter of social importance and a priority of the Georgian government, it is imperative that target indicators for improving the current situation and technical measures to achieve them are

present on the agenda for 2022-2025 and subsequent years. This is necessary to achieve not only the goal of state strategies, action plans and programs and socio-economic development of the country, but also to achieve the goal of sustainable development until 2030.

Due to the fact that the results of studies of various organizations on this issue differ, it is necessary to conduct more detailed studies in the future.

Regarding the issue of the UN Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, it should be noted that, due to the importance of this topic, measures to achieve sufficient quantity and quality of drinking water and sanitation have been integrated in to state policy, strategy documents, programs and action plans. These documents overlap both with the principles of the UN ECE Protocol "Water and Health" and with the UN Sustainable Development Goals until 2030 (Goal 6.).

Due to the importance of the topic, according to task 6 (6.1-6.8) of the matrix for the implementation of sustainable development objectives, the Third National Action Plan for Environmental Protection (2018), the Second National Action Plan for Environment and Health (2018-2021), the Strategy for the Development of High-Altitude Settlements of Georgia (2018), etc. is provided for:

- Changes to national sanitation policies and regulations as recommended by WHO;
- At the national level, provide the population with adequate safe sanitary conditions, including institutions;
- 6.1.1 6.2.1. Increase the safe sanitation services for the population (100%);
- 3.9 3.9.2. Improve indicators of water quality, sanitation, lack of hygiene and WASH services, and disease and outbreaks (decrease from Y to Y 1%).

V. Levels of performance of collective systems and other systems for water supply (art. 6, para.2 (e))

Targets have not been set in this context. However, due to its importance, this issue is reflected in various strategies, programs and action plans of the country. The same documents define the goals, objectives and related activities.

According to GeoStat (2021), 70% of the country's population is provided with a centralized water supply, including 95% of the urban and 35% of the rural population. The country has 1,500 collective and 800 small water supply systems. For water supply, groundwater (72%) and surface water (32%) are used.

According to GeoStat (Environmental Indicators C-5.2021), over the past three years (2018-2020), there has been an increase in the population connected to water supply systems. If in 2018 the number of the population connected to collective water supply systems was 2,450,000 (65.8%) people, then in 2019 this figure increased by 2.8% and amounted to 2,520,000 (67.7%) people. In 2020, compared to 2018, this figure increased by 5% and amounted to 2,570,000 (68.9%) people. And the population connected to the water supply system, without being connected to the sewerage network, in 2020 amounted to 0.70 million people, or 27.3%. (Environmental Indicators C-14. Geostat 2021).

In 2019-2020, there was an increase in household water consumption per capita. For example, if in 2019 per capita households received 88.8 m³ of water, then in 2020 this figure was 89.2 m³ (Environmental indicators C-4. Geostat 2021).

Despite the fact that the technical measures taken in recent years have significantly reduced the loss of drinking water supplied to the population, the problem of water loss in the network of collective and other water supply systems, remains on the agenda. In some cases, this number is over 60%. So, for example, if in 2019 the loss of drinking water amounted to (543.4 mil/m³) 66.5%, then in 2020 this figure decreased by 1.8% and amounted to 491.6 mil/m³ (GeoStat S-7. 2021). In 2020, the water supply was 760.1 mil/m³, but the population received 268.6 million m³ of water, losses amounted to 491.6 mil/m³ (63%).

In order to increase the level of efficiency of collective and other water supply systems, the Government of Georgia, back in 2018 and in subsequent years, approved a number of state programs (Freedom, rapid development and prosperity, Regional Development Program of Georgia 2018-2021, Programs for the development of pilot regions of Georgia in 2020-2022, On measures for the Implementation of measures for the development of pilot regions of Georgia Resolution of the Government of Georgia No. 628 of December 20, 2019. Basic data and direction of Georgia for the period 2020-2023 (Final version); Strategy for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Georgia (2021-2027), Action Plan for 2021-2023 of this strategy (Goal 1.5. Increasing the level of access to infrastructure and services. Paragraph 1.5.7., program 5608/2504), 10-year plan of socio-economic development of Georgia for the period 2021-2031, 10-year plan for the integrated development of the regions of Georgia for 2021-2031 et al.) one of the main directions of which is the continuation of the construction and rehabilitation processes in the water supply systems of cities and towns and improve the efficiency of collective systems and other water supply systems.

Conclusion: Despite the fact that in recent years, large-scale construction and rehabilitation work has been carried out in the field of collective water supply systems, the efficiency of these systems in the country does not yet meet today's requirements. The technical condition of the water supply and distribution networks of residential buildings remains on the agenda.

This is accompanied by frequent system failures. In general, this leads to additional water losses and a deterioration in the quality of service. However, the implementation of strategies and action programs, taking into account the goals of sustainable development, will ensure the level of efficiency of collective and other water supply systems. As a result, many of the problems that exist today will be resolved.

It should also be noted that within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals until 2030, the Sustainable Development Goal in Georgia (6.1.-6.8) is integrated into the above strategies, action plans and programs.

VI. Levels of performance of collective systems and other systems for sanitation (art. 6, para. 2 (e))

Target indicators in this context were not established since the protocol has not been ratified. However, it is reflected in the various strategies, programs and action plans of the country due to the importance of the issue. The same documents define objectives, tasks and relevant measures.

Over the past three years (2018-2020), there has been an increase in the population connected to collective sanitation systems. If in 2018 the number of people connected to collective systems was 1,810,000 (48.6%) people, then in 2019 this figure increased by 1.1% and amounted to 1,830,000 (49.4%) people. In 2020, compared to 2018, this indicator increased by 3.2% and amounted to 1,870,000 (50.1%) people. And the population connected to the sewer network without wastewater treatment in 2020 amounted to 0.51 mil.people, or 13.6% (Environmental indicators C-14. GeoStat 2021).

In order to increase the level of efficiency of collective sanitation systems, as mentioned above (Chapter V.), the Government of Georgia, back in 2018 and in subsequent years, approved a number of state programs, one of the main directions of which is the continuation of the construction and rehabilitation of systems for both water supply and sanitation.

Conclusion: Despite the fact that in recent years large-scale technical measures have been taken in the field of collective sanitation systems, which has significantly improved the rates of connection to collective sanitation systems, the effectiveness of these systems in the country does not meet today's requirements. Consequently, this indicator and the technical condition of existing systems remains low, and the problem remains on the agenda. This is accompanied by frequent failures in the system, which leads to a deterioration in the quality of service.

However, the implementation of strategies and action programs, taking into account the goals of sustainable development, will ensure an appropriate level of efficiency of collective and other sanitation systems. As a result, many problems that exist today will be solved.

It should also be noted that within the framework of the UN sustainable development goals until 2030, the goal of sustainable development in Georgia (6.1.-6.8) is integrated into the relevant state strategies, action plans and programs. Therefore, it is necessary to keep respective tasks related to the improvement of the current situation for the year 2022 and following years on the agenda. Furthermore, agenda must also envision as the implementation of appropriate measures under the protocol on water and health, taking into account the goals of sustainable development until 2030.

VII. Application of recognized good practices to the management of water supply (art.6, para.2 (f))

Target indicators in this context were not established since the protocol has not been ratified.

One of the priorities of the State Concept of the Public Health System of Georgia since 2014-2020 is “Health in all policies – a state interdisciplinary approach” (Government Resolution No. 724 of 12/26/2014). This means effective coordination mechanisms in areas such as environmental protection, water safety, risk reduction, improving human health, etc., considering this, the strategies and action plans adopted by the government in subsequent years have been developed including effective coordination mechanisms.

It should be noted that the National Energy and Water Resources Regulatory Commission of Georgia adopted Decree No. 27 dated November 22, 2019 “On Approving the Rules for Evaluating Investments in the Field of Water Supply Management”.

This document establishes the main principles and criteria for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of investment plans and components of investment projects by water supply licensees. As well as determining the level of access of the population to drinking water, and a number of key indicators.

This regulation promotes the implementation of recognized good practice in the field of water supply management, as licensed water supply companies are required to develop short-term and long-term investment plans and components of investment projects, as well as identify and improve such key indicators as:

- drinking water quality index (DWPQ);
- index of the population's access to drinking water
- index definition of the area of coverage of domestic and drinking water supply (DWCA);
- drinking water index according to the schedule (CS);
- drinking water pipeline accident rate index (DWPB);
- drinking Water Infrastructure Leakage Index (ILI);
- service personnel performance index (SPI);
- Drinking water pipeline distribution network flexibility index (WPFI), etc.

Event designs developed by licensed water companies index indicators that contribute to the implementation of recognized good practice in the field of water supply management are approved by the Ministry of Environment Protection and agriculture. The term required for the implementation of the short-term investment plan of the licensee shall not exceed 3 years.

Assessment of investments in the water supply sector includes: studying, assessing and improving the condition of the head and treatment facilities, reservoirs, pumping and chlorine stations, laboratories, sanitary protection zones, main and distribution networks, improving technical re-equipment and maintenance processes, etc.

It should be noted that as a result of the activities carried out in 2019-2021 in a number of cities (Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Chiatura, Kazbegi, Ckaltubo, Signagi, Gori, Borjomi etc.), recognized good practice in the field of water supply management was introduced, which allowed the population to access high quality 24-hour water supply. However, in the regions, the application of this practice remains a priority, which is reflected in the 10-year action plan of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development (2021).

The development of water supply infrastructure will continue actively from 2022. As a result of the implementation of recognized good practice in the field of water supply management, 150 localities with a population of 360,000 people will improve water supply. In addition, it is planned to build new water supply systems in the city of Khashuri worth 260 mil. lari, or 84.0 mil. \$, which will expand the rehabilitation of 18 km of water supply and 191 km of distribution network within 5 years.

As noted above, according to forecasts, by the end of 2025, the population of all cities in Georgia will be fully provided with round-the-clock high-quality drinking water. And in 2030, recognized good practice in water supply management and full access to standard water supply will be implemented in all parts of the country.

Despite the fact that in recent years the coordination mechanisms and application of recognized good practice in the field of water supply management have been gradually improved, which has significantly improved some indicators of providing the population with high-quality drinking water, the level of application of recognized good practice does not yet meet today's requirements. Therefore, this indicator remains on the agenda.

As for the issue in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, it is reflected in the Program for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia and the Second National Environment and Health Action Plan (2018-2021), Annex 1. Task 1.1., 1.2., 1.3.) and in other strategic documents.

VIII. Application of recognized good practice to the management of sanitation (art. 6, para. 2 (f))

According to the protocol in 2019-2021, the target indicators in this field were not set. However, goals, objectives and related measures are determined by different strategies, programs and action plans of the country, depending on the importance of the issue.

As noted above (Chapter VII.), given that one of the priorities is the development and implementation of effective mechanisms for environmental protection, water safety, reducing risk factors and improving people's health, in recent years, the government of the country and the National Energy and Water Regulatory Commission Georgia has adopted a number of strategies, action plans and resolutions in the field of application of recognized good practice in the field of both water supply and sanitation management, including the "On approval of the rules for assessing investments in the field of water supply management".

This document establishes the basic principles and criteria for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of investment plans and components of investment projects by licensees not only in the field of water supply, but also in the field of sanitation. As well as determining the level of access of the population to sanitary conditions and a number of key indicators in this area.

This regulation promotes recognized good practice in sanitation management, as licensed companies are required to develop short and long term investment plans and project investments, and to identify and improve key performance indicators such as:

- index for determining the area of water disposal coverage (WWCA)
- index of accidents of sewerage systems (WWPB);
- index of the quality index of the liquid discharged into water bodies through sewerage (WWPQ).

The index of the quality indicator of the liquid discharged into water bodies through sewerage (WWPQ) consists of such components as:

- Number of branches to sewer networks;
- The number of samples taken from wastewater discharged through sewers into surface water bodies that do not meet the requirements of the technical regulation during the last year (WWPCT);

- Number of samples taken by licensees from wastewater discharged into surface water bodies in the last year (WWACT).

Developed by licensed campaigns, action projects, index indicators that contribute to the implementation of recognized good practice in the field of sanitation management are agreed by the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture.

During the reporting period, the United Water Supply Company of Georgia carried out the construction of treatment facilities in 6 settlements (Zugdidi, Poti, Marneuli, Mestia, Gudauri, Abastumani) and in 2 settlements (Anaklia, Ureki). In addition, during the reporting period, the design of wastewater treatment facilities in the village of Mukhrani, the resort of Bakhmaro and the city of Martvili was completed. Construction of treatment facilities is underway at 6 facilities. According to the plan (2017-2021), the total budget of the campaign was set at 149 mln GEL or \$48,064,516.

As part of the implementation of the Third National Action Plan for Environmental Protection (2017-2021), a project was developed in 2020 Decree of the Government of Georgia “On Approval of the Technical Regulations for the Discharge of Urban and Industrial Wastewater into Surface Water Bodies”, which, after the adoption of the Law "On Water Resources Management" will be presented to the government.

At the same time, it should be noted that improving the state of sanitation in general and in specific regions of the country and the application of recognized good practice in the field of sanitation management remains a priority, which is also reflected in a number of national strategies and 10-year action programs (2021). It should be noted that as a result of the activities carried out in 2019-2020, recognized good practice in the field of water supply management has been introduced in four large cities (Kutaisi, Zugdidi, Chiatura, Tsnori). This allowed the population access to a 24-hour-high quality water supply.

As mentioned above, by the end of 2025 the population of all cities in Georgia will be fully provided with a high quality water supply, in 2030 a recognized good practice in the field of water supply management will be introduced. Therefore, this process also concerns the application of best practice in the field of sanitation management and full access to standard services.

It should be noted that improving the state of sanitation in general and in particular the regions of the country and the application of recognized good practice in the field of sanitation management remains a priority.

Given the significance of the issue, it is necessary that the agenda for 2022-2025 and beyond include the development of target indicators related to the improvement of the situation in this area, and the implementation of measures to be achieved under the protocol on water and health.

In recent years, the country has established strategies, action plans and regulations on the application of best practice in the field of water supply and sanitation. These documents establish the fundamental principles and criteria for the development of both the sanitation system and the results of the application of recognized good practice in the field of sanitation management (2021).

As for the issue in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, it is reflected in the Program for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Georgia and the Second National Environment and Health Action Plan and in other strategic documents.

IX. Occurrence of discharges of untreated wastewater (art. 6, para. 2 (g) (i))

According to the protocol in 2019-2021 the target indicators in this field were not set.

According to the applicable law, it is prohibited to discharge unprocessed wastewater into surface water objects. Under the legislation, the list of activities subject to ecological expertise is defined. Environmental Impact Assessment reports should include measures, technologies and obligations that are necessary for the treatment and discharge of polluted waters. This is important for the protection of surface water objects from pollution.

According to GeoStat (2021), discharges of untreated wastewater into surface water bodies have decreased in recent years. In 2019, if this indicator was 401.6 million m³ (including 187.3 mil. m³ of polluted wastewater), then this indicator in 2020 decreased by 30.1% and amounted to 280.8 million m³ (including 86.5 mil. m³ of polluted wastewater).

However, it should be noted that according to the "Georgia Regional Development Strategy for 2019-2023" and the "Program for the Development of High Mountainous Regions of Georgia for 2018-2021), in mountain municipalities do not operate in full or there are no wastewater treatment and sewerage facilities.

As a result, raw sewage is discharged into surface water bodies. For example, the existing sewerage systems in the municipalities of Shuakhevi, Khulo and Kedaare worn out, while in Racha-Lechkhumi and KvemoSvaneti these systems partially function only in municipal centers.

According to GeoStat (2021), biological treatment facilities functioned only in three cities (Sachkhere, Batumi and Gardabani). If in 2020 up to 50%, was connected to sewerage systems, then the connected to wastewater treatment plants amounted 36% of the population 1 360 000 people, including:

- The number of people connected to the first stage of mechanical treatment amounted to 0.02 million people (0.4%);
- The number of people connected to the second stage of biological treatment amounted to 0.19 million people (5.2%);
- The number of people connected to the third stage of comprehensive cleaning amounted to 1,150,000 million people. (30.9%).

The development of sewerage systems in villages is carried out in accordance with the National Strategy for the Development of Villages in Georgia, Strategy for the development of mountainous settlements in Georgia for 2019-2023 (2019) and other action plans. However, it should be noted that the importance of the problem and the need to improve the existing situation in this area does not lose its relevance in terms of further development of the infrastructure system and the legislative framework. These issues are reflected in the strategies, operational plans and action programs, a list of which is presented in different chapters of this report.

As a result of the measures taken, in recent years, the volume of untreated wastewater discharges into surface water bodies, has decreased. Up to 50% of the population is connected to sewer systems. However, the indicators of connection to wastewater treatment plants remain at a low level. And in some regions, including in mountain municipalities, do not in full operational or are missing wastewater and sewerage. As a result, raw sewage is discharged into surface water bodies.

Considering that the issue of untreated wastewater discharge into surface water bodies has not been fully resolved at present, it is necessary to develop, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals until 2030:

- Vision, policy and strategy for the development of this system with principles and goals in line with European standards;
- Institutional arrangements and modern management systems for these waters;
- Management of system components and related activities;
- Monitoring and quality control mechanisms.

X. Occurrence of discharges of untreated storm water overflows from wastewater collection systems (art. 6, para. 2 (g) (ii))

Household and drainage systems in the cities are independent of each other. The collection and transportation of household waste, wastewater to treatment facilities (Tbilisi, Mtskheta, Rustavi, Gardabani, Sachkhere, Batumi) is done by separate systems. Drainage water flows without treatment in surface water bodies are also discharged by separate systems.

Considering the importance of the problem, the need to improve the situation in this area is reflected in country strategies, action plans and programs (Third National Environmental Action Plan 2018-2021), Georgia's Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy (2021-2027), Action Plan for 2021-2023 of this strategy (Goal 1.6 of paragraph 1.6.2.), etc.

XI. Quality of discharges of wastewater from wastewater treatment installations (art. 6, para. 2 (h))

Legal support for the protection of surface water bodies and their quality is provided by the water legislation of Georgia, as well as relevant regulatory acts ("Sanitary Rules and Norms for the Protection of Surface Water Bodies from Pollution" No. 297/o of 16.08.2001; Rules for the Calculation of Pollutants No. 414 /. 12/31/2013 "Technical Regulations on the Protection of Surface Waters from Pollution" No. 425. 12/31/2013 "Technical Regulations on Water Protection Zones" No. 440. 31/12/2013 Technical Regulations on Water Protection Belts of Small Rivers of Georgia No. 445 dated 31 /112/2013; "Technical regulation on nature protection" No. 17 dated 03/01/2013).

According to Georgian legislation, all individuals and legal entities are obliged to protect water resources from pollution. However, in most settlements there are no treatment facilities, as a result of which polluted waste water enters surface water bodies.

In 2019, only 46.6% of untreated wastewater was discharged into surface waters, while in 2020 it was 30% (GeoStat 2021). According to the National Environment Agency (2019-2021), surface water bodies are mainly polluted with ammonium nitrogen.

It can be said that in 2019-2021, according to the Protocol "Water and Health", no target indicators were set in this part. However, this issue is widely reflected in the country's strategies and action plans for the next and next 10 years. Consequently, the question of analysis of the current situation will not lose its relevance in the coming years.

This is also evidenced by ongoing and planned international and national projects in the country. However, targets need to be set in this area, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the Protocol on Water and Health.

XII. Disposal or reuse of sewage sludge from collective systems of sanitation or other sanitation installations (art. 6, para.2 (i))

Despite the fact that the country has regulations, sanitary rules and norms "On the use of wastewater and their residues for irrigation and fertilization" (No. 297/N.16/08/2001), water from collective systems, or other sanitary facilities not used.

There is no specific state policy regarding this topic, and accordingly there are no institutional obligations in this direction. Target indicators for 2019-2021 in this area have not been set.

XIII. Quality of wastewater used for irrigation purposes (art. 6, para.2 (i))

Soil irrigation in the country is carried out on the basis of the Law "On Irrigation", the Technical Regulations "On the Rules for the Technical Operation of Ameliorative and Irrigation Systems" (No. 409 of December 31, 2013), the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Georgia (2021-2027) and action plan for 2021-2023 of this strategy (goal 1.6 of paragraph 1.6.2.).

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia develops and implements the state policy and programs in this field.

According to the report on the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Integration of Georgia into the European Union (2020), the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas of Georgia (2021-2027) and the action plan for 2021-2023 of this strategy (Goal 1.6 of paragraph 1.6.2.), at the expense of state programs (31.06.03) the areas of reclaimed and drained lands in the country are increasing from year to year. The introduction of modern irrigation systems is gradually being carried out.

In 2020, in order to improve and develop irrigation systems, 47 projects were implemented, of which 10 were completed. Cash execution amounted to GEL 11,810,009 or USD 3,809,680. On irrigation systems, 6 projects are being implemented within the framework of the capital budget, 2 completed. Cash execution within the framework of the capital budget amounted to 3,503,023 GEL or 1,130,007 US dollars.

However, the current legislation does not include the monitoring of water quality used for irrigation purposes.

XIV. Quality of waters which are used as sources for drinking water (art. 6, para. 2 (j))

According to the protocol, in 2019-2021, the characteristics of target indicators in this area were not established.

An appropriate legal framework has been developed to maintain the quality of drinking water in the country.

The Law on Water and a number of normative acts regulate issues such as sanitary safety of water supply sources, water protection zones and their length. A special regime is established in each zone, which must be observed to ensure the proper quality of these waters.

According to the Laws on Health Care and Public Health (2007), the quality standards of drinking water sources are set by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. The quality control of drinking water is carried out by the National Food Agency of the Ministry of Environment Protection and Agriculture of Georgia. Since 2006, the agency has created a centralized database of drinking water. Due to the importance of the issue, in 2019 the government approved the technical regulation (No. 161.26.03.2019) "Rules for determining the sanitary protection zones of groundwater bodies subject to the mineral extraction license."

Groundwater is mainly used to supply drinking water to the population. These waters are characterized by high quality. However, some cities (Tbilisi, Batumi, Borjomi) also use surface water bodies for water supply. Due to the relatively low quality of these waters, they are treated using appropriate technologies.

In Georgia, the restoration of the groundwater monitoring network began in 2013. In 20 municipalities of 7 district units for groundwater monitoring in 2013-2021, automatic stations were installed at wells and springs. Over the years, the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of groundwater have been assessed at 66 water points, 50 wells and 6 springs. In 2021, automatic groundwater quality monitoring stations for 10 wells were additionally installed.

Considering that most of the watercourses of the groundwater monitoring network are used by the population for drinking, their chemical and bacteriological studies were carried out, and important components were determined to establish the state of the quality of these waters (nitrite and nitrate ions, ammonium ions, phosphates, fluorides, silicic acid, heavy metals, pesticides, petroleum products, E. coli, common E. coli, fecal streptococci, etc.).

The results of the study showed that:

- Elevated levels and/or episodically observed values of average concentrations of various water quality parameters are associated with anthropogenic impact;
- Petroleum products and pesticides in the selected samples are not fixed or are significantly less than the maximum allowable standards;

- In isolated cases, there is a content above the maximum allowable norm of microbiological indicators, while the average content does not exceed the maximum allowable standards.

Based on the results of laboratory tests, in case of detection of drinking water pollution, the results of the survey are sent to the City Hall of the relevant municipality and/or the interested citizen in order to inform the population and take appropriate measures.

Based on hydrogeological monitoring studies, ten information bulletins on the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of Georgian groundwater were prepared and published (<https://nea.gov.ge>). Also, the report "Assessment of quantitative and qualitative characteristics of freshwater groundwater resources in Georgia (analysis of the current situation, forecast and recommendations (2021)". From 2022, the results of hydrogeological monitoring will be available in electronic format. In the future, it is planned to annually expand the network of hydrogeological monitoring.

In order to protect the quality of water used for drinking, the country has created an appropriate legislative framework. The network for monitoring the quality of groundwater, which is used as a source of drinking water, will be gradually restored and expanded. Chemical-bacteriological studies are being carried out, and important components are being determined to establish the state of the quality of these waters. The results of the study show that the groundwater used as sources of drinking water is of good quality. The results are published in newsletters. In the future, it is planned to expand the network of hydrogeological monitoring annually.

Despite the above, this issue does not lose its relevance, since it must always be on the agenda due to its high social significance. This is indicated by ongoing and planned international and national projects in the country. Nevertheless, in the future, it will be necessary to define target indicators for the Water and Health protocol, taking into account the UN sustainable development goals.

XV. Quality of waters used for bathing (art. 6, para.2 (j))

According to the protocol, no target indicators were set in this area in 2019-2021. In Georgia, a generally accepted classifier of water bodies has not yet been developed.

At present, there is no generally accepted classifier of water bodies in Georgia. Legally, the management of waters used for bathing and their quality is carried out in accordance with the water legislation of Georgia, as well as normative acts.

Legal support regarding the management of waters used for bathing and their quality is carried out in accordance with the water legislation of Georgia, as well as normative acts ("Sanitary rules and norms for the protection of surface waters from pollution", approved by order of the Ministry of Labour, health and social protection No. 297 / N of August 16, 2001; No. 414 of December 31, 2013 "On approval of the rules for calculating the norms of pollutants discharged with wastewater into surface water bodies"; No. 425 of December 31, 2013 "On the protection of surface waters from pollution"; No. 440 of December 31, 2013 "On approval of the technical regulation on water protection belts"; No. 445 of December 31, 2013 "On Approval of the Technical Regulations on

Water Protection Strips for Small Rivers of Georgia”; No. 17 of January 3, 2014 “On approval of environmental technical regulations”).

In accordance with these documents, 2 categories of water use define (water objects of the first category and water objects of the second category). The first category includes water bodies that are used as sources for centralized or non-centralized drinking water supply, as well as for water supply to the food industry. The second category includes water bodies that are used for cultural and domestic purposes, recreation and sports.

For these water bodies, maximum allowed concentrations have established for 1346 harmful substances and 4 levels of their degree of pollution (permissible pollution level, moderate pollution level, high pollution level and especially the high pollution level). In addition, in accordance with the country's water legislation, sanitary protection zones and water protection zones are established, in which economic activity is limited.

In the field of water quality monitoring of surface water bodies, in accordance with the legislation of the country, the competent authority has been determined - the National Environmental Agency of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. It should be noted that every year the number of surface water bodies on which the quality control of water and samples taken for analysis is carried out is increasing (Table No.6)

(Table No.6)

Dynamics of Quality Control of Surface Waters

№	Quantity	Years		
		2019	2020	2021
1.	Rivers	85	86	109
2.	Lakes and Water Reservoirs	16	17	17
3.	Total	101	103	126
4.	Control points	153	156	201
5.	Number of samples	1010	839	1145

For example, if in 2019 sampling for water quality analysis was carried out at 153 points on 101 surface water bodies (rivers / lakes / reservoirs), in 2020 these studies were carried out at 156 points on 103 water bodies, and in 2021 - at 201 points on 126 rivers, 13 lakes and 3 reservoirs. In total, 1010 samples were taken in 2019, 839 samples in 2020 and 1145 samples in 2021.

The process of studying the qualitative state of water bodies is carried out according to plan. To determine the qualitative state of these waters, from 33 to 40 physical and chemical parameters and 4 microbiological indicators are measured (content: E.coli, total coli forms, streptococci, total number of microbes). Based on the studies conducted on the qualitative state of water bodies, a monthly information bulletin - “Summary of the state of the environment in Georgia” is compiled, which are published on the Agency's website.

Despite this, it is necessary to further expand research in this direction, develop and implement a complete monitoring program for other water bodies that are used for bathing.

At present, there is no generally accepted classifier of water bodies in Georgia. Legal support for protection and management of the quality of waters used for bathing is carried out in accordance with the water legislation of Georgia, as well as by-laws. These normative acts for water bodies established categories of water use and adopted their hygienic classification according to the degree of pollution, sanitary protection zones and water protection strips were established. It should be noted that some progress has been made in this area. Every year, the number of controlled water bodies and samples taken for analysis increases. However, the monitoring process has not yet covered other surface water bodies that can be used for bathing. Therefore, to achieve the ultimate goal, it is necessary to continue work.

Based on the social significance of the issue, it is necessary to and determine the relevant target indicators according to the protocol after adoption of the new law on water management, considering sustainable development goals of the UN 2030 period.

XVI. Quality of waters used for aquaculture or for the production or harvesting of shellfish (art. 6, para.2 (j))

The legislation did not regulate issues related to aquaculture until 2020. Therefore, in 2019-2021, no target indicators were set in this area. In 2020, the Parliament of Georgia adopted the law "On Aquaculture".

The purpose of the law is to protect the biological and water resources of Georgia, as well as to protect their quality.

The law provides:

- Systematic monitoring of water quality for aquaculture;
- Treatment of consumed water before discharge into a surface water body;
- Providing information on water pollution and deterioration of environmental and water quality indicators.
- Establish the procedure for sampling and measurements necessary to determine environmental quality in the environmental monitoring area;
- Need for support of water quality supplies;
- Principles of regulation and implementation of aquaculture activities and management of aquaculture zones, etc.

XVII. Application of recognized good practice in the management of enclosed waters generally available for bathing (art. 6, para.2 (k))

According to the protocol, no target indicators were set in this area in 2019-2021.

Legal support of issues related to public closed recreational water bodies (swimming pools of closed and open type - the establishment of sanitary requirements for the design, construction and operation of closed waters, as well as the quality of water supplied and located in the pool, its disinfection, etc.), is regulated by the relevant sanitary rules and norms ("Hygienic

requirements for the design, operation and water quality of swimming pools” No. 306/n dated August 16, 2001); "Hygienic requirements for the arrangement and operation of preschool institutions" sanitary rules and norms (2.4. 000 - 00, N 297/o of August 16, 2001; “Sanitary Rules and Norms on the Arrangement, Equipment and Working Mode of Children's and Preschool Educational Institutions No. 308/n August 16, 2001) approved by the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection of Georgia. This issue is also regulated by the relevant building codes and regulations.

Compliance with the requirements stipulated by these sanitary rules and regulations ensures epidemic safety and prevention of the transmission of rowing, viral, bacterial and parasitic diseases. Protects the human body from the possible harmful effects of the chemical composition of water, intoxication caused by harmful substances that enter the body during breathing, through damaged skin, etc.

One of the requirements of the above sanitary norms and rules is to ensure the exchange and recycling of water in the pools in order to renew them. According to the nature of the water exchange, in accordance with these sanitary norms and rules, the following types of pools can operate in the country: pools of the recirculation type; flow type (including swimming pools with seawater) and periodic exchange. Recirculation of water must be carried out uninterruptedly so that every 8 hours at least 10% of the amount of water is renewed.

In sports and health-improving pools, the main disinfection methods are chlorination, bromination, ozonation, ultraviolet irradiation, etc. Requirements for water quality determined by the relevant sections of the above-mentioned sanitary rules and regulations.

The above applies to any pools, regardless of their form of ownership.

It should be noted that during the pandemic, in order to prevent the disease caused by the new coronavirus, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Protection of Georgia issued order No. 01-227 / o dated May 29, 2020 "On approval of the recommendation to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus (COVID-19) in the workplace".

Appendix No. 33 of this order "General recommendations regarding the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) infection (COVID-19) for outdoor / indoor pools, sauna and baths", describes the necessary activities and requirements that must be implemented and observed by all types of outdoor and indoor pools, water quality requirements (quality indicators and standards).

Based on the foregoing, it should be concluded that the legal support for the application of recognized good practice in the field of management of enclosed waters that are publicly available for bathing is carried out in the relevant regulations. These documents regulate the issues of management and operation of indoor and outdoor pools, as well as issues of the quality of water supplied and located in the pool, its disinfection, etc. However, it is necessary to improve the process of monitoring these waters.

Therefore, to achieve the final goal, it is necessary to continue the work. Based on the social significance of the issue, it is necessary to further determine the relevant targets, according to

the protocol, taking into account the UN sustainable development goals for the period up to 2030.

XVIII. Identification and remediation of particularly contaminated sites (art. 6, para.2 (I))

No targets were set in this area in 2019-2021. However, this issue is reflected in the third national environmental action plan of Georgia (2018). The plan is part of the country's sustainable development policy, which reflects Georgia's environmental priorities and long-term strategic goals, objectives and activities in 2017-2021.

Historical polluted places in Georgia pose a serious problem to the environment and public health. This issue has not been resolved yet. Sources of pollution are: expired and unusable industrial and agricultural chemicals; Illegal dumps; former arsenic processing plants, ruins and graves of their waste depots in the municipalities of Lentekhi (Tsana) and Ambrolauri (Uravi). Therefore, these issues were one of the main directions of the work of the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture in 2019-2021. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for the management of chemicals. In order to introduce modern systems for the removal and management of existing problems in 2015, there is a "Code of Accounting with Revenue". Code based on the required Directive and Regulatory EC.

It is noteworthy that the country has implemented the "Third National Environmental Action Plan" (2017-2021). Parts 5 and 6 of the plan included the need to improve waste and chemicals management issues and take appropriate action (Actions 5.5 and 6.5).

Waste Management Chapter 5 of the Plan - included 3 unions and 16 actions. In 2019, 14 actions were performed. The objectives were focused on establishing a waste management system, waste recycling and the development of safe infrastructure. Also, the "polluter pays" principle and the manufacturer's extended liability plan. The level of its operations with total expenses amounted to GEL 3,041,426 (\$ 1,013,809).

Plan 6: Chapter Chemical Management - included 3 tasks and 18 actions. Of these, 14 actions were planned for 2019. The objectives were focused on improving the management systems of chemicals and various hazardous chemicals at the national level, the introduction of an integrated management system for the inspection of hazardous industrial facilities, and more.

A study of the implementation status of the above-mentioned Action Plan in 2021 revealed that as a result of the measures taken to achieve the objectives of Chapters 5 and 6 during 2019-2020:

- A draft law on Waste Import, Export and Transit (new edition) has been drafted, which is in full compliance with the Basel Convention;
- All municipalities have developed and approved 5-year municipal waste management plans;
- Waste management plan of up to 500 companies has been agreed by the Ministry during 2019; Up to 4,000 companies have appointed an environmental manager;
- Within the framework of the establishment of the National Hazardous Waste Management System, a draft "Hazardous Waste Action Plan" was developed;

- "In the framework of strengthening the capacity for sustainable management of chemicals, a working version of the draft law" On Chemicals and Mixtures "was developed;
- Initial working version of the Law on Management of Chemicals;
- It is planned to create a unified mechanism for identifying objects contaminated with chemicals;
- Work was underway to create a unified state register of hazardous chemicals;
- Waste recycling and safe disposal
- Infrastructure development (improvement of existing official landfills and closure of unofficial landfills), etc.

With regard to the specific identification and clean-up of particularly contaminated areas, the assessment of areas contaminated with obsolete pesticides, and the implementation of remedial measures (Section 6.2.3.), the goal was to assess the areas contaminated with obsolete pesticides in 2019-2020, develop and implement measures for the reclamation of these areas.

- To this end, an assessment of the Ialguji landfill site was carried;
- A treatment project for this landfill has been developed. However, remediation of areas contaminated with toxic chemicals has not yet begun, as negotiations are underway with potential donors.

Subsequently, hazardous waste management infrastructure was developed to avoid hazardous waste pollution of the areas (Action 5.2.4. Transportation of hazardous waste). For this purpose, permits for hazardous waste treatment have been issued to 70 companies. More than 150 companies are registered for the collection and transportation of hazardous waste. It is further planned to arrange a hazardous waste landfill and other pre-treatment facilities.

Although no targets, special programs or action plans were developed under the Water and Health Protocol for 2019-2021 to implement and achieve the objectives, the Government of Georgia approved a number of strategic programmatic documents and actions for 2019-2023 and the following 10 years. Plans. Among them is the "National Strategy for Reducing Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear Threats 2021 - 2030" approved by the Resolution # 208 of the Government of Georgia of May 11, 2021.

These documents address, among other issues, the current state of waste and chemicals management, the challenges facing the country, prevention, detection, response, legal measures, institutional mechanisms and issues to improve issues, and financial security mechanisms.

A new draft national plan is currently being developed to support the implementation of the National Waste Management Strategy. The project aims to implement the requirements of the Georgian National Waste Management Strategy through consultation with government agencies, municipalities, the private sector and other stakeholders. And within the framework of the Georgian Hazardous Waste Management Project (2019-2024), hazardous waste will be collected, treated and separated in accordance with European standards.

XIX. Effectiveness of systems for the Management, Development, Protection and Use of Water Resources (art. 6, para.2 (m))

In recent years, a number of measures have been taken in Georgia in the direction of socio-economic, environmental policy, legislative and institutional reforms. However, this process is not over yet. Government agencies are working to harmonize sectoral legislation with EU legislation, as well as to introduce international standards and best practices. Their work also includes improvements in water resource management and the task of providing a safe environment for human health.

Water resources protection and use control is carried out by the Department of Environmental Supervision of the Ministry of Environment and Agriculture. The levels of sanctions for violation of environmental legislation are determined by the relevant legislation.

The development of tasks for water resources protection and use, is carried out within the framework of environmental impact assessment projects. The public is involved in the public discussion on environmental impact assessment projects for the construction and operation of industrial and other facilities. According to the existing legislation, the data submitted by water users to the Ministry in the form of statistical consumption registration forms sent to the Statistical Service of Georgia and published on the following website: <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/single-categories/109/sakartvelos-bunebrivi-resursebi-da-garemos-datsva>; https://www.geostat.ge/media/41826/GAREMO_2020_GEO_V3.pdf.

Surface and groundwater monitoring is carried out by the National Environment Agency of the Ministry. Monthly and annual results are published on the Agency's website (<https://nea.gov.ge/Ge/Bill>). The dynamics of monitoring carried out on the quality of surface and underground waters is presented in Table №6.

According to the monitoring results, most of the surface water objects of Georgia satisfy the water quality standards. However, as mentioned above (Chapter XV, quality of water used for bathing) in several rivers and lakes, the water is constantly polluted with ammonium nitrogen, heavy metals and manganese.

According to the current legislation, one of the directions of water resources protection is the environmental impact assessment by the bodies conducting environmental expertise. Environmental impact assessment projects should address water use and protection issues.

The current Law on Water (1997) sets out the legal norms for the protection of water bodies from pollution, while the Law on Subsoil applies to groundwater and sets requirements for its protection and exploitation. The issues of protection and use of water resources from pollution are also regulated by a number of technical regulations adopted by the Government of Georgia. Integrated management of water resources is yet in the form of the draft law.

Water sector legislation defines water use categories, while the hygienic classification of water bodies is determined by the degree of pollution. As for the definition of water protection and sanitary protection zones of surface water bodies (including water for bathing), these issues are within the competence of local self-government bodies.

In 2021, the Law on Environmental Liability was adopted, according to which, from July 1, 2022, a person who causes significant damage to the environment will be obliged to restore the polluted environment to a state close to its original or initial state. The Law on Environmental Liability deals with the damage to three components of the environment - water, soil and biodiversity.

It should be noted that the “Water Law” adopted in 1997 is outdated and does not meet requirements. It regulates only the management of surface water resources and does not address the complex issues of water management.

It should also be noted that the “Third National Environmental Action Plan” (2017-2021) has been implemented in the country. The third chapter of the plan included 3 tasks and 15 activities. The goals were focused on the implementation of an effective water management system, reduction of water pollution from point and diffuse sources and ensure the rational use of water resources, as well as improve the system for monitoring and assessing water quality and quantity.

It should be noted that the country has implemented the "Third National Action Plan for Environmental Protection" (2017-2021). In 2021, the status of implementation of the above action plan was studied. It was established that as a result of the measures taken to achieve the goals of the third chapter, during 2020 the following were developed:

- Final version of the draft law on water resources management;
- A working version of the draft Decree of the Government “On Approval of the Technical Regulations on the Procedure for Development, Review and Approval of Basin Management Plans” was prepared;
- A working version of the maritime strategy has been prepared;
- A working version of the draft Decree of the Government of Georgia “On Approval of the Technical Regulations for the Discharge of Urban and Industrial Wastewater into Surface Water Bodies” was prepared;
- An assessment of nitrate pollution of water bodies was carried out and corresponding maps;
- A program for surface water monitoring has been developed.

Objective 3.1 Implement an efficient water resource system.

- Activity 3.1.1. The development of the draft law "On Water Resources Management" has been completed. The bill provides for a large-scale reform in the field of protection, management and use of water resources. To carry out reforms, a package of relevant by-laws has also been prepared. The adoption of this package will facilitate such processes as the transition to a water basin management system, development of basin management plans, further development of the monitoring system, modification of cooperation and institutional arrangements between countries, etc.
- Activity 3.1.3. Define procedures for developing basin management plans. A working version of the draft “On the procedure for developing, checking and evaluating the procedure for regulating basin management plans” has been prepared, which will be submitted to the government after the adoption of the Law on Water Resources Management;
- Activity 3.1.4. Establish a water management system in the environmental protection and economic development system. Implementation of the adoption after the adoption of the Law on Water Resources Management;
- Activity 3.1.6.: Develop and approve basin management plans”. With the support of the EU project “EU Water Initiative +”, draft management plans for the Chorokhi-Adzharistskali, Alazani-Iori and Khrami-Debeda river basins have been developed, and the finalization of documents is being finalized. Within the framework of the same project, in 2019-2020, a geophysical description-survey of 30 operating wells and a comprehensive geophysical survey of 14 wells were carried out. In addition, in a number of cases, the need to renew and modernize several wells was identified;
- Activity 3.1.7: Creation of advisory and coordinating councils for basin management. A working version of the draft resolution of the Government of Georgia on the approval of the composition and rules of activity of the advisory and coordinating councils for basin management has been prepared and will be submitted to the Government after the adoption of the Law on Water;

- Activity 3.1.8. Development of a maritime strategy. A working version of the Strategy and Action Plan for the marine environment has been developed;

Target 3.2. Reduce water pollution from point and diffuse sources and ensure the sustainable use of water resources.

- Activity 3.2.1 To standardize the maximum allowable discharges of industrial and municipal wastewater, according to the EU criteria. A working version of the draft Decree of the Government of Georgia “On Approval of the Technical Regulations for the Discharge of Urban and Industrial Wastewater into Surface Water Bodies” has been prepared and will be submitted to the Government of Georgia after the adoption of the Law on Water Resources Management;
- Activity 3.2.3: Rehabilitation/construction of urban wastewater collection/treatment systems in selected settlements. During the reporting period, the United Water Supply Company of Georgia carried out the construction of treatment facilities in 6 settlements (Zugdidi, Poti, Marneuli, Mestia, Gudauri, Abastumani) and in 2 settlements (Anaklia, Ureki). In addition, during the reporting period, the design of wastewater treatment facilities in the village of Mukhrani, the resort of Bakhmaro and the city of Martvili was completed. The indicator of the activity is basically fulfilled, the construction of treatment facilities at 6 sites is underway. According to the plan (2017-2021), the total budget of the campaign was set at 149,000,000 GEL. Actual results for the reporting period (2020) amounted to GEL 19,438,760;
- Activity 3.2.5.: Identification of surface water bodies with the risk of nitrate pollution used in agricultural activities and identification of areas vulnerable to nitrates. The Ministry applied to the Embassy of the Czech Republic for technical assistance in identifying nitrate-polluted or endangered waters and identifying areas vulnerable to nitrates. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the process has been put on hold. However, in order to carry out the planned activities, the National Environment Agency conducted an assessment of the state of nitrate pollution of water bodies and developed an appropriate map;
- Activity 3.2.7: Introduce the practice of calculating the environmental costs of water. With the support of the USAID Governance for Development in Georgia (G4G) project, a methodology for determining environmental costs has been developed. Approbation of the methodology was carried out within the framework of the GEF-UNDP project "Mtkvari-2". In the Aragvi pilot basin;

Target 3.3: Improve systems for monitoring and assessing the quality and quantity of water resources .

- Activity 3.3.1: Implement new surface water quality standards. A draft resolution of the Government of Georgia on the approval of the Technical Regulations on Environmental Standards for Surface Water Quality has been prepared and will be submitted to the Government of Georgia after the adoption of the Law on Water Resources Management;
- Activity 3.3.2: Expansion of the network for monitoring the quality of surface (including the Black Sea) and ground waters. The surface water quality monitoring network has been expanded. In 2020 monitoring was carried out at 181 points. Actual budget: 46,382.5 GEL (15461 \$);
- Activity 3.3.3: Improving the groundwater quality and quantity monitoring system.
 - Hydrogeological reports were prepared - "Groundwater Survey - 2019",
 - "Georgian Groundwater Monitoring Program-2020",
 - Fieldwork reports for Groundwater Survey 2020 and EUWI +.

Activity 3.3.4: Develop a monitoring program for surface water quality. A program for monitoring the quality of surface waters for 2020 has been developed, according to which monitoring was carried out at 176 points.

In 2020, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Progress Reports and Indicators were prepared for the Global Report on the following indicators: SDG-6.5.1 - Quality of implementation of water resources management; SDG-6.3.2 - Achieve good quality of water bodies; SDG-6.6.1 - water-related ecosystem change over time; SDG-6.5.2 - Cooperation on transboundary water resources between bordering countries (Information Hydrological Report. Tbilisi. 2021).

Thus, it can be concluded with the conclusion that during the reporting period a number of measures were taken in Georgia in the direction of socio-economic, environmental policy, legislative and institutional reforms. However, this process is not over yet. Government agencies are working to harmonize sectoral legislation with EU legislation, as well as to introduce international standards and best practices. Their work also includes the tasks of improving water resources management and ensuring a safe environment for human health. In 2021, the Law on Defensive Liability was adopted, which deals with the three main environments of the environment -the external environment of water and the damage to biodiversity.

The draft law on water resources management has been developed, after the adoption of which a large-scale reform in the field of protection, management and use of water resources is envisaged. A package of relevant bylaws was also prepared to carry out the reforms. The adoption of this package will facilitate processes such as the transition to a river basin water management system, the development of basin management plans, the further development of a monitoring system, the strengthening of cooperation and institutional mechanisms between countries, and so on.

Involvement of the community in the process of water resources management is important. For this purpose, with the assistance of the European Union and the technical and financial support of the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Georgian Water Information System has been developed. This is a significant step forward in facilitating data-driven policy development, integrated water resources management, and public access to water-related information. Georgia Water Information System includes information on national water policy, legislation and other important issues, qualitative and quantitative data on water resources, and dynamic maps.

In addition, Georgia is actively involved in the existing processes of water resources management within the framework of sustainable development. In particular, one of the objectives of Objective 6.5 is related to the integrated management of water resources at all levels. The task has two indicators: one (6.5.1), which measures the degree of implementation of integrated water resources management, and the other (6.5.2), which assesses the cooperation on transboundary waters between bordering countries. The country participated in the baseline reports for 2017 and in 2020. It should be noted that in the reporting process for indicator 6.5.1, the involvement of various stakeholders was ensured, including from international organizations. The stakeholder consultation process was supported by the Global Water Partnership (GWP).

XX. Additional national or local specific targets

Additional concrete target indicators on national and local levels were not set.

Part three

Common indicators¹

I. Quality of the drinking water supplied

1. Context of the data

According to GeoStat (2021), the population of Georgia was 3,716,900 people. Up to 70% (2,601,830) of the population is connected to centralized water supply systems (Environmental Indicators C-5.2021. <http://wis.mepa.gov.ge/News/Topic?Id=2120>; <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/565/garemosdatsviti-indikatorebi>), including 95% of the urban and 35% of the rural population. 31% of the population is provided by other local water supply systems (water pipes in yards, wells in yards, natural water source in the yard or in the district).

The number of people connected to water supply, without connection to the sewerage network, in 2020 amounted to 0.70 million, or 27.3% (GeoStat 2021. Environmental Indicators C-14. <https://www.geostat.ge/ka/modules/categories/565/garemosdatsviti-indikatorebi>). There are 1,500 collective and 800 small water supply systems in the country. Groundwater (72%) and surface water (32%) are used for water supply. There are 1500 collective and 800 small water supply systems in the country. Groundwater (72%) and surface water (32%) are used for water supply.

In accordance with the Law on Public Health (2007) and the "Technical Regulation on the Quality of Drinking Water" (2013), the state supervision body conducts inspection, develops a drinking water quality monitoring scheme, and determines the number of samples to be.

The National Food Safety Agency of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia is the controlling body for the quality of drinking water. Internally, laboratory control is carried out by operating companies. The legislation also allows external laboratory testing of drinking water quality by independent, accredited laboratories.

Considering that in the western part of Georgia, mainly in rural areas, the main sources of water supply are non-centralized systems (individual wells, boreholes, etc.) of water supply, The Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Protection, by order No. 297 / N of August 16, 2001, approved the "Sanitary Rules and Norms - Hygienic Requirements for Water Quality of Non-Centralized Water Supply Systems".

Thus, Georgia has created a legal framework and a system for internal and external state control of drinking water quality.

Sampling for conducting water quality studies is carried out at the head facilities, at the places where water exits the water treatment facilities and at the points of intake by the consumer.

According to the available data, the construction and rehabilitation of drinking water systems supplied to the population in recent years have resulted in the reduction of bacteriological

¹ In order to allow an analysis of trends for all Parties under the Protocol, please use wherever possible 2005 — the year of entry into force of the Protocol — as the baseline year.

contamination and improvement of the quality of drinking water. So for example if in 2005 the rate of bacteriological contamination of drinking water (E.coli) in the country was 25.0%, in subsequent years this rate increased slightly, However, in 2020-2021 there was a sharp decrease in the bacteriological contamination rate of drinking water, which amounted to 28.3% (Table №7). As for the study of additional parameters in drinking water, such studies for 2019-2021. Has not been implemented as the Drinking Water Technical Regulation (2014) does not provide for such a study.

Table № 7

Dynamics of bacteriological contamination of drinking water

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Area/category</i>	<i>Baseline value (2005)</i>	<i>Value reported in the previous reporting cycle (2019)</i>	<i>Current value (2021)</i>
<i>E. coli</i>	Total	25.0	34.0	28.3%
Additional parameter 1:	-	-	-	-
Additional parameter 2:	-	-	-	-
Additional parameter 3:				

Based on the above, it can be said that as a result of the measures implemented according to the strategies, action plans and programs of the country during the reporting period, the condition of quality drinking water supply to the population has significantly improved. The state program for monitoring drinking water and financing measures has been increased. Improved drinking water quality control system and organization of laboratory analysis. The range of microbiological research on drinking water has expanded. However, the technical condition of the drinking water infrastructure remains on the agenda, which poses a problem for the quality of drinking water. In order to improve the situation, a number of construction and rehabilitation projects of water supply systems are underway in the country, which should significantly improve the access of the population to drinking water, as well as its quality.

Given that the quality of drinking water supplied to the population is a matter of social importance, it has always been a priority for the government. It is necessary to keep the target indicators related to the quality of drinking water in the future and to implement technical measures to achieve them.

II. Outbreaks and incidence of infectious diseases related to water

In last decade, the surveillance information system in Georgia of reporting and notification of incidents and outbreaks of infectious diseases has been improved. In particular, reporting to the upper level public health authorities has been performed by any available means of communication, urgently (notification card, telephone, fax, e-mail), within 24 hours from identification of the case. As a result, recording and registration of infectious diseases significantly increased, including those caused by water.

On the basis of normative documents regulating epidemic surveillance in Georgia, investigation of single-time cases of water-borne diseases, with the exception of typhoid, paratyphoid, salmonellosis and shigellosis is not carried out. Reporting is carried out in routine manner once a

month, in aggregated form. Complete study of pest holes and the relevant analysis is carried out only in the case of outbreaks. Consequently, in single cases of presumably water-related diseases, identified and registered by epidemic surveillance system, the factor of transfer of infection is not exactly specified. Therefore the role of unreliable drinking-water in spreading of these diseases cannot be excluded. In most cases, laboratory investigations of outbreaks are mainly conducted by the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health.

As a result of implementation of rotavirus vaccination in the country, according to sentinel surveillance data, decrease of rotavirus diarrhoea in children under 5 was recorded.

Incidence of infectious diseases related to water in Georgia

	2005 Year		2018 Year		2021 Year	
	Abs. The number	incidents for 100000 populations	Abs. The number	incidents for 100000 populations	Abs. The number	incidents for 100000 populations
Shigelosis	310	7,3	589	15,8	72	1,9
legionelosis	ND		ND		ND	
Cryptosporiosis	ND		ND		ND	
Typhoid fever (A01.0)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Legionellosis	N.D		N.D		N.D	
A Vir Hep (B15)	889	20,5	0		1	0.03
Vir Hep E (B17.2)	N.D		0		0	
(a) Enterohemorrhagic Escherichioses (A04.3)	787 (A04.4)	18,2	63	1,7	18	0,5
Probabale infection daiarea (A09)	7431	171,6	18497	497,6	8586	229,5

Outbreaks of infectious diseases related to water in Georgia

	2005 Year		2018 Year		2021 Year	
	Abs. The number	incidents for 100000 populations	number	incidents for 100000 populations	Abs. The number	incidents for 100000 populations
Shigelosis	310	7,3	1158	31,0	0	

III. Access to drinking water

Indicators of the population's access to drinking water are presented in Chapter 3 of the second part of the report (Access to drinking water (art. 6, para. 2 c)). The data is also presented below in respective format.

<i>Percentage of population with access to drinking water</i>	<i>Baseline value (2005)</i>	<i>Value reported in the previous reporting cycle (2018)</i>	<i>Current value (2020)</i>
Total	89	98	98.5
Urban	90	100	100
Rural	81	95	97

- Estimates provided by the WHO/United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation. *JMP definitions are available at <http://www.wssinfo.org/definitions-methods/watsan-categories>.*
- National estimates. *Please specify how "access" is defined and what types of drinking-water supplies are considered in the estimates in your country.*
In particular, please specify if the above percentage on "access to drinking water" refers to access to (tick all applicable):
 - Improved drinking water sources (as per JMP definition)
 - Supplies located on premises
 - Supplies available when needed
 - Supplies that provide drinking water free from fecal contamination

IV. Access to sanitation

Indicators of the population's access to sanitation are presented in chapter 4 of the second part of the report (Access to sanitation (Article 6, paragraph 2(d)). The data are also presented below in respective format.

However, due to the fact that the results of studies of different organizations on this issue are different, more detailed studies are needed in the future.

<i>Percentage of population with access to sanitation</i>	<i>Baseline value (2005)</i>	<i>Value reported in the previous reporting cycle (2019)</i>	<i>Current value (2020)</i>
Total	89	97	98
Urban	96	97	95
Rural	81	96	73

- Estimates provided by JMP. *JMP definitions are available at <http://www.wssinfo.org/definitions-methods/watsan-categories>.*
- National estimates. *Please specify how "access" is defined and what types of sanitation facilities are considered in the estimates in your country.*

In particular, please specify if the above percentage on "access to sanitation" refers to access to (tick all applicable):

- Improved sanitation facilities (as per JMP definition)
- Facilities not shared with other households
- Facilities from which excreta is safely disposed in situ or treated off site

V. Effectiveness of Management, Protection and Use of Freshwater Resources

1. Water Quality

Information on the efficiency, regulation, protection and use of water resources, including fresh water, are presented in the second part of the report (Chapter XIX).

In Georgia, there is no generally accepted classifier of water bodies, including groundwater. Therefore, information in accordance with the format and tables established for this section is not presented.

The classification of water bodies will be introduced after the adoption of the draft law "On Water Resources Management".

However, it should be noted that for the regulation, protection and use of fresh water resources, including groundwater, an appropriate legislative framework has been created in the country (water law and by-laws).

For water bodies, including groundwater, categories of water use have been established and a hygienic classification of water bodies has been adopted according to the degree of their pollution.

In accordance with the "Sanitary Rules and Norms for the Protection of Surface Water from Pollution"² categories of water use are defined (reservoirs of the first category and reservoirs of the second category).

A hygienic classification of water bodies according to the degree of pollution was also adopted and 4 levels of their pollution were established (permissible level of pollution, moderate level of pollution, high level of pollution and especially high level of pollution). A sanitary-hygienic classification of groundwater has been adopted. This classification is based on the degree of their pollution by technogenic factors and provides for 4 classes.

This issue is also regulated by such technical regulations as:

- "Regulations on water protection strips" and "Regulations on water protection strips for small rivers" (No.440 and No. 445/31/12/2013);
- "Protection of surface water bodies from pollution" (No.425/31/12/ 2013);
- "Rules for calculating the norms of pollutants discharged with wastewater into surface water bodies" (No.414/31/12/ 2013);

- On Approval of Environmental Technical Regulations” (No. 17 dated 03/01/2014);
- On the procedure for determining and approving the sanitary protection zones of groundwater objects, which are subject to the licensing rules for the extraction of minerals " (No.161/26/03/2019) etc.

In the future, in order to improve the efficiency of regulation, protection and use of water resources, including fresh water resources, it is planned to adopt a new bill "On the management of water resources" and 6 by-laws, including the "Technical Regulations for Discharge of Urban and Industrial Wastewater in Surface Water Bodies", "Technical Regulations on the Environmental Status of Surface Water Quality", etc.

2. Water use

The water use index reflects the level of pressure on renewable water resources. Given that renewable water resources as a whole are subject to climatic conditions, in particular the impact on water resources, this data is subject to variability.

The water exploitation index by sectors is presented in the table

<i>Water exploitation index</i>	<i>Baseline value (2005)</i>	<i>Value reported in the previous reporting cycle (2017)</i>	<i>Current value (2020)</i>
Agriculture	0.6	2.0	3.5
Industry ^a	0.2	0.8	0.5
Domestic use ^b	0.7	1.0	1.2

a) This figure does not include the use of water for energy systems and cooling.

b) This figure refers only to public water supply

Therefore, it can be said that the pressure on water resources in Georgia is low. However, water abstraction has had an impact, especially on the amount of water in rivers and their run-off, as 70% of water demand is met by rivers. Groundwater is mainly used for drinking purposes (C1 - Renewable Freshwater Resources in Georgia. [http://wis.mepa.gov.ge/News/Topic? I'd=2109](http://wis.mepa.gov.ge/News/Topic?I'd=2109)).

Part four

Water-related disease surveillance and response systems

1. In accordance with the provisions of article 8 of the Protocol:

Has your country established comprehensive water-related disease surveillance and early warning systems according to paragraph 1 (a)?

YES NO IN PROGRESS

Has your country prepared comprehensive national or local contingency plans for responses to outbreaks and incidents of water-related disease according to paragraph 1 (b)?

YES NO IN PROGRESS

Do relevant public authorities have the necessary capacity to respond to such outbreaks, incidents or risks in accordance with the relevant contingency plan according to paragraph 1 (c)?

YES NO IN PROGRESS

On the basis of normative documents regulating epidemic surveillance in Georgia, investigation of single-time cases of water-borne diseases, with the exception of typhoid, paratyphoid, salmonellosis and shigellosis is not carried out. Reporting is carried out in routine manner once a month, in aggregated form. Complete study of pest holes and the relevant analysis is carried out only in the case of outbreaks.

Part five

Progress achieved in implementing other articles of the Protocol

A summary of the status of Articles 9-14 of the Protocol is not provided.

Part six

Thematic part linked to priority areas of work under the Protocol

1. Water, sanitation and hygiene in institutional settings

WASH activity-Georgia is co-leader with Hungary and Moldova-Georgia is involved in strengthening Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in Schools in European Region. In future Georgia is willing to continue co-leading in WASH activity in institutional settings. NCDC is strongly involved in drafting process of WHO recommendations and strategies.

Situation with provision of public schools' students with drinking water and proper sanitary conditions is also unsatisfactory, which is evidenced by the findings of research on drinking water supply and sanitary-hygienic conditions of the country's 600 public schools, conducted by the National Agency for Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development with financial and technical support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2013. It was found that situation at schools is currently inadequate in regard to the International Standard of Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH).

For further information see "Survey of water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in public schools"<https://www.unicef.org/georgia/reports/survey-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-conditions-public-schools>.

The WASH technical regulations for schools was developed and submitted to the Government of Georgia for the approval. Status: adoption is pending.

The monitoring framework of WASH in Schools was developed and tested for integration into the Education Management Information System (EMIS). Status: the integration of the WASH monitoring framework into EMIS is pending.

The national guidelines on WASH for preschools were developed and approved by the Minister of Labour, Health and Social Affairs through the Ministerial Decree N01-172/o on July 28, 2016.

The WASH technical regulations for preschools were developed and approved by the government of Georgia through the government resolution N 485 of October 27, 2017.

COVID-19 underlined the importance of WASH services as part of infection prevention and control in schools. Thus, this is a major focus of the Government of Georgia's strategy for the safe reopening and operation of schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic. With UNICEF's support, WASH-related technical regulations were developed for schools and a monitoring framework of WASH in Schools was developed and tested. The work for integrating these regulations into the education management information system (EMIS) continues.

UNICEF continues to work closely with the Government, WHO, and other United Nations and humanitarian partners to provide technical guidance and support. In line with WHO's COVID19 Strategic Response Plan, UNICEF is focusing on risk communication; provision of critical hygiene supplies and PPE for frontline workers; and mitigating the secondary effects of the outbreak by facilitating continued access to healthcare, education and child protection services, as well as social protection programmes for children, pregnant, and lactating women.

Health, Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNICEF's virtual antenatal care programme reached 20,260 pregnant women, out of which around 34% participated in virtual medical consultations. To date, the programme covered red zones, such as Bolnisi, Gardabani, Marneuli, and Vani, as well as the entire pregnant population of Tbilisi, Adjara, Guria, Imereti, Samegrelo-ZemoSvaneti, and Kakheti regions.
- UNICEF, in coordination with the MoESCS, WHO, and NCDC, prepared information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on COVID-19, IPC and hand washing, proper use of face masks, and physical distancing recommendations in Georgian and ethnic minority languages for students, teachers, and non-teaching staff.

Two documents were adopted and published by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health, and Social Affairs of Georgia:

- "Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools - National Recommendation for Public Health (Guideline)" approved with the Order of the Minister of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of February 6, 2020, №01-40 / o
- "General Recommendations for General Education Institutions Related to New Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) Infection (COVID-19)" approved by the Department of Labor Inspection of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia (Appendix # 37) on August 14, 2020.

Furthermore, the WHO Guideline on the Role of Primary Care in the COVID-19 Response and the State Standard for Clinical Management of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia used in clinics to study the situation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Adherence to water and sanitary-hygienic norms in dispensaries is also essential for the control of nosocomial infections.

Sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services in health care facilities (HCF) are critical for providing safe, quality health care in Georgia. Without WASH services in HCF we will not reach the goal of universal access to WASH, or achieve a number of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including universal health coverage, ending preventable newborn deaths and reducing maternal mortality. Safely managed WASH services in HCFs are

essential to patients' health and in ensuring quality of care, the prevention and control of infections, tackling anti-microbial resistance (AMR) and improving the environmental sustainability of health systems.

According to the legislation of the country, **all medical facilities should** have a source of drinking water supply:

- This condition in the inpatient facility is the permit condition and is controlled by the State Regulation Agency for Medical Activities, which means that if the facility does not meet this condition, the permission of the inpatient medical facility will not be accepted;
- **All medical institutions in Georgia are private.** Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs and LEPL State Regulation Agency for Medical Activities are **responsible for licensing/permission/notification and control of these facilities. WASH conditions are among the licensing/permission/notification requirements;**

Control (selective control) of WASH's conditions is provided by the Agency. If medical facility does not satisfy WASH's conditions, it is a reason of penalties;

- For the high risk outpatient service (surgery, dermatology, venereology, dentistry, obstetrics and gynecology, emergency, radiology, dialysis, infectious diseases, phthysiology, endoscopy, immunization) provider facilities provide WASH conditions in compliance with the technical regulations and are controlled by the State Regulation Agency for Medical Activities, which means that all such outpatient facilities must have a drinking water supply;

Monitoring of WASHs conditions in Georgia is conducted in the mode of assessment of the functioning of the infection control system in inpatient medical institutions. Monitoring is coordinated by the Department of Health of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs in conjunction with NCDC. Monitoring is carried out by the method of supporting surveillance.

2019 MICS study evaluated household water supply and quality but, to date, no study about health care facilities has been conducted at the national level to evaluate Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Waste management services, problems, and legislative basis in Georgia.

WASH Management for SARS-Cov-2 the virus that causes COVID-19 – approved in 22.03.2021 by order from minister of Health Infection prevention and control guideline for the long-term care facilities in the context of COVID-19.

Infection prevention and control for the safe management of a dead body in the context of COVID-19: interim guideline Infection prevention and control during health care when coronavirus disease is suspected or confirmed.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, under the 01-123 o 25.03.2020 decree of the minister of health issued up to 40 different guidelines (mostly adapted from WHO) and recommendations for different health care service providers. Including: Dialysis, immunisation, dental, dermato-cosmetological facilities, for psicologic health providers, hospises etc.

Section 1.02 Georgia has committed to implement global and regional priorities to ensure and sustain the provision of adequate WASH services in health care facilities. The National Environment and Health Action Plan (NEHAP) for 2018-2022 defined the strategic goal and interventions on WASH in health care facilities, including undertaking the systematic situation assessments and improvement actions. The situational analysis will be undertaken in the

framework of biennial collaborative agreement between the Ministry of Health of Georgia and the WHO Regional Office for Europe for 2020-2021. The National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC) in Georgia, is responsible for conducting a situational analysis of the WASH provisions in health care facilities in the country, addressing existing policies and the broader enabling environment as well as the actual conditions with respect to WASH services in health care facilities. The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH) was provided technical and financial support in undertaking the survey. Such analysis will assess strengths and gaps at the national level and it will inform the development of targeted recommendations for improvement implementation.

Section 1.03 Surveyed HCFs

Data were collected from 240 HCFs: 78 hospitals (basic stationary, multi-profile stationary, obstetric-gynaecology clinics), 78 outpatient facilities (outpatient clinics, specialized doctors), and 84 primary facilities (family doctors, village doctors). Out of 240 visited HCFs, 176 HCFs (73%) were located in urban areas, whereas 64 (27%) were located in rural areas. In rural areas, the majority of the visited facilities were primary HCFs (54, 84%), as well as 6 outpatient facilities and 4 hospitals. In urban areas, hospitals and outpatient facilities were equally distributed (about 42% each) and 30 (17%) primary HCFs.

Section 1.04 The final report of the survey WASH in HCFs in Georgia is under the preparation and will be available soon.

2. Has the situation of WASH in schools been assessed in your country?
 YES NO IN PROGRESS

Access to water and sanitation in Georgian public schools Special report. Office of the Public Defender of Georgia 2018.

Water, sanitation and hygiene at school. National Public Health Recommendation (Guideline 2020)

3. Has the situation of WASH in health-care facilities been assessed in your country?
 YES NO IN PROGRESS

4. Do approved policies or programmes include actions (please tick all that apply):
 To improve WASH in schools
 To improve WASH in health-care facilities

5. On these issues, relevant national policies and program documents are presented in the first part (general aspects) in paragraph 4. Also, in the program for the implementation of sustainable development goals in Georgia (Matrix) until 2030.

2. Safe management of drinking-water supply

6. Is there a national policy or regulation in your country, which requires implementation of risk-based management, such as WHO water safety plans (WSPs), in drinking water supply?
 YES NO IN PROGRESS

However, the technical regulation of drinking water (2013) provides mechanisms for monitoring the quality of drinking water, as well as the development and implementation of appropriate measures to ensure the safety of drinking water. In addition, the problem of safe drinking water is reflected in various

government plans for socio-economic development, in the “National Action Plan for Environment and Health”. And also in the plan of achieving the goal of sustainable development of Georgia

Please indicate the source of data. If data is not available, please put (-).

Percentage of population	Current value (specify year)
Total	-

3. Equitable access to water and sanitation

9. Has the equity of access to safedrinking-water and sanitation been assessed?

YES NO IN PROGRESS

10. Do national policies or programs include actions to improve equitable access to water and sanitation (please tick all that apply):

- To reduce geographical disparities
- To ensure access for vulnerable and marginalized groups
- To keep water and sanitation affordable for all

On these issues, relevant national policies and program documents are presented in the first part (general aspects) in paragraph 4. Also, in the program for the implementation of sustainable development goals in Georgia (Matrix) until 2030.). These documents provide for the implementation of actions to ensure more equal access to water and sanitation.

Part seven

Information on the person submitting the report

The following report is submitted on behalf of Georgia

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18.04.2022

Nana Gabriadze

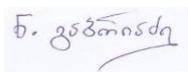
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