

Agenda item 10

# Prevention and reduction of water-related diseases

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6th Session of the

**Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health**

16-18 November | Geneva | Switzerland

# Why is this work important for the pan-European region?

- Surveillance is **essential public health function**
- Water-related disease (WRD) **incidents and outbreaks continue to occur** across the Region
- Many countries still have **insufficient capacity:**
  - Surveillance and outbreak management of water-related disease
  - Early-warning, event-detection and effective response
- **Public health, economic and social consequences**

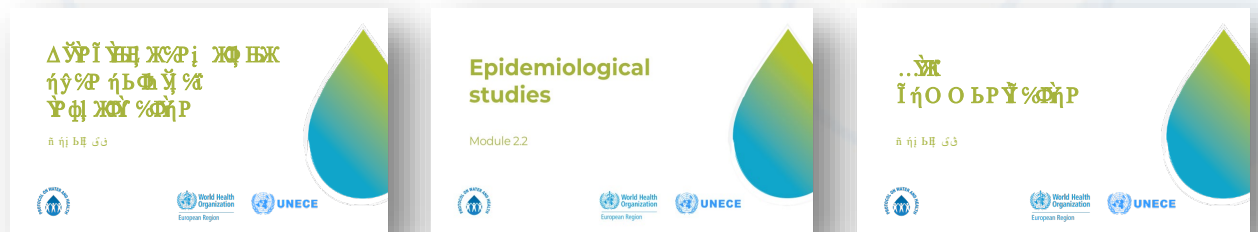


- **IHR Core Capacity Requirements** for surveillance, response, preparedness and risk communication
- **Article 8:**
  - Establish and maintain surveillance and early warning systems
  - Develop national and local contingency plans for responding to outbreaks, incidents and risks
  - Strengthen response capacity
- **Article 6.2:**
  - Establish and publish targets to reduce WRD outbreaks and incidents
- **Article 13:**
  - Strengthen transboundary cooperation on early-warning and response systems

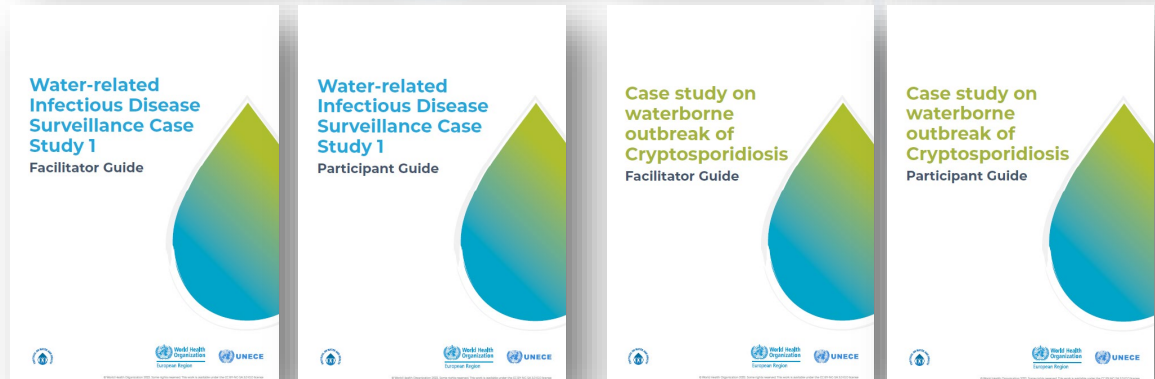
# Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes

## Capacity building: Training package on water-related disease

Available at: <https://www.who.int/europe/activities/strengthening-drinking-water--wastewater-and-water-related-disease-surveillance>



- Module 1: WRD surveillance
- Module 2: Outbreak management
- Case studies for interactive exercises
- Guides for participants and moderators



# Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes

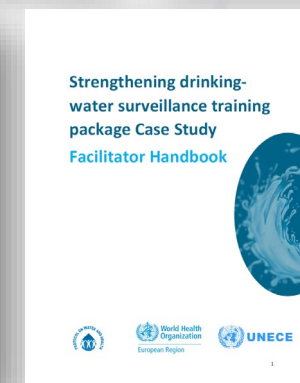
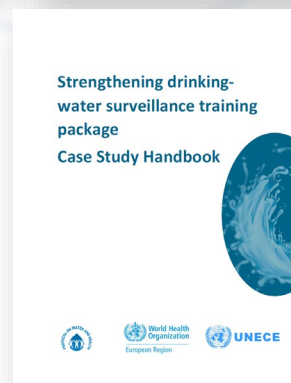
## Increased focus on *Legionella* prevention and control

- Comprehensive evidence review undertaken
- Regional expert meeting on prevention and control of legionellosis (online, 30 November–2 December 2021):
  - 70 experts from 28 countries
  - Appraised the relevance of legionellosis in the region
  - Fostered exchange of good practices
  - Defined priorities under the Protocol on this area



# Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes

## Capacity building: Training package on risk-based surveillance of drinking-water



- Six modules
- Case studies and expert interviews
- Knowledge tests
- Supported by the WHO Collaborating Center at the University of Surrey

# Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes

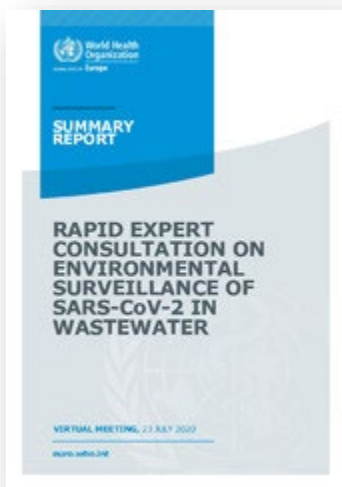
## **Policy impact:** Establishing drinking-water quality standard in Azerbaijan

- Undertaking a baseline analysis
- Defining scope and thematic coverage of the national standard
- Defining set of core, operational and possible supplementary drinking-water quality parameters
- Establishing requirements for risk-based surveillance: monitoring priorities and frequencies
- Integrating key principles of the WHO-recommended water safety plan approach
- Setting requirements for remedial actions/procedures in case of exceedances
- In-country mission by WHO/Europe (25-27 May 2022)

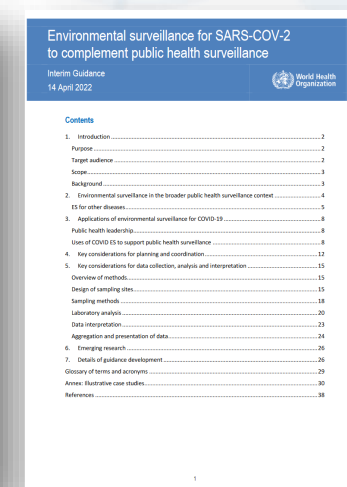
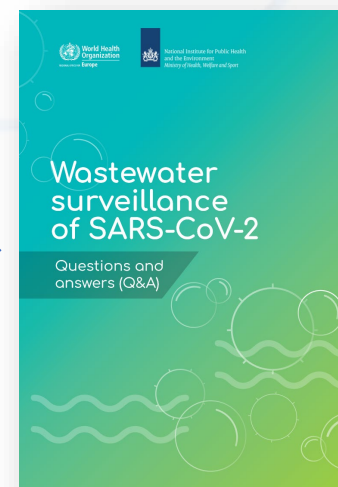
# Major milestones since 2020 and outcomes

## Addressing emerging priority: Environmental surveillance for SARS-CoV-2

- **Webinar** on surveillance of COVID-19 virus in wastewater (15 October 2020):
  - Concept and use cases of such surveillance
  - Country experiences, challenges and feasibility
- **First rapid expert consultation** (online, 23 July 2020)
- **Second expert consultation** (online, 30 November 2020)



Raised need and defined scope for guidance and tools



# Challenges and lessons learnt for future work

## Building back/building better from the pandemic:

- Maintain **effective surveillance** of water supply systems in normal times and during emergencies
- Recent developments in **EU Drinking Water Directive (2020)** provides a regulatory push for scaling-up the uptake of a risk-based approach to water quality monitoring
- Strengthen surveillance and control of **legionella in building water systems**, including in emergencies
- Environmental **surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater** is a part of public health surveillance

## Impact on in-country work:

- Capacity building workshops on WRD and drinking-water surveillance require in-person trainings due to detailed technical nature and were affected by pandemic



# Suggested future work in this area for 2023-2025

## Objectives

Support Parties and other States in implementing **Article 8 of the Protocol** in:

- Improving, maintaining and sustaining surveillance and early warning systems of water-related disease, preparedness and contingency planning, and response to outbreaks and water quality incidents
- Building national capacities for risk-based surveillance of drinking-water supply and quality
- Improving environmental surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 and other disease agents of concern in wastewater as an integral part of public health surveillance

# Suggested future work in this area for 2023-2025

## Strengthen water-related disease surveillance and outbreak management systems

- **Capacity building:** organize up to three subregional and/or in-country trainings on water-related disease surveillance and outbreak management by using the existing training resources
- **Scientific evidence:** prepare pan-European synthesis report on the state of Legionella
- **Improving regulation and enforcement:** organize up to three national and/or subregional capacity-building events on Legionella prevention and control

# Suggested future work in this area for 2023-2025

## Strengthen risk-based surveillance of drinking-water supply

- **Capacity building and networking:** organize up to three subregional and/or national workshops by using existing training resources (jointly with programme areas 4 and 5)
- **Uptake of risk-based approach in regulations and surveillance:** support countries in setting national standards and regulations for drinking-water quality and application in practice (upon request)

# Suggested future work in this area for 2023-2025

## Build capacities for environmental surveillance of wastewater

- **Best practice exchange:** organize an expert meeting on environmental surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater
- **Guidance:** develop a background document on wastewater surveillance (in cooperation with programme area 5)
- **Country support:** develop procedures or regulations for setting up environmental surveillance programmes for SARS-CoV-2 and other disease agents (upon request)

# Thank you for your attention!

