

PROJECT DOCUMENT
15TH TRANCHE OF THE DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Code and Title:	Equitable access to water and sanitation services for all and in all settings and strengthened climate-resilience in the water and sanitation sector
Budget:	500.000 USD
Target countries:	Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan
Lead Entity:	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
Other UN DA Implementing Entities	
Other Collaborating Entities:	World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe) Resident Coordinator and United Nations Country teams in beneficiary countries.

Brief description:

The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of the crucial role of safe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services as a first line of defense in preventing and controlling the spread of infectious diseases. However, safe access to water and sanitation should not be taken for granted in the pan-European region: despite significant progress, over 16 million people lack access to essential drinking water, and more than 31 million are in need of basic sanitation. Moreover, significant inequities persist between rural and urban areas, and vulnerable and marginalized communities, such as homeless people, nomadic populations, and people living in informal settlements, face systemic barriers to accessing WASH services.

At the same time, efforts to ensure access to water and sanitation need to go hand in hand with enhancing the climate resilience of WASH services. Indeed, if WASH services are not designed, built, and operated in a way that enables them to withstand the increasing impacts of climate change, risks would increase for human health and well-being, as well as for the environment, including water-related ecosystems. Despite widely available evidence of the occurring and predicted impacts of climate change on WASH services and on water resources, climate action in the areas of water and sanitation has remained slow. There is also a lack of explicit water-related components in various climate change documents, including national adaptation plans and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, highlighting the need to promote integrated policies on climate change and WASH.

In line with this, the objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of policymakers and water and wastewater operators in target countries in the UNECE region to develop and implement policies and measures aimed at ensuring equitable access to climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services for inclusive COVID-19 recovery and enhanced resilience in the water and sanitation sector. The project seeks to address diverse challenges in an integrated manner and combines an equity lens with a focus on climate change resilience in the WASH sector. Additionally, the project is designed with a human rights approach and will contribute to the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. The project further integrates a gender perspective, which is indispensable to make sure that WASH services are adequate and acceptable for all users and that they do not contribute to the preparation of discriminatory practices.

Potential beneficiary countries for the project range from Eastern Europe to Central Asia. All potential beneficiary countries are either Parties or Signatories to the UNECE-WHO/Europea Protocol on Water and Health or are in the process of preparing accession, demonstrating political commitment to implement the provisions of the Protocol. The target countries have been chosen on the basis of requests of support expressed to the governing bodies of the Protocol in 2017-2019 or with the framework of activities carried out under the Protocol, as well as considering the content of the latest Protocol reporting cycle.

The key stakeholders will be policymakers responsible for developing national policies on water and sanitation. Furthermore, this project seeks to help the Member States with economies in transition to identify best practices, measures, and procedures relevant to sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. DEMAND, CONTEXT AND ANALYSIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted that people without access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services are amongst the most vulnerable in the context of infectious disease outbreaks. Adequate WASH practices are a simple but effective intervention to prevent and contain the spread of disease, and yet these may be difficult to practice for users that are facing affordability concerns in relation to WASH or people who simply lack access to the infrastructure and/or equipment. By way of illustration, it might be impossible for homeless people to regularly wash their hands with a steady supply of safe water and soap.

In the pan-European region, which has been one of the epicenters of the pandemic, despite significant progress in increasing access to safe drinking water and sanitation, over 16 million people lack access to essential drinking water, and more than 31 million are in need of basic sanitation. In addition, significant inequities persist between rural and urban areas, and vulnerable and marginalized groups, such as homeless people, refugees, migrants, nomadic populations, or people living in informal settlements, face systemic barriers to accessing WASH services. Furthermore, the development of targeted policies and measures for improving equity is hampered by the fact that there is often no information on certain categories of users, which, in the words of the UN framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, are "too often made invisible"¹.

In this light, efforts to ensure access to WASH services need to be intensified, with a special focus on existing inequities. In particular, there is a need to improve the evidence base on equitable access to water and sanitation by collecting reliable, credible, and disaggregated WASH data, as this would enable policymakers to take measures and/or establish policy frameworks that leave no one behind, based on detailed assessments of the equitable access situation for all members of the population, including those who suffer disadvantage and social exclusion. In addition, detailed assessments on the WASH situation also need to be carried out in institutional settings, particularly schools, where WASH practices can be promoted not only for COVID-19 prevention and control but also to enhance general resilience against the spread of infectious disease.

At the same time, efforts to ensure access to water and sanitation need to go hand in hand with enhancing the resilience of WASH services. Indeed, if WASH services are not designed, built and operated in a way that enables them to withstand the increasing impacts of climate change, risks would increase for human health and well-being as well as for the environment, including water-related ecosystems. By way of illustration, higher precipitation levels and the increased incidence of extreme weather events may damage infrastructures and/or bring about discharges of untreated stormwater overflows from wastewater collection systems, causing pollution and contamination. Climate change effects may also exacerbate existing inequities in the WASH sector, for instance, by disrupting the provision of water and sanitation services in areas where these are most vulnerable, such as rural and remote areas (e.g. by causing the flooding of toilets typically installed in the ground in rural areas and causing contamination of territories and near sources of drinking water).

Despite widely available evidence of the occurring and predicted impacts of climate change on WASH services and on water resources, climate action in the areas of water and sanitation has remained slow. This is also evidenced by the lack of explicit water-related components in many climate change documents, including national adaptation plans and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. There thus is a need to promote integrated policies on climate resilience and WASH, including

¹ UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (April 2020), p. 5

by devising concrete climate objectives and strategies for their implementation. Data gathered under the fourth reporting exercise of the UNECE-WHO Regional Office for Europe Protocol on Water and Health has shown that many countries in the pan-European region consider this a priority, but they have different levels of knowledge and/or capacity to deal with climate-related issues within the WASH sector.

Against this backdrop, the project seeks to address the above-mentioned problems in an integrated manner, and it combines an equity lens with a focus on climate change resilience in the WASH sector. In terms of design elements, the project has a human rights approach and will contribute to the progressive realization of the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation. The notion of equity is defined through criteria that converge with human rights standards (i.e. accessibility and geographical disparities, non-discrimination, affordability), and the promotion of hygiene practices is approached with a special focus on WASH in institutional settings. The project further integrates a gender perspective, which is indispensable to ensure that WASH services are adequate and acceptable for all users and that they do not perpetuate discriminatory practices (particularly in educational institutions). Amongst other things, activities will be carried out since water and sanitation facilities need to be designed and built to meet the needs of women and girls, including appropriate equipment for menstrual hygiene management.

2.1 Country demand and target countries

The target countries for this project are Kazakhstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova , Turkmenistan . The selection beneficiary countries will be fully finalized in September 2022, following further consultations with the relevant national authorities.

All potential beneficiary countries are either Parties or Signatories to the Protocol or are in the process of preparing accession. The target countries have been chosen on the basis of requests of support expressed to the governing bodies of the Protocol in 2020-2022 or within the framework of activities carried out under the Protocol, as well as considering the content of the latest Protocol reporting cycle². Under the latter, countries submit national summary reports on the situation in the areas of water, sanitation, hygiene, and health, and the information provided allows for an analysis of national objectives in these areas, action taken, and progress achieved so that it gives significant context for the activities that will be carried out under the project. Furthermore, some beneficiary countries have submitted Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), reiterating their commitment to implementing SDG 6.

Although not all beneficiary countries will receive the national capacity building outputs foreseen in the project, special efforts will be made to make sure that the results of such outputs are shared within regular meetings of technical and intergovernmental bodies of the Protocol, for instance by organizing special sub-sessions/side meetings for UNDA 15T beneficiary countries. By way of illustration, the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation can have a special session to share the experience of Kazakhstan regarding the equitable access self-assessment with other UNDA 15T beneficiary countries, and the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting can host a sub-meeting to share the experience of Montenegro and the Republic of Moldova with developing targets on climate-resilient WASH services. Such sub-sessions/side meetings can also serve to channel requests from other UNDA 15T beneficiary countries to implement the national capacity building activities in the future, furthering the replicability and scaling up of project results.

² See https://unece.org/fifth-reporting-exercise-under-protocol-water-and-health-november-2021-april-2022#accordion_1

2.2 Context and situation analysis

Ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation services is an important priority for the pan-European region, which, despite significant progress, is still home to 16 million people lacking access to essential drinking water and more than 31 million without basic sanitation. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that access to safe, reliable, and resilient WASH services is a key public health priority for preventing infectious diseases. All relevant UN documents on the pandemic, including General Assembly Resolution 74/270, the Secretary general's report on responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, and the UN framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 also stress that vulnerable and marginalized groups were hit hardest by COVID-19, and these are often the people facing systemic barriers in access to safe drinking water and sanitation. However, it is challenging to tackle inequities in the absence of reliable and disaggregated information that can inform policy-making.

In the specified target countries, providing the population with access to water, including quality drinking water, remains a significant problem especially in rural areas where the population is continuously declining. Additionally, access to sanitation, despite progress in the past year, remains relatively low, particularly in rural areas. In the Republic of Moldova, for example, merely 2.8% of the population in rural areas are connected to a centralized sewerage system. In line with this, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), among others from exposures to contaminants in drinking water, have remained the leading cause of mortality in Turkmenistan, and according to WHO estimates, account for 79% of deaths in the country. Consequently, multisectoral approaches are taken at the governmental level to prevent and control NCDs which involve the realization of the National Strategy and Action Plan on the implementation of the Ashgabat Declaration on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Furthermore, equitable access to WASH services cannot be ensured long-term without a focus on climate resilience. Despite widely available evidence of the impacts of climate change on WASH services and on water resources, climate action in the areas of water and sanitation has remained slow, as also evidenced by the lack of explicit water-related components in many climate change documents, including national adaptation plans and Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. This has the potential to heighten health and environmental risks, including damage to water-related ecosystems. Although data gathered under the UNECE-WHO Regional Office for Europe throughout the 2019 reporting exercise showed that many countries in the pan-European region consider integrating a climate change perspective into the WASH sector as a priority, they have different levels of knowledge and capacity in dealing with such issues.

From the perspective of the target countries, climate change remains a central concern since it could overburden the most vulnerable and marginalized communities of a population and contribute to a further deepening of existing gender gaps and social disparities. Considering that the frequency of extreme weather patterns is increasing, resulting in long-lasting droughts and spring floods such as in Kazakhstan, countries are taking climate-sensitive action to increase their resilience to the impacts of climate change. In Kazakhstan, the number of glacial lakes has increased by 41% over the past three years due to the degradation of glaciers. Under these circumstances, the target countries require the support of the global community to enhance their adaptive capacity i.e. through capacity-building workshops.

2.3 Country-level situation analysis

Country	Status of affairs	Realistic Outcomes
Kazakhstan	<p>Kazakhstan is not yet a Party to the Protocol. Nevertheless, the proposal to accede to the Protocol has been included in the country's long-term international treaty plan and is advanced in this process.</p> <p>At the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group on Water and Health (Geneva, virtual, 19-20 May 2022), Kazakhstan raised the "urgent issue" of providing its population with adequate water, which allows it to maintain the protection of human health. Additionally, it was reported that the acuteness of the problem is caused by a relative scarcity of water resources, uneven distribution across the country, pollution of water bodies, and deterioration of technical conditions of water supply and sanitation systems. All these areas are key areas of action under the Protocol on Water and Health.</p> <p>At the regional workshop on equitable access to water and sanitation held under the Protocol (Geneva, 13-14 June 2022), representatives of Kazakhstan expressed interest in the tools available under the Protocol and possibly undergoing an assessment.</p> <p>Moreover, according to the VNR, Kazakhstan is directing its efforts towards increasing the country's resilience to climate change and has ratified the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. In the context of water resources, the country faces an increasing number of springs floods as the hydrological characteristics have been altered. In the VNR, the country states that it "requires the support of the global community to enhance the country's adaptive capacity, not only to reduce the risks of disasters, but</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified equity gaps and priority areas of action to progress towards the achievement of equitable access to WASH and of adequate WASH services in institutions. • Increased capacity in the area of ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation and in the area of increasing resilience to climate change as a result of exchange of experience and development of targeted guidance documents.

	<p>also to reduce the potential damage to vulnerable sectors of the economy.</p> <p>Kazakhstan has also conducted pilot surveys in the past revealing significant gaps in provisions for WASH in healthcare facilities and schools at the local level, and suggesting the need for more systematic assessment at the national level.</p> <p>The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe has Biennial Collaborative Agreements with the Ministry of Health in Kazakhstan. In this framework, the country has explicitly requested technical assistance in advancing monitoring for WASH services to inform policy development.</p>	
<p>Montenegro</p>	<p>Montenegro is a recent Party to the Protocol and, when acceding to this instrument in 2019, it has indicated that it aims to tackle challenges such as climate change, water scarcity and ensuring universal and equitable access for all and in all settings.</p> <p>In its second voluntary national review (2022), Montenegro highlighted that a limited number of activities had been implemented to strengthen resilience and adaptation to climate change. Despite some progress in the integration of climate change measures into national policies, the country reported that policy implementation is a significant challenge and capacities remain limited.</p> <p>The project’s activities planned to be implemented in Montenegro include a strong capacity-building component and are well-placed to strengthen action in the area of increasing resilience to climate change. Furthermore, Montenegro is in the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity by decision-makers and practitioners in increasing climate-resilience of WASH services • Increased capacity in the area of increasing resilience to climate change as a result of exchange of experience and development of targeted guidelines

	<p>process of developing intersectoral targets on water, sanitation, hygiene and health under the Protocol. The adoption of such targets will provide a useful framework in which to position the project's activities. They are expected to be adopted at highest possible level by the government, which will strengthen the durability and ownership of commitments.</p>	
<p>Republic of Moldova</p>	<p>The republic of Moldova became a Party to the Protocol in 2005 and, despite continuous progress, it still faces various challenges in providing sustainable and quality water and sanitation services for all members of its population. Today, according to the latest VNR, the country has the largest urban-rural gap and the lowest level of access to water supply and sanitation services in the Danube region, with only 2.8% of the rural population being connected to a centralized sewerage system, as compared to 64.1% in urban localities. Additionally, investments in sewerage systems proved to be ineffective due to the population's refusal to connect to the network. This reluctance may arise due to economic reasons, gaps in the legislation and particularly because of low understanding in the population of the need for proper wastewater management. Also, the proper operation of municipal wastewater treatment plants requires skilled management of industrial wastewater, which today is rather ignored, and especially important as wastewater accounts to the main source of water pollution in the country.</p> <p>In the context of climate change, the country has been affected by the impacts of it but cannot implement climate adaptation measures due to financial restraints. According to the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of policymakers in undertaking systematic assessments of the policy landscape and WASH situation in institutional settings • Increased capacity by decision-makers and practitioners in increasing climate-resilience of WASH services • Increased capacity in the area of increasing resilience to climate change as a result of exchange of experience and development of targeted guidelines

	<p>VNR, the most frequent impacts of climate change are the increasing frequency of extreme weather patterns such as long-lasting droughts and heavy rainfalls leading to flash floods. Indeed, the Republic of Moldova has set climate-sensitive targets under the Protocol on Water and Health such as the "correct management of droughts, floods and rainwater".</p> <p>The Republic of Moldova has also conducted a pilot survey in the past revealing significant gaps in provisions for WASH in healthcare facilities at the local level and suggesting the need for more systematic assessment of WASH services in institutional settings.</p> <p>The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe has Biennial Collaborative Agreements with the Ministry of Health in the Republic of Moldova. In this framework, the country has explicitly requested technical assistance in advancing WASH services with a focus on institutional settings.</p>	
<p>Turkmenistan</p>	<p>Turkmenistan is Party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. The challenges caused by climate change has led to the formulation of national plans such as the adoption of the National Climate Change Strategy, which is designed to promote the transition to integrated planning for sustainable development.</p> <p>The World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe has Biennial Collaborative Agreements with the Ministry of Health in Turkmenistan. In this framework,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity of policymakers in undertaking systematic assessments of the policy landscape and WASH situation in institutional settings • Increased capacity in the area of increasing resilience to climate change as a result of exchange of experience and development of targeted guidance documents.

	<p>Turkmenistan has explicitly requested technical assistance in undertaking a national survey on the status of WASH services in healthcare facilities. Therefore, the project foresees implementation of activities on WASH in institutions, which are included in the dedicated area of work on institutional WASH under the Protocol.</p>	
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2.4 Stakeholder analysis and capacity assessment

Non-UN Stakeholders	Type and level of involvement in the project	Capacity assets	Capacity gaps	Desired future outcomes	Incentives
<p>Ministries of Environment; Ministries responsible for water resources; Ministries of Health; Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry; Ministries of Energy; National research institutions</p>	<p>Target audience as they are responsible for developing relevant policies and regulations and lead their implementation at the national level.</p>	<p>Regarding resources and strengths, target ministries are the key leading actors in the areas addressed by the project: they hold knowledge of the country's situation, experts engaged in day-to-day work, and institutional structures that can help sustain project implementation.</p>	<p>Lack of awareness of the situation of equitable access to water and sanitation. Lack of experience with applying the equity lens and human rights-based approach in the context to WASH services. Lack of guidelines in increasing resilience against climate change in the WASH sector.</p>	<p>The project is expected to improve the stakeholders' understanding of the importance of increasing resilience to climate change in its COVID-19 recovery strategy to be prepared for a broader range of emergencies. It is also expected that the project will support the stakeholders to better assess the current situation of equitable access to</p>	<p>Confirmed need to increase capacity to analyze, measure and approach current inequities in the equitable access to water and sanitation within the scope of the COVID-19 recovery. Confirmed needs to increase understanding of the impacts of climate change on WASH services and the approaches needed to</p>

				water and sanitation and to include this dimension in its COVID-19 recovery plan.	increase resilience against extreme weather events.
Local authorities	Target audience as they are responsible for the implementation of many policies and regulations and their practical rollout. They are also first in line to face the problems this project addresses and need practical solutions.	Lack of resources at the local level is a strong incentive to increase capacities in climate-resilient water provision and management	<p>Lack of understanding of the existing approaches to increasing resilience to climate change in the water and sanitation sector.</p> <p>Lack of understanding of identifying and approaching equity gaps through a human rights-based approach, as well as guidance documents and tools.</p>	<p>It is expected that the local authorities will be able to identify equity gaps in water and sanitation and progress with developing policies and/or measures to provide equitable access to WASH services in the context of COVID-19 or other emergencies.</p> <p>Local authorities and water and wastewater operators will progress with developing or implementing strategies, policies, or measures to provide climate-resilient WASH services.</p>	<p>Confirmed need to Increase resilience of water and wastewater operators against climate change.</p> <p>Confirmed need to improve provision of services by water service providers leads to better customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Confirmed need to increase overall resilience of water and sanitation provision in times of emergencies.</p>

<p>NGOs and civil society organizations (including consumer organizations)</p>	<p>Target audience as they contribute to the dissemination, implementation, and use of mitigating measures. Some project activities may also be carried out with the involvement of NGOs (e.g. in carrying out assessments).</p>	<p>Regarding resources and strengths, NGOs can be a real asset when working on vulnerable and marginalized groups, as they may hold related knowledge and have connections that would facilitate project implementation. In addition, NGOs and civil society organizations can potentially drive the development and implementation of mitigation measures.</p> <p>NGOs and civil society organizations are crucial for any public participation process due to their network and knowledge of what is happening on the ground.</p>	<p>Are not always informed adequately on the policy and regulatory implications of water resources management .</p>	<p>More vital involvement of local NGOs through increased dialogue with public stakeholders.</p> <p>Establishment of collaboration with the relevant Ministries.</p>	<p>Possibility to engage actively in the realization of equitable access to water and sanitation.</p> <p>Possibility to strengthen cooperation with government institutions such as Ministries to lobby their concerns.</p> <p>Also, increased dialogue with international partners supporting progress towards SDG targets.</p>
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3. PROJECT STRATEGY: OBJECTIVE, OUTCOMES, INDICATORS, OUTPUTS

The project's objective is to support Member States with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its economic and social aftermath by strengthening the capacity of policymakers and water and

wastewater operators to provide equitable access to climate-resilient WASH services. The project's activities will assist beneficiary countries in guaranteeing inclusive COVID-19 recovery and strengthen resilience against future emergencies, including infectious disease outbreaks and potential climate change impacts on the WASH sector. Special attention is also given to the relationship between climate change and inequities to mainstream the "no one left behind" perspective across the project and promote cross-fertilization and the enhancement of synergies between relevant activities.

The project is strongly aligned with the UN framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, and its activities can reinforce three of the pillars of the UNDS response³:

- (1) **Putting health first;**
- (2) **Protecting people**, including through the provision of basic services;
- (3) **promoting social cohesion and community resilience.**

In the area of health, the provision of safe, reliable, and resilient WASH services is a key measure not only to contain and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in its immediate aftermath but also for disease and risk prevention in the long term. The COVID-19 pandemic has raised everyone's attention to the close connection between the water/WASH sector and the health sector, as also evidenced by the World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 73.1 on COVID-19 response, which calls on the Member States to take measures to support access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene and to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the promotion of personal hygienic measures in all settings. Investment into adequate hygiene practices is thus an investment into long-life skills, which may come with the help of the population at any time during the outbreak of disease.

As for social protection and basic services, the principles underlying this pillar are at the heart of the project's design, which applies an equity lens to the provision of WASH services with the aim of reaching all sections of the population, including the most vulnerable and marginalized users. In this area, the project also has synergies and potential links with the rapid response project on strengthening social protection for a pandemic response, particularly area (iii) on improving data collection and analysis for rapid identification of vulnerable groups. In this respect, the project foresees developing and implementing a methodology that enables detailed assessments and disaggregated data collection. Amongst other things, the tool will help gather WASH data on vulnerable and marginalized groups and, consequently, it will facilitate the development of targeted social protection schemes.

Indirectly, all of the above mentioned aspects will also contribute to enhancing social cohesion and community resilience. All project activities rely on participatory processes, which include various stakeholders from the public and can promote community-led dialogue, public engagement, and inclusion in water, sanitation, health, and climate change resilience.

Innovation is a key feature of the project in many ways:

- (i) Firstly, from a general point of view, the project is situated within the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health, which is an innovative instrument combining water, environment, and health dimensions. It has an original approach to protecting human health and well-being, which is fundamentally interlinked with sustainable water management, safe drinking water and sanitation provision for everyone, and the prevention of water-related diseases.

³ See p.11 of the UN framework for immediate socio-economic response

- (ii) Secondly, the project also relies on innovative tools and methodologies promoted under the Protocol. By way of illustration, in order to ensure climate-resilient WASH services, the project will promote the use by water and wastewater operators of internationally recognized risk-based approaches, including Sanitation Safety Plans (SSPs). The SSP approach is recognized as the most effective way to manage risks along the full sanitation chain in order to protect human health and the environment. The adoption of the SSP approach innovates "traditional" infrastructure-focused sanitation concepts by offering a holistic approach to managing sanitation risks and thereby enabling the safe reuse of wastewater.
- (iii) Thirdly, the project will also aim to "update" existing tools, approaches, and methodologies to make them sensitive to the COVID-19 pandemic and build on the lessons learned from the pandemic to strengthen resilience against future emergencies. All equitable access to water and sanitation activities are aimed at further developing existing WASH knowledge in this direction.

3.1 Project Strategy

This project combines an equity lens with a focus on increasing resilience to climate change. In the area of equity, it foresees the implementation of the Equitable Access Score-card which helps to obtain a baseline analysis of the equity of access to water and sanitation, to identify related priorities, to set targets to bridge the identified gaps and evaluate progress. The assessment on the gaps, and bottlenecks in equity, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, will help in the identification in action plans for inclusive recovery from the pandemic – while simultaneously including a climate-resilience dimension in the process. The revision of the Equitable Access Score-card, which was initiated in 2022, has captured the lessons learnt in the assessment processes in various countries, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emergency situations. Consequently, the baseline analysis will cover a broader range of important parameters in its assessments and support of policy processes to achieve the human right to water and sanitation.

The Equitable Score-card methodology which aligns human rights standards and gender considerations, can strengthen the capacity of policymakers to assess equitable access to water and sanitation, including the affordability of services and the provision of adequate WASH in institutional settings. The human rights lens of the assessment warrants the needs and rights of the most vulnerable communities who often do not have safe access to water and sanitation such as homeless people or nomadic communities. Based on these assessments and the data gathered, decision makers can develop informed policies and measures to improve equity in COVID-19 and other emergencies. Additionally, national workshops will support policymakers in undertaking systematic assessments of the policy landscape and WASH situation in institutional settings such as school and health-care facilities. The subsequent advisory missions will provide technical advice to policymakers and other stakeholders in the definition of national policies building on the gaps identified in the equity assessment.

Consequently, the above-mentioned approach helps countries to identify gaps, develop informed policies on equitable access to WASH for all, based on the revised assessment methodology including the lessons learnt in the context of the pandemic and other emergencies.

In the area of climate resilience, the project aims to integrate a climate change perspective into the WASH sector, including by setting concrete targets on water and climate, developing strategies for their implementation, and identifying indicators to track progress. Furthermore, the project includes activities

to strengthen the capacity of water and wastewater operators to carry out strategic planning for ensuring climate resilience, including through the application of internationally recognized risk-based approaches (e.g. WSP and SSP approaches).

Within the scope of outcome 2, one regional workshop will lay the groundwork as policymakers, water and wastewater operators will have an opportunity to exchange experiences and gather good practices of increasing the resilience of WASH services in the context of climate change. Building on the workshop in output 2.1, a collection of good practices in strengthening climate resilience of the water and sanitation sector will be compiled under the 2011 Guidance on Water Supply and Sanitation in Extreme Weather Events. Subsequently, two national workshops will support policymakers in developing policies for climate resilience in the WASH sector through the setting of concrete and measurable targets. The workshop will build on the knowledge created in the previous outputs. Capacity development will also be conducted in the form of two national trainings to support water and wastewater operators in strategic planning for climate-change adaptation and safe provision of services. Furthermore, two advisory missions will support policymakers and other concerned actors in their implementation process of increasing resilience to WASH services. Finally, a policy brief will capture the lessons learnt, success stories, as well as challenges of the entire project cycle with the aim of providing recommendations on streamlining climate policies in the water and sanitation sector at the national level. The overall outcome will be the improved capacity of key actors which will contribute to the overarching objective of this project.

Expected progress towards the attainment of the objective and performance measures

This work is expected to strengthen policymakers' capacity as well as water and wastewater operators within selected target countries to ensure equitable access to climate-resilient WASH services for inclusive COVID-19 recovery and enhanced resilience against emergencies. This would be demonstrated by:

- (i) Target countries identifying equity gaps and progressing with developing or amending policies/measures aimed at providing equitable access to WASH services in the context of COVID-19 or other emergencies;
- (ii) Target countries and water and wastewater operators progressing with developing or implementing strategies, policies, or measures to provide climate-resilient WASH services, including by devising concrete and measurable targets;
- (iii) Target countries are reporting on progress on ensuring equitable access to climate-resilient WASH services under the Protocol's reporting framework and by reporting to the Protocol governing bodies. The above-mentioned measures can help to track the project's results.

3.2 Results Framework

<u>Intervention logic</u>	<u>Indicators of achievement</u>	<u>Means of verification</u>
Objective To strengthen the capacity of policymakers and water and wastewater operators in target countries in the UNECE region to develop and implement policies and measures aimed at ensuring equitable access to climate-resilient water, sanitation and hygiene services for inclusive COVID-19 recovery and enhanced		

resilience in the water and sanitation sector.

<p>Outcome - OC1</p> <p>Strengthened capacity of policymakers in target countries to develop informed policies, based on detailed assessments, on equitable access to WASH for all and in all settings in the context of COVID-19 or other emergencies,</p>	<p>IA 1.1: One target country adopts the results of the equitable access self-assessment and related recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular reporting mechanisms available to various Protocol bodies, including the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation, the Working Group on Water and Health (meeting twice per triennium) and the Meeting of the Parties (meeting once per triennium) - Technical meetings organized under the Protocol’s framework in the areas of work of equitable access to water and sanitation and institutional WASH. If tailored publications and guidance documents are developed, case studies from beneficiary countries may also serve as a mean of verification. - Advisory missions in support of the outcomes will also serve as a verification method - Non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations will be involved in technical and inter-governmental meetings under the Protocol, including the Expert Group on Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation and the Working Group on Water and Health. Interventions by such organizations will be strongly encouraged, so that they can serve as verification methods on the outcomes of the project
<p>IA 1.2: One target country adopts the results of the assessment of WASH in institutions and related recommendations</p>		
<p>IA 1.3: At least one target country develops a roadmap/action plan/measures/targets (depending on country circumstances) on equitable access to water and sanitation</p>		

<p>Output 1.1 Two national and/or local workshops organized to support the application of the Equitable Access Score card and aiming at undertaking a detailed assessment of the equity of access to WASH at national and/or local level</p> <p>What the output will entail: the Scorecard is an analytical tool composed of a set of qualitative questions that need to be filled by the country, addressing several dimensions of equity. It serves to: establish a baseline measure of the equity of access and collect information, prompt discussions and multi-stakeholder engagement, track progress</p> <p>What it will lead to: The country will identify where it is lagging behind in terms of equity of access to water and sanitation, as well as where the information is particularly unreliable. The exercise helps to build the case for follow-up action.</p> <p>Responsible entities: Ministries of Health and of Environment, civil society (specific stakeholders will have to be discussed with the country in the inception phase of this exercise). UNECE will be responsible for the implementation of this activity</p>		
<p>Output 1.2 Two national workshops organized to (i) support policy makers in undertaking systematic assessments of the policy landscape and WASH situation in institutional settings and, to (ii) inform policy making and intervention planning at health care facility level using WHO tools (WASH FIT)</p> <p>What the output will entail: WHO has developed standardized methodologies and tools to support countries assessing enablers and gaps to ensuring improved WASH services in institutional settings such as schools and health care facilities. The workshops will address Ministries of Health, Education and Environment, depending on the settings focus of the workshop, and provide insight on such instruments and foster discussion on adaptation in the local context and planning for implementation at the national level.</p> <p>Responsible entities: WHO/Europe</p> <p>What it will lead to: The workshops will build the capacity of targeted countries to monitor and plan status and improvement of equitable WASH services in institutional settings. It will equip stakeholders to plan and implement assessments at the national level leading to the development of national baselines to track progress of the SDGs (3 and 6), and the identification of enablers and gaps to drive and inform action on improving governance at the national level and sustainably advancing conditions at the facility level for equitable WASH services.</p>		
<p>Output 1.3 Two advisory missions organized to provide technical advice and assistance to policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in the definition of national policies and measures to ensure equitable access to WASH, including in institutional settings, in the context of COVID-19 or other emergency situations.</p>		

What the output will entail: missions are undertaken in support of Ops 1.1 and 1.2. Missions aim at gathering a smaller audience as compared to the workshops and at organizing follow-up action based on the findings of the detailed assessments foreseen under OP1.2 and OP1.3. For OP1.1, the advisory mission may also be aimed at promoting the use of the Guidance Note on the development of action plans to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation⁴, so that the findings of the assessment can be translated into policies. The exact scope of the missions is to be further defined and discussed with the national counterparts in the inception phase of the project.

What it will lead to: targeted technical advice and assistance in the definition of national policies/strategies/programmes or plans

Responsible entities: UNECE and WHO will arrange advisory missions and tailor them on the needs of the target countries as identified in Ops 1.1 and 1.2

<p>Outcome – OC2</p> <p>Improved capacity for policymakers and water and wastewater operators in target countries to develop and implement innovative strategies and approaches aimed at providing climate-resilient WASH services</p>	<p>IA 2.1: Two target countries adopt and disseminate recommendations relating to the development of policies aimed at providing climate-resilient WASH services , based on guidance documents developed under the project</p> <p>IA 2.2: Two target countries develop policies, action plans and/or measures on climate resilience in the water and sanitation sectors, including for water and wastewater operators, with a concrete plan for implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular reporting mechanisms available to various Protocol bodies, including the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting (meeting twice per triennium), the Working Group on Water and Health (meeting twice per triennium) and the Meeting of the Parties (meeting once per triennium) - Technical meetings organized under the Protocol’s framework on increasing resilience to climate change will serve as an opportunity for beneficiary countries to report on progress. - As guidance documents are foreseen as outputs for this outcome, case studies will be collected from beneficiary countries - Advisory missions in support of the outcomes will also serve as a verification
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⁴ <https://unece.org/environment-policy/publications/guidance-note-development-action-plans-ensure-equitable-access>

		method
<p>Output 2.1 One regional workshop organized for policymakers and water and wastewater operators to exchange experience and gather good practices on building climate-resilient WASH services.</p> <p>What the output will entail: a regional workshop will be organized on strengthening climate resilience of water and sanitation sectors and services, including preparing for and responding to extreme weather events. The event will also explore interlinkages with other sectors and the benefits of integrated action across sectors.</p> <p>What the output will lead to: this activity is expected to build capacity in the area of increasing resilience to climate change, provide a basis for the development of guidelines/collection of good practices foreseen in OP2.2 and benefit countries beyond the target countries as it is a regional activity held under the Protocol's framework.</p> <p>Responsible entities: UNECE will be in the lead for organizing this activity, with substantive and technical input from WHO/Europe</p>		
<p>Output 2.2 Guidelines/collection of good practices on strengthening climate resilience of the water and sanitation sector and across other relevant sectors, also based on the findings and good practices identified and discussed through Output 2.1. This work will build on the 2011 <i>Guidance on Water Supply and Sanitation in Extreme Weather Events</i>.</p> <p>What the output will entail: based on the outcomes of OP2.1, a consultant will be hired to develop a document collecting good practices and formulating guidelines on increasing climate resilience in the water and sanitation sector.</p> <p>What the output will lead to: this activity is expected to build capacity in the area of increasing resilience to climate change, and benefit countries beyond the target countries, as the guidelines can easily be disseminated through the framework of the Protocol. In target countries, the guidelines will be used to support national activities (OP2.3, 2.4 and 2.5)</p> <p>Responsible entities: UNECE will be in the lead for organizing this activity, with substantive and technical input from WHO/Europe</p>		
<p>Output 2.3 Two national workshops organized to support policymakers in developing policies and/or measures on climate resilience in the water and sanitation sectors, including through the setting of concrete and measurable targets on climate-resilient WASH services. This activity will also take place in the context of developing the guidelines/collection of good practices mentioned under Output 2.2.</p> <p>What the output will entail: based on the good practices gathered under OP2.1 and collected through OP2.2, this output focuses on translating them into national policies and/or measures on climate</p>		

resilience. To do this, the project will build the target-setting process available under the Protocol (see [here](#) for further information)

What the output will lead to: Concrete national and/or local targets on increasing climate resilience in the water and sanitation sector or related roadmaps, action plans, strategies (depending on country context)

Responsible entities: At the national level, the process will be intersectoral and will involve the Ministry responsible for Water/Environment, the Ministry of health and other stakeholders. UNECE will be in the lead for organizing this activity, with substantive and technical input from WHO/Europe (note that the extent of support needed from WHO/Europe side will partly depend on the nature of the targets set and the expertise required to support their development)

Output 2.4

Two national trainings organized in priority countries to support water and wastewater operators in strategic planning for ensuring climate resilience in the WASH sector, including through the application of international recognized risk-based approaches (e.g., WSP and SSP approaches).

What the output will entail: WHO has developed standardized methodologies and tools to support operators at the local level to improve the management of water and wastewater resources ensuring resilience to climate changes and extreme events. The workshops will address Ministries of Health and of Environment, surveillance authorities and service providers of relevance. The trainings will disseminate WHO recommended risk-based approaches and country best practices to foster discussion on adaptation and planning for implementation in the local context.

Responsible entities: WHO/Europe

What it will lead to: The workshops will build the capacity of targeted countries to uptake WHO recommended water and sanitation safety plan approach in regulations and practice. It will equip stakeholders to plan and implement planning of improvements for safe and climate-resilient management of water and/or wastewater resources for better preparedness to locally-relevant risks and vulnerabilities.

Output 2.5

Two Advisory missions organized to support policymakers and other concerned actors in integrating climate resilience into water and sanitation policy development/implementation.

What the output will entail: missions are undertaken in support of Ops 2.3 and 2.4. Missions aim at gathering a smaller audience as compared to the workshops and at organizing follow-up action that can help steer the results of national meetings and trainings. For OP2.3, synergies will be sought between this activity and the development of guidelines/collection of good practices on strengthening resilience to climate change foreseen under OP2.2. Depending on the country context, the advisory mission could focus on how to bring these two processes together.

What it will lead to: targeted technical advice and assistance in the definition of targets/policies/roadmaps/related measures and in the organization of trainings to support the uptake of risk-based approaches on water and sanitation

Responsible entities: UNECE and WHO will arrange advisory missions and tailor them on the needs of the target countries as identified in Ops 2.3 and 2.4

<p>Output 2.6</p> <p>One policy paper analyzing the interlinkages between the guidelines/collection of good practices, climate-sensitive targets and other climate-related processes such as the development of Nationally Determined Contributions, with the aim of providing recommendations on how to streamline climate policies in the water and sanitation sector at national level.</p> <p>What the output will entail: this output will be aimed at making sure that the guidelines/collection of good practices developed under OP 2.2 and the climate-sensitive targets developed under OP 2.3 can also be linked by target countries to other global climate processes. The objective is not to proceed in silos and ensuring that the outcomes of the project can go beyond the water and sanitation sector. A consultant will be hired to develop the policy paper.</p> <p>What the output will lead to: targeted guidance and concrete recommendations for target countries on how to streamline project-related climate change activities with other climate processes at the national level.</p> <p>Responsible entities: UNECE will be in the lead for organizing this activity, with substantive and technical input from WHO/Europe</p>
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3.3 Risks and mitigation actions

Risks	Likelihood of risks	Impact of risks (low, medium or high)	Mitigating Actions
Possible political instability in selected countries	Low	High	The project will be executed at the technical level, with the full support of the level of high-level governmental officials. This would contribute to ensuring the successful implementation and sustainability of the project.
Lack of political support/regulations	Low	Medium	All target countries were chosen on the basis of interest expressed within the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health and/or related processes (e.g. BCAs). They have also been involved in Protocol activities before, so there is a proven track of collaboration and a political and technical network on which the project can build. In addition to this starting basis, in order to ensure that political support is continued, regular consultations and bilateral meetings with stakeholders will be held, including at the inception phase of the project. Every effort will also be made to keep high-level

			decision-makers informed of progress and plans, in order to secure political support beyond the technical experts that may be involved in implementation.
COVID-19 related disruptions on travel and meetings	Medium	Low	Every effort will be made to make the activities flexible to be in person or virtual as required. Back-up plans will also be developed to reallocate resources if certain activities cannot be implemented, for instance, by spending such resources on online activities to disseminate project results.

3.4 Sustainability and scaling-up

Sustainability is essential for this project. The project outcomes must pave the way for long-lasting results, fostering SDG implementation, ensuring inclusive COVID-19 recovery, and promoting long-term adoption and scaling up of best practices.

The capacity of national governments and other stakeholders across silos, which will be developed within the project, is an essential factor for the long-term sustainability of the project outcomes.

The project will be a coherent continuation of the work that has already started in UNECE through its intergovernmental work, conventions, and experience made during previous UNDA projects, particularly in building broad local and international partnerships for sustainability and ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation. The present project will also strive to strengthen existing and build new partnerships to increase local and community ownership (city-angle) and sustainability beyond the project's life cycle. These national and regional networks of experts will be set up from the project's outset with mixed participation (public, private, local agencies, and civil society) and will be a pillar in this respect and key for ensuring sustainability. The aim is to lead the activities under this project towards national and regional follow-up and continuation after the project completion and set up mechanisms and networks linked to existing inter-governmental work and mechanisms. This would ensure sustainable changes for the years to come and if timely will pave the way for the phasing out strategy

Therefore, the project will build on already established partnerships with other international organizations, donor agencies, and experts in intergovernmental processes to ensure substantial financial support for sustainable relations.

Regarding its water, sanitation, and health component, the project's sustainability is significantly enhanced because activities occur in States Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. This offers two key advantages:

1. The Protocol is a legally binding instrument, which means that Parties have a legal obligation to implement its provisions.

2. The Protocol offers an institutional framework and mechanisms for follow-up and review, including a mandatory reporting system and regular intergovernmental and expert meetings to exchange experience. In addition, beneficiary countries will continue reporting under the Protocol even after the project's completion, so the mechanism can monitor and uphold project results long-term.

Similarly, the project's sustainability and the continuation of its work can be enhanced in food availability and nature-based solution in urban areas via UNECE's work on cities and urban forestry via the relevant and existing inter-governmental mechanism expert groups. In addition, the Forum of Mayors is a vehicle UNECE avail of that will help ensure continuity of results and replication of efforts across the entire region, even beyond the beneficiary countries.

The project's achievements are aligned with the long-term measures being taken under the Protocol on Water and Health. First, in outcome 1, the assessment undertaken in analyzing the policy options in place to warrant equitable access to water and sanitation for all can be used by beneficiary countries to set/revise or prioritize targets, which can be implemented by formulating coherent action plans. These measures are fully aligned with the human rights lens of the Protocol to leave no one behind. Furthermore, under the reporting cycle of the Protocol, stipulated under Article 7, countries are required to collect and evaluate data concerning the achievements of those targets, which not just warrants the sustainability of the project but also introduces an accountability dimension on the part of countries. Moreover, the lessons learned within the scope of the second outcome, as well as the exchange of best practices, will lay the foundation for the development of guidance documents under the Protocol, which countries in the pan-European region but also countries globally can utilize in interlinking climate adaptation measures in the WASH sector into their COVID-19 recovery plans.

4. KEY ASPECTS

4.1 Mandates, comparative advantages, and link to the Programme Budget

The project is situated within the overall analytical and normative framework of UNECE and of its implementing partner, the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

The mandate, to which this project contributes, is to improve environmental governance performance for safeguarding the environment and health in accordance with the UNECE's [Proposed programme budget for 2023 – subprogramme “Environment”](#) “to improve environmental governance and performance for safeguarding the environment and health”. In line with this, it contributes to achieving the goals of international health and environmental cooperation and fostering socio-economic prosperity and sustainable development in the pan-European region. In doing so, it capitalizes on the comparative advantage of UNECE as a regional economic commission and a regional intergovernmental platform for cooperation between countries and the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and technical expertise in the region. Furthermore, UNECE has more than 20 years of experience in water resources management as well as in other areas of environmental policy, including environmental monitoring and assessment and public participation in environmental decision-making processes. UNECE also has a remarkable mobilization and policy advocacy capacity and is a recognized actor having the trust of the Member States, which is a key aspect of promoting the effectiveness and sustainability of project interventions. Finally, UNECE encourages the nexus approach within its work areas, and this project will contribute to the nexus of sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable and smart cities.

The project also furthers the main mission of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, which is to protect human health and well-being. In particular, the implementing partner will be the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health (ECEH) (Water and Climate Programme), which, under its mandate, leads regional work on preventing water-related disease, including outbreak response; health and environmental water surveillance; safely managed and climate-resilient water and sanitation services; and the provision of WASH services in health care facilities and schools, based on the relevant WHO guidelines and standards established in the domain of water, sanitation, hygiene, and health. The mandate is underpinned, among others, by output 3.3.1 “Countries enabled to address environmental determinants, including climate change” from the revised Programme budget 2022-2023 adopted by the [Seventy-Fifth World Health Assembly on 17 May 2022](#).

4.2 Link to the SDG targets

The most recent intergovernmental document and entity-specific mandate calling for action on the project's areas of focus is the programme of work of the Protocol on Water and Health, adopted at the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties (Belgrade, 19-21 November 2019). At this meeting, over 40 countries from across the pan-European region recognized that the Protocol has matured into a regional hub for policy and technical developments on WASH while recognizing that further action is needed to tackle some persisting challenges and address new threats and risks, including the increasing impacts of climate change. Countries have thus chosen to include within future priority areas of action the technical areas of work of equitable access to water and sanitation, provision of WASH services in institutional settings, and increased resilience to climate change.

The project also responds to the global call on accelerating action on SDG6 and, overall, the project's activities will contribute to the implementation of Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation; Goal 3 on good health and well-being, and Goal 13 on climate action. In addition, the project indirectly furthers Goal 1 on no poverty; Goal 4 on quality education; Goal 5 on gender equality; Goal 10 on reduced inequalities and Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

Primary targets:

- SDG3** 3.9 Reduce deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and water and soil pollution and contamination
3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks
- SDG6** 6.1 Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all
6.2 Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations
6.3 Improve water quality by reducing pollution, halve the proportion of untreated wastewater and increase recycling and safe reuse
6.6 Protect and restore water-related ecosystems
6.b Support and strengthen participation of local communities in water and sanitation management
- SDG13** Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Secondary targets:

- SDG1** 1.4 Ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have access to basic services
- SDG4** 4.a Build and upgrade educational facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide inclusive and effective learning environments for all
- SDG5** 5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- SDG10** 10.3 Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action
- SDG11** 11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services
11.b Increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards mitigation and adaptation to climate change and resilience to disasters

4.3 Lessons learned

The project will build on lessons learned, and achievements from past activities carried out by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe in water, sanitation, hygiene, and health as well as climate change, including beneficiary countries. Furthermore, as all of the technical areas of focus of the project are part of the Protocol's programme of work, the project will also aim at promoting synergies with complementary ongoing activities.

In particular, in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation, activities will build on a specific tool available under the Protocol: the [Equitable Access Score-card](#). The Score-card helps policymakers establish a baseline measure of the equity of access to water and sanitation through self-assessment and data collection. Since 2011, the Score-card has been applied in 12 countries across the pan-European region, bringing about important changes to strengthen equity, including legislative amendments, the development of concrete action plans, and targeted interventions aimed at bettering the infrastructure for water supply. The wealth of experience available under the Protocol allowed for the identification of common trends, including with respect to the challenges faced by countries and the identification of lessons learned. These were recently mapped out in the publication [The Human rights to water and sanitation in practice: Findings and lessons learned from the work on equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health in the pan-European region](#). The project will build on this framework while also considering the equity-related aspects that are most relevant in the context of water-related epidemics (e.g., access to equipment for appropriate hygiene).

With respect to its focus on climate resilience, the project also builds on past and complementary activities, particularly in the area of improving governance for water and health. Specifically, the project will support the development of policy measures on climate resilience in the water and sanitation sector, including through the development of concrete and measurable targets that will be set based on an existing mechanism under the Protocol, which allows for the development of intersectoral objectives on water, sanitation, hygiene, and health. Under the latter, countries set targets following an in-depth baseline analysis and through a participatory process; track progress through the use of indicators aligned with international monitoring frameworks; and report on achievements and challenges faced by the Protocol governing bodies. Almost all of the potential beneficiary countries have relied on this mechanism within the framework of the Protocol, but the new element brought about by the project is the specific climate angle.

As for activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of water and wastewater operators to ensure climate resilience in the WASH sector, these will benefit from existing knowledge and complementary activities carried out by UNECE and the WHO Regional Office for Europe in the area of risk-based approaches to water and sanitation management, such as Water Safety Plans and Sanitation Safety Plans.

4.4 E-Learning

Building on the experience gathered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project incorporates e-learning components through:

- Organization of hybrid meetings. All meetings foreseen under the project will offer the possibility to join remotely (hybrid format), specifically under Ops 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4. Special efforts will be made to promote wide hybrid participation for the regional workshop foreseen under OP2.1, in order to reach a broader audience and to reduce the environmental footprint of the project.
- Advisory missions will take place in-person (unless the circumstances prevent this), but regular consultations with countries taking place to prepare the missions will be held through virtual platforms.
- The guidelines foreseen under OP2.2 and the policy paper developed through OP2.6 will be disseminated through digital modalities, including by uploading them in the Protocol's webpages but also "launching" them through virtual means (e.g. at other hybrid workshops organized under the Protocol, through social media campaigns aiming to engage stakeholders virtually ...)

It should be noted that as public access to information, as well as education and training, are part of the Protocol's core provisions, all Protocol-related resources (e.g. Publications, training materials, reports of meetings...) are publicly accessible through virtual means.⁵

5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 Proactive Monitoring

The UNECE project manager, with input from the partnering implementing agencies, will be responsible for the regular monitoring of the project implementation. The project's progress will be reported each year by annual progress reports. The material and information related to the project will be publicly shared on a dedicated project website managed by UNECE.

The reports will be provided according to the below timeline:

- By **31 January 2024**: 1st Annual Progress Report
- By **31 January 2025** 2nd Annual Progress Report
- By **31 January 2026**: 3rd Annual Progress Report
- By the **end of June 2027**: External Evaluation Report and Final Report

⁵ See <https://unece.org/environment-policy/water/protocol-on-water-and-health/about-the-protocol/introduction>

Documents and information that will be collected throughout the project implementation process:

- List of workshop participants, including names, gender and email addresses
- Workshop agendas
- Guidelines developed by the project
- Publications (Policy Brief)
- Project websites
- List of project focal point and counterparts in target countries, partner organizations and donors
- Estimates staff time on the project

5.2 Final Report

The project manager will collect data on the implementation of the project and will include it in a structured account of the implementation of the project's main elements. The Final Report, which will follow the guidelines of the DA Team, will be submitted to the DA by the end of June 2026. If an external evaluation is required ("projects to be evaluated will be selected at midpoint"), a draft of the Final Report will be submitted as early as possible to the external evaluator (preferably at the time of hiring the evaluator in January 2026).

5.3 Evaluation

If the project is selected for evaluation, the project will be evaluated in line with the Development Account Evaluation Framework and the ECE Evaluation Policy. An external evaluator will evaluate the project during the last six months of the project. The evaluator will have access to project progress reports, workshop reports, as well as evaluation forms, which include a basic set of workshop evaluation questions in ECE to be completed by all participants in project workshops. The evaluator will also conduct interviews with key project stakeholders from target countries and partner organizations, conduct desk research, and prepare the evaluation report. The ECE Programme Management Unit will provide guidance and oversee the conduct of the project evaluation. The evaluation results will be published at Open ECE and shared with ECE member States through the annual evaluation report.

6. MANAGEMENT, PARTNERSHIP, AND COORDINATION AGREEMENTS

The project will be implemented jointly by UNECE (executing entity) and WHO/Europe (cooperating entity). The project will be coordinated via periodic project steering group meetings on all aspects related to project management, implementation, and activities. The focal points in each organization will be responsible for liaison with the project manager and other implementing agencies and participating in the project steering group meetings. This will ensure that the nexus approach is followed in all activities and that deliverables, schedules, and activities can be coordinated in the most efficient way possible.

The UN country teams will be informed and involved whenever possible in national and local activities and, when necessary, invited to dedicated project group meetings, which are meetings that include the steering group and invited other participants.

UNECE will carry out administrative and reporting responsibilities. Moreover, the responsibilities of the

UNECE will include coordination of activities with the governments and other stakeholders on the topics related to UNECE expertise, the organization of workshops, and provision of trainers for these workshops, as well as supporting the development of training material and electronic tools.

WHO/Europe, as the co-secretariat of the Protocol on Water and Health, will work closely with UNECE on water, sanitation, hygiene, and health activities. The cooperation between these two entities is long-standing. It will build on pre-existing arrangements, including the Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) and other related planning documents. For this project, a specific MOU may be developed as relevant and appropriate, building on the model that was prepared for the implementation of a previous UNDA project (9th or 14th tranche), also jointly carried out by UNECE and the WHO/Europe.

Cooperation will further be established with the Resident Coordinator and United Nations Country teams in the beneficiary countries, which will support operational activities at the country level and inter-agency coordination and help ensure that the project's outcomes and outputs support national priorities, development strategies and plans. In line with this, regular communications will occur on the status of the project implementation. This will also include presentations at the beginning of the project's cycle, if and as needed. The cooperation also involves the provision of logistical support to workshops and advice on the involvement of local stakeholders. Cooperation with the Residence Coordinator and United Nations Country teams will further involve the consultation in the integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) to the project activities in the beneficiary countries.

7. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: RESULTS-BASED WORK PLAN AND BUDGET DETAILS

Table 1.1 – Breakdown of budget by output and outcome

Outcome	Output #	Budget class and Code <i>(Please use the budget classes listed in the table above.)</i>	Amount (USD)
OC1	OP1.1	Other Staff Costs (GTA)	015 \$ 10,000
		Consultants	105 \$ 19,500
		Travel of Staff	115 \$ 2,200
		Contractual Services	120 \$ 40,000
		Grants and Contributions (Workshops/ Study Tours/EGMs)	145 \$ 20,000
	OP1.2	Consultants	105 \$ 31,500
		Travel of Staff	115 \$ 3,300
		Contractual services	120 \$ 40,000
		Grants and contributions (Workshops/ Study Tours/EGMs)	145 \$ 16,000
	OP1.3	Travel of Staff	115 \$ 2,200
General Operating Expenses		125 \$ 5,000	
OC2	OP2.1	Other Staff Costs (GTA)	015 \$ 10,000
		Consultants	105 \$ 18,000
		Travel of staff	115 \$ 4,600
		Grants and contributions (Workshops/ Study Tours/EGMs)	145 \$ 24,000
	OP2.2	Consultants	105 \$ 36,000
	OP2.3	Other Staff Costs (GTA)	015 \$ 5,000
		Consultants	105 \$ 31,500
		Travel of Staff	115 \$ 6,600
		Contractual Services	120 \$ 40,000
		Grants and Contributions (Workshops/Study Tours/EGMs)	145 \$ 24,000
	OP2.4	Consultants	105 \$ 18,000
		Travel of Staff	115 \$ 4,400
		Contractual Services	120 \$ 40,000
		Grants and Contributions (Workshops/Study Tours/EGMs)	145 \$ 16,000
	OP2.5	Travel of Staff	115 \$ 2,200
	OP2.6	Consultants	105 \$ 30,000

Table 1.2 – Results based workplan⁶

Outcome	Output #	Expected time to complete outputs															
		2023				2024				2025				2026			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
OC1	OP1.1																
	OP1.2																
	OP1.3 ⁷																
OC 2	OP2.1																
	OP2.2																
	OP2.3																
	OP2.4																
	OP2.5 ⁸																
	OP2.6																

Table 1.3 – Planned annual budget expenditure and cumulative financial implementation rate⁹

Budget Class	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Total	%
Consultants (105)	\$ 24,000	\$87,000	\$18,000	\$55,500	\$184,500	37%
Travel of staff (115)	\$4,600	\$12,100	\$2,200	\$6,600	\$25,500	5%

⁶ The results-based workplan may be slightly revised in the course of the project depending on factors such as country availability for implementation of the activities (expected to be further defined through country consultations) as well as timeliness in the transfer of funds to the implementing entity.

⁷ Advisory missions are in support of OP1.1 and OP1.3. The exact timing of them will depend on the implementation of said outputs.

⁸ Advisory missions are in support of OP2.3 and OP2.4. The exact timing of them will depend on the implementation of said outputs.

⁹ The Planned annual budget expenditure may be slightly revised in the course of the project depending on factors such as country availability for implementation of the activities (expected to be further defined through country consultations) as well as timeliness in the transfer of funds to the implementing entity.

Contractual Services (120)	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$160,000	32%
General operating expenses (125)	\$2,000	\$3,000	-	-	\$5,000	1%
Grants and contributions (145)	\$24,000	\$40,000	\$12,000	\$24,000	\$100,000	20%
Other staff costs (15)	\$10,000	\$10,000	-	\$5,000	\$25,000	5%
Total project cost	\$104,600	\$202,100	\$62,200	\$131,100	\$500,000	100%
Cumulative percentage	21%	40%	13%	26%	100%	

ANNEX 2: DETAILED JUSTIFICATION BY CODE

Grand total: \$ 500,000

1. Other staff costs - GTA (015): \$25,000 (Total)

Temporary assistance to perform the tasks of providing technical and organizational input and coordinating efforts, in support of outputs:

(OP1.1 (1 work month) + OP2.1 (1 work month) + OP2.3 (0,5 work months)) x (\$10,000 per work month) = \$25,000.

2. Consultants and Experts (105): \$184,500 (Total)

(a) International consultants

International consultants for the task(s) of preparing training and guidance material and providing technical input, assisting in the preparation of national workshops and trainings, providing other support as appropriate, in support of outputs:

- OP1.1 (1 work-month) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$6,000
- OP1.2 (3 work-months) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$18,000
- OP2.1 (2 work-months) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$18,000
- OP2.2 (5 work-months) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$36,000
- OP2.3 (3 work-month) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$18,000
- OP2.4 (3 work-month) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$18,000
- OP2.6 (5 work-months) x (\$6,000 per month) = \$30,000

Total: \$144,000

(b) National consultants

National consultants for the tasks of assisting in the application of training and guidance material in target countries and in the preparation of national workshops and twinning exercises, providing other support as appropriate, in support of outputs:

- OP1.1 (3 work-months) x (\$4,500 per month) = \$13,500
- OP1.2 (3 work-months) x (\$4,500 per month) = \$13,500
- OP2.3 (3 work-months) x (\$4,500 per month) = \$13,500

Total: \$40,500

(c) Consultant missions (travel plus other expenses)¹⁰

3. Travel of Staff (115): \$25,500 (Total, travel plus other expenses)

Missions by staff for the purpose of providing technical support/advice and attending national/regional and regional workshops/trainings as detailed below:

OP1.1 (2 missions) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) = \$2,200

OP1.2 (1 mission) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) x (3 people) = \$3,300

OP1.3 (2 missions) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) = \$2,200

OP2.1 (1 mission) x (\$1,150 average mission cost) x (4 people) = \$4,600

¹⁰ Mission distribution between staff and consultants will be further defined in the course of the project. For the purpose of this proposal, missions are budgeted in the section "travel of staff". Depending on the public health situation with the COVID-19 pandemic in target countries, including potential travel restrictions and/or other public health measures, this section may be adapted as appropriate

OP2.3 (2 missions) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) x (3 people) = \$6,600

OP2.4 (1 mission) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) x (4 people) = \$4,400

OP2.5 (2 missions) x (\$1,100 average mission cost) = \$2,200

4. Contractual services (120): \$160,000¹¹ (Total)

A provision of \$160,000 is required for contractual services with national/regional NGOs and/or other relevant institutions at national and/or regional level to provide logistical services and support in the organization of national workshops/trainings/meetings as appropriate in support of OP1.1 (\$40,000), OP1.2 (\$40,000), OP2.3 (\$40,000), OP2.4 (\$40,000)

5. General operating expenses (125): \$5,000 (Total)

(a) Communications

(b) Other general operating expenses (expenses related to logistical/office arrangements for temporary staff and consultants, as needed)

In support of OP1.3 (\$5,000)

6. Grants and Contributions (145): \$100,000 (Total)

Workshops and trainings, support for participants

- Two national and/or local workshops to support the application of the methodology on equitable access to WASH and aiming at undertaking a detailed assessment of the equity of access to WASH at national and/or local level in support of **OP1.1** (\$1,000 per participant) x (10 participants) x (2 workshops) = \$20,000
- Two national workshops organized to support policy makers in undertaking systematic assessments of the policy landscape and WASH situation in institutional settings in support of **OP1.2** (\$1,000 per participant) x (8 participants) x (2 workshops) = \$16,000
- One regional workshop for policymakers and water and wastewater operators to exchange experience on building climate-resilient WASH services in support of **OP2.1** (\$1,000 per participant) x (12 participants) x (1 workshop) x (2 days) = \$24,000
- Three national workshops to support policymakers in developing policies and/or measures on climate resilience in the water and sanitation sectors in support of **OP 2.3** (\$1,000 per participant) x (8 participants) x (3 workshops) = \$24,000
- Two national trainings organized in priority countries to support water and wastewater operators in strategic planning for ensuring climate resilience in the WASH sector in support of **OP2.4** (\$1,000 per participant) x (8 participants) x (2 trainings) = \$16,000

¹¹ Contractual services are designed to capture possible contracts with NGOs or other institutions (e.g. national research institutes) in the context of national workshops. Contracts may cover only logistical support, interpretation costs and related expenses, or they may also include substantive support (e.g. in the data collection relating to assessments). This will be further defined in the inception phase of the project, following consultations with beneficiary countries. If institutions do not provide substantive support for the preparation of workshops, money will be allocated to national consultancies for such support.

ANNEX 3: BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES BY ENTITY AND COST CENTERS

Note: The activities contained in this proposal are aligned with the programme of work of the Protocol on Water and Health, which is jointly implemented by UNECE and WHO/Europe.

In the below table, UNECE-implemented activities and WHO-implemented activities have been displayed as such, on the understanding that, as the two organizations service a joint instrument, technical input and involvement of one entity in activities led by the other may also occur, in line with the intersectoral nature of the Protocol.

The exact allocation between the two entities may also change depending on the how the activities unfold and the type of technical expertise needed to support them. By way of illustration, for OP2.3, addressing the setting of climate-sensitive targets, details will be defined in the course of 2026, depending on the type of targets/policies/measures that the target countries define and the expertise needed to support their development.

PROPOSED BUDGET									
Entity	Cost center	Functional area	Other Staff costs (15)	Consultants (105)	Travel of staff (115)	Contractual services (120)	General Operating Expenses (125)	Grants (145)	Total Budget
UNECE	13807	20AC0001	\$25,000	\$123,000	\$17,800	\$100,000	\$5,000	\$60,000	\$330,800
WHO/Europe	tbc	tbc	-	\$49,500	\$7,700	\$80,000	-	\$32,000	\$169,200
TOTAL									\$500,000