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

**Working Group on Water and Health**

Fourth meeting

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Information paper 10

**Note on how to strengthen synergies and cooperation between  
different activities under the Protocol**

Submitted by Switzerland in cooperation with the UNECE secretariat

**INTRODUCTION**

**1. Programme areas under the Protocol's programme of work**

The Protocol on Water and Health is cross-sectoral in its nature. Not only does it address water, environment and health but also different programme areas and domains, attempting to bring about synergies between them. These synergies are crucial in the implementation of the Protocol at the national level. At the same time, they are crucial at the level of the programme of work.

The programme of work for the period 2011-2013 comprises the following 6 core activity areas:

- Programme area 1: Target setting and reporting
- Programme area 2: Surveillance and early warning systems, contingency plans and response capacities
- Programme area 3: Cross-cutting issues incl. Small-scale water supplies and sanitation, Water supply and sanitation under extreme weather events and the impact of climate change
- Programme area 4: Project Facilitation Mechanism
- Programme area 5: Compliance procedure
- Programme area 6: Promotion of the Protocol and advocacy.

It comprises 3 areas of reinforcing activities which are carried out if the resources for them are available.

A. Programme area 7: Public awareness, access to information and public participation

- B. Programme area 8: Equitable access
- C. Programme area 9: Capacity-building and sharing of experience.

The Working Group on Water and Health is the body which reviews progress of activities in all programme areas and of all Task Forces and other bodies. As such, the Working Group on Water and Health is the institutional mechanism suitable to review and possibly promote synergies amongst different programme activities.

This paper has been prepared by Pierred Studer, Chair of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting, in cooperation with of the UNECE secretariat. The Paper mostly presents possible synergies from the viewpoint of the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting and the integration of different elements into the target setting process.

*Delegates are encouraged, on the basis of these reflections, and beyond, to give thought to the possibilities for synergies under the different programme areas and to actively contribute their views to the discussion on the strengthening of synergies between different activities under the Protocol.*

## **2. Current situation**

The statements presented at the Meeting of the Parties (MOP) in Bucharest in November 2010 have shown the importance to network the activities of the different task forces and working groups of the Protocol. The status reports gave the impression that each body of the Protocol works on its own, without much consultation and coordination with the other bodies. Only a few interactions were shown and all these different activities, without any prioritization, did not delivered a clear message on the way in which these contribute to achieving the overall objective of the Protocol, i.e. the prevention or reduction of water related diseases throughout the UNECE/WHO pan-European Region. The time is ripe, at the early stage of a new programme cycle, to consider areas for enhanced synergies and to give thought to processes and mechanisms which could support these. Such processes or mechanisms could comprise, but are not limited to:

- information sharing through meetings and email distribution lists (e.g. amongst all Task Force Leader e.g. in the context of the Bureau)
- the integration of different programme elements into meetings of existing bodies, such as under the Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting.

## **I. PROMOTING SYNERGIES THROUGH THE TASK FORCE ON TARGET SETTING AND REPORTING (TFTSR)**

The TFTSR is responsible for the implementation of the articles 6 and 7 of the Protocol. When dealing with the different aspects described under the article 6, from paragraph a) to m), it is evident that the same items are handled partially by other bodies under the Protocol or other programmes dealing with the different aspects of the Protocol. In order to strengthen all activities under the Protocol, there needs to be a strive to support and contribute to the core activities of the Protocol, notably related to target setting and reporting. It is essential to support each others' activities conducive to the implementation of the current work programme in order to produce tangible results at the third Meeting of the Parties.

We have also to be aware of the other programmes launched by international organizations dealing with water, which are related to activities under the Protocol and could possibly contribute to or duplicate them.

In the following, you will find a description of the activities managed by different Protocol bodies of relevance for the TFTSR.

As programme areas under the Protocol relate to priority issues that are key in the Protocol's implementation, they offer themselves as obvious themes/issues on which targets under the Protocol might be set to promote progress. The action-oriented, operational approach of target setting could be an effective mean to translate recommendations, practices and approaches promoted under the different bodies/areas of work under the Protocol into action at the national and local levels. The next sections of the present document show possible examples on how the work under different areas of the Protocol could be mainstreamed through setting targets and, in some cases, reporting. While these examples are not exhaustive, they aim to contribute to the holistic approach of the Protocol and to give ideas on how synergies can be found

## **1. Reduction of the scale of outbreaks and incidents of water-related disease (art. 6, para.2 b)**

The "Guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting" provide some recommendation on this item. On the other side, the Task Force on Surveillance has defined some key parameters which have to be considered by national authorities.

For the next reporting cycle, Parties agreed to include in their summary reports information related to real-time data on incidence (number of cases per year reported from all exposure routes) and on the number of outbreaks per year (potentially related to water) of:

- (a) Cholera;
- (b) Bacillary dysentery (shigellosis);
- (c) EHEC (Enterohaemorrhagic E. coli 0157:H7);
- (d) Viral hepatitis A;
- (e) Typhoid fever.

During the 4th TFTSR meeting held in October 2011 in Tbilisi, it has been mentioned by WHO-Europe that rotaviruses and helminthes are of importance for the European Region and therefore countries which are affected by these could set targets under the Protocol to address them, for instance to promote vaccination campaigns.

Moreover, it could be needed to review and possibly amend the core parameters to be reported under the Protocol to be sure that they promote the priorities identified by the Task Force on Surveillance.

## **2. Access to drinking water and sanitation (art. 6, para.2 c and d).**

### **2.1 Equitable Access**

Specific targets can be defined under the Protocol in order to promote access to water and sanitation of specific groups of the population like vulnerable groups, or persons living in rural areas and to ensure the affordability of access for them. Some examples of such targets already exist, for instance related to the access to water and sanitation in schools in the Republic of Moldova.

The Task Force on Target Setting and Reporting and the Working Group will be invited to further propose and discuss which indicators are suitable to address the dimension of "equitable access." Moreover the expert group on equitable access proposes to amend the reporting template to investigate whether equitable access is promoted in Protocol's Parties, and might develop specific indicators to that end.

## **2.2 Small scale water supply and sanitation SSWSS**

The work undertaken by the group dealing with Small Scale Water Supply and Sanitation (SSWSS) could also be reflected in the targets set by countries for rural areas. The expert groups can recommend targets and activities/measures related to SSWSS. The work on the questionnaire and the future policy guidance promises to be crucial in this regard and could, from the beginning on, integrate a “target setting perspective.”

Eventually, the proposals made by the expert groups should be reflected in the statistic on SSWSS for rural areas. This might imply a differentiation regarding the overall access to drinking water and sanitation into access “in urban area” and “in rural areas”. In addition to the collection of these statistics, the actions undertaken to improve the quality of water and sanitation from small-scale supplies and to implement respective targets set should also be described in the corresponding national reports.

### **3. Good practices in the management of enclosed waters generally available for bathing (art. 6, para.2 k)**

The ad hoc working group on pools and spas has discussed specific issues. The proposed recommendations, which are based on WHO-Guidelines, should be taken into account for setting targets in this field.

### **4. Synergies between the TFSTR and the Project Facilitation Mechanism PFM**

The work on setting targets in countries which are supported by the Project Facilitation Mechanism should take due account of the outcome of the work by the different Task Forces and programme activities under the Protocol of relevance for target setting. At the same time, the progress achieved in projects financed under the Project Facilitation Mechanism is of great importance for the work under the Task Forces, primarily the Task Force on Setting Targets and Reporting: it allows to test the guidance documents and bring in first hand experience and practices that can be shared in Task Force meetings.

Another important aspect is that the setting of targets and target dates represent a clear prioritization of future action, which has been broadly discussed in the country and has broad support and official endorsement. Thus the setting of targets is an important asset for future donor interventions, including under the Project Facilitation Mechanism. On one hand it provides a clear prioritization for recipient countries that can strongly substantiate their requests for assistance. On the other hand, the fact that targets have been broadly discussed and endorsed is an important guarantee for donors and for the Project Facilitation Mechanism that interventions respond to a priority need, are embedded in a long term perspective and are therefore sustainable in the long term.

## **II. THE ROLE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON WATER AND HEALTH IN PROMOTING SYNERGIES**

Another potentially very effective mean and platform to promote synergies is the Working Group on Water and Health. However so far, meetings of the Working Group have mostly focused on discussing the progress under the different areas and little attention has been paid in furthering synergies.

The agenda, structure and approach of the Working Group meetings might be revised to highlight synergies and to bring closer together the different working areas under the Protocol.