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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**

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Information paper 9

Concept note

**Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation in the Pan-European Region
Developing and testing a scorecard for monitoring progress**

Background

One of the main objectives of the UNECE¹-WHO/EURO² Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes is the provision of safe drinking water to everyone. In particular the Protocol includes several provisions on non-discrimination and equity aspects. For instance, article 5 requires that “equitable access to water, adequate in terms both of quantity and of quality, should be provided for all members of the population, especially those who suffer a disadvantage or social exclusion”. In 2011, under the auspices of the Protocol’s Working Group on Water and Health, an ad-hoc Expert Group produced the document “No One Left Behind. Good Practices on Ensuring Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation in the pan-European Region”³. The overall objective of this activity was to promote the implementation of the Protocol in relation to facilitating access to water and sanitation for poor, vulnerable and socially excluded people and to reduce geographical disparities in access to water and sanitation through information exchange on relevant experience in countries of the pan-European region.

The 2011 document developed a conceptual framework, identified policy options, and gathered information on good practices on this area. One of its main messages is that current water governance frameworks are often “equity blind”, and that ensuring equitable access requires a results-oriented action plan building on country-situation analysis and context-specific equity indicators. At their final meeting, the members of the ad-hoc Expert Group recommended as follow up work the development of a self-evaluation tool which could have the structure of a scorecard. Such proposal was endorsed by the Working Group on Water and Health at its fourth meeting (1-2 November 2011).

¹ United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

² Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization:

³ The document and related communication materials can be accessed at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29170>

Objective

The objective of this project is to encourage and support actions to ensure equitable access in the countries of the pan-European region by developing and testing a tool (“scorecard”) that could be used by governments and other stakeholders to establish a baseline, track progress, and prompt discussion on further actions to be taken. The intention is not to use the tool to develop a regional assessment that would allow monitoring progress across the region – while useful, that idea would be much too ambitious given the current state of play⁴. Rather, the intention is to develop a credible and practical assessment methodology, and to encourage the development of national assessments.

Methodology

Convening of an Expert Group

An ad-hoc Expert Group will be convened to oversee and help implement this project. The working ways of the Expert Group will be modeled on those of the Drafting Expert Group that developed the document “No One Left Behind”. France will act as chair of the Expert Group. The target size of the Expert Group is 15 members. The members will be drawn both from the Drafting Expert Group that oversaw the development of the “No One Left Behind” publication as well as from outside. The combined membership of the Expert Group should be able to offer expertise in the areas of water policy, water and sanitation services regulation, water economics, social protection policy, regional development policy, and access to information and public participation in public service provision.

The main task of the members of the Expert Group will be to provide advice through the development and finalization of the scorecard, by (i) identifying relevant initiatives, materials and resource persons to be considered, and (ii) providing comments and inputs to drafts of the scorecard and related deliverables both in written form and at dedicated meetings. A first draft of the scorecard will be presented by the Secretariat at the first meeting of the Expert Group (it will be distributed in advance to the members of the Expert Group).

The Expert Group will work in English. It is envisioned that the members of the Expert Group will meet twice: in late September 2012 and in late April 2013. The meetings of the Expert Group will be organized by the chair (France) with support from the Secretariat.

Conceptual development of a Scorecard

The “scorecard” is expected to be a list of indicators that would help to keep score of how a country/region/city is progressing in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation. The indicators in the list could possibly combine quantitative as well as qualitative indicators -- such as “traffic lights”, “1-4 scoring” or “Yes, To some extent, No” assessments. The indicators in the list could potentially be supplemented with short narrative text providing information to justify the score assigned to the indicator. The number of indicators should be long enough to provide a comprehensive overview of progress in the different dimensions of equitable access and support accountability, but short enough to keep it manageable and a useful public policy communication tool.

The development of the scorecard will be structured to reflect the findings of the “No One Left Behind” document. Thus, the scorecard will cover the following three dimensions of equitable access: geographical disparities in access, access by vulnerable and marginalized groups, and affordability concerns. The scorecard will also cover governance issues, such as those highlighted in the Checklist offered in chapter 3 of the “No One Left Behind” document (reproduced in the Annex to this concept note).

The development of the scorecard will build on the existing relevant indicators monitored through current reporting processes, as well as on other relevant initiatives, such as the review of the indicators under the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme (see footnote 4). It will also build on the experience of developing other scorecards in the water and sanitation sector (such as the AMCOW/WSP CSO2 Scorecard, see: <http://www.wsp.org/wsp/sites/wsp.org/files/publications/CSO-Synthesis-Report.pdf>).

The development of the scorecard will aim for an easy-to-use and flexible tool, so it can be used in countries facing different data constraints, as well as at different levels (national, sub-national, city).

Testing through Country Pilots

In order to support the methodological development of the scorecard, it is envisioned that two piloting exercises will be carried out. One piloting exercise will take place in a country from the Eastern part of the region (with financial support from France through the Secretariat), and another one in a country from the Western part of the region. Draft Terms of Reference for carrying out those piloting exercises will be shared by the Secretariat in July 2012 and finalized at the first meeting of the Expert Group in September 2012.

⁴ Note that the Joint Monitoring Programme is spearheading an effort to refine indicators for global monitoring of access to water, sanitation and hygiene services including equity and non-discrimination issues (see <http://www.wssinfo.org/post-2015-monitoring/overview/>). The objectives of the two exercises (scorecard and post2015 monitoring) are different but complementary, and it is expected that the development of the scorecard will build on as well as inform the post2015 monitoring discussions.

The country pilots can be carried out at national or sub-national level (e.g. oblast).

The country pilots will consist of three steps:

- 1) Drafting a **situational analysis**. The analysis will include a self-assessment structured according to the draft scorecard and using the available information. The analysis will also include a critical assessment the draft scorecard (usefulness, ease-of-use) as well as suggestions for improving the scorecard (such as adding or eliminating dimensions).
- 2) Organising a **multi-stakeholder workshop** (at the national or sub-national level) for each country pilot. The workshop will have three blocks:
 - a) Discussion of the results offered by the scorecard tool (Does it offer an accurate assessment of the extent to which access to water and sanitation is equitable and the efforts being done to improve the situation?)
 - b) Discussion of priority actions to ensure more equitable access
 - c) Critical assessment of the scorecard tool (Is it useful to track progress? Is it useful to encourage action? Is it easy-to-use? How can it be improved?)
- 3) Drafting a **country report**. The country report will include a revised version of the situational analysis (taking into account the discussions at the workshop). In addition, it will document and critically analyse the process of carrying out the piloting exercise.

For each country pilot, a **country team** will be established. The country team will include a country team leader (which is expected to devote substantial time to coordinating the piloting exercise) and 3-6 additional experts. Ideally, the country team will include a balance of stakeholders (government, service providers, users, civil society organizations) as well as a balance of fields of expertise (urban water services, rural water services, vulnerable and marginalized groups, affordability issues). The country team will be supported by the Secretariat.

Delivery of final product

The final product of the project will be a document structured around four blocks:

1. Equitable access to water and sanitation (max. 5 pages)
2. The scorecard (max. 20 pages, including explanations on the use of the scorecard)
3. A description and analysis of the two country piloting exercises (max. 10 pages)
4. Recommendations for countries that intend to use the scorecard (max. 5 pages)

The target length of the document is max. 40 pages.

Expected results

The project will contribute to fulfill the human right to water and sanitation and to reduce inequities in access through the following expected results:

For the countries involved in piloting the scorecard:

- The project is expected to increase the profile of equitable access issues.
- The project is also expected to develop the capacity of those countries to undertake a self-assessment and to identify opportunities for improvement.

For all the countries in the region:

- The project is expected to encourage them to undertake self-assessments on equitable access -- this will be achieved by making available an assessment framework as well as by showing the feasibility of undertaken self-assessments (through sharing the experience of the pilot countries).

Timeline

- **June-July 2012.** The Secretariat, with the support of a consultant, produces a first version of the scorecard and the draft Terms of Reference of the piloting exercises. Countries volunteer to carry piloting exercises.
- **September.** The Secretariat and the lead country organize the first meeting of the Expert Group. The members of the Expert Group discuss (i) the structure of the scorecard and (ii) the structure of the piloting exercises. The names of the two pilot countries are confirmed.
- **October.** The Secretariat prepares a revised version of the scorecard. The country piloting exercises are launched.
- **November-February.** The two country piloting exercises are carried out, led by country teams and supported by the Secretariat.
- **March 2013.** The Secretariat prepares a first draft of the full document.

- **April.** The Secretariat and the lead country organize a second meeting of the Expert Group. The members of the Expert Group discuss the first draft of the full document.
- **May.** The Secretariat prepares a revised draft of the full document.
- **August.** The revised draft of the full document is discussed at World Water Week in Stockholm.
- **October-December 2013.** The revised draft of the full document is discussed at the Conference of the Parties. The Secretariat finalizes the document.

ANNEX: Checklist to develop a strategic framework for ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation

1. Reflect **international commitments** in national legislation. While international law is applicable at the national level, changes in national legislation to reflect the contents of the Protocol on Water and Health and the human right to water and sanitation as regards equitable access would contribute to their effective application.
2. Identify and allocate **responsibilities** among the different actors (central government, local authorities, services providers,...) for delivering on those commitments, and the **financial resources** needed to effectively discharge those responsibilities.
3. Set **equitable access targets**. Setting targets under the Protocol can actively promote equitable access, for example, setting differentiating targets for areas that lag behind or setting specific targets addressing vulnerable or marginalized groups, or setting specific targets related to affordability.
4. Develop **capacity building initiatives** aimed at enhancing the understanding of the importance and implications of adopting an *equitable access lens* to the planning and delivery of water and sanitation services by staff in relevant ministries, agencies and utilities.
5. Invest efforts in better **understanding the** linkages between equitable access to water and sanitation services and equitable access to other public services (in particular health services) and assess the need for developing **integrated responses** to equitable access to public services.
6. Develop **awareness raising programmes** aimed at informing users and other right-holders of water supply and sanitation services of their relevant rights and the mechanism to claim them, making sure that those programmes are designed in a way that prioritizes reaching out to citizens with no access or lower levels of access.
7. Analyse and **publish the progress** in closing equity gaps.
8. Develop **accountability mechanisms** that help to identify violations of the human right to water and sanitation (including with respect to discrimination, exclusion and unjustifiable retrogression) and to seek redress. They can be formal (such as customer service departments within water and sanitation operators, courts and national human rights institutions) or informal.
9. Create national or local **spaces for discussion and coordination** between competent authorities. At the national level, key agencies include: the ministry of finance, the ministries responsible for water and sanitation services, the ministry responsible for regional development, the ministry responsible for social protection, the ministry of health and the ministry of environment.
10. Ensure well-functioning institutional mechanisms for the **monitoring and enforcement of standards**, such as those related to the quality and costs of drinking water or sanitation facilities. Such mechanisms (e.g. water regulator, water observatory) should in particular allow monitoring the evolution of coverage and service quality levels in the areas lagging behind in terms of access, as well as for users belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups.