

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

*WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE*

Protocol on Water and Health

IMPROVING HEALTH IN ARMENIA THROUGH TARGET SETTING TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT, ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND ADEQUATE SANITATION

2nd AHPFM meeting, 1 July 2009, Geneva.
Proposal submitted by Republic of Armenia

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Applicants official title and address

Ministry of Environmental Protection, represented by Water Resources Management Agency.

Ministry of Health represented by State Hygiene and Anti-Epidemic Inspectorate and

Ministry of Territorial Administration represented by State Committee on Water Systems.

Main Executive Agency

Taking note of high level decision of the Coordination Council on the National Dialogue on Water Policy in the Armenian Republic, the leading agencies in the implementation of the Project shall be the Ministry of Nature Protection and Ministry of Health.

Engaged organizations

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia;

Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Armenia;

Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Armenia;

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia;

Ministry of Nature Protection of the Republic of Armenia;

Ministry of Territorial Administration of the Republic of Armenia;

Non-Governmental Organizations - “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment”.

It is considered that the NGO dealing with water supply systems, sanitation and environment may be eventually engaged into the Project.

The main aim of the project

The main aim is to provide assistance to Armenia to promote the implementation of specific scopes in the frame of the 1999 Protocol on Water and Health to the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, thus, «to promote at all appropriate levels, nationally, as well as transboundary and international contexts, the protection of human health and well-being, both individual and collective, within a framework of sustainable development, through improving water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and through preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases». (Article 1 of the Protocol).

The specific objective of the project

The specific objective is to provide assistance to Armenia in setting and publishing national and/or local targets for standards and levels of work that should be reached or maintained in order to ensure a high level of protection of human health and well-being, to improve access to safe water and ensure safe sanitation as well as sustainable management of watercourses, including development and approval of agreed objectives with the participation of all engaged national organizations.

Background of the project

Armenia is not a Party to the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes. Armenia signed the Protocol on Water and Health in 1999. It is in the process of ratification. According to Articles 21 and 22 of the Protocol Armenia may become a Party to the Protocol, despite not being a Party to the Convention.

Background of the project

In April 2006 Armenia officially applied to the European Union, stressing its interest in starting a process of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) in the water sector, asking the European Commission to support that initiative. The main purpose of that dialogue is to improve the use of water resources and provide for sustainable investment in implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

Background of the project

For the NPD implementation an Action Plan has been developed and approved by the First Meeting of the Steering Committee in the frame of the NPD on January, 2007. Memorandum of Understanding had been signed between the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Plan includes also establishment of Protocol discussions in the frame of a Steering Committee.

Background of the project

Within the framework of the NPD financing strategy for rural water supply and sanitation was developed, based on the Millennium Development Goals, as well as promoting the introduction of the integrated water resources management principles, according to the approach of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Goal

The goal of the proposed project is to develop target indicators to assist Armenia in implementing certain requirements of the 1999 Protocol on Water and Health, thus to promote at national level the protection of life and health of the public both in terms of individual and collective aspects, as well as to improve management of water resources use, including protection of ecosystems, improvement of safe water supply and discharge, and controlling and reducing water-borne diseases.

Main objectives

Needs assessment related to implementation of requirements included in the Protocol of Water and Health.

Establish and approve targets and target dates in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health in Armenia with participation of all engaged national institutions.

In order to implement the target indicators of the Protocol on Water and Health develop a timeframe of actions for agencies involved in the Project according to the requirements of the reporting as well as the outline of the National Report.

Ensure appropriate involvement

For appropriate promotion and implementation of the Project on Targets and Target Dates in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health, the following stakeholders will be engaged:

Ministry of Nature Protection

Ministry of Health

Ministry of Territorial Administration:

Local self-governance authorities

State Committee of Water Systems

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Justice

Ensure appropriate public participation

Public participation is an important condition for the target implementation process, taking note of Article 6 paragraph 2 «these targets shall be periodically revised. In doing so, they shall make appropriate practical and/or other provisions for public participation, within a transparent and fair framework, and shall ensure that due account is taken of the outcome of the public participation». In the sector of water use, supply, sanitation and ecology in Armenia several NGOs are very active, including “Armenian Women for Health and Healthy Environment”, “Ecological Survival”, “Earth’s Water Partnership” and “Lore Ecoclub” NGOs.

Task Force

State government agencies (Ministries and others), which are responsible for water resources management, public health, provision of safe water supply and sanitation, as well as self-governance authorities, water supply companies, water users and NGOs;

European Union and other donors, international financial institutions collaborating in water sector of Armenia, will be also engaged in the Project.

Main users

The whole population of Armenia and all water users will gain long-term advantage as a result of the Project development.

Expected outcomes

- Development of established targets and target dates at national level in accordance with the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Armenia.
- Support to issues envisaged by the Protocol on Water and Health, as well as national regulatory processes.
- Development of an Action Plan and its presentation to the Government.

Methodology and Project State-of-the-Art International level-Role of WHO ,UNECE, donors

UNECE and WHO Regional Office for Europe will provide expert evaluation of established aims and targets and relevant summary reports. Logistical expenses of UNECE and WHO representatives participating in the meetings will be covered by the project budget.

Support for the implementation will be requested from Finland, Norway, Switzerland and other countries, as well as from international finance institutions.

National Level- Steering Committee and Working Group

Fairly established national targets may be used by national and local public authorities as a baseline for the distribution of resources. Transparent and politically approved targets may also serve as a secure background for international aid application, increasing the opportunity to apply for international financing. For this purpose a steering committee and working group will be established.

The steering committee will consist of key ministry officials and a representative from the NGO. The main responsibilities will be to collect interim reports from the project and provide feedback.

A working group composed of specialists from the key ministries and NGOs will be established. This will meet periodically to discuss the progress of the work.

- **Methods to be followed**
- Consultations of representatives of Ministries and Departments engaged in matters of water management, water protection and public health services in the frame of Round table discussions.
- Assessment of current status on the implementation of the requirements of the Protocol on Water and Health in compliance with the existing reports and their formats.
- Analysis of actual problems and drawbacks regarding implementation of the requirements of the Protocol on Water and Health, and its publication.

- **Methods to be followed**
- Organization of a kick-off national meeting to deliver the main information to the participants. Organization of a meeting at the national level on the advanced phase of development in order to review and assess the progress and to discuss the schedule of activities.
- Development of an Action Plan in touch with all engaged parties.
- Engagement of the public to ensure transparency.
- Establishment and adoption of indicators for monitoring and assessment of progress.
- Coordination of assessment mechanism.
- Monitoring and assessment of the Project through the Steering Committee on the national level and by WHO and UNECE on the international level.

Activities

- Promotion and provision of consultations to Ministries and Departments involved.
- Discussion of the main provisions in the Protocol on Water and Health.
- Assessment of current status on water and health in Armenia.
- Needs assessment and definition of priorities.
- Establishing a list of responsibilities and obligations regarding implementation of the requirements of the Protocol on Water and Health.

Activities

- Analysis and publication of the existing problems and drawbacks
- Development of an Action Plan for further activities on the basis of time schedule and expected outcomes. Targets and indicators will be established and agreed upon.
- Organization of meetings and seminars with participation of engaged parties. As an outcome, the Action Plan will be established and approved, with responsibilities of every participating body for relevant activities.

Activities

- Coordination of the schedule of activities by all engaged parties (cooperatives, Ministries and Departments) at national level.
- Raise public awareness about the programme, scopes and targets.
- Definition of monitoring indicators and assessment of progress. The indicators should reflect various activities, undertaken by a variety of participants at national and local levels. It will comply with the provisions approved by the meetings of the Parties.
- Coordination of assessment mechanism.

Activities

The format of the National Report will be developed in compliance with the requirements and standards of already existing mechanisms of summary report preparation. The report will provide the assessment of targets.

Preliminary assessment of the budget

Preliminarily, the budget of the Project is estimated as 145 500 USD

Should the Project be approved, co-financing for implementation will be sought from the National Dialogue on Water Policy in Armenia (one meeting of a Coordination Council is around 5 000 USD) and the Government of Armenia will provide resources equivalent to 12 500 USD.

The NGOs will contribute by providing resources for public awareness activities to be implemented.

Expert assistance from the Parties of the Protocol on Water and Health is expected; travel expenses of participating experts will be covered from the budget of the Project.