

EQUITABLE ACCESS COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS: UKRAINE

SECTION I: COUNTRY SETTING

Basic information

POPULATION	44.8 million (2017)
AREA	603,628 km ²
GDP	US\$ 112.9 billion
GDP PER CAPITA	US\$ 2,522
ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER	91.33 per cent ⁴⁵
ACCESS TO SANITATION	60.48 per cent ⁴⁵

Protocol on Water and Health. Ukraine ratified the Protocol in September 2003. In 2011, targets under Article 6 were set and approved by the Government. In 2013, Ukraine was one of the countries where the Equitable Access Score-card was piloted.

Water sector. The main responsible authority, which also acts as a coordinator for the Protocol, is the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. Other ministries involved in water and sanitation include the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Regional Development, Building and Housing, and the Ministry of Education and Science. Financial aspects are overseen by the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Social Policy deals with social regulations.

Section II: Self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation

II.A. Key findings⁴⁶

Governance framework. One key finding was that the legal framework, although covering water in many regulations, is underdeveloped with respect to sanitation. Sanitation is given much less attention in State policy, and the right to sanitation lacks a national legal definition.

Geographical disparities. There are major geographical disparities in terms of both water quality and the price of services. There has been a persistent lack of financial resources in the water and sanitation sector for the past two decades, which has led to infrastructure deterioration as well as high levels of risks and accidents. Major cities used local budgets to replace obsolete infrastructures, but villages had been unable to do so leading to significant disparities. Moreover, villages rely overwhelmingly on decentralized systems, e.g. coverage of centralized sanitation systems in rural areas was found to be as low as 3 per cent, and the quality of such systems is not overseen by government authorities. The reduction of geographical disparities is not considered a political priority in Ukraine.

Vulnerable and marginalized groups. Information on the different categories of users varied significantly in terms of completeness and availability. The most significant information gaps were identified with respect to traveller communities (Roma) and homeless people. Kindergarten and school educational facilities were lacking proper menstrual hygiene management facilities for girls, and schools in rural areas were not equipped with sanitary toilets. To address the situation, Ukraine set a national target under the Protocol to increase by 2015 the share of educational facilities with drinking water of adequate quality, and connected to sewers and equipped with cesspools both in cities and in rural areas.

Affordability. The most relevant social protection measures in place in Ukraine aim to maintain affordable prices for all housing and utilities services. Measures include providing water and sanitation services free of charge, discounted prices of centralized water supply and sanitation services for certain categories of users, and non-monetary housing subsidies. However, social protection measures do not cover decentralized systems and systems of self-provision of water and sanitation. Overall, the tariff system does not strike a good balance between recovering the cost of services and guaranteeing affordability, as tariffs—and the price of other goods and services—increase faster than salaries.

⁴⁵ For official WHO UNICEF JMP data from 2015, see <https://washdata.org/data/household#!/>

⁴⁶ For more information on the findings of the self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation, see the country report available at <https://bit.ly/2nu4vZd>

A local self-assessment highlighted the situation of 1,202 households in Sevastopol, which had been disconnected from a sewer as a result of non-payment of water bills in March 2013.

II.B. Self-assessment process

Brief description. The self-assessment exercise was undertaken as a pilot process. The exercise was performed at both national and local levels in the city of Sevastopol and had a time frame for implementation of five months from January to May 2013. It was mainly implemented by the State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service (SSES) and by the national environmental NGO MAMA-86 supported by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources. The project also involved experts on the legal, financial and social aspects of the WASH sector, and included international obligations concerning water and sanitation. National public authorities, including the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Regional Development, Building and Housing, the Ministry of Social Policy, and State Agencies and Services were involved in gathering information for the score-card assessment. As part of the process, Ukraine organized stakeholder workshops, as well as press events to convene the results of the self-assessment.

Key lessons learned from the process:

- Applying the score-card requires some capacity in place. Practical experience in cooperating with different stakeholders and working together on different aspects of the water sector can serve as good groundwork for the self-assessment exercise.
- The score-card is a useful tool to raise awareness on the rights to water and sanitation, to analyse gaps in access to water and sanitation, to prioritize problems and to further discuss possible solutions among the different stakeholders. At the local level, it empowers local communities by improving knowledge on the topic of equitable access to water and sanitation.
- The State-NGO partnership was beneficial in applying the score-card. NGOs can provide a neutral framework for reviewing the self-assessment results and can facilitate the carrying out of the exercise at the local level.
- There is a lack of expertise at the national level on the theory and practice related to the rights to water and sanitation such that capacity-building and awareness-raising are needed in this respect.

Section III: Actions taken to improve equitable access to water and sanitation

The results of the self-assessment were used to lobby for legislative changes in the existing Law on Drinking Water and Drinking Water Supply, in particular for the inclusion of additional definitions and the recognition of new terms and concepts, as well as their introduction in national programmes. The amendments proposed included definitions of sanitation, rights to sanitation, affordability of WSS, safe drinking water, and water safety plans (WSPs). Although not all the proposed changes were accepted, the introduction of WSPs, affordability of WSS, and amendments regarding sanitation were incorporated into the final version of the Law on Drinking Water, Drinking Water Supply and Water Disposal. About drinking water, drinking water supply and water disposal. Results regarding geographical disparities were used to advocate for budget support to the State Targeted Programme on providing a centralized water supply to rural settlements, which was already in place but was not adequately funded.

The findings on poor water quality were also extremely significant and in particular for the SSES, the national entity responsible for drinking-water safety. The findings prompted SSES to work and cooperate in 2015 with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the WHO office in Ukraine to introduce risk-based approaches to drinking-water quality surveillance in the country, i.e. WSPs.

At the local level, the score-card's results in the city of Sevastopol furthered discussion among the different stakeholders on the option and costs of connecting households to the main sanitary sewers and on financing mechanisms, particularly cross-subsidizing, to ensure the affordability of water and sanitation for all users. The situation of the 1,020 households who were disconnected from the sanitation network was also brought to the attention of city authorities.

Furthermore, the NGO MAMA-86 used the results of the score-card to prepare a project proposal on ensuring the rights to water and sanitation, obtaining the financial support (about €90,600) from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The main objectives were to collect additional information on access to water and sanitation in targeted communities, to build the capacity of local authorities in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation, and to stimulate public discussion on local issues concerning access to water and sanitation. The project was implemented in 12 regions where the self-assessment was performed, and it led to the development of water and sanitation safety plans (WSSPs) for the selected project areas. In 2016, eight pilot projects on selected measures of WSSPs were implemented involving targeted communities and having a tangible impact on more than 17,000 residents, mainly children and rural dwellers.

Section IV: Financing equitable access to water and sanitation

Funds for activities related to equitable access to water and sanitation are typically allocated within national and regional programmes financed by the State budget. These include, for instance, the national programme Drinking Water of Ukraine and the State Programme of Reforming and Developing Housing and Utilities Sector. Some projects are also co-financed by local entities, e.g. oblast.

Many of the challenges faced by Ukraine in ensuring equitable access to water and sanitation relate to a chronic underfunding of the water and sanitation sector. This is the case for poor water quality, which is closely related to the lack of investment in water and sanitation related infrastructures. Underfunding also leads to a low rate of implementation of relevant laws and policies, which means that even when legislative steps are taken, they might not translate into tangible improvements for the population. The programme Drinking Water of Ukraine for 2006–2020 for instance, was only implemented by 20 per cent in 2011 owing to a lack of resources. The State Target-specific Programme for Ensuring Priority Centralized Water Supply in Rural Settlements was underfunded such that centralized water supplies and sanitation services were only provided at about 25 per cent of the planned level.

For future activities related to water and sanitation, Ukraine must have a financing strategy in place. This is not specifically targeted to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation, but it does estimate costs for some specific actions, including the provision of drinking-water supply and sanitation services to educational and health care facilities. Furthermore, Ukraine has considered financing the installation of individual and collective tertiary treatment units, i.e. on-tap filters, including in pre-school facilities and clinics, and to establish drinking water distribution centres. Funds have been allocated by the Ministry of Regional Development, Building and Housing from 2006 to 2020 with the estimated costs of the projects reaching 166.5 million hryvnia (~US\$ 6.6 million), of which 150.2 million hryvnia (~US\$ 6 million) come from the State budget.

In terms of international support for the water and sanitation sector, Ukraine has mobilized funds from the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, mainly to benefit infrastructure related projects. Furthermore, Sida has provided financial support in Ukraine, including grants of 45 million kronor (~US\$ 4.6 million) for the modernization of water utilities and another grant of 40 million kronor (~US\$ 4.1 million) for the purchase of wastewater treatment facilities and the elimination of wastewater discharges into the Black Sea.

