

Scorecard to assess equitable access to water and sanitation

Portuguese pilot project

The Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority

15 May 2013



Entidade Reguladora dos Serviços de Águas e Resíduos

Objectives

- Objectives:
 - Test a tool for a national regular evaluation of the progress regarding equitable access to water and sanitation
 - Develop and support policy definition and national strategies for the sector towards the progressive realisation of these rights
 - Raise awareness with the pupose of reaching out even to non-traditional stakeholders;
- Leading partners
 - The Water and Waste Services Regulation Authority (ERSAR)
 - National Commission for Human Rights (Secretariat by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Scale of the project
 - Nationwide
 - 7 months (Sept 2012 – Apr 2013)



Country profile

Population (inhabitants)	10 047 621
Extension (km²)	89 088,9
GDP per capita (EUR/person)	16194
% of population below national poverty line	18,0 (2010)
% of population living in urban areas / rural areas	47,5% / 39,1%
Renewable freshwater resources (million m³ per capita)	75000 (aprox)
% of population <u>without</u> access to safe drinking water	5%
% of population <u>without</u> access to wastewater collection / wastewater treatment (any level)	19% / 22%
Rate of access to water in urban areas (%) / rural areas (%)	99% / 90%
Rate of access to sanitation in urban areas (%) / rural areas (%)	95% / 69%
Amount of the average water and sanitation bill in the country/region/city (Euros/year)	185,95 €/ year
Amount of the water and sanitation bill in the country/region/city for households in the lowest wealth or income group (Euros/year)	120,95 €/ year (considering that every operator follows ERSAR's recommended social tariff).
Average disposable household income (or expenditure) (Euros/year)	30668€/ year
Average household income (or expenditure) for households in the lowest wealth or income group (please specify whether this refers to lowest quintile, lowest decile, or people under the national poverty line) (Euros/year)	2798€/ year (2010)



Self-assessment exercise

- Team composition:
 - Coordination team: ERSAR, National Commission for Human Rights
 - Official institutions:
 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Directorate-General for External Policy;
 - Ministry of Internal Affairs - Directorate- General for Internal Affairs
 - Ministry of Solidarity and Social Security - Directorate-General of Social Security
 - Ministry of Health - Directorate-General for Health;
 - Ministry of Education and Science - Secretary-General for Education
 - High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue;
 - Portuguese Ombudsman;
 - Ministry of Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (MAMAOT-GPP);
 - Ministry of Justice - Directorate-General of Justice Policy;
 - Ministry of Economy and Employment – Authority for Working Conditions;
 - Ministry of Economy and Employment – Directorate-General for Consumers;



Self-assessment exercise

- Team composition:
 - Operators: local service providers, national holding for the water sector
 - Other stakeholders: water sector associations, consumers associations, unions, NGOs, church institutions
 - Gulbenkian Foundation – Gulbenkian Programme of Human Development
- Description of the process
 - Initial contact with official institutions to provide information;
 - Followed by specific contacts for further details on the information
 - Convening of all stakeholders to a workshop for dissemination of the scorecard
 - Production of a draft of the country report



Main findings

- Good practices:
 - Setting of strategic targets to ensure universal access in Portugal with an holistic public policy for the water sector
 - Targeting public subsidies policies to reduce price disparities
 - Reducing price disparities through tariff guidelines and assessing the need for subsidisation in Portugal with macro-affordability indicator
 - Pushing utilities to introduce social tariffs and enable solidarity between regions
 - Availability of subsidies for adapting private facilities to support people with special physical needs
 - Existence of social security benefits to support households that cannot afford water bills (people in economic need)
 - Inducing operators to improve service provision by benchmarking
 - Setting up a mediation mechanism for consumer complaints



Main findings

- Main gaps:
 - Lack of integration of policies (water, social, environmental, etc)
 - Lack of information on financial resources
 - Lack of information on specific issues
 - Need for improvement in communication to consumers
 - Need for a practical support to those with special needs (illegal housing, nomadic people, homeless people)
 - Lack of integration between social policies and water support measures
 - Difference in prices and inequalities between regions



Next steps

- Set the ground for an informal network of stakeholders from the water sector and from the field of human rights and social policies;
- Carrying out a Recommendation by ERSAR addressed at the operators of drinking water and wastewater management services about good practices in ensuring the human right to water and sanitation, including equitable access;
- The drafting of recommendations/handbooks of good practices in specific areas of social policies related with access to water and sanitation under the umbrella of the relevant government bodies (e.g. access in the workplaces; access in schools and education facilities; access in health facilities; etc.).



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Benefits

- A broader understanding of the issues related to the access to water and sanitation in Portugal;
- Raise awareness about these issues among the stakeholders of the water sector and the general public;
- Have a clear notion of the available and lacking information about this topic, of the efforts needed to develop new tools for the collection of data and assessment of the reality (e.g. financial resources allocated to the sector, standards of service in specific facilities, levels of access for vulnerable and marginalized groups) and of the possible improvements in existing laws and regulations;



Benefits

- A better knowledge of the undergoing initiatives and difficulties met by stakeholders in issues of access to water and sanitation in the field of human rights and of social policy.
- To place ERSAR in a pivotal role in this area;
- Get contributions for the on-going revision of the national strategic plan for the water sector (PEAASAR);
- Find the right partners to develop new initiatives in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation.



Lessons learnt

- Important to find the right partners to develop initiatives in the area of equitable access to water and sanitation;
- Important to balance between independent stakeholders and institutional stakeholders. Specific problematic situations are most of the times covered by a national average;
- The human right to water and sanitation brought a new topic into the discussion, for which most of the institutions are not aware;
- The awareness raising should be widely extensive to NGO's and other stakeholders.

