

Making Water and Sanitation Affordable for All

Good practices to ensure the affordability of drinking water supply and sanitation services in the pan-European region

Draft Annotated Outline

Executive Summary (2 pages)

This section will highlight the main messages of the document.

1. About this Document (1 page)

Why has this document been developed? In November 2019, the Fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties of the Protocol on Water and Health mandated, as part of the Programme of Work for 2020-2022, the development of a brochure on good practices to ensure affordable water and sanitation services.

What are the objectives of this document? This document aims to contribute to supporting the efforts of countries in the pan-European region in the progressive realisation of the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation. The specific objectives of this document are (i) to raise the profile of affordability issues among policymakers, (ii) to enhance the understanding of how affordability concerns can be addressed, (iii) to inspire and promote further action on ensuring affordability of water and sanitation services.

What is the target audience of this document? The primary target audience of this document are government representatives from ministries responsible for water and sanitation services, social protection, and finance; water regulatory authorities; local authorities (municipalities); and providers of water and sanitation services.

How is this document related to previous work? Countries of the pan-European region have a long tradition of working together to address affordability concerns in the framework of the Protocol on Water and Health. Until now, that work has taken place as part of the broader work on equitable access to water and sanitation. In 2012, the publication [No One Left Behind](#) discussed the key issues around affordability, presented the main options to address affordability, and identified relevant good practices. In 2013, the publication [The Equitable Access Scorecard](#) presented a tool to assess equitable access to water and sanitation that included a framework to assess progress towards ensuring affordability. In 2016, the publication [Guidance Note on the Development of Action Plans to Ensure Equitable Access to Water and Sanitation](#) presented a strategic approach to address affordability concerns as part of a broader effort to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation. In 2019, the publication [The Human Rights to Water and Sanitation in Practice](#) identified findings and lessons learned regarding affordability from the work of the Protocol on Water and Health in 2011-2019. This new document is the first one under the Protocol to focus exclusively on affordability. It builds and expands on the previous work, updating the collection of good practices, and incorporating new work done by other actors

How was this document developed? This section will present the methodology used to develop the document (literature review, call for good practice contributions, review by the Expert Group on Equitable Access).

How is this document organised? This section will present the structure of the document.

2. Why does affordability matter? (1 page)

This section will discuss why the affordability of drinking water supply and sanitation services is an important topic. It will recall that one of the SDG-6 targets is “By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and **affordable** drinking water for all” (emphasis added). It will recall that “economic accessibility” is one of the normative dimensions of the human rights to water and sanitation. It will recall that affordability is one of the three dimensions of equitable access to water and sanitation under the Protocol on Water and Health. It will reflect on trends that make affordability an increasingly relevant topic (e.g. increase in cost of provision; tariff reforms to deliver financial sustainability and environmental objectives; economic impact of COVID-19 crisis on households). It will include a reference to the treatment of affordability in the recently adopted EU Drinking Water Directive. It will build on a rapid literature review.

3. What is affordability? (1 page)

This section will briefly introduce the concept of affordability of water and sanitation services. It will discuss the different approaches to affordability (human rights perspective, comparison of WASH expenditure to total income). The section will build on a rapid literature review as well as the presentations and discussions in Session 3 of the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access. The section will include a box on measuring and monitoring affordability, building on the upcoming UNICEF/WHO publication on measuring and monitoring affordability presented at the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access.

4. What policy options are available to ensure affordability? (2 pages)

The section will make the case for a strategic approach to addressing affordability concerns, and discuss the roles of the relevant stakeholders (national authorities, local authorities, regulators, service providers, NGOs). This section will briefly introduce and discuss the different policy options to address affordability concerns (tariff measures, and social protection measures) and will include a table identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The section will build on a rapid literature review, including previous work carried out under the Protocol on Water and Health.

5. Good practices in adopting strategic approaches (2 pages)

Ensuring that the water bill is affordable for all requires in each country the adoption of a long-term strategy as well as careful selection of in-tariff and out-of-tariff tools. This section will present examples of strategic approaches to address affordability concerns introduced in countries of the pan-European region since the publication of *No One Left Behind*. It will build on the responses to the call for contributions as well as examples identified at the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access.

6. Good practices in implementing tariff measures (4 pages)

This section will present examples of tariff measures introduced in countries of the pan-European region since the publication of *No One Left Behind*. It will build on the responses to the call for contributions as well as examples identified at the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access.

7. Good practices in implementing social protection measures? (4 pages)

This section will present examples of social protection measures introduced in countries of the pan-European region since the publication of *No One Left Behind*. It will build on the responses to the call for contributions as well as examples identified at the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access.

8. How can affordability measures be financed? (1 page)

This section will briefly discuss how affordability measures are financed. It will build on the responses to the call for contributions as well as examples identified at the 6th Meeting of the Expert Group on Equitable Access.

9. What to do now? (1 page)

This section will draw conclusions regarding the challenge of ensuring the affordability of water and sanitation services, and the emergence of good practices in the pan-European region (extent, pace, replicability, gaps). It will present a set of recommendations for governments and other stakeholders.