

The First meeting of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting to the Protocol on water and Health took place on 13–14 March 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Task Force on Indicators and Reporting was established by the first Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health (Geneva, 17–19 January 2007) with a mandate linked to compliance with articles 6 (Targets and target dates) and 7 (Review and assessment of progress). The main objective of the Task Force is to provide guidance to Parties and to promote exchange of experience and harmonization in the region. To this aim, the Task Force is working on draft guidelines for the setting of targets and target dates, as well as draft guidelines for reporting in accordance with article 7, for adoption by the Parties at their second meeting.

The official representatives of 19 Parties and Signatories to the Protocol (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Italia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey Ukraine, Uzbekistan) took part in the meeting as well as the representatives of European Bureau of WHO, the Compliance Committee, ECO-Forum, the private sector and others interested stakeholders. Switzerland is the lead country for this activity and chaired the meeting.

In preparation to the meeting the joint secretariat has requested Parties and Signatories to fill in a short questionnaire. The Meeting documents are available www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_TFIR.htm.

Meeting agenda

Item 1: Opening of the meeting

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda

Item 3: Election of Vice-Chairperson(s) – was postponed till the end of meeting

The Task Force elected two Vice-Chairpersons from Hungary and Germany.

Item 4: Mandate and objectives of the Task Force on Indicators and Reporting

Item 5: Reports by Parties and Signatories on progress achieved in developing national process to set targets and target dates, including future plans

On the basis of a template Parties and Signatories to the Protocol exchanged information on their national process to set targets, as well as information on target and target dates set, together with their relevant indicator of progress.

The experience of Hungary and Finland can be an example of the targets setting up process, which already completed and included the broad stakeholders participation. (see Countries Replies to the questionnaire on progress on setting targets and target date, available on Website). Most of the Parties and Signatories are still in the progress of setting targets.

The Chairmen of the Compliance Committee informed the Meeting about the first meeting of the Compliance Committee, recalled the relevant obligations of the Protocol on timetable on setting targets and called the Parties to speed up the national setting target process and preparation of national Reports on Protocol implementation.

Item 6: Guidelines on the setting of targets, evaluation of progress and reporting

Background document: Draft guidelines on setting targets, evaluation and reporting (WH/TFIR 01-02)

The Task Force discussed draft guidelines on setting targets, evaluation and reporting prepared by the Core Group, the Task Force agreed on:

- (a) Scope, approach and outline of the guidelines; WFD is a
- (b) Main message and specific recommendations of the different parts of the guidelines(including needs to establish or to use the existing inter-ministerial organs/committees for coordination of targets setting up/reviewing process, cooperation of the Ministries on environment and health, targets prioritization, public participation, national-local targets setting up link; using the EU WFD, cost –benefit analysis as a basis for prioritization and targets setting up, analysis of real financial possibilities at national, local level, including

affordability of WS services for consumer; taking into account the targets for centralized and decentralized WS, for rural and urban WS, others.

(c) Examples of good practices to be included in the guidelines, and reference to recognized standards, methodologies, studies, etc.

ECO-Forum provided information about the examples of public consultations/participation in different decision-making processes at national-local levels related to water sector reforms (local action plans on improvement the access to water, state programs on Drinking water or national Strategies for water sector development) as well as public participation in implementation of the decisions, practically at local level.

The Task Force agreed on work-sharing arrangements to further develop the draft guidelines for its second meeting and for presentation at the regional workshop on sharing experience on target-setting.

Item 7: Indicators, especially for targets under article 6, paragraphs 2 (f)–(n)

Background documents: Preliminary guidelines for review and assessment of progress under the Protocol (ECE/MP.WH/2007/4 - EUR/06/5069385/11) and others

European Bureau WHO presented to the Task Force the existing reporting mechanisms, international and regional obligations, and standards of relevance for the Protocol.

On the basis of a document prepared by the Core Group, the Task Force discussed and agreed on:

(a) Possible options of qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress towards targets that Parties might use when setting their targets; big scale and small scale WS system indicators, scope of common biological, chemical indicators, others

(b) Indicators to be used in summary reports prepared by Parties (5 common and 5 specific national indicators can be clarified in the guidelines).

ECO-Forum made several interventions related to the chemical indicators, social indicators (affordability, accessibility of WS for consumers).

Item 8: Workshop aimed at sharing experience on target-setting

The Task Force discussed the preliminary programme, objectives and target audience of the planned workshop aimed at sharing experience on target-setting, tentatively scheduled for 2 and 3 December 2008.

Item 9: Future work and dates

Background document: Time frame for future work of the Task Force (WH/TFIR 01-05)

The Task Force discussed and agreed on working arrangements and on the time frame to carry out the tasks mandated by the Meeting of the Parties, including the finalization of the guidelines on target-setting, the preparation of guidelines on reporting, the organization of a workshop on sharing experience on target-setting, testing the guidelines (April-August 2009), meeting of WG on W&H Protocol (January 2010) and the reporting exercise by the second meeting of the Parties in 2010.

For more information contact Anna Tsvietkova, Water IG of European ECO-Forum
atsvet@mama-86.org.ua