

TERMS OF REFERENCE**National consultant to carry out rapid situational analysis of access of the most vulnerable families and children in Bulgaria to clean water**

Start date:	20 th of September 2020 (tentative)
End Date:	30 November 2020
Duration:	50 days in total
Reporting to:	UNICEF Deputy Representative UNICEF ECD Officer

I. BACKGROUND

Access to safe water and adequate sanitation is a fundamental requirement for ensuring survival, health and wellbeing of all human beings. Recognizing the importance of water, the UN General Comment No. 15¹ states: that “The human right to water is indispensable for leading a life in human dignity. It is a prerequisite for the realization of other human rights”. The right to water is defined as the right of everyone *to sufficient, safe, acceptable and physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses*. UN Resolution 64/292 reaffirms that access to safe water and adequate sanitation is essential to the realization of all human rights. The Resolution calls upon States to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all. The Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the international community in 2015 identifies access to water as a critical element for improving social and economic prosperity for all by 2030 (SDG 6).

The right to water and adequate sanitation is enshrined in the Bulgarian legislation. A number of national legal and strategic documents, including the Water Act, Water Supply and Sewerage Services Regulation Act, the Water Strategy for Development and Management of Water Supply and Sewerage in the Republic of Bulgaria 2014-2023 and its Action Plan, regulate the right to and provision of quality, affordable water and sanitation services for the population. A special commission – Commission for the Regulation of Water Supply and Energy is responsible for regulation of the quality and prices of water.

The National Census in 2011 showed that 96,2 % of the population is connected to the public water supply system, usually provided by a registered operator². However, despite the legislation and the serious investments made to improve water and sanitation infrastructure in the country, serious regional, rural vs. urban disparities in access remain. In urban areas, 0.4% of the dwellings do not have access to a water supply source and 1.0% - to sewage, while in the rural areas – 1.4% are without access to water and 7.6% of the dwellings – to sewage.

¹ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 2002, general Comment 15

² Data from the National statistical Institute based on 2011 Census. There are 45 water management companies in Bulgaria with different ownership (11 – 100% state ownership, 11- 100% municipal ownership, 4- 100% private ownership, 14 – state and municipal ownership, 1 (Sofia) – with private and municipal ownership)

A particular issue of concern is the limited access to water for some disadvantaged groups of the population. For example, the National Strategy for Integration of Roma 2012-2020 highlights that a considerable part of Roma population lives in areas without access to quality housing, proper water and sanitation infrastructure. About 2/5 of Roma lives in houses without running water, using water from external sources, 3/5 of the Roma dwellings are not connected to the central sewage system. A more recent survey of the Fundamental Rights Agency (2016)³ confirmed the situation - 23% of Roma households did not have indoor running water (compared to only 0.7% for the general population) and 44% of the Roma households did not have indoor toilets (12% for the general population).

Access of Roma families to water and sanitation is affected by structural issues. A significant part of the Roma population lives in rural areas, where the quality of the water supply and sanitation infrastructure is lower. In urban areas, access is particularly difficult in segregated Roma neighbourhoods due to serious urban planning issues. About 30% of Roma people are estimated to live in segregated neighbourhoods in the big cities such as Stolipinovo (Plovdiv), Nadezhda (Sliven), Fakulteta and Filipovtci (Sofia) etc. Many families in these neighbourhoods live in overcrowded, unregulated, sub-standard housing with only partial or illegal connection to public utilities (such as water supply, sanitation and electricity). The levels of poverty are also very high, with pockets of extreme deprivation and marginalization. In general, all these areas lack essential and quality urban infrastructure.

The poor living conditions of some vulnerable groups of the population undermine the prospects for healthy development of children and increase the risk of infectious diseases. This became particularly evident during the COVID-19 crisis. The limited access to water, as well as the high prices of sanitisers and hygiene materials have not allowed many poor families to adhere to the recommended hygiene practices, thereby increasing the risk of interpersonal transmission of COVID-19 virus. There is no accurate data and analysis of the specific impact of the epidemic on vulnerable groups, but the official statistics show clusters of confirmed cases in some of the biggest Roma neighbourhoods (in Sliven and Sofia).

II. UNICEF ROLE

The human right to water is at the core of the UNICEF mandate for children⁴. Access to clean water and adequate sanitation is critical for ensuring that every child survives and thrives. Globally, UNICEF works to support Governments and communities to promote strong national systems, effective sector institutions, and a strong accountability framework at all levels for guaranteeing the right to water for all children. UNICEF engages in evidence generation, advocacy, modelling of innovative solution to improve access of the most disadvantaged children to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services⁵.

UNICEF Bulgaria is in the third year of implementation of the Country Programme for the period 2018-2022, endorsed by the Council of Ministers in 2019. The overall goal of the country partnership is to support Bulgaria in its efforts to enable all children and adolescents in the country, including the most disadvantaged, to enjoy their rights and develop to their full potential in an inclusive and protective society. One of the key priorities is promoting national policies and

³ FRA. European Union's Agency for Fundamental Rights (2016), Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey. Roma – Selected Findings. https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-eu-minorities-survey-roma-selected-findings_en.pdf

⁴ UNICEF Global Strategy on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

⁵ Ibid.

strengthening national capacities for prevention and protection of all children and families against poverty and social exclusion, especially the most vulnerable ones.

The Country program does not contain specific focus on improving access of vulnerable children to clean water, sanitation and hygiene. However, given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on vulnerable children and children's rights, UNICEF engaged in the distribution of basic hygiene materials to disadvantaged communities during the COVID-19 crisis⁶. The experience showed the need for development of **a more longer-term and sustainable solutions aiming to address the immediate needs of children in the context of COVID-19, but also to address some of the structural barriers to access to water, sanitation and hygiene service for the most disadvantaged groups.**

In August 2020, UNICEF in Bulgaria started the implementation of a 2-year pilot project for testing of the EU Child Guarantee, which aims to contribute to ending child poverty for all children in Europe. The project will support the development and implementation of innovative approaches and services to ensure inclusion and access to services of children with disabilities and developmental difficulties and children in precarious family situations (including children living in poor and extremely poor households and Roma children) starting from birth through transition to school. The project will be implemented in three districts of the country – Sliven, Burgas and Stara Zagora. Although, it does not envisage specific interventions for improving water and sanitation for vulnerable groups, it will provide a framework and opportunity for strengthening advocacy and support for improving the living conditions and access to water and sanitation for the most vulnerable children and families.

II. OVERALL OBJECTIVE AND SPECIFIC TASKS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

UNICEF in Bulgaria is seeking a national Consultant to support the office in the development of interventions aiming to improve access of vulnerable families and children to water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH). In particular, under the direct supervision and guidance of the UNICEF Deputy Representative and Early Childhood Development Officer and in consultation with other relevant UNICEF staff, the Consultant will be responsible for conducting a situational analysis of access of vulnerable families and children to WASH and development of recommendations for specific interventions, both at policy/system level, and specific technical solutions at community level for improving access.

The consultant will be responsible for the following specific tasks:

1. Preparation of a brief situational analysis of access of vulnerable families and children, to clean water, sanitation and hygiene services. *Estimated total consultancy day – 35 days.*

Purpose and scope of the analysis: The main purpose of the analysis is to provide quality, up-to-date overview of the situation and needs of vulnerable families, with regard to WASH. It is expected that the analysis will help conceptualize and develop future interventions, both at policy/system level and at local level aiming to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for vulnerable families.

The analysis will include the following main elements:

⁶ With a specific focus on the districts of Sliven, Shumen and Montana. Hygiene materials were also distributed in partnership with the National Network of Roma Health mediators.

- National policies, legal and institutional framework regulating water supply to the population in Bulgaria, including key stakeholders (Government, local authorities, water and sanitation service providers, international organizations, national/international NGOs and other relevant stakeholders).
- Financing of the water and sanitation sector and service provision and the roles of different stakeholders, including end-users. Existing mechanisms for ensuring equitable access to service for the most disadvantaged groups of the population should be also analyzed.
- Recent and ongoing initiatives of the Government, local authorities, international/national organizations, service providers or other relevant stakeholders aiming to improve water supply, sanitation and hygiene services for the most vulnerable families and children, success stories and main lessons learnt.
- Key factors contributing to limited access to water and sanitation for vulnerable families and children, including legal, institutional, technical, political, financial, social and behavioral factors;
- A list of communities/areas in the country where access to water and sanitation for vulnerable families and children is particularly difficult (both rural and urban), providing information on both the scope of the problem and number of children affected, as well as any specific local factors/aspects affecting access.

Groups to be covered by the analysis: The analysis should explore the situation of vulnerable families and children with a highlight on Roma populations with comparison of both rural and urban differences.

Geographical coverage: The analysis should have a national coverage. However, it is expected that the analysis will cover Sliven, Stara Zagora and Burgas districts among the others. It will identify up to 4-5 areas/communities most severely affected by the issue (including in the three specific districts) and provide more detailed information on the local context, needs and barriers related to access to water. These areas will be further considered by UNICEF for development of local solutions for improving access to WASH.

Methodology of the analysis: It is expected that the individual consultant will propose a methodology for the situational analysis. It is advised as a minimum the methodology to include a desk review of available administrative data and documentation, including national legal and strategic documents, action plans and reports, EU legislation and documents, project documentation, etc. with relevance to the issue; as well as limited primary data collection, including approximately 20 in-depth interviews (remote mode should be considered) with key informants at national and local level (representatives of the state and local authorities, NGOs, water and sanitation service providers, community leaders) with substantial knowledge and experience related to access to WASH, with a focus on vulnerable families and children.

Other primary data collection methods may be also suggested by the consultant. Any primary data collection should adhere to the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. The methodology should also highlight any potential ethical issues that may arise in the process of data collection. The methodology and data collection should incorporate safeguards to avoid stigma, discrimination, any form of harm to children and their caregivers, to ensure confidentiality and protection of personal data, protection of the rights and the dignity and welfare of all respondents, their families and communities.

The situational analysis should not exceed 20-25 p. without annexes.

2. Based on the findings of the situational analysis, develop recommendations for possible interventions to improve access of vulnerable families to water, sanitation and hygiene services. The recommendations should include both general recommendations for improving access of vulnerable families to water, sanitation and hygiene services nationally (both at system and community level), but also specific areas for engagement of UNICEF, considering the organization's global and regional strategic documents and technical documents related to WASH, as well as taking into account the core roles of UNICEF in upper-middle income country. The recommendation should also include possible partners that UNICEF could engage and include - Government, civil society, individuals and Business.

Recommendations should address structural causes at policy, institutional and community level, as well as specific technical solutions that can be considered at local level.

Expected total days of consultancy: 15 days

The task will include the following main steps:

- Based on the findings of the situational analysis, drafting of recommendations for specific interventions at policy and community level to improve access to water, sanitation and hygiene services for vulnerable families and children;
- Discussion of the proposed interventions with relevant UNICEF staff.
- Finalization of the recommendations based on UNICEF feedback and comments

The commendations should not exceed 7 pages in total, without annexes.

V. TIMEFRAME AND DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

It is expected that the assignment will take place in the period **20th September 2020 – 30 November 2022**.

VI. DELIVERABLES

The individual Consultant is expected to provide the following deliverables:

- Brief inception report for the research that includes main questions for analysis, methodology and structure of the analysis – by end of September 2020.
- Draft situational analysis – by 25th of October 2020;
- Final Situational analysis taking into account UNICEF comments and recommendations on the draft document;
- Draft recommendations for UNICEF involvement – by 15th of November 2020.
- Final recommendations amended as per UNICEF comments – by end of November 2020.

VII. OFFICIAL TRAVEL

The consultancy is home-based with limited travel in the country. Travel costs will be covered separately. A lump sum will be paid for in-country travel – BGN 60 per day for travel without overnight, and BGN 120 per day for travel with overnight.

VIII. REQUESTED DOCUMENTS FROM THE PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

- A letter of interest demonstrating why the applicant is suitable for the assignment;
- Detailed CV;
- Financial offer, including all costs (except travel expenditures) related to the assignment. The financial offer should contain a breakdown of the cost by type, indicating daily consultancy fee.
- Names and contacts of two referees.

IX. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The selected consultant will work under the direct supervision of the UNICEF Deputy Representative/ECD Officer.

Performance indicators

The performance will be evaluated against the following criteria: successful completion of the planned activities and quality of the submitted deliverables, adherence to agreed timeframe; ability to work independently and also as part of a team; organizational and planning skills, responsibility, initiative and communication.

UNICEF recourse in the case of unsatisfactory performance

In case of unsatisfactory performance, the contract will be terminated by notification letter sent 10 days prior to termination.

X. REQUIRED EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND COMPETENCIES

- Advanced university degree (Master's or higher) in one or more of the following disciplines: Public Health, Civil Engineering, Geology, Hydrology, Sanitation Engineering, or a field relevant to international WASH related development assistance.
- Sound technical expertise in the area of water and sanitation in Bulgaria.
- Excellent understanding of the WASH sector in Bulgaria and the issues affecting access to water, sanitation and hygiene of vulnerable families in Bulgaria and beyond.
- Ability to work under pressure; good negotiation and presentation skills; pro-activity and strong orientation towards results;
- Respect for cultural diversity and human rights;
- Excellent oral and written command of Bulgarian and English;