

**World Health Organization Western Pacific Region
Healthy Cities Recognition 2014**

Water Safety Planning

Background

Waterborne diseases remain one of the major health concerns in the world, such as diarrhoeal diseases, primarily from contaminated water and inadequate sanitation.

Today, there are millions of people with no access to improved sources of drinking water. And this has staggering adverse health consequences. Recent data found that globally, in 2012, 502,000 diarrhoea deaths were estimated to be caused by inadequate drinking water and 280,000 deaths by inadequate sanitation¹.

Drinking-water suppliers usually rely on results of water quality testing for the presence of microorganisms and other contaminants to assess whether the water is safe for consumption. Unfortunately, overreliance on such testing has several major drawbacks: Testing water quality is costly and cumbersome; not feasible to test all water; takes time for results to return; and people fall ill before the problem is identified. Water quality test results provide little information on when, why and where the contamination event occurred; and it may not be clear what actions to take to correct the problem.

While testing is an important part of verifying drinking-water safety, a complementary approach, called water safety planning, is needed to better protect the consumer and lower the risk of contaminants entering drinking-water supplies in the first place.

The principles and practice of water safety planning are increasingly being adopted around the world as the basis for the provision of safe and clean drinking-water. This process is most pronounced in urban conglomerates where the institutional infrastructure of municipal corporations, parastatal enterprises or private utilities is conducive to their adoption.

The objectives of a water safety plan (WSP) are to ensure safe drinking-water through good water supply practice. This means to prevent contamination of source waters; water treatment to reduce or remove contamination that could be present, to the extent necessary to meet water quality targets; prevention of re-contamination during storage, distribution and handling of drinking-water. In this context, this call for application is looking for good practices with most or all of the key components of a WSP in place, as further elaborated in the submission format.

¹ "Burden of disease from inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene in low- and middle-income settings: a retrospective analysis of data from 145 countries" Pruess- Uestun, WHO , 2014
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/enhanced/doi/10.1111/tmi.12329/>



Application submission guide

When completing the application template, please ensure that the key points highlighted in this section are fully addressed:

Item # 3: Background, specifically:

- Description of the water supply system from catchment to consumer

Item # 4: Strategy, specifically:

- Evidence of operation of a water safety plan management plan with health based targets

Item # 6: Methodology

a. Team members, specifically:

- Evidence of a dedicated and functioning team in charge of all aspects related to the water safety plan, including a copy of the institutional organigram

b. Description of partnership strategy

- Evidence of community participation in the evaluation of the drinking water supply quality and service

c. Settings

- Description of community involvement in the establishment of drinking water supply system in particular settings

d. Beneficiaries

- Description of the various categories of customers and drinking water tariffs applied accordingly

e. Equity (Did the programme focus on the poor, the marginalized and/or the vulnerable groups, etc.)

- Description of how differentiated tariffs related to the drinking water supply benefit the most vulnerable social groups

f. Process (Please specify what approaches / activities were implemented during the project?) Specifically:

- Reports of the systematic risk assessment conducted, the control measures put in place and the provision of a water flow diagram

g. Community involvement

- Description of the role of the community members in participating in the set-up, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the water safety plan

Item # 7: Monitoring the process and evaluating the outcome - Evaluation methodology, specifically to show:

- Evidence of an effective operational monitoring mechanism to verify that the water supply system is delivering quality drinking water in compliance with the national legal requirements.
- Evidence of systematic documentation of operational procedures for actions to be taken when the system operates in normal and in incident conditions.

Item # 8: Measures for sustainability

- Evidence of policy documents and institutional frameworks set up to ensure the safety and accessibility to safe water is ensured over time.

Materials to be submitted

A concise written report and other supporting materials including, necessarily, still captioned high-resolution colour photographs in electronic format, which describe the city's programme on safe water supply.

Award

The winner will receive a plaque of recognition. Additionally, the mayor of the winning city will be sponsored by WHO to attend the 37th WEDC International Conference in September 2014 in Hanoi, Vietnam, as a learning experience to strengthen the city's ongoing programmes, and to share experiences and lessons learnt with conference participants.

** For further information, please email Mr Alexander von Hildebrand (Technical Officer for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) at hildebrandal@wpro.who.int*

