

**UNICEF**

**Evaluation of UNICEF-WASH Programme in  
Response to the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine  
(2014-2018)**



**Evaluation Report – Final Version**

September 2021

Submitted by:



## Acknowledgements

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*Note: The contents of this evaluation report are the sole responsibility of the evaluators and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of UNICEF.*

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## Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
CCC	Core Commitment for Children
CO	Country Office
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil society organization
DNR	Donetsk People's Republic
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
ERB	Ethical Review Board
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCA	Government-controlled areas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HAC	Humanitarian Action for Children
HDN	Humanitarian-development nexus
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Inception report
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices
KFW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
LNR	Luhansk People's Republic
LRASD	Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation



Acronym	Definition
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NGCA	Non-government controlled area
NWoW	New Way of Working
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD-DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PIN	People in Need
PUI	Première Urgence Internationale
QA	Quality assurance
RBM	Results-based management
RO	Regional Office
RPA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
RSE	Research, Study and Evaluation
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToC	Theory of change
ToRs	Terms of reference
TGH	Triangle Génération Humanitaire
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
VD	Voda Donbasu
VK	Vodokanal
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

## A. Executive Summary

In December 2019, Hydroconseil was commissioned to conduct the summative evaluation of the UNICEF WASH Programme in Response to the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine for the period 2014-2018. This study was mainly focused on two Oblasts: Luhansk and Donetsk. In these two oblasts an armed conflict has been in progress since 2014, with the Ukrainian state opposed to a pro-Russian separatist insurgency. The cities of Donetsk and Luhansk in particular are very close to the actual 'contact line'. Those cities, their suburbs, and the important water networks nearby (which sometimes cross the 'contact line', have been significantly affected by the conflict. The WASH sector has been particularly hit, UNICEF's work on this sector has been crucial for the vulnerable populations of the area. The objective of this evaluation was to study the work done by UNICEF and its implementing partners to answer appropriately the WASH needs between 2014 and 2018.

The evaluation took place between January 2020 and July 2021. The actions evaluated in this study were funded over the period by 29 grants, covering a wide range of activities:

- **Numerous assessments** of access to water and sanitation for the population / at check-points or within institutions (schools and health facilities),
- **Sanitation:** installation of portable toilets,
- **Hygiene:** distribution of hygiene kits, winterization kits, setting up of e-vouchers, awareness raising activities (distribution of promotion materials, development of WASH & health promotion guidelines, and training for teachers),
- **Access to water:** distribution of bottled water, water-trucking operations, support for the operation of water companies (provision and installation of pumps, repair and rehabilitation of water supply and plumbing systems, provision of household and institutional water storage containers, provision of water purification equipment), repair/rehabilitation of existing private water supply systems and sanitation facilities; and WASH rehabilitation in social institutions (schools and kindergartens).

All of these interventions were carried out with the support of 17 implementing partners (IPs) and the involvement of the water companies themselves, notably through identification of what they needed to be able to carry out repair works on the network.

### *Purpose and objectives of the evaluation*

The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate substantive evidence-based knowledge by identifying good practices and lessons learned from the intended and unintended effects of the WASH programme response in eastern Ukraine. The main objective is to assess the activities implemented since the onset of the crisis in 2014 using standard Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability), and to guide future programme activities, focusing on the humanitarian-development nexus approach.

The evaluation focuses on the interventions directly implemented by UNICEF or by its IPs between 2014 and 2018 in two conflict-affected regions (oblasts) of Ukraine: Donetsk and Luhansk.

### *Evaluation methodology*

A mixed methods approach was used for the evaluation, combining the following data collection methods:

- Review of secondary data sources: more than 100 documents were received including the Country Programme Document, UNICEF annual reports, partner progress reports, a recent

document on Kiev's office strategy (under construction) as well as UNICEF's Global Strategy on Active Conflicts,

- Key informant interviews (semi-structured): 33 key informants, including implementing partners, staff and former staff of UNICEF in Ukraine and New York, water companies representatives, and regional representatives,
- In-depth database analysis,
- Reconstruction of the programme's theory of change (ToC): The ToC was reconstructed (as it was not built at the time) in order to compare it with the activities carried out between 2014 and 2018 and to identify the points of continuity / change for 2018-2022

In agreement with UNICEF Ukraine, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, field visits were cancelled. All the evaluation work was done remotely, a fact that led to several limitations (inability to interview beneficiaries, to access gender-disaggregated data, and so on.).

## Main findings and conclusion

The preparatory work for the evaluation revealed that UNICEF's water and sanitation intervention in Ukraine could be divided into two phases:

- **Phase 1:** 2014 - 2017, with 2017 marking the introduction of the theme in the programme documents between UNICEF and the Government of Ukraine;
- **Phase 2:** 2017-2018 and beyond.

This breakdown into two phases was confirmed throughout the evaluation, and therefore we chose to make a two-stage conclusion

### *Partial conclusion 2014-2017*

In the early years (2014-2017), the water and sanitation intervention struggled to find its place within UNICEF Ukraine's activities. Interviews and the literature review<sup>1</sup> indicate that this was due to a combination of factors, which were both internal to the institution and external: these included lack of visibility of the scope of the crisis and lack of interest in the conflict from the international community (including international NGOs).

However, the evaluation highlighted that significant work was carried out by UNICEF between 2015 and 2016 to provide feedback from the field on the population's access to water and sanitation. Although it could have been better exploited, this work is one of UNICEF's strengths and provided added value over the period. UNICEF obtained very clear feedback from its IP's, the water company and staff on the ground, at a time when circulation of information was otherwise opaque.

The emergency activities were highly traditional and very like the "activity packages" deployed in other regions of the world. These activities were based on a centralized procurement system that was thus not perfectly aligned with the needs of the population or with the timeline. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the activities were beneficial to several thousand families on both sides of the 'contact line', in spite of the very great difficulties encountered by the teams to gain both acceptance (a 'bond of trust') and administrative authorization to work in some territories. One of the innovations of this period was the introduction in 2016 of e-voucher technology in urban areas. This strategy, not previously tested in Ukraine, was piloted and then gradually rolled out throughout the government-controlled areas close to the 'contact line'.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see A.1. Annex 2: Desk Review and Background Documents.

### *Partial conclusion 2017-2018*

2017 marked a turning point in the WASH response in Ukraine. In this year UNICEF reviewed its partnership agreement with the Government of Ukraine with the support of UNICEF's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office for 2017 to 2022. From 2017, and after difficult discussions within UNICEF, water and sanitation was finally integrated to the Country Programme Document. This decision enabled the creation/structuration of a real WASH team within the Ukraine Country Office and the progressive construction of a proper intervention strategy, which was unfortunately not very well-documented and therefore not very easy to follow. During this period, the effectiveness of UNICEF's work was enhanced. Teams were aware of what they needed to do and achieve. Pure emergency interventions were reduced, and substantive work was initiated with the water companies to ensure – as much as conditions allowed – a continuous and high-quality water supply service to the different communities on both sides of the 'contact line' (needs assessment was conducted with the water companies and Voda Donbasu for pipes, pumps or water treatment chemicals).

Territorial anchoring with the water companies was strengthened, and several assessments were conducted. All of this work laid the foundations for the support provided at the end of 2018 and beyond. National anchoring remained fragile, but increased contact and discussions with the various ministries in charge of water allowed UNICEF to consider working on more systemic issues and with a humanitarian-development nexus focus.

### *Relevance*

The relevance of UNICEF's intervention in the water sector is verifiable in several ways:

- The humanitarian crisis in eastern Ukraine remained silent for a long time,
- Few international donors were mobilized, perhaps on the assumption that the Ukrainian and Russian states would quickly find a solution, and that it was not the responsibility of the international community to act,
- Water and sanitation remained important elements to be preserved at all costs, particularly in times of crisis.

UNICEF does not seem to have aligned itself with certain national policies, but this is due to the disorganization and high opacity in the water sector. This is even more true if we consider eastern Ukraine. Prior to 2014, it appears that UNICEF (as a whole) had not developed concrete guidelines to guide urban interventions in middle-income countries. This lack of guidelines makes it impossible to determine if the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office remained aligned with the UNICEF HQ's principles of intervention / strategic approach in these particular contexts.

The response to humanitarian needs is indisputable. Providing an emergency solution for drinking water was essential, and the work with the water companies was highly relevant - despite the incessant shelling of the water network. Indeed, the provision of chemical products in the first instance and materials and equipment in the second have broadly supported public services, which means they will have an "easier" time recovering after the crisis, if the staff are still present.

On the whole, activities and deployment in the field were coherent even if all of the emergency and recovery activities could have been better backed up with sufficient advocacy at the beginning of the intervention. Over the years, and more specifically after 2017, advocacy has become more structured and has helped to strengthen the visibility and coherence of UNICEF-funded activities.

More specifically, mechanisms were not formalized regarding vulnerability. Nevertheless, UNICEF and its partners focused their action as close as possible to the 'contact line'. Therefore, all those benefiting from the interventions financed by UNICEF were in great need, and thus vulnerable. Some approaches could certainly have helped to better reach the most vulnerable and isolated, but

the overall proposed intervention was relevant and sufficiently challenging, especially on the NGCA side.

### *Effectiveness*

The effectiveness of the UNICEF intervention has evolved positively as the team and the WASH division (at Country Office level) have become more structured. At the start of the intervention (2014), the lack of internal vision and some administrative slowness led to very long response times, even though it was clear that the needs of the populations on the ground were vast. In addition, the lack of partners in the water sector in Ukraine also greatly hindered the effectiveness of the action.

Gradually, the work carried out by the Cluster and the diagnoses carried out (with UNICEF funding) have enabled UNICEF WASH Section to have a better vision of the situation and to reorient its interventions towards high-impact activities. The second part of the intervention (2017-2018) was much more efficient. Cessation of service would have been dramatic for millions of people, particularly in the NGCA where humanitarian actions have been very difficult to conduct.

The M&E framework developed was basic: its effectiveness was limited only to the strictly necessary, even if progress was made over time. UNICEF did not develop a specific tool to evaluate the quality or equity of the intervention and of the M&E process and the evidence generation that will guide UNICEF programme and activities. This is also why there was no analysis of equity or the gender dimension in the evaluation.

### *Efficiency*

Even when analysing the figures, it is not easy to state if UNICEF resources were sufficient or adequately used to achieve the objectives.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to the resources allocated to IPs, it may have been possible to achieve some economies of scale by having fewer implementing partners (more specifically between 2014 and 2016), but no duplication was observed. For support to water utilities, resources seem to have been directly used for operations as they became necessary, but given the situation budgets were limited.

UNICEF human resources in Ukraine during the first phase (2014-2016) were insufficient to ensure comprehensive programme planning, as well as monitoring, or to provide high-level support to authorities.

Inter-actor coordination in Ukraine was limited and did not enable economies of scale. but since 2017, UNICEF has rationalized the partners . However, there was no evidence of duplication of intervention efforts, as the needs were huge, and it was difficult to access the intervention area.

### *Impact*

Measuring the impact of a multitude of emergency interventions, often 6 years after the end of these activities, in a changing context (population displacement, turnover of NGO staff) is a challenging exercise, especially when, for public health reasons (the COVID-19 context), the evaluation is carried out remotely.

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<sup>2</sup> Neither it is possible to assess the level of duplication with the programmes of other organizations working in Ukraine. Financial information on similar programmes, which would be required to evaluate their efficiency and compare them with the UNICEF WASH Programme in Ukraine, was unavailable.

Between 2014 and 2017, UNICEF's intervention strategy remained relatively traditional and measuring the impact was not a priority: the traditional expected effects of the types of activity developed by UNICEF and its partners were there (greater confidence from local authorities, improvement in people's living conditions, reduced bombing of infrastructure [as a result of advocacy], better knowledge of the situation [because of alerts], and water companies continuing to operate). However, the knock-on effect of donors in the WASH sector, the sustainable anchoring of UNICEF interventions in Ukraine, the organization of the team and improvement of its skills from 2018 and beyond should be considered as unexpected effects, as they were not included at all in either the ToC or the logframe, which – it is important to bear in mind – did not exist for the period evaluated. None of the actors interviewed shared mention of any negative impact.

### *Sustainability*

During the first phase of the intervention, sustainability was not the primary concern. This position must be assumed by the UNICEF Ukraine teams and would make sense if this was in the context of (i) a limited time frame and (ii) the construction in parallel of other more sustainable strategies in line with UNICEF's water and sanitation mandate. The focus on hardware support to water companies was a strategic shift, as was the integration in 2017 of the WASH components into the UNICEF's Country Programme Document (CPD). The Voda Donbasu assessment was an important first step towards implementing larger (and more costly) projects to improve the sustainability of the water network and to prepare the institution for the reconstruction and operation of the water network at various levels (the levels of channels, municipalities, and institutions).

From 2019, UNICEF worked more intensively on the national anchoring of its activities by relying on its local knowledge of actors and the network, and on its capacities to mobilize other major international development partners.

### *Humanitarian development nexus*

Water is a central element of the triple humanitarian – development – peace nexus. UNICEF's approach to the water sector tends towards this aspect:

- Firstly, through work undertaken from 2016 onwards with advocacy for ceasefires on the networks,
- Then, with the support provided to the water companies to keep all the equipment running and enable them to maintain, even under fire, acceptable service coverage.
- Finally, since 2017, a real shift into the humanitarian – development – peace nexus activities, oriented more towards structural support to Ukrainian water companies and government bodies.

### *Scalability*

In the context assessed, it is difficult to speak of true scaling up, both because of the nature of the support and because of the context of implementation of the interventions.

Between 2014 and 2018 there were few real scaling-up mechanisms seen in the UNICEF activities, except for the e-vouchers approach (the roll out of this activity along the 'contact line' can be considered as working towards scaling up the programme). This is justifiable given the many challenges faced by the team (under construction), which focused more on ensuring a presence on the ground and responding to the vital needs of the population. The real work of disseminating good practices began at the end of 2018. These increased communication / advocacy activities between



2019 and today (outside the scope of this evaluation) generated wider engagement among the international community on water, and thus a kind of scalability .

In addition, the WASH team has grown from 3 permanent staff in 2014 to 12, and the budget managed has also changed considerably (amount and objectives). Finally, given that WASH activities were not part of the Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Ukraine prior to 2018, we have de facto considered the inclusion of its activities in the 2018-2022 CPD to be an important shift in scaling up for the UNICEF Country Office in Ukraine.

## Recommendations

The recommendations were formulated using the evaluative evidence and evaluation findings. They include practical recommendations, operational recommendations and recommendations on the internal functioning of UNICEF (not only the UNICEF WASH team in Kiev).

This exercise has not been straightforward, because these recommendations were produced 3 years after the end of the evaluation period. Thus, should any of the recommendations below seem disconnected from the current reality, it is important to bear in mind that they would have made sense in 2018 at the end of the activities. The recommendations on internal organization are directly linked with the 2014-2018 situation and have been already implemented. This is also true for some of the recommendations on strategy and tools.

### *Recommendations linked with 2014-2018 period*

- 1 Mobilize sufficient external support from other countries with similar challenges to:**
  - Assign the appropriate staff or upgrade staff skills (note: we are not saying here that the staff in place are incompetent, as they learned the required skills on the job: this recommendation merely considers this aspect in the context of the evaluation (i.e. what could have been done better at the time).
  - Support the development of strategies, approaches and tools.
- 2 Optimize internal procedures, as already initiated from 2018 by:** limiting centralized purchasing only to strictly necessary procurement; optimizing (purchasing and contractual) processes to reduce delays, particularly for emergency activities.
- 3 Continue with structuring activities (initiated in 2018):** Integrate the WASH component into the next Country Programme, build a WASH strategy document that describes the desired approaches to be used (this document was initiated in 2021 with the Programme Strategy Note but the “approach section” could be more precise or, if it is not the purpose of this document, it could be useful for internal and external visibility to develop another support between strategy and operational content)
- 4 Maintain the WASH Cluster and devote the necessary energy to:** (i) expand its representativeness with WASH partners in Ukraine and with government bodies and evaluate the necessity to extend the geographical representativeness of the Cluster to other region; (ii) continue to provide information to feed into the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP: priority, targeting, geography and cost); (iii) communicate on the evolving humanitarian situation, water and sanitation needs, funds requested, funds received and results achieved; and finally (iv) manage contingency plans.

The recommendations presented above have been partially or fully addressed by UNICEF since 2018. The recommendations presented below are aspects that the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office could still work on to improve: (i) the effectiveness and efficiency of its actions; but above all (ii) the visibility of its intervention logic and the impact of the actions undertaken.

**Coordination:** There is still room for improvement in the transfer of good practices within the Cluster and more widely with partners in the sector. Such improvement would improve the visibility and recognition of UNICEF's work.

- Build a comprehensive partnership strategy to optimize the implementation of activities through mid-level coordination, maximize the expertise available and address all challenges by the constitution of the private sector/NGO consortium.
- Share experience/disseminate good practices by: (i) establishing conditions for the sharing of good practices, lessons learned and knowledge management within the implementing partners (IPs) financed by UNICEF to strengthen the evidence of programmatic and operational reorientations if needed and to facilitate the field work of the IPs; (ii) systematically introducing experience-sharing within the WASH Cluster, or outside the WASH Cluster to discuss more development-related issues (a full day once a year) ; and (iii) promoting and participating in inter-donor coordination on water (linked with advocacy to encourage involvement by the ministries in charge).

**Advocacy:** advocacy with both communities and national stakeholders needs to continue and be intensified for future activities (including for minorities and vulnerable people in non-conflict areas as well as taking into account gender considerations in schools and health centres).

- Continue community-based advocacy for ceasefires and corridors to access beneficiaries and infrastructure, and bring an end to destruction of networks.<sup>3</sup>
- Intensify advocacy work with national stakeholders to place access to water and sanitation on the national agenda – *in both crisis and non-crisis areas (link with public health)*: conduct long-term work to anticipate water needs and integrated water resources management (following the water cycle); support the drafting/revision of regulatory texts and the drafting of a roadmap to align with international donors.
- Establish an inter-donor group and work towards a global fund for water and sanitation in Ukraine

**Monitoring and evaluation:** The recommendations on the M&E system are particularly important. Their priority is to enhance the actions carried out by UNICEF and its partners in overall improvement of the water and sanitation sector framework, whether in the emergency phase (Cluster) or in a more systematic way:

- *Build a real M&E system to provide the information needed to manage interventions to:* (i) improve the reporting process with the Ips; (ii) systematically require post-field visit recommendation reports (joint partnership review, as already in place since 2018); and (iii) encourage the production of visual documents (maps, etc.) for communication purposes.
- *Schedule regular evaluations (over 2 years)*
- *Continue efforts to self-assess achievement of the WASH team results* by encouraging staff to review the approach taken, the difficulties encountered and the solutions to be put in place to address them. Strengthen the evidence generation that will guide the UNICEF programme and activities

**Strategy and tools:** The recommendations formulated serve to support the ongoing dynamics and to fully integrate water and sanitation in the UNICEF/Ukraine cooperation. They also serve to improve the visibility, the efficiency of the actions and the added value of UNICEF in the sector, and to be a driver in the dissemination of good practices within UNICEF (as a whole).

- *Harmonize the activities carried out in schools and clarify UNICEF's desired approach* (activities package, rehabilitating specific infrastructure only, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup> See UNICEF “Water Under Fire” series in which Ukraine is particularly showcased, and the resolution 2573 adopted by the Security Council in April 2021



- *Clarify the approaches to be implemented in small communities (network extensions, etc.) and the phasing of interventions.*
- *Structure the tools used:* improve the support provided to IPs to implement their activities (guidelines, checklist, etc.), systematically monitor the impact of the approaches used (e.g. the voucher approach over the 2018-2020 period)

**Programmatic // Activities:** The recommendations propose lines of intervention to continue emergency interventions in conflict zones, and to diversify UNICEF's scope of work to other non-visible emergencies or areas of insufficiency in the water and sanitation sector in Ukraine (minorities, etc.). On the development side, work with institutions at national level to lay the foundations for long-term interventions requiring adequate budgets. This implies working with stakeholders in the sector, including donors.

*Emergencies:*

- Focus emergency activities on the NGCA and on the 'contact line' in the GCA by maintaining regular communication with de-facto authorities and water companies (alert mechanism, access negotiation, e-vouchers when possible)
- Improve the way people's special needs are taken into consideration and focus funding efforts on the most impactful activities (i.e. access to water, non-standardized hygiene kits).
- Explore whether there are other vulnerable populations in Ukraine with regard to access to water and sanitation, and work to define an appropriate "service offer" (disabilities, minorities)
- Establish a procedure and contingency plan to enable UNICEF to rapidly intervene in water and sanitation-related actions in future crises.

*Nexus // long-term support*

- Work on the sustainability of interventions on institutions (schools and health facilities) and In settlements (decentralized networks): develop an approach to guarantee the maintenance of built or rehabilitated structures, taking account of changes in the water-related practices of the population and local authorities.
- Concentrate and consolidate UNICEF's expertise on the water cycle and sanitation activities (access to toilets) within a Climate Change consideration
- In a second phase, consider the possibility of working on other themes.

# B. Chapter 1: Background, Objectives and Methodology

## B.1. Subject of the Evaluation

### B.1.1. Context of the subject

#### a) SDG and Ukraine situation at the time<sup>4</sup>

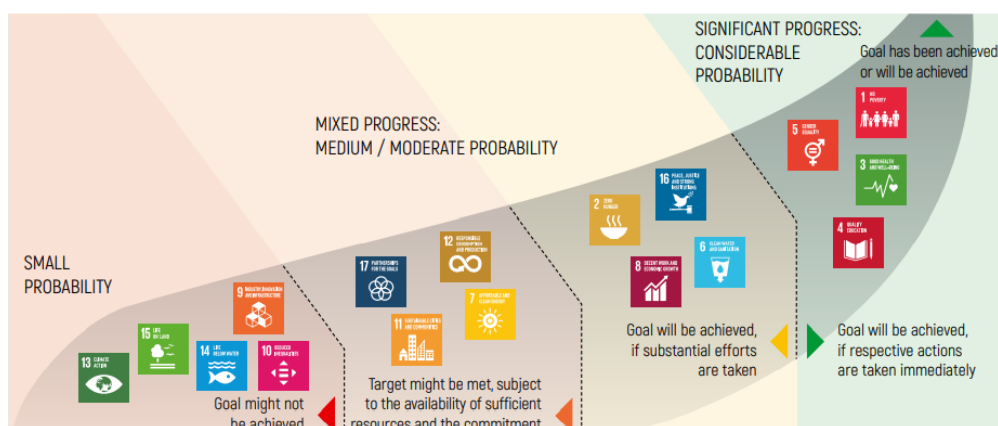
The human right to water and sanitation in Ukraine is recognized in the 1996 Constitution, national laws, the National Environmental Protection Action Plan, and in the by-laws of ministries and agencies. Since 2010, public health standards and regulations have been developed and approved concerning the quality of drinking water, treatment methods, water supply systems and sanitation.

WASH plans are developed for each sector, but they are not fully implemented and are only adequately funded for health facilities and schools. Plans to achieve universal access to water, sanitation and hygiene (SDG 6) are being developed, including for the poor and people living in slums and remote areas, internally displaced persons, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities. However, there are still few specific plans for improving and maintaining drinking water and sanitation services.<sup>5</sup>

The main coordination mechanisms are developed and distributed among ministries and government agencies. Several ministries and institutions share leadership on drinking water and sanitation services: the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources; and the Ministry of Regional Development, Constructions and Housing and Communal Services. The Ministry of Health leads hygiene promotion initiatives and has a number of responsibilities for sanitation and water. There are also coordinated action plans between the Government and NGOs (mainly MAMA-86 for hygiene, which is also an UNICEF’s partner).<sup>6</sup>

The 2020 SDG Monitoring Report shows that access to water and sanitation is one of the four development areas that can be achieved if all partners, especially ministries, take substantial efforts to improve the situation.

Figure 1: SDG Goal ranking in 2020



<sup>4</sup> Source: “Sustainable Development Goals Ukraine 2020 – Monitoring report”. The SDGs 2020 Monitoring Report provides data on Ukraine’s SDGs national indicators for 2015-2019. This Monitoring Report was developed by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine (SSSU) with the support of UNICEF in Ukraine and the United Nations Resident Coordinator’s Office using data from state statistical surveys conducted by SSSU and information from public authorities that administer administrative data, as well as scientific institutions and international organizations.

<sup>5</sup> Source: UN-Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water, Ukraine 2014, WHO 2015

<sup>6</sup> Source: UN- Water Global Analysis and Assessment of Sanitation and Drinking Water, Ukraine 2014, WHO 2015

Specifically, access to improved drinking water service declined between 2015 and 2019 in both rural and urban areas.

**Figure 2: Access to centralized water supply according to the SDG Monitoring report**

6.1.4. Share of the rural population with access to centralized water supply, %						6.1.5. Share of the urban population with access to centralized water supply, %					
Target value set for 2020 – 20.0						Target value set for 2020 – 90.0					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Share of the rural population with access to centralized water supply, % <sup>1</sup>	25.0	29.0	30.0	30.1	26.0	Share of the urban population with access to centralized water supply, % <sup>1</sup>	99.0	99.0	99.3	99.2	89.5
Source: MCTD						Source: MCTD					
<sup>1</sup> Data provided on the provision of settlements						<sup>1</sup> Data provided on the provision of settlements					

While access to sanitation remains poor but stable in rural areas, it has deteriorated considerably in urban areas, from 96.1 per cent in 2018 to 77 per cent in 2019.

These data show that Ukraine is facing real challenges. These challenges are exacerbated in the conflict-affected regions of eastern Ukraine.

- Ageing water facilities are in need of repair;
- Essential water pumps have diminished functionality due to the lack of electricity caused by the bombing of the electrical systems that supply the water pumps;
- There are access issues, either due to the presence of armed groups, landmines or unexploded ordnance, or associated with poor road conditions that prevent residents from accessing wells or receiving water by truck;
- There are access issues preventing workers from carrying out repair work or receiving spare parts needed to repair water facilities;
- Orders restrict freedom of movement and/or the supply of goods or water across the ‘contact line’;
- Frequent water cuts have contributed to the worsening of the situation.

In summary, the work started since 2014 by UNICEF Ukraine to support the water and sanitation sectors is strategic and helps to keep SDG 6 high on the national agenda.

### *b) Overview of the crisis location and context*

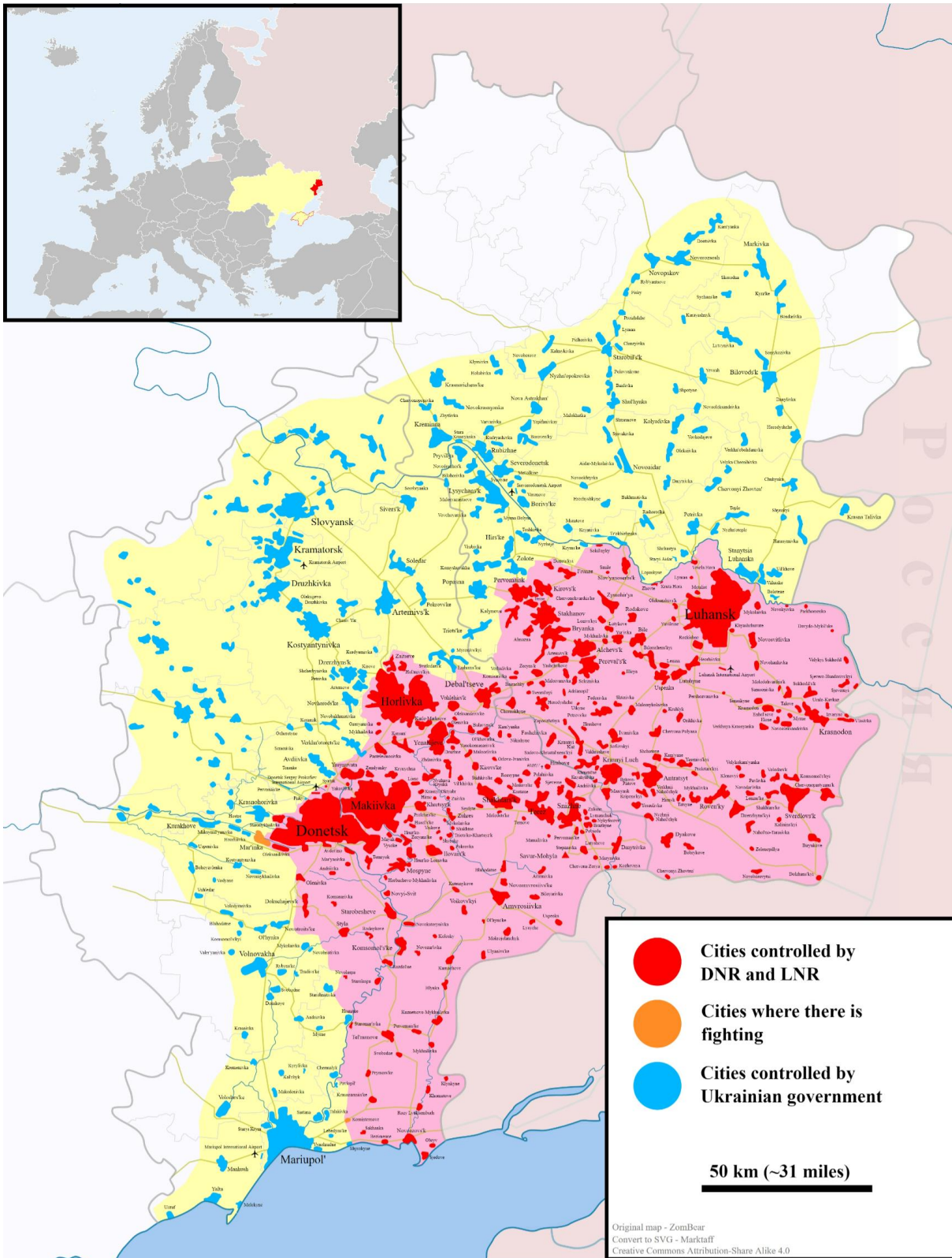
Since 2014, the armed conflict in Eastern Ukraine has affected 5.2 million people. After five years of conflict, 3.4 million people in Ukraine are struggling to cope with the impact of the humanitarian crisis and urgently require humanitarian assistance and protection (HNO, 2020).<sup>7</sup>

The Donbas crisis, where the Government of Ukraine opposes pro-Russian separatists is taking place in two oblasts in Eastern Ukraine: Donetsk and Luhansk. In April 2014, the Donetsk People's Republic was self-proclaimed, followed in May by the Luhansk People's Republic. An armed conflict then broke out with the intervention of the Ukrainian army, in May 2014.

The frontline of this conflict shifted continually throughout the summer of 2014 before a first ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk in September 2014. This was followed later by the Minsk 2 agreement in February 2015. Both made it possible to negotiate temporary ceasefires but did not succeed in bringing an end to the conflict. From this date (Minsk 1), the ‘contact line’ (which divides the opposing sides) has generally remained stable, passing nearby the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk (both in the non-government controlled area (NGCA)) and crossing the route of the region’s main water networks several times.

<sup>7</sup>[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukriane\\_2020\\_hno\\_at\\_a\\_glance-en.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukriane_2020_hno_at_a_glance-en.pdf)

Figure 3: Location of the Donbas Crisis



Active military action has resulted in significant internal displacement, leaving a particularly elderly population behind in the NGCA. As of 10 August 2020, there were 1.451 million internally displaced persons in Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> Critical civilian infrastructure has been severely affected as ceasefire agreements are regularly disregarded. The armed conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts remains

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.msp.gov.ua/news/18942.html>

active and continues to create humanitarian needs and protection concerns (the WASH Cluster estimates that 2.8 million people are in need).<sup>9</sup>

The situation is also causing serious public service coverage problems. “For nearly five years, armed clashes have damaged and destroyed critical civilian infrastructure, including houses, hospitals, schools, water, electricity and gas supply systems. Access to these facilities and services has long become a daily struggle for millions of people. In 2018, there were 89 incidents against water and sanitation facilities reported. The situation remains critical for major water infrastructure such as pipelines, pumps, and treatment plants in an area where 4.6 million people rely on centralised water systems. In 2018, at least 27 per cent of people who live close to the 'contact line' experienced daily or weekly water shortages.”<sup>10</sup>

### **B.1.2. Presentation of the subject of the evaluation**

Before 2014, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was not integrated into UNICEF focus areas as conditions for access to water and sanitation services for the local population were reported to be “good”. The lack of data and their quality were questionable. However, following the outbreak of the conflict, UNICEF Ukraine initiated a WASH Programme in 2014 to respond to the humanitarian needs of the conflict-affected population in Eastern Ukraine.

The main aims of the programme were to:

- Provide WASH services as a humanitarian response – but subsequently supplemented by recovery and development activities – to children and their family members on both sides of the ‘contact line’;
- Strengthen the key capacities of regional and national authorities to provide WASH services in emergency-affected areas;
- Build on and encourage children’s and communities’ innate resilience to crisis;
- Foster community resilience.

In this context, Hydroconseil was commissioned to conduct a summative evaluation of the UNICEF WASH Programme in Response to the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine for the period 2014-2018.

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<sup>9</sup>[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukriane\\_2020\\_hno\\_at\\_a\\_glance-en.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ukriane_2020_hno_at_a_glance-en.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF Ukraine, *Terms of Reference - Evaluation of UNICEF’s WASH programme in response to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine (2014-2018)*, 6 November 2019



## B.2. Overview of the Actions and Context

### B.2.1. Stakeholders and their Roles

#### *a) Water Governance Structure in Ukraine*

At the national level, water management is divided between several ministries:

- The Ministry of Regional Development, Construction, and Communal Living (for water facilities);
- The Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons (for the administration of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts);
- The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources (for water resources).

Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in Eastern Ukraine are mainly water-scarce and rely on gigantic water networks. Built in the 1960s, the water supply systems are centralized, much more extensive than required and now extremely inefficient. The state company Voda Donbasu owns the main system – including treatment and transportation – that supplies water to up to 3.9 million people. Most secondary water providers in the region then buy water from Voda Donbasu to supply this water to cities and small towns and treat sewage for consumers. Water is also the energy source used for electricity and heating in the area. The obsolete supply system is exceedingly energy-consuming, which creates financial challenges due to high bills, and the pipes are subject to excessive corrosion, which adversely affects the water quality.

All water intakes are located in the government-controlled area, along the Donets River – the main water source in the region - leaving non-government-controlled areas dependent on this area for water. Whilst the water company in the government-controlled area bears the costs of water extraction, most profit comes from the non-government-controlled areas, where most of the population lives. This has resulted in tensions, including disputes between parties across the ‘contact line’ regarding payments to the main water company, leading to major utility cut-offs when the bills are not paid.

The water systems on which most of the population depends are therefore old, technical, over-sized, underfunded and poorly maintained. The companies that manage them are also in debt. There are wells in the programme implementation area. However, due to the high level of mining activity in the region, some of them are polluted.

There are also governance differences between GCA and NGCA:

Early in the conflict, international humanitarian organizations and Ukrainian civil society groups both raised concerns over their lack of access to people in need in Ukraine, and the challenges being faced by people affected by the crisis in accessing the support they need, both in government-controlled and non-government controlled areas. In areas under government control, regulations introduced under the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) framework have limited freedom of movement and restricted trade and economic contacts with non-government controlled areas. In addition, internally displaced persons have faced legal and bureaucratic obstacles to accessing state benefits from the Government. In non-government controlled areas, regulations introduced by the de facto authorities in July 2015 have made it effectively impossible for international organizations to operate, while increasingly hostile policies are making it difficult for local organizations to provide assistance.

In the NGCA, physical access for humanitarian organizations was severely curtailed by the accreditation system established by the de facto “DNR” and “LNR” authorities in July 2015. The de facto authorities also placed restrictions on the activities that humanitarian organizations could undertake, including needs assessments, protection programmes (landmine awareness and psychosocial support) and monitoring.

For the most part, international humanitarian actors successfully set up operations in areas under government control, and overcame the bureaucratic hurdles encountered in an environment unprepared for humanitarian work. However, very few were able to establish or maintain access in the NGCA. The scope for operations near the ‘contact line’ was also very limited, given the agencies’ security management policies.

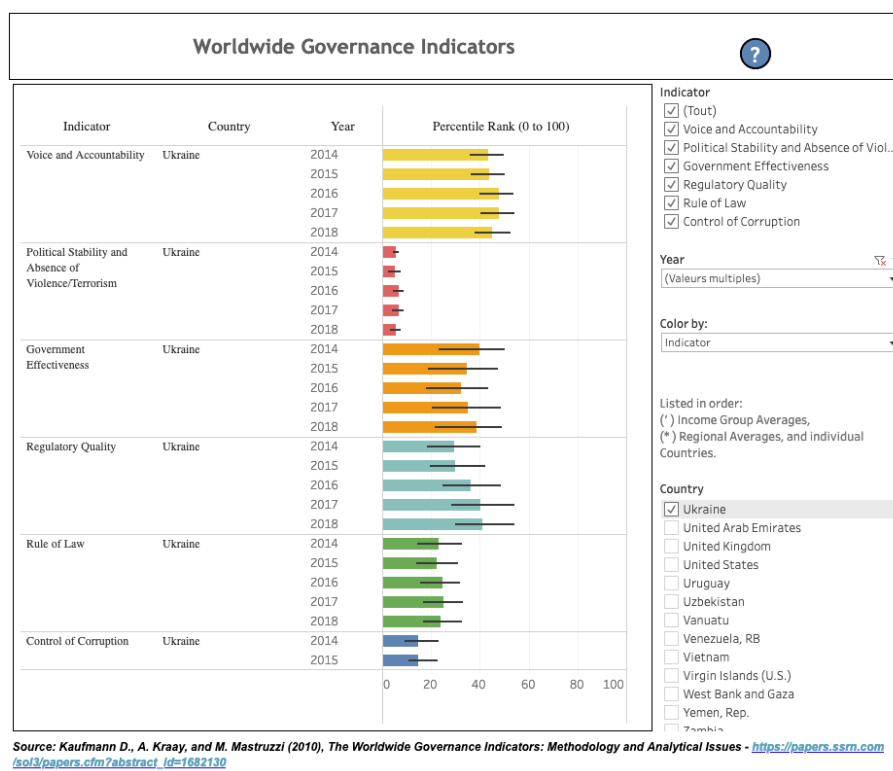
When the accreditation process was introduced in July 2015, United Nations agencies publicly refused to participate and, at OCHA’s request, NGOs initially followed the United Nations’ line and allowed the United Nations to negotiate on their behalf. Subsequently, NGOs agreed to comply with the accreditation request; however, in the vast majority of cases, requests for accreditation were denied.

Finally, the World Bank has analysed Ukraine’s governance, covering the six aspects of governance studied by the World Bank’s “Worldwide Governance Indicators project”:<sup>11</sup>

- Voice and Accountability;
- Political Stability and Absence of Violence;
- Government Effectiveness;
- Regulatory Quality;
- Rule of Law;
- Control of Corruption.

These aggregated indicators combine the views of multiple companies, citizen and expert survey respondents in industrial and developing countries. They are based on over 30 individual data sources produced by a variety of survey institutes, think tanks, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, and private sector firms.

**Figure 4. The World Bank’s Ukraine governance indicators**



<sup>11</sup> <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/Home/Reports>

*b) Specific actors of the programme during the period 2014-2018*

The various programme stakeholders, as well as their positions and role in the programme, are listed in the table below.

**Table 1. Stakeholders and their roles in the programme**

<b>Group of Stakeholders</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	UNICEF agencies and UNICEF WASH Cluster	<p>Advocacy with the various donors to mobilize a budget to maintain access to water and sanitation for vulnerable populations (especially children).</p> <p>Managing the funds provided by the donors and monitoring the effectiveness and quality of the interventions carried out by the implementing partners.</p> <p>Being highly active in coordination/cluster meetings.</p>
<b>Donors</b>	GIZ, KFW	<p>Supporting the populations by releasing budgets, in this case to UNICEF to carry out WASH activities.</p> <p>Holding UNICEF accountable through the annual activity reports.</p>
<b>17 Implementing partners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People in Need (PIN)</li> <li>• Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH)</li> <li>• Mama-86</li> <li>• Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)</li> <li>• Foundation 101</li> <li>• PUI</li> <li>• Water Research Fund (WRF)</li> <li>• KHORS</li> <li>• Arche Nova</li> <li>• IMPACT</li> <li>• Ukrainian Frontiers</li> <li>• SOS Kramatorsk</li> <li>• Donbass Development Centre (DDC)</li> <li>• Help Is Me (HIM)</li> <li>• Proliska</li> <li>• Friends Hands</li> <li>• Acceptance international</li> </ul>	<p>Acting as the “linchpin” of UNICEF; carrying out needs analysis and thus guiding UNICEF in the drafting of its “programme”; implementing activities in the field through the signature of PCAs.</p>
<b>Central government</b>	Government representatives	Defining the framework and authorizing UNICEF's action.
<b>Local government</b>	<p>Donetsk Oblast Administration</p> <p>Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development (LRASD)</p>	Partner in defining and implementing the action.



Group of Stakeholders	Organization	Notes
<b>Beneficiaries</b>	Population, including young people and women	Main target of UNICEF interventions; these include both households and children, in schools, in the affected areas with specific involvement of women and girls.
	Social institutions (schools, kindergartens and health care facilities)	Beneficiaries
	Water companies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voda Donbasu</li> <li>• Popasna VK</li> <li>• Kramarosk VK</li> <li>• VK Mariupol</li> </ul>	Providing the population with minimum access to water. Because her ability to fulfil their obligation has been considerably impeded, they estimated their need for support and forwarded it to UNICEF. Once the funds were received, the water companies were responsible for replacing pipes and running the water purification plants as well as possible in the circumstances.

### B.2.2. Main Areas of WASH Intervention

The following section traces UNICEF's interventions throughout the five years of the programme targeted by this evaluation. The Theory of Change (ToC) reconstructed with UNICEF's Ukraine team (as it was not produced before the evaluation) is presented in Chapter C.3. Logic of Intervention (ToC).

The objectives pursued by UNICEF in its WASH activities between 2014 and 2018 can be summarized as follows:

- **Year 1 (2014):** Rapidly intervene on-site with emergency activities to support the populations and conduct a needs assessment in both oblasts to guide future support strategies;
- **Year 2 (2015):** Structure, continue and intensify emergency activities, support water companies;
- **Year 3 (2016):** Continue with 2015 activities;
- **Years 4-5 (2017-2018):** As the WASH team is better organized, refocus interventions on activities linking the emergency and development.

The following table summarizes the interventions conducted by the implementing partners over the period. It is difficult to clarify the funding utilized each year.

**Table 2. Interventions by implementing partners over the period**

Intervention Description	Implementing Partners	Year of implementation
<b>Assessments</b>		
- Assessment of access to WASH facilities; - WASH needs assessment.	- KHORS - Mama-86	2014
<b>Sanitation</b>		
- Installation of portable toilets (very small project = \$25,000).	- Acceptance international	2015

Intervention Description	Implementing Partners	Year of implementation
<b>Hygiene</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribution of adult hygiene kits;</li> <li>- Distribution of family hygiene kits;</li> <li>- Distribution of baby kits;</li> <li>- Distribution of institution kits;</li> <li>- Distribution of supplies: nappies, baby wipes, soap, shavers, hair dryers, dishwashing liquid, washing powder, etc.</li> <li>- Voucher distribution;</li> <li>- Hygiene promotion: distribution of promotion materials (lined copybooks, colouring books, bars of soap with hygiene promotion stickers) and hygiene promotion sessions for schools and communities;</li> <li>- Development of WASH and health promotion guidelines;</li> <li>- Training for teachers on promotion of hygiene practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ukrainian Frontiers</li> <li>- People in Need (PIN)</li> <li>- Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA)</li> <li>- IMPACT</li> <li>- Mama-86</li> <li>- Ukrainian Frontiers</li> <li>- SOS Kramatorsk</li> <li>- Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development (LRASD)</li> <li>- KHORS</li> <li>- Donbass Development Centre (DDC)</li> <li>- Foundation 101</li> <li>- Help Is Me (HIM)</li> <li>- Proliska</li> <li>- Arche Nova</li> <li>- Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH)</li> <li>- Friends Hands</li> <li>- PUI</li> <li>- UNICEF direct support (without involvement of NGOs/INGOs)</li> </ul>	<p>2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018</p>
<b>Drinking water</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provision and installation of pumps;</li> <li>- Repair and rehabilitation of water supply and plumbing systems;</li> <li>- Provision of bottled water;</li> <li>- Provision of household water storage containers (jerry cans etc.);</li> <li>- Provision of institutional water storage facilities (water tanks etc.);</li> <li>- Water trucking (in communities, government, and education institutions and to checkpoints);</li> <li>- Installation and handover of water tanks (in education and health care institutions);</li> <li>- Provision of water purification equipment;</li> <li>- Provision of winterization items (boilers, heaters and generators);</li> <li>- Winterization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- ADRA</li> <li>- PIN</li> <li>- LRASD</li> <li>- Ukrainian Frontiers</li> <li>- SOS Kramatorsk</li> <li>- Donbass Development Centre (DDC)</li> <li>- Arche Nova</li> <li>- Water Research Fund</li> </ul>	<p>2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018</p>
<b>Water and sanitation infrastructure</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Repair/rehabilitation of existing private water supply system and sanitation facilities;</li> <li>- Creation of Parenting Rooms;</li> <li>- WASH rehabilitation in social institutions (schools and kindergartens): rehabilitation of showers and toilets;</li> <li>- Repair of existing centralized water supply system;</li> <li>- Repair of existing decentralized water supply system (borehole cleaning and construction).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Arche Nova</li> <li>- ADRA</li> <li>- DDC</li> <li>- PUI</li> </ul>	<p>2017 and 2018</p>

The water utilities were also the main beneficiaries of the UNICEF programme. The following table lists the assistance they received over the period:

**Table 3. UNICEF assistance to water utilities over the period**

Assistance/Intervention Description	Water Utilities
<b>From 2014 to 2016</b>	
Reimbursement and procurement of water treatment materials: chlorine gas, charcoal, chemical reacts and other materials such as pipes, pumps, etc.	Voda Donbasu, Popasna VK, Kramarosk VK, Kramatorsk VK, Mariupol VK
<b>2017</b>	
Handover of materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pipes, pumps, equipment: welding machine for polyethylene pipes, frequency converter, transformers, etc.</li> <li>- Machinery: wheeled excavator, service truck, loader-digger.</li> <li>- Accessories: cables, etc.</li> </ul> Reimbursement of water treatment materials: chlorine gas and sodium hypochlorite. Voda Dombasa risk assessment	Voda Donbasu, Popasna VK, Mariupol VK, Lysychansk VK
<b>2018</b>	
Handover of pipes and other equipment Reimbursement and procurement of water treatment materials: chlorine gas, sodium hypochlorite, aluminium sulphate and activated charcoal.	Voda Donbasu, Popasna VK, Mariupol VK, Lysychansk VK, VK Vuhledar

### B.2.3. Budget of the WASH programme

Between October 2013 and November 2020, USD 56,837,389 in grants were injected into UNICEF's programme in Ukraine, 57.8% of which were directed towards mixed activities (WASH and other themes).

The USA (USAID and the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance OFDA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs the European Commission, ECHO, and Germany were the main donors of UNICEF WASH interventions during the 2014-2018 period. See Annex 3: List of grants concerned.

## B.3. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives and Scope

### B.3.1. Evaluation Rationale

The main purpose of the evaluation is to generate substantive evidence-based knowledge by identifying good practices and lessons learned from the intended and unintended impacts of the WASH programme response.

As stated in the ToR, the evaluation objectives are as follows:

- In terms of accountability, the evaluation will enable reporting on the results achieved by the WASH programme and the populations benefiting from its implementation;
- In terms of organizational learning, the purpose of this evaluation is to document good practices and lessons learned from implementation of the WASH programme, inform decision-making on scaling up the various approaches adopted during implementation, review existing strategies, and formulate new strategies (or improve existing strategies).

### B.3.2. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

This summative evaluation aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Document the achievements and challenges of the WASH programme, identify facilitating and constraining factors of the programme in terms of process and actors in order to produce tangible recommendations, and identify lessons learned at strategic and operational level;
2. Assess the coverage of the WASH programme's intervention-related needs in terms both of geographic coverage and of the number of women and children targeted compared to the number of women and children in need;
3. Evaluate the quality of the services provided;
4. Assess the effectiveness of programme partnership and coordination, especially between UNICEF and its implementing partners.

The main objective is to assess the activities implemented since the onset of the crisis in 2014, and to guide the future programme activities, focusing on the humanitarian development nexus approach.

### B.3.3. Evaluation Scope

The evaluation covers the period from 2014 to 2018 and two conflict-affected regions (oblasts) of Ukraine: Donetsk and Luhansk. It focuses mainly on the interventions directly implemented by UNICEF or by its IPs.

The ToR requested that a minimum of 10 sites be visited by the evaluation team (utility company sites of Voda Donbasu, Popasna VK, Lysychansk VK; sites of the decentralized water supply system interventions; hygiene distribution sites; institutions undergoing rehabilitation of their WASH facilities, water trucking areas, and water quality testing facilities). These 10 sites are not representative of all the interventions carried out during the four years of UNICEF support. Therefore, during the inception phase, the team adopted a guided sampling methodology for site selection under which we selected "rayons" (as selection units) where a wide range of activities had been implemented (including in institutions) that had involved a representative sample of implementing partners. This sampling methodology is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**

**In agreement with UNICEF Ukraine, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the consultancy team had to cancel the field visits to these selected rayons and conducted all the evaluation work remotely.**

The target of this evaluation is the interventions carried out by all partners of the UNICEF-supported WASH response. The evaluation team was provided with mapping of all UNICEF-supported activities and, after analysing this mapping, proposed a sampling that is set out in the Evaluation Methodology section of the Inception Report.

Despite not being able to travel to Ukraine, this preliminary sampling work enabled the evaluation team to get a sense of the number of beneficiaries by geographical area and how activities were distributed across the spokes, which improved their understanding of the programme.

### B.3.4. Target Audience

The knowledge generated by the evaluation will be used by:

- **UNICEF Ukraine** to further expand and improve its programmatic activities in this field to guide its advocacy work, and to have evidence on the necessity to work on policy making with ministries in charge of the water and sanitation sector;
- **UNICEF regional and global entities** to document opening of a thematic and how to work in urban areas in middle-income countries in crisis conditions.
- **Line ministries** for planning and implementing the relevant state programmes and policy reform;

- **Local authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders** for improving their WASH-related activities.

The evaluation findings and recommendations will help to strengthen UNICEF’s contribution to realization and protection of children’s access to water, as well as improve inter-sector commitment and coordination.

The evaluation results will inform UNICEF about how to improve its humanitarian and development programming in Ukraine, starting seamlessly from the onset of humanitarian crises, so that UNICEF can effectively assist the Government’s ongoing reform efforts. Hence, the evaluation results will inform UNICEF’s programming when building the Government’s systemic and institutional capacities to provide basic services, improve individual and community resilience, and reduce vulnerability among conflict-affected populations.

### B.3.5. Evaluation approach: Use of OECD-DAC criteria and UNEG guidelines

We have **respected the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct and Ethical Guidelines** including the following principles, as a guarantee for the quality of the review process and final product: Utility, Credibility, Independence, Impartiality, Ethics, Transparency, Human rights and gender equality, and Professionalism.

The evaluation was also guided by the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Evaluation Standards**.

The evaluation criteria used are based on the updated OECD-DAC standards, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, specific gender equality, human rights based approach (HRBA), humanitarian response standards, humanitarian-development nexus, and evaluation criteria which address coverage, coordination, appropriateness, quality and protection have been explored (more or less successfully, depending on the component of the WASH programme being evaluated) as well as the “leave no-one behind” approach.

We have reorganized all the evaluation questions identified by UNICEF in the ToR around these evaluation criteria.

**Table 4. Evaluation criteria and their definitions**

Criterion	Definition
<b>Relevance</b>	The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the targeted group, recipient and donors.
<b>Effectiveness</b>	A measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objective
<b>Efficiency</b>	Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the designed results. This, generally, requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.
<b>Impact</b>	The positive and negative changes produced by an intervention directly and indirectly, intended or unintended. This involved the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdraw. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

In addition to these five standard criteria, we also take into account the cross-cutting criteria that are the core of the UNICEF mandate and humanitarian response standards:

**Table 5. Cross-cutting additional criteria**

Criterion	Definition
<b>Equity and inclusion</b>	Extent to which UNICEF interventions have affected and benefited the most vulnerable: children, women, the elderly or the disabled, and the most disadvantaged.
<b>Consistency</b>	The extent to which the interventions supported are not contradictory to other interventions that have the same objectives but are coordinated and complementary to them.
<b>Added value</b>	The extent to which the development intervention has added value as compared to other interventions.

In constructing the evaluation matrix, we also paid close attention to the principle of scaling-up / scalability of the approach and the implementation of the NEXUS principles.

**Table 6. Principle of scaling-up / scalability of the approach: definitions of the criteria**

Criterion	Definition
<b>Scalability</b>	How the messages of UNICEF, as a major player in the WASH response and in the protection of children's and families' rights, have influenced other local, national or international actors
<b>Humanitarian development nexus</b>	To what extent the UNICEF programme has anticipated, organized and possibly established links between activities addressing emergency needs and activities aimed at providing durable solutions
<b>UN-HRBA (human rights-based approach)</b>	<p>Based on international human right standards, the extent to which UNICEF, while implementing the programme, has identified and analysed possible inequalities, and, if necessary, redressed discriminatory practices. The extent to which the programme has tried to enhance the capacities of ‘duty-bearers’ to meet their obligations regarding human rights application and permitted ‘right-holders’ to claim their rights.</p> <p>The HRBA has been considered as a necessarily transversal and supposedly systemic approach. The evaluation team focussed their attention particularly on use of UNICEF’s HRBA regarding beneficiaries’ selection and more widely in links with coverage, equity, UNICEF’s global approach and UNICEF’s links with local authorities and local actors.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">13</p>

<sup>13</sup> Source : [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Human-Rights-Based-Approach-HRBA-86\\_fig3\\_277006073](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Human-Rights-Based-Approach-HRBA-86_fig3_277006073)



Criterion	Definition
<b>Humanitarian response standards</b>	<p>The extent to which UNICEF's programme allowed the beneficiaries to reach at least the minimum standards as described in the Sphere Handbook. The Sphere standards, as revised in the 2018 edition, are considered as the reference regarding humanitarian response standards in the WASH sector.</p> <p>Compliance with this reference is studied transversally throughout the assessment as a basis on which the emergency response programme should have been built. It is studied with particular attention to questions relating to effectiveness, relevance and impact.</p>

The main guide of the evaluation was to retrace the theory of change undeveloped by UNICEF and to identify if the right means and processes were used to achieve the expected results (see B.7 and Main findings C).

## B.4. Evaluation Questions

During the inception phase, the team carried out an initial in-depth documentary review from which this matrix was reconstructed to guide all of our evaluation work.

The very numerous initial evaluation questions (presented in the ToRs) were reorganized and simplified to make the matrix easier to read. Some very specific sub-questions addressed in the ToRs that are not relevant to the specific context of the evaluation were also greatly simplified. A total of 21 evaluation questions re considered in the evaluation report.

**Table 7. The 21 evaluation questions**

	Topics
	<b>RELEVANCE and COHERENCE</b>
1	<b>Institutional context and UNICEF's response:</b> To what extent is UNICEF's intervention in line with national policies?
2	<b>Humanitarian needs and UNICEF's response:</b> To what extent has UNICEF considered existing humanitarian needs and how has it been involved in identifying them?
3	<b>Coverage, coordination and relationship with humanitarian actors:</b> How has UNICEF worked with other humanitarian actors to ensure optimal coverage of WASH interventions in the two oblasts?
4	<b>Integration of equity measures in approaches and actions:</b> Has equity been one of the principles/guidelines used in the design of UNICEF's intervention strategy? Has the equity principle been integrated into the intervention strategy in a coherent way?
	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>
5	<b>UNICEF's global approach:</b> What was the overall approach adopted by UNICEF? Did it lead to effective interventions in the field (achievement of results, coverage, response time, etc.)? Has the approach evolved in response to changing needs and conditions?
6	<b>Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the quality of projects and equity measurement:</b> Did M&E (feedback mechanisms from the field, assessment of participation mechanism) ensure the quality of interventions and the measurement of equity?
7	<b>Coordination mechanisms and transfer of approaches:</b> The nexus approach is based on skills transfer. In what way has UNICEF participated in boosting the coordination mechanisms in place?
	<b>EFFICIENCY</b>
8	<b>UNICEF resources and achievement of the objectives:</b> Were the activities implemented by UNICEF to monitor the programme sufficient?

Topics	
9	<b>Coordination and economies of scale:</b> Did the coordination between the different actors lead to economies of scale in the UNICEF programme?
<b>IMPACTS</b>	
10	<b>Priorities for action and targeted changes:</b> Does the UNICEF Ukraine intervention meet UNICEF intervention standards (response to humanitarian needs)? Has the intervention been slowed down? How did UNICEF and partners work to identify and address barriers?
11	<b>Direct and indirect impacts of the UNICEF programme:</b> Throughout the intervention, UNICEF identified and documented the direct and indirect impacts of its interventions on the beneficiaries (population, institution, water companies, etc.). What are the impacts of the programme?,
12	<b>Measure and use of the effects:</b> Throughout the intervention, UNICEF identified and documented the direct and indirect impacts of its interventions on the beneficiaries (population, institution, water companies, etc.). Were these impacts used by the team to reorient the programme?
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	
13	<b>Sustainability factors:</b> between 2 and 6 years after the end of the interventions covered by this evaluation, are the positive changes induced by the activities still visible?
14	<b>Institutional anchoring:</b> Did UNICEF's interventions have a strong institutional anchoring?
15	<b>Development of new local capacities:</b> How have UNICEF's activities enabled the development of new local capacities?
<b>HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS</b>	
16	<b>HDN strategy:</b> Between 2014 and 2018, was there an HDN strategy in place? Were actions and interventions identified for the three phases (Emergency, Recovery, and Development) to ensure a return to the prior WASH delivery situation?
17	<b>Anticipation, adaption and applicability of the HDN strategy:</b> To what extent was the UNICEF programme designed and built to adapt to the needs of Emergency, Early Recovery and Development?
18	<b>Lessons learned and 2018-2022 country programme document development:</b> Which processes were put in place by UNICEF to identify the “lessons learned” before development of the 2018-2022 intervention strategy? Does the 2018-2022 strategy take this into account?
<b>SCALABILITY</b>	
19	<b>Approach dissemination and spill-over effects:</b> After the UNICEF-funded interventions, has there been a spontaneous expansion of activities within the communities?
20	<b>Scaling-up / replicability factors analysis:</b> Can the activities carried out between 2014 and 2018 serve as a reference for urban WASH interventions in emergency situations?
21	<b>Appropriateness and replicability of approaches, methods, processes:</b> Have the approaches used by UNICEF between 2014 and 2018 been integrated at the national level (by the Government or the private sector)? Have the activities implemented in Ukraine served as a reference for urban emergency WASH programming elsewhere?

The indicators and benchmarks of this matrix were discussed with UNICEF team during the inception phase. It was established that subjective indicators were not to be used. The evaluation team proposed “benchmark trends to compare UNICEF intervention against an optimal, normal / improvable, ill-adapted situation. The full matrix with scoring indicators is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**, and was approved with the Inception Report.

The various criteria presented in this matrix have been evaluated using a grid to cross-reference the evaluation sub-question findings. This indicator-based evaluation uses the following colour code:



	Approach or activity to be reviewed
	Approach or activity that contributed to the final objectives of the programme, but which could be improved
	Activities aligned to achievement of the programme objectives

As agreed with the UNICEF team, a scoring matrix was put in place. For each evaluation question, three colour-coded trends were drawn. At the end of the analysis work and interviews, the sum score of the evaluative findings for the sub-questions was identified as falling under either the green, orange or red trend.

## B.5. Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology was initially based on the identification of the “most significant changes” and was intended to be highly participatory through interviews in the field with the main beneficiaries of UNICEF's action: households, health centres, schools, water companies and, indirectly, community representatives. The health situation (COVID-19) and the absence of a “contact” database meant we were unable to implement this methodology and to have access to people in the field.

The methodology was refocused on documentary analysis and in-depth interviews (individual or in working groups) with partner NGOs, and especially with the UNICEF teams who have participated to several workshops (focused on the ToC and on the co-construction of recommendations). The remote facilitation of these workshops did not make it easy for everyone to participate, but overall the whole team was involved in the work and these sessions were very rich in information.

The following chapters present the work carried out.

### B.5.1. Evaluation methodology and data sources

Our evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach to gather data from multiple sources as explained in the following chapters.

Following analysis of the documents transmitted by UNICEF, some adjustments were made to the orientations set out in our technical bid.

**Moreover, because of the current health situation (COVID-19), the entire evaluation had to be carried out remotely. In January 2021, after having taken into consideration the COVID-19 transmission rate in Ukraine, UNICEF decided that all interviews would be conducted remotely.**

This reorganization profoundly changed the methodology of the evaluation, as the planned field visits (direct observation) and the focus group discussions were unable to take place.

#### *a) In-depth analysis of reference documents and databases of activities implemented*

Following cancellation of the field visits, and given the very high probability of significant staff turnover within the institutions / organizations to be contacted for information, the evaluation team concluded that, although not field-based, documentary analysis remained the best source of information.

During the inception phase, the team asked UNICEF to collate various documents (partners' contracts, periodic reports, etc.). This considerably lengthened the inception phase, but it also strengthened our methodological proposal (by strengthening the literature review). The desk review also enabled us to reconstruct the chronology of interventions and the evolution of events in the region.

During the evaluative phase, the evaluation team conducted a more in-depth literature review, examining more than 50 documents. The complete list of documents reviewed is provided in **Error! Reference source not found.**

### *b) Reconstruction of the programme's Theory of Change*

Our literature review did not allow us to identify the Theory of Change (ToC) followed by UNICEF during the four years of the programme, which is no doubt due to the crisis situation. The impression is that the programme and its resulting activities were built up as more knowledge of the situation was obtained (through assessments), as the WASH programme was not initially well-defined but implemented more as a response to the crisis. It did not form part of the 2012-2017 CPD and was virtually absent from the 2017-2022 CPD.<sup>14</sup>

The team therefore decided to work with UNICEF to reconstruct the WASH programme Theory of Change in order to compare it with the activities carried out over the period (2014-2018) and to identify the points of continuity / change in the 2018-2022 strategy.

As the 2014-2018 Country Programme period is now over, and was completed without a Theory of Change being defined beforehand, but was guided by the Core Commitments for Children (CCC), it was necessary to look back and consider “what should have been done / or what UNICEF intended to do”, and not what was actually achieved.

The team suggested to the UNICEF team that two ToCs should be developed: one for the period 2014-2015, and a second for 2016-2018. This made the exercise more complex, but seemed more relevant given the programme's context and implementation. Two participatory workshops were held to rebuild these two ToCs.

The details of the aim, organization and results of these workshops are provided in Chapter B.7. Logic of Intervention (ToC).

### *c) Semi-Structured Interviews*

Semi-structured interviews are used to gather qualitative data. These are conducted using interview guides that contain a series of questions aligned with the evaluation matrix. The advantage of semi-structured interviews is that the evaluators can tailor questions and prompt the interviewees based on their specific experience of working on the programme. This makes it possible for the evaluators to collect a wealth of information and thus gain a holistic understanding of the programme.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team conducted all the interviews by Skype/Teams/Zoom or phone. As it knew that it would be difficult for our interviewees to remain focused using these remote methods, a maximum of 90 minutes was set for the interviews, which consisted of 10 to 15 open-ended questions targeted to each interviewee.

The interview work was divided into two: our team of international experts conducted the interviews with English-speaking stakeholders, and the Ukrainian consultant, Iryna Vanda, carried out the interviews with the Ukrainian-speaking stakeholders.

UNICEF helped us by facilitating access to the various people in charge of the UNICEF-funded interventions during the period covered by this evaluation (2014-2018), and by making the initial contact (email addresses and phone numbers, letters of introduction and reason for the evaluation). An invitation letter, validated and signed by UNICEF, was sent by email in English and/or Ukrainian to all the stakeholders identified. The interviewed organizations are listed in Table 8:

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<sup>14</sup> The first ex-ante ToC was produced in 2021 (out of the scope of the evaluation) to prepare for the 2023 - 2026 CPD.

**Table 8. Summary table of interviews conducted**

<b>Group of Stakeholders</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Number of people interviewed</b>
<b>Donors</b>	GIZ, KFW	Reporting and rational use of funds used; Justification of the activity and choice of interventions; UNICEF's role in advocacy at country level; UNICEF's role in dissemination and adoption of good WASH intervention practices (guidelines etc.).	1 man
<b>National authorities</b>	Government representatives	Effectiveness of the approaches; Analysis of scaling-up / replicability factors.	3 men
<b>Regional representative</b>	Donetsk Oblast Administration Luhansk Regional Agency for Sustainable Development (LRASD)	Coverage, coordination and relationship with humanitarian actors; Integration of equity measures in the approaches and actions; Coordination mechanisms and transfer of approaches; UNICEF resources and achievement of the objectives; Institutional anchoring; Development of new local capacities.	2 men
<b>UN agencies</b>	UNICEF OCHA	Integration of equity measures in the approaches and actions; UNICEF's global approach; Priorities for action and targeted changes; Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the quality of projects and equity measurement; Measurement and use of the effects; Coordination mechanisms and transfer of approaches; Institutional anchoring; HDN strategy / anticipation, adaption and applicability of the HDN strategy; Lessons learned and 2018-2022 programme document building; Sustainability factors; Scaling-up / replicability factors analysis.	4 women 10 men
<b>WASH Cluster</b>	UNICEF	Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the quality of projects and equity measurement; Measurement and use of the effects; UNICEF resources and achievement of the objectives; Coordination and economies of scale; Sustainability factors; Approach dissemination and spill-over effects; Scaling-up / replicability factors analysis; Appropriateness and replicability of approaches, methods, processes.	2 men

Group of Stakeholders	Organization	Topics	Number of people interviewed
NGO partners	People in Need (PIN) Triangle (TGH) Mama-86 Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) Foundation 101 PUI Water Research Fund (WRF) Arche Nova	Coverage, coordination and relationship with humanitarian actors; Integration of equity measures in the approaches and actions; UNICEF's global approach; Priorities for action and targeted changes; Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure the quality of projects and equity measurement; Coordination mechanisms and transfer of approaches; UNICEF resources and achievement of the objectives; Sustainability factors; Institutional anchoring; Lessons learned and 2018-2022 programme document building; Approach dissemination and spill-over effects; Scaling-up / replicability factors analysis.	4 women 5 men
Water companies	Voda Donbasu Popasna VK Kramarosc VK VK Mariupol	Coordination mechanisms and transfer of approaches; UNICEF resources and achievement of the objectives; Priorities for action and targeted changes; Direct and indirect impacts of the UNICEF programme; Sustainability factors; Institutional anchoring; Development of new local capacities.	5 men

The detailed list of stakeholders interviewed is provided in [Error! Reference source not found.](#)

#### *d) Focus on gender*

Applying a gender lens to the evaluation process supports a proper analysis of how unobserved gender norms and gender discrimination can affect programme implementation processes and outcomes for diverse groups of women and girls, men and boys.<sup>15</sup> The programme evaluated does not deal specifically with gender issues (no outcomes or leverage effects were expected on gender or on the improvement of the consideration of women in conflict zones). Thus, the gender issue was not further explored by the evaluation team after the inception phase<sup>16</sup> beyond the information included in the Ips' evaluation reports and the testimonies of resource persons. No unintended effects (positive or negative) could be identified during the evaluation process.

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1226/file/UNICEF%20Guidance%20on%20Gender%20\(Full%20version\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/media/1226/file/UNICEF%20Guidance%20on%20Gender%20(Full%20version).pdf)

<sup>16</sup> During the inception phase Hydroconseil prepared questionnaires along the lines indicated in the report [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/global\\_gender\\_responsive\\_wash\\_programming\\_2017.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/global_gender_responsive_wash_programming_2017.pdf)

## **B.5.2. Data analysis**

Following the data collection process, the evaluation team prepared a draft of the preliminary findings, based on their data analysis. Their analysis was built on triangulation of information collected from different stakeholders and desk review.

The team critically examined the information gathered from the various sources and synthesized the information in an objective manner. If contradictory information was obtained from different stakeholders, an effort was made to understand the reasons for such information.

As previously mentioned, the evaluation approach (and data collection / analysis methods) was focussed on equity, gender and human rights aspects, and was responsive and appropriate for analysing gender equality and human rights issues, including child rights issues, identified in the scope. Gender equality, equity and human rights considerations were elaborated by the evaluation team during the inception phase but this approach was not easy to use as it was impossible to access the beneficiaries and because UNICEF and the IPs had little data available.

The objective of this phase was to analyse and synthesize the results collected in order to answer the evaluation questions, both for the direct and the indirect beneficiaries of the programme. These elements were put into perspective with the logical framework of the project and theory of change rebuilt by the evaluation team. A debriefing meeting was held on the first conclusions of the evaluation at the end of the data collection phase before the writing of the report.

## **B.5.3. Participation of key rights holders and duty bearers**

We organized two participating sessions of work with UNICEF Ukraine team focused on the reconstruction of the programme Theory of Change (see section B.7) on February-March 2021. Numerous discussions with UNICEF Ukraine were also held regularly throughout the evaluation work. Finally, a workshop was held on July 14<sup>th</sup> 2021 with the ERG Group, with the aim of discussing and validating the conclusions and recommendations developed by the evaluation team.

The remote facilitation of these workshops did not make it easy for everyone to participate, but overall we feel that the whole team was involved in the work and that these sessions were very rich in information.

According to the COVID-19 pandemic situation we had done all the work remotely and we haven't follow the sampling trends. The sampling is, however, presented in Annex 9. We increased the number of remote interviews with people who agreed to answer our questions (linked to the consent issue).

## **B.6. Major Limitations, Ethical Considerations, Human Rights and Gender**

### **B.6.1. Major limitations and mitigation measures to ensure the quality of the evaluation**

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation team was unable to travel to the field, and so it conducted most of the investigative work remotely. Consequently, and as set out as a proposed mitigation measure in the Inception Report, the evaluation team made extensive use of remote data collection methods, such as interviews over Skype, Zoom and Teams.

The major limitation of this reorganization is that the evaluation team were unable to interview beneficiaries and to access disaggregated data on equity, vulnerability and gender, with the possible

exception of that contained in the database provided by UNICEF, which was itself compiled for the purposes of the evaluation (2015, 2016 and 2017 databases<sup>17</sup>).

Moreover, as the evaluation team was assessing a five-year programme that ended two years before the study, some key stakeholders proved difficult to reach or struggled to remember exactly what had been done at the beginning of the period studied. Some key documents and data related to the very beginning of the humanitarian action in the area were also hard to find. Despite our research, some remained unavailable.

The team worked in conjunction with UNICEF to make the most of those elements that we were able to work on remotely. For example, UNICEF completely reconstituted its 2014 to 2015 intervention database for the purposes of this evaluation. It was not possible to mitigate for the beneficiary limitation as no contact information (telephone numbers) was collected by the IPs, who themselves have experienced high staff turnover since 2014. We have, however, cited as many of the “testimonies” contained in the NGO partners’ activity reports as possible. While these are not “beneficiary” testimonies, they better illustrate the situation on the ground than we have been able to do otherwise.

### B.6.2. Evaluation Ethics

The evaluation team took particular care to respect the rules of ethics. The evaluation was not based on subjective value judgements but on an analysis of documented facts and evidence.

Hydroconseil maintained its independence and neutrality, and carried out this study in a constructive manner. The evaluation team ensured that it remained transparent with UNICEF staff through regular updates via email and remote meetings.

With the remote work and the missing contact number files of the beneficiaries, the consultancy team did not interview the beneficiaries (households, heads of schools or health care centres). For the programme stakeholders, UNICEF first informed them of the evaluation and that Hydroconseil would contact them. A consent form was elaborated and sent by UNICEF (Annex **Error! Reference source not found.**) to all the key-informants, and all of them were contacted twice. If they did not respond after two attempts and to trigger this no-response process, the consultancy team sent out an anonymous questionnaire containing selected key questions. None of the stakeholders who had not responded to Hydroconseil and/or UNICEF requests responded to the online questionnaire. We therefore concluded that they were not willing to take part in the evaluation and did not contact them again.

Then, as mentioned on the ToR and requested by UNICEF, all the summaries of the interviews conducted by the consultant were sent to UNICEF.

With regard to ethical considerations, our methodology was based on listening to each person's point of view without judgement. We then compared these various points of view to produce the evaluation report as best we could by also considering factual elements. Moreover, the evaluation team is familiar with UNICEF’s “**Children Participating in Research, Monitoring And Evaluation (M&E) —Ethics and Your Responsibilities as a Manager**”, and the **United Nations Evaluation Group’s Ethics Guidelines** and integrated these codes of ethics into its methodology even if no field activity was carried out with the beneficiaries.

UNICEF, for its part, was responsible for setting up and running the Country Office Research, Study and Evaluation (RSE) Steering Committee and the Ethical Review Board (ERB) in order to assess the consultancy team's compliance with its principles. The official letter of ethical approval is presented in Annex **Error! Reference source not found.**

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<sup>17</sup> 2017-2018 databases already existed prior to the evaluation.



### B.6.3. Code of Conduct

Hydroconseil's professional code of conduct is based on the following points:

- Independence and impartiality.
- Fighting against corruption in public procurement.
- Sensitivity when interacting with vulnerable people and sensitivity to their needs.
- Minimization of potential negative impacts of projects on vulnerable populations.
- Sensitivity to differences in culture, customs, beliefs and religious practices, and their possible implications in terms of interactions with people in a work setting.
- Safeguarding of confidential, sensitive and personal data acquired within the framework of the project and prohibiting use for personal purposes or to the detriment of third parties.
- Reduction of the ecological footprint of our consulting firm's activities and prioritization of the sustainable management of natural resources.
- Sensitivity to issues of women's roles, disability, age and ethnicity, and awareness of the potential implications of these differences when planning, executing and reporting work.

### B.6.4. Evaluation Management and Logistics

The evaluation was managed from the UNICEF Country Office. The UNICEF Country Office focal points for the evaluation were Natalia Sitnikova (the evaluation process) and Tetiana Lysytsia (WASH issues).

To help set up the interviews, UNICEF assisted the evaluation team to contact all the stakeholders involved in implementing the WASH programme. UNICEF also provided extensive literature on the WASH programme in the Standard Operating Procedures, available project documents, progress reports, financial documents and other documentation to guide the evaluation process.

An Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) was created to review the draft and final evaluation reports. The purposes of this ERG were to:

- Facilitate the participation of key stakeholders during the evaluation process, including the planning phase where the initial design and scoping of the evaluation was carried out;
- Add transparency to the evaluation process;
- Build a common vision with key partners around UNICEF's presence and programme of work in Ukraine;
- Support dissemination of the evaluation results;
- Act as experts in an advisory capacity with a view to optimizing the relevance, independence, quality, credibility and impartiality of the evaluation.

The composition of the ERG is provided in **Error! Reference source not found.**

The evaluation was carried out in three phases: the inception phase, the data collection phase, and the analysis and report writing phase:

- Inception phase: December 2019 – November 2020.
- Data collection phase: January 2021 – March 2021.
- Analysis and report-writing phase: March 2021 – July 2021 (includes incorporating feedback from UNICEF and Universalia).

The Inception Report was validated by the ERG on December 2020. The Draft Evaluation Report finding was presented by Hydroconseil to the ERG members on 14 July 2021.

## B.7. Logic of Intervention (ToC)

This chapter will describe the intervention logic of UNICEF's WASH programme in response to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine between 2014 and 2018. It was informed by the development and the explanation of the programme's Theory of Change.

“A Theory of Change (ToC) is an ongoing process of reflection to explore why change is needed and how it happens. For UNICEF, a ToC presents the broad vision of what results will be achieved and how they will be achieved. It articulates the theories and assumptions that underpin the anticipated change process through which inputs and activities are converted to or lead to identified results at the output, outcome and impact levels.”<sup>18</sup>

First, the Theory of Change as reconstructed by the UNICEF teams during two workshops facilitated by Hydroconseil is presented, and then it is set out as interpreted by the consulting team from the data analysis.

### B.7.1. Reconstruction of the Programme's Theory of Change

The programme has now been completed, and it was implemented without a Theory of Change having been defined beforehand. It was therefore necessary to look back and consider “what should have been done / or what UNICEF wanted to do”, rather than what was actually achieved.

The consultancy team decided to work with UNICEF on reconstruction of the programme's Theory of Change through two participatory workshops. The detailed Terms of References for these workshops are provided in [Error! Reference source not found.](#)<sup>19</sup>

We suggested to the UNICEF team that we work on two ToCs: one for the period 2014-2016, and a second for 2017-2018. This made the exercise even more complex, but seemed more relevant given the programme's context and implementation and for properly demonstrating the changes made.

This participatory exercise consisted of three main stages, as described below.

### B.7.2. Definition of the Overall Programme Outcome for the Defined Period (2016 and 2018)

We conducted a group brainstorming process by asking ourselves questions such as: “How will you know if the programme has been successful?”; “What would the ideal situation be following the intervention in the defined period (i.e. 2014 – 2016 & 2017 – 2018)?”

The idea of this first step was to find a consensus on the overall outcome of the programme, disregarding what was actually achieved.

#### 1. Defining the pathways for achieving this overall outcome (outputs, strategies adopted)

A pathway is the order in which outcomes must occur to reach a long-term goal (the overall outcome). Pathways are depicted by vertical chains of outcomes connected to one another by arrows, proceeding from early outcomes at the bottom to longer-term outcomes at the top.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, *Results-Based Management Handbook: Working together for Children*, 2017

<sup>19</sup> The ToRs stipulated a single workshop, but we finally conducted two workshops: one to define the 2014-2015 ToC and a second to define the 2016-2018 ToC.



Pathways represent a causal logic: each level along the pathway depicts the outcomes that must occur for the next outcomes up the chain to be achieved.

A key component of the ToC experience is the process of “**backwards mapping**”, beginning with the overall outcome and working back towards the earliest changes that need to occur.

Starting with the overall outcome, we asked the group: “What outputs must be brought about before we can achieve our overall outcome?” These outcomes were placed directly underneath the overall outcome as its direct prerequisites. Once we had captured that information, we continued the backwards mapping by repeating the process for each of the outcomes we just identified.

This is the opposite of how we usually think about planning, because it started with asking “What prerequisites must be in place for the long-term outcome to be reached?” rather than “What activities can we implement to advance our goals?”.

## **2. Listing the activities**

The “last steps” of the pathways defined to achieve the overall objective were the list of activities implemented.

Through this “backwards mapping”, we reviewed the outputs, the strategies adopted to achieve these outputs and the overall outcome, with this list ending with the activities.

## **3. Identifying the barriers to and assumptions for completing these pathways**

The whole Theory of Change is, in a sense, a set of assumptions. The particular meaning of “assumptions” in this case is those conditions in the setting or environment in which the initiative would take place that need to be recognized, and which must hold true for the ToC to be realized.

These conditions are assumed to already exist and to continue to exist during the lifecycle of the initiative. The outcomes of the ToC comprise conditions that do not yet exist, and which must be created by the initiative.

Finally, one useful way of drilling down into the outcome pathways is to ask the group to identify all the barriers to achieving a given outcome in the framework. We therefore worked to define these barriers.

The process ended once it became clear that there were no more necessary prerequisites for an outcome, and that an “intervention” at this point was obvious.

The final product developed at the end of these workshops is set out in the following chapter.

### B.7.3. The Theory of Change Developed

Figure 5. The programme’s Theory of Change as reconstructed by UNICEF after completion of the programme – First phase: 2014 - 2016

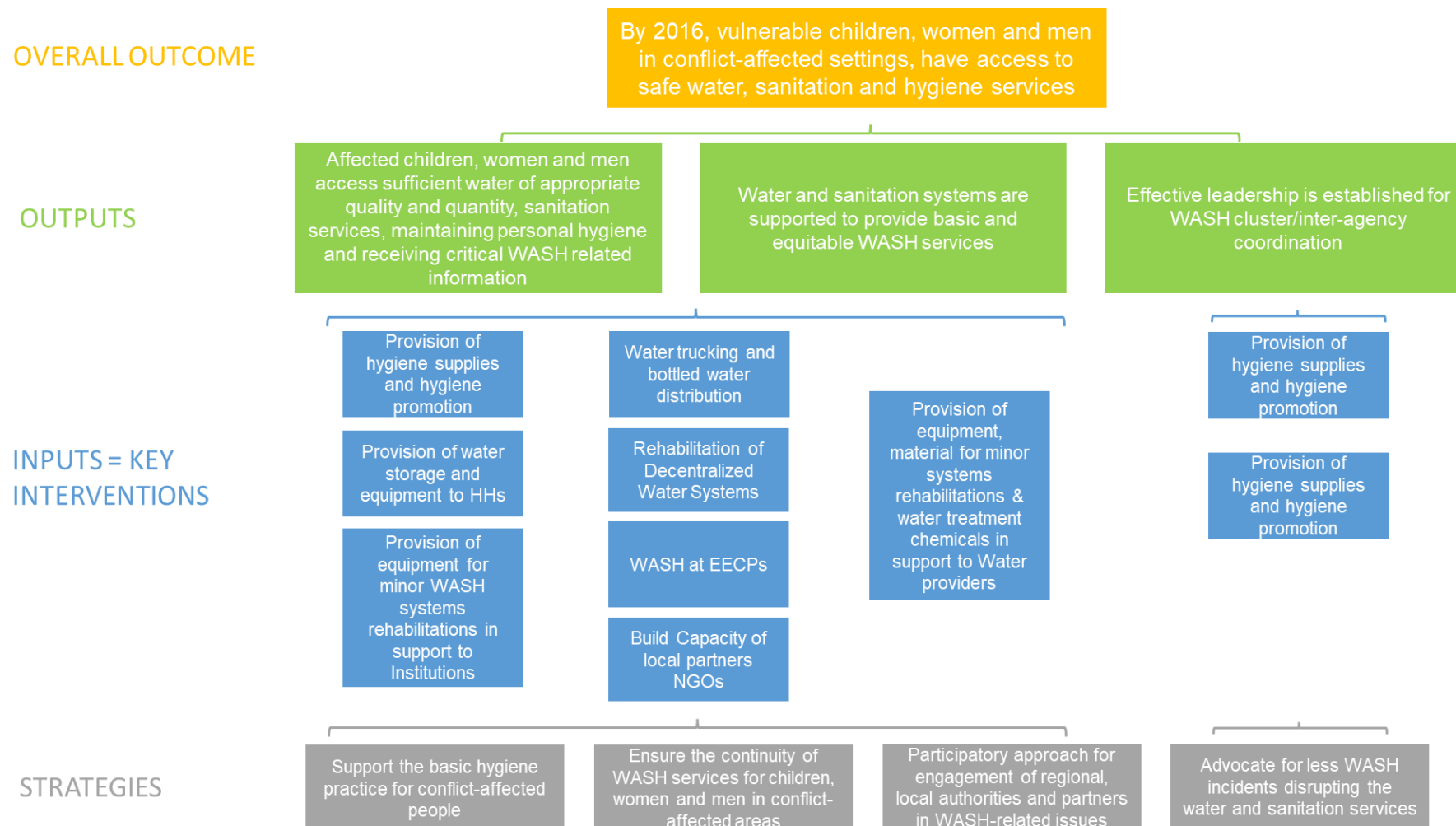
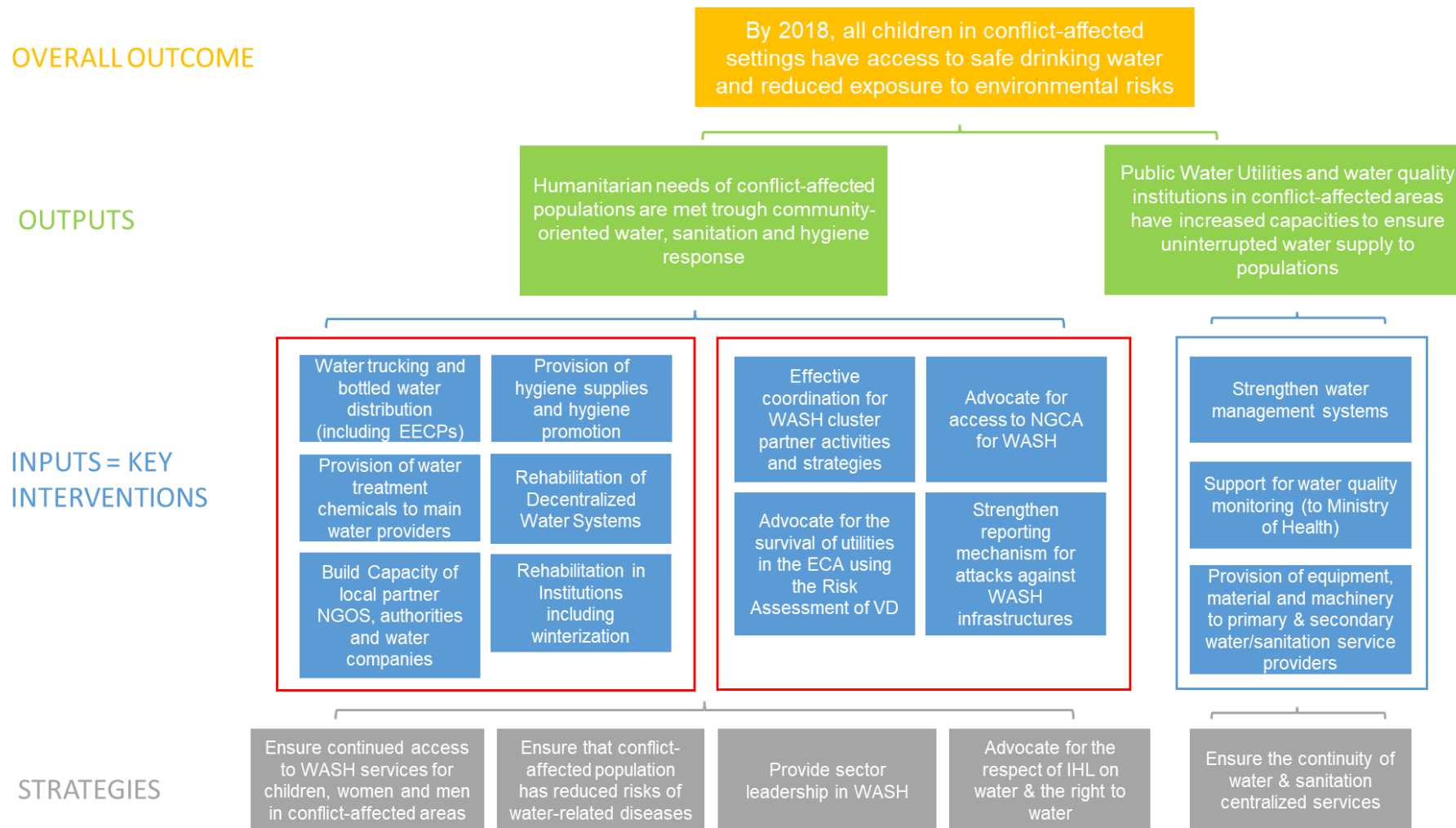


Figure 6. The programme’s Theory of Change as reconstructed by UNICEF after completion of the programme – Second phase: 2017 - 2018



For the period 2014–2016, the UNICEF team set the following overall outcome:

***“By 2016, vulnerable children, women and men in conflict-affected settings, have access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services”.***

In these first two years of programme implementation, the UNICEF WASH team was not in place, military conflict had broken out in eastern Ukraine and an emergency humanitarian response was required.

The mainly humanitarian interventions were based on four main strategies:

- Support basic hygiene practices for conflict-affected people;
- Ensure the continuity of WASH services for children, women and men in conflict-affected areas;
- Develop the participation/engagement of regional, local authorities and partners in WASH-related issues; and
- Advocate for fewer WASH incidents to disrupt water and sanitation services.

The expected output of this last strategy was the establishment of effective leadership for inter-agency coordination. The main priority of UNICEF's intervention during this period was to ensure that children, women and men affected by the conflict had access to sufficient water of appropriate quality and quantity, sanitation services, and personal hygiene. However, UNICEF also wanted to prepare for a protracted crisis situation in order to propose sustainable actions and move away from emergency response only.

In these first three years of intervention, there were numerous barriers to following this Theory of Change and working towards the overall outcome, all of which were related to the outbreak of military conflict in eastern Ukraine. As a result, this hindered the establishment of the humanitarian response:

**Table 9. Barriers and assumptions highlighted for the period 2014-2016**

2014 – 2016	
<b>Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited access to some areas, especially non-government controlled areas and the area along the ‘contact line’;</li> <li>• Underfunding and limited resources;</li> <li>• Political instability &amp; limited government capacity to provide basic services;</li> <li>• Risks related to active military actions which complicated all interventions in the conflict-affected area;</li> <li>• Lack of WASH sector humanitarian response (and later recovery) capacity, especially among local actors;</li> <li>• Lack of evidence-based information of needs, limited access to data;</li> <li>• Lack of coordination due to multiple governmental (national and regional) counterparts responsible for different WASH-related issues and poor internal coordination;</li> <li>• Limited capacity of stakeholders and partners on water, sanitation and hygiene issues.</li> </ul>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sufficient funds to implement the activities;</li> <li>• WASH policy in place;</li> <li>• Activities of the water companies regulated;</li> <li>• Inter-ministerial coordination well engaged;</li> <li>• Common approaches adopted by duty-bearers;</li> <li>• Evidence is generated;</li> <li>• Expectation that the conflict is at the stage of being resolved (not protracted);</li> <li>• Possibility to carry out WASH interventions on both sides of the ‘contact line’.</li> </ul>

In 2017, the UNICEF staff team was in place and organized. By 2018, the idea was to understand national and regional strategies, and to build UNICEF's own.

The overall objective for the period was defined as follows:

***“By 2018, all children in conflict-affected settings have access to safe drinking water and reduced exposure to environmental risks.”***

The Theory of Change developed for the period 2017-2018 has been divided into different "frameworks": the first red box represents the UNICEF WASH team's framework for action; while the second red box represents the WASH Cluster's framework for action.

The intervention strategies of the WASH team are to: i) ensure continued access to WASH services for children, women and men in conflict-affected areas; and ii) ensure that conflict-affected populations have reduced risk of water-related diseases. On the WASH Cluster side, the intervention strategies at the time were defined as being to provide WASH sector leadership and to advocate for respect of international humanitarian law on water and the right to water.

Through these intervention strategies, and by beginning to work with the water companies (in GCA sites only), the UNICEF team considered that there were two main outputs to be achieved in order to reach the overall outcome for this period:

1. The humanitarian needs of conflict-affected populations are met through a community-oriented water, sanitation and hygiene response;
2. Public water utilities and water quality institutions in conflict-affected areas have increased capacities to ensure uninterrupted water supply to populations.

Again, there were many barriers to implementation of activities and the achievement of objectives. In addition, the UNICEF team defined assumptions for change:

**Table 10. Barriers and assumptions highlighted for the period 2017-2018**

2017 - 2018	
<b>Barriers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited capacities of the NGOs;</li> <li>• Limited access to beneficiaries in NGCA (economic blockade, geo restrictions, limited number of IPs);</li> <li>• Poor involvement and coordination from local and national state actors, and limited capacity to provide basic WASH services;</li> <li>• Water/sanitation considered to be more of a technical than a political issue;</li> <li>• Unclear accountability of the duty bearer on WASH issues;</li> <li>• Lack of financial capacity to co-fund humanitarian intervention activities;</li> <li>• Lack of contractors willing to conduct rehabilitation activities in areas close to the ‘contact line’;</li> <li>• Liberal economy dynamic undermining access to WASH services (monopolies, economic interests, political influences, etc.);</li> <li>• Hostilities (including ballistic activities and mined areas) hampering the ability to access water, sanitation and hygiene;</li> <li>• Status quo at Minsk level;</li> <li>• Environmental risks in highly industrialized Donbas, but lack of evidence regarding water quality;</li> <li>• No clear exit strategy for water trucking activities, not enough funding for continuation;</li> <li>• High cost of hygiene supplies for the most vulnerable groups;</li> <li>• Lack of international development agencies in Ukraine in 2017-2018;</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 20px;">Water companies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdated and energy consuming WASH systems;</li> <li>• Unfavourable institutional environment;</li> <li>• Governance issues;</li> </ul>

2017 - 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financially non-sustainable (inadequate tariff, non-revenue water, etc.);</li> <li>• This situation is hampered in the east by the conflict.</li> </ul>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stable funding with no gaps;</li> <li>• Moving towards a protracted crisis;</li> <li>• Unrestricted access to all conflict-affected children, women and men;</li> <li>• Market solutions available and consistent for implementing construction and rehabilitation work in the conflict-affected area;</li> <li>• Implementing partners have all necessary capacities;</li> <li>• Local and national state actors (particularly the Ministry of Temporarily Occupied Territories) are engaged and take over or co-fund some activities;</li> <li>• All water-related aspects are considered (technical, institutional environment, finance, governance) in strategy and planning.</li> </ul>

The team encountered some difficulties in reconstructing these two Theories of Change a posteriori. It was not easy for the participants, who entered the programme at different stages (and, since 2016, along the way for the most part), to imagine themselves in the past and reflect on what the strategies and objectives were at that time without considering what was actually put in place, and the strategies that later emerged.

Finally, the Theory of Change reconstructed for the period 2017-2018 is aligned with the objectives of UNICEF's WASH programme over the next period (2018-2022), the aims of which are to ensure that:

- The humanitarian needs of conflict-affected populations are met through community-oriented water, sanitation and hygiene response; and
- By 2022, public water utilities in conflict-affected areas have increased capacities to ensure uninterrupted water supply to the population.

*Note: The team have not used this 2018-2022 programme as a basis for reconstructing this ToC. The 2018-2022 programme includes a new ToC on which the consultancy team will base its recommendations (which will also be informed by the evaluation findings).*

#### **B.7.4. The Evaluation Team's Understanding of the Logic of Intervention**

In parallel to this participatory work, the evaluation team also started to develop a Theory of Change based on the interviews and the literature review.

In our vision, the UNICEF's ToC overall outcome for the period 2014-2016 was to open a specific water and sanitation team, and to respond to the crisis by being an emergency actor on WASH for children and vulnerable people. This involved achieving the following outputs:

- Completing the needs assessment;
- Improving internal organization: staff recruitment, establishment of M&E process, etc.;
- Mobilizing actors on the ground (NGOs, institutions, etc.);
- Utilizing funds;
- Implementation of emergency WASH actions including:
  - Water access improvements in a humanitarian context (water trucking, distribution of water bottles / water tanks, chlorine supply, etc.);
  - Distribution of hygiene kits;
  - Hygiene promotion.

In 2016, as the 'contact line' had not moved for more than a year, UNICEF realised that the crisis was set to last. The WASH team was then better organized and settled and had started to



approach the water companies more intensively. The objective, by 2018, was that vulnerable children, women and men in conflict-affected settings had access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services but also to **keep the water companies operational**.

To achieve this goal, UNICEF had two main angles of attack:

1. Emergency activities, which must continue to ensure access to water, sanitation and hygiene for the affected populations; and
2. Working intensively with the water companies on the water network (i.e. continuing repairs and ensuring that the public service could continue to function).

Thus, differences appear between the two reconstructed Theories of Change.

**The ToC served as a basis for the evaluation and for the discussions carried out during the study by the evaluators to analyse if the process and activities set in place and developed by UNICEF could achieve some of the outputs. The ToC was used to check that the benchmark elements of the evaluation matrix constructed during the inception phase were consistent and relevant. Each element of the ToC (especially barriers and assumptions) was discussed during the interviews with UNICEF Ukraine in order to analyse the relevance and effectiveness of the pathway followed.**

**However, the evaluation team consider that this ToC somewhat "idealizes" the ambitions of the WASH programme in eastern Ukraine at the time, particularly when viewed in light of the human and financial resources available, the technical maturity of the UNICEF staff, and the relatively new deployment context for the UNICEF Kiev Agency (WASH, emergency/conflict, urban areas).**

## C. Chapter 2: Analysis and Findings

### C.1. Overall Context

The WASH response to the Donbas crisis can be divided into two phases.

The first phase corresponded to the construction, during the first two years of the conflict, of a WASH emergency response in a particular environment with no recent humanitarian experience. The second was more elaborate: while maintaining a standard emergency response, it was more focused on a nexus-type approach and on keeping water systems operational.

#### C.1.1. The First Two Years of the Donbass Crisis: Constructing an Emergency Response in an Unusual and Inaccessible Environment

The Donbas crisis began as early as February 2014 with the 2014 Ukrainian revolution. On 7 April 2014, the Donetsk People's Republic was self-proclaimed, followed on 11 May by the Luhansk People's Republic. An armed conflict then broke out in Eastern Ukraine with the intervention of the Ukrainian army, which started on 2 May 2014.

The frontline of this conflict shifted continually throughout the summer of 2014 before a first ceasefire agreement was signed in Minsk on 5 September 2014, followed later by the Minsk 2 agreement on 11 February 2015. Both made it possible to negotiate temporary ceasefires but were unable to bring an end to the conflict. Since this date, the 'contact line' has generally remained stable.

During the first two years of the conflict, UNICEF Ukraine was thus confronted with an unprecedented situation and saw the emergence of a particularly alarming and prolonged inaccessible emergency situation in the east of the country. At the same time, it had to continue its action as planned under the 2012-2016 Country Programme.

During this first phase, the humanitarian WASH response had to be built out of almost nothing. The number of potential WASH actors in the area was originally very small, and there was virtually no history of humanitarian action. Moreover, access was very limited in the NGCA, and the course of the ongoing war was unpredictable.

According to the UNICEF's 2014 annual report, the situation deteriorated quickly, in particular in the WASH sector. By the end of 2014, basic services had been considerably disrupted for over 1,250,000 people living in the conflict-affected areas of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, who only had limited access to safe drinking water and adequate hygiene.

Most of the population living in the area (approximately 3.9 million people) are supplied with water by large-scale water networks that cross the 'contact line' several times.

UNICEF in Ukraine did not work on WASH before 2014.

- The first challenge in this period for UNICEF was to recruit new emergency WASH partners and technical human resources. At the same time, as the number of WASH partners slowly grew, it became clear that coordination would soon become essential.
- 2014 saw the creation of the WASH Cluster, which became operational in 2015 (the newly formed cluster met only three times in 2014). UNICEF conducted its first WASH interventions, supporting the providers (with water treatment chemicals and

equipment), carrying out water trucking and distributing bottled water and hygiene kits to communities.

- Between 2015 and 2017, the WASH team became more structured and intensified its strategic thinking. In 2017, WASH activities were integrated into the 2018-22 Country Programme and the first WASH Programme documents were signed with the Government of Ukraine.
- In 2018, an agreement was signed between UNICEF and the de facto authorities allowing UNICEF to operate in the NGCA.

In this challenging security context, the WASH emergency response remained limited in 2014.<sup>20</sup> UNICEF (globally) raised its first significant emergency funds via Unilever, ECHO and OCHA (the CERF fund) in September 2014, which contributed approximately US\$296,000, €500,000 and US\$583,000 respectively.

A first wave of consistent WASH emergency response started in 2015, at the same time as a significant influx of humanitarian funds (UNICEF tripled its resources from US\$10.26 million in 2014 to US\$36.1 million in 2015<sup>21</sup>).

The first six months of 2015 saw the development of numerous field assessments implemented and funded by various actors, which covered water access and risk of waterborne diseases in particular (see Chapter 3.2). The first noticeable humanitarian response was also implemented during this period. This first wave of response relied on the expertise of the few actors in place and involved a combination of standard response packages (often including hygiene kit distribution and standard hygiene promotion campaigns), water trucking, chlorine supply, small infrastructure rehabilitation and the distribution of various kits / water bottles.

The WASH response in the NGCA was, however, severely hampered from mid-2015 onwards by the lack of access due first to security reasons then by the de facto authorities' requests for accreditation. This administrative situation blocked most of the humanitarian interventions in the NGCA between August 2015 and the beginning of 2016, and remained a major obstacle for the rest of the period studied.

In addition to WASH issues affecting the population, livelihood and food security were also concerns. The first two years of the conflict saw a significant slump in the labour market and an increase in the price of basic necessities. Furthermore, elderly people (very numerous in the region) struggled to obtain their pensions.

### **C.1.2. Second Phase of the Response: Focus on Water Networks and the Shift to Recovery and HDN**

The years 2016 and, in particular, 2017 and 2018 were spent putting in place more organized and more coordinated action, improving the communication of alerts on the ground and developing more advocacy at the local and regional levels. This led to better, albeit still difficult, access to the NGCA and areas near the 'contact line'.

In parallel with the gradual politicization of access to water – as water facilities were considered strategic targets and thus were increasingly targeted by conflict stakeholders –

<sup>20</sup> Every year there are always at least 15 crises with Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) that require more resources than the Ukrainian conflict. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis was not one of the most important crises at the time. The Ukraine HRP secured 62 per cent of funding requested for 2015, which is comparatively good (above average). This figure then dropped to 35 per cent – 40 per cent over the next three years, which is comparatively low. Overall, except for 2015, the crises that required more funding secured a greater percentage of their funding requests than the Ukrainian crisis.

<sup>21</sup> UNICEF annual report 2015: [https://sites.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine\\_2015\\_COAR.pdf](https://sites.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine_2015_COAR.pdf)

advocacy became more and more vital and necessary for negotiating breaks in hostilities to allow interventions on the water networks. It also appeared that working on the water networks that served almost four million inhabitants had an effective and considerable impact on both sides by improving access to water in the area. Finally, it became clear to all WASH actors that keeping the water networks in service should be the main priority going forward.

Consequently, while activities to supply water treatment materials (chlorine) had been developed quite early in the crisis, and as the usual supply chain had been cut, this second phase of interventions enabled more extensive and comprehensive collaboration with the water companies present in the Donbas region.

Activities such as bottled water distribution and water trucking were slowly and gradually abandoned wherever possible, and in 2017 UNICEF Ukraine and its partners further increased their support to the main water utility companies (Voda Donbasu and Popasna Vodokanal), providing pipes, pumps, equipment including personal protective equipment, machinery, hundreds of tons of liquefied chlorine gas and sodium hypochlorite, and assisting with the rehabilitation of facilities.

The collaboration between UNICEF and Voda Donbasu in particular would prove very important and became a determining factor in the WASH response in May 2017, when a technical assessment was carried out (published first in 2017, and revised in 2019).<sup>22</sup>

As water network installations gained more and more attention, UNICEF, ICRC, SDC and OSCE, in particular, worked together to ensure the necessary breaks in hostilities, and the equipment, chemicals and materials required to fix the repeated water supply breakdowns. Both water companies and external experts inspected several sections of the water networks in 2016-2017 in order to conduct risk assessments and define intervention priorities.

At the same time, the WASH Cluster grew and developed a coordination system and alert transmission tools (the first standardized alert bulletin was issued in September 2016). It experienced a peak in activity in 2017.

Due to the accreditation issue, there continued to be relatively few humanitarian actors in the NGCA, while the number of NGOs in the GCA exploded. The difference in governance between the two areas led to a difference in response. For instance, cash transfer activities expanded on the western side but they remained non-existent on the eastern side (because they were not allowed by the de facto authorities and also because any bank transfers are forbidden by Ukrainian legislation and sanctioned by the international community (the European Union, the United States and the United Nations).

As stated in UNICEF's annual report, in 2016<sup>23</sup> 3.7 million people were affected by the crisis, including 580,000 children and 230,106 internally displaced persons. Given the interconnectedness of the water supply, central heating systems, electricity supply and sanitation systems, some 2.9 million people were at risk of service disruption. At the same time, water companies were not able to pay their electricity bills and thus they were cut off by the energy service providers. This affected some 4.5 million people's access to water and heating.

In addition to the support provided to water companies, the increase in the number of WASH NGOs (and particularly international NGOs) made it possible to reduce the use of distribution

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<sup>22</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/reports/VD-risk-assessment-2019>

<sup>23</sup> [https://sites.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine\\_2016\\_COAR.pdf](https://sites.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Ukraine_2016_COAR.pdf)

approaches in favour of more technical yet still traditional methods, such as the use of vouchers.

## C.2. Baseline and Endline Survey Results

The programme did not include either a proper baseline or a quantitative endline survey as such. Instead, the programme relied on multiple assessments to define the intervention priorities.

### C.2.1. Baseline Surveys

A significant number of assessments were conducted in 2015 to lay the groundwork for the response strategy. This first wave of assessments was later supplemented by other assessments, including the strategically important diagnosis of Voda Donbasu in 2017.

Together, these documents helped to define the main components of the global and specific UNICEF WASH emergency response to the ongoing crisis in Eastern Ukraine.

The first wave of assessments conducted in 2015-2016 included assessments carried out at the initiative of international NGOs and assessments commissioned by UNICEF and conducted by local and international partners in the field:

- UNICEF was able to first draw on PIN's multi-sector assessment carried out in December 2014 (following this assessment, PIN became an UNICEF partner in May 2015);
- In January 2015, UNICEF commissioned an assessment focused on WASH needs that was carried out by a Luhansk regional charitable organization, “Luhansk Communities Fund” KHORS. This WASH assessment, entitled “Situations in Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene in Areas Damaged by the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine”<sup>24</sup> supplemented PIN’s multi-sector assessment, as did an initial short WASH overview led by Mama 86 in late 2014.

This first WASH-focused assessment highlighted the following conclusions:

Figure 7. Extract from the KHORS assessment report 2015, page 7 and page 10

The causes of most problems in the field of water supply existed long before the outbreak of the armed conflict. With the outbreak of hostilities, it became difficult to perform routine repairs on the water supply systems and cannot be capital. Thus, in many areas, water consumption increased at the expense of displaced persons.

(...)

In 12 cases, interviewees noted that waste disposal is becoming an obvious problem (waste is dumped close to residential areas, there is a problem with insects).

These first findings were subsequently supported and consolidated by the conclusions of a much larger UNICEF-commissioned assessment: “A Rapid WASH and Infrastructure Assessment in Non-Government-Controlled Areas of Eastern Ukraine”<sup>25</sup> which was

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/khors\\_-\\_unicef\\_survey\\_of\\_wash\\_in\\_the\\_conflict\\_areas\\_of\\_eastern\\_ukraine\\_january\\_2015.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/assessments/khors_-_unicef_survey_of_wash_in_the_conflict_areas_of_eastern_ukraine_january_2015.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH\\_report\\_blue.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/REACH_report_blue.pdf)

published in August 2015 and compiled using data collected remotely by REACH<sup>26</sup> in July 2015 from key informants at water, health, and education facilities, as well as from affected communities.

This assessment, mainly conducted remotely for the NGCA, produced the following conclusions:

Figure 8. Extract from the REACH assessment report 2015, page 30

These results were later backed by the findings of the evaluation report conducted by the OSCE and published in September 2015 entitled: “Access to Water in Conflict-Affected

The assessment and secondary data together suggest that, even before the crisis, service coverage within Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts was commonly characterised by a lack of regular WASH facilities maintenance, reported underfunding over the past 20 years, access disparities between urban and rural areas, and the unreliability of water and sanitation services. The ongoing conflict, together with the financial constraints it has generated for the Ukrainian population, has exacerbated both these pre-crisis service gaps and the capacity of the population to deal with them.

As such, the assessment provided the outline for humanitarian programmes targeting the various institution facility types, while highlighting that site-specific needs assessments would be required as described in the section below:

- Given the wide-reaching impact of the drop in water facility production, priority should be given to supporting service providers directly with emergency repairs, small-scale interventions to improve plant efficiency and continuity, and the provision of consumable items for treatment and testing.
- Much needed but significantly larger rehabilitation, construction and extension activities fall beyond the scope of humanitarian interventions.
- In addition, more specific support can be targeted to key social institutions to help them to offset the impacts of further reductions in water supply and quality.
- Investigations into local sewerage and solid waste services will be needed to ensure that the public health-related aspects of WASH are broadly covered in any given area.
- The displacement indicated by the findings suggests household level and collective centre support will be required to ensure essential WASH needs are met. Hygiene promotion, notably on water storage and household water treatment, will also be key.

Areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions”:<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT, its sister organisation ACTED, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT).

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/0/6/183151.pdf>



**Figure 9. Extract from the OSCE assessment report 2015, page 3**

The targeting of water installations, as well as collateral damage resulting from the fighting, has impacted the functionality of water systems. Lack of access to water and poor water quality pose a threat to human health and sanitation and can limit food production.

To complete this first overview, UNICEF also commissioned a KAP survey, published in August 2016,<sup>28</sup> which supplemented a first KAP survey conducted by ACF in December 2015.<sup>29</sup>

These two reports stress that users complain mainly about water cut-offs and about general water quality. The studies revealed that the population had fairly good knowledge of water-related risks:

**Figure 10. Extract from the ADRA KAP survey, page 6**

The population in the studied region is highly aware of the dangers related to consuming water of poor quality, identifying the main risks as gastrointestinal disorders and various diseases.

The results of the KAP survey for hygiene practices and sanitation were relatively positive.

**Figure 11. Extract from the ADRA KAP survey, pp. 7-8**

Respondents from the focus regions are not concerned about issues with toilet conditions and waste disposal services. Most households have their own bathrooms / toilets, toilet paper and proper facilities for handwashing with soap.

90% of caregivers and 87% of children state that they always wash their hands with soap after using the toilet and before eating.

These first assessments, conducted in 2015 and 2016, agreed on the crucial importance of conducting interventions on water and, more specifically, on water networks to keep them in working order. Thus, the findings of this first round of baseline studies led to another phase of assessment that focused more on water network risk analysis.

The assessment report that enabled effective implementation of the second phase of the response is the "Risk Assessment of the Voda Donbasu Water System" (draft 2, first published in May 2017 before being reviewed in 201<sup>30</sup>). This study produced technical recommendations for the water network through a thorough risk analysis, and became the cornerstone for the second phase of the response.

### C.2.2. Endline Survey

There was no endline survey as such conducted for the overall UNICEF-led programme. Each NGO sub-contractor wrote a final intervention report, some of which included evaluation elements, but the overall action has not been evaluated.

An evaluation was carried out on the 2012-2016 partnership framework for the UNICEF action, however. This partnership framework agreement was reviewed at the mid-term point in 2015 and again in 2017 ("Evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of Ukraine and UNICEF 2012-2016:<sup>31</sup>).

<sup>28</sup><https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-public-opinion-survey-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-kap-study-analytical>

<sup>29</sup>[https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/acf\\_kap\\_survey.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/acf_kap_survey.pdf)

<sup>30</sup><https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en/reports/VD-risk-assessment-2019>

<sup>31</sup><https://evaluationreports.unicef.org/GetDocument?fileID=9557>

The main recommendations of this evaluation were as follows:

**Figure 12. Extract from the Evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation, page 2**

- Re-assess bottlenecks, identify vulnerable groups and improve quality and availability of disaggregated data to support UNICEF programme planning and monitoring;
- Ensure that decentralisation advances and does not harm children's and vulnerable groups' rights;
- Shift the focus towards policy advocacy, building broad pro-reform coalitions;
- Revise the approach to piloting and modelling and make this more strategic;
- Improve UNICEF planning and M&E architecture by increasing focus on results and equity.

### C.3. Relevance

Here, the team seek to analyse how UNICEF has worked with national and local institutions to design and then implement its interventions in the water and sanitation sector. The consultancy team also seeks to determine the relevance of the activities implemented, taking into account the context, and the activities' alignment with international humanitarian standards.

Finally, in this chapter the coverage of the UNICEF-funded interventions will be assessed, as well as the coordination put in place with other water and sanitation actors to ensure maximum coverage, in terms of geographic areas and equity in the "targeting" of the populations concerned by the interventions.

#### C.3.1. Institutional Context and UNICEF's Response

Section **Error! Reference source not found.** presents the state of water governance in Ukraine as the team were able to reconstruct it. The absence of a dedicated water ministry and the multiplicity of sometimes conflicting institutions involved in the water sector hampered our efforts to assess the alignment of UNICEF approaches and strategies with national strategies.

As the first step in the 2014-2016 period was financing a series of emergency actions relying exclusively on the action of (national and international) NGOs, it appears to have been relevant to have relied solely on humanitarian actors. Any other, more institutional, solutions would probably have been even more complicated to put in place (given that internal instability and the crisis with Russia strongly curtailed contact between national institutions and UNICEF). This impression is also confirmed by interviews with UNICEF, ECHO and KFW representatives, who underscored the diplomatic issues surrounding water and the local populations' strong mistrust of international institutions (the United Nations, ECHO, international NGOs and so on).

However, in parallel with this response to the needs on the ground, higher-level work could have been carried out with various government representatives to lay the groundwork for diplomatic intelligence, despite the highly complex political context. The interviews conducted during this evaluation highlighted that the Ukraine Country Office took a long time to structure its emergency action and that the staff in place at the time, including top

management, were ill-equipped to deal with this type of situation and probably lacked the right mix of skills to bring some of the ministry representatives on board. This is especially true given that, at the time, water was not at all part of the Country Programme agreed with the Government of Ukraine.

The interviews do not enable us to understand whether UNICEF teams were able to work with the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Living<sup>32</sup> between 2014 and 2018 to determine the best strategies for intervention in conflict zones. Later, the UNICEF WASH team was in contact with the Ministry at least once a year to validate the annual working plan. This could be considered a first step towards collaboration, even if the Ministry had no commitments to uphold in these work plans.

During the second period of intervention (2017-2018 and after), contact between UNICEF and the national authorities was more frequent and facilitated by the trust that UNICEF had been able to build both locally and regionally with the water companies. However, work with the central level remained complicated and slow, despite this being a real ambition for UNICEF in Ukraine. Recent changes in the government suggest that discussions will be more open in the coming years.

- **Without a national strategic framework, UNICEF designed its action in accordance with its experience of this type of context and the action strategies in which it specializes (emergency support for the most vulnerable, compliance with water access standards, etc.).**

### C.3.2. Humanitarian Needs and UNICEF's Response

In order to evaluate the relevance of the actions implemented and the priorities established, the team has studied the work of the WASH Cluster, particularly the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs) and the strategic document that guided UNICEF's interventions, entitled "Humanitarian Action for Children". The consultancy team thus sought to determine whether the projects financed by UNICEF were consistent with the established priorities.

The intervention began with surveys. At the same time, emergency activities were implemented that covered water, sanitation and hygiene.

The table below shows the scale of the water-related response within the overall UNICEF-funded humanitarian response. This is taken from the humanitarian issues highlighted in the various HRPs, which stipulate the importance of:

- supporting water distribution systems (HRP 2014 and 2015);
- finding alternative distribution solutions (HRP 2015 and 2016);
- Improving the quantity and quality of water distributed (HRP 2017 and 2018).

The choice made by UNICEF to focus on water issues seems relevant to the HRP priorities. By facilitating the distribution of bottled water or trucked water, storage (tuff tanks) and conservation (bucket) equipment, or infrastructure repairs in communities and institutions, UNICEF was able to respond to the water needs of a range of beneficiaries (rural and urban communities, elderly people, families, schoolchildren, etc.).

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<sup>32</sup> Known as the Ministry of Communities and Regional Development since August 2019.

**Table 11. HRP WASH priorities and UNICEF's response, elements from HRP documents**

		Dec-14	Nov-15	Nov-16	Nov-17	Dec-18
<b>Humanitarian Response Plan data</b>	Number of people in need	1,400,000	3,100,000	3,800,000	3,500,000	3,500,000
	Number of people with WASH needs	750,000	2,900,000	3,700,000	3,400,000	3,200,000
	Number of internally displaced persons	460,000	1,600,000	1,700,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
<b>UNICEF response</b>	Number of people with access to safe water	45,966	1,632,324	1,200,000	1,698,748	1,900,000
	Number of people with access to hygiene supplies	38,082	164,035	300,000	140,000	77,371
	Number of affected people benefiting from hygiene and sanitation promotion messages		103,003		160,000	50,000
	<b>Funds received, US\$</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>5,899,916</b>	<b>1,939,842</b>	<b>2,788,596</b>	<b>2,152,201</b>

The strategy of coupling the water response with hygiene awareness and promotion activities is also consistent with the cholera and polio risk strategy highlighted in the 2015 HRP.

However, this strategy was quickly abandoned due to the low level of cholera and polio risk identified, and efforts mainly focused on the water response and the distribution of hygiene kits.

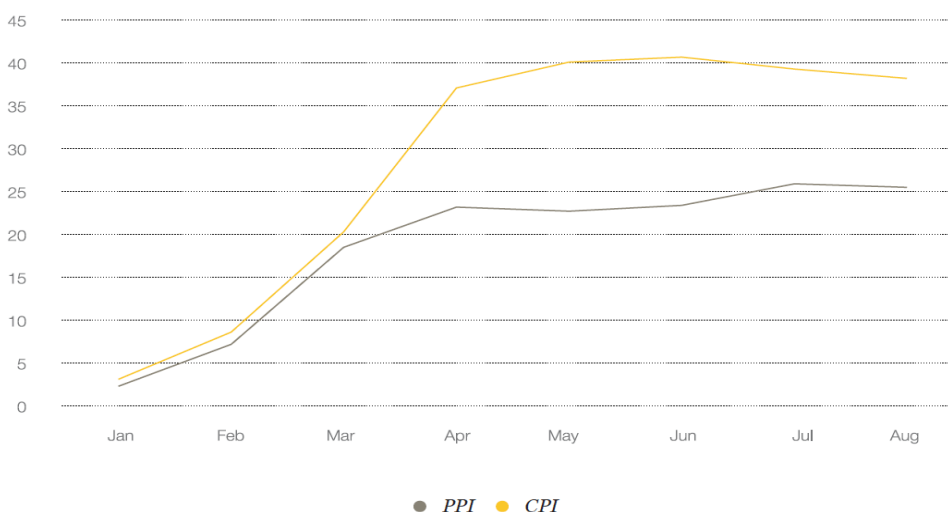
One of the first actions financed by UNICEF was an assessment by three local NGOs (Mama 86, KHORS and LRASD) and one international NGO (ADRA) of the situation and humanitarian needs. In a context where little was known about the humanitarian needs and where it was difficult to obtain reliable information on the effects of the conflict on the civilian population, this action was particularly coherent. However, the approach was significantly hampered by the non-specialized local and international actors' lack of local WASH and humanitarian response technical skills. This was even more detrimental because access to the intervention zones was heavily restricted (or even forbidden) by the (Ukrainian and Russian) stakeholders and the international support was greatly mistrusted by the populations. Although UNICEF was only able to obtain a highly fragmented vision of the situation, the scale of water-related issues and the need to provide alternatives to the water network quickly became apparent (Humanitarian Response Plans 2014 and 2015).

The KAP survey conducted by ACF (December 2015) and the assessments conducted by KHORS (January 2015), UNICEF (May 2016), and PUI (July 2016) all focused on water needs. Three major problems were raised: access to water for displaced populations; access to water for populations remaining near the 'contact line', whether they are dependent on the network or not; and access to water at the various checkpoints. Given this context, the scale of the water response provided by UNICEF (36.2 per cent of its "action budget" between 2014 and 2018)<sup>33</sup> seems justified.

<sup>33</sup> Calculated based on available financial data (database and proposals).

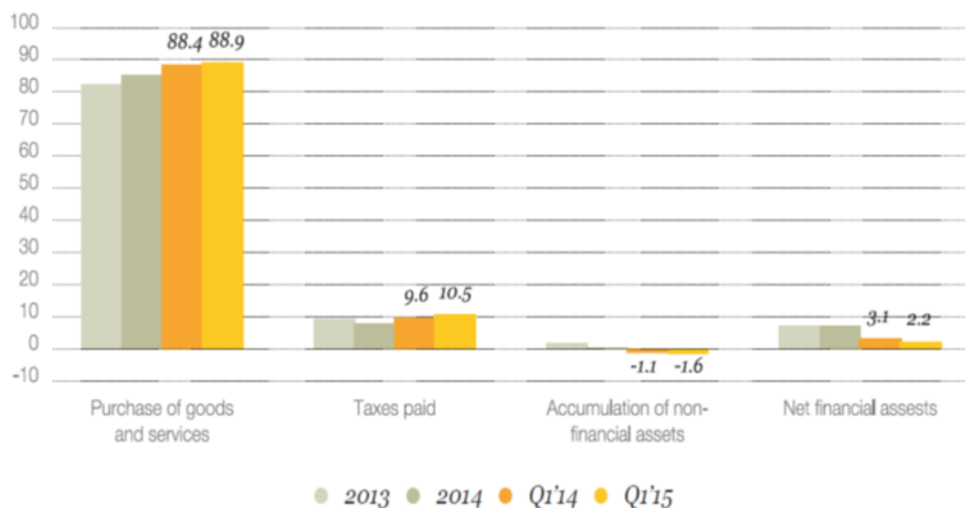
The variety of target audiences (inhabitants of the buffer zone, rural and urban population, internally displaced persons) justifies the variety of implementation methods (mobile distribution, water tank and network repair). However, several reports consulted indicate that humanitarian actors faced difficulties when seeking to respond only to the WASH needs of the most vulnerable in a situation where the entire population was rapidly becoming poorer due to price inflation (see Figure 13) and to a growing dependence on the purchase of goods

**Figure 13. Consumer and Producer Price Index in 2015 compared to December 2014, in percentage (UNDP, 2015)**



and services (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14. Structure of household expenditure and savings, percentage (UNDP, 2015)**

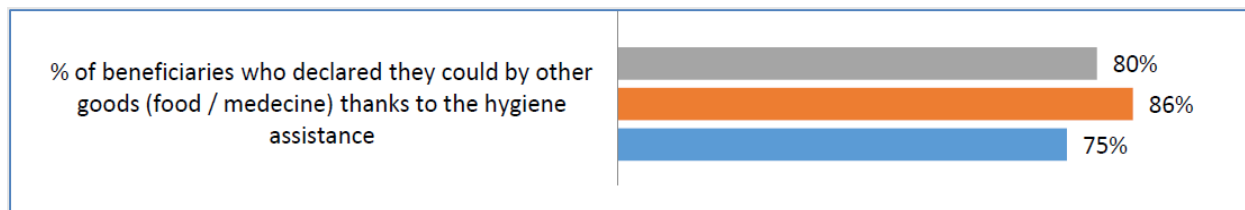


The bibliographical elements consulted<sup>34</sup> and the actors interviewed reveal that hygiene issues were perhaps not the most urgent during a period where many families lost all their means of subsistence overnight (loss of jobs, destruction of crops, and so on). The choice of distributing hygiene kits and raising awareness did not seem to be the most relevant choice at the beginning. This analysis is also confirmed by Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH), whose

<sup>34</sup> KAP Survey Report – 2015 – ACF International, page 13: *The good education system in Ukraine and a high level of knowledge is giving good results. All people say that hygiene is an important part of the children's education and should be learned not only at home but in school too.*

final report underlines that many families did not consider their hygiene needs to be a priority. This analysis is further confirmed by the success of the coupon distribution schemes. Satisfaction with the coupon schemes was further reinforced when they allowed the purchase of food and non-food products.

**Figure 15. TGH Final Report - 2017 - Comparison of beneficiary satisfaction**

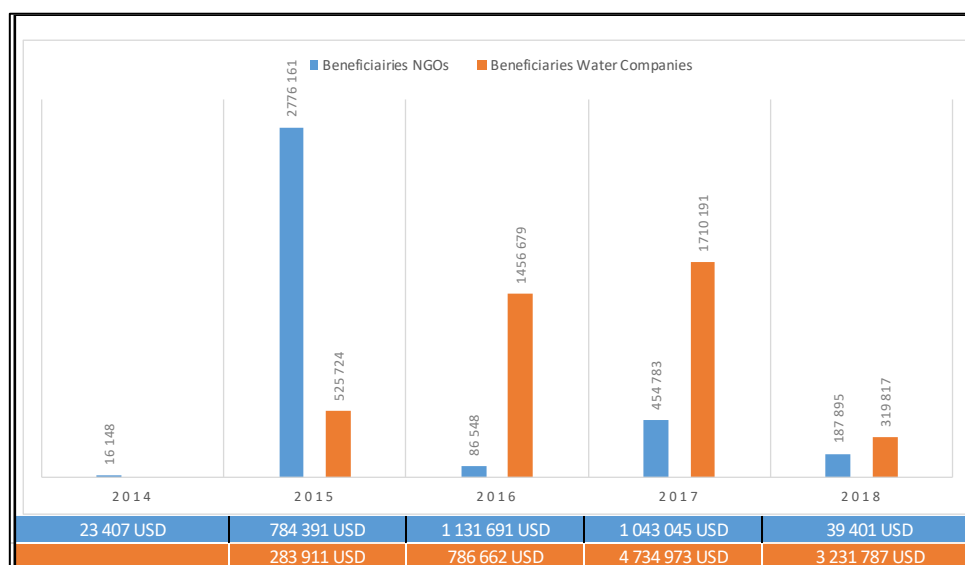


The hygiene kits distributed thus responded more to a need for livelihood support than to a need to increase access to hygiene. The objective here was to enable people to use their income to meet other needs.

Finally, it was brought to our attention (notably by former PIN staff) that the hygiene kits provided by UNICEF in the first few years at least were not properly adapted to the size and type of households and were considered too big (they were intended for 6-8 people whereas a family in Eastern Ukraine usually comprises 2 or 3 people).

Very early in the study period, UNICEF asked its partners to include “population with special needs” as a vulnerability criterion in their selection process. As there are high numbers of elderly people within the affected population, this marked a noticeable effort from an agency specialized in children’s needs to adapt the approach to this underlying structural factor. Perhaps UNICEF and its partners could have gone even further and sought to meet the very specific needs of these beneficiaries (e.g. those who are bedridden or socially isolated). Elderly people was targeted has the most vulnerable people by IPs. With UNICEF funding they received “normal” support, but not the specific support that they could have required due to their special needs as elderly beneficiaries.

**Figure 16. Beneficiaries by NGO and water company, and budget per year<sup>35</sup>**



<sup>35</sup> Analysis of UNICEF database (excel files)



From 2016, following a degree of stabilization of the diplomatic situation, the choice made by UNICEF to support water agencies made it possible to significantly expand the response to water needs. The Figure 16 illustrates the relevance of relying on water companies to increase the water response in a crisis situation. This strategy seems highly relevant given the size of the populated area in which access to water was made precarious by the conflict.

As early as 2015, ACF's KAP survey showed the important role of the water network in providing people with access to water: “All [internally displaced persons] have access to drinking water from a centralised water supply network [...] According to local authorities, the main problem is a lack of budget for changing old pipes. Therefore, people rely on wells. As the results show, water quality in those wells not drinkable.”<sup>36</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that the activities implemented are consistent with UNICEF’s ToC, as set out in Chapter B.7. Furthermore, as UNICEF is the leader of the WASH Cluster, the activities are logically in line with the HRP recommendations.

The relevance of the UNICEF approach can also be measured a posteriori by analysing how water and sanitation were moved up the list of priorities of the Country Programme: as previously stated, these two themes were not components of the 2012-2017 UNICEF/Government of Ukraine Country Programme.

- **Due to a lack of clear information and full understanding of the needs, UNICEF initially deployed a “classic” WASH action based on its experience of addressing water and sanitation needs. Once the first wave of interventions (2014/2015), including needs assessments, was completed, UNICEF utilized information from the field to better understand the type of needs to be met, and this information was consolidated within the Cluster (RPA, HRP). UNICEF also changed its strategy by reducing (kits and water) distribution and introducing more structural solutions (infrastructure and storage capacity).**

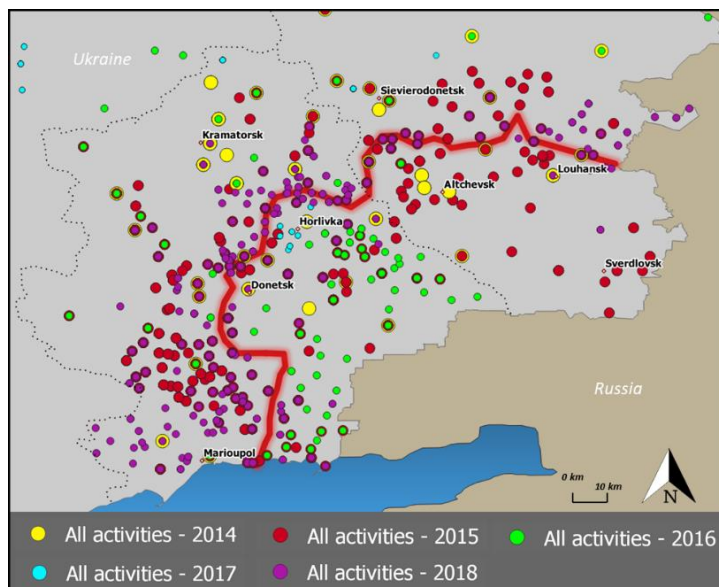
### C.3.3. Coverage, Coordination and Relationship with Humanitarian Actors

In order to evaluate the relevance of the level of coverage of the UNICEF-funded actions, the evaluation team looked at how the actors financed by UNICEF distributed the elements of humanitarian response (geographic, thematic, operational, and so on) and how they coordinated with the other actors present.

The Figure 17 illustrates how UNICEF and its partners ensured continuous humanitarian needs coverage along the contact line between 2014 and 2018.

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<sup>36</sup> ACF International, KAP Survey Report, 2015, p.8

Figure 17. Activities implemented per year between 2014 and 2018<sup>37</sup>

There was homogeneous aid coverage along the entire contact line (GCA and NGCA territory). Even when faced with rapid destabilization in the region, the lack of needs information and the lack of specialized humanitarian emergency response partners, UNICEF was able to ensure a rapid and continuous response via its IPs along the length of the frontline.

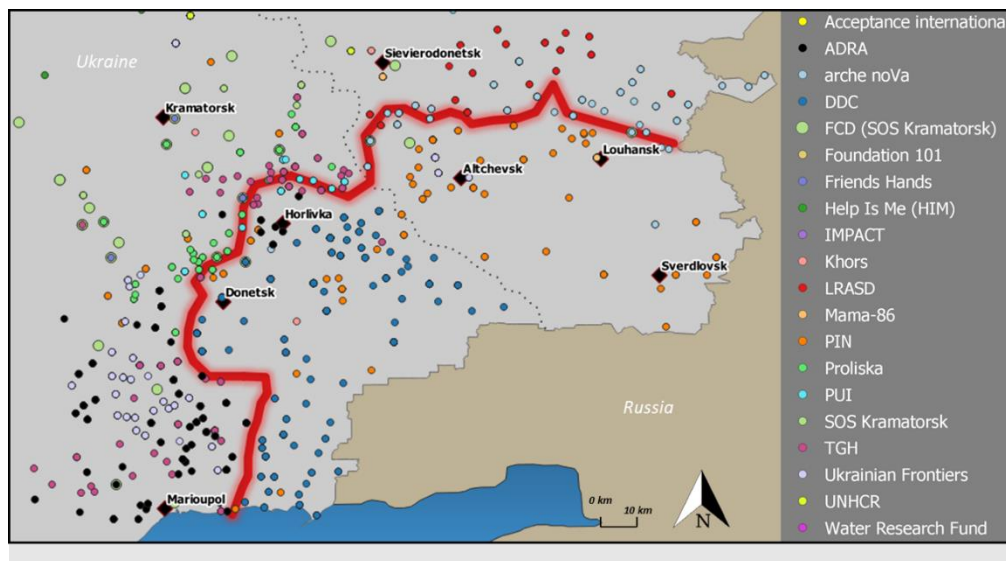
Within the scope of this evaluation, it was not possible to conduct a more detailed analysis of UNICEF's action by “area of intervention / raion”, as this would have required a cross-tabulation to indicate the link between the needs expressed/recognized within the HRP and assessment documents and within the Excel table used to monitor the activities deployed.

For inter-actor coordination, the consultancy team sought to ascertain whether UNICEF set up a process to ensure there was no overlap of activities between the UNICEF-funded IPs and, more broadly, between all WASH actors as part of its role as WASH Cluster leader.

With regard to the internal coordination of UNICEF-funded IPs, the mapping was unable to identify if any particular model was used to coordinate interventions by type of activity or methodology. The various humanitarian actors implemented activities based on their (geographical or thematic) capacities or their knowledge of the field (links with the stakeholders). There was no distribution of actors by geographical area, except between GCA and NGCA areas.

<sup>37</sup> UNICEF databases with GPS localization of the settlement (Excel files)

Figure 18. Activities implemented by year between 2014 and 2018



The interviews conducted with UNICEF staff reveal that coordination with other humanitarian organizations was sometimes difficult, despite the existence of the WASH Cluster since 2015, whose main role is coordination. This can perhaps be explained by issues such as the level of access to the ‘contact line’ provided by the Ukrainian authorities, access to the NGCA and the accreditations awarded by the de facto authorities, and respect of humanitarian corridors, as these limited coordination, information exchange, and communication. A further factor was the presence of local authorities or the OSCE<sup>38</sup> Monitoring Mission, which contributed to the lack of coherence by transmitting WASH-related alerts through its own diplomatic channels (local or national authorities) and not via the WASH Cluster.

As a result, humanitarian actors primarily responded to needs in accordance with the instructions received from their donors, and from local or national authorities, without further coordination with any of the other humanitarian organizations involved.

Figure 19. TGH Final Report 2017 – p. 7

PIN, ADRA, NRC, ICRC and IOM are the other humanitarian agencies and NGOs identified as conducting HK distribution campaigns in the target areas. Meetings were held with PIN, ADRA, ICRC and IOM:

- The list of TGH’s targeted areas was shared in September with **IOM** and it appeared that IOM is not targeting the same settlements as TGH.
- **PIN** does not have any beneficiaries already identified, but responds to the local councils’ requests. It was therefore bilaterally agreed that TGH would share its final beneficiary lists with PIN when finalised; this was done on October 17th. Both organisations are also coordinating on school activities, as PIN is already targeting some schools in the project locations through hygiene kit distributions. 9 schools targeted by PIN have been removed from TGH’s lists to date.
- Initial discussions with **ICRC** led to 6 villages being removed from TGH’s lists (amounting to **158 households**) as ICRC is already covering the entire population [...] Additionally, TGH shared its updated beneficiary lists with ICRC on October 7th, from which ICRC identified that **189 additional households** overlap with their interventions. TGH removed these households from their lists. ICRC reduced the number of its beneficiaries by 74% on

<sup>38</sup> Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

average in the village of Pervomaiske, [...] TGH withdrew **40 households** already targeted by ICRC in Avdeevka.

- TGH shared its updated beneficiary lists with NRC on October 7th, from which NRC identified **70 households** that overlap with their interventions in the village of Novotoshivka. TGH consequently removed the area from its intervention list.

Figure 20. TGH Final Report 2017, p. 3

The first electronic voucher scheme was launched on October 21st for 2,209 households, while the second batch of vouchers (602 HH) was finalised on November 17th. **The delay in finalising the second batch was due to the time required to identify new beneficiaries, which was not included in initial project planning, as well as to the time required by other humanitarian actors to check for beneficiary duplications.**

The situation seems to have returned to normal with the growth of the WASH Cluster (created in 2015) in 2016. From 2018 onwards, this led to aid coherence and the support of water agencies as the main humanitarian response actors in the field. This increase in power has enabled the WASH Cluster to assert itself and clarify its role vis a vis local authorities, who could be very distrustful (see Coordination Mechanisms, p.70).

- **Overall, the geographic focus, first on Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and then on the ‘contact line’ and the NGCAs, was appropriate and evolved according to the changing needs. UNICEF and its partners thus took a major risk by not focusing solely on low-risk areas or exclusively on the GCA. The institutional, diplomatic and security situation and the field actors’ lack of humanitarian response experience limited the impact and performance of coordination mechanisms. As such, coordination has been somewhat difficult and mainly based on personal links maintained on the ground by the different actors. Lack of understanding of the role and strengths of the WASH Cluster system has also limited UNICEF’s ability to influence the nature and quality of the humanitarian response through the dissemination of sector analysis and feedback.**

#### C.3.4. Integration of Equity Measures in the Approaches and Actions

Equity in humanitarian response is a fundamental issue, but it is important to stress the difficulty of measuring this in an active warfare setting. Here the team explore how the activities developed were able to reach different groups of people, especially the most marginalized.

As highlighted many times in this report, the lack of information at the beginning of UNICEF’s action precluded the specific targeting of populations. The first feedback received (from UNICEF-funded and other NGOs) made it possible to better identify the most vulnerable people on both sides of the frontline, namely the elderly, who are often isolated and not very mobile. However, the team has not found any pre-intervention vulnerability reports as such.

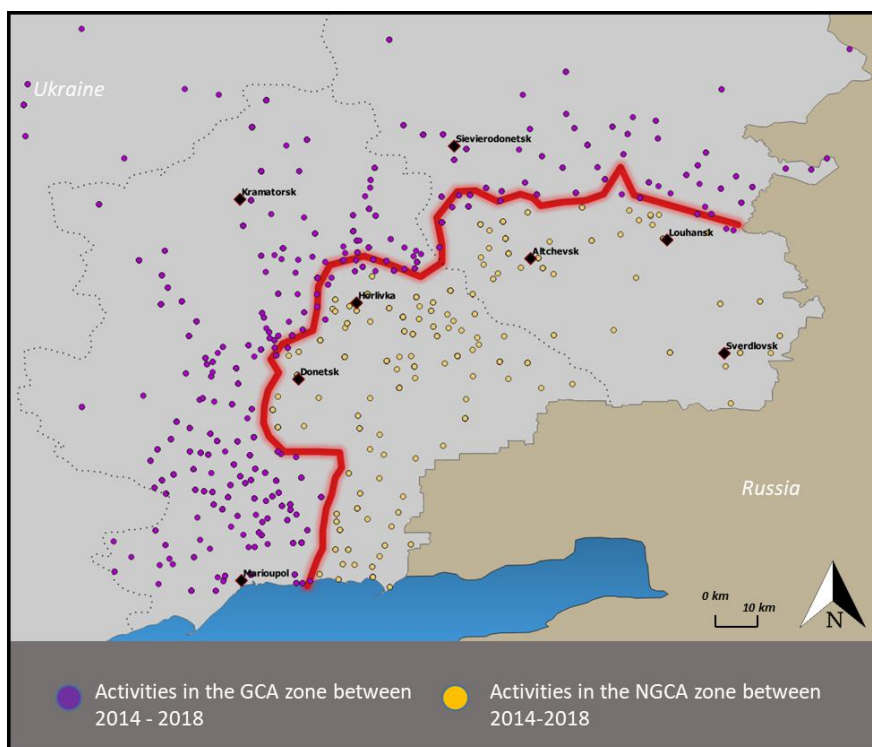
The interviews and the reports consulted indicate that, between 2015 and 2017, UNICEF asked its IPs to work on the equity of their response. Therefore, the evaluation team was particularly interested in studying the activity reports and post-distribution reports of four organisations that seemed to focus particularly strongly on this component: PUI, PIN, TGH and ADRA. These four organizations addressed the issue of equity in several different ways:

- Ensuring greater or equal access for women;
- The creation of hygiene kits or vouchers adapted to the needs of women and children;
- Taking age into account;
- Taking into consideration people with disabilities.

The various proposals and final reports show large disparities in analysis of the level of equity included in the WASH response. As far as we are aware, no UNICEF guide was provided to the IPs to harmonize their vision of equity and to guide their actions.

Thus, the concern for equity in the UNICEF humanitarian response mainly centred on the importance of providing a response on both sides of – and as close as possible to – the ‘contact line’, which is densely populated and largely disconnected from the rest of Ukraine. The map below shows how UNICEF maintained a continuous presence on both sides of the contact line and as close as possible to the most affected populations between 2014 and 2018.

Figure 21. Activities in GCA and NGCA zones



Some of the sites supported are located some distance from the frontline. However, whether in terms of geographical response or in terms of target populations, the various documentary sources consulted and the interviews conducted pointed to no significant lack of equity in the humanitarian response. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that UNICEF and its partners have managed to maintain a response, albeit sometimes fragile, within the NGCA. Active on both sides of the ‘contact line’, UNICEF has benefited from a relatively comprehensive view of the humanitarian situation. Finally, it should be noted that the change of approach in 2017,



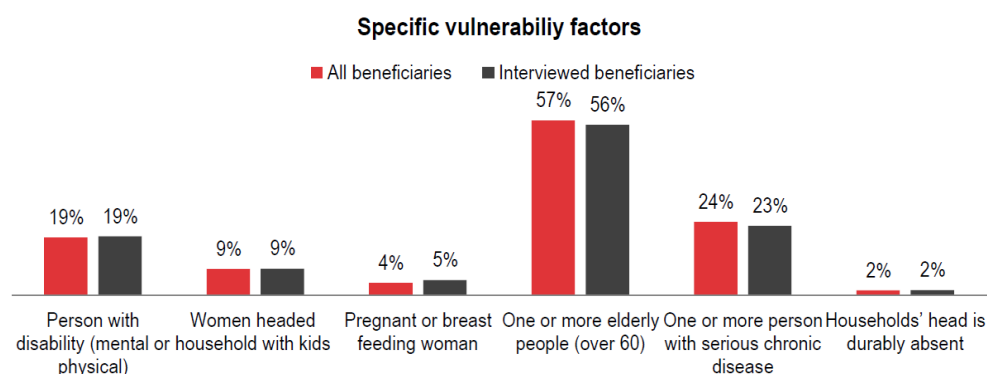
and the support to water companies, de facto increased the equity of UNICEF's response: the work carried out with the water companies guaranteed access to water regardless of gender, income or geographic criteria (GCA or NGCA).

It seems that some generic criteria for vulnerability were explained during the Humanitarian Needs Overview – Humanitarian Response Plan process. But, the various project documents consulted do not specify exactly who the beneficiaries are, nor do they list the vulnerability criteria (see Table 12) and this gave the partner organizations the leeway to adapt their action to their own understanding of vulnerability.

**Table 12. NGO Priority Targets - Examples from 26 project proposals funded by UNICEF between 2014 and 2018**

Partners	Target beneficiaries for the projects signed with UNICEF
PIN project (2015)	8,000 hygiene kits for the population in frontline areas, for internally displaced persons, children with disabilities, children living with HIV, children in institutions and children in pre-trial detention if accessible.
ADRA project (2016)	75,000 beneficiaries (women, men, children, disabled persons).
PUI project (2016)	650 family received hygiene kits.
TGH project (2016)	6,400 beneficiaries from the buffer zone.

**Figure 22. Distribution of kit beneficiaries by vulnerability criteria: Extract from the THG report**



There were no pre-intervention reports on population targeting and targeting methods available; however, the team understand from the post-distribution reports consulted (see Figure 22) that, due to the structure of the population within the zone, the main vulnerability criterion was age (e.g. 52 per cent of PUI beneficiaries with special needs are over the age of 61). Beneficiaries are mainly from the buffer zone and have lost their livelihoods.<sup>39</sup> They account for 15 per cent of all beneficiaries.

- **There are many disparities in organizations' understanding of the notion of equity and vulnerability in projects. There is a clear difference between the international NGOs (PUI, TGH, PIN) and local NGOs. This seems to be largely to be because of the local partners' lack of humanitarian action expertise, which has not been offset by specific support from UNICEF. For example, the team was unable to identify a guide or manual to support organizations to define and assess equity and vulnerability**

<sup>39</sup> Please see the Impact section for more information (Chapter 3.6).



vectors. This gave the IPs the leeway to choose their own vulnerability criteria and response. As a result, all partners were able to successfully adapt their responses to needs (according to their own Post-Distribution Monitoring processes).

## C.4. Effectiveness

In this chapter, the team first analyse how the strategic and operational choices made by UNICEF made it possible to achieve the expected results. Thus, the results achieved by the actions financed by UNICEF and the choices made have been highlighted. Second, the extent to which the monitoring and evaluation mechanism put in place contributed to ensuring the quality of the interventions and/or their reframing was assessed. Finally, the team analyses the coordination and skills transfer mechanisms used.

### C.4.1. UNICEF's Overall Approach

The overall effectiveness of UNICEF's intervention is not easy to assess.

According to the annual Humanitarian Action for Children appeals (HACs),<sup>40</sup> the programme targeted a total of approximately 1,300,000 beneficiaries per year for the first three years and then approximately 1,900,000 for the last two years studied. According to the same reports, except for 2016 when UNICEF reached 210 per cent of its target, UNICEF recorded having achieved around 50 per cent of its water access objectives overall. These results are shown in the table below (Table 13)

**Table 13. UNICEF's targets and achievements per subsector over the period studied**

		Number of affected people with access to safe water	Number of people with access to hygiene supplies and knowledge of basic hygiene practices
<b>September 2014 to December 2015</b>	Cluster targets	675,000	400,000
	UNICEF targets	1,300,000	200,000
	UNICEF results	564,161	54,510
	<b>UNICEF's achievement percentage</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>2016</b>	Cluster targets	1,700,000	412,500
	UNICEF targets	1,200,000	300,000
	UNICEF results	2,523,524	307,153
	<b>UNICEF's achievement percentage</b>	<b>210%</b>	<b>102%</b>
<b>2017</b>	Cluster targets	2,500,000	520,000
	UNICEF targets	1,900,000	200,000
	UNICEF results	962,347	159,696
	<b>UNICEF's achievement percentage</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>80%</b>

<sup>40</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukraine-humanitarian-situation-report-27-6-february-2014>

		Number of affected people with access to safe water	Number of people with access to hygiene supplies and knowledge of basic hygiene practices
2018	Cluster targets	2,500,000	520,000
	UNICEF targets	1,900,000	200,000
	UNICEF results	962,347	159,696
	<b>UNICEF's achievement percentage</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>80%</b>

The very high result for water access in 2016 seems to be because UNICEF focused on providing water treatment chemicals to additional water treatment plants, which ensured greater access to safe drinking water.

However, it is important to note that it is very hard to calculate the exact number of beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries provided by UNICEF is the sum of the beneficiaries reported by the various implementing partners plus, for water network construction work, the number of beneficiaries calculated using standardized calculation rules (e.g. the standard number of beneficiaries per ton of chlorine, and the number of people connected to the water network provided by water companies). Thus, the figures provided are mainly indicative. As a result, it is difficult to determine the effectiveness of the action solely by looking at the number of beneficiaries affected, even if there is no doubt that the activities financed by UNICEF have met the populations' main needs (access to water, in particular).

Analysis of the databases, when cross-referenced with the analysis of UNICEF's IP implementation reports, indicates that all project activities, such as household and KAP surveys and reports, hygiene campaigns and institutional support programmes were effectively implemented (it is somewhat difficult to obtain this kind of evidence from water companies that do not report their actions in the same way that experienced humanitarian actors do). Most of the Implementing Partners reported on the achievement of targets in their final reports but with no other indicators, which made it difficult to generalize achievements. Overall, given the very specific situation of Eastern Ukraine, the findings were clear:

- Activity targets were set to meet the needs of households in both rural and urban areas;
- The precision with which needs were met improved with experience and improved after 2017, as work became more structured (logical frameworks for the WASH activities, etc.);
- Although there were a few exceptions, most activity targets, as described in the IP's proposals, were met;
- Either it was not possible to attain the annual and global targets with the funds allocated or the counting of beneficiaries was misleading.

Retrospectively, effectiveness has improved as the response has progressed. For both internal and external reasons, during the first phase of UNICEF's WASH response (2014 to 2016), effectiveness varied from one activity to another and from one area to the next.

1. First of all, due to lack of access, it was virtually impossible to respond in the NGCA in 2014 and 2015: in 2014 for security reasons, as presented in Chapter C.1, because the frontline was still very fluid at the time; and in 2015, largely for administrative

reasons related to the rise in power of the de facto authorities in their territories, as identified from the reports of partner NGOs (cf. PIN Final Report, 2016).

2. Accreditations and access in general to the NGCA proved to be very challenging constraints that hindered the response and largely account for the lack of effectiveness seen during the first years of the action.
3. The effectiveness of the response was also greatly hampered by the lack of dedicated human resources for emergency WASH response, both within UNICEF and among implementing partners: a significant part of the action over the first two years focused on the recruitment of staff and partners.
4. The complex relationship with the institutional partners on both sides also slowed progress.
5. The WASH response was based on several assessments, which is a commendable approach. However, it seems that the initial responses focused on developing more-or-less standard response packages that were defined in accordance with the expertise of the actors in place. There was no – or only a poor - strategic vision to guide the activities.
6. The implementation the first water access response (water trucking, chlorine supply, water tank distribution and water distribution) and rehabilitation of WASH facilities in school actions was relatively effective, given the security and access constraints that had to be addressed.
7. The strategy and effectiveness of hygiene equipment access was initially more mixed but later improved. The response first focused on kit distribution (involving UNICEF-provided kits and supplies) before partially moving to electronic voucher distribution. According to several NGO actors (PIN and former UNICEF staff, for instance), the fact that most items were initially provided by UNICEF led to unnecessary and unfortunate delays in the supply of these items due to UNICEF’s procurement/operations process. The problem of access in the field to these supplies was part of a bigger issue that encompassed a lack of jobs, difficulties accessing pensions and an overall rise in the prices of basic goods. As the market did not collapse, the voucher approach proved to be more effective than kit distributions.

**Figure 23. PUI Final Report: Analysis of the availability of hygiene products/cash approach**

“Most hygiene products are available in local shops but the main reason for difficult access is economic (high prices of hygiene products/no money available in families/limited financial resources from institutions). In order to support local markets and address the economic issues, alternate distribution methods could be considered (voucher).” (...) “For most beneficiaries, the voucher/cash programme should be prioritised because the main barrier is economic and the local market can provide most of the hygiene products. Therefore, voucher/cash schemes would improve relevance and adaptation to needs, as well as cost efficiency. “

Combining this hygiene access activity with a livelihood / food security approach would have improved the overall effectiveness of the humanitarian response. Furthermore, had it been authorized by the authorities, a blanket cash approach would have been even easier and more effective.

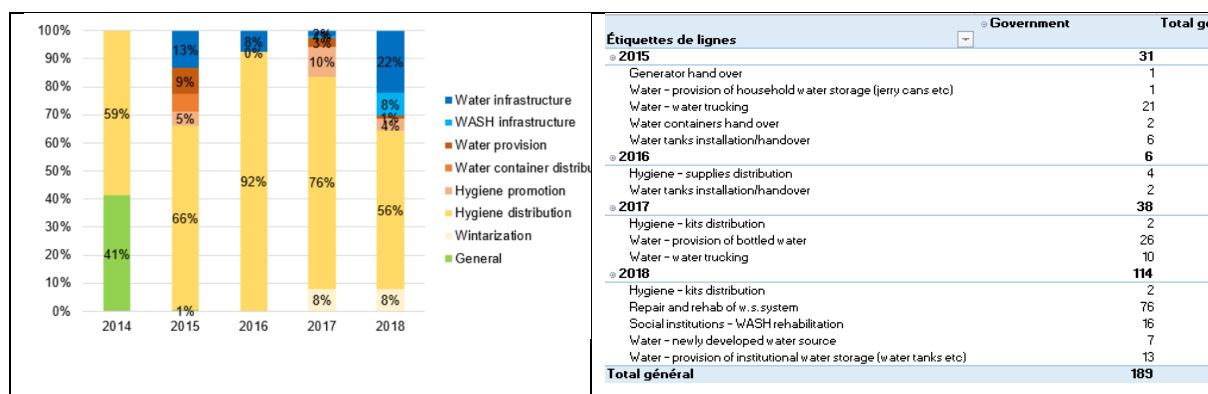
Several NGO partners complained about UNICEF’s slow and cumbersome administrative processes, particularly during the first phase of the response, and especially delays with obtaining signatures and kit supplies. These, administrative and supply process delays seem to have arisen on several occasions and hindered the effectiveness of the action.

Figure 24. PUI Final Report - Feedback on administrative constraints<sup>41</sup>

“In order to comply with Ukrainian law on in-kind donations, the distribution of hygiene kits should have been accompanied by the signature of a donation certificate. However, in order to produce these certificates, PUI needed a UNICEF goods transfer note, which unfortunately was received by PUI one month after the delivery of the kits”.

The transition in 2017 to the second phase of the response, that focused most of the effort on water systems, was a wise choice that greatly improved the effectiveness of the response. The two figures below show the evolution of UNICEF's intervention.

Figure 25. Evolution of UNICEF activities during the period



This response was based both on detailed technical studies and on a response to the immediate needs of the water companies to maintain adequate water (and heating) service levels despite the conflict.

UNICEF also produced a detailed report on access to water and sanitation at the checkpoints. This work has led a major change in UNICEF's strategic position : UNICEF decided to let other actors (MSF, ADRA, PUI and PIN for GCA, and ICRC for NGCA) do the job but to provide support if funding gaps materialized. Since 2017, UNICEF has stated that activities at entry/exit crossing points were the responsibility of the authorities (including access to basic services such as water and sanitation).

There is no documentation to explain this (assumption, etc). This lack of visibility undermines the decision taken, which is perfectly understandable and seems to have been carefully thought out by the team.

Additionally, UNICEF quickly moved towards action in schools and institutions. This positioning makes sense in terms of UNICEF's mandate and contributes to ensuring access to quality water and sanitation in places frequently used by communities (instead of drinking water distribution or purchase by the population themselves). However, the approach used is not documented, which again fails to properly highlight the strategic work of the teams and the coordination mechanism put in place with school directors and health care facility directors.

- **The effectiveness of the action is difficult to measure because the figures for the number of beneficiaries are approximate and the intervention strategies have limited or no documentation. However, it is undeniable that the action carried out by UNICEF was effective and met the needs of the population. Effectiveness was lower over the first two years due to: the lack of partners; the**

<sup>41</sup> PUI\_UNICEF\_WASH\_Report Final, page 4

**lack of permanent technical staff within the organization; some internal dysfunctions within UNICEF; the complicated relationship with institutional partners, especially on the NGCA side; and slow and cumbersome logistical and administrative processes (especially for the procurement process). However, effectiveness greatly increased once greater collaboration with water management companies was put in place.**

#### **C.4.2. Effectiveness of Monitoring and Evaluation Tools to Ensure the Quality of Projects and Equity Measurement**

The monitoring elements consulted were the IPs' and water companies' databases, the reports produced by the NGOs, and the reports sent by UNICEF to its funders. Reports to funders indicate that:

**Figure 26. Extract from Improving the Water Security of Communities Living along the Contact Line in Donetsk Oblast (Phase II) – Monitoring and Evaluation section – 2018 – KfW donors (p. 17)**

A comprehensive approach to monitoring can be observed during the reporting period. The indicators were discussed with Civil Society Organisations as part of the partnership signed with UNICEF. During project implementation, UNICEF will monitor the realisation of WASH activities through frequent monitoring field visits. UNICEF will continue meeting regularly with government partners, affected communities and other organisations to ensure that project activities are applied appropriately and in a timely manner. The WASH Cluster, supported by UNICEF, facilitates regular coordination meetings on WASH; regular bilateral meetings with other organisations are held to avoid duplication of work and to ensure that all basic needs of vulnerable communities are covered. Finally, meetings with government partners are held to ensure that UNICEF is aware of the situation and needs of the population in need. Specific monitoring will be conducted on gender issues and on children with disabilities.

The available material shows that a much more limited monitoring system was in place for the period evaluated (2014-2018).

The following monitoring system was put in place: UNICEF regularly (mostly on a monthly basis) collected the number of beneficiaries covered by its partners (NGOs, plus water companies from 2017 onwards). UNICEF also received quarterly reports from implementing NGOs and conducted field visits. The NGO partners appear to have viewed the monthly reports as time-consuming and of little use for guiding their interventions.

Some subcontracting NGOs set up their own monitoring systems, and each NGO partner ultimately provided at least a final accountability report (and most also drafted additional quarterly reports).

From 2018 onwards (which is outside the scope of this evaluation), UNICEF strengthened its monitoring activities over the closing phase of the activities by introducing a mandatory “joint partnership review”.

The databases transmitted by UNICEF do not mention any particular indicators on equity, vulnerability or gender disaggregation (apart from geographical location) and do not, in our opinion, allow us to document the approaches implemented with a view to adapting them to improve the efficiency and quality of the projects developed. However, the team assume that the reporting conducted by NGO partners, especially the international NGOs, led to a revision of certain approaches, particularly those used for hygiene-related activities, which gradually switched from basic kit distribution to the implementation of electronic voucher systems.

The documents studied indicate that no overall evaluation tools were set up by UNICEF either for its IPs or for the water companies.

- **UNICEF’s standard monitoring system was used (including monthly beneficiary counts, quarterly NGO reports and occasional field visits). It appears that UNICEF did not develop a specific tool to evaluate the quality or equity of the intervention. The M&E developed was basic and, therefore, its effectiveness was limited only to what was strictly necessary, even if progress was made over time.**

### C.4.3. Coordination Mechanisms and Transfer of Approaches

There was little coordination over the first two years of the action, firstly because of the lack of a pre-existing WASH response system (until 2014, UNICEF's actions were focused mainly on child protection), and secondly because of the general lack of contacts/partners (among both civil society organizations and the administrative authorities). This did not have a major negative impact on the action due to the lack of actors in the sector throughout 2014 and early 2015.

In 2015, the number of WASH actors increased and thus so did the need for coordination. The WASH Cluster, created in 2014, only truly became operational in 2015, and was fully up and running by the end of that year. The WASH Cluster lead was provided by UNICEF following a lack of interest from government partners to take on this role in an impartial and equitable manner for all the territories affected by the conflict.

Starting in December 2015, a simple coordination tool, the 5W (who, what, where, whom, when), was shared during the monthly meetings held to discuss the different actors’ actions and thus limit the risks of overlap. The effectiveness of this tool could, however, have been increased had it included maps. As it was, it was kept as an Excel worksheet tool.

Despite these regular meetings and use of the basic though useful 5W tool, the final reports from several partners (the NGO TGH in particular) showed that during the winter of 2016-2017, coordination between WASH actors remained an issue, particularly between NGOs that were all members of the WASH Cluster. This situation prompted some of these NGOs to revise their targeting of beneficiaries (see C.3.3). It is likely that this renewed lack of coordination was partly due to the increase in activity triggered by the harsh winter of 2016 and 2017, which saw NGOs rush to set up and include winterization activities in their projects. This situation also overwhelmed the coordination capacities of the system in place. However, the overlap and duplication issues encountered during targeting did not have any major negative repercussions.

The coordination set-up had three shortcomings that it will be important to consider in the future:

- The set-up enabled the partners to coordinate to a certain extent while there was a crisis underway, but did not help anticipate future crises;
- During a rapidly growing crisis, the frequency of meetings sometimes proved insufficient;
- Some actors refused to join in with the coordination efforts.

While, from the end of 2015 onwards, most of the WASH actors participating in the WASH Cluster were able to coordinate relatively effectively, coordination remained complicated



between international agencies such as UNICEF and ICRC and this until 2017.<sup>42</sup> This communication issue was worsened by the fact that there is no water ministry in Ukraine. Water issues in the conflict area are mainly overseen by the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Living and the Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons. However, these two ministries were in conflict, particularly over the water access issue and:

- ICRC was close to the Ministry of the Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons, which was also in conflict with the Donetsk authorities;
- UNICEF was close to the Ministry of Regional Development, Construction and Communal Living.

In addition to the coordination tool, the communication of alerts by the WASH Cluster from September 2016 onwards helped to limit the risk of gaps in water supply. The WASH Cluster produced a short alert report template for the circulation of alerts. This system, which is independent of the monthly meetings, optimizes responsiveness and is a classic tool for any cluster. According to various actors interviewed, including the ECHO representative, the WASH Cluster played a fundamental role in transmitting alerts as part of the WASH response to the crisis.

Thus, at a higher level, coordination was complicated by the lack of an institutional focal point recognized by all donors, and the absence of an inter-donor coordination mechanism in the sector during the first years of the conflict. This further limited the transfer of approaches as it prevented the introduction of an operating procedure that was clearly driven in agreement with the Government of Ukraine. In 2021, relationships with government officials remain fragile and there is still no mechanism for inter-donor coordination. However, significant progress in communication was made between 2016 and 2020.

Little evidence was collected on the transfer of approaches, which is not surprising given the existing institutional tensions. However, it can be noted that, by the end of the period evaluated (Q3/Q4 of 2018), the WASH Cluster had created a working group on hygiene. This group has produced hygiene promotion guidelines to ensure consistency in the hygiene promotion actions carried out across the two oblasts. These are the first (and only over the studied period) WASH guidelines developed by the WASH Cluster to ensure consistency of action. There were no other initiatives introduced to manage knowledge or drive action through guidelines.

- **The WASH Cluster coordinator has proven vital for coordinating action and is particularly recognized by donors for his coordinating role. This is especially important as this role could not and still cannot be fulfilled by government partners (bias and politicization of the water issue). Although the WASH Coordinator's work has been indispensable, it took a relatively long time to become effective. Effectiveness was limited during the first period (2014-2016) by lack of willingness on the part of some actors to coordinate, as well as by the lack of a single government counterpart in charge of WASH aspects, and sometimes by a lack of anticipation. However, effectiveness increased during the second period (2017-2018) thanks to the work undertaken by the WASH Cluster to produce various documents, such as a reporting**

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<sup>42</sup> ICRC did not attend the WASH Cluster meetings for neutrality reasons.

system to record attacks on WASH facilities with systematic information sharing with stakeholders and donors. This work also included the mapping of WASH organizations, 5W reporting, regular and frequent meetings on different topics, and high-level advocacy on wider WASH-related issues. The fact that only one guideline document has been produced shows that the WASH Cluster's priority has been coordination between actors rather than guidance.

## C.5. Efficiency

In this chapter, we seek to identify whether the resources allocated to UNICEF, even incrementally, have enabled the expected results to be achieved, and whether these resources have been properly used by UNICEF. We also seek to determine whether other programmes and donors have developed similar actions that have produced different results. The coordination between the different actors is also studied to identify whether any economies of scale have been achieved.

### C.5.1. UNICEF Resources and Achievement of the Objectives

We have extracted the WASH expenditure reported by the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office from the UNICEF financial system. The percentage of funds allocated to activities (mostly WASH emergency preparedness) is extremely high. A rate of 80 per cent of operational expenditure would be considered efficient, so it could be concluded that the programme was highly efficient with a strong focus on reaching the beneficiaries. However, coordination and monitoring activity expenditure both seem to have been too low to ensure a sufficient level of coordination and monitoring of the field activities (see section C.5.2). Unfortunately, figures were unavailable for 2017 and 2018.

Expenditure Item	Expenditure (2014-2016) – in US\$	% of Expenditure
Coordination	318,677	4.4%
Communication & Advocacy	45,986	0.6%
Activities	6,775,873	94.3%
Data collection and knowledge management	4,455	0.1%
Monitoring	14,031	0.2%
Staff	27,547	0.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,186,569</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Table 14. UNICEF WASH expenditure per expenditure item between 2014 and 2016, source: SISTER (UNICEF expenditure monitoring system)

We have sought to conduct the same calculations for the implementing partners used by UNICEF during the period, based on the budgets agreed in Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) and Small Scale Funding Agreements (SSFAs).

Implementing Partner	Start	End	Total (US\$)	Coordination, Staff and Direct Programme Costs
Mama 86 (1)	Nov 2014	Jan 2015	11,357	58%
KHORS	Dec 2014	Dec 2014	10,002	10%
Ukrainian frontiers (SSFA)	Dec 2014	Mar 2015	23,643	13%
LRASD (SSFA)	Jan 2015	Jan 2015	12,112	3%
PIN	Mar 2015	Aug 2015	387,677	40%
Mama 86 (2)	Jul 2015	Sept 2015	21,328	43%
LRASD (PCA)	Sept 2015	Dec 2015	13,019	10%
Ukrainian frontiers (PCA)	Oct 2015	Dec 2015	71,924	12%
ADRA	Oct 2015	Feb 2016	274,542	13%
SOS Kramatorsk	Oct 2015	Jan 2016	6,604	43%
Acceptance international	Nov 2015	Feb 2016	81,650	34%
SOS Kramatorsk (FCD)	Mar 2016	Dec 2016	17,920	44%
HIM Kharkiv	Apr 2016	Jul 2016	16,728	36%
Proliska	May 2016	Aug 2016	24,991	28%
ADRA (GIZ) - cost extension	Jun 2016	Jun 2017	1,151,759	27%
DDC Donetsk (SSFA)	Aug 2016	Nov 2016	10,112	63%
TGH	Sept 2016	Jan 2017	259,182	30%
Foundation 101	Sept 2016	Mar 2017	10,950	70%
PUI	Nov 2016	Mar 2017	299,752	40%
DDC Donetsk (PCA)	Dec 2016	Apr 2017	70,024	17%
ADRA parenting rooms SSFA	Jun 2017	Aug 2017	101,924	79%
Arche Nova	Oct 2017	Feb 2018	98,503	46%

**Table 15. Budget per implementing partner and share of general expenditure, source: Implementing Partners' SSFAs and PCAs**

The ratio of general expenditure here appears quite high, corresponding to US\$975,224 out of a total of US\$3 million taken into account here (some activities like winterization or heating systems have not been included). The ratio exceeds 50 per cent for 4 IPs' budgets, 3 of which had budgets of under US\$11,500. In general, it could be argued that having several small contracts limits efficiency, especially due to the transaction and monitoring costs involved.

Water utilities were primarily supported through the procurement and handover of supplies (82 per cent), which is directly linked to operations. The amounts reimbursed appear reasonable, as this reimbursement arrangement was only used to procure water treatment chemicals. The budget for rehabilitation projects seems relatively low given the costs of water supply infrastructure and equipment. The water utilities appreciated the support received,

especially the machinery and funds (direct cash transfers for treatment chemicals), but the amounts allocated were the strict minimum to ensure service continuity and not enough to prevent service degradation.

Year	Procurement and handover of supplies (in US\$)	Rehabilitation projects (in US\$)	HACT arrangement (reimbursement) <sup>43</sup> (in US\$)	Total (in US\$)
2015	257,222.34	26,688.97		283,911.31
2016	670,434.07	0.00	116,228.00	786,662.07
2017	4,562,306.46	0.00	341,167.00	4,903,473.46
2018	2,090,590.16	133,398.00	1,007,799.00	3,231,787.16
<b>Total 2015-2016</b>	<b>7,580,553.03</b>	<b>160,086.97</b>	<b>1,465,194.00</b>	<b>9,205,834.00</b>
<b>% of total</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>16%</b>	

Table 16. Water utilities' support budget per year and type of support

Source: UNICEF (assistance to water utilities (2015-2018) Excel document)

Based on the financial information available from the budget from donors, budget in the PCA and SSFA, the water utilities' support budget synthesis, and additional information provided by UNICEF Ukraine, the gaps between the WASH-related budget from donors and the budget for WASH IPs and water utilities seem high and vary from year to year.

	2014 (US\$)	2015 (US\$)	2016 (US\$)	2017 (US\$)	2018 (US\$)	TOTAL (US\$)
Budget for NGOs	28,011	571,751	1,625,805	823,418	3,983,801	<b>7,032,786</b>
Budget for water utilities	0	283,911	786,662	4,903,473	3,231,787	<b>9,205,834</b>
Budget for the procurement of hygiene kits	67,550	2,229,454	1,424,398	783,037	158,537	<b>4,662,976</b>
Budget for the procurement of bottled water	17,341	30,735	22,936	22,132	7,181	<b>100,325</b>

<sup>43</sup> Only for treatment chemicals: UNICEF signed an MoU with Vodokanal, which sent the official request to UNICEF for water treatment materials needs, plus a contract with prices from suppliers. Vodokanal then procured chlorine and requested a reimbursement. UNICEF refunded the cost based on the supporting evidence provided.

	<b>2014 (US\$)</b>	<b>2015 (US\$)</b>	<b>2016 (US\$)</b>	<b>2017 (US\$)</b>	<b>2018 (US\$)</b>	<b>TOTAL (US\$)</b>
Budget for the procurement of water tanks	0	67,920	0	0	4,946	<b>72,866</b>
Budget for water utilities assessments	0	0	0	150,320	0	<b>150,320</b>
<b><i>Subtotal of WASH budgeted expenditure (excluding UNICEF's)</i></b>	<b>112,902</b>	<b>3,183,771</b>	<b>3,859,801</b>	<b>6,682,380</b>	<b>7,386,252</b>	<b>21,225,107</b>
<b>Reported WASH expenditure<sup>44</sup> (including UNICEF Ukraine's)</b>	<b>260,049</b>	<b>3,849,951</b>	<b>4,091,558</b>	<b>7,600,831</b>	<b>8,705,602</b>	<b>24,507,991</b>
Budget from donors (all) <sup>45</sup>	1,790,096	8,095,166	13,194,663	10,044,478	11,315,511	44,439,914
Budget from donor (WASH allocation) <sup>46</sup>	331,930	4,122,735	4,462,355	8,583,648	9,314,994	<b>26,815,662</b>
% of expenditure that is UNICEF-linked	66%	23%	14%	22%	21%	21%

This 21 per cent gap between the WASH budget and subtotal of WASH budgeted expenditure is related to UNICEF Ukraine costs, which correspond to a total of US\$5.6 million over five years. According to UNICEF, these are mainly administrative costs, but they also include some operating costs (travel between UNICEF premises and IP premises in some cases), supportive programmatic costs (financial assessment of IPs, spot checks and audits) and the costs of M&E, communication and C4D activities. In addition, approximately US\$8.9 million over the five-year period was spent on UNICEF headquarters operating costs.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> This is the WASH expenditure reflected in the financial reports by grants and includes supplies, payment to partners and some UNICEF operating costs (including human resources, percentages to M&E and C4D, staff travel, etc.). The figures were extracted by UNICEF from separate documents produced for internal use and for each grant, and are based on the specific sections relating to WASH expenditure.

<sup>45</sup> For the budget figures, we used the programmable amount in the grant financial reports extracts taken by UNICEF, which corresponds to the amounts actually received by UNICEF Ukraine (without the overhead costs for UNICEF headquarters).

<sup>46</sup> The WASH ratio was 100 per cent if the grant was directly and completely related to WASH, 50 per cent if WASH was one of the 2 sectors in the title of the grant, and 30 per cent if the title of the grant was broader.

<sup>47</sup> This amount was calculated by ascertaining the difference between the total of the grant values agreed by the donors and the programmable amount received by UNICEF Ukraine in total (not only WASH).

Expenditure on UNICEF WASH staff in Ukraine was limited throughout the whole 2014-2018 period, especially for WASH in humanitarian situations. It appears, in fact, that it was too limited to optimize the results of the programme.

The information we have does not enable us to identify the level of resources made available and used for governance and the coordination of actions, which were the focus of evaluation question 8.1.

Neither is it possible to assess the level of duplication with the programmes of other organisations working in Ukraine. The financial information required on similar programmes to evaluate their efficiency and compare them with the UNICEF WASH Programme in Ukraine is unavailable.

- **It is difficult to say if UNICEF resources were sufficient or adequately used to achieve the objectives. For the resources allocated to IPs, it may have been possible to achieve some economies of scale by having fewer implementing partners. For the support to water utilities, resources seem to have been directly used for operations as they became necessary but, given the situation, these were limited. There appear to have been too few UNICEF human resources in Ukraine to ensure comprehensive programme planning and monitoring and provide high-level support to the authorities.**

### C.5.2. Coordination and Economies of Scale

In the emergency situation encountered by all humanitarian stakeholders in Ukraine in 2014, based on the information we have, it appears that there was no pre-programme coordination work or targets, and geographic areas were not distributed between different stakeholders, as highlighted in section C.5.1. Therefore, there was no positive effect on the efficiency of the programme that can be attributed to pre-programme coordination.

As indicated in the same section, coordination with other stakeholders was poor and complicated by the situation. There was no specific distribution of areas or targets to enable economies of scales between humanitarian stakeholders, even during the implementation period.

With regard to implementing partner coordination, analysis of the databases shows that, depending on the year, between 1 per cent and 12 per cent of the settlements covered by hygiene distribution campaigns were targeted by at least two implementing partners, which means that there was some geographical duplication (even if the items distributed and the beneficiaries may have differed).

Year	Settlements targeted by hygiene distribution campaigns	Settlements where 2 IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns	Settlements where more than 2 IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns	% of settlements where 2 or more IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns
2015	153	13	6	12%
2016	153	2	0	1%
2017	303	17	1	6%



Year	Settlements targeted by hygiene distribution campaigns	Settlements where 2 IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns	Settlements where more than 2 IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns	% of settlements where 2 or more IPs implemented hygiene distribution campaigns
2018	127	13	0	10%

While geographical distribution seems to have been organized (see maps below), the areas allocated to the implementing partners could have been optimized to limit transportation costs and facilitate relationships with local authorities:

- In 2014-2015, some neighbouring settlements were shared between PIN, Ukrainian Frontiers and SOS Kramatorsk. SOS Kramatorsk distributed items in settlements far from its main area.
- In 2016, optimization of the distribution areas seems to have improved, except for Proliska, who covered two different areas. The area covered by FCD (SOS Kramatorsk) was very large and contained few settlements.
- In 2018, aid was concentrated in the frontline area, with a clear area in the east allocated to Arche Nova. In the middle, the area was covered by both TGH and Proliska, which is explained by the fact that TGH was providing electronic vouchers while Proliska was distributing hygiene kits as it proved challenging / impossible to use e-voucher technology in many of the rural areas close to the contact line.

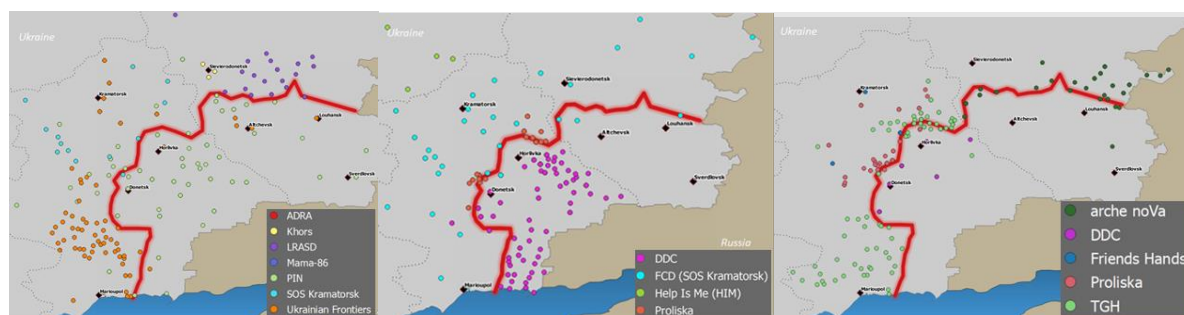


Figure 27. Locations of NGO hygiene distribution interventions (kits, supplies and vouchers) in 2014-2015, 2016 and 2018

It seems, therefore, that efforts were made to coordinate the IPs' hygiene distribution campaigns with regard to the areas of intervention, even though some discrepancies remained.

- **Inter-actor coordination in Ukraine was limited and did not enable economies of scale. However, there is no evidence of duplication of intervention efforts, as the needs were huge and it was difficult to access the intervention area.**

## C.6. Impacts and Unexpected Effects

In this chapter the team seek to identify the effects that the UNICEF-funded activities may have had on the various target audiences of the intervention. It should be noted that, for sanitary reasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation was not carried out in situ and it was impossible to interview beneficiaries as no contact database (households, institutions, etc.) was available.

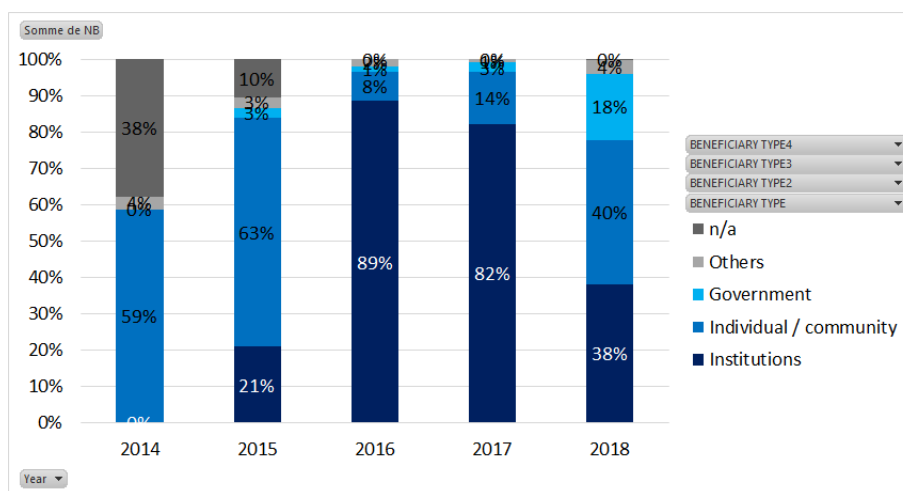
The evaluation team therefore collected information from partner NGOs and UNICEF staff to understand the effects and the means used (i) to identify, monitor and analyse the impact on the beneficiaries, and (ii) to inform assessment of the programme and UNICEF's actions in urban areas and in crisis situations.

UNICEF also asked the consultancy team to examine the impacts / effects (expected or not) produced by the activities financed between 2014-2016 on the internal functioning of the country office between 2017 and today.

### C.6.1. Priorities for Action and Targeted Changes

As explained in the section on Relevance, the action of the IPs funded by UNICEF remained fairly open-ended in terms of targeting beneficiaries and/or the nature of the emergency activities to be developed. There is very little quantitative data available to categorize the beneficiaries of the interventions.

Figure 28. Database analysis of UNICEF target changes



Nevertheless, some, albeit not linear, changes in the action could be observed:

- Distribution of materials to the populations was gradually balanced out with actions in institutions (health care, education, social protection) up to 2017, before there was a switch to “government support” in 2018<sup>48</sup>. Government support also involved water distribution, hygiene kit distribution, etc., so there was no major change to the types of activity carried out;
- Water-related interventions were reoriented in 2017 to focus on material support to the various water companies supplying the area with drinking water.

<sup>48</sup> It should be noted that this is the sum of the lines in the database (= sum of the individual actions recorded); however, the team is not able to convert this into the number of beneficiaries or financial figures.

These changes in targets enabled UNICEF to maximize the impact of its intervention and to ensure the minimum conditions were in place to continue an intervention in the area (dialogue with local authorities, and water agencies/water companies).

Although they were highlighted through our interviews, these changes are relatively poorly documented in the reports consulted. Building assumptions and arguments for these changes, particularly through the creation of a Theory of Change, would have helped the team by increasing their understanding of the strategic choices made (unattainable assumptions, identification of barriers, etc.).

Work to structure the intervention began at the end of 2017, and work recently carried out with the teams (in February 2020, so outside the scope of this evaluation) to initiate a review process of the 2018-2022 CPD, and examine the need to refocus the programme for the coming years, is the only review effort documented so far. Discussions with UNICEF staff show that this review process is occurring and is going in the right direction; nevertheless it is still neither common practice nor well-documented even in the Country Office Annual Reports. This situation hampers knowledge management of the intervention history in Ukraine. Such institutional memory is important, however, particularly for ensuring new intervention actors do not repeat past mistakes and are aware of the assumptions and risk analysis underlying the strategic choices made. Much of this information is being produced but is fragmented. Simply centralizing and formatting this data would have been sufficient to document the choices made.

- **Between 2014 and 2017, UNICEF's intervention strategy remained relatively traditional. There is limited or no documentation of the strategic choices made during this period. Also, during this period the only notable strategic change concerns support to water companies (replacing the water trucking strategy). This change made it possible to significantly increase the impact of the intervention on access to water for the population. Strategic directions were later defined and diversified (in late 2018 and early 2019). However, although these are very clear in the minds of some UNICEF staff, they are not set down on paper. The first real Theory of Change was developed in February 2020 as part of work to prepare the CPD for 2022-2026 (outside the scope of this evaluation).**

### C.6.2. Direct and Indirect Impacts of the UNICEF Programme

The impacts of UNICEF-funded interventions are not open to question. In 2014, few donors (about three) and few international NGOs wanted to be involved in water and sanitation activities in (eastern) Ukraine. Rapid diagnostics and feedback from the WASH Cluster clearly show that the military and political crisis in eastern Ukraine has contributed to reduced access to water for populations near the 'contact line'. In the scope of this evaluation, it is difficult to provide qualitative answers about the direct and indirect effects of UNICEF's intervention in the water and sanitation sector as it was not possible to speak directly with the beneficiaries of the IP component. However, from the interviews conducted with the partner NGOs, UNICEF staff and water companies, we have determined that the actions carried out have contributed to:

- **Assessments:** objective reports on the situation through UNICEF's constant presence on the ground. These include observations on service coverage and quality of access to water for populations that have been poorly documented in the past, thereby providing valuable information to the international community.
- **Emergency distributions:** the emergency actions of distributing hygiene kits and water (transport of water by truck, bottled water) had a positive impact. These actions responded to immediate needs, generated by the attacks on the network, of hundreds of thousands of families along the 'contact line'. None of the actors highlighted any negative impacts of these actions even though some of the humanitarian aid available was earmarked for certain very vulnerable families who received various types of aid, whether complementary or not, while other families, although in need, received nothing.<sup>49</sup> However, more than the distribution of water or hygiene items, the mere presence of humanitarian actors to support families who had to flee their homes and jobs overnight was essential (see Figure 29). **Error! Reference source not found.**

Figure 29. Extract from the TGH Final Report 2017, p. 19

The local authorities [...] are calling for the approach to be combined with vouchers for work projects so as to include households/individuals with no specific vulnerability criteria often excluded from humanitarian assistance, but whose economic situation has clearly deteriorated as a result of the recent conflict.

Thus, the impact of the emergency response can be summarized as follows:

- It has provided moral support (through mere presence) to people in the conflict zones;
- It has enabled people to save their financial resources to spend on other basic necessities;
- It has helped maintain access to safe drinking water.

**Work with water companies:** has helped to improve the capacities of the water companies (direct machinery: excavators, specialized tanks; indirect: reduced repair times and water losses). Although it is difficult to accurately assess the impact of this strategy, we can assume that failure of the water companies, loss of staff technical skills and difficulties restarting operations after the war would have had serious consequences for public health in eastern Ukraine.

**Use of vouchers:** the shift from a standard emergency response (distribution of hygiene kits) to the provision of vouchers, particularly for urban populations, greatly enhanced the impact of the actions on beneficiaries. The voucher distribution system has had a positive impact on economic activity in the area by stimulating consumption and thus supporting the local economy (see Figure 30).

The project indirectly benefited the local economy and supply chain through the partnership with 20 local grocery shops. These grocery shops increased their income by 23.5% on average thanks to the project, and 12 jobs were created (100% of which were filled by women).

Figure 30. TGH Final Report 2017, p. 18

**Awareness-raising:** There is no measurable impact available from the documentation as there was a limited number of activities. However, Arche Nova highlighted that UNICEF's action has improved the capacity of local institutions (schools, hospitals and municipal services) to

<sup>49</sup> These comments made during discussions or in distribution reports could not be verified or quantified due to a lack of accurate data.

respond to basic needs and fulfil their roles under better conditions. The NGO underlines the emotional impact of the interventions carried out (educational theatre, teaching materials, etc.).

Moreover, the local authorities, who were suspicious at the beginning, seem to have benefited from the activities to learn and understand the role of UNICEF and its partners. The relationship that developed between 2014 and 2018 helped to lay the foundations for the activities currently underway and will undoubtedly enable more structuring actions.

Actions in schools, hospitals and on decentralized networks started later (the end of 2018). The impact of these activities is therefore difficult to measure, but they have undoubtedly contributed to improving overall access to water and sanitation in the region.

The traditional expected effects of the types of activity developed by UNICEF and its partners are mentioned below. However, the evaluation team consider that the knock-on effect of donors in the WASH sector, the sustainable anchoring of UNICEF interventions in Ukraine, the organization of the team and its skills improvement from 2018 and beyond should be considered as unexpected effects, as they were not at all included in either a ToC or a logframe – which, it is important to bear in mind, did not exist for the period evaluated. All of these unexpected effects are out of the scope of the evaluation but were used by the evaluation team in the Effectiveness, Sustainability, Nexus and/or Scalability chapters to strengthen the analysis of the 2014-2018 period.

- **The lack of precise data on the impact of the action carried out and our inability to observe these actions in the field has severely limited our ability to answer the evaluation questions.<sup>50</sup> Measuring impact was not a priority and was not appropriate for the types of activities developed. The most visible impact relates to the work conducted with the water companies to maintain the public water service and functional technical teams.**

### C.6.3. Measure and Use of the Effects

It is important to note here that, given the nature of the actions (distribution of kits and materials or financial support to water companies) and the context (conflict situation), it was more important to monitor the activities than to evaluate the impacts.

Careful reading of the various reports submitted to UNICEF's financial partners (ECHO, KfW, OFDA, etc.) and technical partners (the NGOs) did not reveal a real system for evaluating the project's impacts. The various stakeholders in this project have mainly focused on assessing the monitoring of activities and their successful completion. The following figure (Figure 31) contains the only paragraph on monitoring and evaluation found in the reports submitted to ECHO and KfW by UNICEF. It illustrates that the focus was only on monitoring activities, not measuring effects.

The only information found on impact measurement is quoted below, without further qualitative or quantitative details.

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<sup>50</sup> The consultancy team was not able to conduct field visit due to the sanitary situation (COVID-19) or to conduct phone survey/interviews with recipients, as UNICEF's database and the database of the NGO partner contacted during the evaluation do not contain phone numbers of recipients.

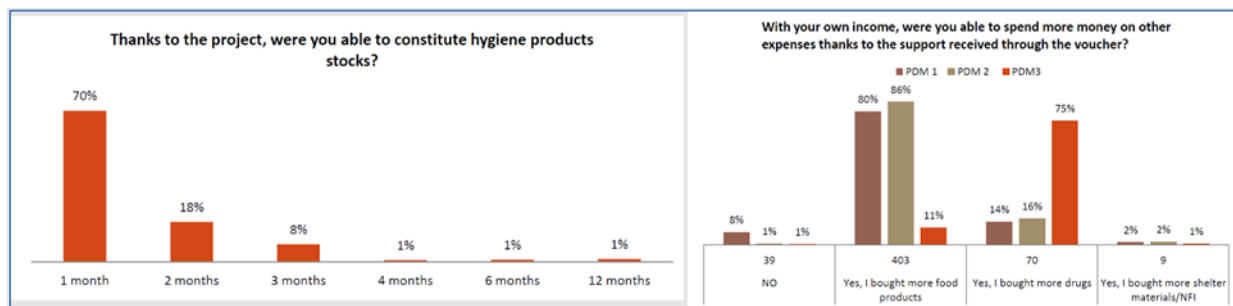


Figure 31. Extract from *Improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Situation for Children and Women Affected by the Crisis in Eastern Ukraine, 2015*, ECHO donors (p. 10)

During post-monitoring, it was observed that the families received hygiene kits. The impact of this was huge as it helped them to continue with their basic hygiene practices during their stay at the transit/IDP collective centre and prevent many diseases, especially among children and women. The IDPs and people affected stated that the basic hygiene products provided, including those for babies and young children, made them feel human and boosted their sense of dignity. Families' and children's ability to maintain minimum hygiene standards and practices was very important and helped to avoid outbreaks of sickness, especially among children under five. In addition to the hygiene kits that were designed to meet the needs of the affected population, hygiene items from the in-kind contributions of other donors were distributed in some locations to children and women to address their critical needs. The transport costs of these were covered by ECHO funds.

Only 4 of the 14 financial partners between 2016 and 2018 analysed and communicated the impact of their actions (a PDM or M&E report). Furthermore, only 2 of these 4 reports focus on the impacts of activities (TGH, PUI). For example, at its own initiative, TGH conducted a series of impact studies of their voucher operations, and were particularly interested in the effects of using vouchers rather than distribution campaigns. The final report and post-distribution surveys (1 & 2) provide a clear picture of the direct (family) and indirect (local authorities, traders) effects of the programme. The analysis focused on areas such as the use of vouchers, the type of products purchased, and the consistency of costs on the local market (see example Figure 32). Because of this analysis the voucher scheme evolved from allowing only the purchase of hygiene products to covering food products and then NFI.

Figure 32. Example taken from the TGH Final Report, Annex 1 - Post Monitoring Report, 2017



Although some NGOs used this type of results-based management system, there is no evidence that UNICEF extended such practices to the other partners it funds. This can perhaps be explained by the national NGOs' lack of experience in monitoring and evaluation, as they are not used to international procedures.

Finally, it is important point to note that many assessments were carried out. These assessments clearly describe the water, hygiene and sanitation situation in several hundred areas (raions). The interviews stated that interventions were designed based on these assessments. However, no sustainable monitoring of situation improvements has been carried out to demonstrate the real long-term impact of the activities financed by UNICEF. For example, the consultancy team is not able to say:

- Once its network was repaired, that a given settlement experienced “x number of” water cuts during 2019 and why; or
- After its toilets were repaired in 2016, whether students still have access to usable toilet facilities in school x.



These are just examples that, once the required information has been collected, would give considerable weight to UNICEF's interventions. This monitoring mechanism is not suitable for pure emergency situations but can be put in place with local authorities and/or water companies during the recovery phase. Consequently, the team consider that the programme does not yet have an effective monitoring system in place.

- **The M&E system did not enable the project's impacts to be measured. Project partners mainly focused on justifying the implementation of their activities and justifying a constant presence in the field. Except for a few partners, no major impact studies were conducted. This is largely explained by the NGOs' lack of skills for conducting this type of study, as well as by the nature of the emergency activities carried out that makes this type of measurement difficult. In addition, the context made medium-term monitoring difficult. There are no project impact assessments to attest to the fact that the actions had an impact on WASH capacity.**

## C.7. Sustainability

This section examines the extent to which the benefits and achievements of the programme are likely to continue through national government or community ownership after the programme's end.

### C.7.1. Sustainability Factors

First, it should be noted that the project implemented by UNICEF during the period studied is an emergency response.

- Every implementing partner interviewed was keen to stress that sustainability was not the primary goal;
- Water companies emphasized that, even though the material made available was of good quality and would enable lasting repairs if not targeted by military weapons, this was not a development project but again an emergency response to the most urgent needs.

Overall, therefore, sustainability was not a priority. However, since 2017/2018 some aspects of UNICEF's approach suggest a move towards ensuring some sustainability. As a result, the study period can be divided into two phases, with the second phase focusing more on sustainability than the first.

#### *a) First phase: 2014 - 2016*

As a general observation on sustainability, it is important to understand that the very first years of the programme consisted of:

- Implementing a purely emergency response to an exceptional situation in the country;
- Structuring the intervention team that, until the end of 2017, relied mainly on short-term positions (national and international). This structure, itself very unstable, did not enable the UNICEF Ukraine office to build long-term strategies;

- Adapting to the nature of the crisis. The crisis was as unpredictable as it was uncertain, and in the first years of the conflict no one thought that it would last.

Unlike other regions where UNICEF works that are exposed to regular severe crises (Haiti, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Somalia, etc.), institutional actors and the population in Ukraine have not developed a crisis culture. This explains why purely emergency actions remained in place from 2014 to the middle of 2017. During this period, UNICEF's partners mainly responded to emergencies by distributing hygiene materials, water, chemicals and small equipment (winterization); all of which were necessary to meet the needs of the population.

During this first period, hygiene awareness activities were carried out in schools. In essence, these activities form part of a virtuous dynamic of sustainability (training teachers and children to be active promoters in their families). However, the first assessments carried out showed that hygiene education was not a priority.

### *b) Second phase: 2017 – 2018 and beyond*

The second phase began with the introduction of water and sanitation issues into the 2018-2022 CPD. The inclusion of water and sanitation embeds UNICEF Ukraine's interventions into a long period of work (at least five years). This period also coincides with a very large amount of German funding being obtained to secure sustainable access to water in the Mariupol area. Thus, during this phase, the teams realised that the cost of water trucking / bottled water distribution and the lack of accessibility to the area made it impossible to consider this a long-term solution. At this time, various assessments were also conducted with water companies, with the consistent finding that the water and sanitation sector faced systemic sustainability issues – including critical environmental and financial issues – which, if not corrected, would lead to the situation deteriorating further. This situation was itself due to the privatization, legal or de facto, of public services over the last thirty years, and to a lack of investment in infrastructure that has been exacerbated, of course, by the ongoing conflict taking place on top of part of the major water networks.

On the basis of this analysis – and given that there was no foreseeable end to the crisis – the approach used by UNICEF to target the water response at the water companies was a logical strategic move that thus aimed for more sustainability.

All UNICEF-supported water utilities were contacted as part of this evaluation. The information collected from these organizations and from all the people working in the water and sanitation sector does not enable us to conduct a detailed analysis of the sustainability of the interventions. From our interviews with water companies and UNICEF staff, we can affirm that the activities carried out during this period were essential for laying new and solid foundations for long-term work.

**Figure 33. Statements from Popasna Vodokanal representative and Lysychansk Vodokanal representative**

"The interventions have a long-term effect because the materials chosen for the repair works are of good quality".

"The UNICEF funded machinery (excavators) still work and facilitate repairs on the water supply systems."

The assessment of Voda Donbasu conducted in 2017, which highlighted the risk factors in the network, is a prerequisite for developing a sustainable strategy for water network development under the triple emergency - development – peace nexus. As previously

mentioned, this assessment took more than two years to be accepted by the various Ukrainian authorities, illustrating the difficulties that the UNICEF teams faced and had to address.

The assessments and activities aimed at repairing water networks, not only in institutions but also in small urban settlements (decentralized water networks), as well as larger centralized networks, demonstrate this pursuit of sustainability, even though they were implemented after the period covered by this evaluation.

Advocacy is one of the tools used to ensure sustainability (especially advocacy at national level). UNICEF has developed advocacy actions at the very local level to open ceasefire windows and to enable the various water companies to repair the networks on the ground. Thus, our analysis shows that some advocacy actions were carried out between 2014 and 2017, but these took some time to become structured and effective at the local and micro-local level (with a view to sustainability). Furthermore, there were no such actions at the national level (see D.7.2). It is only really from 2019 onwards that advocacy grew in strength, scale and stature.

- **During the first period (2014-2016), UNICEF conducted a strictly emergency project and initiated few recovery assessments. The operational strategy did not make sustainability a priority. The strategic shift to focus on hardware support to water companies allowed for more sustainability longer-term. (The actions carried out were not intended to improve the condition of the networks over the long-term but to keep them in operation as much as possible in a warzone)**
- **Then, after 2017 and the integration of WASH components into the strategic document (CPD), while maintaining some of its (useful) emergency activities, UNICEF concentrated its efforts on Output 5, working on activities to prepare for the reconstruction and operation of water networks in municipalities and institutions. The Voda Donbasu assessment was an important first step towards implementing larger (and more costly) projects to improve the sustainability of the water network.**

### C.7.2. Institutional Anchoring

It is important to bear in mind that the project was set up amid some organizational confusion about the institutions in charge of the WASH sector in the area (various local / regional / ministerial actors were often in conflict). As mentioned above, according to the partners interviewed, UNICEF worked hard at regional and more local level to obtain the necessary authorizations to work in the various territories. Obtaining authorizations (for the NGCA, in particular) required and still requires strong institutional diplomacy, which was often highly dependent on inter-personal agreements and/or power issues.

The priority seems to have been placed on implementation and on negotiating access to infrastructure and beneficiaries at the local level. However, none of the institutional partners interviewed complained of a lack of anchoring. While UNICEF seems to have made little effort towards institutional capacity-building, it has maintained regular contact at the local level, thereby ensuring good acceptance of the project and relatively positive collaboration with the institutions, given the complexity of the situation. The initial assessments created a certain anchoring as they helped to start a dialogue with the local authorities on both sides of the ‘contact line’.

**Figure 34. Figure 30. Donetsk Oblast State Administration / Donetsk Oblast State Civil-Military Administration statements on their relationship with UNICEF**

“The project activities were planned in detail. UNICEF was involved in the decision-making process. The choice of location / activities was based on a risk assessment / prioritization. The oblast authority had the final word, especially on activities with Voda Donbasu. Formalization of the interventions was up to the oblast authority.

The decision-making process was flexible and collegial, especially during emergencies.

The authority was involved in the implementing the WASH programme at regional level (mentioned the role of the owner of Voda Donbasu).

We were involved in consultations (coordinating donor meetings at regional level twice a year; meeting UNICEF on sectors of activity).”

These authorities all expressed their needs. There is little evidence available to assess the process that UNICEF teams put in place to maintain contact with the institutions during the period. More generally, there is no mapping of institutional actors at the national or local level that would guide partners’ understanding of who does what/who has which responsibility in the water and sanitation sector. The interviews stated that this knowledge exists within UNICEF, but it has not been formalized – either during the period or since.

As with the institutional mapping, the team was unable to find any documentation of the discussions held between the ministries at the central level and UNICEF during the first period (2014-2017). During the evaluation, several actors reminded us that, if they do not seem immediately ambitious, the steps taken by the teams were actually much more ambitious than expected because of the lack of knowledge of international action in Ukraine (at the central, regional and local levels). This lack of knowledge led to great reluctance, and even opposition, from national bodies to work with this new type of actor. The various people interviewed also agree that national/international advocacy for taking water into account in the conflict in Eastern Ukraine was slow to take hold within UNICEF. This can be explained:

- first of all, by the lack of attention paid to this theme in Ukraine by UNICEF’s Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (as demonstrated by the difficult introduction of this theme into the CPD in 2017);
- by the limited human resources available to carry out this work between 2014 and 2017, a factor exacerbated at the time by a lack of vision, supervision and high-level support.

Even today (2021), while institutional anchoring at local and regional level has generally been consolidated, at national level it remains fragile and under construction. Significant work has been undertaken since 2019 (outside the scope of the evaluation) both with the Ministry of Ecology and Environment to work on updating water policy, and with the Ministry of Territories and Development to work on securing access to water and sanitation for all. This work can be carried out because:

- UNICEF has been working in the water sector since 2014 in Ukraine, and is thus familiar with the actors and the situation at the local and regional levels;
- UNICEF has been able to attract the interest of other development partners thanks to the various assessments produced. Together, the international community has more weight in discussions with the Government of Ukraine and can also address longer-term sector reconstruction issues (funding needs that far exceed the resources and funding arrangements possible from the United Nations system).

The last evaluation question on the sustainability of UNICEF's intervention in eastern Ukraine concerns relates to assessing local authorities' operational and financial capacities to determine the extent to which these institutional partners are able to maintain and extend the effects of UNICEF's intervention over time. It should once more be borne in mind that between 2014 and 2018, the objective of the UNICEF programme was not service provision but protecting the service provision infrastructure. Therefore, working with the municipalities was not a priority. However, in the second part of its intervention, UNICEF developed closer working relationships with the centralized and decentralized water companies, marking a stronger institutional anchoring of the programme (technical audit). In 2020 and 2021 (outside the scope of this evaluation), one of the UNICEF team's areas of work is providing support to the managers of these networks to set up maintenance plans and plan expenditure. The aim of this work is to identify equipment needs and therefore to coordinate the actions of the various "donors". It should be noted that this approach greatly contributes to the sustainability of the interventions. More detailed discussions could be carried out, particularly with small, decentralized companies, as the approach implemented (rehabilitation and network extension based on a community approach) must be aligned with financial capacities and willingness to pay. With this inclusive vision, actions would remain truly sustainable over time for both the populations and the institutions in charge of equipment maintenance.

- **Between 2014 and 2017, UNICEF did not focus on institutional capacity-building or policy. UNICEF prioritized local anchoring for implementing its intervention and achieved good results in this regard. From 2019, UNICEF worked more intensively on the national anchoring of its activities by relying on its local knowledge (actors and network) and on its capacities to mobilize other major international development partners.**

### C.7.3. Development of New Local Capacities

Local capacities can be considered in several ways:

- The capacities of institutions to respond to shocks and the capacities of communities to be resilient and maintain an acceptable level of access to water and sanitation;
- The capacity of Ukrainian civil society actors (NGOs) to work in emergency situations under the rules defined by the United Nations and humanitarian standards;
- The capacity of UNICEF staff (especially national staff) to manage an emergency programme and/or a water and sanitation programme.

As stated above, the context in Ukraine was particular. NGOs' knowledge of United Nations rules and humanitarian standards was weak, while the institutions operated under a post-Soviet set-up and were not used to external support (suspicion, lack of trust, etc.), and UNICEF staff was relatively ill-equipped to deal with such a crisis.

From our analysis:

- The approach used with the implementing partners did not enable effective and rapid improvement of the national NGOs' capacities. Usually in such a context, international organizations rely initially on international NGOs that have crisis response experience and expertise (and awareness of operational and financial reporting requirements), who themselves take on the task of strengthening the national expertise on which they rely to carry out their activities on a day-to-day basis (especially in a Russian-speaking and/or Ukrainian-speaking context). However, in Ukraine, the approach used for the water-related activities was the opposite: small



national organizations started the activities and little peer-coaching seems to have taken place. This is partly because, for a long time, the situation in eastern Ukraine remained a silent crisis that attracted no major interest from international NGOs because it was not immediately expected to be protracted.

- Some formal training activities on humanitarian processes (the Sphere standards) and United Nations reporting rules (HACT, M&E, etc.) were organized for all NGOs (national – working in all sectors) working for the UNICEF Ukraine office. However, these were conducted late – in 2017 and 2018 – while the interventions started in 2014. This means that, between 2014 and 2017, the staff (themselves sometimes new to UNICEF) took on the task of developing the skills of implementing partners, in addition to their daily workload.
- UNICEF staff also had to develop their own skills during this period. Our analysis shows that support from top management and from UNICEF’s regional office/New York headquarters was sometimes slow to arrive and not fully adapted to the needs; thus, the learning process for staff was generally painful. Several staff members confirmed that the work environment was stressful and not very fulfilling as they were overworked and there was no structure or vision. Moreover, it seems that the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office found itself relatively isolated and the teams would have benefited from experience-sharing with similar countries.
- Finally, capacity building for institutions was implemented progressively and focused on understanding of the role that an institution such as UNICEF can have. Subsequently, the water companies were able to develop their expertise through their teams working with external experts during the assessments. A few training sessions were delivered (mostly after 2019, therefore outside the scope of the evaluation) but we do not have the information required to review the content of these training sessions.

**Figure 35. Statements on capacity-building: representatives from Voda Donbasu and Mariupol Vodokanal**

“The communication / consultation experience with experts helped to develop our ability to review problems from different perspectives and update our professional knowledge.”

“UNICEF provided methodological support for company staff: consultations and training. Regarding skills development, experience of working with high-skilled foreign experts helped us develop another way of problem solving / situation analysis.”

To learn more about its implementing partners, UNICEF conducted field visits every three to six months to partner NGOs. These visits were of particular benefit to the less experienced local NGOs, as it provided them with operational recommendations through which they were able to gain experience and know-how. The reports produced were recently centralized, but no analysis has been carried out by UNICEF, either during the period or afterwards, to define the changes observed over the period by UNICEF teams and/or by the IPs. Since the end of 2018 (outside the scope of this evaluation), a joint partnership review is carried out at the end of each project to assess activity progress and the relationship between UNICEF and the implementing partners.

- **Technical support and capacity-building is one of UNICEF’s areas of work (according to the reconstituted ToC). From our analysis, UNICEF has conducted small-scale but recognized and appreciated capacity building efforts. By conducting field visits**



**and giving recommendations to partner NGOs, UNICEF also contributed to the operational development of often local and inexperienced organizations. This capacity building could have been made more effective by building partnerships with international NGOs (which were themselves not very active in the area at the start of the conflict), and through experience sharing with other UNICEF offices between 2014 and 2016.**

## C.8. Humanitarian-Development Nexus

In this chapter the consultancy team explores how UNICEF Ukraine has taken up existing nexus strategies within the agency to ensure that its approach is fully engaged with development activities.

Beyond the analysis of activities over the period evaluated (2014-2018), the evaluation team also look at how the humanitarian-development nexus (HDN) approach was reflected in the 2018-2022 programme, i.e. which lessons were learned over the previous period and how they were used to build UNICEF's new intervention strategy (including partnerships).

### C.8.1. HDN Strategy: Anticipation, Adaptation

The idea of the humanitarian–development nexus is to provide the programmatic framework, institutional support and funding to enable humanitarian actors to formulate their responses to protracted crises, while overseeing investment in development specifically targeted at helping a country meet the needs of the SDGs.<sup>51</sup>

Within its intervention between 2014 and 2018, UNICEF Ukraine worked on an ad hoc basis based on the funds available. This can be explained by the context in which the country (as previously mentioned) did not have an “emergency” culture and had a water and sanitation infrastructure that was old but fairly functional and managed by powerful institutions and organizations.

According to the UNICEF staff interviewed, while no one could reasonably foresee that the conflict would drag on, in 2016 the question of the nexus between emergency and development began to be asked. From then on, it became clear that:

- The nexus was inevitable and the only suitable exit strategy: it was (and remains) clear that WASH issue form part not only of a humanitarian-development nexus but also, and especially, of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus, as illustrated by the fact that, in 2018, the water network was the only thing that still connected GCA and NGCA inhabitants. So working on the water network was not only inevitable it represented and represents a real peace-building opportunity.
- In the meantime, the WASH response requires:
  - Quick-win solutions to ensure a presence among the population in these conflict-affected areas;
  - More sustainable solutions to improve water distribution and sanitation conditions that require longer-term planning than annual or semi-annual emergency funds can provide.

These funds will not be made available by emergency donors and will require multi-year development projects.

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/media/87311/file/FGM-Humanitarian-Development-Nexus-2020.pdf> & <https://sdgs.un.org/fr/goals>

Figure 36. Abstract of the 2018 IASC report<sup>52</sup>

Utilities struggle to ensure staff safety and service continuity in Eastern Ukraine: for example, moving goods and services across the contact line entails added complexity. Voda Donbasu currently needs around US\$170 million for repairs (2018 to 2022) and US\$220 million for critical support projects. Around US\$160 million is needed for Luhansk oblast during the same period. [...]

The HDN will provide a useful forum, linking relevant international actors with MinTOT, MinRegion and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on Water. Unfreezing bank accounts for utility companies in conflict-affected oblasts and implementing a moratorium on debts accrued in Non-Government Controlled Areas due to the fighting would stabilise the situation, accompanied by implementation of draft legislation, currently under consideration.

In the spirit of the New Way of Working<sup>53</sup> encouraged by the United Nations,<sup>54</sup> UNICEF has been transitioning towards a nexus approach since 2016 by:

- Gradually switching from distribution campaigns (NFIs, water trucking and bottled water), to a voucher system;
- Advocating in the field with the NGCA de facto authorities through the WASH Cluster in order to negotiate ceasefire windows to access the water network (2014, 2016 and 2017<sup>55</sup>);
- Assessing water networks, and Voda Donbasu in particular, in order to minimize risk factors and define priorities for medium-term rehabilitation. This assessment document is currently being used as a major tool in discussions between national authorities, the water company and international actors, after having remained confidential for a long time and ignored by institutional actors;
- Integrating water companies into the emergency response to water needs and gradually increasing the support provided, with a view to carrying out more structured actions in the short- and medium-term.

### C.8.2. Lessons Learned and 2018-2022 Programme Document Building

UNICEF's project cycle is as follows: production of the Situation Analysis (SitAn); formulation of the strategic note that informs the Country Programme Document; and, finally, design of the annual work plans that set out the roadmap and operational direction for the teams.

- The Situation Analysis was produced in 2015;
- The strategic note and the CPD were developed in 2017;
- Triennial and annual working plans have been produced.

The WASH situation is described for the first time in SitAn 2012-2015. The report focuses on the destruction that had taken place since the end of 2013 in eastern Ukraine, but also on the more systemic weaknesses of the sector, not only at national level (quality of services, legal

<sup>52</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-task-team-strengthening-humanitariananddevelopment-nexus-focus-protracted-contexts/documents-70>

<sup>53</sup> The New Way of Working (NWOW) calls on humanitarian and development actors to work together, based on their comparative advantages, towards 'collective outcomes' that reduce need, risk and vulnerability over multiple years. Recognizing the need to work differently in protracted crises, several Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators and Country Teams, together with a range of partners, embarked on the process of articulating collective outcomes in 2017.

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.un.org/jsc/content/new-way-working>

<sup>55</sup> Date of documented visits by UNICEF teams to the NGCA zone

and policy framework, budgeting and expenditure, and management and coordination), but also at regional and local level (Vodokanals, institutions). The report concludes that there is a need to include emergency water and sanitation actions in a more “long-term” approach: *“The humanitarian field presence could facilitate a “bottom-up” approach to policy advocacy from the local level and enhance access to government and non-government services for vulnerable children.”*

The CPD produced in 2017 seems to have struggled to find a place for water and sanitation. The water and sanitation context is well set out in an annex, but water and sanitation are only mentioned on pages 8 and 9 (paragraphs 32 and 33).

32. The component is aimed at ensuring that children and their families, on both sides of the ‘contact line’, have equitable access to sustainably managed water and sanitation services and improved hygiene behaviours in communities, schools and health facilities. These results would also directly contribute to UNDAF outcomes supporting recovery in eastern Ukraine. On the basis of a UNICEF risk assessment of the Voda Donbasu water systems, and taking into account the evolving situation, support would continue to be focused on the physical infrastructure of schools and the rehabilitation of water systems, with an emphasis on water quality, while at the same time fostering intersectoral cooperation and social cohesion at the local level.

33. The development of a national strategy to address the environmental risks faced by children in Ukraine would contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 13 targets, taking to the national level the good practices learned in improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene in conflict-affected areas. UNICEF would invest in generating new evidence and advocacy to demonstrate the impact of environmental change on children and highlight children’s perspectives in building resilient communities.

All of these principles are translated into a single ambitiously worded outcome: “By 2022, all children living in conflict-affected areas have access to safe drinking water and are less exposed to environmental risks”. This leaves a great deal of latitude to the section leaders to develop different operational approaches to achieving the expected results.

**Figure 37. Extract from the 2017-2022 CPD on the water and sanitation sector**

5. By 2022, all children in conflict-affected settings have access to safe drinking water and reduced exposure to any environmental risks	5.1 Proportion of population with access to safely managed drinking water. B: 92.7% <sup>10</sup> (2015) T: 95% (2022)	WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation, WHO/UNICEF survey	Humanitarian needs of conflict-affected populations are met through community-oriented water, sanitation and hygiene response. Sustainable and reliable water	Ministry of Occupied Territories, Ministry of Regional Development, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian	200	6 600	6 800
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UNICEF outcomes	Key progress indicators, baselines (B) and targets (T)	Means of verification	Indicative country programme outputs	Major partners, partnership frameworks	Indicative resources by country programme outcome: regular resources (RR), other resources (OR) (In thousands of United States dollars)		
					RR	OR	Total
	<p>5.2 Percentage of targeted population in in humanitarian situations provided with sufficient quantity of quality water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene annually</p> <p>B: 0 (number of population – Humanitarian Response Plan - annually) T: 100%</p>	HACT reports	<p>services are operational in conflict-affected areas.</p> <p>National plan addressing environmental degradation and climate change, including environmental risks faced by children, are developed and adopted.</p>	Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, European Union, bilateral partners, water management companies, subnational authorities, schools			
	<p>5.3 Environmental risks faced by children in Ukraine are mitigated in an integrated fashion.</p> <p>B: Environmental risks are partially addressed inside sectors (2018) T: Integrated environmental risk-reduction strategy is developed and implemented. (2022)</p>	Sustainable Development Goal reports					

During the period covered by the evaluation (2014-2018), the WASH team took the time to become properly structured and create a common vision that reflected the commitments made in the country programme. The activities implemented during this same period partially met the expected outcomes and outputs of the CPD, as they included emergency and recovery activities. However, the analysis of the situation and the interviews conducted stated that most of the team's work of reviewing and looking at the future of the CPD (updating the CPD in progress and preparing the next CPD) really began in 2020 with several events:

- A teamwork seminar on approaches in 2020;
- A management master class in 2020 to examine the extent to which the management and working environment of the units within the UNICEF Ukraine Country Office enabled achievement of the expected results;
- An extended internal review in February 2020;
- The drafting of the SitAn and the programme strategy note.

The lessons learned from this programme cycle are as follows:

- There is a need to consider water as a priority intervention sector. This is particularly the case given that water remains a highly strategic theme and allows us to work on a triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and can also be coupled with other areas of interest for UNICEF, such as education, health and climate change;
- The Ukrainian context is different from many other settings in which UNICEF works due to the strong Soviet background and the presence of a functioning government. The crisis situations in eastern Ukraine and in Crimea are not the core problem as far as water and sanitation are concerned. Of course, they need to be addressed (contingency stock for emergency deployment, etc.), but the humanitarian system as a whole, as well as government bodies, are now better equipped to deal with them.
- The substantive work must be focused on development actions. The crisis has only highlighted and exacerbated more structural water and sanitation infrastructure maintenance and financing problems.
- Fundamental work on structural challenges requires government willingness. In the 2018-2022 CPD, there was limited space for advocacy and technical support for sector reforms; however, this now must be made a priority so that the development banks (as a whole) can work – with the Government – over the long-term to improve access to water and sanitation throughout the country (and not just in areas under stress).

- Activities under the 2018-2022 CPD have laid very solid foundations for addressing the current situation, about which little was known by other potential donors in the sector. Between 2018 and 2020, the numerous bilateral discussions with the international community (USAID, French Embassy, European Bank for Reconstruction, European Investment Bank, Danish Embassy, etc.) also played an important role for the Government's commitment to water and sanitation. However, nothing tangible has yet been implemented due to the institutional context in the sector.
  - **The first phase of the intervention was not focused on the emergency/development links. This is understandable because, not only was it necessary to act quickly, but also the process of structuring the UNICEF Ukraine office took time to complete. Gradually, and with a view to ending the crisis, the importance of working on the nexus became more apparent and UNICEF worked as best it could to align its (emergency) actions and anticipate future actions by rapidly developing a new intervention framework for the 2018-2022 period that better integrated “development” aspects. The WASH sector is one of the sectors in which the HDN nexus is the most prominent: they have initiated the shift since 2017 with the Water Management Software for Mariupol (completed in 2021) and with the risk assessment of Voda Donbasu water systems, which provided recommendations for recovery activities and orientations for development activities (presented during the global WASH NET meeting in June 2018).**

## C.9. Scalability

The last chapter of this evaluation focuses on the scaling up of the actions implemented. Given the context evaluated, scaling up is not particularly relevant, both because of the nature of the support and the circumstances in which the interventions were implemented, with these interventions being developed as UNICEF gained more information on the challenges and needs in the area and realised that the crisis was set to last.

Nevertheless, the team has sought to determine whether certain activities/approaches funded by UNICEF were recognized as useful by some of the actors in place, and therefore spontaneously reproduced in the field. The evaluation team has also looked at whether UNICEF played a strong role in identifying good practices/approaches for WASH interventions in the conflict zone and whether it was able to play an effective role in keeping this sector high on the Government's agenda across the ‘contact line’.

Finally, given that WASH activities were not part of the Programme of Cooperation between UNICEF and the Government of Ukraine prior to 2018, the evaluation team has de facto considered the inclusion of its activities in the 2018-2022 CPD to be an important shift in scale for the UNICEF Country Office in Ukraine.

### C.9.1. Approach Dissemination and Spill-Over Effects

Through the WASH Cluster, UNICEF was able to disseminate information on humanitarian needs, the security situation, and the various challenges of the peace process. This



dissemination mainly took place through the HAC and the WASH Cluster minutes. These documents are an important source of information on a humanitarian situation about which relatively little is known compared to other contexts (Syria, Lebanon, Haiti, Somalia, etc.). This ongoing monitoring and alert work, which has been taking place since 2014, has notably led to advocacy efforts to end destruction of the water infrastructure and, in 2021, to the development of a draft resolution voted on at the Security Council.

With regard to the activities carried out between 2014 and 2018, the evaluation team did not observe any real strategy for disseminating and building on lessons learned outside the project (see the previous section). Furthermore, the various interviews conducted, and the literature review of the partners' approaches, did not enable us to determine if there were any exchanges between the partners. As far as we are aware, the different partners' projects did not share similar tools, methodologies or processes. No systematic knowledge management and documentation of the actions appears to have been requested (or carried out) from the actors, as we were only able to consult three knowledge management documents, which were produced by the largest NGOs involved (PIN, TGH and PUI) in the distribution process.

The distribution reports – particularly those produced by THG<sup>56</sup>, PIN,<sup>57</sup> and PUI<sup>58</sup> - provide very interesting feedback and contain lessons to be disseminated to improve the overall capacities of local actors to carry out their WASH activities. There is no clear evidence of a plan for disseminating the lessons learned from the project, although the use of e-vouchers was expanded in the GCA between 2016 and 2020 (two studies were conducted in 2020 and 2021, outside the scope of the evaluation).

In 2016, when the UNICEF-coordinated WASH Cluster grew in importance, it was able to play a greater role in disseminating humanitarian WASH needs and good practices. Few good practice identification and/or dissemination activities have been organized, either within the WASH Cluster or more widely within the community of actors working on water and sanitation in Ukraine (including government bodies).

Finally, it is important to note that there has been shift in scale. This involves the internal transformation of the WASH team in UNICEF Ukraine. In 2016, there were only 3 permanent staff members working on WASH, which was itself attached to the health team. Today, in 2021, the WASH team has 12 permanent staff (including 10 national staff members). This expansion is important because, if the human resources are used to their fullest potential, the scope of the Country Office's interventions can move towards more structural actions.

- **Dissemination of approaches and duplication of interventions was not a priority for UNICEF during the evaluation period. This is largely understandable, especially since water and sanitation was a new area for UNICEF Ukraine and it was necessary to build everything from scratch. WASH Cluster meetings from 2016 onwards sowed the seeds of a dissemination mechanism but dissemination remains limited.**

### C.9.2. Analysis of Scaling-Up / Replicability Factors

Between 2014 and 2018, scaling up was not the priority of the team in Ukraine, because this approach would have required more resources for coordination, good practice knowledge management and institutional dialogue within what is a middle-income country that has

<sup>56</sup> TGH introduction to e-voucher arrangements.

<sup>57</sup> UNICEF Hygiene Kit PDM report.

<sup>58</sup> Annex 1 – PDM report (PUI).



strong institutional leadership. In any case, at the time, the WASH team was not staffed for this purpose: the priority was to ensure a presence in the field and to provide reliable information.

UNICEF's analysis of the operations and needs of the water utilities, particularly Voda Donbasu, is an important source of information for all actors wishing to work in the water sector in this region. The production of this framework document in 2017 is having a strong knock-on effect, as several international donors are now interested in working more structurally in the water sector in Ukraine. It should be noted that this framework document was the subject of a strong communication plan (UNICEF New York and all stakeholders in Ukraine), developed with the aim of replicating the methodology in other settings, such as Libya.<sup>59</sup>

Gradually – and outside the evaluation period – once better structured, the WASH team was organized differently so as to enable the head of the team to allocate more time to strategic activities with the Ministries in order to work on high-level aspects of sector framework documents (national water policy, master plan, etc.). This work has progressively started to pay off as, whereas there were initially three donors “timidly” committed to financing WASH activities, in 2021 more than a dozen partners are interested in allocating substantial funds to rebuilding and modernizing the water network and ensuring its sustainability (water master plan, maintenance and upkeep plan, financing/pricing of water, etc.). The implementation of such a programme is not possible in wartime but must be sufficiently anticipated so that it can be implemented quickly as soon as the situation in the area becomes stable.

- **Few real scaling-up mechanisms were seen in the deployment of UNICEF activities between 2014 and 2018, with the exception of the e-vouchers approach. This is justifiable given the many challenges faced by the team (which was under construction), which focused more on ensuring a presence on the ground and on responding to the vital needs of the population. The real work of disseminating good practices began at the end of 2018, although this was not supported by specific documents. This dissemination work therefore centred on the technical Voda Donbasu assessment, and was carried out somewhat bilaterally by the head of the WASH team with other international donors. These increased communication / advocacy activities generated wider engagement among the international community on water, and this between 2019 and today (outside the scope of this evaluation).**

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with the WASH Coordinator, May 2021.

# D. Chapter 3: Conclusions and Recommendations

## D.1. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

### D.1.1. Conclusion for Each Phase

#### *a) Preliminary remarks*

Prior to presenting the results of the evaluation, it is important to reiterate the context in which UNICEF's water and sanitation interventions took place between 2014 and 2018:

- This was a new theme for UNICEF (which had just established a water and sanitation team);
- The interventions were being conducted in a middle-income country, the development problems of which are totally different from those encountered in other regions of the world;
- The interventions were implemented in response to a silent crisis that is not particularly visible to the international community, and which involved considerable diplomatic and political constraints.

The preparatory work for the evaluation revealed that it was important to consider two phases in UNICEF's water and sanitation intervention in Ukraine:

- **Phase 1:** 2014-2017, with 2017 marking the introduction of the theme in the programme documents between UNICEF and the Government of Ukraine;
- **Phase 2:** 2017-2018 and beyond.

This breakdown into two phases was confirmed throughout the evaluation and means a consistent conclusion cannot be produced for the entire period.

The evaluation took place between 2020 and 2021. Analysis of the achievements during this period, although outside the scope of the evaluation, shows that the actions initiated between 2017 and 2018 to structure and give substance to UNICEF's intervention had a real impact in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

#### *b) Partial conclusion 2014-2017*

The evaluation found that in the early years (2014-2017), the water and sanitation intervention struggled to find its place within the office's activities. Interviews and the literature review show that this was due to a combination of factors, which were both internal to the institution and external, such as the lack of visibility on the scope of the crisis and the lack of interest in the conflict from the international community (including international NGOs).

This lack of strategic anchoring was reflected in the effectiveness of the intervention and in the working environment at the time. There were few permanent staff members, which was coupled with high staff turnover that hindered stabilization efforts and implementation of a strategic vision for the sector. Staff were also significantly overworked and faced numerous challenges to respond to the needs of the populations on the ground, which were growing week by week.

However, the evaluation highlighted that significant work was carried out by UNICEF between 2015 and 2016 to provide feedback from the field on the population's access to water and sanitation. Although it could have been better exploited, this work was one of UNICEF's strengths and added value over the period. UNICEF provided very clear feedback from the ground at a time when the circulation of information was otherwise opaque.

The emergency activities were highly traditional and very like the “activity packages” deployed in other regions of the world. These activities were based on a centralised procurement system that was thus not perfectly aligned with the needs of the population or with the timeline. Nevertheless, these activities were no doubt beneficial to several thousands of families on both sides of the ‘contact line’, in spite of the very great difficulties encountered by the teams to gain both acceptance (a ‘bond of trust’) and administrative authorization to work in some territories. UNICEF field teams worked closely with local Ukrainian and de facto authorities to explain the content of the interventions and to ensure the widest possible access to communities affected by the conflict. It is important that this work – carried out close to the ground by Ukrainian and Russian speaking staff – be highlighted and it had a significant positive impact on the second phase of the interventions.

One of the innovations of this period was the introduction in 2016 of e-voucher technology in urban areas. This strategy, not previously tested in Ukraine, was piloted and then gradually rolled out throughout the GCA contact zone (the NGCA refused to adopt this mechanism and financial transfers were forbidden).

### *c) Partial conclusion 2017-2018*

The year 2017 marked a turning point in the WASH response in Ukraine. That year UNICEF developed a new partnership agreement with the Government of Ukraine with the support of the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office for 2017 to 2022. As of 2017, and after difficult discussions within UNICEF, water and sanitation was finally integrated into the Country Programme Document. This decision enabled the creation/structuring of a real WASH team within the Ukraine Country Office and the progressive construction of a proper intervention strategy, which unfortunately was not very well documented, and therefore not very easy to follow.

During this period, the effectiveness of UNICEF's work was enhanced. UNICEF's teams were aware of what they needed to do and achieve. Pure emergency interventions were reduced and substantive work was initiated with the water companies to ensure – as much as conditions allowed – a continuous and high quality water supply service to the different communities on both sides of the ‘contact line’ (needs assessment conducted with the water companies and Voda Donbasu for pipes, pumps or water treatment chemicals).

Advocacy for ceasefires on water infrastructure for civilian populations was strengthened and led to the publication of WASH Cluster alerts.

Territorial anchoring with the water companies was strengthened and several assessments were carried out, including the technical audit of the Voda Donbasu water utilities company. All of this work laid the foundations for the support provided at the end of 2018 and beyond. National anchoring remained fragile, but increased contact and discussions with the various ministries in charge of water enabled UNICEF to envisage working on more systemic issues. Although this work was an ambition included in the 2017-2018 CPD, it has not yet been possible to properly initiate due both to the lack of availability on the part of the UNICEF teams and to UNICEF being alone in discussing water-related issues within the international community.

#### *d) After 2018, an out-of-scope but instructive intervention*

The years 2019 and 2020 do not fall within the scope of this evaluation. However, the consultancy team reviewed the achievements and processes implemented during these two years to ensure that the recommendations produced are as relevant as possible to the current programme status and strategy, in particular:

- The monitoring of intervention partners (development of joint partnership reviews, etc.) and the archiving of documents;
- The structuring of databases, which started in 2017 and which integrates logical framework monitoring, but remains focused on activity achievements and not on the monitoring of more complete indicators that include “longer-term” aspects such as sustainability or impact (in particular in institutions and relating to access to water in communities);
- The delivery of the strategy and approaches developed by UNICEF. The draft situation analysis produced to prepare the 2023-2027 CPD presents the Theory of Change and assumptions underpinning the water, sanitation and hygiene intervention in Ukraine for the first time.

#### **D.1.2. OECD Criteria Conclusion**

The following table summarizes the conclusions for each of the evaluation questions analysed. The detailed matrix containing the conclusion and a coloured flag for each evaluation question is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**

The colour codes are as follows:

	<b>Approaches or activities are not in line with the objectives.</b>
	Results were achieved but they could have been better addressed by UNICEF or its partners to have greater impact.
	Satisfactory.

Of the 21 evaluation questions initially included (see. Table 17), two were combined with other evaluation questions. Thus, 18 evaluation questions were ultimately considered.

**Table 17. Summary of the conclusion of the evaluation questions analysed**

Relevance	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Impact	Sustainability	HDN Nexus	Scalability
3		2	1		1	
1	2	1		3		2
	1		1			
			1			

Of these 19 questions:

- **7, or 39%, were identified as green.** These are satisfactory or highly satisfactory;

- **9, or 50%, are orange.** In the context of the project, UNICEF and/or its partners could have done better at implementing these aspects of the programme;
- **2, or 11%, are red.** For these aspects, if these really were the objectives that UNICEF Ukraine or more broadly UNICEF regionally or globally had set for this intervention (see the reconstructed Theory of Change), then they were not achieved. From the evaluation team's point of view, and because we do not have the same vision of the strategic scope of UNICEF's programme, we feel that some of these evaluation questions are not appropriate. This relatively negative impression should be balanced by more positive aspects. This is particularly true for all the questions relating to sustainability, scalability, and so on.
- Finally, a **“not rated” category was added in grey** for aspects that the consultant team feel it is impossible to rate. One question/aspect was listed in this category.

This analysis of the situation is not very nuanced and responds to the evaluation exercise requested. So, in order to take into account the differences between the two phases of the intervention, our conclusions are further refined below.

#### *a) Relevance*

During the period 2014-2016, the intervention was relevant because water rapidly became a significant strategic and political issue.

Between 2017 and 2018, the activities carried out have evolved but remain relevant to the context.

- **No major problems noted. Continue in the direction followed so far. For detailed conclusions see Annex Error! Reference source not found. and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *b) Effectiveness*

During the period 2014-2016, the programme responded to the needs of the populations, but there was little vision and internal structuring. It was too long before the first intervention took place.

During the period 2017-2018, there was a clear improvement in the effectiveness of interventions: reduction in emergency activities (distribution), refocusing on water companies and a gradual increase in WASH Cluster interventions.

- **The approach taken in 2017, to work with water companies, was the right step towards effectiveness. Greater clarity on UNICEF's positioning and approaches will improve effectiveness. For detailed conclusions see Annex Error! Reference source not found. and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *c) Efficiency*

For the period 2014-2016, the efficiency should not be evaluated for a crisis response situation, especially as this coincided with the creation of a new team.

During the period 2017-2018, the efficiency improved over the years through the structuring of functions, the know-how of the teams and the orientation of activities towards more long-term activities.

- **It is “normal” not to focus on efficiency in the emergency and opening phase of a new subject. This criterion should become a point of vigilance**

**for the next few years in order to justify if the whole intervention of UNICEF in the WASH sector is “value for money”. For detailed conclusions see Annex Error! Reference source not found. and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *d) Impact*

For the period 2014-2016, the impact criteria should not be evaluated. Short-term effects are visible, but it is not possible to evaluate the long-term impacts of the interventions carried out exempt for the dialogue establish with local bodies. The many discussions at local level have helped to lay the foundations for the future.

During the period 2017-2018, it remains difficult to assess the impact of interventions during this period. The major impact observed is that the restructuring/coaching of the teams freed up time for institutional diplomacy. These discussions have generated interest from sector donors, leading to a new round of discussions with the central-level authorities.

- **Impacts exist but are not sufficiently documented. The structuring of the monitoring and evaluation system (based on a ToC) will contribute to make visible the expected and unexpected impacts (positive and negative), and to adjust the actions as a consequence. For detailed conclusions see Annex Error! Reference source not found. and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *e) Sustainability*

For the period 2014-2016, the sustainability is not to be evaluated.

For the period 2017-2018, there is still room for improvement in approaches, but sustainability of interventions was improved by focusing on advocacy at the national level : In 2020-21 – UNICEF is involved in working groups to revise the National Water Strategy (with the Ministry of the Environment) and National Water Supply and Sewerage Strategy (with the Ministry of Regional Development). This has been made possible thanks to the work at local and regional level and advocacy at various levels (to prevent attacks against WASH infrastructure, to support the regional water companies and so on).

- **Efforts have been made since 2017. Further efforts are needed to structure the approach and define the longer-term vision of UNICEF’s support to the water and sanitation sector in Ukraine. For detailed conclusions see Annex E.8 and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *f) HDN Nexus*

For the period 2014-2016, the HDN Nexus is not to be evaluated.

Water is a central element of the triple humanitarian-development-peace nexus. During the period 2017-2018, UNICEF's approach to the water sector tends towards this aspect.

- **The combination of emergency response with recovery actions from 2017 initiated the NEXUS approach. It is necessary to continue in this direction while maintaining UNICEF's capacity to respond to the emergency. For detailed conclusions see Annex E.8 and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

#### *g) Scalability*

For the period 2014-2016, only the roll-out of e-voucher schemes along the ‘contact line’ can be considered as working toward scaling up the programme.



During the period 2017-2018, the assessments carried out have helped generate interest among the international community, which today feels ready to get involved in the water and sanitation sector (development component/structural actions). In addition, the WASH team has grown from 3 permanent staff in 2014 to 12, and the budget managed has also changed considerably (amount and objectives).

- **At the time of the evaluation, the cluster ensures coordination of actors without documenting good practices (initiated after 2018). The cluster and the WASH division are now sufficiently structured to be able to put in place all the tools and processes to well document good practices and lessons learned on the approaches. This will positively influence scalability, which will have to be done in active collaboration with the representatives of the ministries at central level as well as local-level actors. For detailed conclusions see Annex Error! Reference source not found. and Chapter D.2 for recommendations**

### D.1.3. Lessons Learned

The following chapters present the lessons learned from the evaluation in a manner that is disconnected from the OECD criteria and thus from the matrix. These lessons learned have been discussed and reviewed with the UNICEF Ukraine team so that they can inform the design of the next UNICEF water and sanitation intervention programme in eastern Ukraine.

- 1. In the context of a conflict impacting aging and poorly managed important water infrastructures, it is crucial to assess not only the damages done by the conflict, but more broadly the global functioning of those infrastructures in order to develop the greatest impact by targeting effectively the most acute vulnerabilities.**

The assessments carried out since 2017 have shown that, although the conflict has largely led to degradation of the water networks, the poor quality of the service provided and the decades-long lack of investment/maintenance on the network were already significant issues, with both being a major focus of the work carried out. These two areas of work are not easy to reconcile but form part of a real nexus approach. UNICEF has been working towards this nexus approach since 2017, and more specifically in 2019. This approach has been highlighted in recent UNICEF publications (Water under fire) and used in Lebanon (2020): contributing to the rapid identification of needs to enable recovery of the public service is the first lesson learned in an urban environment in a middle-income country facing long-term/chronic water access challenges.

- 2. In a protracted crisis it is important, as soon as the conflict stops escalating, to build at early stage a nexus strategy.**

The strategy to combine short-term approaches (emergency) and a longer-term approach (support to water utilities) is aligned with a nexus approach. Here, the nexus corresponds to responding to the immediate needs of the population (contingency stock, use of vouchers) and carrying out the background work required to prepare for a return to more "traditional" network operations by implementing a capacity-building plan and rehabilitating infrastructure: the intention was to replace what already existed identically, so for the evaluation period (2014-2018) it was more of a Humanitarian to Recovery Nexus. As of 2019 (out of scope of the evaluation), UNICEF has adopted a broader approach, moving from Recovery to Development, with more capacity building and support to regional & national plans, strategies, policies.

**3. Both internal and external advocacy are very powerful tools that should accompany even the first emergency actions.**

Advocacy for water and sanitation initially struggled to find the right institutional communication channels.

**Internal:** In the 2012-2017 CPD, water was not part of the CPD. Then, in 2017, the team has done a lot of internal advocacy to include WASH concerns in the UNICEF 2017-2022 CPD.

**External:** In 2017, UNICEF's Ukrainian office was relatively isolated in advocating for WASH. Since 2019, better internal organization of the team has enabled the team manager to conduct more intense institutional diplomacy. In 2020, the result of this new approach is a growing interest in the water sector from development banks and international donors. Consequently, UNICEF is no longer isolated and has more leverage with the government to target its actions on more structural support activities. Advocacy work (local, national) is one of the most important levers for the effectiveness of the action, its sustainability and its value for money.

**4. As long as a market still exists, even if weakened by the conflict, the e-voucher system can be a very effective option when considering meeting quickly the needs of affected populations in emergency situations.**

The use of e-vouchers as indeed shown great effectiveness in giving households the ability to buy their own hygiene products or other items. This type of activity was well-received by families and was tested and expanded to other products and services and used in other situations. The evaluation shows, that more follow-up and monitoring of this e-voucher system is required to avoid the misuse of funds, and deep work with local authorities is also needed to define the most vulnerable populations and the access arrangements for the vouchers<sup>60</sup>. In 2020/2021, Studies are being made to assess (i) the need to adapt and continue the approach and (ii) include it into a broader system that would be in line with the advocacy efforts made by UNICEF to link Social Policy to WASH.

**5. New conflicts in unusual areas, attracting little emergency funding, are particularly hard to respond and require even further efforts than usual to build a response team and to demonstrate clearly both needs and response capacities.**

During the period evaluated, the conflict in Ukraine did not attract any particular interest from the international community (little budget released compared to some other regions and not particularly well-funded based on the HRP<sup>61</sup>). Difficulties for UNICEF related to the creation of a new team and the organisational and positioning problems that this entailed. Within the Ukraine office, the lack of vision and constructive supervision of the teams, both in crisis situations and when setting up a new team, generated an "unhealthy" working environment that was denounced by many staff and which remained in place until the end of 2016/ 2017.

Human resources management remains a challenge that needs to be addressed in order to create the necessary conditions for affirming the ambitions set and for the success

<sup>60</sup> In a different context, see the work carried out by UNICEF Burkina Faso to identify the most vulnerable people in the northern and eastern regions of the country with regard to access to water and sanitation (host communities, displaced persons) and the work carried out by UNICEF in Palestine with e-vouchers.

<sup>61</sup> Every year there are always at least 15 crises with a more substantial HRP (which require more money) than the Ukrainian conflict. Thus, the Ukrainian crisis was not one of the most important crises at the time. The Ukraine HRP secured 62% of funding for 2015, which is comparatively good (above average). This figure then drops to 35% - 40% over the next three years, which is comparatively low. Overall, except for 2015, the crises that required more funding secured a greater % of their funding than the Ukrainian crisis.

of interventions. Since 2017, the working environment has changed: the vision of the intervention has been structured, the role of each staff has been clearly defined and the top management has worked to stabilize the teams (long-term contract) in order to ensure consistency and continuity of action.

**6. UNICEF's offices settled in areas facing sudden new emergency crisis may greatly benefit support from regional and central headquarters.**

During the period evaluated (2014-2018), it appears that the UNICEF Ukraine office did not receive sufficient support from the UNICEF Europe Regional Office (no knowledge of emergency contexts) or from HQ New York to deal with some of the internal issues and positioning questions. Since 2018, the office has received more support and attention from both the RO and HQ NY.

Sharing experience with or involving staff deployed at the beginning of comparable crises (Yemen / Syria / Venezuela) for capacity-building does not seem to have been considered, at least over the period covered by the evaluation (2014-2018). The working environment (the right people in the right positions) as well as the support and exchange of experience between different UNICEF offices facing the same constraints is the guarantee of efficient and successful work, and the development and stabilization of staff as well.

**7. Defining and writing a WASH strategy allows for clearer and more visible action.**

The process of building the long-term vision and structuring the WASH activities was relatively slow. There was no initial strategy to guide the intervention (see reasons explained above) and work on the strategy only really started in 2018 (setting up a logical framework for interventions). UNICEF's use of the Theory of Change tool for the first time in 2020 is a continuation of this positive structuring trend. More internal and external clarification and communication on the approaches adopted by UNICEF for each component (centralized networks, decentralized networks, institutions, households, etc.) should have increase the visibility of the actions undertaken.

**8. The WASH cluster has demonstrated its capacity for impact in terms of coordination not only between humanitarian actors but also with state institutions and companies.**

UNICEF's leadership in the water and sanitation emergency and recovery response has been strengthened since 2014. The WASH Cluster has gradually and successfully taken on its coordination role so that there are no overlaps (who does what where). However, the evaluation showed that the WASH Cluster and/or WASH team could perhaps play a greater role in coordinating the approaches of the different emergency actors around the nexus strategy, and act as the link between these humanitarian and development actors<sup>62</sup>. The coordination of approaches and practices and their dissemination to IPs and more broadly to partners working in the water and sanitation sector makes UNICEF's intervention visible, whatever the country of intervention.

**9. M&E specific tools and approach allow a more reactive and precise steering of the activities.**

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<sup>62</sup> The positioning of UNICEF Mali in the framework of the Dubai Care Wash in Schools programme could provide a relevant example (coordination, building on good practices and scaling up). Outside of UNICEF, but also an interesting example of partnership, is the WASH Cluster that brings together 5 different NGOs in DRC, each with specific expertise / niches of work, and who have worked on setting up information-sharing mechanisms and a common approach architecture to improve the coherence of their response.

M&E processes are the tools on which teams rely to discuss/challenge the approaches and strategies implemented. At the beginning of the intervention period, there was no mechanism for the centralised monitoring of activities (no database). This situation later changed, but only the minimum of M&E was carried out and did not allow the team to properly question and review the activities implemented and their usefulness. In the past three years, more assessments and evaluation have been carried out (including this one). The management of an intervention and its strategic choices can only be based on a robust system that guides the intervention throughout the project cycle, and that in all context.

**10. The use of a large number of local NGOs has allowed access to all the affected areas, but in a context unaccustomed to emergency response, the ramping up of these organizations, if not well supported, can be slow and difficult.**

The national NGO support component was very time-consuming for both sides (with a lot of very small contracts to oversee). Moreover, the work carried out by these NGOs was not necessarily of very high quality. In many "crisis" contexts, action starts with international NGOs, who rely on national NGOs' local knowledge and who progressively develop national NGO staff capacities over the course of their daily work. The lack of interest from international NGOs at the beginning of the conflict, and their relatively rapid withdrawal today, has enabled some capacity-building for the future, but (during the period evaluated) their involvement did not necessarily help UNICEF free up any time to focus on other more structuring activities (M&E, coordination, advocacy). The choice of intervention partners is crucial because it influences (i) the quality of the data collected in the field, the quality of the interventions funded, (ii) the possible coverage (NGCA, GCA parts), (iii) UNICEF's support and follow-up time which cannot be dedicated to other activities (e.g. advocacy).

## D.2. Recommendations

The recommendations presented in the table below were formulated using the evaluative evidence and evaluation findings. They are predominantly focused on producing:

- Practical recommendations, as well as highly strategic recommendations on the type of activities to be carried out (UNICEF positioning);
- Operational recommendations on coordination, M&E and guidance;
- Recommendations on the internal functioning of UNICEF (not only UNICEF's WASH team in Kiev).

This exercise has not been straightforward, because these recommendations have been produced three years after the end of the evaluation period. It should also be noted that several international framework documents (including from UNICEF and the Global WASH Cluster) have been produced between 2018 and 2020 (outside the scope of the evaluation). These provide strong guidance for designing and implementing WASH activities in a proactive crisis. Thus, should any of the recommendations below seem disconnected from the current reality, it is important to bear in mind that they would have made sense in 2018 at the end of the activities.

These recommendations were also compared with the analysis of the 2018-2022 Country Programme Document and discussed with the UNICEF Ukraine teams.

The recommendations were developed in several stages. They were first co-constructed with the UNICEF Ukraine team through two workshops, and then presented for discussion to the entire Evaluation Reference Group at a workshop held on 14 July 2021. During this workshop, the ERG members were able to discuss the recommendations. During this workshop, the consultant acted as a facilitator so as not to influence the opinions of the members. At the end of the workshop, the final version of the recommendations was drafted and integrated into the evaluation report. The involvement of the actors (UNICEF Ukraine and its partners) in the last stage of the evaluation work demonstrates a willingness to appropriate and improve the actions.

Discussions with UNICEF during the development of the recommendations indicate that:

- UNICEF will integrate these recommendations into an evaluation management response plan. This plan is not the responsibility of the consultancy team and is therefore not part of this document. The plan will need to incorporate the responsibilities of the HQ, RO, CO and any implementing partners and donors. The purpose of this plan is to facilitate discussions around these findings and to develop a monitoring and evaluation culture where the findings and recommendations of an evaluation process can reorient or confirm the approaches pursued by UNICEF.
- These recommendations will serve as a basis for reflection for the next CPD 2023-2026 and programme strategy note – WASH component – as well as to formulate the general logframe and project documents that will be drafted in the coming months.

Table 18. Recommendations

Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
<b>Coordination</b>		
<p>Coordination of activities is better than during the first phase (2014-2016). The early warning system plays its role (with water companies and partners). The emergency response is coordinated.</p>	WASH Cluster	Medium
<p>There is still room for improvement in the transfer of good practices within the Cluster and more widely with partners in the sector. This would improve the visibility and recognition of UNICEF's work.</p>		
<p><b>1 IP strategy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimize the implementation of activities through mid-level coordination: agree larger contracts with international NGOs with expertise, which themselves pilot and coordinate the local NGOs' activities.</li> <li>• Introduce an obligation for these international NGOs to implement capacity-building activities with their national IPs (supervised by UNICEF).</li> <li>• Create private sector / NGO consortiums to maximize the expertise available and address all challenges.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2 Share experience/disseminate good practices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create conditions for the sharing of good practices, lessons learned and knowledge management within the IPs financed by UNICEF (to enable programmatic and operational reorientations and facilitate the field work of the IPs).</li> <li>• Systematically introduce experience-sharing within the WASH Cluster, or outside the WASH Cluster, to discuss more development-related issues (a full day once a year).</li> <li>• Promote and participate in inter-donor coordination on water (to determine <i>where we are, who is doing what, and which approaches are being used</i>) – linked with advocacy to encourage involvement by the ministries in charge.</li> </ul>	WASH Cluster	Medium
<p><b>3 Maintain the WASH Cluster and devote the necessary energy to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding its representativeness with WASH partners in Ukraine and with government bodies and evaluate</li> </ul>	UNICEF Ukraine and WASH Cluster	High / On going



Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
<p>the necessity to extend the geographical representativeness of the Cluster to other regions<sup>63</sup>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing to provide information to feed into the HRP (priority, targeting, geography, and cost).</li> <li>Communicating on the evolving humanitarian situation, water and sanitation needs, funds requested, funds received and results achieved.</li> <li>Managing contingency plans.</li> </ul>		
<b>Advocacy</b>		
<p>During the first phase, advocacy focused on working at a very local level. The benefits of these actions and the better structuring of the WASH team at the same times has allowed, from 2018 to move towards advocacy actions at national level.</p>	UNICEF Field Offices and Country Office	High/ on-going
<p>Both types of advocacy need to be continued and intensified for future activities (including for minorities and vulnerable people in non-conflict areas as well as gender consideration in schools and health centres).</p>		
<p>1 <b>Continue community-based advocacy</b> for ceasefires, corridors to access beneficiaries and infrastructure, and to bring an end to network destruction.<sup>64</sup></p>	UNICEF representative and head of WASH Section	High / on going and immediate
<p>2 <b>Intensify advocacy work with national stakeholders</b> to put access to water and sanitation on the national agenda, in both crisis and non-crisis areas (a link with public health): conduct long-term work to anticipate water needs and integrated water resources management (following the water cycle); support the drafting/revision of regulatory texts, and draft a roadmap to align with international donors.</p>		
<p>3 <b>Establish an inter-donor group and work towards a global fund for water and sanitation in Ukraine.</b> Concentrate funds in a single facility to ensure greater coherence and alignment between donors and to maximize the impact of interventions.</p>	UNICEF and others partners	High / short-term
<b>M&amp;E</b>		

<sup>63</sup> Geographical expansion of the Cluster is limited by the HCT mandate to Donbas region, for instance

<sup>64</sup> See the UNICEF “Water Under Fire” series in which Ukraine is particularly showcased, and Security Council Resolution 2573 of April 2021

Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
<p>The recommendations for the M&amp;E system are particularly important.</p> <p>Currently, the M&amp;E system monitors the activities carried out (number of pipes, etc.) but does not measure the impact of the actions over time, their sustainability and, above all, cross-cutting indicators on equity, vulnerability or gender.</p> <p>The recommendations will enhance the actions carried out by UNICEF and its partners in the overall improvement of the water and sanitation sector framework, whether in the emergency phase (Cluster) or in a more systematic way:</p>		
<p><b>1 Build a real M&amp;E system to provide the information needed to manage interventions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the reporting process with the IPs: simplify the process (on quarterly basis) and collect information other than the simple execution of activities (new indicators).</li> <li>• Systematically require post-field visit recommendation reports (a joint partnership review, as already in place since 2018).</li> <li>• Encourage the production of visual documents (maps, etc.) for communication purposes (assess whether it is easy to use the database to communicate).</li> </ul>	M&E division	High / mid-term
<p><b>2 Schedule regular evaluations (over 2 years).</b></p>	M&E division	Medium
<p><b>3 Continue efforts to self-assess the achievement of the WASH's team results</b> by encouraging staff to review the approach taken, the difficulties encountered and the solutions to be put in place to address them. Strengthen the evidence generation that will guide UNICEF programme and activities (such as baseline assessments, setting up and monitoring of theories of change, etc.)</p>	WASH section	High / on going and short-term
<b>Internal organisation (linked with 2014-2018 period)</b>		
<p>These recommendations concern the past situation and the overall functioning of the institution. It is necessary to remember that in a context of opening up of themes, urban problems and crises, it is necessary to be able to ensure that the right people are quickly in the right positions and that they have the necessary support. This will contribute to the motivation and stability of the staff, even in times of intense/stressful work.</p>	UNICEF HQ UNICEF RO UNICEF Kiev	Low / linked with 2014-2018 period
<p><b>1 Mobilize sufficient external support from other countries with similar challenges to:</b></p>		

Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assign the appropriate staff or upgrade staff skills (we are not saying here that the staff in place are not competent, as they learned the skills required on the job; we are merely considering this aspect in the context of the evaluation (i.e. what could have been done better at the time)).</li> <li>Support the development of strategies, approaches and tools (see the previous note).</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Optimize internal procedures, as already initiate since 2018</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limit centralized purchasing to strictly necessary procurement only.</li> <li>Optimize (purchasing and contractual) processes to reduce delays, particularly for emergency <b>activities</b>.</li> </ul>	Senior management UNICEF Country Office	Low / linked with 2014-2018 period
<b>Strategy and tools</b>		
<p>Until 2017, the HACs served as the strategy documents guiding UNICEF's interventions. Since 2018, UNICEF has been working to structure and articulate its intervention strategy. The year 2021, and the preparation of the new CPD, marks a new step forward in this process with the use of the ToC. Despite this work, there are still visible gaps in the tools available for the teams (of UNICEF and its partners) to clarify UNICEF's positioning and its approaches to be clearly exposed to all partners working in the sector.</p> <p>The recommendations formulated serve to support the ongoing dynamics and to fully integrate water and sanitation into UNICEF-Ukraine cooperation. They also serve to improve visibility, the efficiency of the actions and the added value of UNICEF in the sector, and to be a driver of the dissemination of good practices within UNICEF (as a whole).</p>		
<p><b>1 Continue with the structuring activities (initiated in 2018):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate a WASH component into the next Country Programme.</li> <li>Build a WASH strategy document that describes the desired approaches to be used (this document was initiated in 2021 with the Programme Strategy Note but the “approach section” could be more precise or, if it is not the purpose of this document, it could be useful for internal and external visibility to develop another material between strategy and operational content)</li> </ul>	Head of WASH section	High / immediate and on-going
<p><b>2 Harmonize the activities carried out in schools and clarify UNICEF’s desired approach (activities</b></p>	Head of WASH	High / short-term

Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
<p>package, rehabilitating specific infrastructure only, etc.).</p> <p><b>3 Clarify the approaches to be implemented in small communities (network extensions, etc.) and the phasing of interventions.</b></p> <p><b>4 Structure the tools used:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the support provided to the IPs to implement their activities (guidelines, checklist, etc.).</li> <li>• Systematically monitor the impact of the approaches used (e.g. the voucher approach over the 2018-2020 period).</li> </ul>	<p>section (and all the team)</p> <p>Ministries representatives</p> <p>Head of WASH section (and all the team)</p>	<p>Moderate / Mid-term</p>
<b>Activities</b>		
<p>From an emergency-based programme, UNICEF has progressively worked on the emergency/recovery link (nexus). The recommendations propose lines of intervention to continue emergency interventions in conflict zones, and to diversify UNICEF’s scope of work to other non-visible or insufficiency taken into account in the water and sanitation sector in Ukraine (minority, etc.) emergencies. For the development part, the recommendations are to work with institutions at national level to lay the foundations for long-term interventions requiring adequate budgets. This implies working with stakeholders in the sector, including donors, focusing on key themes.</p>		
<p><b>1 Emergencies:</b></p> <p>1.1 Focus emergency activities on the NGCA<sup>65</sup> and on the ‘contact line’ on the GCA side by maintaining regular communication with de-facto authorities and water companies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up alerts to know if and where to intervene.</li> <li>• Negotiate access.</li> <li>• Continue working in communities: it is not possible to introduce vouchers, so we suggest continuing distributions, if and as permitted by the de facto authorities (which does not prevent advocacy - see below).</li> </ul>	<p>WASH team and Cluster</p>	<p>High : Short term</p>

<sup>65</sup> Geographical access is limited in NGCA territories: accreditation system has rejected UN agencies in 2020 and first part of 2021.

Recommendations	Lead	Priority/timeline
1.2 Improve the way people’s special needs are taken into consideration and focus funding efforts on the most impactful activities (such as access to water and non-standardized hygiene kits).		
<b>1.3 Explore whether there are other vulnerable populations in Ukraine regarding access to water and sanitation (such as disabilities or minorities), and work to define an appropriate “service offer”.</b>		
1.4 Establish a procedure and contingency plan to enable UNICEF to rapidly intervene in water and sanitation-related actions in future crises.		
<b>2 Nexus / long-term support</b>		
2.1 Work on the sustainability of interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Institutions (schools, health facilities)</i>: develop an approach to guarantee the maintenance of built or rehabilitated structures =&gt; Ministry of Education// Public Health, parents’ associations, municipalities, etc.; establish long-term monitoring of the institution and set up a multi-year commitment plan.</li> <li>• <i>In settlements (decentralized networks)</i>: Take account of changes in water-related practices of the population and local authorities. At the same time as extending the networks, thoroughly review water pricing and set up a maintenance fund that is available at any time. As with schools, set up a multi-year plan of work and engagement with communities.</li> </ul>	UNICEF WASH Team  Ministries representatives  Institution representatives	
2.2 Concentrate and consolidate UNICEF's expertise on the water cycle and sanitation activities (access to toilets) within a climate change consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect water resources as part of efforts to take climate change into account.</li> <li>• Improve access to water, coverage, and network maintenance to take water scarcity into account.</li> <li>• Reduce discharge of sewage into the environment</li> </ul>		
In a second phase, consider the possibility of working on other themes.		

## ANNEXES

Annexes - Part II (pages 112-219)