

Danube Water Program Update

This newsletter updates readers on the activities of the Danube Water Program. The program supports policy dialogue and capacity development to achieve Smart Policies, Strong Utilities, Sustainable Services in the water supply and wastewater sector in the Danube Region. The program is jointly run by the World Bank and IAWD, the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube Catchment Area, with funding from the Government of Austria.

NEWSLETTER / June 2015**PROGRAM NEWS****Revised Work Plan adopted**

On February 20 the Danube Water Program Steering Committee formally endorsed a revised Work Plan outlining the progress to date under the Program's 45+ regional and national activities and defining priorities and adjustments for the remaining portion of the Program's current phase, closing in October 2015. The [revised Work Plan](#) is available at the Program's website; there will be no further update under this phase of the Program.

Capacity Building Effort Launched

A concept to prepare a common curriculum to support strengthening of capacity among water utilities in the Danube region has been developed by IAWD in cooperation with Danube area water utility associations. The concept was discussed and in principle endorsed at a meeting of the Associations prior to the Danube Water Conference and is aimed at creating synergy and economies of scale for capacity building programs of national water associations. A more detailed outline of the concept and definition of specific actions is being prepared and will be available in fall of 2015. The [concept paper](#) circulated among the associations can be found on the [Danube Water Program](#) website.

2015 Danube Water Conference a Success

On May 7-8 the 2015 Danube Water Conference (co-organized with GIZ/ORF) took place in Vienna. It brought together over 160 professionals from more than 20 countries to discuss the challenges that the Danube region faces in terms providing sustainable services for their populations. The conference also served to present best practices and to increase the dialogue and exchange between different stakeholders within and among the countries. Over the years, the conference has become a forum to maintain and increase collaboration for many of the involved stakeholders. [Presentations and photos](#) from the event can be found on the [Danube Water Program](#) website.

Update on Second Phase of Danube Water Program

The World Bank management has now formally endorsed the design for the proposed second phase of the Danube Water Program and the Ministry of Finance of Austria has confirmed its strong interest, although the formal confirmation is still outstanding. A final decision is expected in the coming months; in parallel, the team is also seeking contributions from other interested parties into the Program's Multi-Donors Trust Fund; please contact David Michaud (dmichaud@worldbank.org) for any question or suggestion.

State of the Sector Report Released

The regional State of the Sector review has been launched at the 2015 Danube Water Conference at the beginning of May. The review aims at documenting the progress and challenges of the Danube region in delivering sustainable water services to all. It provides a unique overview of the situation of water and wastewater services throughout the entire region and consists of a regional report and 16 country-specific notes. This study is the first of its kind in compiling data from the region into one document and therefore allowing for comparisons between the countries and learning from best practices. Electronic versions of the documents can be found on SoS.danubis.org. Translations in the region's major languages are being prepared. If you are interested in more information, a paper version or specific dissemination or recommendation for your country please contact David Michaud (dmichaud@worldbank.org).

DANUBIS.org water platform further improved

The DANUBIS.org water platform, an online repository of resources for and about water and sanitation utilities in the Danube region, has seen a growing number of visitors since its launch in May 2014. Based on this success DWP has committed further resources to enhance and customize further the content. A new version has been launched before this year's Danube Water Conference. The platform now counts with a completely new interface, improved user access to upload information and the development of country portals hosted by the respective countries in their local languages. We congratulate our colleagues from Kosovo for starting the first portal, which will shortly be fully operational. If you would like to keep track of its improvement, request your own portal, provide any feedback or contribute information to the Platform please contact David Michaud (dmichaud@worldbank.org).

Regulator Conference Held in Kosovo, Feb 23-27, 2015

On February 23-27 2015 the Danube Water Program hosted a Regulatory Benchmarking Workshop with 25 representatives from regulatory agencies and line ministries in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Hungary, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine. The workshop was facilitated by Prof. Sandy Berg from the University of Florida Public Utility Research Center (PURC). The workshop's [final report and main presentations](#) are available on the [Danube Water Program](#) website.

UPCOMING PROGRAM EVENTS**EU Integration Event in Zagreb**

The Danube Water Program is organizing a regional workshop for EU candidate countries and aspiring countries in the region. It will be focused on building knowledge on the requirements and challenges of the EU accession process regarding the water sector, based on the experience of Croatia as the most recent EU member. This workshop will target responsible ministries and water agencies in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania. The workshop objective is to deepen the knowledge on EU membership requirements in the water sector, with particular emphasis on the EU water directives, and exchange of experiences regarding EU accession between the counties that are in different stages of the process. For more information please contact Stjepan Gabric (sgabric@worldbank.org).

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS**Competitive Grant Progress**

The Competitive Grants issued under the Danube Water Program are currently being completed and the results were presented during the Danube Water Conference. As part of one grant project, a group of Young Water Professionals from Kosovo [met their Austrian counterparts and visited Vienna's WSS infrastructure](#) in the beginning of June. Generally, grant activities are progressing well and their main achievements have been documented and are now available on the website of the [Danube Water Program](#). For information on the Competitive Grants please contact Violeta Wolff of IAWD (wolff@iawd.at)

Commercial Efficiency Program Underway

The Commercial Efficiency program of the Danube Water Program has completed training programs in Macedonia, Moldova, Kosovo and Montenegro for carrying out business planning, and the over 20 participating utilities are in the process of now completing their business plans. In the next phase of the program, 15 utilities will be chosen for detailed support in realizing some of the commercial efficiency measures identified in the business plans. The consultant team managing the program will work with the chosen utilities to implement and monitor the efficiency improvements before the end of the program in October 2015. For information on the program contact Philip Weller of IAWD (weller@iawd.at).

Utility Benchmarking Second Cycle Beginning

The first cycle of utility benchmarking in the Danube basin has been completed under the Utility Benchmarking Program managed by the European Benchmarking Cooperation under a contract with the Danube Water Program and GIZ/ORF. Over 30 utilities have received individualized reports documenting their status related to various performance indicators and workshops have been held in Bulgaria, Serbia and Albania to jointly discuss the results. Joining the program for the second cycle of benchmarking is the new Ukraine Hub managed by the Ukraine Utility Association, which has attracted the involvement of 8 Ukrainian utilities into the program. The second cycle of data collection is now underway and participating utilities are using a data platform, which eases both the upload of data and generation of reports for the utilities. Please contact Philip Weller of IAWD for more information (weller@iawd.at).

Asset Management Progress

The seventeen utilities participating in the DWP capacity building program on asset management have all been making substantial progress in preparing the asset registries needed for effective decision making on maintenance and replacement of assets. At the last workshop in Belgrade in April 2015 the utilities received final guidance on the additional steps to be carried in next few months, until the program completion. Final workshop has been planned for September 15th 2015 in Belgrade. Please contact Violeta Wolff of IAWD for more information (wolff@iawd.at).

Energy Efficiency Utilities moving into financing

The second phase of the Energy Efficiency for Water Utilities training was successfully completed in December 2014 with a third round of workshops in Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine. 18 utilities prepared energy audits and investments plans for more than 10M Euros in more than 30 facilities, with energy savings around 22M MWh/yr, 2.5M Euros/yr in cost savings and payback periods of two and five years. In a third stage, the training participants are attempting to seek financing for the most promising of their projects. With Program support, they have secured so far over 2M Euros or over 35% of the needed investment from a variety of external and internal sources.

EVENTS AND NEWS FROM THE REGION

EWA Spring Days in Budapest, March 4-6, 2015

The European Water Association (EWA) Spring Days– Budapest Water Conference (BWC) and water industry expo, was held March 4-6 in Budapest and included a keynote opening statement from the Hungarian President, H.E. János Áder.

The three day event provided an opportunity for public and private sector decision-makers, water utility professionals, experts and other stakeholders from the developed and the developing world to exchange views and share experiences with leading international experts on the most pressing challenges and potential solutions in the field of urban water management. The presentations and information on this event can found on the website of the [Budapest Water Conference](#).

Utility Conference in Tirana, May 13-15, 2015

The International Water Association (IWA) and SHUKALB (the Albanian Water Utility Association) convened a specialist conference targeted at south-eastern European water utility operators in Tirana May 13-15, 2015. The conference highlighted key issues for utility operators, such as asset management, benchmarking and commercial efficiency. The [conference website](#) provides further information and presentations.

GIZ launches Non-Revenue Water Program

The GIZ Open Regional Fund has launched a program of Non-Revenue Water targeted at reducing the loss of water in utility networks in the region. The program is targeted at Macedonia, Kosovo and BiH and will involve work taking place at pilot utilities to reduce water loss. For more information on this program, contact Georgi Hristov of GIZ (georgi.hristov@giz.de).

Romanian Water Association (ARA) convenes Water Loss Conference

The Romanian Water Association is convening their yearly water expo beginning June 15. The event is open to all specialists in the field of water including water resource managers, operators of water supply and sanitation utilities, and not least, the general public interested in improving technical performance and management of the sector. During the exhibition, specialized suppliers of equipment and technologies dedicated to water will promote their products. In conjunction with the event, the IWA **Water Loss Management 2015 conference** is held. The conference intends to present and discuss the latest developments, strategies, techniques and applications of international best practices in water loss assessment & management, leakage reduction, and control and improvement of customer metering. More information on the conference can be found on the [conference website](#).

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