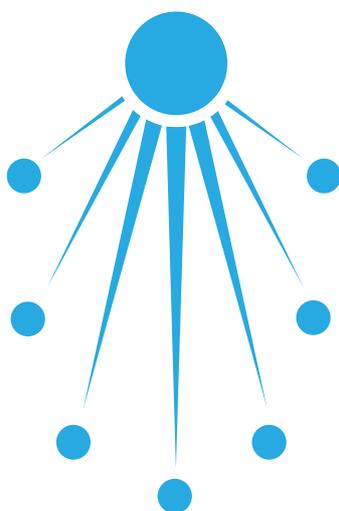


ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE WORK OF
ADKOM



2019

10.01.2019

Meeting of ADKOM's Funeral Services Commission

On January 10, 2019, a meeting with the Funeral Services Commission was held in the executive office of ADKOM. Following the adoption of the new Law on Cemeteries and Funeral Services, the Commission, after reviewing the draft text, adopted the following conclusions:

- To go back to burials being a communal activity with the management of cemeteries;
- To find a way in the legal regulations for taking over the management of the cemeteries on the territory of the entire municipality. In the further text of the Law to elaborate the matter on this issue through legal solutions, whether it will be through PUCs, an alternative - the private sector and religious communities;
- Burial and services are of great importance in the public interest that need to be transferred to the competence of the municipality;
- To correct the time limit for a cemetery management permit from one year to three - five years;
- To re-introduce the measure - grave fees;

The members of the Funeral Services Commission consider that all these arguments are a sufficient reason for adopting a completely new law on cemeteries and funeral services and have proposed that the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of North Macedonia establish a working group that will work on drafting a new law and in it should include representatives from: ADKOM, ZELS, the Communal Inspectorate of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Local Self-Government, the Religious Community, JSC Butel and the Association of Private Operators for Performing Burials.

The text was prepared at the meeting and the same was sent to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

16-17.01.2019

Training of Trainers for the Program "Water safety and Crisis Management- Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management in Water Supply and Sanitation Utilities" - Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) - IAWD

On 16th and 17th January, 2019, the first preparatory

training for trainers was organized through the Training Center of ADKOM, as part of the "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management", intended for the providers of water services, that is, for bigger PUCs in the country.

The program "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management" has been developed and is supervised by the technical partner, IAWD, the Consortium Infracprotect, together with Energie AG Wasser, Vienna water supply and Austrian Association for Gas and Water Supply (ÖVGW). The program is being implemented by national or regional centers, such as ADKOM in this country. The program for PUCs will be implemented in Macedonian language and is designed on the principles of learning through practice. It involves a combination of workshops on face-to-face training, which provide tools and techniques to address the challenges faced; to monitor how they are being applied in practice, followed by training at work, where the participating enterprises apply tools and techniques in their environment and develop specific products (diagnostics, action plans, tariff plans, etc.). The principles of combined learning are applied, i.e., face-to-face training is accompanied by e-learning materials provided at the D-LeaP Academy.

On behalf of IAWD, the trainers at this preparatory training for trainers were Mr. Christian Plohberger (program director at INFRA PROTEC), Mr. Juri Paul (general manager at Vak Beroun a.s.) and Mr. Christian Hasenleithner, (general manager at ENERGIEAG).

The following participants attended the preparatory training:

- Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia: Mr. Stevko Stefanovski, Mr. Trajce Jovanovski and Ms. Gordana Naumovska
- Institute of Public Health: Mr. Mihail Kochubovski and Aleksandra Stalbolieva
- PE "Vodovod" Bitola: Mr. Ljubisha Bakic and Mr. Emilijan Michevski

23.01.2019

Meeting of ADKOM's Legal Affairs Committee

On 23 January 2019, the members of ADKOM's Legal Affairs Committee held a meeting at the premises of ADKOM, where the participants worked on the review, discussion and drafting of a letter on behalf of all PUCs that is to be sent to the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of North Macedonia, regarding proposals for amending the Law on Public Enterprises. The text prepared by the members of the committee is sent for review to all members of ADKOM.

29.01.2019

Conference of the twinning project “Strengthening the capacities for effective implementation of the acquis in the field of water quality”

On January 29 2019, the conference of the twinning project “Strengthening the capacities for effective implementation of the acquis in the field of water quality” was held in Skopje. The purpose of this project is to strengthen the administrative capacities in the field of water management through the implementation of the relevant EU legislation. Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva attended this conference as a representative of ADKOM. During the implementation, the project helped the national competent authorities in the preparation of the Vardar River Basin Management Plan, as well as in the harmonization and implementation of the sub-legal acts in the field of water monitoring and issuing water use permits.

31.01.2019

Session of the Management and Supervisory Board of ADKOM

On 31 January 2019, in Skopje, sessions of the Management and Supervisory Board of ADKOM took place. At the third session, the Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, presented the final account of ADKOM for 2018 before the members of the Supervisory Board. After it was reviewed by the members of the Supervisory Board, it was unanimously adopted and submitted for review and adoption by the members of the Management Board of ADKOM. At the ninth session of ADKOM’s Management Board, Mr. Zoran Janev, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of ADKOM, presented the adopted final account of ADKOM for 2018. After a brief discussion and explanation by the Executive Director of ADKOM, the members of the Management Board of ADKOM adopted and submitted it for review and adoption to the Assembly of ADKOM.

31.01.2019

Session of the Assembly of ADKOM

The session of the Assembly of ADKOM was held in Skopje on 31 January 2019, where the delegates of ADKOM were invited and attended. The meeting was in accordance with the item on the agenda – Review and adoption of the final account of ADKOM for 2018. The working presidency, led by the President of ADKOM, Mr. Zoran Gorgiev, informed the attendees about the results of the financial operations of the association, that is, with the final account of ADKOM for 2018, and the same was adopted shortly by the delegates of the assembly of ADKOM.

31.01.2019

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding Ceremony

One of the key activities undertaken by ADKOM during 2018 was the implementation of the project “Support for establishing a platform for dialogue on water services in the Republic of Macedonia”, through which several round tables were organized, featuring discussions about the main challenges and possible solutions to the problems in the water sector.

The stakeholders in the sector showed high interest and active participation in the round tables, thus contributing to stimulating the dialogue. In order to continue the application of this well established practice, as well as to continue the successful and close cooperation of the stakeholders in the water services sector, an initiative was raised for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ADKOM, the Energy and Water services Regulatory Commission (ERC) and of R. North Macedonia and the regional project “Regional Capacity Development Network for the water services sector” implemented by GIZ, financed by the Governments of Switzerland and Germany.

The aim of the Memorandum is to provide a basis for continuing the joint efforts of the partners to increase the efficiency and quality of water services in the Republic of North Macedonia, through joint coordination, regular exchange of information, as well as harmonization of commonly systematized positions for improving the conditions for work of water services providers.

The Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, officially opened the ceremony and first expressed her gratitude to the PUCc for their support, to the consultants involved in this process, but also to the donors, without which key activities could not be realized. Ms. Stojanovska added that signing this memorandum means an incentive for even greater engagement for cooperation and dialogue in this area and obtaining higher quality services for users.

The President of ADKOM, Mr. Zoran Gorgiev, stressed that this Memorandum of Understanding carries a great responsibility for all the partners that are signing it and that they will continue to cooperate with it in fulfilling the already emphasized challenges in the water sector.

The Memorandum, on behalf of the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission (ERC) of the Republic of North Macedonia, was signed by its President, Mr. Marko Bislimovski. He noted that during the past period key interventions were made in the water sector. Moreover, Mr. Bislimovski added that the implementation of the water sector reform in the Republic of North Macedonia would not be in its current state and level without the intensive cooperation and assistance provided by all stakeholders of the system,

both nationally and internationally. Mr. Bislimovski said that he strongly believes that intensifying cooperation will contribute to achieving the goals of this reform process and effective coordination and understanding will help achieve positive results in building the system, both at the central and the local level.

On behalf of the project "Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services", the memorandum was signed by GIZ Fund Manager, Mr. Peter Wolf.

Mr. Wolf emphasized that Germany is one of the biggest donors in the world in the area of water supply and sewage services, adding that the Swiss support for the Republic of North Macedonia is financed through SEKO and SDC and is implemented through the Swiss Embassy. It is precisely that the project "Regional Capacity Development Network for Water Supply and Sewage" is funded through the governments of Germany and is implemented through GIZ. And the whole idea of the project is to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of water communal utilities in the Western Balkans in order to provide better services to the population. Mr.

Wolf, as one of the messages to be conveyed, added that it is particularly important to support the division of roles and foster cooperation between the PUCs, the municipalities and the Regulator. Thus, it is expected that international financial institutions and donors will be interested and will join or support such platforms for dialogue, since the infrastructure investments financed by them will be provided and maintained through adequate capacity development measures.

The partners that signed the Memorandum will continue and intensify the coordination activities by participating and stimulating the dialogue at the national level with all other stakeholders in the water services sector, namely: Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Health, State Inspectorate for the Environment, State Inspectorate for Communal Activities, as well as with representatives of the EU Delegation, bilateral and multilateral donors, international agencies and financial institutions.



PHOTO GALLERY





01.02.2019

Meeting with representatives from IAWD and GIZ/ Assessment of the needs for training of the responsible person for the RCDN project from ADKOM

Two working meetings were held in the executive office of ADKOM on February 1, 2019, where, during which the first meeting, through the project "Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services, an interview was conducted to assess the needs for training of the responsible person for the RCDN project from ADKOM, Ms. Lea Pavlovic. The interview was conducted by Ms. Katerina Wagner, IAWD - International Association of Water Supply Enterprises from the Danube River Basin, and Mr. Hari Shutovski from GIZ.

The second meeting was attended by Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva and Mr. Jane Vrteski, Consultant to ADKOM. The purpose of this working meeting was the organization and implementation of the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) program, i.e., the training on "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management".

07.02.2019

65th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Municipal Services Improvement

The sixty-fifth session of the Coordinating Committee for Municipal Services Improvement was held on February 7, 2019, in Skopje, at the premises of the Ministry of Finance. At the session, the committee members reviewed the reports on: the criteria for obtaining a grant for the municipality of Vasilevo, the municipality of Ohrid and the municipality of Cheshinovo Obleshevo. At the same session, the project coordinator, Ms. Tanja Tomic, presented the grant agreements for the following municipalities: the municipality of Kavadarci, the municipality of Zrnovci, the municipality of Makedonska Kamenica, the municipality of Dojran and the grant agreement with the City of Skopje. The members of the MSIP Project Coordinating Committee had no objections regarding the presented evaluation reports on the criteria for obtaining the grant for the aforementioned municipalities and the same were adopted.

07.02.2019

One-day workshop on the topic - Novelties in the Law on Public Procurements and Implementation of Electronic Public Procurements

ADKOM, in cooperation with the Public Procurements Bureau, on February 7, 2019 in Skopje - organized a one-day workshop on the novelties in the law on public procurements. The workshop was designed for all contracting authorities concerned with public procurement activities in the PUCs. The workshop was led by Ms. Aleksandra Petrevska, an employee of the Public Procurements Bureau. In the first part of the workshop, work was done in the area of novelties in the Law on Public Procurements, and the second part concerned the electronic system for public procurements.

12.02.2019

Introduction to the Training Program for PUCs for the program "Water safety and Crisis Management- Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management in Water Supply and Sanitation Utilities" - Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) - IAWD

On February 12, 2019, the Training Center of ADKOM, together with the Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Public Health Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Danube Learning Partnership, organized the promotional event for announcing the Training Program "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management".

ADKOM organized this event with the support of the International Association of Water Supply Companies from the Danube River Basin (IAWD), as support of the PUCs for water supply in capacity building, in order to be able to respond to their legal obligations in the field of water safety and crisis management, as well as supporting the dialogue and cooperation of the institutions at the local and central level.

At said event, the health aspects were first presented, and the presentation was prepared by Prof. Mihail Kochubovski, PhD, Institute for Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia. Dr. Stevko Stefanoski also had a presentation on Crisis Management - Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia, and during said presentation he elaborated in detail the legal framework, obligations and responsibilities of the Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Ms. Lea Pavlovic, Training Manager at the ADKOM Training Center, pointed out in her presentation that ADKOM is actively working on capacity building and that last year one of the key programs developed by IAWD and D-LEAP had been implemented, i.e., the program “Commercial Efficiency and Business Planning “. This year, ADKOM will soon begin with the implementation of the second program as well, related to the program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management”.

Mr. Jane Vrteski, ADKOM consultant, briefly informed the participants of the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP).

The representative of the Technical Partner of the Danube Learning Partnership and developer of the training program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management”, Mr. Christian Plohberger, provided the final presentation. During his address, he gave a brief introduction of the program, as well as stressed the importance of its implementation.

Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, Executive Director of ADKOM, said before the end of the event that all PUCs will receive a notification about the start of the training and the registration for participation in said training. In addition, Ms. Stojanovska added that the program for PUCs will be implemented in Macedonian language and is designed on the principles of learning through practice. It involves a combination of workshops for face-to-face trainings, which provide tools and techniques to address the challenges faced; to monitor how they are applied in practice, followed by training at work, where the participating enterprises apply the tools and techniques in their environment and develop specific products (diagnostics, action plans, tariff plans, etc.).

15.02.2019

“Promotional event of ADKOM Training Center and its RCDN Offer” / “Peer Learning for challenges related to Waste Water Collection and Treatment (WWCT) Operations and Management”

On 15 February 2019, a promotional event took place, organized by the Training Center of ADKOM and in cooperation and support of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”.

The main objective of this event was to present the offer of ADKOM for capacity development (CD) of PUCs and municipalities related to water services.

The event was divided in two sessions: 1) Promotion of the Training Center of ADKOM and the offer of the Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN); 2)

Exchange of experiences on the challenges associated with the activities and management in the collection and treatment of wastewater.

The first session allowed Ms. Lea Pavlovic, Training Manager at the ADKOM Training Center and a responsible person for the RCDN project, to inform the participants about the products for capacity development through the project “Regional Capacity Development Network”.

The second session was a demonstration of the format and content of the standard for exchange of experiences, focusing on the topic “Exchange of experiences on the challenges related to the activities and management in the collection and treatment of wastewater.” This was an opportunity to demonstrate good practice, to provide a presentation of experiences and to identify and cluster the challenges that arise in operational work and the management of wastewater collection and treatment.

24-26.02.2019

A two-day workshop on “Identification and analysis of problems in the implementation of the Law on Public Sector Employees and preparation of recommendations for necessary changes and amendments organized by MISA”

In accordance with the Action Plan for reform of the public administration, organized by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration (MISA), the second measure began for changing and amending the regulation of public sector employees, in accordance with the Law on Administrative Officers and the Law on Public Sector Employees . This two-day workshop was attended by Ms. Kristina Findacka, employee of PUC “Vodovod” Kocani and Mr. Sasho Stankovski, employee of PE “Nikola Karev” Probishtip, as representatives from ADKOM and members of the Legal Affairs Committee.

The main topics of discussion at the workshop were the following:

- The scope of the law on public sector employees and the possibility and need to exclude certain institutions;
- A catalog of jobs and the establishment of working groups for cleaning thereof;
- General principles, employee records (register of employees in the public sector) and internal organization and systematization acts;
- Types of employment in the public sector and general rights and obligations of the employees in the public

- sector (types of employment, abuse of fixed-term employment and opportunities for overcoming problems, rights and obligations of employees.

26.02.2019

Training “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”- The project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”

On 26 February 2019, in Hotel Continental in Skopje, a one-day training was organized on the topic “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”. The training was organized by the Training Center of ADKOM and in cooperation and support of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”. The main goal of the training is to prepare the participants to access the funds with the capital infrastructure investment projects ready for financing, to meet the requirements of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and donors, and provide adequate support at all stages of the Project Cycle Management.

The trainer at this training was Mr. Jane Vrteski, who explained in more detail about the available sources of funding. The expansion and deepening of knowledge through the experiences from the practical preparation, selection and implementation of the projects ready for financing was done through the presentation of the support expert, Ms. Snezana Menkovska, who

presented the project “Technical Assistance for Implementing Investment Projects for Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal in Macedonia “JOS 241 11/12, of which she is Team Leader.

During the training work was done in groups, and then the joint work was presented, whereby the trainer opened a plenary discussion on the topic “What is the role of the decision makers for successful project development”.

27.02.2019

Conducted “Association Needs Assessment” (ANA)

In the executive office of ADKOM on February 27, 2019, an interview was conducted with the employees of ADKOM, which was attended by Mr. Zoran Gorgiev, Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva, Ms. Lea Pavlovic, and Mr. Jane Vrteski, consultant to ADKOM. During the interview, each of the participants answered the given questions in relation to their field of work. The interview was conducted by Ms. Katerina Wagner, IAWD - International Association of Water Supply Companies from the Danube River Basin and by GIZ, Ms. Svetlana Zdravkovska and Mr. Hari Shutovski.

This interview was conducted within the framework of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”, and its purpose was to make an adequate assessment of the needs of the association, that is, of ADKOM in order to identify all needs and take steps regarding improvement and upgrading.

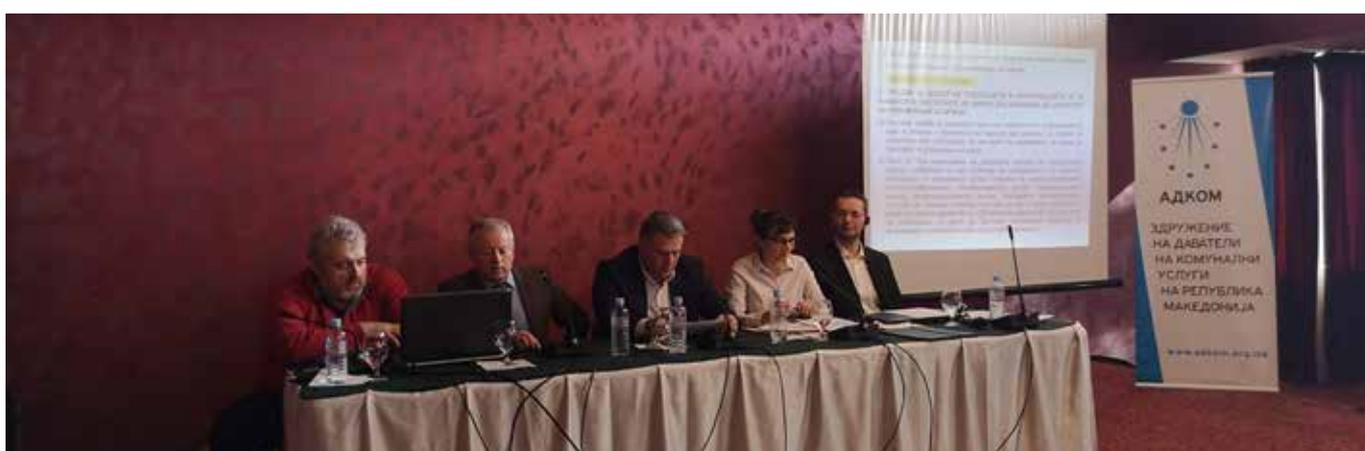


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06.03.2019

One-day workshop - Delchevo

On March 6, 2019, in Delchevo, a meeting took place, attended by representatives of SECO - Mr. Cliff Hammer and Ms. Stanislava Dodeva, as well as Mr. Reto Buhler, project expert, from IAWD - Mr. Radoslav Rusev, from GIZ - Mr. Oliver Nachevski and from ADKOM - Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva, Ms. Lea Pavlovic and Mr. Jane Vrteski. The purpose of the working meeting was focused on coordination of the corporate development needs of the PUCs from Delchevo, Berovo and Pehcevo. The activities and needs will be realized through the training programs of RCDN and D-Leap and the Training Center of ADKOM.

On behalf of the project that will be realized in these three municipalities, the consultant, Mr. Reto Buhler, presented the analysis of the priority needs of the PUCs, and Mr. Jane Vrteski, the consultant of ADKOM, shared with the attendees the information regarding the trainings which can be implemented through the Training Center of ADKOM.

07.03.2019

Meeting of the Legal Committee of ADKOM

The members of ADKOM's Legal Affairs Committee held a meeting on 07 March 2019, in the Executive Office of ADKOM, where the participants discussed and worked on drafting a paragraph regarding the submitted initiative by the Association for Health-Education and Social Aid to the Constitutional court for annulment of paragraph 1 of Article 33 of the Law on Potable Water Supply and Drainage of Urban Wastewater. At the same meeting, the members of the commission worked at this meeting on amendments to the already prepared letter for amendments to the Law on Public Enterprises, according to suggestions received from the Management Board of ADKOM.

11-14.03.2019

Training on the topic "Promotion and Sale" - The project "Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services"

The project "Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services" organized a three-day training on "Promotion and Sales" in Bihac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 11t-14 March, 2019. The target group of the training were the focal points of the associations of the local self-government units and the associations of public utility companies from the 6 project-countries (Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia).

ADKOM was represented by Ms. Lea Pavlovic, training manager at the ADKOM Training Center and the responsible person for the project "Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services".

The focus of the training was the development of the capacities of the responsible persons in relation to the promotion and sale of products for capacity development, that is, trainings in their associations.

14.03.2019

Eleventh Session of the Management Board of ADKOM

The members of the Management and the Supervisory Board of ADKOM, on 14 March 2018 in Strumica, held the eleventh session of the Management Board of ADKOM. In addition to the members of the Management Board of ADKOM, representatives of SECO, Mr. Cliff Hammer and Ms. Stanislava Dodeva were also invited to this session. This session featured discussions regarding the organization of a round table during the Annual Assembly of ADKOM, which will be held on March 21, 2019.

The participants also discussed the organization of the Jubilee Conference - 15 years since the establishment and existence of ADKOM. At this session, the members of the Management Board were introduced to the inclusion of the first five PUCs in the Water Safety and Crisis Management Program, as part of the trainings conducted by ADKOM through its Training Center. Discussions also took place on the directions for implementation of activities in accordance with the Memorandum of Cooperation, signed by ADKOM with the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission (ERC) of the Republic of North Macedonia and GIZ.

11-13 and 15.03. 2019

Workshops in cooperation with the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission (ERC) of the Republic of North Macedonia

ADKOM, in cooperation with the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission (ERC) of the Republic of North Macedonia, organized and held three one-day workshops in accordance with the provisions deriving from the Law on determining the prices of water services. The workshops were attended by the invited persons who are in charge of electronic submission of data on the web platform for submitting the requirements for determining water services tariffs and annual reports, for the purpose of fulfilling the data and, at the same time, timely execution of the procedures for correct submission of data.

20.03.2019

First meeting of the sector working group for regional and local development

On 20 March 2019, at the offices of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, the first meeting took place of the sector working group for regional local development formed by the Ministry of Local Self-Government. The Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, was present as a member of this working group from ADKOM. At the meeting, the Coordinator of the Sector Working Group presented the Rules of Procedure as well as the action document "EU for Regional Development" were presented.

21-22.03.2019

Annual Assembly of ADKOM

The Annual Assembly of ADKOM was held on 21 and 22 March 2019, in Ohrid. Traditionally every year, all members of ADKOM, donor organizations and representatives from the line ministries in the Republic of North Macedonia take part in the Annual Assembly. Northern Macedonia. This year a panel session was organized on the topic "Legal challenges faced by Public Utility Companies for water supply, collection and treatment of wastewater". At the beginning of the panel session, Mr. Emil Janeski, director of PUC "Vodovod i kanalizacija" Prilep, presented the most pressing problems faced by the PUCs regarding the ownership of water meters and their calibration, highlighting the problem of water theft, as well as the challenges regarding water treatment plants with the removal of sludge. Ms. Ana Petrovska, State Secretary from the

Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Mr. Zoran Manevski, State Secretary of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Mr. Sali Ajdini, Director of the Communal Inspectorate and Mr. Shamil Rexhepi, Advisor at the Economic Affairs Sector of the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission R. North Macedonia, also took part in the panel session.

At the session of the Annual Assembly of ADKOM, the President of ADKOM gave a short report on the work of the MB of ADKOM in the past year 2018. The report on the work of ADKOM in 2018 was presented to the attendees by Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva and it was adopted by the delegates of the assembly. The Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, presented to the delegates of ADKOM the annual work program of ADKOM for 2019, as well as the activities that will be realized within the Training Center of ADKOM.

28.03.2019

Meeting of the Legal Committee of ADKOM

The members of ADKOM's Legal Affairs Committee held a meeting on 28 March 2019, in the Executive Office of ADKOM. Apart from the members of the Legal Affairs Committee, the meeting was also attended by the President of ADKOM, Mr. Zoran Gorgiev and Mr. Goran Kozarov, Director of PE "Vodovod" Bitola. At the meeting, the provisions of the Law on Public Enterprises were adjusted in order to improve the work of the PUCs. The present members of the committee prepared a text with amendments to certain articles of the Law and it will be shared with all members of ADKOM before sending it to the Ministry of Economy.

PHOTO GALLERY





PHOTO GALLERY





PHOTO GALLERY





04.04.2019

New Law on Public Procurement with detailed guidelines on accurate implementation

On April 4, 2019 in Skopje, ADKOM, in cooperation with the Bureau on Public Procurement of the Republic of North Macedonia organized a one-day workshop on: "New Law on Public Procurement with detailed guidelines on accurate implementation". The workshop was organized due to the promulgation of the new Law on Public Procurement and it aimed at giving guidelines for its accurate implementation to the public procurement units, members of public procurement committees in the Public Utility Companies and the responsible persons in the companies. The lecturer at the workshop was Ms. Aleksandra Petreska, who presented the following:

- New types of procedures and thresholds, which include simplification of procedures and new thresholds
- New rules for participation in public procurements, differences and similarities between the current and the new law
- Publishing of e-plan for public procurement – what has changed
- Benefits from increased transparency
- Unique document for public procurements and the new rules for the bidders
- Opening the market for small and medium enterprises
- Technical dialogue with the bidders on preparing quality technical specifications and gathering data for the bid and access of all economic operators to the annual public procurement plans (e-plan).

In the second part of the workshop, Ms. Petreska informed the attendees on the most important novelties of the Law on Public Procurement by putting the accent on: the criteria for the best bid, higher quality of service or goods vs. lowest price (price/costs for life cycle/quality), increased transparency, data protection, insight into the bids of the competitors/bidders, publishing the contracts and control of procedures by the Bureau for Public Procurement (the call, technical documentation, evaluation of bids up to the final selection). In the final part of the workshop, the representatives of the PUC discussed about solving real problems regarding public procurement, with special accent on the electronic system of public procurement. All participants were given certificates by ADKOM for their participation on the workshop.

09-11.04.2019

"Modernization of water services in Bosnia and Herzegovina" Conference

The fourth regional conference on "Modernization of water services in Bosnia and Herzegovina" took place in the period from April 9 to April 11, 2019, in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was organized by the association Aquasan from B&H. ADKOM participated on the Conference with a delegation of its representatives, with the Chairman of ADKOM as Head of delegation. As panelists, Ms. Linda Shakiri, from PUC "Vodovod i kanalizacija", and Mr. Jane Vrteski, ADKOM Consultant, took active participation on this Conference. Mr. Vrteski had a presentation on the topic of: "Experiences from implementing reforms in the water services sector in the Republic of North Macedonia", as he spoke of the experience from introducing the reforms in our country based on new regulation, establishing of a new regulatory body for water services, new operational procedures, introduction of tariff methodologies and other activities.

Mr. Pance Orcev and Mr. Shamil Redzevi, as representatives from the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia also participated on the Conference. Mr. Orcev addressed the attendees of the conference as he spoke of the implementation of the Law on Setting the Prices for Water Services, which Law was promulgated in 2016. This Law regulates the prices and policies of water services for supply of raw water for the population, water supply, collection, waste and treatment of waste waters. Mr. Orcev presented the establishment of a functional system of price setting, the manner, conditions and procedure for setting prices for water services, the tariff structure of water services, as well as the authorizations of the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission in setting the tariffs for water services.

The Chairman of ADKOM, Mr. Gjogiev, as panelist on the Conference, presented the role of ADKOM in the reforms, where the members of ADKOM – the PUCs are part of the reforms and how the reforms were subsequently implemented by the PUCs. From the discussions with the ADKOM members, the Conference attendees had the chance to hear real examples from the implementation process as well as the process of preparations of the reforms in the water sector in our country.

24.04.2019

Twelfth sessions of the ADKOM Management Board

On April 24, 2019 in Shtip the Management Board of ADKOM held its twelfth session. The members of the Management Board worked as per the established Agenda. The members reviewed the proposal for the Memorandum of cooperation with the Association of the Units of Local Self-Government – ZELS, and it was decided that the draft Memorandum should be submitted to ZELS. Other topics of discussion were: the conference in 2020, proposals for organizing an event for the fifteenth anniversary of ADKOM.

15-16.04.2019

Training for the program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management” – Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) – IAWD

The ADKOM Training Center, on April 15 and 16, 2019, organized a training on the program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management” for the water services suppliers, i.e. for the bigger PUCs in the country.

The program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management” is developed and supervised by the technical partner, IAWD, the Infracprotect Consortium, together with Energie AG Wasser, Vienna Water and the Austrian Association for Gas and Water (ÖVGW). The program is implemented by national or regional centers, such as ADKOM in our country. The program for the PUCs was implemented in Macedonian language and it was designed based on practical experience. It included a combination of training workshops, which provide tools and techniques for: handling challenges, monitor of practical implementation; it was followed by hands-on training, where the participants implemented the tools and techniques in their environment and developed specific products (diagnostics, action plans tariff plans etc.). The principles of combined learning have been applied in the program, as a combination of peer-to-peer training and e-learning materials, provided from the D-LeaP Academy.

The main trainers were: Mr. Jane Vrteski, Ms. Linda Shakiri and Mr. Strahil Gavritov, expert from the Crisis Management Center, and Mr. Christian Plohberger (INFRA PROTEC program director), who was invited as representative of the Technical partner of Danube Learning Partnership and creator of the training program.

The training was attended by the employees from:

- PUC “Komunalec” Strumica
- PUC “Vodovod” Kochani
- PUC “Vodovod i kanalizacija” Prilep
- PC “Komunalec” Negotino

Mr. Stefko Stefanovski, from the Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia addressed the attendees regarding the water safety and crisis management – the legal framework and responsibilities of the PUC for water supply.

One of the main trainers, Mr. Vrteski, had a presentation on risk management: Identification of hazards, and crisis management methodology in the first day of training, while on the second day, on April 26, the rules, roles and scenario for the basic training of crisis managers were presented.

After the presentations, the participants had a lot of examples and group exercises, where the employees of the PUCs played the roles of crises managers and they created crises headquarters. This exercise was done in order for the PUCs to gain more experience and practical skills about the crises management.

15-18.04.2019

Project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN)

The German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ) through the Open Regional Fund for Modernization of Municipal Services (ORF MMS), in cooperation with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), implemented the Project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN).

ADKOM is part of the RCDN network and is participating actively in all the activities, together with other 16 associations from the South-East Europe, including 2 regional networks (NALAS and IAWD), as well as AQUASAN network from B&H.

The RCDN project enables improvement and continuous creation of innovative solutions, which contribute to increased knowledge and improvement of the performances of the municipalities and the public utility companies (PUC), specifically in the area of water and sanitation services in the Western Balkans. The network offers measures for capacity building of the PUCs and the municipalities in the area of water and sanitation services.

In order to develop adequate measures for capacity building of the PUCs and municipalities, one of the ADKOM activities within the project was estimation of the training needs of the management and the key employees on operational level in the water treatment plants in PUCs and the municipalities, as well as mapping

of main problems in the operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants.

The evaluation was done based on previously held interviews in four PUCs, i.e. in the municipalities of Gevgelija on April 15, Berovo on April 16, Strumica on April 17 and Kumanovo on April 18.

The main purpose of the interviews was:

- To identify the challenges of the current operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants and the reasons for those challenges on different levels: individual, organizational, sectoral
- To get information on the preferred methods and formats of adult learning
- To identify topics of interest for future trainings.

As part of advanced preparation, before the actual visit to the PUCs they were sent questionnaires, and the interviews were held in two parts:

- The Technical director of the PUC and the Head of department / unit on public utility services in the municipality were present during the first part of the interview
- The mechanical engineer in the water treatment plant, engineering technologist/ process engineer of the water treatment plant were present during the second part of the interview.

After both parts of the interview were completed, the PUC team and the interview team visited the water treatment plant, where they discussed in details the operation and maintenance of the plant.

09.05.2019

Sixty sixth session of the Coordinative committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The sixty sixth session was held on May 9, 2019, in Skopje, in the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of North Macedonia, and it was chaired by the project's coordinator Ms. Tanja Tomikj. Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva participated in the session as a member from ADKOM in the Coordinative Committee. The Committee reviewed and adopted the evaluation reports of the following units of local self-government: Shuto Orizari, Demir Hisar, Bitola, Radovish, Gostivar, Makedonski Brod and Kratovo. In the second part of the session, Ms. Tomikj presented the sub-lease agreement for the municipalities of Krivogashtani, Kisela Oda, Shuto Orizari, Centar and Pehchevo. The members of the Coordinative Committee of MSPI project did not have any remarks on the proposed grant agreements with the abovementioned municipalities and they were adopted unanimously.



PHOTO GALLERY





09.05.2019

Meeting with UNDP – UN Development Program

A meeting with the leadership of UNDP-UN Development Program took place on May 9, 2019 in Skopje, when it was announced that the project “Building Municipal Capacity for Project Implementation” will be implemented within the Program. Besides the UNDP representatives, Ms Jana Belcheva Andreevska and Mr. Michael Froidenberg participated on the meeting, as experts who will work on the project. Ms. Fani K. Petrusheva participated on the meeting as representative of ADKOM. The purpose of the meeting was to provide analytical grounds as support to the objective and rational decision-making on local and national level, especially in setting and financing developmental priorities. In this stage ADKOM was asked to share opinions and experiences from the operations in the utilities sector thus far.

10.05.2019

Project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN)

“Peer Exchange – Estimation of needs for training on the functioning and maintenance of water treatment plants”

On May 2019 in Skopje, the ADKOM Training Center, in cooperation with the RCDN project organized a peer exchange event: “Peer Exchange – Estimation of needs for training on the functioning and maintenance of water treatment plants”.

The main purpose of the peer exchange event was to estimate the training needs of the management and the key employees on operational level in the water treatment plants in order to identify the main problems that hinder the operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants, and in that context to adjust the capacity building activities.

The specific purposes of this event were:

- To address/confirm problems with the operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants and the reasons for such problems
- To address preferred methods and formats for learning
- To identify specific topics which are greatly needed or are of interest to the management and the key operational personnel of the water treatment plants.

The peer exchange was structured in six sessions:

Session 1:

The first session started with the presentation of goals, the agenda of the event and the basic rules by

the moderator Mr. Shutoski. During this session, Ms. Lea Pavlovikj, Head of the ADKOM Training Center and RCDN contact person, briefly presented the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN) and informed the participants regarding the cooperation between RCDN and ADKOM. Firstly, the participants were informed about the promotional event organized in February 2019 by ADKOM, where the first discussion about the water treatment plants started. Then, the participants were briefed about the visits to the four water treatment plants in Berovo, Gevgelija, Strumica and Kumanovo in April 2019, by the team of experts from ADKOM, SECO and GIZ.

Mr. Cliff Hammer, regional advisor for SECO stated that a big portion of the investments and the financial aid for the construction of the water treatment plants were provided by SECO and other donors, but that the PUCs are faced with challenges connected with the operations and the maintenance of the water treatment plants. The purpose of all efforts is to find a solution and improve the current situation by developing of a comprehensive capacity building program for the operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants, fitted to the needs of the managerial and operational staff.

The moderator, Mr. Shutoski, had a presentation in which he summed up the first part of the key findings from the visits of the 4 water treatment plants in Berovo, Gevgelija, Strumica and Kumanovo regarding the key factors that hinder the operations of the water treatment plants as well as the main reasons for inefficient operations and maintenance of such plants.

Sessions 2 and 3:

The second session started with the moderator’s explanation of the steps and the methods of group work. The participants were divided into three groups. The first group was consisted of directors and technical directors of the PUCs and representatives of the municipalities. The other two groups consisted of heads of water treatment plants and their operational staff (mechanical engineers/ electrical engineers and technicians, process engineers/ lab engineers).

All three groups worked especially on:

- Identifying the major factors that hinder the operations of the water treatment plants
- Identifying the major reasons for inefficiency of operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants

During the third session, the participants presented the results from the group work, with the following key conclusions:

- It is necessary to present the findings to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and include them in the dialogue among the stakeholders on the subject of operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants.

- Upon preparation of the IPA II projects, which are mostly financed with grants, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning has the biggest influence. In general, the participants expressed their concern regarding the lack of strategy of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning on water treatment plants (e.g. technologies/conglomerates, how to finance the water treatment plants, sludge management and disposal etc.), or if there is existent strategy it is not being implemented.
- PUC lack expertise for: handling feasibility studies, projects, preparation and implementation of complex infrastructure projects for collection and treatment of waste waters.

Main results from group work # 1 – Identification of the key factors that hinder the operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants/Identification of the main reasons for inefficient operation and maintenance of water treatment plants.

Session 4:

The moderator presented and summed the rest of the key findings from the interviews with the four water treatment plants in Berovo, Gevgelija, Strumica and Kumanovo regarding the preferred learning methods and formats, as well as the potential topics on operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants.

Sessions 5 and 6:

The groups staid unchanged during the fifth session, where the participants worked together on preparing a review of practical measures for capacity building on operations and maintenance.

In the sixth session, the participants presented the results from the group work, and some of the key conclusions were as follows:

- There is a lack of local expertise. One possibility is to have the employees of the water treatment plants included as trainers and resources for the future events. The other possibility would be to organize capacity building measures for operations and maintenance of the water treatment plans on national level (e.g. train the trainers).
- There is a need for continuous exchange between the water treatment plants' staff and the local experts on operations and maintenance of the water treatment plants (Community of Practice).

The peer exchange event was closed with a discussion and evaluation by the participants. According to the summary of evaluation results, around 86% of the participants agree that the contents of the peer exchange met their expectations and that they know how to apply the contents. Most of the participants are satisfied by the methods of learning and they think they can share their experience and examples acquired from the peer exchange. A total of 90% of the participants agree that the set objectives of the peer exchange were met and all participants were satisfied with the

entire organization of the peer exchange event. The majority of participants had positive evaluations for the moderators.

13.05.2019

Public discussion organized by the Ministry of Information Society and Administration of the Republic of North Macedonia – MIOA

A public discussion and presentation was held on May 13, 2019 in Skopje in the Parliamentarian Club, on the Annual report on the implementation of the Public Administration Reform Strategy for the period 2018–2020. ADKOM was represented by: Ms. Lora Gjoteva, from PUC “Komunalec” Strumica, Ms. Marija Valakova from PUC “Plavaja” Radovish and Ms. Stanka Efremova from PUC “Komuna” Krushevo, who have shared the views of the PUCs.

May 20-21, 2019 in Vienna

Impressions of the 2019 Danube Water Conference

In its seventh year, the Danube Water Conference traditionally happening in May each year in Vienna, has again proved to be THE gathering of the Danube region's water family.

This year's conference on “Achieving resilience in water and wastewater utilities in the Danube region” brought together 200 people coming from 25 countries representing all stakeholders of the water sector to discuss the way forward towards smart policies, strong utilities and sustainable services. In her keynote speech Monika Weber-Fahr, CEO of the Global Water Partnership, pointed out that resilience is the ability to “bounce back” after a shock or negative development and talked among others about the importance of resilient leadership to build a resilient water sector. Consequently, the investment in human capital was one of the guiding principles during the two days event. The State of the Sector update report identified the capacity of people as one of the remaining key challenges in the region and referred to the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) as one of the possible options to improve the situation.

In the session on “Managing talents for resilient services”, Jasmine Boehm highlighted that the entire pool of talents needs to be sourced to ensure a diverse workforce and finally resilient water and wastewater services. Further on, the audience identified an inspiring leadership as the key element to attract talent into utilities and appreciated IAWD's concept of a Utility Management Training, which is currently under development.

On the second Day, Michel Sponar, Deputy Head of DG ENV C2 in the European Commission presented his talk on the “Evaluation and recast of EU water policies – status, challenges and lessons learned”. Although there are still some barriers preventing the full implementation of water policies, such as lack of political will or too optimistic deadlines due to lack of serious planning, the success is obvious due to a simple, clear and focused legislation as well as the EU carrot and stick approach (EU funds vs. infringement).

Other topics discussed in the two days include cooperation as a tool to achieve resilient services, financing for resilient water infrastructure projects as well as the upcoming component on water security, which is to be developed by the World Bank under the third phase of the Danube Water Program.

In the interactive closing of the conference the audience identified “Investment in people” followed by “Financing instruments should listen to bottom-up needs” and finally “Communication and collaboration between all stakeholders are essential to meet SDG targets” as the take home messages from this year’s conference.

Source: https://www.danubis.org/eng/dnnews/265/246/535/details/w/0/impressions-of-the-2019-danube-water-conference/?fbclid=IwAR1bI0w3K1X7q3NyNla3xTi09-oahyw01cWnkXmn2b97kWbSaihY_G9MALk

22.05.2019

Meeting of ADKOM Legal Committee

The meeting took place on May 22, 2019 in the executive office of ADKOM, with part of the members of ADKOM Legal Committee and Ms. Emilija Chukikj, head of the unit for public sector support in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIOA. The purpose of the meeting was the nomination of members from the ADKOM Legal Committee who will work on the amendments of the existing Public Sector Jobs Catalogue, as well as on the steps necessary for the successful realization of this activity. These were the members of the working group: Lora Gjoteva, from PUC “Komunalec” Strumica, Ms. Marija Valakova from PUC “Plavaja” Radovish, Ms. Elisaveta Petkova, PUC “Niskogradba” Bitola, Ms. Vesna Rajkovska, PUC “Komunalna higijena” Skopje, Ms. Katerina Pejnova, PUC “Vodovod i kanalizacija”, Skopje and Ms. Kristina Findachka, CUP “Vodovod” Kochani. The attendees concluded that in order for this activity to be fully implemented, it will be necessary to organize workshops for all PUCs – members of ADKOM, so that their position will be considered when amending the Public Sector Jobs catalogue.

22.05.2019

Meeting of ADKOM representatives with the Chamber of Enforcement Agents

The meeting took place in the executive office of ADKOM on May 22, 2019, between the members of ADKOM Legal Committee and representatives of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents, led by Mr. Zoran Dimov, Chairman of the Chamber of Enforcement Agents, Ms. Jadranka Jovanovska, enforcement agent – member of the Chamber, Ms. Snezhana Andreevska, enforcement agent – member of the Chamber and Ms. Danica Strachkova, enforcement agent – member of the Chamber. Mr. Dimov informed the attendees on the difficulties that the enforcement agents are facing after the amendments of the Law on Enforcement, on the increased costs due to lack of data base and other barriers in the current operations. All attendees agreed that both parties need to meet more frequently, and the members of the Chamber were informed that their positions and opinions will be shared with the members of ADKOM Management Board.

30.05.2019

Public discussion regarding the Law on Waste Management

On May 30, 2019, ADKOM in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning organized a public discussion regarding the proposal on amendment to the Law on Waste Management. The following persons represented the Ministry at the public debate: Ms. Ana Karanfilova Mazneva, Head of Waste Sector and Ms. Dragana Cherapnalkovska, Head of the Legal Unit with the EU Sector in the Ministry. The public debate was attended by representatives of the PUCs (from their departments on waste) and representatives of the units of local self-government. The attendees heard of the activities that the Ministry is planning to undertake and of the amendments to the Law on Waste Management, as presented by Ms. Karanfilova Mazneva. At the end of the debate, the attendees agreed that they will submit all their comments to the Ministry via ADKOM.



PHOTO GALLERY





05-07.06.2019

Workshop on the changes of the Public Sector Jobs catalogue

From June 5 to June 7, 2019 ADKOM, organized two workshops in cooperation with the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. On the workshops, Ms. Emilija Chukikj, head of the unit for public sector support in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIOA, informed the attendees on the activities of the Working Group, consisted of representatives of ADKOM Legal Committee, concerning the changes in the catalogue of jobs in the public sector.

12.06.2019

Meeting of the Network for Resistant and Protected Polog

On June 12, 2019, upon invitation from the UN Development Program – UNDP ad Ms. Ermira Fida, Project Coordinators of the Project Improving Resilience to Floods in the Polog Region, the employees of ADKOM executive office, Ms. Fani K. Petrusheva and Ms. Lea Pavlovikj, together with the consultant Mr. Jane Vrteski, attended the third meeting of the Network for Resistant and Protected Polog. As leading ADKOM consultant, Mr. Vrteski presented the attendees with the program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management”. In addition, Mr. Vrteski presented ADKOM’s approach to the challenges of PUCs’ capacity building. This activity was elaborated in detail to all attendees and they were informed that it is being executed by ADKOM Training Centre.

13.06.2019

Sixty seventh session of the Coordinative committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The sixty seventh session was held on June 13, 2019, in Skopje, and it was chaired by the project’s coordinator Ms. Tanja Tomikj. Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva participated in the session as a member from ADKOM. The Committee reviewed and adopted the evaluation reports of the following municipalities: Karposh, Sopishte and Ilinden without any remarks after they were presented by Mr. Goce Dimovski, independent consultant hired by MSIP to verify the meeting of criteria for grants of these municipalities. In the second part of the session, the grant agreements with the following municipalities were presented: Lipkovo, Veles, Mavrovo and Rostushe, Kochani, Ohrid and Vrapchishte and they were unanimously adopted by the members of the Coordinative Committee.

19.06.2019

Annual reports of the PUCs

The reforms in the water sectors of the Republic of North Macedonia started in January 15, 2015, with the promulgation of the Law on Setting the Prices for Water Services. Therefore, the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia was given one more authorization in the domain of regulating the water services prices, i.e. setting the tariffs for supply of raw water and drinking water, urban wastewater collection and drainage and wastewater treatment.

In light of the regulation of prices and calculation of the tariffs the public utility companies (PUC) were obligated to prepare three-year Business Plans (BP) and Tariff Adjustment Plans. The regulatory process was established based on this legal provision and it developed in two stages. In the first stage, the PUCs from the municipalities with over 10,000 Population Equivalents were included and this stage was finalized in September 2017, while the second stage for PUCs from municipalities with less than 10,000 Population Equivalents was finalized in September 2018.

The Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia stipulated another legal obligation – all PUCs from municipalities above 10,000 Population Equivalents need to prepare and submit annual reports in 2019.

In accordance with the above-mentioned legal provision, ADKOM (Association of public utility services providers of Republic of North Macedonia) implemented the Project “Strengthening the association for capacity building of PUCs in the Republic of North Macedonia for provision of sustainable water services”. Through the ADKOM Training Center and the involved experts, the Project supported and strengthened the capacities of PUCs for preparation and submission of the annual reports to the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia.

A one-day workshop was organized on June 19, 2019 in the ADKOM Training Center, for the consultants for the preparation of the annual reports in accordance with the Methodology for the Setting of Water Service Tariffs and the guidelines from the Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia. After this, in the period from 24th to 26th June the first workshops for the consultants and the PUCs were organized, and the objective of the workshops was to provide guidance and instructions for the PUCs on the annual reports for 2018, the auxiliary tools that will be used in the process and defining the logical framework for the activity.

During the month of July, 2019, the PUCs together with the consultants worked on data collection and evaluation and preparation of the annual reports. The same month the annual reports were submitted to the Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia.

24-25.06.2019

Two-day workshop on the chances of the Public Sector Jobs catalogue

In the period June 24-25, 2019, the members of the ADKOM Working Group led by Ms. Emilija Chukikj, head of the unit for public sector support in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIOA, worked on the changes of the existing catalogue of jobs and the new categorizations of jobs per the amendments to the Law on Public Companies. As a result, on this workshop the new categorization was completed for the jobs of public service providers and the auxiliary technical staff and the required criteria for education and professional experience per the new categorization were established.

PHOTO GALLERY





PHOTO GALLERY





PHOTO GALLERY





02.07.2019

Technical workshop – PUC “Vodovod i kanalizacija” Prilep

The Technical workshop on the subject of “Urban waters – from source to consumer” took place on July 2, 2019 in Prilep, and it was organized by PUC “Vodovod i kanalizacija” Prilep. The Mayor of Prilep opened the workshop, and the general Director of PUC “Vodovod i kanalizacija” Prilep, Mr. Emil Janeski and the Commissioner in Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, Mr. Orce Panchev addressed the attendees of the Workshop. Ms. Fani K. Petrusheva, represented ADKOM with a presentation on the 15 years of operations of ADKOM. Many companies and public intuitions had their representatives at the Workshop, as well as the partners on the project from Greece, Albania, Cyprus and Bulgaria, as part of the WATenERgy CYCLE project. Some of them had presentations of their products, services, suggestions and studies.

03-04.07.2019

Monitoring and Evaluation Training – Project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN)

The Project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN) organized two-day training on the subject of Monitoring and Evaluation in Ohrid, on July 3-4, 2019.

The training focused on capacity building of participants regarding operational planning, monitoring and evaluation. From the presentations and exercises at the training the attendees were able to learn more about the elements of the monitoring and evaluation, as well as about their importance.

ADKOM was represented by Ms. Lea Pavlovikj, training manager at the Training Center and responsible person for the Project “Regional Capacity Building Network for PUCs”.

03.07.2019

Thirteen sessions of the ADKOM Management Board

On July 3, 2019 in Negotino the Management Board of ADKOM held its thirteenth session. The members of the Management Board worked as per the established Agenda, and the meeting was chaired by Mr. Zoran Gjorgiev, the Chairman of ADKOM. The members discussed the activities within the project of the German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ) realized through the Open Regional Fund for Modernization of Municipal Services (ORF MMS). The changes in the public jobs catalogue were also discussed at the meeting, and the activities that are planned for the celebration of the 15th anniversary of ADKOM.

11.07.2019

Sixty eighth session of the Coordinative committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The sixty eighth session was held on July 11, 2019, in Skopje, and it was chaired by the project’s coordinator Ms. Tanja Tomikj. Ms. Tomikj presented the grant agreements with the following municipalities: Delchevo, Shuto Orizari, Demir Hisar, Gevgelija, Chucher Sandevo, Tetovo and Kochani; the attendees unanimously and adopted the grant agreements without remarks.

25 - 26.07.2019

Two-day workshop on the changes in the Public Sector Jobs

In the period July 25-26, 2019, in Dojran, the members of the ADKOM Working Group led by Ms. Emilija Chukikj, head of the unit for public sector support in the Ministry of Information Society and Administration-MIOA, continued to work on the changes of the existing catalogue of jobs and the new categorizations of jobs per the amendments to the Law on Public Companies. The attendees worked on the categorization of jobs of public service providers and the auxiliary technical staff, and they decided that on the next meeting they will work on the titles of each post in order to unify them with the titles for the public sector adopted on national level.



PHOTO GALLERY





Program: “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management”

In the period from April to August 2019, ADKOM Training Centre, in cooperation with the technical partner Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) – the Consortium Infracprotect together with Energie AG Wasser, Vienna Water and the Austrian Association for Gas and Water (ÖVGW) – together with the Centre for Crisis Management, and supported by the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) and World Bank (WB), delivered the program: “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management”.

With this program, the participating utilities improved their knowledge on identification of operational risks and on planning, preparing and responding to incidents in order to be able to react and recover fast from crises or disasters. Also, the participants were trained on decision-making under uncertainty, based on practical scenarios.

The first four utilities that joined the program and expressed their readiness to establish crisis management teams and to train the members of the teams in establishing the procedures for crisis management by resolving possible crisis situations are: Public Utility Company Vodovod Kochani, Public Company Komunalec Negotino, Public Utility Company Komunalec Strumica and Public Utility Company Vodovod and Kanalizacija, Prilep.

In a period of four months, seventeen workshops were organized, of which one was organized as a joint two-day workshop and additional 4 one-day workshops for each company included in the program.

In the workshops 139 employees took active participation, as potential members of the crisis management teams in each of the utilities participating on the training.

On the first joint two-day workshop in Skopje and the additional 4 one-day workshops held in the Public Utility Company Komunalec, Strumica, besides the ADKOM trainers, Mr. Christian Plohberger and Mr. Christian Hasenleithner, attended the workshops as representatives of the technical partner of the Danube Learning Partnership, who created the program for the training.

The program consisted of three stages: 1) Basic training on Water Safety and Crises Management which included risk management – identification of risks and risks levels and Crises Management – essentials- with accent on the Guidebook for Crises Management; 2) Second stage of implementation – Establishing of organizational structure and procedures for crisis management in the public utility companies with designated members to the Crisis Management Team of the utilities; and 3) Final

exercise: practical simulation of the operation of the Crisis Management Team in each of the utilities, monitored by representatives from the National Crisis Management Centre.

Possible scenarios for crises management in water supply utilities were simulated as part of the final exercises, which imitated cases of: 1) landslide endangering the water plant; 2) landslide causing interruption of the water supply for several days due to demolition of the main transportation pipeline; 3) diseases spread among the population as consequence of unsuitable drinking water from the water supply system and 4) flood and interruption of the water supply. These exercises were created for drilling possible solutions for handling in order to provide for continuous supply of suitable drinking water.

The training program was evaluated by all participants with high grades and it was pointed out that it is necessary for the utilities to establish teams for crises management and all members of the teams to be trained, at least once per year.

It came up from the training that it is necessary to translate the standards and have them available in Macedonian: MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 (Security of Drinking Water Supply – Guidelines for Risk and Crisis Management – Part 1: Crisis Management) and MKC EN 15975-2:2013 (Security of Drinking Water Supply – Guidelines For Risk and Crisis Management – Part 2: Risk Management), in order to avoid the mistakes and different interpretation of the terminology (which was detected during the training), and which can be of crucial importance in the crisis and risk management.

ADKOM will organize expert debate in cooperation with the Institute of Standardization of the Republic of North Macedonia (Technical Committee of the Institute of Standardization of the Republic of North Macedonia 17 – Air and Water Quality) in order for stakeholders' representatives to give their input in overcoming different interpretations of standards' terminology.

The cooperation between ADKOM and the National Crisis Management Centre proved to be the correct form of cooperation for capacity building of the utility companies and their crisis management teams.

The program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management” is one of the programs that ADKOM Training Centre will provide for its members in the forthcoming period. This program will be further upgraded and adapted according to the needs of the companies.



11.09.2019

Fourteenth session of the ADKOM Management Board

The Fourteenth session of the ADKOM Management Board was held on September 11, 2019 in Skopje. The members of the Management Board discussed the activities concerning the organization of the international conference, which should take place in 2020. The members were presented with the activities undertaken for the changes in the Jobs Catalogue for the PUC and the plan for the public discussion that will be held on this topic. As one of the more important activities of ADKOM was presented the one undertaken between ADKOM and the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia concerning the findings from the Annual reports on creating a tariff application for the second regulated period and business plans. On this session, the members discussed the possibility of having a joint session of the management boards of ADKOM and ZELS. Also, they examined the possibility of having regional meetings organized by ADKOM to identify pending problems of the PUCs.

11.09.2019

Seventieth session of the Coordinative Committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The Coordinative Committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project met on September 11, 2019, in the Ministry of Finance. The financial specialist of the MSIP project informed the members of the Committee that on the session they would discuss the following topics: three sub-loan agreements, four grant agreements and one evaluation of a grant project. The sub-loan agreements for the following local self-government units were discussed and approved: Krushevo, Gyorche Petrov, Bitola, Novo Selo, Sopsishte, as well as the grant projects with the following local self-government units: Gyorche Petrov, Bitola and Gevgelija. The members of the MSIP Coordinative Committee had no objections concerning the draft texts of the sub-loan agreements and the grant projects, and they were unanimously adopted.

16-17.09.2019

Training on Lobbying and Advocacy / Preparation of Position Papers

The Training on Lobbying and Advocacy / Preparation of Position Papers took place on September 16 and 17, 2019, organized by ADKOM Training Center and in cooperation with the "Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)".

The main goal of the training was familiarization with the advocacy process and acquiring skills for preparation of position papers for the local and central government, as well as other stakeholders, such as donors and international financial institutions.

Specific goals of the training:

1. To provide knowledge for the basic principles of advocacy and lobbying as well as the differences between them.
2. To learn the tools of advocacy and lobbying (including writing policy documents).

24.09.2019

Expert debate on the standards MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 and MKC EN 15975-2:2013

On September 24, 2019, the ADKOM Training Center, with the support of the RCDN project organized an expert debate on the standards MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 and MKC EN 15975-2:2013.

The specific goals of the debate were:

- To present the pilot trainings from the ADKOM Training Program on Water Safety: Crisis Management and Risk Management
- To initiate the translation of the standards MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 and MKC EN 15975-2:2013 and their availability in Macedonian language.
- To overcome various interpretations of the standards' terminology.

In the period from April to August, ADKOM organized trainings for four pilot PUCs in its Training Center on the subject "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management". The trainings were implemented in collaboration with the Crises Management Center and supported by the Vienna Office of the World Bank, and the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area, with headquarters in Vienna. As one of the identified next steps from the trainings, was the need for translation and avail

ability in Macedonian language of the standards MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 and MKC EN 15975-2:2013. ADKOM initiated an expert debate for the translation and interpretation of the terms in order to avoid mistakes and different interpretations of the terminology (as detected on the trainings), which might have crucial importance in implementing the standards.

Some of the main conclusions were as follows:

- ADKOM translated and edited both standards, and after the experts debate will also submit the comments concerning the terminology of the translations to the Standardization Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia (The Technical Committee of the Standardization Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia – Quality of Air and Water).
- The Standardization Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia should establish a working group (upon recommendation from ADKOM, in which the following institutions should have their representatives: ADKOM, Crises Management Center, Protection and Rescue Directorate, Food and Veterinary Agency), which shall work on the standards and then published them on the web site and call for a public debate about the standards. After the public debate, it is expected that the standards will be verified and ready to be put into use.
- The standards have a designation MKC, as this designation is used for the country where the standard is translated; however the standards come from Europe. The text of the standard is identical for all European countries..

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Regional meetings with the PUC directors

Harmonizing joint standings on improvement of working conditions for the providers of utility services

One of the key activities of AKDOM, undertaken in 2018 was the implementation of the Project "Support in establishing a platform for dialogue concerning water services in Republic of Macedonia", where several round tables were organized on the main challenges and possible solutions in the water sector.

The stakeholders in the water sector demonstrated huge interest and took active participation in the round tables, thereby contributing to the dialogue. In order for this good practice to continue in the future, and the collaboration within the water sector stakeholders to continue, there was an initiative for a Memorandum of Understanding among ADKOM, the Association of Local Self Governments, Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, and the regional project "Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)", implemented by the Swiss and German Governments.

ADKOM organized four regional meetings in September and October:

- I. 26.09.2019 – Mavrovo
- II. 27.09.2019 – Radovish
- III. 01.10.2019 – Rankovci
- IV. 02.10.2019 – Kavadarci

As main identified issues that bother most of the PUCs were:

1. Huge debts of the PUCs;
2. Lack of funds for payment of debts to EVN;
3. Lack of funds for payment of debts to the Public Revenue Office (PRO) and the contributions for health and pension;
4. Problems with paying of VAT;
5. Problems with collecting payments for raw drinking water by the UCs;
6. Problems in collecting payments from the service beneficiaries;
7. Defining of a social category and collection of bills;
8. High prices and debt to "Vodostopanstvo" SA;
9. PUCs pay a very high price for the raw drinking water;
10. Huge maintenance (fixed) costs;
11. Legal regulations concerning the status of the employees in the PUCs (administrative servants / public services providers);

12. Overburdening with legal obligations and procedures;
13. Amendments to the law concerning penalizing and cutting off beneficiaries from the network due to inability to pay debts;
14. Lack of vehicles and machinery for executing the main activities of the PUCs;
15. Inadequate preparation of bidding documents by the municipalities for part of the vehicles and machinery. After receiving the vehicles and the machinery, PUCs are not able to maintain them
16. Law on Cemeteries, especially the part concerning their maintenance;
17. Outmoded water supply and sewage network;
18. Lack of adequate training of employees concerning waste water treatment plants.
19. Providing funds for the waste water treatment plants and putting them into use;
20. Problems in taking over rural water systems;
21. Problems with illegal plugs into the network from the beneficiaries (legal and natural persons);
22. Problems with calibration of meters ;
23. Fountains maintenance and increase funds in the budget for this purpose;
24. Increased waste of waters (50-60%);
25. Misuse of drinking water by the beneficiaries (used for watering plants etc.)
26. Utilities inspectors are not present on-site, therefore the laws cannot be enforced;
27. Waste and waste dumps management, procurement of containers and waste bins;
28. Management of hospitality premises, which encumbers the operations of the PUCs;
29. Problems with the implementation of the Law on trading on green markets;
30. Management with livestock market and inability to obey all legal provision and criteria;
31. Lack of support and cooperation with the municipality;
32. Lack of information for procurement of equipment, grants and donations.

Proposals for overcoming the problems and challenges:

1. Funds to be allocated from the State Budget for the payment of debts of PUCs.
2. Organize a conference for all directors of the PUCs on 28.10.2019, before the 15th anniversary of ADKOM.
3. Share identified topics on the conference and organize media coverage of the conference in order to lobby before the Central Government.
4. Strengthen inspections.

1. Relieve PUCs from payment of contributions.
2. Decrease VAT on waste.
3. From the water fund, towards which PUCs pay on monthly basis, provide projects on which PUCs could apply independently and/or get grants.
4. Organize a meeting with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (MOEPP) concerning licenses for wells as well as waters discharged into sewages.

09.10.2019

Meeting of the Working Group for reviewing the draft – catalogue of jobs

On October 9, 2019, in the executive office of ADKOM, a meeting was held with the members of the Working Group and the representative of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIOA, Ms. Emilija Chukikj. On the meeting the members of the Working Group reviewed the comments on the contents of the Draft Catalogue of Jobs in the PUCs, and prepared a manual for reading the catalogue which was sent to all PUCs.

16.10.2019

Fifteenth session of the ADKOM Management Board

On 16.10.2019, in Pelince, the fifteenth session of ADKOM Management Board took place. The members of the Management Board had detailed discussion regarding the report on the regional meetings with the PUCs and the identified problems such as: Huge debts of the PUCs; Lack of funds for payment of debts to EVN; Lack of funds for payment of debts to the Public Revenue Office (PRO) and the contributions for health and pension; Problems with paying of VAT; Problems in collecting payments from the service beneficiaries; Legal regulations concerning the status of the employees in the PUCs (administrative servants / public services providers); Overburdening with legal obligations and procedures; Lack of vehicles and machinery for executing the main activities of the PUCs; lack in taking over rural water systems; Problems with calibration of meters ;Waste and waste dumps management, procurement of containers and waste bins; Problems with the implementation of the Law on trading on green markets; Management with livestock market and inability to obey all legal provision and criteria etc. Also, the members of the Management Board discussed the preparations for the 15th anniversary of ADKOM, by the executive office.

28.10.2019

15th anniversary of ADKOM

At the 15th anniversary of ADKOM, which is an association in which more than 80 public utilities companies are members, many of the problems were discussed openly. Also, a plead was sent to the Central and Local Government to review all aspects and harmful consequences from the enforcement of the Law on trading on green markets, on the debts of the PUCs to the public and private institutions, the problems caused by the current status of the employees in the PUCs, the lack of vehicles and mechanization in the PUCs, human resources and the low wages in the PUCs.

“The public utility companies are very important to the everyday lives of the citizens, so that they may live in a clean, healthy and dignified environment. United in one association, where they can exchange experiences and set priorities, the members of ADKOM contribute as responsible companies”, said the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Zaev in his address.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Zaev, found the role of the PUCs to be very important in their municipalities and that it is crucial for ADKOM to take initiative and articulate joint directions and recommendations and achieve a higher degree of functionality of the PUCs for the development and quality of the services delivered to the citizens and the communities.

“The ideas and motives born 15 years ago, to establish ADKOM as a non-profit organization for the public utility providers demonstrated to be justified, rational and sustainable. ADKOM is active in all areas within the scope of the activities of the PUCs”, said the Chairman of ADKOM’s Management Board, Mr. Zoran Georgiev and he added that “today ADKOM is a necessary and important mechanism of coordination, networking, lobbying and representing of the PUCs”.

During the ceremony, it was announced that ADKOM established a Training center in order to support the capacity building of its members, and that they can acquire knowledge and exchange experiences in such Training Center; it was also pointed out that ADKOM is part of the regional initiatives for capacity building of associations, utility companies and local governments, such as the Danube Learning Partnership of IAWD and the regional project “Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)”, implemented by GIZ and financed by the Swiss and German Governments. One part of the international collaboration of ADKOM is the participation on the regional and international conferences and fairs and the bilateral collaboration with similar associations from the region. Also, it was announced that ADKOM collaborates closely with the Ministries within the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and in the last two years has been working intensively with the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia.

“ADKOM collaborates with citizens associations with the local and central government, and we are always ready to initiate and motivate growth, as we are convinced that the utility company has a great potential to be an active stakeholder in joint long-term development strategy of the country”, said the chairman of ADKOM.

During his speech, the chairman of ADKOM pointed out that ADKOM is working actively on stimulating the dialogue among the stakeholders in the utilities sector by organizing various events. In that context the signed Memorandum of Understanding among ADKOM, the Association of Local Self Governments, Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, and the regional project “Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)”, is a platform for initiating, maintaining and forwarding of such a dialogue in the water supply sector, and at the same time it gives a framework for a dialogue with the stakeholders in all other utilities services.

31.10.2019

Round Table “First Regulated Period – Acquired Experiences”

On October 31, 2019, ADKOM’s Training Center, in collaboration with the project “Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)”, organized the Round Table “First Regulated Period – Acquired Experiences”, in light of the well established practice for dialogue.

Many representatives of the public utilities companies took participation on the Round Table and they discussed the problems they faced in the past period. After an elaborate discussion the following conclusions were made:

- The first regulated period is just a beginning of the reform. It offers the possibility to learn from it, and implement the learned lessons in the second regulated period.
- Lack of unified internal accounting systems and book-keeping of expenses in a different manner in every PUC, is a huge problem. Also, it was pointed out that this problem may be observed when giving different and often contradictory data from the technical and financial sector.
- The huge differences between planned and implemented investments have been detected as some of the major problems in the first regulated period. The investments planned by the local self-government will not be taken into consideration i.e. only the investments planned by the PUCs shall be taken into consideration when setting the regulatory tariffs for the second regulated period.
- In the meantime, it will not be possible to upgrade the platform of the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia and a tariff model in Excel will be used for entry and calculation of data. The shared difficulties concerning the feeding and using the tariff model have been taken into consideration and possible solutions for them will be requested from ADKOM and from the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- ADKOM will continue to look for funds for supporting the following processes: 1) preparation and submission of reports from the PUCs in municipalities under 10,000 inhabitants; 2) review, preparation and submission of necessary documentation for the second regulated period by PUCs in municipalities with over 10,000 inhabitants.
- ADKOM will plan and implement trainings that will strengthen the capacities of the PUCs, in order to have a successful implementation of the second regulated period and submission of reports from the smaller companies.
- The deadline for submission of new request with BP and PPT must be respected, which currently is March 2020.



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05.11.2019

Round Table “Availability and accessibility to resources for urban and physical planning and modeling of GIS models for PUC and Local-Self Government needs “

On November 5, 2019, the ADKOM Training Center, in cooperation with the project “Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)”, organized the Round Table “Availability and accessibility to resources for urban and physical planning and modeling of GIS models for PUC and Local-Self Government needs”, in light of continuing the good practice of established dialogue.

The objective of the Round Table was to initiate a dialogue between the ministries and authorities with the PUC and Local Self-Government on the available resources for planning and modeling of GIS models for the needs of the PUCs.

Specific purposes:

- To inform the Local Self-Government and PUCs on the existence and availability of various resources for planning and modeling of GIS models owned by the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy.
- To identify the needs of the Local Self-Government and PUCs and the possibilities for joint collaboration and partnership of the stakeholders in developing the system for creation, update and use of data as resources for urban and physical planning and GIS modeling.

In the introductory speech, Mr. Vrteski informed the attendees that first an insight will be given into the project “Managing infrastructural assets – consultation services for PUCs of South East Europe” and the needs arising from the project, followed by presentations from the representatives of the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy on the existing and available resources for planning and modeling of GIS models.

Mr. Vrteski gave a brief summary of the activities within the project “Managing infrastructural assets”, putting the accent on the software EDAMS, managed by EDAMS Technology and on the integrated management of the infrastructural assets and need of geographic data of PUCs and adequate ortophoto maps.

Mr. Darko Burovski, Head of Geodetic Affairs with the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre, spoke of the authorizations of the Agency for Real Estate Cadastre and presented the geodetic and cadastral products. In his presentation he gave a detailed explanation of the cartographic products of the agency, such as

aerophotos, ortophoto maps, printed maps and the digital terrain model. He also presented the framework and the services of the Agency, i.e. he gave more data on the rulebook, the specification, the meta data catalogue, tariff models and the access for submitting a request for data from the distribution system.

Mr. Ljupcho Chadinoski, Advisor for technical support in the Unit for identification of cadastral parcels in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy presented graphic data owned by the Ministry. He presented the ortophoto maps for 2009 and 2017 as one of the products created by the Ministry, but, as stipulated in the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, these may be used only by the authorities.

After concluding the discussion, the moderator of the Round Table shared the following conclusions:

- Even though the ortophoto maps for 2009 are available to buy they deviate from the actuality.
- One of the most crucial needs identified at the Round Table is the accessibility to the new ortophoto maps from 2017. These are available, but only to the authorities, and not to third parties. This means that these maps cannot be obtained from the municipalities, as the municipalities are not on the list of institutions authorized to use such maps. If the ortophoto maps are not made available to third parties soon, the same problem was with those from 2009 will be repeated – they will become unusable. The time period of recording should be between 3 and 5 years.
- It is necessary to bring up, in a new unit of time, the need of ortophoto maps, by the PUCs and the Local-Self Governments, so that these are made available. ADKOM will address officially the stakeholders such as: the Association of Local Self-Governments, the Agency for Real estate Cadastre, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Government in order to initiate a change in the legislation, so that the municipalities and the PUCs are included in the entities authorized to use the ortophoto maps free of charge, or to introduce tariffs for third parties using the ortophoto maps from 2017.
- Need of initiatives and specific actions in order to raise the awareness on the need of special data and therefore lobby to the Central Government.

06.11.2019

Seventy second session of the Coordinative Committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The Financial Management Expert of the MSIP opened the 72nd session of the Coordinative Committee of the Municipal Services Improvement Project – MSIP and introduced the independent consultant, hired as technical support of the municipalities, beneficiaries of the sub-loan within the Second Project for Municipal Services Improvement for Urban Review, who explained that on this session the reports on the urban review of three municipalities will be presented: Kavadarci, Pehchevo and Resen. On this session the following sub-loan agreements were presented and adopted: Gostivar, Dolnenin, Novaci and grant agreements with Local Self-Government of Radovish and Mavrovo Rostushe. The members of the MSIP Coordinative Committee had no objections and unanimously adopted the reports for the urban reviews, for grant for poor areas/social inclusion for the municipalities of Kavadarci, Pehchevo and Resen and adopted the agreements for sub-loans and the grant agreements.

13-14.11.2019,

Two-day Workshop on “Lobbying and Advocacy “

On November 13 and 14, 2019, ADKOM organized a two-day workshop for the members of the Management Board and the directors of the PUCs from the bigger municipalities.

The objective of the workshop was to introduce the directors of the PUC with the topic of Lobbying and Advocacy, as well as to create position papers and round tables on the same topic.

It was pointed out that ADKOM organized trainings for the committees on the subject of Lobbying and Advocacy and then organized regional meetings in order to identify the challenges in the utilities sector. After the topics were identified, they were given priorities and the following topics were individualized:

1. Need of PUCs for equipment and mechanization
2. Legal regulation of the status of employees in the PUCs (administrative workers vs. service providers)
3. Debts to public institutions

In order to overcome these challenges, Ms. Stojanovska announced that ADKOM will hire internal consultants who will work on the position papers for the three priority topics, which would then be promoted and used for lobbying to the Central Government. This activity

should be finalized by end of November 2019, and in December 2019, two round tables should be organized on which the position papers would be shared with the PUCs and the other stakeholders.

Mr. Georgiev joined the discussion and pointed out that he is a strong believer of lobbying for the modernization of the PUCs. He also stressed that it is necessary to consider the option for public-private partnership and concession, as well as following the examples of the most successful companies in the country. The attendees agreed that this topic should be a priority of the lobbying, however that the position documents will be created for the three topics above, due to their urgent nature and they will be lobbied by the end of 2019.

Signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Crises Management Center (CMC)

On the ceremony for the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, the Chairman of ADKOM, Mr. Zoran Georgiev stated that the successful cooperation between ADKOM and CMC on the implementation of the ADKOM's program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management” and from the joint interest for continuous collaboration, led to the signing of the MoU. Its goal is to establish a system for crisis management and responsible risk management, Mr. Georgiev stated.

The CMS Director, Mr. Agron Buxhaku stated that public utility services are part of the national critical infrastructure and of vital interest to the citizens; therefore they generate a lot of interest for establishing adequate procedures and skills within the organizations and for building internal capacities for successful management of crises. Mr. Buxhaku, also added that the contemporary approach to crises management is for this concept to become part of the regular operations, i.e. of the business continuity of each entity in the National system for crises management.

The Memorandum of Understanding between CMC and ADKOM will give additional contribution to the efforts to establish a reliable national system for crises management, where every entity will have its place and role, according to their authorizations and responsibilities, stated Mr Buxhaku.

Based on the Memorandum, ADKOM and CMC will establish different types of collaboration, among which will be the coordination on including the PUCs, as members of ADKOM, in order to exchange data and information in order to prevent and assess risks, as well as to plan the responses to crises. The collaboration will include also the Regional Centers for crises management by regular information on regular or extraordinary interruptions of services in the area of public utilities, in order to have accurate and timely information for the beneficiaries.

Mr. Georgiev stated that ADKOM and CMC will collaborate, will offer each other help and support in order to exchange knowledge and experience, as well as they will have joint activities for education and capacity building and teams in the PUCs for crises and risk management.

14.11.2019

Sixteenth session of the ADKOM Management Board

The sixteenth session of ADKOM's Management Board was held on November 14, 2019 in Ohrid. The members were presented with the report on the 15th anniversary of ADKOM, a Decision was adopted on the date of the international conference in 2020, and there was a discussion on the Draft Law on Waste Management. On this session, the Management Board unanimously adopted the 2020-2022 Business Plan of ADKOM. Also, the members discussed organizing round tables with authorized Ministries; submitting a petition for reduction of the VAT rate from 18% to 5% on the service "green markets"; and submitting an initiative to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on availability of cartographic products free of charge for the PUCs and municipalities.

26-27.11.2019

IAWD Round Table of Associations of Water Supply Companies from the Danube Region and the Council of D-LeaP Committee

On 26 and 27 November 2019 in Vienna, a round Table was organized by IAWD for the Associations of Water Supply Companies from the Danube Region and the Council of D-LeaP Committee, to which ADKOM participated with its representative. The topics discussed concerned the following: realization of Annual plans of D-LeaP for 2020; additional sources of financing of D-LeaP; development of new curricula within D-LeaP; creating a framework for a list of indicators for D-LeaP; establishing a D-LeaP Advisory Committee. During these two days the associations were able to exchange their experiences.



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03.12.2019

ADKOM participates on RENEXPO, the First Conference for Solid Waste Management – FROM WASTE TO ENERGY and the First Conference for sustainable management of waters in North Macedonia

On December 3, 2019, within the RENEXPO@NMK 2019 Fair in Skopje, REECO International organized RENEXPO the First Conference for Solid Waste Management – FROM WASTE TO ENERGY and the First Conference for sustainable management of waters in North Macedonia. ADKOM took active participation on the conferences with a presentation on the subject: "Reforms in the water supply sector in the Republic of North Macedonia – Focus on PUCs". Also, contacts were established with companies which had their exhibition stands during the conference. On both conferences participated representatives of PUCs, members of ADKOM.

10.12.2019

Round Table "Debts of UCs", within the process of ADKOM's dialogue with the central and local government

On December 10, 2019, ADKOM organized a Round Table on the subject of "Debts of PUCs to public institutions", within the process of ADKOM's dialogue with the central and local government for increased effectiveness and efficiency in providing citizens with utility services.

The main goal of the Round Table was to present identified conditions through analysis conducted by ADKOM and to discuss possible solutions to overcome the identified problems.

Ms. Marija Valakova from PUC "Plavaja" from Radovish and one of the consultants presented the position paper "PUCs debts".

In her presentation, Ms. Marija Valakova gave a short overview of the PUCs which are established to provide utility services and their financial standing, and then the main accent was put on the debts of the PUCs. As major creditors of the PUCs were individuated public institutions and authorities, such as PRO, PDIF (HIF), Local Self-Government Units, ELEM and others. And as major debtors to the PUCs were mentioned Local Self-Government Units, higher education institutions and primary and secondary schools.

In order to overcome the debt problems, Ms. Valakova offered several solutions for the PUCs in her presentation:

- Writing off total debts and interest

- Compensate debts of PUC with the public institutions
- Writing off total debts to Heath Insurance Fund
- Pass a Law on Write off of interest to overdue obligatons
- Signing agreements for payment of debts of PUC to public institutions on 120 installments

After the discussion the moderator shared the conclusions:

- PUCs and the institutions are open to resolving the debt problems
- All settlements done with PUCs for payment of debts should be carefully planned and all segments should be aligned so that the PUCs can keep working but also not generate new debts.
- Coordination and cooperation with the central and local government is essential in order to have a clear picture of their policies and goals and in order to put the focus on the utility services providers.
- The debts, partisanship and need for increased efficiency and effectiveness are too complex subjects and they need to be worked upon actively. The constant dialogue among the stakeholders is essential, in order to actively discuss about the problems and use it as a vehicle to find measures and overcome the problems.
- It is necessary to work on a detailed study in the forthcoming period which will offer research and analysis of the sources of debt of the public companies, to discover the main reasons which cause these sectors to generate debts perpetually.

11.12.2019

Training of trainers

On December 11, 2019, ADKOM in collaboration with Aquasan Network from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) in Skopje, organized a regional training for trainers and moderators for peer exchange for successful infrastructural projects on collection and treatment of waste waters.

The main goal of the event was to prepare the coordinators for trainings in the associations of public companies from the country of the western Balkans, as well as potential trainers and moderators for structural exchange of experiences among peers from PUCs and municipalities as a flexible capacity building format.

The specific goals of the event were:

1. To upgrade the knowledge of the participants for successful organization and implementation of structured peer exchange
2. To present the contents and the curriculum for peer exchange for successful infrastructural projects for collection and treatment of waste waters
3. To present the Manual for trainers and moderators for implementation of structured peer exchange

Besides this the participants had the opportunity to get to know several good practices in the sector, as well as to exchange knowledge and experience in a non formal manner.

The event was organized within the activities of the "Regional Capacities Development Network (RCDN)", where ADKOM is an active member. Sustainable water supply, collection and treatment of waste waters is not based only on improved infrastructure, but also on trained personnel. In the country and in the entire region are being planned and/or executed several major infrastructural projects and so the capacity building of the PUCs and municipalities' employees in the field of water supply, collection and treatment of waste waters is very important.

During next year, ADKOM's Training Centre will organize several events for peer exchange for PUCs and municipalities for successful infrastructural projects for collection and treatment of waste waters.

12.12.2019

First meeting of the Working Group for amendments to the Law on Public Companies

On December 12, 2019, in the premises of the Ministry of Economy, a meeting was held concerning the preparations for the Law on Public Companies. On this meeting ADKOM participated with two representatives, the Ministry of Economy had the following representatives: Mr. Zoran Pavlovski, State Secretary, Biljana Mickovska and Renata Kostovska, employees of the Ministry. At the meeting there were also representatives from the Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIQA, Association of Local Self-Government, Democratic Institute and the City of Skopje. The meeting was organized in order to review the Draft Amendments to the Law on Public Companies which refers to the managing bodies in the public companies, their composition, election, dismissal (director, Management Board, Supervisory Board) as well as the preparations for a new Law on Public Companies, considering that the current Law was adopted in 1996 and so far it had 17 amendments and addenda. Due to the influence that this Law has

on others as well as other laws have on it, it was found adequate that representatives of several Ministries should take participation in the meeting. ADKOM, as an association of public utility companies had already prepared comments on the current Law on Public Companies and detected problems of its members during implementation of the Law. These were submitted to the Ministry of Economy.

17.12.2019

Round Table "Legal status of the employees in PUCs", within the process of ADKOM's dialogue with the central and local government

On December 17, 2019 ADKOM organized the Round Table "Legal status of the employees in PUCs", within the process of ADKOM's dialogue with the central and local government for increased effectiveness and efficiency in providing utility services to the citizens.

The main objective of the Round Table was to support the dialogue between the PUCs, represented by ADKOM, and the stakeholders of the local and central government.

The Round Table was opened by the moderators, Mr. Jane Vrteski. It was pointed out that ADKOM, as an association of all PUCs in R. Macedonia, undertakes several activities to support reforms and develop the sector or public utilities in accordance with the priorities of the local self-governments and the Program of the Government. Therefore ADKOM established a standardized process of dialogue i.e. a dialogue platform with the stakeholders from the local and central government. The dialogue was initiated last year and it will continue in the next year through several activities, and eventually result in a signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among various stakeholders. The subject of legal status of the PUC employees has been part of the dialogue among ADKOM's members and analyzed in a position paper. It has also been identified by ADKOM's committees, the regional meetings with the PUC directors and the plans and meetings of the Management Board of ADKOM.

The moderator presented the agenda and informed the participants that Ms. Valakova from the PUC "Plavaja" Radovish will be the first to present the position paper on the subject of "Legal Status of the PUC employees".

In her presentation, Ms. Valakova gave a short insight in the PUCs established for delivering utility services and stated that due to the vast array of activities executed by the PUCs it is necessary that they have different profiles of employees, also, that the PUCs need to rearrange their operations, in order for them to be able to meet utility needs in timely and quality manner.

Ms. Valakova demonstrated a list of laws connected to the operations of the PUCs and stated that the problems which preoccupy the PUCs are due to disharmonized legislation, which affect significantly the PUCs, and so she stated that it is crucial to establish a dialogue with the ministries in order to overcome the identified influences of the legislation.

In order to overcome the problem with the PUCs' employees' status, Ms. Valakova offered several solutions:

- Amendments to the Law on Employees in the Public Sector, according to the identified remarks [for the solution of this problem, the dialogue with Ministry of Information Society and Administration- MIOA is essential]
- New Collective Agreement for the PUCs with detailed regulation of the sector, the rights and obligations of the employees and employers, in accordance with the viable legislation and; simplification of procedures (for the solution of this problem it will be necessary to establish dialogue with the Unions);
- In the Law on Employees in the Public Sector to differentiate public companies financed from the State Budget and owned by the State from those established by the Councils of the municipalities and self-financed; (for the solution of this problem it is necessary to establish a dialogue with the Ministry of Economy)

After the discussion the moderator shared the following conclusions:

- The ministries are open to solving and overcoming the problems arisen from the legal status of the employees. In the Working Group for the amendments to the Law on Public Companies will be included the members of ADKOM, i.e. the employees of the PUCs.
- The dialogue with the authorized ministries and agencies will continue towards overcoming identified problems concerning the legislation.
- ADKOM will continue with the activities of monitoring problems related to this topic, it will establish additional cooperation with other stakeholders in order to get more detailed analyses and resolve problems more easily.

18.12.2019

Seventeenth session of the ADKOM Management Board

The Seventeenth session of the ADKOM Management Board was held on 18.12.2019 in Tetovo, and the members of the Management Board discussed the

current activities for the forthcoming international conference in 2020; they were also informed on the first meeting on amendments of the Law on Public Companies. The members of ADKOM Management Board were informed on the trainings organized by ADKOM for creating business plan for the second regulated period.

18.12.2019

Second meeting of the Working Group for amendments to the Law on Public Companies

On December 18, 2019 in the Ministry of economy, the Second meeting of the Working Group for amendments to the Law on Public Companies, where the submitted materials on the Law, prepared by the Democratic Institute were reviewed, as well as the additions to the Law concerning the Management and Supervisory Boards. ADKOM submitted the remarks on the current Law, and the PUC Nikola Karev from Probishtip submitted their comments on the amendments to the Law. On the meeting was presented the content of the Law on Senior Executives. The next meeting will be held in January 2020, when ADKOM members will submit proposals concerning the comments from PUC Nikola Karev from Probishtip on the amendments to the Law, as well as prescribing criteria for the election of members in the management and Supervisory Boards, their fees, as well as the costs these are causing to the PUCs.

20.12.2019

Presentation of the Program "Water Safety and Crisis Management"

On December 20, 2019, in Tetovo, ADKOM and the Project "Improving Flood Resistance of the Polog Region", financed by the Swiss Government and implemented by UNDP, organized an event on presenting the results of the ADKOM's Training Program "Water Safety and Crisis Management".

The main objective of the event was for the PUCs and other relevant institutions from the Polog Region to familiarize with the Training Program "Water Safety and Crisis Management" as well as the benefits from the program for capacity building of the PUCs and other institutions for better handling of natural disasters.

Mr. Jane Vrteski, ADKOM consultant and main trainer on the program, had a presentation with which he informed that the Program "Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management". Was developed and supervised by the technical partner, IAWD, the Infraprotect Consortium, together with Energie AG Wasser, Vienna Water and the Austrian Association

for Gas and Water (ÖVGW). Mr. Vrteski added that the program is implemented by national or regional centers, such as ADKOM in our country. The program for the PUCs was implemented in Macedonian language and it was designed based on practical experience. It included a combination of training workshops, which provide tools and techniques for: handling challenges, monitor of practical implementation; it was followed by hands-on training, where the participants implemented the tools and techniques in their environment and developed specific products (diagnostics, action plans tariff plans etc.), stated Mr Vrteski.

Mr. Vrteski informed the employees that ADKOM implemented the program in four PUCs, in Strumica, Prilep, Kochani and Negotino, and it helped support the PUCs in capacity building in order for them to be able to comply with the legal obligations concerning water safety and crisis management.

Mr. Vlado Trifunov shared the experience of PUC "Vodovod" Kochani from the Training Program. He pointed out that the program is a long-term process, but very useful one. He stated that during the program, the team that will manage the crisis was identified, and then it was trained on all positions. Also, they made a model of the water supply system, they had a lot of exercises, and also at the end of the program they mocked up a real crisis and drilled it.

Mr. Stefko Stefanovski, from the Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia addressed the attendees regarding the water safety and crisis management – the legal framework and responsibilities and authorization of the CMC.

The event was closed with a call to the PUCs in the Polog region to apply for the program, stating one more time that the program aims at helping the PUCs in capacity building in order for them to be able to comply with the legal obligations concerning water safety and crisis management.

PHOTO GALLERY





PHOTO GALLERY





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