Project overview


By adopting the Protocol in 2005, Moldova committed to protect human health and well-being by improved water management and by preventing water-related diseases. This European agreement is meant to support the countries, particularly from the Eastern Europe, to attain an adequate supply of safe drinking water and sanitation for everyone, and to protect the water ecosystems.

With the support of SDC and UNECE, the Moldovan authorities responsible for water, environment and health sectors mobilized with the aim of meeting these goals. During the first phase of the project, the national and local targets and target dates were established under the Protocol on Water and Health.

Building upon the previous best practices, the current phase of the project focuses on the development of effective measures to ensure the implementation of the targets, contributing to the advancement of Moldova in fulfilling its commitments under the Protocol on Water and Health.

Problems and potentials

Only 62.5% of the population of Moldova, i.e. 94% of urban and 35.5% of rural populations, has access to improved sources of drinking water. The rural families are still heavily relying on the shallow wells as a source of drinking water, which in the most of cases (8 in 10) does not meet the minimal quality standards. On the other hand, the majority of the rural households (98%) do not use proper sanitation and wastewater treatment systems, polluting even more their water sources and the environment.

The shortage of water supply and sanitation systems, as well as the increased incidence of diseases caused by the consumption of poor quality drinking water, particularly in the rural areas of Moldova, are the issues that have been raised recently more often both by the national authorities and by the civil society.

The Government of Moldova acknowledged the Protocol on Water and Health as a guiding tool towards the development of an effective integrated water management, based on the principles of equitable access, inclusiveness and solidarity. Since signing the Protocol, the Republic of Moldova took significant steps in bringing the legal framework in line with the European Union water directives.

Experience and results

The main result of the first phase of the project was the development of a roadmap of 35 targets and target dates under the Protocol on Water and Health. The Moldovan ministries of Environment
and Health approved the set of targets in October 2010, and ordered the establishment of a multidisciplinary committee in charge of planning, monitoring and implementation of the Protocol.

Beyond the developed set of targets, the project created a platform for continuing policy dialog to secure coordinated planning of activities and allocation of resources involving the national and local authorities, the institutions and the NGOs working in water, environment, sanitation and health sectors.

The experience of the Republic of Moldova in the process of setting targets under the Protocol on Water and Health was internationally recognized as a best practice at the Meeting of Parties of the Protocol on Water and Health in 2010, and is being replicated in Georgia, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan.

The target setting process and recommendations on the measures to be taken towards meeting the national targets under the Protocol were described in the publication “Setting targets and target dates under the Protocol on Water and Health in the Republic of Moldova”.

"Respecting the human right to water and sanitation is not only an economically wise choice, it is also a legal obligation, especially towards those marginalized, vulnerable and neglected."

Catarina de Albuquerque, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation

Current approach
Through the established policy dialog platforms, including the Sector Coordination Council and the EU Water Initiative National Dialog Platform, this phase of the project continues to promote policy coherence across sectors. In addition to creating favourable frame conditions, the project strengthens the capacity of all stakeholders to move forward in the process of implementation of the water and health targets under the Protocol on Water and Health.

Main activities of the phase
- Develop a national action plan and a strategy of mobilizing existing and additional resources to guarantee the financial coverage of actions.
- Train the operators of water and sanitation utilities in the management of water supply and sanitation systems, water safety, the construction of small scale water and sanitation facilities etc.
- Conduct national consultations for the development of new standards and norms that provide for the construction, operation and maintenance of small rural water supply and sanitation systems.
- Create a clearing house to ensure the access to the environmental information and the public participation in decision-making.
- Support awareness raising events aimed at informing the urban and the rural population about water management, legal issues, their rights to water and sanitation services and obligations to protect the sources of water supply.

Project beneficiaries
National and local public authorities responsible for environment, water management, water supply and sanitation, operators of water utilities, environmental NGOs, the population of Moldova.

Overall goal
The population of Moldova, in particular from rural areas, benefits from improved access to safe water and sanitation, reduced water-related diseases and a protected environment, through the implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health.

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