

MACEDONIA: A CASE STUDY ON COMMITMENTS-RELATED BEST PRACTICE OR LESSONS LEARNED IN WATER

This Case Study was provided in consultations with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy of Republic of Macedonia.

It refers to the recommendation from the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development for achieving sustainable development and a higher quality of life for all people, by reduction and elimination of unsustainable patterns of consumption and by promotion of appropriate demographic policies.

Regional Water Supplying System “Studencica”, Republic of Macedonia

The characteristics of this Regional Water Supplying System are that it covers two river catchments, 20 local self-government units, with approximately 70.000 people, who are with different ethnical background. The municipalities are with different level of development and demography.

The basic, initial reason for building and operating of this system was the lack of drinking water in this region, which is, also its main purpose. Yet, in the periods of the year when there are major quantities of water, it is used for irrigation.

In the vicinity of the spring, there are no waste disposal nor industrial capacities. The origin of the spring is otherwise located in a cavern, in a karstic area and there is no human influence due the fact that there are no inhabited places (settlements) around it. There has been no degradation in the catchment area - moreover, it is forested. The river bed is well regulated.

The major challenge was to increase the level of awareness of the local people about the importance and necessity of the water as a resource and as a public wealth, as well as changing their unsustainable patterns of its usage. In that sense, the increasing of the level of awareness was focused on promotion of the approach: “everyone to have a little quantity of water is better than small number of people to have huge quantity of water”.

Positive effect is that the operation of this regional water supply system did not endanger nor disturb the biological balance of the spring, which was extremely important, taking into account that we are dealing here with clean spring water. It was an imperative to provide its comprehensive protection in order to achieve normal functioning of the ecosystem. Namely, the essential biological minimum of the spring was ensured, which is 10% of the total annual capacity of the spring. In this way the supply of the population, in the largest part of the year with the required quantity of quality water was ensured. In the periods when the quantities of water can not meet the demand, the population is supplied by water from their own local springs. The water is of first (highest) quality, which needs to be chlored only. The abundance of the spring is between 800 and 1000 litres per second.

The most persistent problem was the shortage of elementary cooperation among the local inhabitants who, belonging to different cultural, social and economic communities, had different approach to the use of water, as well as different (often opposed) attitudes regarding conscience and awareness. It remains also as a future challenge.

The basic benefit achieved is the establishment of the Public Enterprise for water management, by which the management of this resource is transferred/passes to the end users. The Public Enterprise provides even distribution of water in the region.

However, the most significant achievement represents the prevention of displacement and migration of the local population, which gives way to encouragement of appropriate sustainable economic development.

In addition to this, benefits can be expected in the fact that the various ethnicities can be brought together, coexistence and cooperation in all areas of living may improve, the tensions may ease, a contribution to the poverty reduction can be made, the population mortality may decrease, while health condition of the population can be promoted, etc.
