

EVENT

# Introducing Utility Management Training: Our First Water Service Management Master Class

The Utility Management Training program (UMT) is the result of a cooperation of stakeholders in the water sector, with IAWD as the prime organizer, the World Bank Group and the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of the Sofia University as institutional partners, Energie AG and Sofia Water as utility partners, and range of competence partners, among them Siemens and Econoler.

IAWD President Walter Kling stated in his introductory statement:

“It’s great that we could involve such a wide variety of stakeholders in the program. This helps to cover a wide spectrum of special issues, far beyond the broad perspective taught at business schools, technical colleges and universities.”

### **“The new kid on the block”**

Raimund Mair, the Danube Water Program coordinator at the World Bank, put the program in a broader perspective in his statement:

“When you go about improving infrastructures, there is an undisputable need to further human capacities. Among the wide range of capacity building efforts in the water sector, UMT is the new kid on the block. Let’s see what it has to offer.”

Utility Management Training is modular training program with a core target audience of mid-career professionals in water utilities.

“This program is for technically-oriented managers in search of a wider grasp of financial, commercial and regulatory aspects, and for non-technical managers who want to understand networks and plants, energy and asset management, investment planning, etc.”,

said IAWD program manager Katerina Schilling during her presentation on the course logistics.

The program will also explicitly welcome water facility managers of large industrial plants, experts and politicians administrations, regulating authorities and basin directorates, technology vendors and service providers, and also newcomers to the sector, like, e.g. senior officers who join water companies and their boards with limited sector-specific experience. Participation is strictly limited to 20 participants per cycle.

### **“Equipping managers”**

“The curriculum aims at equipping managers with applicable tools and techniques that help them to bridge gaps between operations and management”,

said IAWD expert Rado Rusev during his presentation on the course content.

The UMT will consist of eight English language modules, spread over two years. Each module consists of an introductory webinar, a one-week residential activity and some follow-up work, spread over a three-month period. The course ends with a graduation project implementing approaches, tools and techniques taught during the UMT. The University of Sofia as the academic partner of the

program will issue the graduation certificate including ECTS credits that can be used as a foundation for a Master degree.

The course will cover all aspects of utility management, and program trainers Sylvia Dimova and Albert Williams offered examples for lesson content, presenting a financial management pack for accounting management and an energy efficiency approach that, in one case, reduced pump system energy consumption by 42 percent.

### **“Developing the next generation”**

Evis Gjebrea, Tirana Water Utilities, recommends the program not only because it covers very specific knowledge that is difficult to acquire on the job, but also because it helps to create a network of people with the similar challenges sharing their experiences:

**“Here, like in any other sector, it is important to learn from your peers.”**

Teodor Popa, APA Brasov, views UMT as a great help to shorten the learning curve.

**"All too often we hear somebody say `I'm not an engineer – I'm an accountant´ - or the other way round. It is highly important that managers understand all aspects of the operations, their customers, and what is happening in the field."**

Marco Beros of the European Investment Bank is also enthusiastic about the program and recommends that utilities send their managers. Elisabeta Poci, Deputy Managing Director at SHUKALB, mentioned that SHUKALB's market research proved strong interest for advanced training and calls for systematic investment:

**“We need to develop the next generation utility managers, and this is exactly what this program does.”**

As mentioned before, participation in the Utility Management Training is limited to 20 participants per cycle. Those considering participation should therefore move quickly. Find all information on the UMT under [here](#). Download the [UMT leaflet](#) to browse the content. under

For further inquiries, please do not hesitate to contact [office@d-leap.org](mailto:office@d-leap.org) or, directly, [weller@iawd.at](mailto:weller@iawd.at) or [schilling@iawd.at](mailto:schilling@iawd.at).