



# **BEYOND UTILITY REACH?**

## **HOW TO CLOSE THE RURAL ACCESS GAP TO WASTEWATER TREATMENT AND SANITATION SERVICES**

**RURAL WASTEWATER  
TREATMENT WORKSHOP**  
**JANUARY 19-20, 2021**

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## II. SESSION OVERVIEW

<b>Tuesday, 19 January</b>	
13:30	<b>Start of Day 1 - Welcome and introduction</b>
13:40	<p><b>Session 1: Setting the scene – policy context and regional analytical work in field of rural wastewater management</b></p> <p>Presentation of status overview, existing EU framework and requirements, findings and recommendations from advisory and analytical works on the topic of rural wastewater</p>
15:00	<i>Break</i>
15:15	<p><b>Session 2: The enabling environment - approaches to wastewater management at national level (legal, financial, regulatory)</b></p> <p>Presentation of rural wastewater management experiences from individual countries, including policy and regulatory-related challenges</p>
16:30	<i>End of Day 1</i>

<b>Wednesday, 20 January</b>	
13:30	<b>Start of Day 2</b>
13:30	<p><b>Session 3: Good practices at municipal level</b></p> <p>Showcasing examples of good practices in the development of rural wastewater projects/systems at municipal level from different countries</p>
14:45	<i>Break</i>
15:00	<p><b>Session 4: Technical solutions and developments in rural wastewater management</b></p> <p>Review of experience in the implementation of different technical solutions, including small scale, compact, low-cost and nature-based technologies</p>
16:15	<p><b>Session 5: Wrap-up and closing</b></p> <p>Key take-away messages from the event</p>
16:45	<i>End of Day 2</i>

## III. THE ORGANIZERS

### 1. World Bank Danube Water Program

The World Bank / IAWD Danube Water Program supports **smart policies, strong utilities and sustainable water and wastewater services** in the Danube region by partnering with regional, national and local stakeholders, promoting an informed policy dialogue around the sector's challenges and strengthening the technical and managerial capacity of the sector's utilities and institutions.

Governments and water professionals in the Danube region face a double challenge of meeting their citizens' demand for universal, good quality, efficient, and financially sound or - in one word - sustainable water and wastewater services, while catching up to the environmental requirements of the European Union *acquis communautaire*. To address this double challenge, the World Bank and the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) have partnered in the frame of the Danube Water Program, with a 13 million Euro, three-phased financing from the Government of Austria.

#### What has the Program achieved?

The Danube Water Program was formally launched in May 2013 in partnership with line ministries, regulators, waterworks associations, and local government representatives of a dozen countries in South-East Europe. Since the launch of the Program, knowledge exchanges among more than a thousand sector professionals and policy makers in the region and beyond has taken place. In 2015 a State of the Sector report was launched (SoS 2015), and updated in 2018 (SoS 2018), which are flagship products of the Danube Water Program, next to additional analytical pieces exploring status and trends in wastewater management, rural water supply and sanitation and agglomeration of utilities. Capacity building programs benefiting over 170 utilities have been undertaken under the region wide Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) involving cooperation with all the national water utility associations. Numerous local initiatives worth more than € 1,000,000 through competitive grants have been supported.

[www.danube-water-program.org](http://www.danube-water-program.org)

[www.iawd.at](http://www.iawd.at)

### 2. International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

The International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) works to ensure the sustainable and equitable use of waters in the Danube River Basin. The work of the ICPDR is based on the Danube River Protection Convention (DRPC), the major legal instrument for cooperation and transboundary water management in the Danube River Basin.

The ICPDR addresses the entire Danube River Basin, comprising 19 countries, making it the most international river basin in the world. Including more than 300 tributaries and connected groundwater resources too, this makes the ICPDR one of the largest and most active international river basin management commissions in the world.

In 2000, the ICPDR contracting parties nominated the ICPDR as the platform for the implementation of all transboundary aspects of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and development of the International Danube River Basin Management Plans.

#### The goals of the ICPDR

Three key elements of the ICPDR's management plans provide the three pillars of action that are needed for the Danube to achieve: i) a Cleaner Danube – this means reducing pollution from settlements, industry and agriculture; ii) a Healthier Danube – this means protecting rivers as ecosystems that provide a living environment for aquatic animals and plants, as well as services for people such as drinking water and recreation; and iii) a Safer Danube – this means a safer environment for people to live without the fear of major flood damage.

[www.icpdr.org](http://www.icpdr.org)

## IV. TUESDAY, JANUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>

### 1. Setting the Scene – Policy context and regional analytical work in the field of rural wastewater management

**Date:** Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 13:30 to 15:00  
**Location:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ)  
**Chairs:** Mr. Raimund Mair, World Bank and Mr. Adam Kovacs, ICPDR

#### Context and objective

For most of the countries in the Danube region, managing wastewater remains an important challenge to reach water resources protection targets, especially in the context of EU accession and harmonization processes. Analytical work shows that approximately 22 million people remain without flush toilet access in the region. However, Goal 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underlines the countries' commitment to achieving universal access to water services for all by 2030. In that context, the issue of providing adequate wastewater collection, treatment and disposal in rural areas is often a neglected topic, being overshadowed by wastewater management and compliance requirements of much larger agglomerations in urban areas. The objective of the session is to provide an overview on the policy context, existing frameworks, challenges and first insights into possible approaches and solutions for wastewater management in small agglomerations and rural settlements.

#### Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
13:30	10'	<b>Welcome</b> and introduction to the event	<b>Raimund Mair</b> , Senior Water Resource Management Specialist, World Bank, Austria, and <b>Adam Kovacs</b> , Technical Expert on Pollution Control, ICPDR
13:40	15'	<b>Overview</b> of existing framework, status and analytic review on rural wastewater management in the Danube region	<b>Günter Langergraber</b> , Institute for Sanitary Engineering and Water Pollution Control, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
13:55	15'	<b>EU wastewater legislation</b> and relevance for wastewater management in rural areas	<b>Michel Sponar</b> , Deputy Head of Unit, Marine Environment and Water Industry, European Commission, DG Environment
14:10	15'	<b>Regional overview</b> on water quality and wastewater situation in the Danube River Basin	<b>Elena Tuchi</b> , Director of Department, National Administration Romanian Waters and Chairperson of ICPDR Pressures and Measures Expert Group
14:25	15'	<b>Approaches and analytical insights</b> on wastewater service provision in rural areas	<b>Susanna Smets</b> , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank, Washington DC
14:40	20'	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	Moderated by <b>Raimund Mair</b> and <b>Adam Kovacs</b>



## 2. The enabling environment: approaches to wastewater management at national level (legal, financial, regulatory)

**Date:** Tuesday, January 19<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 15:15 – 16:30  
**Location:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ)  
**Chair:** Mr. Adam Kovacs

### Context and objective

The EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) obliges EU Member States to construct sewer systems and introduce at least secondary (biological) treatment at all agglomerations bigger than 2,000 Population Equivalents (PE) and also at those below 2,000 PE where sewer systems are already in place. Complying with these ambitious requirements on one hand brings positive impacts on water quality and the environment, on the other hand it has substantial financial, administrative and regulatory implications. While investment priorities are usually set to mid-sized and large agglomerations, construction projects are often lagging behind in small (rural) communities where lack of management and technical capacity and affordability issues may further hinder measure implementation and where decentralized systems may offer an alternative to be considered. The UWWTD also states that individual and other appropriate systems (IAS) as exceptions shall be used if constructing wastewater collection system is economically not feasible or would not result in environmental benefit. However, it remained ambiguous how the provision of IAS to be justified and an appropriate legal, administrative and regulatory framework for applying IAS is still missing in many countries.

By inviting high-level government representatives from three Danube countries, the session will focus on the policy-making aspects of wastewater management in small (rural) agglomerations and individual treatment systems. Legislative background, measure implementation, financing possibilities and regulatory challenges will be presented and discussed.

### Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
15:15	5'	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Mr. Adam Kovacs</b>
15:20	10'	Presentation of country experience in rural wastewater management from the region - <b>Hungary</b>	Speaker t.b.c.
15:30	10'	Presentation of country experience in rural wastewater management from the region - <b>Romania</b>	<b>Gheorghe Constantin</b> , Director, Directorate for Water Resources Management, Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, Romania
15:40	10'	Presentation of country experience in rural wastewater management from the region - <b>Austria</b>	<b>Heide Müller-Rechberger</b> , Head of Department, Directorate-General I – Water Management, Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism, Austria
15:50	30'	<b>Discussion</b>	Moderated by <b>Mr. Adam Kovacs</b>
16:20	10'	<b>Summary of event day 1</b>	
16:30		<b>End of day 1</b>	

## V. WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>

### 3. Good practices at the municipal level

**Date:** Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 13:30 to 14:45  
**Location:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ)  
**Chair:** Mr. Stjepan Gabric

#### Context and objective

While institutional and national requirements for wastewater management usually define expected effluent standards and compliance periods, rural wastewater management approaches chosen by individual local government units and responsible service providers to achieve given requirements vary significantly depending on the combination of economic, social and technical possibilities. A particular challenge remains in the need to cover the costs of operation of rural wastewater systems, while keeping tariffs at the relatively low, and maintaining service affordability for the local population with income that is commonly, at average lower than in urban areas.

The objective of this session is to showcase different examples of good practices in the development of rural wastewater projects/systems at municipal level from countries of the region and EU. During the session representatives from managing institutions will present their experience in the development and operation of rural wastewater management systems.

#### Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
13:30	5'	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Stjepan Gabric</b> , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank
13:35	15'	Rural wastewater management in Serbia	<b>Prvoslav Marjanovic</b> , Advisor to Director, Institute for Water Resources Development`Jaroslav Cerni`, Beograd, Serbia
13:50	15'	Organization of wastewater management in rural area of Upper Austria- Upper Austrian Water Association	<b>Wolfgang Aichlseder</b> , General Manager, OÖ WASSER Genossenschaftsverband, Linz, Austria
14:05	15'	Organization and costs of wastewater treatment in low density area of Portugal	<b>Nuno Broco</b> , Head of Engineering Department, Aquas de Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal
14:20	25'	<b>Discussion</b>	
14:45		<b>End of Session 3</b>	

## 4. Technical solutions and developments in rural wastewater management

**Date:** Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 15:00 to 16:15  
**Location:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ)  
**Chair:** Mr. Stjepan Gabric

### Context and objective

Rural, commonly small scale, wastewater management technology is often in shadow of large, urban wastewater management and treatment schemes. While some of the technological approaches taken mimic conventional, urban treatment technology reduced in scale, the recent period is characterized by the development of original, purposely developed rural wastewater systems. The trend that is particularly important is the development and application of compact, nature-based treatment processes, that are simple to operate and have low operation and maintenance costs, which is of key importance considering a lack of operation capacity for system management in rural communities. Further subgroups are technological solutions for wastewater treatment of individual households or objects in isolated areas, where challenges of rural wastewater treatment are further enhanced due to very small size, need to keep operation costs at low level without economy of scale, and lack of system operation capacity at the site.

The objective of this session is to present experience in the implementation of different technical solutions for rural wastewater collection and treatment, with a focus on small scale, compact, low-cost and nature-based technologies. The session will present which technical possibilities are available and how they work in practice.

### Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
15:00	5'	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Mr. Stjepan Gabric</b> , Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist, World Bank
15:05	15'	Overview on small-scale/decentralized wastewater treatment technologies and their performance	<b>Günter Langergraber</b> , Institute for Sanitary Engineering and Water Pollution Control, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria
15:20	15'	Individual wastewater treatment systems in Polish rural areas with the consideration of specificity of mountain regions	<b>Andrzej Jucnerski</b> , Institute of Technology and Life Sciences · Mountai Centre of Research and Implementation in Tylicz, Poland (t.b.c.)
15:35	15'	Presentation of nature-based solutions, constructed wetlands in Slovenia	<b>Anja Potokar</b> , Engineer, Limnos Ltd., Company for applied ecology, Ljubljana, Slovenia
15:50	25'	<b>Discussion</b>	
16:15		<b>End of session</b>	



## 5. Wrap up and Closing

**Date:** Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>  
**Time:** 16:15 to 16:45  
**Location:** [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k4i7LijCS2yFDqRUVsoAwQ)  
**Chair:** Mr. Raimund Mair and Mr. Adam Kovacs

### Context and objective

This session will allow to summarize the key take home messages, draw conclusions, reflect on the lessons learned and identify potential future actions.

### Session structure

Time		Content	Speaker
16:15	15'	<b>Summary</b> , conclusions, lessons learned and potential future actions	<b>Günter Langergraber</b> , Institute for Sanitary Engineering and Water Pollution Control, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna
16:30	10'	<b>Q&amp;A</b>	
16:40	5'	<b>Closing words</b> by event coordinators	<b>Raimund Mair</b> and <b>Adam Kovacs</b>
16:45		<b>End of session</b>	

## VI. WORKSHOP SUPPORTERS

The organization of the 2021 Rural Wastewater Treatment Workshop has been made possible through institutional support from:

 Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Finance

## VII. LOGISTICAL DETAILS

### Registration

Please register yourself to participate in the 2021 Rural Wastewater Treatment Workshop using the [Registration link](#). As soon as you have registered, you will receive a link via email to join the event.

### Zoom

The 2021 Rural Wastewater Treatment Workshop will be brought to you by the Zoom webinar tool. We recommend to download the Zoom App (for PC and mobile devices) [here](#).

### GDPR Disclaimer

The event will be fully recorded. We reserve the right to use the recording for publication on our websites (iawd.at, danube-water-program.org, d-leap.org, worldbank.org), and social media channels. By participating in the event, you agree to the disclaimer above.

For further information, please download the data privacy statement of IAWD on our website: [www.iawd.at](http://www.iawd.at)

### Contacts

In case of any questions with regard to logistics of your participation, please contact the organizers via email:

- ▶ World Bank: Kathia Havens: [khavens@worldbank.org](mailto:khavens@worldbank.org)