Summary,

conclusions, lessons learned and potential future actions

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Rural Wastewater Treatment Workshop

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Summary

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Day 1

- Session 1: Setting the scene
- Session 2: The enabling environment - national level

Day 2

- Session 3: Good practices at municipal level
- Session 4: Technical solutions and developments

Session 1: Setting the scene

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- SDG 6 "Clean water and sanitation"
- EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD)
  - Regulations for < 2'000 PE very general
  - UWWTD currently under revision → stakeholder participation process
- Social dimension - affordability - …

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Session 2: The enabling environment - national level

- Rural areas:
  - high number of WWTPs required but only small part of total wastewater load
  - Decreasing rural population
  - Rural areas are often poor
- National implementation
  - National regulation often in place but financial support from EU for implementation required
  - Regional differences require different national action plans

Session 3: Good practices at municipal level

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- Financing models for rural wastewater management
  - Subsidies are required
  - Regional differences
- Capacity of operating WWTPs needs to be built
  - Different O&M models, e.g. umbrella organisations
  - Training of operators

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Session 4: Technical solutions and developments

- IAS - small WWTPs - DEWATS
- Technologies for rural areas must
  - be simple and robust and
  - have low O&M requirements and costs
- Design standards for decentralised systems facilitate their implementation
- Without O&M no technology works

  → capacity for O&M required

Conclusions 1

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- Importance of rural wastewater management is widely neglected
- Policy framework for enabling and supporting rural wastewater management is lacking
- Clarity of EU legislation for agglomerations less than 2'000 PE is required (e.g. definition of agglomeration, use of IAS, adequate treatment levels for IAS)

Conclusions 2

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- Local communities should be able to operate the systems

  ⇒ Technologies that are simple and robust and that have low O&M requirements and costs

  ⇒ nature-based solutions such as treatment wetlands are suitable solutions

Conclusions 2a

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- There is a prejudice that treatment wetlands treat wastewater less effectively compared to technical solutions (such as activated sludge).

  ⇒ Experience shows that treatment wetlands - if properly designed, constructed & operated - can achieve the same (if not better) treatment level as technical solutions

Conclusions 3

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- Financial support for rural communities required (e.g. subsidies) … affordability and social aspects
- However, O&M is never subsidised
  - ⇒ Development O&M models for rural areas (e.g. cooperations with umbrella organisations)
  - ⇒ including training programmes for operators
- Regional differences need to be considered

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