

Program Launch Event
Smart policies, Strong utilities, Sustainable services
Vienna, May 2013

- Date/Time:** May 22-24, 2013
- Location:** Hilton Vienna Danube, Vienna, Austria
- Purpose/focus:** Key water and sanitation sector representatives from the Danube region will convene for the formal launch of the Danube Water Program; discuss the main challenges facing the sector; and define country-level priorities and activities under the Program.
- Structure:** The event will involve presentations of good practices, panel discussions and group work around the Program's five pillars:
- Sector Governance and Structure
 - Regulations, tariffs and subsidies
 - Benchmarking
 - Asset management / investment planning
 - Service efficiency improvement
- Participants:** Around one hundred representatives from national institutions (Ministries, regulators); national water associations and utility representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Ukraine, as well as from the International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) and the World Bank. Representatives from different IFI, EU, and the WB.

Agenda

Wednesday, May 22nd	
<i>Venue: Hilton Vienna Danube</i>	
14:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening session: smart policies, strong utilities, sustainable services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome words (WB, GoA, IAWD) • Presentation of the Program and IAWD • Keynote speech by high-level speaker on political economy of achieving change in the sector
15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
16:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillar I / Sector policies and institutions</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sector reforms as a condition to sustainable services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and overview of the topic • Presentation of experience from selected countries • EU accession path: challenges and opportunities for sector modernization • Q&A and discussions
17:30	<i>End of activity</i>
18:30	<i>Gala reception, official launch; keynote speech by Vienna Waterworks representative on Austria's path to sustainable services</i>

Thursday, May 23rd	
<i>Venue: Hilton Vienna Danube</i>	
9:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillar II / Regulation, tariffs and subsidy</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">How can regulation improve sector performance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and overview of the topic • Regulating public utilities; using targeted subsidies to address affordability concerns, experience from selected countries • <i>Panel discussion:</i> how can regulators reconcile affordability concerns and cost recovery needs in the region? • Q&A and discussion
10:45	<i>Coffee break</i>
11:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillar IV/Asset manag^{nt} and invest^{nt} planning</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning investments for the 21st century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the topic • Presentation on the European and regional experience in asset management and investment planning • <i>Panel discussion:</i> barriers to modern asset management in our utilities • Q&A and discussion
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>

14:00	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillar V / Service efficiency improvement</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The many paths to stronger utilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the topic • Utility turnaround, efficiency improvement, ESCO or performance-based contract, experience from different utilities • <i>Panel discussion</i>: external vs. internal drivers for utility turnarounds • Q&A and discussions
15:30	<i>Coffee break</i>
15:45	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Pillar III / Benchmarking</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Benchmarking as a tool to smart policies, strong utilities and sustainable services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction and overview of the topic • Utility benchmarking, the European Benchmarking Cooperation experience, the ÖVGW experience • <i>Panel discussion</i>: which way forward to develop effective utility benchmarking programs in the countries of the region? • Q&A and discussions
17:30	<i>End of activity</i>

Friday, May 24th	
<i>Venue: Hilton Vienna Danube</i>	
9:00	<p>Topic Groups Meetings</p> <p><i>Purpose</i>: define preliminary focus of the regional knowledge programs on Pillars I (sector governance and structure) and II (regulations, tariffs and subsidies)</p>
10:15	<i>Coffee break</i>
10:30	<p>Country Groups Meetings</p> <p><i>Purpose</i>: define preliminary focus of work of the Program in the country at utility level (benchmarking, training)</p>
11:45	<p>Bringing it all together: Conclusions and next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of discussions in working groups, definition of working groups leaders • Presentation of Country-led activities / competitive grant window • Program's next steps and events
12:30	<i>Lunch; keynote speech by European Commission on Danube Region Strategy and EC's vision for the sector</i>
14:00	Optional site visit to water supply/wastewater facility in wider Vienna area