

WEBINAR

UTILITY BENCHMARKING PROGRAM FOR THE DANUBE REGION UTILITIES

In 2021, the Utility Benchmarking Program (UBP) for the Danube region utilities will look closely at the data of the year 2020 and the impact of an unparalleled global health crisis on water services on the local, national and regional levels. In a condensed 75-minute online event on 8 June, UBP representatives announced new benchmarking tools and repeatedly stated the obvious: If you haven't joined the program yet, do it now. Because times are too turbulent to fly a company blind, and those who miss the chance to join the guest list may eventually wind up on the menu.

Moderated by IAWD's Philip Weller, the meeting took off with a small but audible bang: IAWD President and Deputy Managing Director of Vienna Water announced that Vienna's municipal water services has decided to join the Utility Benchmarking Program to both demonstrate the importance of the issue and to profit from comparing performance indicators on an international level.

Multiple reasons to join became obvious in the following three presentations: IAWD's Katerina Schilling walked the audience through the IAWD with its 51 members in 16 countries, D-LeaP, the Danube Learning Partnership, IAWD's capacity building initiative and the Utility Benchmarking Program with its regional, sub-regional and national Hubs. The program has grown to support 47 utilities in four Hubs, supporting participating utilities to assess, evaluate and improve their performance indicators through comparison and knowledge sharing.

Next, Viktoria Iskova, Coordinator of the UBP Ukraine Hub, reported from the national level: In Ukraine, the UBP was introduced in 2015 and has since run through six data collection and evaluation cycles. Nationwide, 21 utilities took part in the 2020 cycle, benefiting from objective performance assessments in accordance with international standards, access to experiences, knowhow and best practices in a growing network and valuable insights into performance and development of their own operations.

Finally, Aleksandar Krstic, Coordinator of the Danube Hub gave a detailed insight into the Hub's upcoming 2021 cycle, announcing new features like custom index comparison, composite indicators and a weekly "open doors" session, dedicated to mutual support.

Professionals from several countries then weighed in with their individual benchmarking program experiences, including Sokol Xhafa of the Pristina utility and Darius Bor from Satu Mare. Their unanimous recommendation was to join now if you haven't joined yet, and to enjoy constantly improving data quality, trend awareness and helpful cooperation as a new member going through the first benchmarking cycles.

Wrapping the event up, Philip Weller advised everybody interested in joining to talk to those who have already joined, and to weigh the modest participation fee against the convincing advantages of being inside instead of being left out.

Further information including the recording of the webinar can be found [here](#).