



## Interview with Mr. Peter Wolf

**Sector Fund Manager Open Regional Fund for South East Europe Modernization of Municipal Services (GIZ ORF MMS)**

### **ADKOM: What does GIZ ORF MMS stand for?**

**PW:** DRF MMS stands for strengthening the regional cooperation for improvement of municipal service in accordance with the EU accession requirements. We are doing this by identifying best practices and transfer of know-how through the Western Balkan countries in close cooperation with bilateral projects.

### **ADKOM: In which domains does GIZ ORF MMS support Republic of North Macedonia?**

**PW:** ORF MMS supports improvement of managerial and operational capacities of the municipalities and public water utilities through direct support to ADKOM and ZELS as one of the key service providers to the utilities and Municipalities.

### **ADKOM: What is GIZ ORF MMS approach?**

**PW:** In general: Regional and cross border projects are identified, designed, developed and implemented in cooperation with national and regional partner organisations and networks.

Best practices and know-how from the region are identified and transferred through the region.

The National and Regional networks and associations are strengthened continuously to develop and deliver services to their members, thus enabling them to cooperate and to raise funding.

### **ADKOM: What are the results that should be achieved?**

**PW:** ADKOM has to improve the internal procedures and processes for CD delivery. High quality and comparable CD measures are delivered by Associations. A regional dialogue with national decision makers about necessary measures for the improvement of municipal services is organised.

### **ADKOM: How does GIZ ORF MMS support the public communal enterprises (PCEs) in Macedonia?**

**PW:** GIZ ORF MMS through its network "Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services" (RCDN) as project supports around 25 small utilities for the preparation of tariff-applications and business plans and submission to the Regulatory Commission, using the methodology developed in the frame of EU funded projects, and paves the way to improve quality for further tariffing and business planning exercises.

Water Utility Companies are more than ever under pressure to improve their overall performance and cost efficiency. They face significant challenges to preserve or modernize their assets, and access to funding.



The best way to face this challenge is the introduction of best practices in Integrated Asset Management.

These effective and proven methods allow to monitor, maintain and upgrade the existing assets systematically and cost effectively, while improving the quality and reliability of the services and strengthening company's overall business performance

### **ADKOM: What is the position of GIZ ORF MMS regarding the capacity building in the PCEs?**

**PW:** In early 2015, the German and Swiss cooperation decide to assess the opportunity and feasibility of a project aiming at increasing the offer for CD measures in the Water supply and Sanitation sector in Southeast Europe through enhanced cooperation among the stakeholders.

The assessment confirmed that significant changes to improve municipal services can be achieved in an interplay of municipal key stakeholders, namely the municipalities and the water utilities, and cooperation between their associations and networks by enhancing existing CD expertise and respective offers, assuring quality and coordinating capacity development delivery in the region.

PCEs often request from ADKOM support through the provision of CD measures i.e. formal skills training. ADKOM as most of the associations from the region do not have enough resources to devise CD policies and design quality measures for

a relatively small group of professionals and to implement them systematically and efficiently. CD measures are mostly add-ons to externally financed infrastructure projects. Thus, they are in general limited to the supported water utilities or municipalities and over a limited period.

Therefore, the dedicated project RCDN was launched, where ADKOM is one of the 16 national partner associations and plays mayor role in this endeavour.

The project addresses this problem through the establishment of a self-sustaining RCD Network. The RCDN builds upon and integrates the existing CD activities on regional as well as national level and facilitates a scaling up and further replication throughout the region. Providing the entirety of municipalities and water utilities access to an affordable and quality formal skills training offer and best practices will contribute to the long-term improvement of the water supply and sanitation services in North Macedonia and the Western Balkans in general.

The project will enable ADKOM to facilitate and coordinate CD initiatives and to support the delivery of CD measures to water utilities and municipalities in the country. In addition to this, the project will involve other key stakeholders, such as lending institutions, International Financial Institutions, etc. active in the infrastructure sector which are interested in strengthening capacities to develop and secure their operations in the water and sanitation sector or Donors which may benefit from a regional platform to identify CD needs, dialogue with the stakeholders and their design policies.

**ADKOM: Recently ADKOM, ERC, RCDN and ZELS signed the MoU for coordination of the activities in the sector of water services, what are your expectations from this partnership?**

**PW:** The fact that this MoU is a result of the dialogue between the local and central level actors proves that vertical coordination of different national institutions is challenging, but possible. The MoU provides for a wholistic approach towards improving water

service sector by addressing the key challenges on all levels – institutional, organizational and individual level – and proposing concrete recommendations to overcome them.

Particularly important is to foster a better split of roles and spur cooperation between public utility companies, municipalities and the regulator. Very often the practice evidences that municipalities, utilities and the regulator are still driven by different motives and face difficulties for establishing 2-way communication channels and work together.

Therefore, we welcomed signing of the MoU and appreciated being part of it. We are interested to see how these recommendations at all levels are put into concrete actions which shall be jointly agreed among partners of this MoU through an open stakeholder's dialogue and we are ready to support their implementation in practice through RCDN.

**ADKOM: How do you see the current and the future cooperation between GIZ ORF MMS and ADKOM?**

**PW:** ADKOM will further represent the interests of the Public Utilities and will support and assist in the provision of reliable, affordable and quality services in the sphere of communal activity.

GIZ ORF MMS is supporting ADKOM in strengthening its capacities to be a solid source of knowledge and experience for the public utility companies and to provide their cooperation in preserving the environment and supporting the local and regional economic development.



## ACTIVITIES

16-17.01.2019

### **Training of Trainers for the Program “Water safety and Crisis Management- Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management in Water Supply and Sanitation Utilities” - Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) – IAWD**

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On 16th and 17th January, 2019, the first preparatory training for trainers was organized through the Training Center of ADKOM, as part of the “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management”, intended for the providers of water services, that is, for bigger PUCs in the country.

The program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management” has been developed and is supervised by the technical partner, IAWD, the Consortium Infracprotect, together with Energie AG Wasser, Vienna

water supply and Austrian Association for Gas and Water Supply (ÖVGW). The program is being implemented by national or regional centers, such as ADKOM in this country.

31.01.2019

### **Signing a Memorandum of Understanding Ceremony**

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One of the key activities undertaken by ADKOM during 2018 was the implementation of the project “Support for establishing a platform for dialogue on water services in the Republic of Macedonia”, through which several round tables were organized, featuring discussions about the main challenges and possible solutions to the problems in the water sector.

The stakeholders in the sector showed high interest and active participation in the round tables, thus contributing to stimulating the dialogue. In order to continue the application of this well established practice, as well as to continue the successful and close cooperation of the stakeholders in the water services sector, an initiative was raised for

the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ADKOM, the Energy and Water services Regulatory Commission (ERC) and of R. North Macedonia and the regional project “Regional Capacity Development Network for the water services sector” implemented by GIZ, financed by the Governments of Switzerland and Germany.



12.02.2019

### **Introduction to the Training Program for PUCs for the program “Water safety and Crisis Management- Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Management in Water Supply and Sanitation Utilities” - Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) – IAWD**

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On February 12, 2019, the Training Center of ADKOM, together with the Crisis Management Center of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Public Health Institute of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Danube Learning Partnership, organized the promotional event for announcing the Training Program “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Basis of Operational Continuity of Disaster Risk Management”.

ADKOM organized this event with the support of the International Association of Water Supply Companies from the Danube River Basin (IAWD), as support of the PUCs for water supply in capacity building, in order to be able to respond to their legal obligations in the field of water safety and crisis management, as well as supporting the dialogue and cooperation of the institutions at the local and central level.



15.02.2019

## **“Promotional event of ADKOM Training Center and its RCDN Offer” / “Peer Learning for challenges related to Waste Water Collection and Treatment (WWCT) Operations and Management”**

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On 15 February 2019, a promotional event took place, organized by the Training Center of ADKOM and in cooperation and support of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”.

The main objective of this event was to present the offer of ADKOM for capacity development (CD) of PUCs and municipalities related to water services.

The event was divided in two sessions: 1) Promotion of the Training Center of ADKOM and the offer of the Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN); 2) Exchange of experiences on the challenges associated with the activities and management in the collection and treatment of wastewater.

The first session allowed Ms. Lea Pavlovic, Training Manager at the ADKOM Training Center and a responsible person for the RCDN project, to inform the participants about the products for capacity development through the project “Regional Capacity Development Network”.

The second session was a demonstration of the format and

content of the standard for exchange of experiences, focusing on the topic “Exchange of experiences on the challenges related to the activities and management in the collection and treatment of wastewater.” This was an opportunity to demonstrate good practice, to provide a presentation of experiences and to identify and cluster the challenges that arise in operational work and the management of wastewater collection and treatment.

26.02.2019

## **Training “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”- The project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”**

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On 26 February 2019, in Hotel Continental in Skopje, a one-day training was organized on the topic “Capital Infrastructure Investment Projects in the Water and Sanitation Sector”. The training was organized by the Training Center of ADKOM and in cooperation and support of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for water and sanitation services”. The main goal of the training is to prepare the participants to access the funds with the capital infrastructure investment projects ready for financing, to meet the requirements of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and donors, and provide adequate support at all stages of the Project Cycle Management.

The trainer at this training was Mr. Jane Vrteski, who explained in more detail about the available sources of funding. The expansion and deepening of knowledge through the experiences from the practical preparation, selection and implementation of the projects ready for financing was done through the presentation of the support expert, Ms. Snezana Menkovska, who presented the project “Technical Assistance for Implementing Investment Projects for Water Supply and Wastewater Disposal in Macedonia” JOS 24111/12, of which she is Team Leader.

During the training work was done in groups, and then the joint work was presented, whereby the trainer opened a plenary discussion on the topic “What is the role of the decision makers for successful project development”.

[PHOTO GALLERY](#)

