



# DANUBE WATER PROGRAM

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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Vienna, Austria  
April 2024

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here:





**DANUBE  
WATER  
PROGRAM**

# **2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



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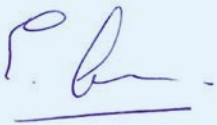
# I FOREWORD

2023 was a special year with many anniversaries: 10 years of the Danube Water Program (DWP), 30 years of IAWD, and the 75th anniversary of Austria joining the World Bank. These milestones were reached because of a shared belief in development cooperation.

The Danube Water Program is one of the longest-standing programmatic cooperations between Austria and the World Bank and has made multi-faceted contributions to the Danube region

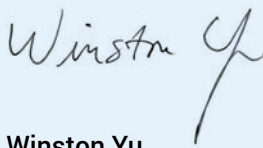
– ranging from analytical and advisory work, policy support, flagship conferences, to capacity development programs, among other activities.

Though the Danube region has seen many changes over the past 10 years, water remains a strategic priority for Austria, the World Bank and IAWD. The DWP has adapted with these changes and evolved to shift focus to pressing topics as they emerge. This is clear throughout the 2023 Annual Report.



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# **DANUBE WATER PROGRAM**



# WHY THIS PROGRAM?

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 services, while catching up to the environmental requirements of the European Union *acquis communautaire*.

In order to support the countries of the Danube region in addressing their water-related challenges, the World Bank and the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD) joined forces in 2013 to launch the **Danube Water Program**. Funded by the Austrian Ministry of Finance, the Program was set up with the objective to support institutional capacity building and the development of regulatory and policy instruments in the water supply and wastewater (WSS) sector of participating countries in the Danube region. The first phase of the Program was formally launched in **2013** in partnership with WSS line ministries, regulators, national water utility associations, and local government representatives of countries from South-East Europe. Given the strong demand for the Program's activities, three follow-up

phases were approved, in **2015 Phase II** put a focus on scaling up activities, in **2019 Phase III** expanded the scope of the program towards the broader Water Security agenda, and in **2022 Phase IV** set out to foster water security and resilient recovery, and to ensure the sustainability of Program activities.

The DWP supports **smart policies, strong utilities, and sustainable water and sanitation services**. The Program is a policy and technical assistance program for water sector institutions and other sector stakeholders. The DWP **promotes informed policy dialogue** around the water sector challenges in the region and offers solutions; delivers **comprehensive research and analytical work** to fill the knowledge gaps; and aims to **strengthen the technical and managerial capacity** of sector national institutions and utilities. Program activities fall under three broad categories: analytical and advisory services; capacity development, and regional knowledge sharing.

The **Program covers overall 16 countries**, including eleven target countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine) and five participating countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia). Target countries directly benefit from Program funding, while participating countries can participate in Program activities but not directly benefit from funding.



The Program is run jointly by the World Bank and the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area (IAWD).

**The World Bank** is a long-standing financial and technical partner of the water and wastewater services sector with several active projects and programs in the Danube region. The World Bank engages in an active dialogue with national and international institutions on challenges such as European integration, utility benchmarking, institutional reforms, and regulation.

**IAWD**, the International Association of Water Service Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area, is an independent, nonprofit organization of water and wastewater utilities, national water utility associations, and other stakeholders engaging in the

provision of safe and reliable water services for all in the Danube region – an international cooperation network with a shared vision, a shared mission, and a shared approach. IAWD was established in 1993, after the fall of the iron curtain, and has recently celebrated 30 years of dedicated, professional work to improving the services of water supply and sewerage in the Danube region.

The Danube Water Program celebrated its 10-year anniversary in 2023. The past decade has been marked by efforts to support the strengthening of water sector policies, institutional capacities, and efficiency of water sector delivery, with a refined and updated focus throughout every phase of the program:

## Phase I

(2013-2015)

€ 4.5 Million

- First Danube Water Conference bringing together more than 130 participants from 19 countries
- Launch of competitive grants with 71 applications
- Creation of the DANUBIS.org utility database
- Design and roll-out of capacity building programs on Energy Efficiency, Commercial Efficiency, and Asset Management
- A holistic State of the Sector assessment conducted and completed in 2015

## Phase II

(2016-2018)

€ 5 Million

- Second round of competitive grants, resulting in a total cumulative investment of €1 million
- Launch of the biggest capacity building initiative in the region: the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP)
- Study on Water Supply and Sanitation Utility Aggregation
- Review of rural water and sanitation services in seven countries of the Danube region

## Phase III

(2019-2022)

€ 3.5 Million

- Broadened scope to encompass the greater water security agenda
- The State of the Sector Update was released
- Launch of the Voice of the Danube website and knowledge sharing community
- KnowNow Webinar series initiated
- Launch of the Utility Management Program

## Phase IV

(2022-2025)

€ 4 Million

- First Danube Water Forum hosted physically in the region
- Water Security analytical work and stakeholder engagement
- Focused work on drought-related risks and resilience in the climate change context
- Addressing demands via continuation of activities under a broadened scope of the Program.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023



January  
**D-LeaP NRW Training Program  
in Montenegro**

Improving Non-Revenue Water Management in Water Utilities



February  
**Water Security Diagnostics**  
Water Security Workshops held in Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia & Herzegovina



March  
**UN Water Conference**  
DWP celebrates World Water Day with a side event at the UN Headquarters in New York



May  
**CAWEP – DWP Central Asia  
Study visit tour**  
Delegations from five Central Asian nations traveled to Vienna for a knowledge exchange with the Danube region



June  
**Danube Water Conference**  
Danube Water Conference with 180+ participants from 23 countries celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the DWP and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of IAOWD



**75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event**  
The World Bank and Austria celebrate 75 years of partnership with the DWP presented and highlighted as a flagship program



September  
**Water Utility Drought Risk Assessments**  
Assessment of the present and future risks of drought for utilities and other water-related sectors to identify effective climate adaption measures initiated



**Launch of RCDN+**  
The DWP joined the launch event of RCDN+ to further support cooperation on improving the water sector in the region



October  
**Drought Risk Conference**  
Conference to raise awareness and discuss Drought Risk & Drought Risk Management approaches in Romania and in Europe



**D-LeaP Access to Financing  
Training of Trainers (ToT)**  
Delivery of the Access to Financing Training of Trainers for ten trainers from four countries



November  
**Water for Green Growth  
in North Macedonia**  
Water Governance Assessment presented at the Water for Green and Resilient Growth Conference in Skopje



December  
**3<sup>rd</sup> European Forum  
on the Regulation of Water Services**  
The DWP shared experiences with European Water Regulators in a session on climate resilience and adaptation of water services



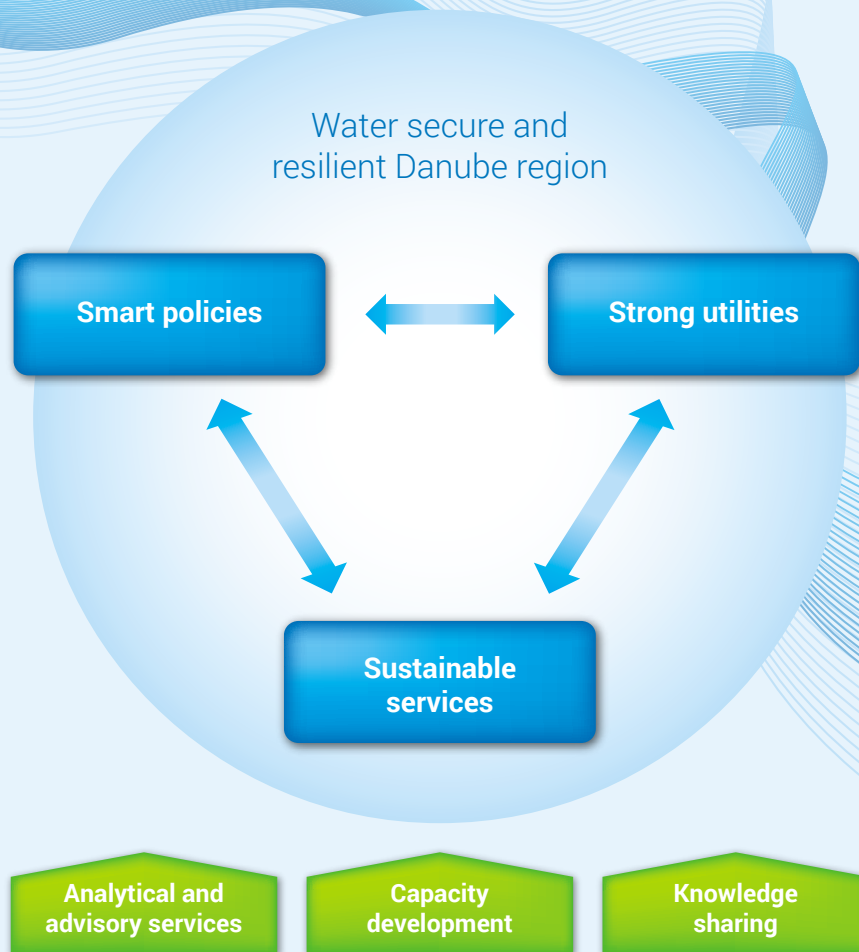
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The year 2023 allowed to make significant progress and move ahead with the implementation of Danube Water Program (DWP) activities under the ongoing fourth Phase titled “Water Security and Resilient Recovery of the Danube Region.” Water sector support activities were continued, and new activities launched, based on discussions with water sector stakeholders in the region and the updated Workplan. Information on the progress made under the ongoing fourth Phase can be obtained from the Results Indicators Frameworks in the Annex. Important progress has also been made in the coordination of DWP activities with other sector initiatives, including the NewIBNET, RCDN+ project and the newly launched Utilities of the Future – Center of Excellence.

The activities during the year were carried out within the following three main fields of action:

- Analytical and Advisory Services
- Capacity Building
- Knowledge Sharing

**Analytical and Advisory Services** on water security have been conducted for countries in the Danube region in the frame of the Water Security Initiative for Europe and Central Asia. Water Security Diagnostics have been developed for 5 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro), complemented by ongoing work on lighter assessments for additional countries and the development of a regional narrative for the Danube and ECA region. The findings from North Macedonia’s Water Security Diagnostics were showcased and deliberated upon with water sector stakeholders and policymakers during a workshop in Skopje, supported by the DWP in November 2023.



In parallel, new activities have been launched, specifically on drought risk management. In cooperation with the European Commission, complementary drought risk assessments have been undertaken for the non-EU countries in the Danube region based on a pan-European methodology. The results feed into the ongoing elaboration of a Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR) for the Western Balkans. More detailed drought risk assessments have been conducted for Romania and presented at a Conference on Drought Risk Management in Romania and Europe, which was organized in October 2023 in Bucharest. The results of the drought-related work also feed into the ongoing transboundary discussion on the topic in the frame of the ICPDR.

Additionally, a new technical assistance project has been launched to aid Montenegro in evaluating sediment management and its repercussions on the nation's coastal water supply. This project, jointly financed by the DWP and the GWSP sediment facility, is contributing to the revision of the Country Partnership Framework between Montenegro and the World Bank.

**Capacity Building** activities are primarily delivered under the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP). 2023 saw the continuous roll-out of D-LeaP training

programs for water utilities which were successfully delivered by the five Hubs. A new Grant Agreement between IAWD and financed by the RCDN+ project, with a total budget of approximately EUR 300,000, has been formally approved in October 2023, covering a period of 24 months, and allowing to further strengthen the capacity building activities in the region. In addition, GWSP supports the Asset Management and Access to Financing programs, with the delivery of the Access to Financing Training of Trainers in October.

**Knowledge Sharing** included the Voice of the Danube weekly digest and a growing community of users on Voice of the Danube website and related Social Media channels. The Danube Water Conference 2023 was successfully organized in Vienna from May 31 to June 2, 2023. Titled "Navigating Changing Waters – New ways to overcome emerging challenges of the water sector in the Danube region," the conference, delivered 8 sessions with a total of 20 presentations by expert speakers and convened 176 participants from 24 countries. The Program also continued with the popular "KnowNow" webinar series, with online knowledge sharing events themed "Revised Regulation, Renewed Challenges: The EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive" and "Tapping Talent - how to attract and retain a qualified workforce in the water service sector of the Danube region."

# ANALYTICAL AND ADVISORY SERVICES

Analytical and Advisory Services under the Danube Water Program aim to develop new and/or consolidate existing knowledge to improve understanding of challenges and emerging opportunities for the water sector in the Danube region. These activities aim to engage in an informed policy dialogue and to provide advice on reform agendas to water sector stakeholders and decision makers in the countries of the region. The analytical and advisory services provided in 2023 were delivered at the regional and national level.

## REGIONAL ANALYTICAL AND ADVISORY SERVICES

Regional analytical and advisory services under the Program focused on the development of (i) a Water Security Diagnostics for the Danube region; (ii) a regional drought risk assessment; and (iii) a water supply utilities drought risk assessment.

The objective of the **Water Security Diagnostics for the Danube** is to develop a regional overview, identify key challenges, promote focused policy dialogue,

and develop actions and recommendations to build a water secure region for the people, economy, and the environment. The activity is jointly implemented with the Regional Water Security Initiative for Europe and Central Asia and co-funded from the Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership (GWSP). The approach follows different levels and depths of assessments. Five countries of the Danube region were selected for in-depth assessments in the frame of the initiative, including Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Two stakeholder consultation workshops were conducted in each country during 2022 and 2023). Assessments for the planned sixth deep-dive country Ukraine had to be put on hold due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The result of this work serves as an analytical basis for discussions with countries on reform priorities, specific support needs and accompanying analytical pieces. Currently, work is ongoing on lighter assessments for the remaining countries in the ECA region, as well as on regional narratives for ECA and the Danube. The initiative will be completed in 2024.

Meanwhile, water scarcity and droughts are an increasing challenge in many parts of Europe, including the Danube region. Climate change is



expected to increase drought hazard, affecting both the frequency and magnitude of droughts. At EU level, steps are taken to pay increased attention and to take measures to increase resilience against drought events. One of the activities conducted by the European Commission in the frame of the European Drought Observatory for Resilience and Adaptation project (EDORA) includes the modelling and assessment of drought risks for EU Member States, aiming to improve drought resilience and adaptation throughout the EU.

The objective of the **Regional Drought Risk Assessments** is to extend the assessments to the non-EU countries in the region, leading to harmonized results based on the established pan-European methodology in the frame of EDORA. The outputs inter alia feed into the ongoing development of the regional Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR) for the Western Balkan countries conducted by the World Bank, as well as into work undertaken by other organizations on the subject, including the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). Drought risk modelling has been conducted and results are available for the Western Balkan countries, Moldova and Ukraine. Currently, work on complementary assessments on existing drought risk management plans and policies is ongoing. The activity is planned to be completed in spring 2024.

In addition, a **Water supply utilities drought risk assessment** is being undertaken. Water utilities are key agents in the delivery of safe, reliable, and affordable water supply. Drought-induced disruptions to critical water supply services can pose a risk to service delivery. This activity supports data collection of selected water supply utilities and employs a framework, developed at Oxford University, for quantifying in greater detail present day and future drought risk at a utility scale in the Danube region. The methodology and results from the global drought risk assessment of water supply utilities and prioritization of adaptation pathways was presented and discussed at the 2023 Danube Water Conference. Following, a more detailed methodology was defined in summer and data collection commenced in autumn 2023, utilizing the Utility Benchmarking Platform. Results will be presented and discussed at the Danube Water Forum in May 2024.

## NATIONAL ANALYTICAL AND ADVISORY SERVICES

In addition to regional assessments, the following national level analytical and advisory services were implemented in 2023:



### In North Macedonia water security

**discussions with stakeholders:** The results of the Water Security Diagnostics for North Macedonia, supported under the DWP, have been presented and discussed with water sector stakeholders and decision makers at a workshop organized with DWP support in November 2023 in Skopje.



### In Romania Drought Risk Assessment:

Romania is amongst the countries which was most severely hit by the 2022 droughts. Building on the work conducted at EU level, the activity includes the preparation of an inventory of the damages of the 2022 drought in the country to obtain a comprehensive picture of the economic, social, and environmental impact of droughts. Furthermore, an assessment of current drought risk management practices in Romania is conducted and recommendations and guidance developed to improve drought management approaches in the country. The initial results of the drought risk and resilience assessment were presented and discussed with water sector stakeholders in Romania in June 2023. Furthermore, a deep-dive assessment based on the EDORA methodology, and a drought vulnerability assessment and analysis of climate change effects, has been conducted. The draft results were presented and discussed at an international [Drought Risk Management Conference](#), which was organized with DWP support on 30-31 October 2023 in Bucharest, Romania. The assessments, recommendations, and the accompanying conference report are currently under finalization.



**In Montenegro Sediment Assessment:**

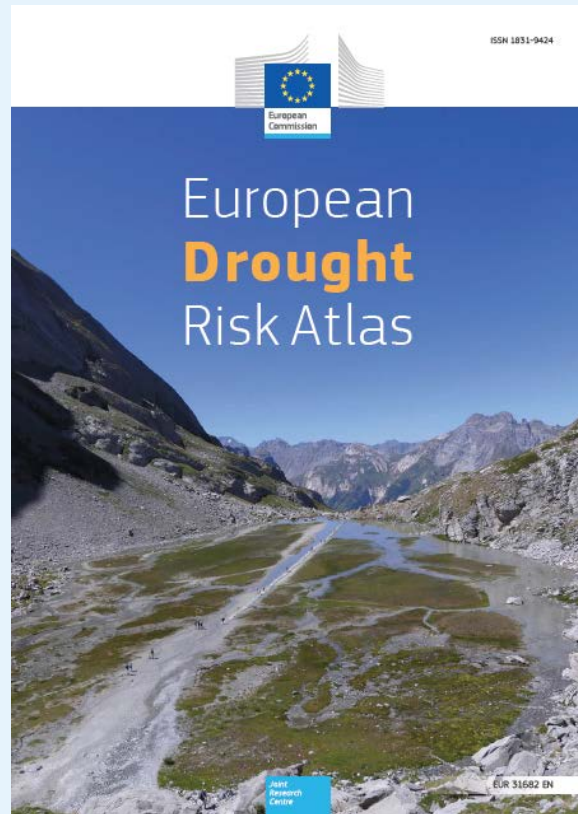
Gravel excavation from rivers in Montenegro led to negative impacts on the strategic karstic water source for the coastal area, with a significant reduction of the discharge compared to the original flow, and hence threatening the coastal water supply for the country. Funds from the GWSP sediment facility and the DWP have been mobilized for technical assistance for a sediment assessment in Montenegro and the elaboration of recommendations and an action plan addressing strategic aspects and the most urgent infrastructure needs to address the issues. A team composed

of local and international experts has been established and technical field visits and discussions with key stakeholders took place in October and December 2023. Currently, data collection is ongoing, which will be followed by assessments and follow-up discussions with stakeholders and decision makers in the country. The technical assistance is planned to be completed by spring 2024. The ongoing work also feeds into the elaboration of a renewed Country Partnership Framework between Montenegro and the World Bank for potential follow-up support.

**INSIGHT:  
DROUGHT RISK IN  
THE DANUBE REGION**

Water scarcity and droughts are posing an increasing challenge to the Danube region in the context of climate change. Substantiating knowledge, raising awareness, and helping to identify the necessary actions to increase resilience and ensure water security is one of the ongoing key activities under the DWP.

The Danube region is already facing serious impacts from recurring drought conditions, with far-reaching consequences across various sectors such as agriculture, energy, water supply, transport, and the environment. The agriculture sector in the region has suffered significant losses due to past drought events, with countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Romania, Montenegro, and Serbia experiencing billions of dollars in agricultural productivity losses. The energy sector, in several countries heavily reliant on hydropower, is also at significant risk, with water scarcity leading to decreased hydropower output and increasing dependency on costly electricity imports. Drought has also critically impacted drinking water supplies and affected transport by reducing the navigability of rivers like the Danube over several weeks. Additionally,



EUROPEAN DROUGHT RISK ATLAS FOR THE EU 27 DEVELOPED BY THE JRC. THE DWP COMPLEMENTS THE ASSESSMENTS FOR NON-EU COUNTRIES IN THE REGION TO OBTAIN A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE FOR ALL DANUBE REGION COUNTRIES.

environmental issues like wildfires have been exacerbated by drought conditions, affecting thousands of hectares of land and causing extensive ecological and economic damage.



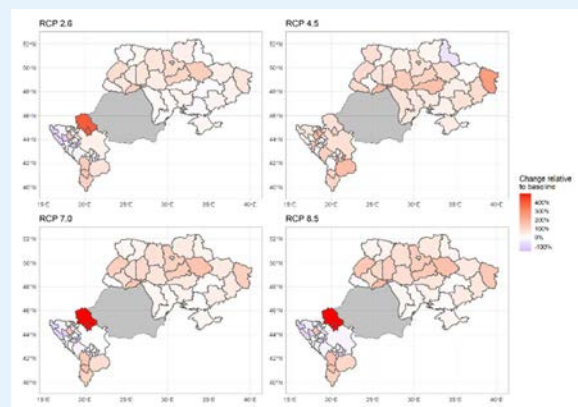
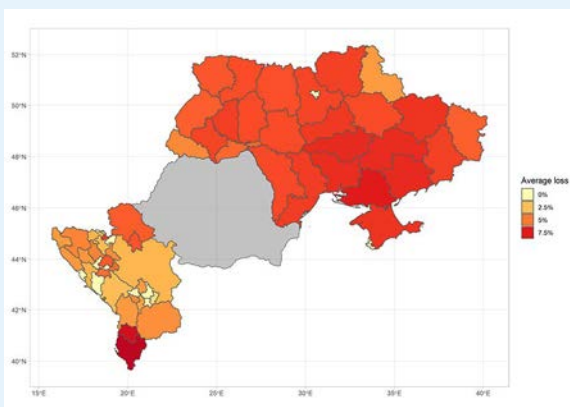
The DWP joined forces with the EU’s European Drought Observatory anchored in the Joint Research Centre (JRC) to complement drought risk assessments for EU Member States in the non-EU countries of the Danube region. The work is supported by the International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA), with the objective to obtain a comprehensive overview on multi-sectoral drought-related risks for all countries in the region based on the same pan-European methodology. The work is based on a model developed in the frame of the European Drought Observatory for Resilience and Adaptation project (EDORA). EDORA offers a nuanced and comprehensive framework for analyzing drought risks by considering the complex interplay between hazard, exposure, and vulnerability factors across different systems and regions. The work also includes a piloted deep-dive assessment for Romania, that allowed to engage in more detailed discussions with water sector stakeholders on drought-related risks and necessary actions to improve resilience. The results feed into the preparation of the Country Climate and Development Report (CCDR), which is under elaboration by the World Bank for the Western Balkans, as well as into the transboundary discussions on water scarcity and droughts, conducted in the frame of the ICPDR.

Highlighting an example of the outcome for one sector, significant yield losses in key agricultural staples like maize and wheat are already

occurring due to drought, with particularly severe impacts in countries like Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ukraine. The impacts are expected to worsen in the future. Projections suggest that both the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe will see increasing annual average losses in crop yields. With certain regions in Ukraine anticipating significant increases in wheat yield losses compared to baseline, and as a substantial contributor to these crops globally, the escalating trend is expected to threaten both regional agricultural sectors and global supply chains.

To better understand vulnerabilities, the multiple impacts of droughts, and to exchange ideas and showcase successful experiences in managing drought risk, the Romanian Ministry of Environments, Water and Forests and the National Administration “Romanian Waters” together with the World Bank and DWP organized in October 2023 an [international conference on Drought Risk and Drought Risk Management in Romania and in Europe](#). With more than 80 participants, the Conference brought together a diverse group of national and international experts and stakeholders to discuss the challenges and opportunities for drought risk management in Romania and the broader European region.

Read more here:



AVERAGE ANNUAL YIELD LOSS FOR WHEAT ASSOCIATED WITH DROUGHTS IN PRESENT CONDITIONS (LEFT) IN THE NON-EU COUNTRIES OF THE DANUBE REGION (WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES, MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE) AND CHANGE RELATIVE TO BASELINE FOR DIFFERENT CLIMATE CHANGE SCENARIOS (RIGHT). THE WORK COMPLEMENTS DROUGHT RISK ASSESSMENTS CONDUCTED BY THE JRC FOR EU MEMBER STATES.



While knowledge on drought-related impacts needs to be further improved, several Regional Water Supply Companies in Romania confirmed having been affected in 2022, a summer in which more than 200 communities in Romania ended up facing temporary water supply cuts. It has proven essential to consider drought in water-dependent sectors, with a required increase in water-use efficiency to improve climate resilience. Reducing Non-Revenue Water in water supply schemes is one of the no-regret measures to improve operational and financial sustainability of water utilities, particularly in the climate change context.

Specifically focusing on drought risks for water utilities, the DWP launched in addition a complementary new initiative to provide insights into exposure and vulnerability to drought-related water shortages of the water supply sector. The central mission of the activity is to assess present and future drought risk at a utility scale, aiming to raise awareness

and explore potential adaptation measures to build resilience. The initiative integrates global experience to refine accuracy for the Danube region. The ultimate purpose of the Utility Drought Risk Assessment is to support water management efforts in the region and pave the way for more detailed utility-level assessments to facilitate adaptation decision-making. Results will facilitate discussions at the Danube Water Forum 2024.

In conclusion, the Danube region faces significant challenges due to recurring drought conditions, with key water-dependent sectors like agriculture, energy, water supply, transport, and the environment being severely impacted. Assessments and modelling results under the Danube Water Program show that the impacts are expected to worsen in the future due to climate change. It is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to consider findings to develop effective strategies for mitigating the impacts of drought in the region.



AN INTERNATIONAL PANEL COMPOSED OF EXPERTS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM ROMANIA, CZECHIA, SPAIN, ICPDR AND THE WORLD BANK DISCUSS DROUGHT-RELATED RISKS AND APPROACHES TO IMPROVE CLIMATE RESILIENCE AT THE CONFERENCE "DROUGHT RISK & DROUGHT RISK MANAGEMENT IN ROMANIA AND IN EUROPE."



# CAPACITY BUILDING ACTIVITIES



Capacity Building is another main pillar of Danube Water Program activities and aims to build capacity of the water sector in the Danube region at different levels from utility companies and their management to local government representatives, regulatory agencies, and ministries.

## REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

Over the past years, several regional capacity building and training activities have been conducted. Due to the success and continuous interest for regional capacity building and training, the activity will be continued in cooperation with partners in the region. The most recent capacity building activity, with participation of an international audience, was organized by the Bank team on October 30-31 in Bucharest on the topic of [Drought Risk and Drought Risk Management in Romania and Europe](#). Further activities are under preparation, including a workshop on Rural Water Services Provision scheduled for April 2024, as well as a workshop on Drought Risk Management in the Danube basin, both planned to be organized jointly with the ICPDR.

## WATER UTILITY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR DATA COLLECTION AND BENCHMARKING

The aim of performance indicator (PI) data collection and benchmarking activities under the Danube Water Program is (i) to achieve national PI data collection in each supported country; and (ii) to offer the D-LeaP Utility Benchmarking Program (UBP) for every country in an appropriate form. The activities regarding national PI data collection and utility benchmarking are managed on a complementary level by the World Bank and IAWD. The software solution of the DANUBIS Data Collection and Management Platform (DANUBIS DCM) has been updated and remains fully functional and stable for continued use by countries until 2029.

## National PI data collection

The aim of performance indicator data collection and benchmarking activities under the Danube Water Program has evolved over time and is currently focused on assisting national PI data collection and the preparation of benchmarking reports in selected countries of interest. Those are primarily countries that have established water utility benchmarking systems during previous phases of the DWP and are presently working on strengthening them.

In Serbia, the DWP supports the Association for Water Technology and Sanitary Engineering (AWTSE), in water utility data collection, analysis, and the preparation of a national benchmarking report in cooperation with the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure. In 2023, continued cooperation with AWTSE included analysis of the benchmarking results from 2022 and 2023; preparation of the two annual benchmarking reports for year 2021 and 2022; and preparation and delivery of a key stakeholders' workshop on sustainability of water sector benchmarking in Serbia. The latest benchmarking report, with 2022 data, has been completed and published in November 2023. In addition, experience in implementing benchmarking activities in Serbia, and options for the sector reform, have been presented in December 2023 during the Serbia Water Forum.

Benchmarking Reports  
 can be found [here](#)



Thanks to DWP support, resulting in improved capacities for benchmarking, several countries, including Montenegro and North Macedonia, are now capable of continuing with benchmarking of the water utility sector on their own and do not require further outside support.



## The Utility Benchmarking Program (UBP)

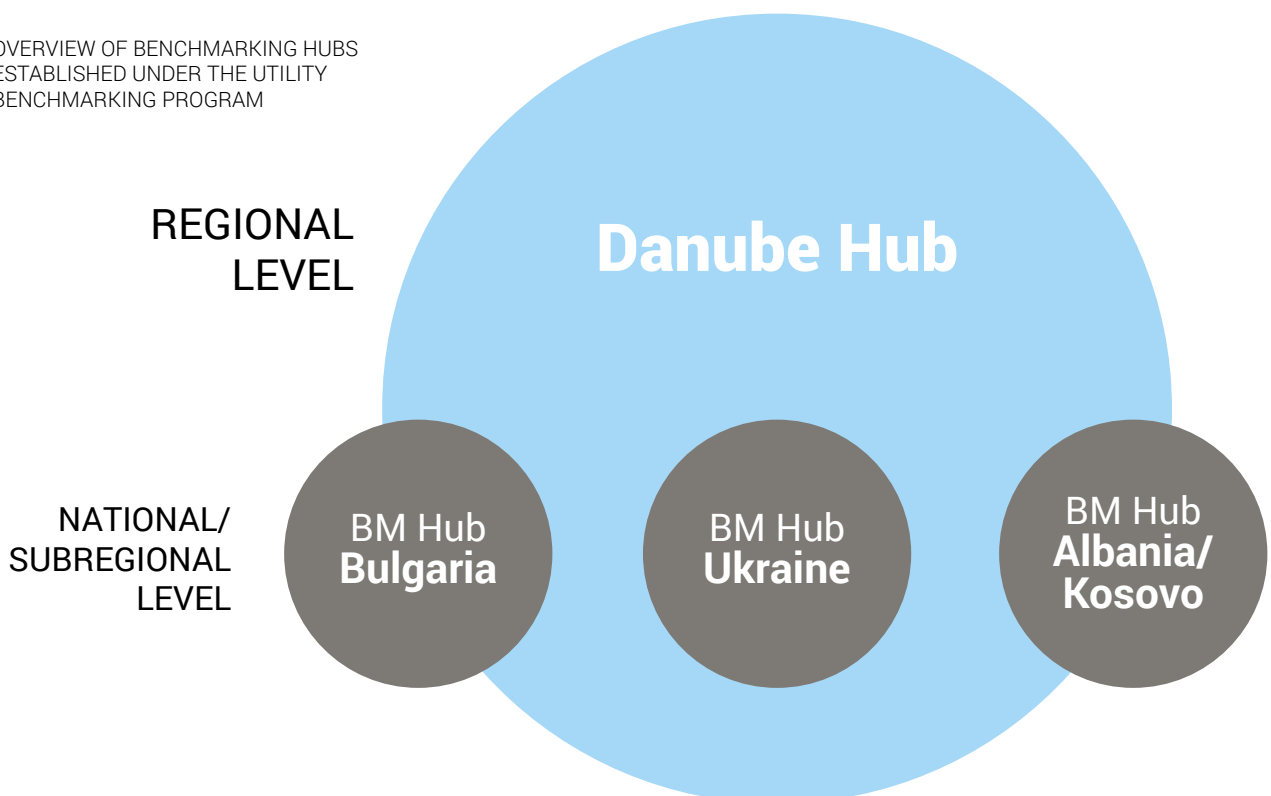
UBP is one of the Foundation Programs of the Danube Learning Partnership. This Program helps participating utilities and staff to establish their own diagnostic of high-impact issues affecting the performance of their utility companies by benchmarking their utility performance against other similar companies and international benchmarks and facilitating dialogue among practitioners on good practices. Two national and one regional previously established UBP Hubs continued to carry out benchmarking in national languages in 2023.

Virtual UBP Hub Coordinators meetings were held in March, May and October to discuss the status of the Hubs as well as the ongoing delivery. At this stage, three Hubs are active, i.e., the Bulgarian Hub, the Albania/Kosovo Hub and the regional Danube Hub. The Ukrainian Hub is currently on hold due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but IAWD is in constant exchange with the former Hub coordinator to identify a suitable time to restart. In 2023, all three Hubs were fully integrated into the D-LeaP scheme and the respective Hub Agreements have been developed accordingly. The Danube Hub's concluding workshop of the 2022 cycle took place on May 30, 2023, back-to-back with the 2023 Danube Water Conference. While the Bulgarian Hub

will organize its final workshop in February 2024, the Albania/Kosovo Hub organized its concluding event in November 2023 in the frame of the Balkans Joint Conference and Exhibition. In addition, the IAWD Secretariat was able to include a number of utilities based on ongoing donor funded projects into UBP Hubs, namely RWC Gjilan into the Albanian/Kosovo UBP Hub through a Financial and Operational Performance Improvement Program (FOPIP), Banja Luka Waterworks into the Danube Hubs through a EBRD FOPIP and Regional Water Utility Shkoder into the Danube Hub through Water Sector Performance and Investment Program (WPIP) Municipal Infrastructure Program V (MIP V).

Hubs are the visible face of the Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP) for active participants, as they have the primary capacity building delivery responsibility. Hubs are primarily established by national water utility associations and well-performing utility companies but can also be professional associations or academic institutions.

OVERVIEW OF BENCHMARKING HUBS ESTABLISHED UNDER THE UTILITY BENCHMARKING PROGRAM



# THE DANUBE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP (D-LEAP)

## Our Vision

A Danube region, where all citizens enjoy sustainable water and wastewater services.

## Our Mission

To offer to participating utility companies and sector professionals, through our national partners, a sustainable and comprehensive set of learning and capacity building programs aimed at providing reliable, high-quality and efficient water and wastewater services to all.

D-LeaP was designed as a regional, integrated and sustainable capacity building initiative of national water utility associations and IAWD to provide a comprehensive curriculum to the staff of water and wastewater utilities located in the Danube region and in local languages.

In 2023, the number of established Hubs increased to 23. Moreover, the Bulgarian Water Association has established a new Hub for Energy Efficiency. In addition, a Training of Trainers on Access to Financing was delivered, which leads the way to the implementation of this program by at least two Hubs in 2024. Despite all efforts, the originally planned number of Hubs could not be achieved as planned in the D-LeaP Work Plan 2023, as the required co-funding could not be identified by the Hubs. Finally, the second cycle of the Utility Management Training has been successfully kicked-off with 16 participants in January 2023. Already established programs, which were delivered in 2023, include: (i) foundation programs, (ii) technical programs, and (iii) implementation programs.

## Foundation Program Offering:

Foundation programs are the entry point to a continuous improvement cycle and help participating utilities and staff to establish their own diagnostic of high-impact issues affecting the performance of their utility companies. These programs rely on the power of benchmarking utility performance against other similar companies and facilitating dialogue among practitioners on good practices.

**UBP** Utility Benchmarking Program

**UMT** Utility Management Training



### Technical Program Offering:

Once utilities and staff have identified the main issues affecting their performance, they can choose from a range of technical programs covering the main utility management topics. These programs do not only provide training on the solutions to those challenges, but also help utility staff to prepare concrete action or investment plans to address those challenges.

- EE** Energy Efficiency
- CE** Commercial Efficiency
- NRW** Non-Revenue Water
- AM** Asset Management
- WSP** Water Safety Planning and Crisis Management

### Implementation Program Offering:

A combination of lack of financing as well as insufficient operating and contractual capacity often means utilities are unable to implement the solutions they have developed. The implementation program offering helps utilities to develop a set of implementation tools.

#### **AF** Access to Financing

Under Phase IV, additional financial resources were secured for delivery in additional countries. A dedicated presentation about the program has been provided at the D-LeaP Committee Council meeting. In addition, a Training of Trainers (ToT) took place in October 2023 with ten trainers trained, in order to roll-out the first Hubs in 2024. Funds earmarked under the DWP were insufficient for organizing the Training of Trainers as well as the subsequent roll-outs, therefore, additional funds were secured under the GWSP as well as RCDN+.

In 2023, 5 Hubs covering 12 countries have delivered five programs with a total of 54 utilities trained. In addition, one Training of Trainers was delivered with 10 trainers trained.



To find out more about the D-LeaP program offering in your country, please visit [D-LeaP Hubs page](#).

Read more here:

## INSIGHT: UBP AND THE NEWIBNET

The re-design of the International Benchmarking Network, that was initiated in 2021, has concluded. The newly developed platform for “Intelligent Utilities: NewIBNET” has been launched in the frame of the UN Water Conference in March 2023. The DWP team has extensively participated in the re-design process to share experiences from benchmarking in the Danube region and to avoid any kind of competition with the Utility Benchmarking Program (UBP). As a result, IAWD and the World Bank signed a Letter of Intent and agreed that IAWD not only acts as the face of NewIBNET in the Danube region, but also coordinates the data collection. To promote the NewIBNET further, the World Bank team has also participated with presentations and as an exhibitor in the 2023 Danube Water Conference introducing their services to IAWD members and the Danube region community.

The usage of the newly created NewIBNET community for IAWD members and partners was piloted by a few members who have already joined NewIBNET in addition to the UBP.



Through submission of data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Management Practices (MPs), utilities can analyse their performance vis-à-vis others (see Dashboard below), and exchange with other utilities globally on improving it. The NewIBNET data assessment is a service free of charge and is based on utility engagement and needs, as the level of involvement varies individually across associations and utilities.

Utilities benefit from the partnership between IAWD and the NewIBNET regarding the data collection and sharing process. Utilities who now join the UBP, can give consent through an opt-in option that part of their data is forwarded to NewIBNET, which autocompletes the NewIBNET data tool to generate 15 Key Performance Indicators (see Dashboard below). Vice versa, if utilities based in the Danube region approach NewIBNET to submit their



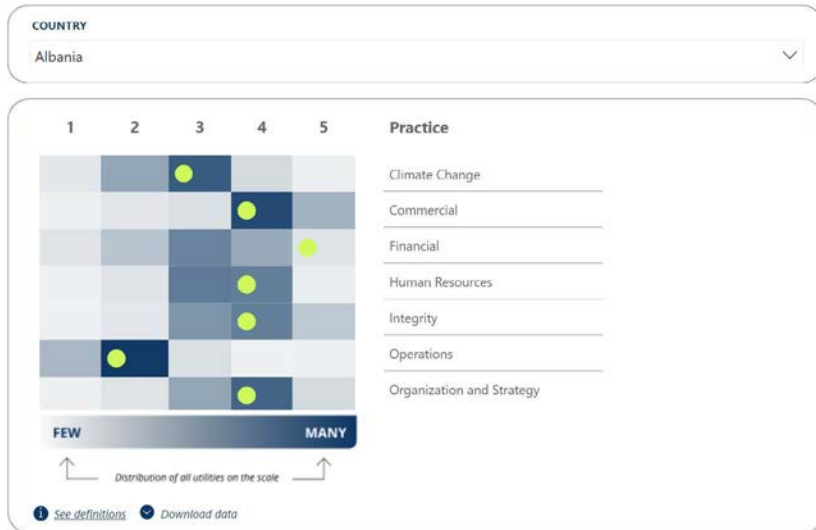
### MANAGEMENT PRACTICES OVERVIEW

Compare your performance with other utilities based on your selection of indicator based on absolute reported values.

This chart summarizes where you stand in each management practices when compared to the distribution of all other utilities.

#### LEGEND

● : This is your selection



data, they receive the option to get connected with the IAWD UBP coordinator.

In addition to the KPIs, a utility can then also submit the questionnaire on Management Practices directly to NewIBNET. One key benefit for utilities is therefore the assessment of their Management Practices on top of the usual KPIs. While it is crucial to collect data on the Key Performance Indicators, utilities who want to walk the extra mile in improving their services will also want to evaluate the management of their utilities. The 7 thematic categories evaluated for the administration of their services can be seen here above.

Finally, utilities who opted for a submission of their data on to NewIBNET get the opportunity to participate in the Connect & Learn Platform - an online space for utility staff to meet, and exchange, and mostly to learn from each other to establish a Community of Practice over the years. It offers a forum, learning material, and moderated discourse events for members only.

Read more here: 



This site provide a platform for the Bank, its Partners and Clients to engage in dialogue and knowledge exchange in pursuit of a water secure world for all.

Many of the Communities featured on this platform are by invitation only and/or are for specific audiences. Publicly available content and events will be visible below.



# KNOWLEDGE SHARING



Knowledge Sharing is the third main pillar of the Danube Water Program and aims to create opportunities for water sector professionals to access and exchange information within and among countries in the region and beyond. A variety of options are offered including major annual conferences, study tours, online webinars, and workshops.

## CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

### The Program’s signature event: Danube Water Conference and Danube Water Forum

The bi-annual Danube Water Conference (DWC) and Danube Water Forum (DWF) have become signature events for the Program and the Danube region and rotate on a yearly basis. While the DWC is hosted in Vienna (Austria), the DWF is organized in the region with the support of a partner institution. Both events serve as an international platform convening sector professionals from the Danube region and beyond to discuss the latest challenges and opportunities in the Danube region water sector. The cross-sectoral and inter-country dialogue created by this annual gathering has been instrumental to create a sense of community, to help professionals in the sector to build and maintain relationships, and to understand the emerging needs and concerns of the water sector and beyond.

### 2023 Danube Water Conference

This year, the Danube Water Conference was held in Vienna, Austria from May 31 to June 2. With the title “Navigating Changing Waters – New ways to overcome emerging challenges of the water sector in the Danube region,” the conference convened senior water sector representatives from the Danube region to discuss new challenges triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, increased energy prices, and climate change impacts, among others. The program covered a variety of topics such as the climate crisis, water utility practices, and workforce struggles. In addition, two anniversaries, 10 years of DWP and 30 years of IAWD, were celebrated on a dinner cruise ship. Overall, the feedback was very positive, and the conference program has been acknowledged for its diverse and interesting sessions which included enough time for discussion and interaction with the audience.

For more information on the Danube Water Conference, please see page [VoD - 2023 Danube Water Conference \(iawd.at\)](#)





2023 DANUBE WATER CONFERENCE

## Regulator Roundtable

A Regulator Roundtable was organized on May 31, back-to-back with the 2023 Danube Water Conference, with the objective to bring together representatives from national regulatory agencies and related bodies from the Danube region, to share information among themselves about the most recent water service regulation developments in each country, strengthen contacts between regulators, and exchange relevant experiences in order to maintain a community of regulatory practitioners. The specific topic of this year's roundtable was the role of regulatory bodies in the reduction of non-revenue water. The Regulatory Roundtable was organized jointly with the Association of European Regulators in the drinking water and wastewater sector (WAREG), with participation of representatives of regulatory agencies from Croatia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania, Kosovo and Hungary.

## Central Asia Study Visit Tour

As part of the knowledge sharing activities, and in partnership with the Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP), a study visit for representatives from Central Asia countries was jointly organized from May 2-6, 2023, by the World Bank teams working on CAWEP and the DWP. The study visit focused on water resources management and water supply and sanitation topics, linked with support activities conducted in the frame of the DWP. The event allowed for an exchange of experiences with Vienna-based institutions, including e.g., the ICPDR, IAWD, Vienna Waterworks, BOKU University, and Siemens, as well with representatives from further Danube countries, including Romania, Albania and Croatia. The event was successfully organized in Vienna, with visits to practical examples for water supply and sanitation solutions in Lower Austria and Styria. A study visit video was prepared and made available on the World Bank website.

Read more  
here:



# COMMUNICATION, OUTREACH AND KNOWLEDGE SHARING

In 2023, both World Bank and IAWD teams continued working to increase Program visibility. The Voice of the Danube (VoD) website has been well received and, as of 2023, has **46,166** page views, **8,400** first visits and has been accessed from **148** countries.

Now housed within the VoD, the DANUBIS.org Water Platform has become the largest and most complete repository of resources for and about water and wastewater services in the Danube region and still attracts a growing number of users, with more than 500 page views in 2023.



[Visit DANUBIS.org](https://www.danubis.org) for more information.

In addition to the VoD, the Danube Water Program maintains a strong social media presence with over 1300 followers on LinkedIn.

## DWP KnowNow Series

After showing great success due to high interest, the Program team continued to organize webinars covering relevant topics on demand, via the “DWP KnowNow Series” which was launched in 2021. Each KnowNow spans 75 minutes with a key expert presentation on a timely topic in the region followed by a panel discussion and Q&A.

In 2023, two KnowNow Webinars were delivered reaching a total of 122 participants from more than 24 different countries. Altogether, 8 experts joined the panels on current issues sharing their experience and views with participants from the region and beyond. The KnowNow series is planned to continue providing relevant and timely information, on demand, in 2024.

### DWP KNOWNOW



Read more here:



#### Tapping Talent - How to attract and retain a qualified workforce in the water service sector of the Danube region



**Ms. Sarah Keener,**  
Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank, US  
(Presenter and Moderator)



**Ms. Louise McSorley,**  
Strategic Resourcing and Skills Manager, Scottish Water, UK  
(Panelist)



**Ms. Fjolla Lasku,**  
Head of WWTP, RWC Gjakova, Kosovo  
(Panelist)



**Mr. Florian Kretschmer,**  
Senior Scientist, University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Austria  
(Panelist)

### DWP KNOWNOW



Read more here:



#### Revised Regulation, Renewed Challenges: The EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive



**Prof. Dr. Enkelejda Gjinali,**  
Polytechnic University of Tirana  
(Panelist)



**Ms. Sanja Barbalic,**  
Head of Water Management Institute, Croatian Waters, Croatia  
(Panelist)



**Mr. Csaba Bauer,**  
Water Treatment Manager, Compania Aquaserv S.A., Romania  
(Panelist)



**Mr. Michel Sponar,**  
Deputy Head of the DG-Environment, European Commission Belgium  
(Panelist)



**Mr. Raimund Mair,**  
Senior Water Resources Management Specialist, World Bank  
(Moderator)

## INSIGHT: DANUBE WATER CONFERENCE

A proud look back, a bold look forward, and a record-sized audience: This was the 2023 Danube Water Conference.

Vienna, 31 May – 2 June: A record-sized audience gathered for the 2023 Danube Water Conference, with multiple challenges to discuss, an encouraging number of young professionals, and two unlikely birthdays to celebrate.

“When we finally looked up, thirty years had passed in a flash,” remarked IAWD President Walter Kling during the 2023 Danube Water Conference opening session, ending a short presentation on the history of IAWD and the Danube Water Program.

Indeed, who would have thought, back in 1993, that an ever-growing demand for networking, cooperation and mutual support would keep this community going, growing, and thriving over a solid three decades? And who would have thought that the Danube Water Program, founded initially as a limited three-year activity, would see its tenth birthday during a fourth program phase?

Yet here we were, and we were many - a record-setting 176 participants from national and local governments, regulatory agencies, water utilities and professional associations across 24 countries. “Here” was the shiny conference venue at the Austrian Federal Academy of Finance, perfectly sized, equipped, and located - one of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Finance’s very valuable contribution to the event’s success. Verena Hagg, Deputy Director for International Financial Institutions at the Ministry, reminded the audience in her welcome address that the Danube Water Program, with its proud record of achievements, is among the longest standing cooperations between the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank, and wished IAWD and DWP a “Happy Birthday.”



Not everything was about birthdays and cake though. “Navigating Changing Waters” was the title of the conference, and more than one speaker remarked how apt and up to date a choice this was, with multiple crises hitting the water sector, and more to come in the foreseeable future.

In his opening keynote, World Bank Lead Water and Sanitation Specialist Gustavo Saliel stated the plain fact that the world is about to miss out on UN Sustainable Development Goal 6: universal access to water and sanitation. In many countries and regions, the water sector is on a slippery slope, and, all in all, the worldwide investment volume needs to increase by a factor 5 to 6 to cover a rapidly growing demand for water and sanitation.

But it was not all downhill from there, on the contrary: With its general focus on the multiple current and future challenges for the sector, including economic turbulences, climate change-related risks, aging workforces and lackluster public support, the conference offered not only worrying diagnoses, but also encouraging perspectives for remedies.

One inspiring outcome was the crowd of Young Water Professionals who enthusiastically supported the event organization – a reason to hope that the ongoing generation change will be smoother than expected.

The active engagement of Young Water Professionals was an encouraging perspective for a sector that wrestles with workforce problems: In a comment during the HR-focused session



“The Hidden Figures,” **Vesna Music**, President of the Aquasan Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reminded the audience: “Infrastructural investments are a waste of money without also developing capacity. Only skilled people can make this sector perform well and make the most of available resources - and that includes decision-makers in national and local governments.”

Young Water Professional **Jakub Sochor**, a graduate student from the Czech Republic, loved the spirit of the Danube Water Conference: “Everybody is enthusiastic about improving things in the sector, and the networking opportunities are awesome – you meet people from every level and from everywhere in the world, and for Young Water Professionals as a whole it is great to be part of this.”

Another highlight of the conference was the introduction of the “Utility of the Future Center of Excellence.” The World Bank’s **Camilo Lombana** presented the Utility of the Future program, and the new Center of Excellence (CoE). The CoE will operate from Tirana, Albania, and 50 utilities from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia will be invited to join the program in the CoE’s pioneering phase.



In addition to sessions focusing on themes like answers to economic challenges, water security in the face of climate change, perspectives for HR in aging societies, and communication within the sector and beyond, the organizers created ample room for lively exchanges of ideas and opinions. A poster session breakfast on Friday morning put the latest research and innovative ideas on display and invited discussions over a nice cup of coffee. In addition, the Thursday afternoon session, titled “Think Outside the Box,” was held in a very productive format, splitting the audience into discussion groups to explore conference themes – a format that was very well received and produced interesting results.

**Jens Liebelt**, of the Vienna-based Consultant Hydrophil, a long-standing member and partner of IAWD and the Danube Water Program, found the conference in general very appealing: “It is great to be here. Very interesting themes, very interesting people on the podium, and very interesting talks in between.”

Eventually, everything was about Birthdays and cake during Thursday evening’s conference dinner event, which was fittingly held on a riverboat cruising the Danube around Vienna. Here, the double Birthday celebration of IAWD and the DWP took place, complete with honors for the founding members. It was a memorable highlight of a memorable conference.

**Marco Antonio Aguero**, Senior Water and Sanitation Specialist and coordinator of the World Bank NewIBNET, also appreciated the conference and its hosts: “This is an excellent platform. The Danube Water Program does an exceptional job bringing everyone together to discuss the issues that are really important for the sector.”

The conference ended Friday noon with a comprehensive wrap-up, leaving everybody slightly tired, but generally highly motivated, and as IAWD President Walter King remarked, “really looking forward to the next 30 years.”

The conference report is available under QR-code:



# STRONGER TOGETHER

With numerous actors working in the Danube region, the team recognizes the importance to coordinate with other development partners throughout the region to ensure synergies and avoid duplication of efforts. Several ongoing efforts have been made with this objective and are outlined below.

**IFIs Meeting:** Back-to-back with the 2023 Danube Water Conference, a Danube IFI and Donors meeting was convened with the objective to provide an update of ongoing activities of the donor community in the Danube region and in the frame of the Danube Water Program. In the context of existing and emerging obstacles of the region's water sector, the following topics were discussed: (1) how the donor and IFI community can ensure good communication and coordination among initiatives; (2) opportunities for cooperation to support existing stakeholders, programs, and national institutions in strengthening the capacity of the sector; and (3) how to mobilize financial resources for the water sector in the region. The meeting served as a fruitful exchange of information, with a total of 20 participants (13 in person, 7 online).



**New IBNet:** The re-design of the IBNET benchmarking platform, that was initiated in 2021, has concluded. The newly developed platform "[Intelligent Utilities – New IBNet](#)" has been launched in the frame of the UN Water Conference in March 2023. The DWP team has extensively participated in the re-design process to share experiences with benchmarking in the Danube region and to avoid any kind of competition with the Utility Benchmarking Program. As a result, IAWD and the World Bank signed a Letter of Intent and agreed that IAWD acts as the face of data collection for New IBNet in the Danube region. To promote the New IBNet further, the World Bank team has also participated with presentations and as exhibitor in the Danube Water Conference. The Secretariat has set-up the mechanism for data collection in close cooperation with the New IBNet team and data collection efforts are ongoing. Furthermore, the Secretariat supports promotional activities of the New IBNet among the IAWD membership base and with dedicated news articles on the Voice of the Danube website.



**RCDN:** Efforts to create more synergies between RCDN and the DWP in the previous year were successful. IAWD's newly established grant agreement, with the new RCDN project, now called RCDN+, includes not only activities supporting the delivery of D-LeaP programs, but also strengthening IAWD in its core association functions. RCDN and GIZ representatives are invited to participate in the D-LeaP Committee Council meeting to foster mutual understanding and synergies between the programs. In December 2023, GIZ together with NALAS, hosted an RCDN networking meeting at the World Bank premises in Vienna. In addition, representatives from both World Bank and IAWD have been invited to join the Project Advisory Board meetings of RCDN+.



**Center of Excellence:** The World Bank, in partnership with the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), established the new Utility of the Future Center of Excellence (UoF-CoE) in Tirana, Albania, focusing on providing support to the water sector in the Western Balkan countries. The UoF-CoE will expand upon the current World Bank UoF program and is intended to complement existing capacity development efforts in the region, such as D-LeaP and RCDN. The UoF-CoE serves as (1) an operations center to manage and implement the UoF Global Program to support to utilities across the world; (2) a knowledge and innovation hub pushing promoting service innovations, and connecting utilities and water stakeholders at local, regional, and global levels; (3) a financing facility giving access to performance-based grants for "quick-win" measures to improve performance and boost sustainability of water and sanitation utilities in the Western Balkans; and (4) a project incubator to identify needs and opportunities and to help utilities in the Western Balkans in the preparation of strategic infrastructure investments. The official launch of the UoF-CoE took place in November 2023 in the frame of the Balkans Joint Conference and Exhibition in Albania. The Program Coordinator of the UoF-CoE participated in the DWP mission, allowing for detailed discussions on coordination and synergies of activities.



# LOOKING AHEAD

Since its launch, the Danube Water Program responded to a strong demand from countries in the Danube region to provide support towards the achievement of sustainable water supply and sanitation services. The Program helped to make progress in several important focus areas, while the scope was expanded towards the broader water security agenda.

Although the sector is advancing, challenges are rising in a changing environment, including an ongoing energy crisis, aging workforce, or the increasingly visible impacts of climate change with extreme weather conditions. The latter impose a threat to the region's economy and topics of increasing relevance are water scarcity and drought risk management. Analytical work conducted in the frame of the Program helps to facilitate an informed dialogue with water sector stakeholders and decision makers in the region to raise awareness and direct efforts and investments towards

“Fostering Water Security and Resilient Recovery,” the headline of the ongoing fourth Phase of the Program. Upcoming work will also include another edition of the well-established “State of the Sector” (SoS) Report, with updated and further extended assessments allowing to track progress and draw lessons learned for the region since the first SoS Report published in 2015.

While building on the continuation of well-established Program activities, such as the roll-out of D-LeaP programs, the broadened scope of the ongoing fourth Phase is perceived as well-targeted to address the continuous demand of water sector stakeholders in providing analytics and advice, share knowledge, and further build capacity, in close cooperation with other development partners active in the region.

**IAWD**

# DANUBE WATER PROGRAM

SMART POLICIES, STRONG UTILITIES,  
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES

# ANNEXES |

## A.1 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

As of December 31, 2023, disbursements for Phase IV of the Danube Water Program amounted to 25% for Bank-Executed Component 1 and 33% for Recipient-Executed Component 2.

Phase I-III	
Original Project Amount (Phase I)	EUR 4.5 million
First Additional Financing (Phase II)	EUR 5 million
Second Additional Financing (Phase III)	EUR 3.5 million
Roll-over to Phase IV / Continuation of activities	EUR 0.53 million
Phase IV	
Third Additional Financing (Phase IV)	EUR 4.0 million
Approval Date	November 21, 2022
Grant Signing Date	December 7, 2022
Effectiveness Date	December 14, 2022
Closing Date	December 31, 2025
Project Amount (Phase IV plus roll-over Phase I-III)	EUR 4.53 million
Disbursement Component 1*	25.8%
Disbursement Component 2**	33.4%

\*World Bank led activities

\*\*IAWD led activities

## A.2 RESULTS INDICATORS FRAMEWORK

### Phase IV

PDO Level Results Indicators	Base-line		Phase IV				Status
			2022	2023	2024	2025	
<p><b>PDO:</b> The Development Objective of the Danube Water Program Phase IV is to foster water security and resilient recovery of target and participating countries in the Danube region. This will be achieved by supporting the strengthening of water sector policies, institutional capacities, and efficiency of water sector delivery.</p>							
<b>Indicator One:</b> [NUMBER] of target countries in which regulatory and policy recommendations for the water sector have been presented and discussed by decision makers	0	Planned	0	3	5	<b>10</b>	On track
		Actual	0	3			
<b>Indicator Two:</b> [NUMBER] of Hubs delivering a capacity building program	0	Planned	4	14	24	<b>34</b>	On track
		Actual	11	16			
<b>Indicator Three:</b> [NUMBER] of participating utilities that have improved their operational performance as a result of a capacity building program under the Danube Learning Partnership	28	Planned	33	43	53	<b>63</b>	On track
		Actual	39	49			
<b>Indicator Four:</b> Cumulative income generated by IAWD from the implementation of DWP activities (in EUR)	0	Planned	10,000	40,000	70,000	<b>100,000</b>	On track
		Actual	22,600	104,895			

Intermediate Level Results Indicators	Base-line		Phase IV				Status
			2022	2023	2024	2025	
<b>Component One:</b> Provision of Policy and Regulatory Support to National and Local Level Authorities and Support for Program Implementation (Bank-executed)							
Intermediate Result Indicator One: [NUMBER] of water supply and sanitation sector regulation and policy reviews conducted	45	Planned	45	45	45	<b>55</b>	On track
		Actual	45	45			
Intermediate Result Indicator Two: [NUMBER] of sector regulation and policy reviews conducted in water security topics	7	Planned	7	10	12	<b>14</b>	On track
		Actual	7	10			
Intermediate Result Indicator Three: [NUMBER] of policy makers, higher-level technical and managerial staff from target and participating countries that benefited from cross-country capacity building activities	415	Planned	415	445	470	<b>500</b>	On track
		Actual	415	480			
<b>Component Two:</b> Capacity Building for Water Supply and Wastewater Utilities and Institutions (Recipient-executed)							
Intermediate Result Indicator Four: [NUMBER] of policy makers, higher-level technical and managerial staff from participating countries that benefited from cross-country knowledge sharing and cross-country capacity building activities	1,194	Planned	1,234	1,274	1,314	<b>1,354</b>	On track
		Actual	1,374	1,593			
Intermediate Result Indicator Five: [NUMBER] of female representatives that benefited from capacity building activities.	529	Planned	549	569	589	<b>609</b>	On track
		Actual	687	799			
Intermediate Result Indicator Six: [NUMBER] of participating utilities that have completed an operational performance improvement program under the Danube Learning Partnership	161	Planned				<b>200</b>	On track
		Actual	176	176			
Intermediate Result Indicator Seven: [Number] of new members joining IAWD	9	Planned				<b>21</b>	On track
		Actual	13	18			
Intermediate Results Indicator Eight: Cumulative amount of co-funding received supporting the implementation of Danube Water Program activities (in EUR)	0	Planned	10,000	50,000	90,000	<b>130,000</b>	On track
		Actual	46,976	91,014			

## A.3 REGIONAL EVENTS, TRAININGS AND CONFERENCES

Dates in 2023	Location	Number of participants	Purpose	1. Organized by DWP 2. Co-organized and/or co-funded by DWP 3. Attended by DWP
January 07	Sofia, Bulgaria	50	Annual Benchmarking Meeting	3
January 31	Vienna, Austria	22	D-LeaP Committee Council	3
February 02	Tirana, Albania	25	2nd Albania Water Security Workshop	1
February 08	Podgorica, Montenegro	25	2nd Montenegro Water Security Workshop	1
February 16	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	15	2nd Bosnia and Herzegovina Water Security Workshop	1
February 21-22	Vienna, Austria	350	ÖWAV Seminar on "Water Reuse"	3
February 22	Virtual	95	KnowNow Webinar: Revised Regulation, Renewed Challenges: The EU Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive	1
February 27 - March 3	Washington DC, USA	300	World Bank Water Week	3
March 01	online	5	UBP Coordinators meeting	2
March 13-15	Sofia, Bulgaria	12	IAWD Board meeting and retreat	3
March 13-17	Sofia, Bulgaria	20	Utility Management Training Module "Utility Economics and Regulation"	2
March 24	New York, US	70	DWP Side Event @ UN Water Conference	2
April 26	Virtual	35	Equal Aqua Forum	3
May 2-6	Vienna, Austria	20	DWP - CAWEP Central Asia Study Visit to Vienna	2
May 10	Virtual	5	UBP Coordinators meeting	2
May 22-23	Bonn, Germany	360	GWOPA Conference	3
30-May	Vienna, Austria	50	OEZA Wassertag	3
30-May	Vienna, Austria	40	UBP Danube Hub workshop	2
May 30	Vienna, Austria and hybrid	12	IAWD Board meeting	3
May 31	Vienna, Austria and hybrid	27	IAWD General Assembly	3
May 31	Vienna, Austria and hybrid	29	D-LeaP Committee Council	3










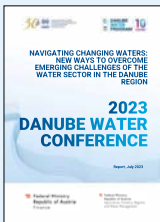
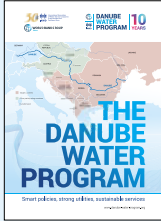
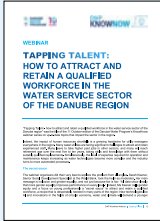


Dates in 2023	Location	Number of participants	Purpose	1. Organized by DWP 2. Co-organized and/or co-funded by DWP 3. Attended by DWP
May 31 - June 2	Vienna, Austria	200	Danube Water Conference	1
June 12-16	Ceske Budejovice, CZ	20	Utility Management Training Module "Commercial Management and Customer Services"	2
June 19-20	Vienna, Austria	100	Austria and the World Bank - 75 Years of an Evolving Cooperation	2
September 20	Vienna, Austria	12	IAWD Board meeting	3
October 3-5	Budva, Montenegro	95	Montenegro Water Conference	3
October 11	Virtual	45	Know Now webinar: Tapping Talent - How to attract and retain a qualified workforce in the water Service sector of the Danube region	1
October 18	Virtual	5	UBP Coordinators meeting	2
October 23-27	Podgorica, Montenegro	14	Training of Trainers: Access to Financing	2
October 30-31	Bucharest, Romania	88	Conference on Drought Risk Management in Romania and Europe	2
November 7-9	Golem, Albania	455	Balkans Joint Conference and Exhibition	3
November 13-17	Belgrade, Serbia	20	Utility Management Training Module "Asset Management and Investment Planning"	2
November 20	Pristina, Kosovo	26	North Macedonia Water for Green and Resilient Growth - Water reports presentation	2
November 29	Vienna, Austria and hybrid	12	IAWD Board meeting	3
December 06	Brussels, Belgium	100	3rd European Forum on the Regulation of Water Services	3



## A.4 MISSIONS AND TECHNICAL VISITS

Dates in 2023	Location	Participants	Purpose
January 13	Virtual	Raimund Mair	Coordination meeting with European Commission on drought risk assessments
February 14-15	Hybrid	DWP team	DWP Implementation Support Mission
March 10	Virtual	DWP team	Coordination meeting DWP - Centre of Excellence
March 30	Vienna, Austria	DWP team	Coordination meeting DWP - RCDN
April 19	Virtual	Katerina Schilling, Elisabeta Poci, Antonia Püspök	STEP Training
April 19	Virtual	Raimund Mair	Coordination meeting with European Commission on drought risk assessments
April 24	Virtual	Raimund Mair, Kathia Havens	Coordination meeting with Global Water Partnership on drought risk assessments
April 25	Virtual	Katerina Schilling, Elisabeta Poci	D-LeaP Quality & Evaluation Working Group meeting
May 17	Virtual	Katerina Schilling, Elisabeta Poci	D-LeaP Quality & Evaluation Working Group meeting
May 26	Virtual	Katerina Schilling, Elisabeta Poci	D-LeaP Quality & Evaluation Working Group meeting
June 21-22	Hybrid	DWP team	DWP Implementation Support Mission
June 27	Virtual	DWP team	Coordination meeting DWP - Centre of Excellence
July 06	Hybrid	DWP team	DWP Steering Committee meeting
September 26-27	Podgorica, Montenegro	Katerina Schilling, Emilija Milunovic	RCDN+ PAB and Networking meeting
October 4-6	Podgorica, Montenegro	Raimund Mair	Mission Montenegro
October 13-14	Virtual	Katerina Schilling	ICPDR EG meeting on Public Participation
November 14	Virtual	DWP team	Coordination meeting DWP - Centre of Excellence
November 17	Virtual	Raimund Mair	Coordination meeting with ICPDR on drought risk assessments
November 20	Virtual	Raimund Mair	Meeting Montenegro Sediment Assessment
November 27	Vienna, Austria	DWP team	Coordination meeting DWP - Centre of Excellence
November 28-29	Hybrid	DWP team	DWP Implementation Support Mission
December 5-6	Brasov, Romania	Katerina Schilling, Antonia Püspök	DWF preparation visit
December 11-12	Podgorica, Montenegro	Raimund Mair	Meeting Montenegro Sediment Assessment
December 13-14	Vienna, Austria	IAWD team	RCDN+ Networking meeting on Quality Standards
December 18-19	Podgorica, Montenegro	Raimund Mair	Mission Montenegro
December 20	Hybrid	DWP team	DWP Steering Committee meeting

# A.5 PUBLICATIONS

Publication date	Title	Publication date	Title
January – December 2023	 <p>Voice of the Danube electronic weekly digest</p>	May 2023	 <p><a href="#">DWC Conference Brochure</a></p>
February 2023	 <p><a href="#">DWP KnowNow summary: "Revised Regulation, Renewed Challenges"</a></p>	May 2023	 <p><a href="#">IAWD "As Time Flows by" 30 Years Brochure</a></p>
March 2023	 <p><a href="#">UMT Utility Economics, Finance and Regulation Module one pager</a></p>	June 2023	 <p><a href="#">UMT Commercial Management and Customer Service Module one pager</a></p>
March 2022	 <p><a href="#">UMT Network Operations Module one pager</a></p>	October 2023	 <p><a href="#">Danube Water Conference Report</a></p>
May 2023	 <p><a href="#">Danube Water Program Leaflet</a></p>	October 2023	 <p><a href="#">DWP KnowNow Summary: "Tapping Talent"</a></p>
May 2023	 <p><a href="#">DWP Annual Report 2022</a></p>	November 2023	 <p><a href="#">UMT Asset Management and Investment Planning one pager</a></p>

## A.6 AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER PROGRAMS AND DONORS

Partner	Area of collaboration	Amount	Status
Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership (GWSP)	ECA Water Security Initiative, covering whole ECA region – synergies with methodological development of Danube Water Security Diagnostics	USD 380,000	Ongoing
	UMT Scholarship covering 50% of program fees for 10 UMT participants	EUR 30,000	Ongoing
	Technical Assistance on Sediment Management in Montenegro	USD 36,000	Ongoing
	Support for the roll-out of D-LeaP Programs on Access to Finance and Asset Management	USD 50,000	Ongoing
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)	RCDN+ Grant Agreement of IAWD co-financing relevant DWP activities such as IAWD Strengthening and D-LeaP	EUR 300,000	Ongoing



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## For further information

[www.danube-water-program.org](http://www.danube-water-program.org)  
[www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water)  
[www.iawd.at](http://www.iawd.at)  
[www.d-leap.org](http://www.d-leap.org)  
[www.danubis.org](http://www.danubis.org)



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