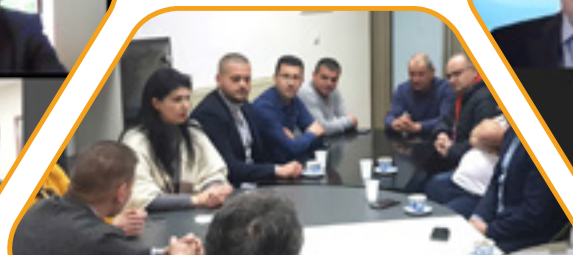
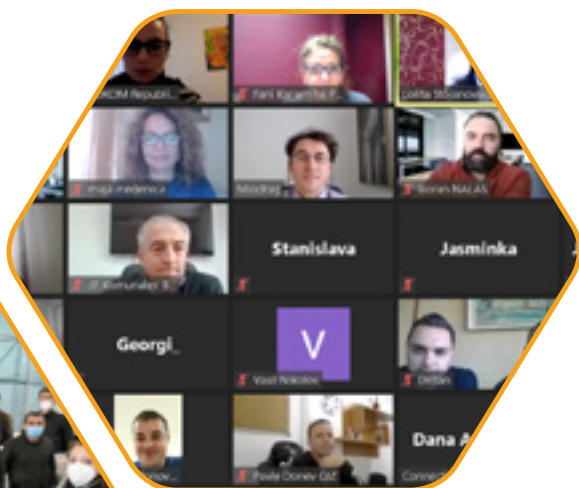
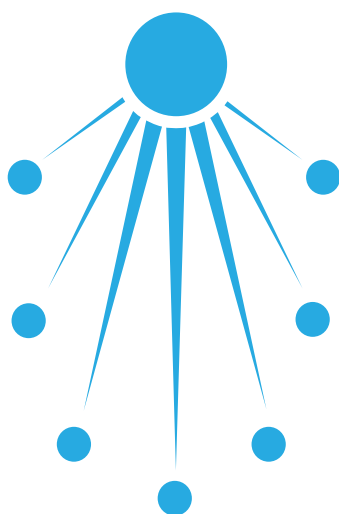


ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE WORK OF
ADKOM



2020

16.01.2020

Meeting of the Editorial Board for the Eleventh International Conference on “Modernization and sustainability of the Communal Services” organized by ADKOM

The first meeting of the Editorial Board for the Eleventh International Conference on “Modernization and sustainability of the Communal Services” took place on January 16, 2020, in the executive office of ADKOM. The attendees of the meeting were: Ms. Ana Petrovska – State Secretary in the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ms. Lindita Shakiri – Technical director – PC Vodovod i Kanalizacija – Skopje, Stanislava Dodeva, PhD – National Program Advisor – Swiss Embassy to the Republic of North Macedonia, Ms. Anastasija Stefanovska – Advisor in Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, Ms. Natasha Bakreska – Environmental Manager in USJE, Mr. Jane Vrteski – Management Consultant and ADKOM employees.

The meeting was chaired by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska. All attendees agreed on the five panel sessions which shall cover the following topics:

1. Regulating water services
2. How to have sustainable wastewater treatments plants (WWTP)
3. PUC modernization
4. Waste management
5. Regulating the price of waste – independent regulatory commission or a decision of municipal councils?

The attendees were informed by Ms. Stojanovska that the five panel sessions will be divided into two conference days, and that all the works will be published as an electronic edition after the conference. The members of the Editorial Board were informed that there will be a technical exhibition organized as part of the Conference, where companies who are related to PUCs may participate as exhibitors.

22.01.2020

Eighteenth session of the ADKOM Management Board

On January 22, 2020 in Skopje the Management Board of ADKOM held its eighteenth session. The members of the Management Board discussed ADKOM activities in the past period. The attendees were informed by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, on the organizational activities concerning the Eleventh International Conference, scheduled to take place in June 2020. On the session were discussed the activities concerning the procurement of mechanization for the PUCs, according to the position document prepared by ADKOM.

According to the planned activities of the executive office of ADKOM, the members of the Management Board of ADKOM agreed on the topics for the donors' meeting as well as of the experts' debate that will take place in February 2020.

30.01.2020

Meeting of ADKOM Markets Committee

The members of the ADKOM Markets Committee held their meeting on January 30, 2020, in the executive office of ADKOM. The members of the Committee worked according to the Agenda for election of Committee Chairman, preparation of the operation plan for the Committee for 2020, and also they discussed the decrease of the VAT rate from 18% to 5% for the service “green markets” and there were several proposals concerning amending the legislation in the area of giving more authorities to the municipalities for the service “green markets”.

The members of the Committee agreed that they will meet regularly every three months during 2020. For the next meeting, all members will have prepared proposals for activities of the Committee and these will be included in the Annual program of the Committee. Concerning the reduction of the VAT rate from 18% to 5%, the members of the Committee, concluded that the Legal Committee of ADKOM should convene and prepare a motion for the reduction of the VAT rate for the service “green markets”. Concerning the amendments of the legislation in the area of giving more authorities to the municipalities for the service “green markets”, the attendees agreed to review the amendments of the Law on markets and if there are no provisions that amend the issuance of licenses that to organize a meeting with the Ministry of Local Self- Government so that the PUCs will be the entities issuing the licenses to the marketers.

PHOTO GALLERY



04.02.2020

Experts' debate on energy efficiency in the PUCs.

On February 4, 2020, the ADKOM Training Centre, in cooperation with the RCDN Project, organized experts' debate on energy efficiency in the Public Utility Companies (PUCs).

The Moderator, Mr. Jane Vrteski opened the debate by greeting all participants and by pointing out that the specific goal of the debate is to raise the awareness with the experts from various institutions on the potential and the benefits of the policies and measures for energy efficiency in the PUCs. The moderator presented the agenda and gave the floor to Mr. Zorancho Georgiev, who presented the initial experiences from the implementation of the energy efficiency measures in the PUC "Vodvod" Kochani.

In his presentation, Mr. Georgiev informed that since last year, PUC "Vodvod" Kochani, with the support from SECO, constructed the main wastewater collector with 10 km length and secondary collectors with 4.5 km length, and installed 11 power inverters. Mr. Georgiev presented the list of necessary documentation for registration and the operational permit for the photovoltaic power station, as well as how it operates.

The next presentation was by Mr. Dragan Chorobeski, from the PC "Vodvod" Kumanovo, who shared the experiences from the region for energy efficiency in the PUCs- like in the Republic of Albania. Mr. Chorobeski gave a brief exposé concerning the motivation for energy efficiency, putting the accent on energy saving and the economic benefits for the public companies. Also, he presented the systems- energy consumers in the water supplying companies and what are the steps and the measures for managing with the energy efficiency.

Mr. Rado Rusev, IAWD Consultant, had his presentation on the subject "Capacity Building of PUC toward implementing the energy efficiency measures" and he elaborated on a program created by IAWD and stressed the benefits of the program as implemented through the ADKOM training center.

- Local ADKOM program and Macedonian trainers
- Access to international trainers
- Software and equipment for onsite measurements available to the participants
- Potential for financing projects for energy efficiency

After the presentations, the participants had a discussion and drew the following conclusions:

1. The measures for energy efficiency are the impetus that might contribute to a more efficient and effective operations of the PUCs, which will contribute that the end users- the citizens will get the services for a lower price.
2. PUC have high maintenance costs for the wastewater treatment plants and in order to reduce those costs the plants need to become energy efficient. PUC that have a photovoltaic power station and which produce electricity are not able to sell the electricity due to the legal restrictions, specifically with the Law on Communal Services.
3. ADKOM in cooperation with ZELS and the State Inspectorate with the Ministry of Transportation and Communication should initiate amendments to the Law on Communal Services, whereby the services of the PUCs would extend and would be in accordance with the needs of the PUCs, with the ultimate goal to improve the services for the benefit of the citizens.
4. The need for strengthening the capacities of the PUC and the implementing the energy efficiency program through the ADKOM training center.

11.02.2020

Session of the ADKOM Supervisory and Management, Annual Assembly

The sessions of the ADKOM Supervisory and Management Boards and the annual Assembly took place on February 11, 2020. On its ninth session the members of the Supervisory Board reviewed and adopted the Rules of Operation of the Supervisory Board.

The members of the Management Board worked according to the session's agenda and the executive director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska informed them on the changes of dates and venue for the Eleventh International Conference – which will take place in Ohrid, in the Metropol Hotel, from 08 to 10 June, 2020. The members of the Management Board reviewed and adopted the Rules of Operation of the Management Board and adopted the annual financial statement for 2019.

The annual Assembly of ADKOM convened all its delegates for the annual session. The session was chaired by the Deputy Chairman of ADKOM's Management Board, Mr. Mazulm Leshi, he acted according to the session's Agenda and pointed out that all PUCs members of ADKOM should take active participation in all activities of the Association. Concerning the adoption of the Rules of Operation

of the ADKOM's Assembly, the Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Stojanovska informed the attendees that it was revised and adopted by the members of the Management and Supervisory Boards of ADKOM. The present delegates were introduced with the amendments of ADKOM's Statute for the period 2020 – 2022 and unanimously adopted them. The delegates also adopted a Decision on changes in the title of ADKOM where the change of the name of the country should be introduced and therefore the name of ADKOM shall be: Association of Public Utility Services Providers of the Republic of North Macedonia.

Concerning the Report on Operations of ADKOM in 2019, Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva presented the attendees with the most important activities of ADKOM that were realized in 2019.

The Chairman of ADKOM's Supervisory Board, Mr. Zoran Janev, presented the Annual Financial Statements for 2019 before the Assembly, as well as the Financial Plan for 2020. The delegates unanimously and without any remarks adopted both documents.

Ms. Lea Pavlovikj elaborated the Business Plan for 2020-2022 and the Annual Program of ADKOM. After the detailed presentation, the Deputy Chairman of ADKOM put these documents to vote and they were unanimously adopted by ADKOM delegates.

11.02.2020

Meeting with SECO and GIZ

On February 11, 2020, part of the members of the Supervisory and Management Boards of ADKOM met with representatives of the German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

The Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska presented some of the most important activities of ADKOM that were implemented with the support from GIZ and SECO, and after the discussion the activities that will need support from GIZ and SECO in the future were also presented.

12.02.2020

Second meeting of the members of the Editorial Board for the Eleventh International Conference on “Modernization and sustainability of the Communal Services“ organized by ADKOM

The second meeting of the Editorial Board for the Eleventh International Conference on “Modernization and sustainability of the Communal Services“ took place on February 16, 2020, in the executive office

of ADKOM. The attendees of the meeting defined the sub-topics in the five panel sessions. Each of the institutions, suggested panelists that should be invited to participate on the conference.

18.02.2020

Meeting of ADKOM Legal Committee

ADKOM Legal Committee met on February 18, 2020. The present members of the Committee worked on the motion for reduction of the VAT rate from 18% to 5% for the service “green market”. Also, they worked on the motion for amendments to the Law on Communal Services in order to provide grounds for the PUCs to be able to do non-communal services as auxiliary services. The Legal Committee worked on the motion for increased participation of the local self-government units and PUCs in the issuance of licenses for the green marketers and also prepared a review of the legislation on communal services that needs to be amended.

20.02.2020

“Commercial efficiency” program

On February 20, 2020 in Delchevo, the employees from the ADKOM executive office, Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva, Ms. Lea Pavlovikj and the consultant Jane Vrteski participated on a meeting, with the propose to present o the PUCs the from Delchevo, Berovo and Pehchevo the “Commercial efficiency” program.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Rado Rusev, a consultant t from the Republic of Bulgaria, who had a presentation on commercial efficiency and its importance for the operations of the PUCs. Through specific examples, the employees of the PUCs from Delchevo, Berovo and Pehchevo were able to get acquainted with more efficient control of the water meter readers, access to water meters and control over the [potential consumption of the consumers.

26.02.2020

Donor Round Table “Accomplishments and Challenges in the Communal Sector”

On February 26, 2020, ADKOM had the first Donor Round Table on the subject of “Accomplishments and Challenges in the Communal Sector”.

The goal of the Round Table was to assist in sharing information among the key stakeholders on the operations and interests of the communal sector.

The Donor Round Table was opened by the moderator, Mr. Jane Vrteski, as he presented the main and the specific goals, as well as the agenda of the event.

The moderator gave the floor to Mr. Andrej Kirov, director of PC "Vodovod" Kochani, and member of the ADKOM Management Board, who in his presentation talked briefly about ADKOM's mission and vision, as well as about the entire organization of the association. In the presentation the following accomplishments of ADKOM were shared:

- Established Training Center for the communal services
- Training programs for: commercial efficiency, crisis management, business planning, reparation of tariff adjustment plans, planning of capital infrastructural projects.
- Implementing research and preparation of position documents
- ADKOM signed individual memoranda of cooperation with ZELS and the Crises Management Center, as well as a joint Memorandum of cooperation with the Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, ZELS and RCDN.
- ADKOM has and is cooperating with several international institutions such as: GIZ, SECO, the World Bank, USAID, EU, UNDP, KWF
- ADKOM is also member of regional networks (IAWD and RCDN),
- ADKOM is a member in several steering committees on projects implemented through the ministries.

Mr. Kirov shared in his presentation the challenges before ADKOM:

- Support the PUCs suppliers of water services in the process of reforms of the water sector (regulation of water services)
- Support PUCs in the process of reforming the waste management (regulating the price of waste management)
- Modernization of the PUCs operations (technical support)
- Lack of equipment and mechanization in the PUCs
- Infrastructure investments
- Build knowledge and skills of the employees (trainings and education)
- Need of new software solutions and provision of data
- Improve the assets management in the PUCs.

The moderator opened the floor for discussions, and the first speaker was Mr. Cliff Hammer, representative of the Swiss Embassy. He stressed that in the past 20 years the Swiss embassy has been active supporter and sponsor of the water supply sector, but also it is active in the waste management sector, which is only one of the ways of support for the PUCs. There are a lot of infrastructural projects being implemented in the country but in parallel it is being invested in capacity building of the PUC personnel, so that the PUCs can manage better their human resources. Mr. Hammer also informed that the "Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services" (RCDN) is working on a training program for management and maintenance of water treatment plants and this program will be offered to the PUCs and municipalities next year.

Mr. Filip Nelkovski, from UNDP addressed the participants and informed them that the topic on the Agenda is in accordance with the project implemented by UNDP, which is concerning the capacity building of the municipalities.

The project aims at helping the municipalities prepare technical documentation for the infrastructural projects. The project's goal is to provide the municipalities, together with the PUCs with easier access to capital investments.

Mr. Luka Aras, representative of the EU Delegation informed that the Delegation is one of the major donors in the country in various areas connected to the communal services, such as water and waste. Mr. Aras also pointed out that the EU Delegation works on constructing water treatment plants but also he pointed out that it is essential to provide maintenance for those plants, by building the capacities of the staff managing these capital investments.

Ms. Arabena Paljoshi Memeti, from the Japanese Embassy pointed out that through the Japanese Embassy over 100 projects with a total worth of 7.2 million Euros were implemented. Also, Ms. Paljoshi Memeti pointed out that this year they signed 10 grants where the end beneficiaries are the PUCs, and the implementers were the municipalities, and she also pointed out that the PC "Solidarnost" from Vinica applied for a project which after being awarded to them they used it to purchase a vehicle. Mr. Igor Hirstov, from OC "Solidarnost" Vinica also participated in the discussion where he added that the cooperation with the Japanese Embassy has been excellent and invited the colleges from the other PUCs to apply for their assistance. Also, Mr. Hristov added that PUC "Solidarnost" from Vinica had an excellent cooperation with the Swiss Embassy, with which assistance the collector is being built to take the waste waters to the water treatment plant in Kochani.

Ms. Tanja Tomikj, from the MSIP Project informed that the project is working on improving municipal services. She also informed that the project provides sub-loans

for the municipalities to improve their infrastructure and each municipality decides for which type of project they would like to use the funds. The project currently provides funds for any type of infrastructural projects. By using the sub-loan the municipality has the possibility to use a grant in the amount of 27% from the construction contract with the sub-loan. Ms. Tomikj also informed that they are currently negotiating with the bank for two possible projects, one for energy efficiency, which is already in the final stage, and the second one about solid waste management, which is still in the research stage.

Ms. Teodora Pop Hristov, GIZ representative mentioned the program that will be elaborated through the the "Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services" (RCDN) Project, and it will be offered by ADKOM to the PUCs.

Ms. Ljupka Dimovska Zajkov, from the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning pointed out that each year there are analyses of the national program in order to determine the inconsistencies and the priorities, in order to know which projects are important and should be given advantage. Besides projects financed from the EU and from other donors, the Ministry prepares other programs, such as the ones for environmental investments and the program on waters, which give the opportunities for procurement of funds to implement these programs in the waste and water sectors. Ms. Dimkovska Zajkov stated that the idea for the Donors' Round Table is an excellent opportunity for the Ministry to be informed which is relevant for its financing decisions. Ms. Dimkovska Zajkov proposed that a system of mutual information should be established displaying all the planned projects, in order for the PUCs and the municipalities to be adequately informed.

Mr. Slavko Arsov, from the Water supply Directorate within the Ministry of Agriculture, informed that the Ministry is part of many projects. He also informed the participants that the Directorate works on several aspects, which besides watering include drinking water, as well as complete water management.

Ms. Biljana Mickovska, from the Ministry of economy informed that the Ministry is working on the amendments to the Law on Public Companies, and that there is a designated Working Group consisted of representatives from the stakeholders, among which is ADKOM. So far, the Ministry has received initiatives from the Institute of Democracy, in a form of a draft proposal but only on the provisions concerning the selection of members for the management and supervisory boards, and the election of directors.

Ms. Linda Shakiri, from the PUC "Vodovod I Kanalziacija" from Skopje, welcome ADKOM's initiative on capacity building and on organizing the round table with donors. Also, Ms. Shakiri pointed out that the applications for all projects are done directly through the municipalities, which puts PUCs in a very peculiar position, especially

after introducing the regulator of the water services as the submitted documentation needs to demonstrate the capital investments of the PUC. She stressed that it is necessary to find a solution for the PUCs to be able to apply directly for the projects they find to be relevant and of priority.

Mr. Andrej Kirov, from PC "Vodovod" Kochani, added that in the amendments to the Law on Public Companies it is necessary to add the activity of selling electricity produced by the PUCs, as the PUCs now are not able to sell the electricity due to legal restrictions.

Ms. Stanislava Dodeva from the Swiss Embassy informed that it was discovered that in the water sector there are many stakeholders involved, but they are not well coordinated. The Swiss Embassy made an analysis in 2014 and the involved expert proposed that there should be a ministerial working group in place. This working group would meet two times a year and they would discuss the most important issues in the sector. The rules of Operation for such working group have already been prepared. Ms. Dodeva stated that ADKOM may initiate the establishment of such working group/ Ms. Tomikj joined the discussion, and she suggested that ADKOM may take a more important role in the coordination of the institutional funds and international funds, so that all PUCs have equal benefit from the donors' investments.

After the discussion, the moderator shared the following conclusions:

- Maintaining the dialogue among the key stakeholders in the water sector is crucial and it must persist in the future
- ADKOM's initiative for establishing an inter-ministerial working group for improved coordination of the stakeholders in the water sector.
- ADKOM needs institutional support in order to meet the challenges before the PUCs.
- Strengthening the PUCs capacities is crucial, and it should be regarded as a capital investment. The ADKOM Training center will continue to deliver its services and through the trainings will work on active capacity building of its members. So far, the center is supported by SECO and GIZ, through the project "Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services" (RCDN), however it is expected that there will be cooperation with other donors as well.

27.02.2020

Visit to the Association for water protection and perseverance in the South of Serbia – WASS

On February 27, 2020, the delegation of PUC directors, members of ADKOM, headed by the executive director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, visited the Association for Water Protection and Perseveration in the South of Serbia – WASS in Nish. The ADKOM delegation consisted of representatives from PUC “Komunalec” Gevgelija, PUC “Solidarnost” Vinica, PC “Vodovod” Kumanovi and PUC “Derven” Veles. The visit was organized in order to strengthen the cooperation and exchange of experiences between both associations.

The topic of the meeting was the operation of ADKOM and WASS, especially because both associations are part of the project implemented through GIZ “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN). The participants discussed the activities that will be realized as part of the project and their importance for the members of the associations. Mr. Milosh Gjorgjevikj, the Chairman of WASS introduced the services that WASS offers to their members in South Serbia.

02-04.03.2020

Three-day trainings for the implementation of the functional analysis

In cooperation with the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, ADKOM organized three-day trainings for its members. The trainings were organized by and took place in the Academy for Professional Development of the Administrative Officers of the Ministry of Information Society and Administration. Ms. Laura Idrizi was the trainer. The trainings were attended mostly by the employees in the legal departments of the PUCs. The training consisted of presenting the methodology for the preparation of the functional analysis and the legal obligations for conducting such analysis. During the training, with the help of practical drills the attendees were presented with the model for conducting the functional analysis in order to help the PUCs in conducting their own functional analysis.

PHOTO GALLERY



05.03.2020

Twentieth session of the Management Board of ADKOM

On March 5, 2020 in Vinica, ADKOM held the twentieth session of its Management Board. The Management Board operated per the determined Agenda, and its members reviewed the activities conducted in the past period, between two sessions of the Management Board. The executive director of ADKOM, Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, informed the attendees on the organizational activities concerning the eleventh International Conference, particularly the panel sessions and the topics. During the discussion, the members of the Management Board and ADKOM's team agreed that due to the new situation due to the virus COVID-19, the Conference should be postponed for September 2020. In case the situation does not resolve until September then the conference will be held in May or June 2021.

The members discussed the organization and holding of trainings by ADKOM for preparation of Business plans and plans for tariffs adjustment in the second regulated period for the registered PUCs, as well as training for preparation of reports for the small PUCs.

The members of the Management Board discussed the challenges for purchasing of orthophoto maps. Also, the members supported ADKOM in applying to MSIP projects for research, studies and trainings.

March/April 2020

Activities undertaken by ADKOM during the State of Emergency

During these times when our country is faced with crisis caused by the virus COVID-19, the PUCs have a crucial role in supplying of potable water as well as for the maintenance of cleanliness and hygiene on the entire territory of the country.

In order for ADKOM to support its members and to help them in executing their daily activities, ADKOM participated on the following activities:

- On 31.03.2020, ADKOM submitted a letter to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Public Procurement Bureau concerning the expiry of the public procurement license.
- On 31.03.2020, ADKOM submitted a letter to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia concerning the salaries of the PUCs and proposed that in the Government's consideration for cuts in wages the specifics of the works and services of the PUCs should be taken into consideration, and that these entities should have a special status, separate from other entities in the public sector.
- ADKOM hired consultants who adjusted and unified the tools for data collection and the model for calculation of tariffs for the needs of the second regulated period, and also prepared the guidelines for the use of these tools.
- Asked for extension of deadlines until May 15, 2020 for submission of Business Plans (BP) and Plans for Tariffs Adjustment (PTA) by the PUCs to the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia.
- Organizing and delivering trainings for BPs and PTAs to the PUCs. The trainings are done online, in order for the PUCs to be supported in the process and also to meet the legal obligations set by the Regulatory Commission.
- On 01.04.2020, ADKOM submitted a request to the Technical Prime Minister, Mr. Oliver Spasovski, in order to get approval for use of gas and gasoline from the state reserves, as well as to get assistance in a form of protective consumable (gloves and masks) and disinfectants for all PUCs in the country.
- On 02.04.2020, ADKOM submitted a letter to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia requesting answers to the questions submitted by the PUCs concerning the use of annual leaves, leaves of absence, and also initiated the resolutions of other issues concerning wages and contributions.
- In April 2020, ADKOM submitted a request to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia for the postponement of the enforcement of the Law on cancelling of interest rates and reprogramming of debts and expenditures of natural persons, publicized in the Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia No.31/2020 from 10.02.2020. Therefore, ADKOM submitted a list of questions to the Chambers of Executors concerning the implementation of this process.
- Collecting additional data concerning increased workload of the PUCs (disinfections, number of people engaged, working during working hours or outside working hours and similar data), after the submitted request by the government for additions to the Administrative Order for payment of fees to the wages of employees in the public sector.
- On 13.04.2020 ADKOM submitted a request to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in order to add to the Administrative Order for limitations to the payment of fees to the wages of employees in the public sector during the State of Emergency. It was pointed out that it is unjust to reduce the fees to the wages of the PUC employees, as they put in extraordinary efforts to meet the needs of the citizens and the State in dealing with this problem.
- The Eleventh International Conference on "Modernization and sustainability of the

Communal Services“ organized by ADKOM due to the situation of COVID-19 will be postponed for September 2020. In case the situation does not resolve until September then the conference will be held in May or June 2021.

Online trainings for making of Business Plans (BP) and Plans for Tariffs Adjustment (PTA)

ADKOM in cooperation with the Energy and Water Services Regulatory Commission of the Republic of North Macedonia, through its Training Center started to implement trainings for the responsible team in the PUCs for making of Business Plans (BP) and Plans for Tariffs Adjustment (PTA) for the second regulated period.

In order to support its members in this process, ADKOM prepared a training program, designed according to the needs of the PUCs, which aims at building the capacities of the PUCs and the PUCs will be able to independently make and submit to the regulatory Commission the Business Plans (BP) and Plans for Tariffs Adjustment (PTA). The training program includes trainers who will help the PUCs teams directly to prepare all the documents, and the program also foresees homework for the PUCs teams.

Even though the State of Emergency imposes postponement of the trainings, in March 2020 ADKOM created additional training plan, and from April 2, 2020 started to implement online trainings. According to the initial training program it was foreseen that there should be 4 trainings, but per the new situation the number of trainings increased in order for the PUCs teams to be support completely during this process.

The following PUCs joined the online trainings:

1. “Ograzhden” Bosilovo
2. “Derven” Veles
3. “Dolneni” Dolneni
4. “Komunalec” Kichevo
5. “Komunalec” Strumica
6. “Komunalec” – Sveti Nikole
7. “Nikola Karev” Probishtip
8. “Niskogradba” Bitola
9. “Plavaja” Radovish
10. “Standard” Debar
11. “Usluga” Berovo
12. “Ilinden” Ilinden
13. “Vodovod” Bitola
14. “Solidarnost” Vinica
15. “Proleter” Resen

Due to the State of Emergency, the Regulatory Commission, in cooperation with ADKOM, granted the PUCs an extension to the deadline for submission of BP and ATP until May 15, 2020.

PHOTO GALLERY





03.04.2020

Online exchange of experiences on the subject of “Operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plants “

On April 3, 2020, the Aquasan network from Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN) organized exchange of experiences on the subject of “Operation and maintenance of the wastewater treatment plants “.

The main goal of the exchange of experiences was to enable the units of local self-government and the PUCs from Bosnia and Herzegovina to share their experience and to improve the operations of the wastewater treatment plants by formal exchange of experiences, based on the product for capacity building, developed by the RCDN network and Aquasan network.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Lolita Stojanovska, the Executive director of ADKOM and Ms. Lea Pavlovikj, Training Manager of ADKOM.

15.04.2020

Online meeting with the training managers / focal points

On April 15, 2020, the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services” (RCDN) organized an online meeting on which participated the members of the project, i.e. the training managers / focal points from the associations

of municipalities and PUCs. The discussion of the meeting evolved around the undertaken activities by the association during the State of Emergency. ADKOM was represented by Ms. Lea Pavlovikj, Training Manager/Focal point for the RCDN project. On the meeting ADKOM presented all the activities through which ADKOM supports its members. Also, the good practices were shared, particularly that ADKOM created a training plan for organizing and delivery of online training for making of Business Plans (BP) and Adjustment to Tariffs Plans (ATP), also, that a Viber group was established for exchange of experiences for the wastewater treatment plants, and the information that ADKOM is working on documents and materials for events which were postponed due to the pandemic, so that after the conditions are improved, ADKOM will be ready to implement them immediately.

28.04.2020

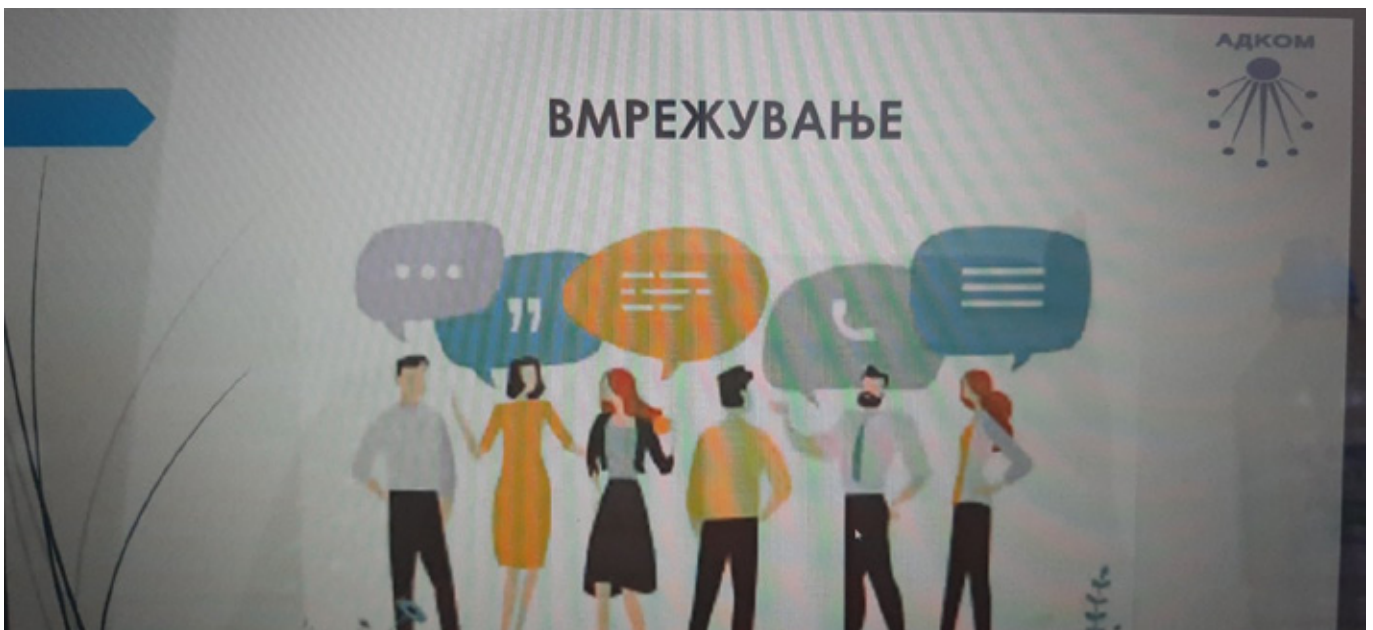
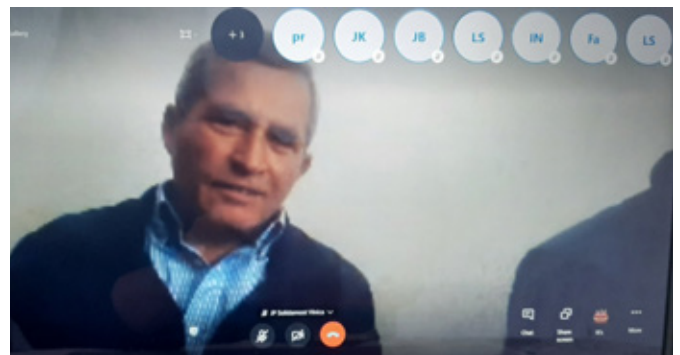
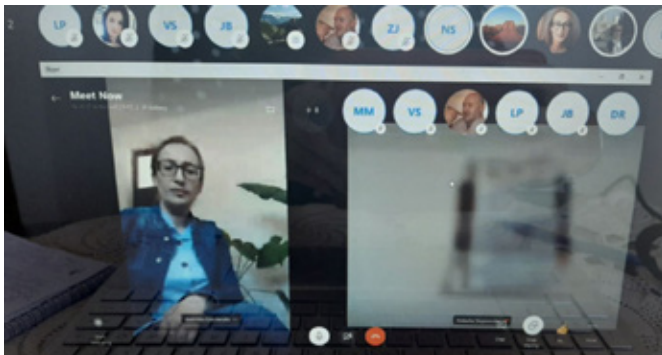
Webinar on uninterrupted operations during crisis

On April 28, 2020, the Water Company from Budapest (Budapest WaterWorks) organized a webinar on uninterrupted operations during crisis.

The main topics of the webinar were the following:

- How to change the operating basis during crisis
- How to return to normal operations after the crisis
- Re-imagine and re-discover the business activities, the regulatory and the competition environment.

A team from ADKOM took part on the webinar.



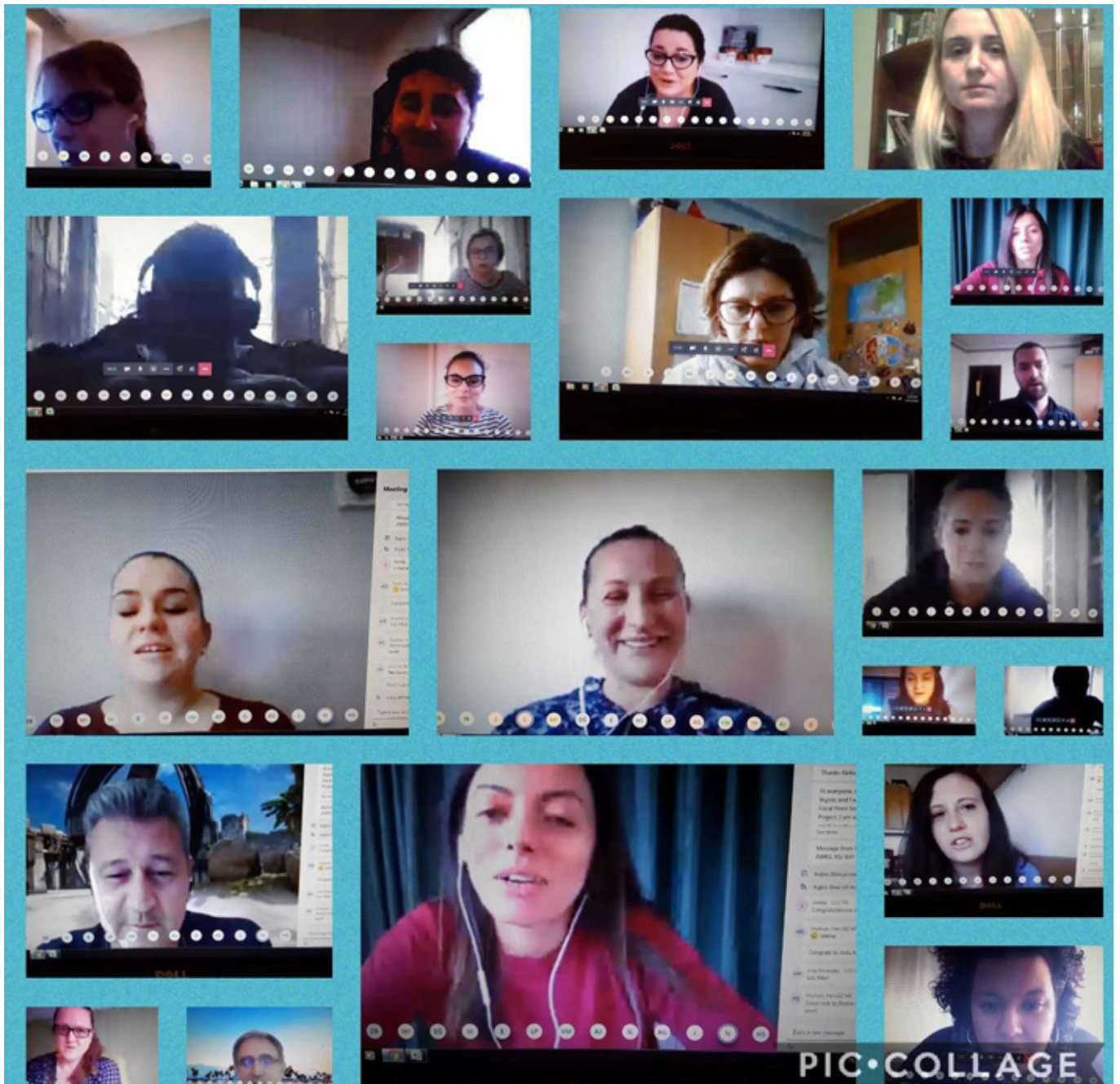
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3. Ил. приливна вода	СРЕДНА	ВРЕШКА
4. Стабилност на инфраструктурата	СРЕДНА	ВРЕШКА
5. Сметки за користење	ВРЕШКА	ВРЕШКА
6. Организациона структура	ВРЕШКА	ВРЕШКА
7. Финансиска стабилност	ВРЕШКА	ВРЕШКА
8. Финансиска транспарентност	ВРЕШКА	ВРЕШКА
9. Висока транспарентност и подготвеност	ВРЕШКА	ВРЕШКА

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Стратежиски цели	Мерење	Индикатори за резултатите	2017	2018	2019	2020
1. Приливна вода	1.1	1.1.1	80	80	80	80
2. Изготвување на сметките и сметките	2.1	2.1.1	80	80	80	80
3. Ил. приливна вода	3.1	3.1.1	80	80	80	80
4. Стабилност на инфраструктурата	4.1	4.1.1	80	80	80	80
5. Сметки за користење	5.1	5.1.1	80	80	80	80
6. Организациона структура	6.1	6.1.1	80	80	80	80
7. Финансиска стабилност	7.1	7.1.1	80	80	80	80
8. Финансиска транспарентност	8.1	8.1.1	80	80	80	80
9. Висока транспарентност и подготвеност	9.1	9.1.1	80	80	80	80

1. Приливна вода	2. Изготвување на сметките и сметките	3. Ил. приливна вода	4. Стабилност на инфраструктурата	5. Сметки за користење	6. Организациона структура	7. Финансиска стабилност	8. Финансиска транспарентност	9. Висока транспарентност и подготвеност
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PHOTO GALLERY





Accurate & up-to-date information for customers

- Constantly updating information**
Website, social media channels, call-center IVR, etc.
- Alternate management for customer service channels**
Personal customer service to follow all official channels on work. Operate in shifts to protect employees.
- Facilitate customers in transitioning to online**
Provide easy tutorial videos. Develop an online registration FAQ.
- Use all available communication channels**
SMS, phone, Messenger, all relevant media should be utilized.
- Make the most of social media**
Management messaging to boost customer morale. Basic trouble shooting via Facebook live to answer FAQs. Advertise all your channels.

Presenters out

Ferenc Keszler, CEO
Tamás Benicz, International Business Development Director
Gábor Lengyel, Customer Investment Director

Presenter

Gábor Lengyel
Technical Investment Director

BUDAPEST WATERWORKS

Management thinking & strategic actions

5 R phases: **Resolve**, **Resilience**, **Return**, **Re-imagine**, **Reform**

Timeline: Before crisis (Normal operation) → Crisis (Emergency operation) → V1 (Recovering business processes) → V2 (Reimagining business processes) → V3 ("New normal" operations)

Key teams: Crisis Management Team + Internal Communications Team, Financial Stability Team, Future Planning Team

Nerve center focus shift

Present focus: Employee protection, Customer management, Supply chain, Cash, Crisis Mgmt Team, Financial Mgmt Team

Future focus: Clear, unbiased scenarios, Portfolio of strategic actions, Detailed plan for Return, New strategy for the "new normal" - Reimagination & Reform, Future Planning Team

Where we are now

Our company has taken the necessary decisions and steps required by **phase Resolve** and shifted to **Emergency Operations** which we introduce in the following chapters.

We understand our partners' problems

World map showing project locations: London, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Moscow, Beijing, Shanghai, Singapore, Jakarta, Manila, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bogota, Lima, Santiago, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Lima, Bogota, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bogota, Lima, Santiago, Mexico City, Buenos Aires.

We love Youtility

- Continuous operation for **152 YEARS**
- Technical developments, processes, protocols for crisis situations
- Excellent drinking water quality and related services
- Integrating cutting edge technologies
- 15+ years of international experience

We have seen world wars, revolutions, natural and industrial disasters... **And now we operate in a pandemic without problems**

Live event Q&A

Moderator 1:02 PM: Welcome Dr. István!

Samantha Yates 1:03 PM: Samantha Yates here from the Global Water Leaders Group - delighted to be here!

Moderator 1:04 PM: Hello Samatha! Nice having you between us!

Teodor Daskalov, Bulgaria 1:03 PM: Hello, from Sofia

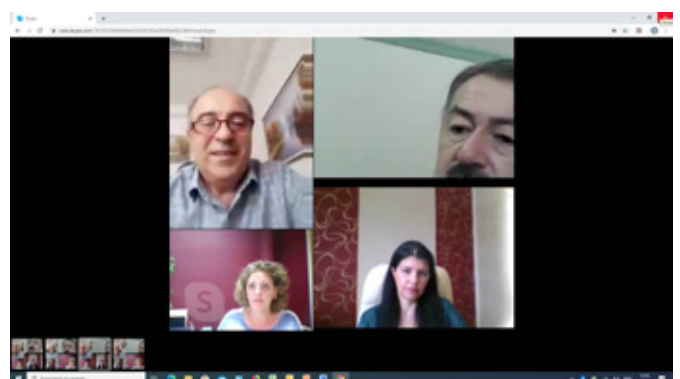
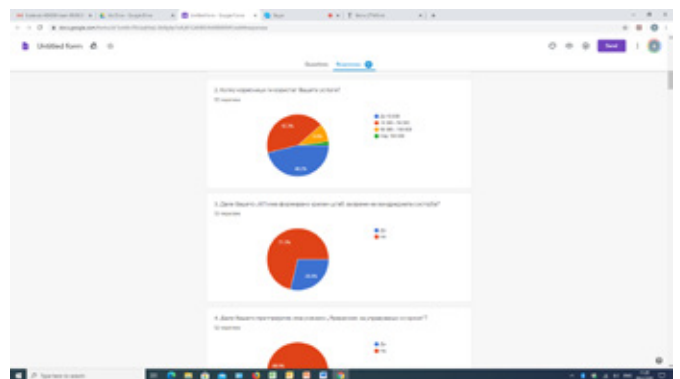
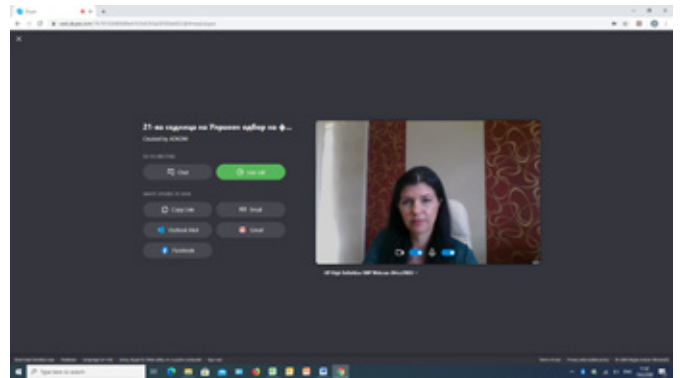
Fani ADKOM (You) 1:04 PM: Hello to everyone, regards from ADKOM team

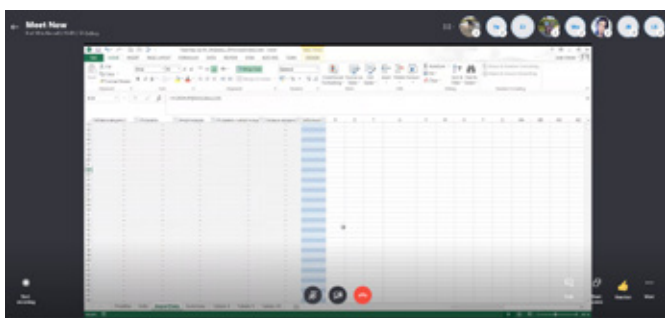
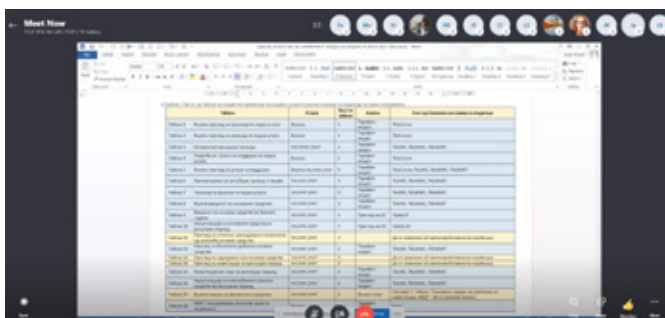
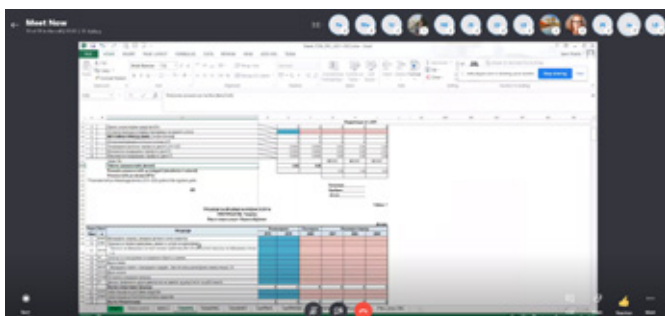
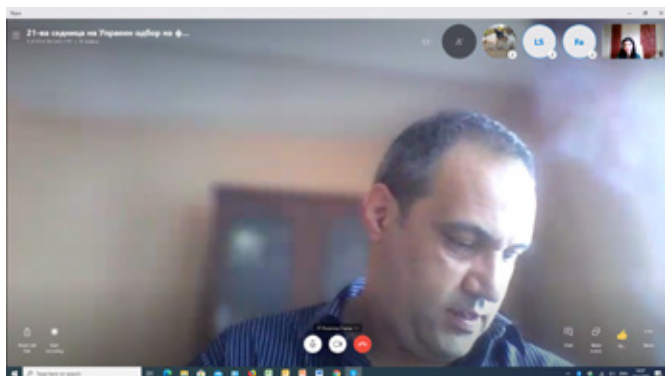
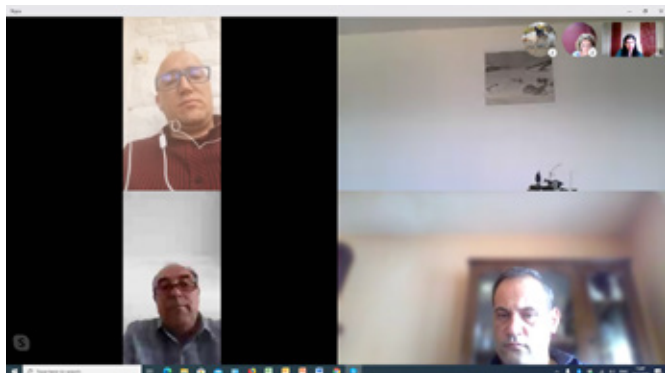
Moderator 1:05 PM: Welcome Fani!

Dear members,

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic all trainings and programs planned by ADKOM to be realized in the period May – August 2020, were cancelled. However, despite the extraordinary circumstances, ADKOM continued to operate and realized the following activities:

- Delivery of online trainings for preparation of Business plans (BP) and Plans for Tariff Adjustment Plans (TAP) for the needs of the second regulated period, for the public utility companies (PUC) over 10,000 population.
- Participation on the D-LeaP Committee Council. Jane Vrteski, ADKOM Management Consultant, was assigned as a representative of ADKOM to participate on this meeting. These were the points of discussion: D-LeaP Annual Report 2019, D-LeaP Work Plan 2020, Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on D-LeaP, Synergies and coordination between DWP and RCDN, Update on Utility Management Training, Update on Access to Financing, Update on Advisory Committee, Update on the Working Group on Quality Control and Evaluation.
- Participation on the seventy-fifth meeting of the MSIP Coordinative Committee. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva participated on the meeting as the ADKOM representative.
- Submitted a letter to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in order to inform on the condition of the PUCs amidst the pandemic and the problems with the collection of debt for the offer services.
- Preparation and finalization of the Marketing plan for ADKOM. For this activity, a consultant was hired who, together with the ADKOM team worked on the Marketing Plan for ADKOM and it included one part for the ADKOM Training center.
- The twenty-first session of the Management Board of ADKOM was held online on 18.06.2020. On this session, the members of the Management Board were introduced with the activities that ADKOM undertook in the period May-June 2020. The members were informed concerning the postponement of the eleventh international conference, planned for May 2020. It was postponed due to the pandemic. Also, the members discussed the need for establishing of a COVID -19 crisis management in the PUCs. It was also discussed that there is a need for a position paper and online presentation for the findings from the COVI-19 questionnaire for the PUCs as well as for the future activities of ADKOM.
- Creation of a survey questionnaire – How the COVID 19 pandemic affected the operations of the PUCs; and distribution of the survey to all members. After this all surveys will be analyzed.
- Participation on the meeting with Nextsense. Due to the pandemic, holding events and meetings is quite challenging. In order for ADKOM to provide





for meetings of the Committees, Management and Supervisory Boards being held, asked a meeting with Nextsense to discuss all possible solutions for digitalization of services, and having e-meetings and e-sessions.

- Reallocation of the budget for the needs of the Project “Strengthening of the Association for Delivering Capacity Development for PUCs in the Republic of North Macedonia for providing sustainable water services”. Due to the pandemic, part of the activities will be executed online, and it is planned that from September 2020 the implementation for the following activities will start:
 - Conduct analysis of the conditions in the water sector services in the Republic of North Macedonia for 2020.
 - Conduct analysis of the survey questionnaire – How the COVID-19 pandemic affected the operations of the PUCs
 - Prepare a manual on crisis management
 - Prepare a position paper for the challenges in the operations of the PUCs in during he pandemic with COVID-19
- Creation of quality standards for training, exchange of experiences and other formats, for this activity ADKOM hired a consultant, who together with Lea Pavlovik, the ADKOM Training Center Manager prepared the quality standards according to which all future trainings and other formats will be planned and executed.
- Preparation of the catalogue of trainings. ADKOM worked on preparation of a 2021 Catalogue of trainings, and designed a flyer for the trainings, in order to provide more information to its members. This activity should be finalized by the end of September 2020.
- Including ADKOM in the preparation of training programs for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewaters, for the employees of the PUCs and the municipalities, by participating in the Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services in CEE (RCDN). Besides the current offer of trainings, RCDN, where ADKOM is a member, has been developing new programs on collection, drainage, and treatment of wastewaters. This area has been identified as a new challenge in the region of the Western Balkans. The topic is in accordance with the priorities of the international institutions and the donors and at the same time it stipulates cooperation between the associations of municipalities and PUCs. Undoubtedly, the collection, drainage and treatment of wastewaters is a priority in the region.
- Including ADKOM in the preparation of the program

“Optimization of the Wastewater Treatment Plants Operations”, which is supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). The main goal of this program is to offer the PUCs a practical program, which will consist of exchange of experiences, sharing of good practices and transfer of knowledge in order to optimize the operations and minimize the problems related to the operations and maintenance, as well as the costs for the Wastewater Treatment Plants.

- Inclusion in the Project for Improvement of Water supply in Delchevo. The swiss company EVR is responsible for the implementation of the concept for corporate development, within the Project for Improvement of Water supply in Delchevo, financed by SECO. For the corporate development part, ADKOM was hired to implement two components:

1. Commercial efficiency
2. Business Planning Support

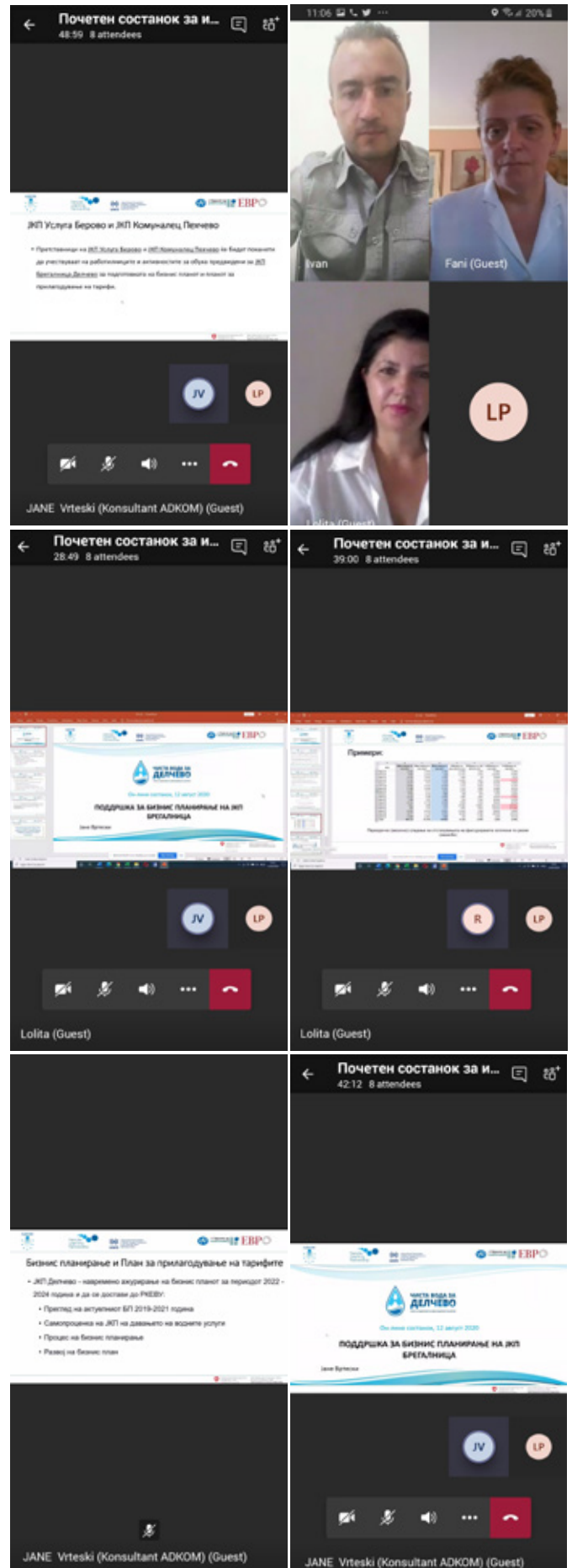
The Project offers support for the PUC “Bregalnica”, while the representatives of the PUC “Usluga” Berovo and PUC “Komunalec” will be invited as attendees of the workshops and the activities, foreseen for the PIC “Bregalnica” Delchevo, for both components.

In order for PUC “Bregalnica”, PUC “Usluga” Berovo and PUC “Komunalec” to review, understand and align planned activities concerning the corporate development, on August 11, 2020, ADKOM organized the inception meeting for the implementation of the activities concerning the Corporate development withing the Project for Improvement of Water supply in Delchevo. On this meeting, ADKOM’s consultant, Rado Rusev talked about the activities of Commercial efficiency, while Jane Vrteski talked about Business Planning and preparation for setting tariffs for water services.

In the forthcoming period, ADKOM will continue to cooperate with the appointed PUCs on both abovementioned components.

- Preparation of a quarterly report for the ADKOM’s operations (May – August 2020)
- Creation of ADKOM’s Bulletin (May – August 2020)

In the period May – August 2020, ADKOM’s team participated on many online trainings and webinars, for which you will be able to get informed from the texts below.





WEBINAR

MANAGING WATER SERVICES IN THE LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

7 MAY 2020, 15:00 – 16:15 (CEST)

07.05.2020

Webinar “Managing water services in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic”

On 7 May 2020, around 120 participants from 23 countries and representing a variety of institutions gathered in a virtual auditorium to discuss the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on water services. Those who had followed the invitation by IAWD and the World Bank enjoyed interesting insights and a lively discussion and are looking forward to the next edition on 14 May.

Moderator Raimund Mair, the World Bank’s Program Leader for the Danube Water Program, introduced panelists Walter Kling, Elisabeta Poci and Gustavo Saltiel who subsequently reported on the crisis, its impact and various response strategies from both the international and regional perspectives.

Gustavo Saltiel, the World Bank’s Global Lead for Water Supply and Sanitation presented international examples for the impact of the pandemic: Hygienic necessities like frequent handwashing trigger rising demand. Shutdowns will impact revenue collection and disrupt supply chains, leading to shortages of critical supplies.

Margins for critical investments shrink.

In short, utilities in many regions of the world find that they are required to “do more with less”.

Short-term crisis responses focus on continuity of services, financial support and expanding access to water, including off-network approaches where necessary. In the long run, says Saltiel, there may even be opportunity in the crisis, because it throws a glaring light on the social and economic costs of neglecting the water sector – and the value of the World Bank’s Water Global Practice Tools and other improvement initiatives.

Walter Kling, Deputy Managing Director of Vienna Water and President of the IAWD provided insights into the crisis management of a large European urban utility. His team met the emergency quite well-prepared, with crisis response schemes in place and trainings for numerous scenarios a regular feature of Vienna Water’s team building programs. On a side note, though, Kling reveals that among dozens of possible emergency scenarios, his team had considered a pandemic quite unlikely. The upside of the situation is that in the current situation, Vienna Water is not on the front line of containment and mitigation efforts: “Municipal authorities pretty much told us to keep the

water running and to leave the rest to them.”

Accordingly, the organization’s crisis response focused largely on staff protection, transferring as many activities as possible to home offices, shutting down buildings, providing the necessary security and now, with Austria enjoying the success of an early and thorough lockdown, reversing the process and returning to normal operations, including the current construction sites. Which includes, as Walter Kling notes, preparations for a possible second wave of infections and a subsequent second shutdown.

Elisabeta Poci, Deputy Executive Director of Albania’s Water Supply and Sewerage Association contributed hard data about the situation in her market, because her organization had undertaken a survey among member utilities to measure the initial impact of COVID-19, and to review the crisis response of utilities. She reports that present and anticipated challenges regarding service continuity during the crisis include the impact of absenteeism on field and treatment operations for half the member utilities.

Supply chain disruptions causing shortages of treatment chemicals or personal protective equipment are not yet of concern, but widely anticipated to hit during the next months. Revenue generation and cash flow are a pressing concern for over 90%, with impacts on revenues estimated to reach up to 70% in the next 3 months, and up to 60% by the end of the year. Albania’s utilities responded according to their crisis and continuity plans, introducing telework and social distancing policies and building reserves of trained staff to ensure continuous operations in spite of absenteeism. Poci finds the results of this survey quite encouraging, with the necessary protection measures for staff and customers in place and continuity of supply ensured. She shares Gustavo Saltiel’s optimistic expectation that the crisis experience will build awareness for the importance of the sector and motivate future investments: “Everybody seems to realize that these days, water is our best friend.”

The ensuing Q&A session had a strong focus on the revenue question, with the panelists in strong consensus that any solution is preferable to more or less protracted revenue cuts for utilities: “We would never consider reducing telecom or energy tariffs – so why water?” asked Elisabeta Poci. She recommends that utilities and associations use the crisis to educate customers and policymakers about the importance of water. Gustavo Saltiel agrees:

“We need to give a clear and powerful message that governments must not undermine the viability of the utilities and decisions regarding tariffs and collection will be of consequence.”

Walter Kling added a practical angle to the discussion,

stating that if governments really want to help consumers, handing out cash is much less risky than messing with the quite complex electronic billing systems of utilities.

One completely different Q&A theme was the detection of Coronavirus residues in wastewater and the options to use those in the context of early warning systems. Walter Kling answered that Viennese sewage did indeed contain traces of SARS-CoV-2, yet not the virus itself, rather byproducts that indicate the earlier presence of the virus. Research in this respect was ongoing, but at the time without conclusive results.

In their final statements, all panelists called the crisis a challenge but also an opportunity for the sector to prove its importance, gain visibility, and emerge stronger.

12.05.2020

Webinar “Collaboration between local government units and public utility companies in provision of water and sanitation services during COVID-19 pandemic“

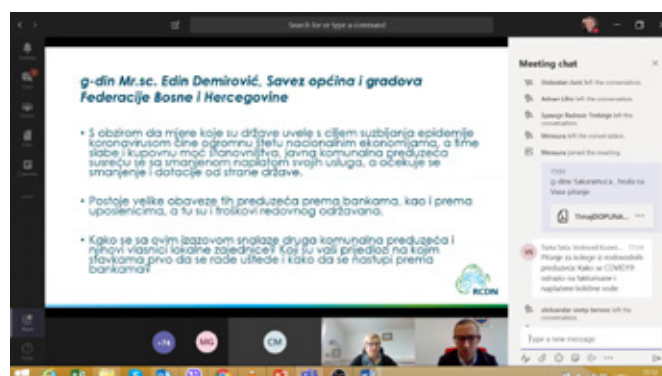
On May 12, 2020, the Project „Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN) organized the first webinar with the main goal to provide a platform for sharing of experiences concerning the cooperation among the representatives of the local communities and the PUCs on provision of water services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On the webinar, as representative of ADKOM, participated Mr. Stojan Eftimov, from the PUC “Komunalec”, Strumica.

The main conclusions from the webinar were the following:

1. The essential issue is the liquidity of public utility companies (PUCs). There are already data that revenues of the PUCs in April 2020 decreased by approximately 20%. Due to the consequences that the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the reduction of economic activity, and thus the income of service users, it is possible that this percentage will be even higher in the coming months. On the other hand, JVPs have so far had financial difficulties due to prices that do not fully cover the costs of providing the service. Most PUCs are also burdened with credit indebtedness for the construction of water infrastructure, with domestic or foreign financial institutions, and the question is how they will repay the annuities of due liabilities in such circumstances. Due to all this, the issue of liquidity and financial aspect of PUCs’ operations, as well as the support of Local Government Units (LGUs) on this issue is emerging as a new topic for some future RCDN webinars.

2. PUCs provide more services with fewer equipment, resources and people. The crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic has put hygiene as one of the primary needs where water is necessary to maintain both personal hygiene and the hygiene of private and public spaces. Therefore, PUCs are obliged to continue to provide services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, most PUCs have introduced new services such as preparation of disinfectants, disinfection of public spaces and public institutions, etc. In doing so, they worked with reduced resources, primarily human resources, because the recommendations of the headquarters for crisis management required the separation of shifts, sparing of vulnerable groups from exposure to contacts, work from home, etc. Access to other resources was also reduced due to difficulties in conducting procurement, then the need to procure protective equipment, and at the same time a decrease in revenue.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic and the crisis it caused imposed "Crisis Management" as a top topic. RCDN as well as national associations should continue with the trainings because they are necessary for the water and sanitation services sector having in mind this topic, both for PUCs and LGUs.
4. In addition, it is necessary to include procedures for financial management in crisis situations because this topic is not covered with the existing trainings.
5. Cooperation between PUC and LGU is necessary in any case, especially in times of crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A strong PUC can only exist if there is strong and committed support from the LGU and vice versa.
6. The challenge of fighting a pandemic is also an opportunity for water services that are, in normal conditions and when everything works, "invisible" but when the service does not work then they are the "top" topic of the public. This is an opportunity to change the perception of water and sanitation services and PUCs and to return it in a positive sense in the focus of the public and to achieve greater appreciation of water and sanitation services and the efforts of PUCs and LGUs to ensure their smooth operation and greater coverage of services.
7. Through this challenge, PUCs were given the opportunity to strengthen the company and thus create resilience to such and similar situations in the future. New services are introduced and important strategic decisions are made, which strengthens the company's resilience.
8. Representatives of the PUCs have confirmed that throughout the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the water they supplied to the users was safe. The same was confirmed by preliminary scientific research on the presence of COVID-19 virus in drinking water from the water supply system, which is a very important message for the public to communicate.
9. Independent scientific researches by experts from the Netherlands and Switzerland showed traces of the COVID-19 virus in wastewater (reference to the video which was shown during the Webinar). This is important information and wastewater can be used for further research which again puts water and sanitation services in focus as sewage and wastewater treatment plants can serve as a source of data for pandemic monitoring of pandemic and for further research as well as for establishing early warning system.
10. Associations of PUCs and Associations of LGUs are a strong support to their members, PUCs and LGUs respectively, in terms of capacity building, opportunities for exchange of experiences and best practices in combating pandemics, and in particular in articulating their needs and advocating for key issues such as: liquidity of PUCs, prolongation of obligations towards international and domestic financial institutions, obtaining additional financial assistance from domestic and international financial institutions and joint communication of important messages to the public.
11. In such situation of crisis, it is necessary to express our gratitude to all people who work in the water and sanitation sector. This applies to those who bear the responsibility and make important decisions on a daily basis, as well as to those people who work directly on the systems themselves and are exposed to risks everyday.





WEBINAR

EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCES BETWEEN WATER UTILITIES IN DELIVERING SERVICES IN THE LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

14 MAY 2020, 15:00 – 16:15 (CEST)

14.05.2020

Webinar “Exchange of experiences between water utilities in delivering services in the light of the covid-19 pandemic”

On 14 May 2020, an international audience gathered on Webex for the second webinar on the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on water services and utilities. Invited by IAWD and the World Bank in the frame of the Danube Water Program, participants learned about experiences and insights from the perspective of European utilities of different sizes, from small to sizable.

Moderator Philip Weller, Head of the IAWD’s Technical Secretariat, introduced the panelists to an audience around the globe. Urgent interest in this professional-level exchange on the impact of the global pandemic on services in the water supply and sanitation sector drew participants from even the Philippines and Australia.

The panel featured Wolfgang Aichlseder, General Manager of OÖ Wasser, a regional association of small utilities in Upper Austria, Evis Gebreja, Deputy General Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Utility of

Tirana, Albania, and Christian Hasenleithner, General Manager of ENERGIE AG Bohemia in the Czech Republic. The panel represented a wide enough spectrum of company sizes and working environments to paint an informative picture of the situation in the Danube Region.

Christian Hasenleithner opened the exchange with a presentation on the crisis response of Energie AG Bohemia, a Network providing water for 900,000 and wastewater services for 700,000 customers in the Czech Republic. His presentation included a timeline from the preparatory measures before the state emergency declaration on 11 March and the subsequent activities of the company crisis taskforce to the reintroduction of normal operations after the end of the emergency status on 27 April.

Energie AG’s crisis response involved the shutdown of customer services including meter reading, meter exchange and cash payment of bills, an extension of payment deadlines to 30 days and information to customers and the wider public regarding water quality and supply security. Staff safety measures reached from the procurement of personal protection equipment to home office work for up to 250 members of a 1,700 employee workforce, introduction of separated teams for

managing all non-home office activities, and replacing personal meetings by videoconferences, the latter proving the enormous value of the sometimes criticized large investments in modern IT equipment.

All in all, the company got through the crisis with only one employee tested Corona positive, but gladly recovered now, and 20 more temporarily quarantined, but already back in office. The return to fully normal operations will be completed by end of May.

Regarding the impact of the crisis on the business, a first guesstimate is a temporary 10% minus in both turnover and bottom line, but hard facts will not be available before next month.

Even more unclear is the medium-term perspective, with an economic crisis in 2021 looming, and its impact on investments, services, consumption, and tariffs anyone's guess, and the single potential upside of the crisis a possibly accelerated migration to smart metering.

Christian Hasenleithner finished his presentation with a photo collection of creative face protection masks which employees produced during the crisis, partly in collaboration with a neighboring 3-D printing startup, to make up for protection equipment shortages, also donating part of their production to hospitals and charities in their communities. He notes:

"The group's utilities adapted to the crisis quickly, quietly, and with remarkable success", he notes.

Following this report from a nation-wide network, Evis Gebreja, the Deputy General Director of the Water Supply and Sewerage Utility of Tirana (UKT Tirana), Albania, presented the perspective of a municipal utility serving one million customers. Much like Energie AG, her organization, and Albania in general, weathered the crisis quite successfully. The country introduced drastic shutdown measures as early as 9 March and got away with some 800 confirmed infections and 30 fatalities to date.

UKT Tirana immediately implemented the adequate crisis management process involving transfer of as many activities as possible to home office, with special protection for mothers, introducing staff rotation, closing seven of altogether eleven customer care offices, and a personal protection and hygiene regime for the staff. Mrs. Gebreja reports that daily operation and maintenance went on uninterrupted: "We were able to keep up meter reading and all necessary repairs in the water and sewer network, even construction work for ongoing infrastructure projects was resumed after a one-week interruption."

Noticeable crisis impacts hit the revenue side. In spite of ongoing efforts to promote using the two available electronic payment options, paying cash is still widespread, and this, together with significant shifts in

consumption patterns of private households and enterprises affected the revenue stream, especially during the March lockdown. During April, the situation improved somewhat, but the impact is still felt, and negotiating a loan to cover unexpected further developments is part of the crisis management. Evis Gebreja reports that these negotiations are still running and will have influence on the current business continuity planning, but all in all, UKT Tirana has shown satisfactory resilience in the face of the global crisis.

Next to take the stage was Wolfgang Aichlseder, General Manager of Ö Wasser association, an umbrella for some 1,000 cooperatives in Upper Austria's villages. He complemented the perspectives of nationwide and big municipal networks with the view of small and very small utility providers serving between four and 2,000 households.

Ö Wasser supports these cooperatives with assistance in procuring equipment and spares, trains more than 1,000 persons every year, with many volunteer workers among them, and generally promotes a healthy approach to independent water supply. In spite of the obvious structural differences, Ö Wasser's crisis response followed a timeline similar to the one presented by Energie AG's Christian Hasenleithner.

As an umbrella organization, the initial response focused on communication to members. Mr. Aichlseder reports:

"The first and most important message we had to get out was that Corona does not spread through water, therefore no special water treatments were needed"

Once this was established, Ö Wasser recommend that members postpone all not necessary activities, reduce personal contacts in the cooperatives to the absolutely necessary minimum, to go about all activities alone instead of in teams, to avoid unnecessary travelling and, when unavoidable, travel alone, and, if possible, to continue important routines like water quality sampling. Personal safety equipment was not an issue during the crisis, with members bringing their own equipment.

Video conferences were not as frequent as reported from other panelists. Phone calls and e-mails were the daily routine and video conferencing the weekly or twice every week exception, although Mr. Aichlseder acknowledges that video conferences may become a future routine to replace physical travelling. Keeping up the supply was not difficult, although water consumption nearly doubled in some areas due to the lockdown.

All in all, Wolfgang Aichlseder says that the sector responded the very exceptional circumstances in a very positive manner:

"We haven't been struggling in our business, and the unusual drought throughout the spring presents more challenges than the virus."

The last third of the webinar was spent answering questions from the audience. Themes of interest were the observed changes in consumption patterns, with Mrs. Gebreja reporting fluctuations of 5 to 20% between months, and the ongoing efforts to use wastewater testing to identify Corona infection hotspots. Here, Mr. Hasenleitner reports that although the same approach has been quite successful monitoring drug use, a Corona survey of a 35,000 inhabitant sector in the western outskirts of Prague produced no results, and that results from another program running in Ceske Budejovice aren't in yet.

Another central issue were differences in payment methods and their effects on revenue streams. Here, Mr. Hasenleitner mentioned an interesting detail regarding customers from the industry and business sectors: With the Czech government providing financial support for companies that are unable to pay their running costs, companies stopped paying their water bills to prove their illiquidity.

Mrs. Gebreja stresses that, generally speaking, during the crisis decreasing revenues meet costs, e.g. for guarding sites and networks, adding to the running costs like rents, loan interests etc.

Mr. Aichseder's organization experienced fewer problems in this respect, with members paying annual contributions by e-banking.

With the clock running out, Moderator Philip Weller wrapped up the webinar stating that while maybe lacking some of the excitement and glamour of crisis responses in other sectors, water utilities have successfully continued a service of great, and in times of crisis quite visible, importance. He closed with an invitation to the third issue of this webinar, scheduled on 28 May, and dealing with questions of business continuity.

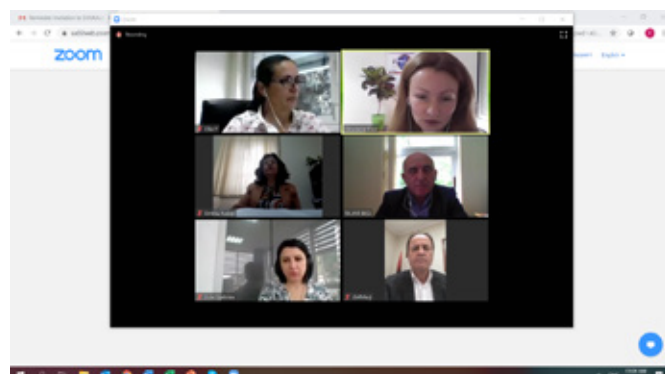
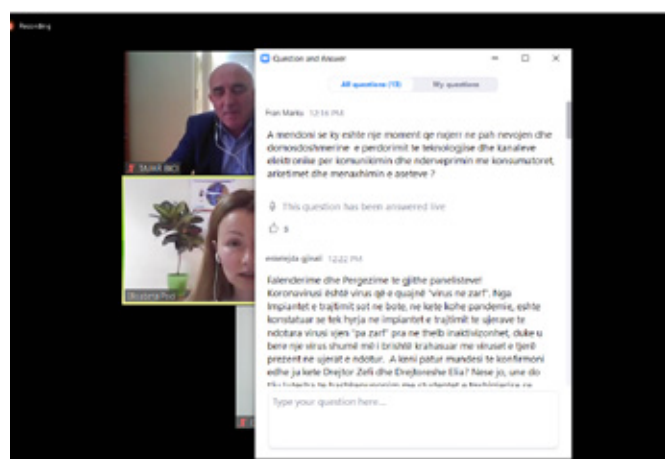
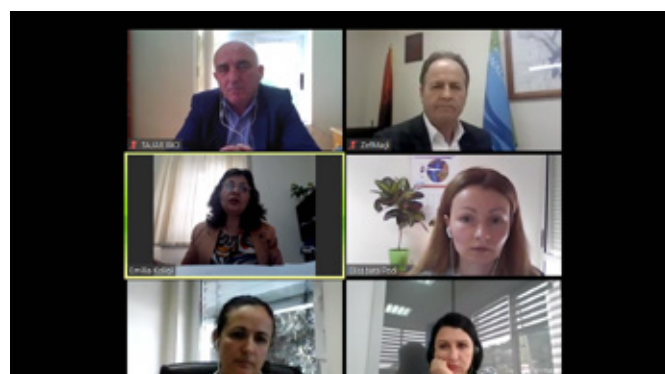
15.05.2020

Webinar "Continuity of water supply and sanitation services during COVID-19"

On May 15, 2020, the employees of the ADKOM's Executive office participated on the webinar organized by the Albanian Association - SHUKOS.

The main objective of this webinar was to give insight into the level of preparedness of the water supply and sanitation PUCs as well as of the municipalities in Albania for the pandemic with COVID-19, by providing a platform for sharing of best practices, challenges and identification of needs for support.

The webinar was organized in a form of panel discussions with participation of administrators from the Albanian water supply PUCs and municipal representatives.





WEBINAR

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FOR ENSURING BUSINESS CONTINUITY OF WATER SERVICES

28 MAY 2020, 15:00 – 16:15 (CEST)

28.05.2020

Webinar “Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic for ensuring business continuity of water services”

The third webinar on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on water services and utilities took place on 28 May 2020. Once again, the invitation by IAWD and the World Bank this time together with NALAS drew a global audience, with almost 80 participants hailing from as far as Japan discussing the lessons learned in a global crisis.

“These are extraordinary times, and now, while many are preparing to return to normal operations, is maybe the right time to reflect how we have been managing the crisis and how we should ensure business continuity and build more resiliency into systems to overcome future crises.”

With these words, Moderator Kelmend Zajazi, Executive Director of NALAS, the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, introduced a panel that presented a wide spectrum of perspectives: Lindita Atanasova, Technical Director of the PE “Vodovod I Kanalizacija” Skopje (PE “Water supply and sewerage” Skopje), represented the supply side. Bojana Kondić Panić, Chief of Cabinet of the Mayor of Laktashi, Bosnia and Herzegovina, told of

experiences from the municipal point of view. Christian Plohberger, General Manager of Protectum Solutions contributed insights into the crisis management approach of professional security consultants.

Additional input came from the audience’s answers to survey questions via Webex chat, a first in this Webinar format.

Christian Plohberger took the podium with a presentation on the basics of prepared crisis response in utility companies, touching all four phases from preparation during normal operations to immediate emergency response, subsequent crisis management and later recovery. He listed the technical contents of a solid pandemic preparedness plan, explained the anatomy of, and responsibility distribution in a crisis management team, noting that as long as such a crisis management structure is at hand, pretty much every crisis is manageable.

Also showing the basics of improvised “60 minutes to reach a decision” emergency crisis management, Mr. Plohberger noted that the current global pandemic presents quite an uncommon calamity: “This is a very long-running crisis, unlike landslides, contaminations and other common threats to water safety.” He closed his presentation with a reference to the applicable European and ISO norms and also the Water Safety and Crisis Management Program offered under D-LeaP.

Next on the podium was Lindita Atanasova, Technical Director of the PE “Vodovod I Kanalizacija” Skopje (PE “Water supply and sewerage” Skopje), one of the North Macedonia’s largest public-owned companies. She admitted that COVID-19 took her by surprise: “In the crisis management seminars I took, we discussed pretty much every disaster you can think of, but a pandemic? In the 21st century? No, we never imagined we would have to handle something like that.”

Nevertheless, a pandemic response plan was at hand, and Mrs. Atanasova’s team hit the ground running: “Our company is an integral part of the Skopje crisis management, therefore we enjoyed a very high level of coordination and cooperation.” Which was just as well, because the Skopje utility had to meet quickly fluctuating challenges: “In the beginning the situation changed very dynamically. We had to introduce response measures on a day-to-day basis to ensure continuation of the water supply for 600.000 inhabitants.”

The first priority was to protect the staff against infection, with the spectrum of measures including distribution of masks, increased security and entry controls at company buildings, reduced staffing of laboratories and water treatment plants, home office wherever possible, and a staggered leave scheme ensuring that reserves would be at hand in case teams would have to go into quarantine. Another important part of the crisis response was communication:

“Throughout the crisis we had to keep informing the public that drinking water was safe” says Mrs. Atanasova. That said, she notes that PE “Vodovod I Kanalizacija” Skopje (PE “Water supply and sewerage” Skopje), has weathered the storm safely: “We were very successful in managing this crisis, keeping our services on the usual high level.”

Last to take the stage was Bojana Kondić Panić, Chief of Cabinet of the Mayor of Laktashi. She added the perspective of a municipality of almost 40.000 inhabitants that struggled with predominantly financial crisis impacts, with increased water consumption from private households, reduced demand from private sector companies, and increasing operation costs adding up to serious challenges.

In the absence of a prepared pandemic response plan, many decisions had to be taken on the run, with a strong focus on hygienic measures, service continuity and continuing necessary infrastructure investments. Thanks to an intact cooperation between city and national government, and additional support by international organizations, the challenges were met, financial stability was secured and all monetary responsibilities were covered. Mrs. Panić said:

“Coordination is always important, and it is of special importance in times of crisis. It takes strong and committed local and national governments to keep going in a situation like this.”

During the initial statements, surveys ran in the background, with one of the questions covering the main challenges during the crisis. Here, employee safety was by far the most common answer, and reduced cash flow a not very close runner-up. Participants also had the chance to contribute questions to the panelists, with part two of the webinar dedicated to answering those.

Asked if utilities had done enough advance planning or if the crisis caught them off guard, Mr.

Plohberger answered ambiguously, looking back at the considerable number of pandemic plans he has helped set up between 2002 and 2005: “In many cases, pandemic preparation often wound up on the backburner, because this specific threat seemed minimal compared to other emergencies.” He remembers one case where last summer a utility decided to replace a batch of expired protection masks and then wound up sharing the new masks with local health services when COVID-19 hit.

Another question touched the legal requirements regarding pandemic preparation, and here again, Mr. Plohberger answered ambiguously: “Is there a legal requirement to have a plan? Yes – and no. Utilities in the EU are required to follow state of the art best practices, and a pandemic plan is of course part of any good Water Safety Plan, so the requirement, is as a matter of fact, indirect.”

One participant asked if the crisis experience might lead to an accelerated shift towards business process automation to reduce health risks to staff. Mrs. Atanasova confirmed that automation offers a recommendable path towards more safety for both employees and water supply.

Asked if special crisis plan suggestions were available for small utilities with limited staff resources, Mr. Plohberger showed a special small unit crisis management plan for organizations with under ten employees, with one person covering more than one field of assessment.

Concerning the lessons learned from the experience, Mrs. Panić said in her closing statement that the most important lesson from the pandemic was the crucial importance of advance planning and professional risk management. She added that the upside of the situation was an increased visibility of the utility companies, a growing interest in the safety of water supplies during an emergency, and therefore better prospects for future investments to address problems. Proof once again that chances can be found in even the most direct crisis.

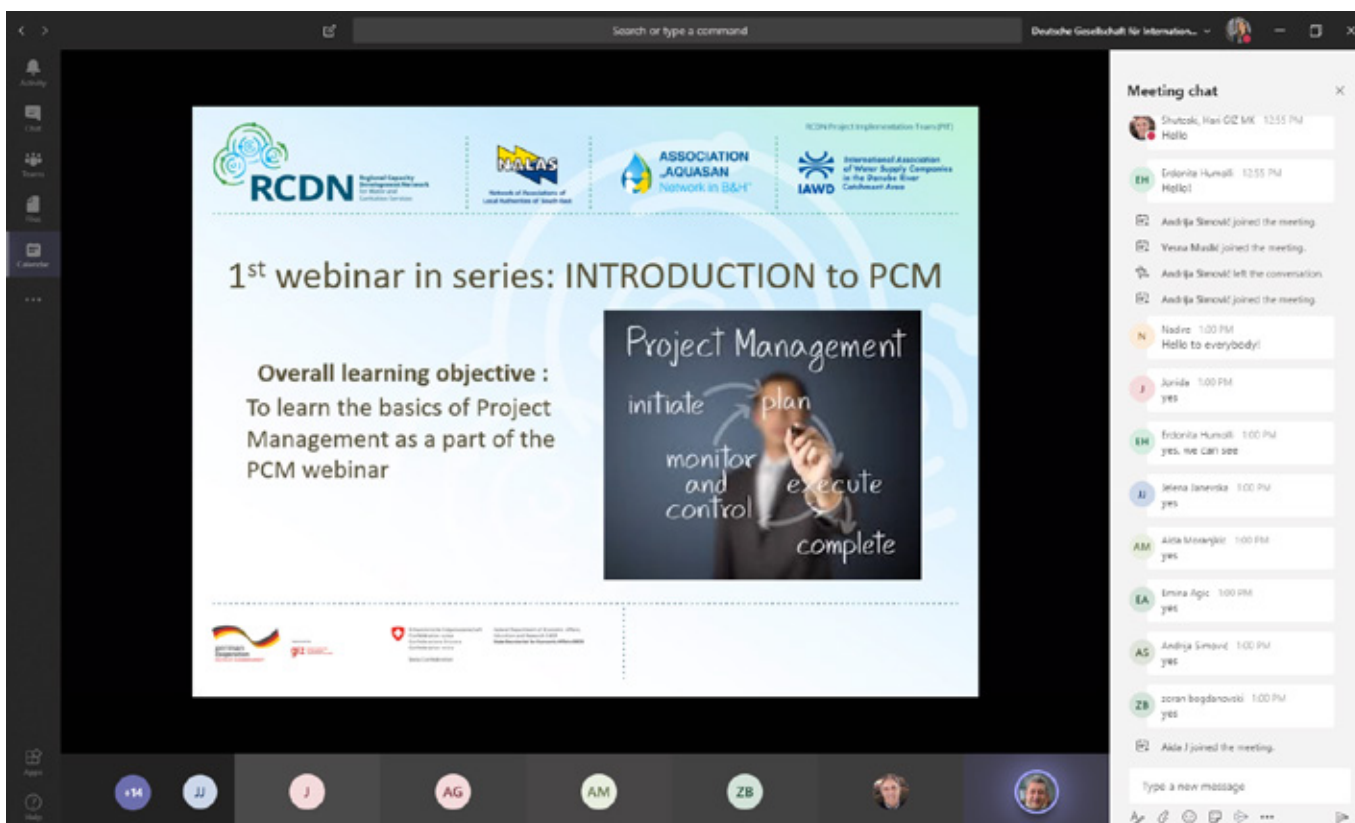
28.05.2020

Online training on Project Management, No.1

On May 25, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized the first online training on “Project Management” for the training managers/focal points of the associations, part of this project.

The main goal of this online training was for the training managers/focal points to get the basic knowledge concerning managing projects.

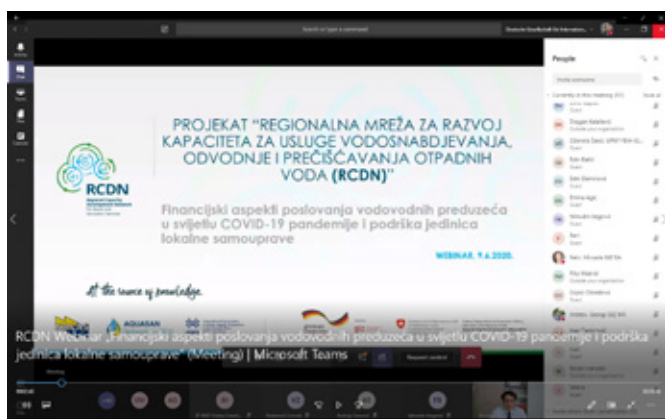
Lea Pavlovik, ADKOM’s Training Manager participated on this training as ADKOM’s representative.



09.06.2020

Webinar “Financial aspects of the PUC operations in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the support from the local self-governments”

On June 09, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized the second webinar, with the main goal for the participants to share experiences as representatives of the local self-government and the PUCs from the Western Balkans, concerning the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, on the financial performances of the PUCs and the support from the local self-governments.



10.06.2020

Webinar “COVID-19 financial impact assessment tool for water service providers”

On 10 June 2020, IAWD and the World Bank held their fourth Corona-themed webinar in two months, inviting an international audience of water utility managers, water sector professionals, representatives from municipalities and interested stakeholders to take a first look at a brand new and very promising analytic tool for water service providers.

Moderator Patricia Lopez, Senior Infrastructure Finance Specialist at the World Bank, introduced as panelists Joel Kolker, Program Manager of the Global Water Security and Sanitation Partnership, the Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist Midori Makino, and freelance financial expert Aldo Baietti. The panelists are working on the frontline of the World Bank’s efforts to ensure the continuity of water service provision in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While earlier webinars on this theme had shown that most utilities had healthy resilience during the acute crisis and the related lockdowns, most had mentioned significant financial crisis impacts, and today’s event addressed those in particular.

Joel Kolker introduced the water-related COVID-19 response activities of the Bank, building on experiences in over 60 countries in order to make the tools under development very practical.

While this very webinar introduces the new financial impact assessment tool for water service providers, helping to quantify the scope of the problem, further work is ongoing for the development of a liquidity facility for utilities supporting decisions on response activities which subsequently require implementation. Following, the webinar focused on the financial impact assessment tool.

“We are aware of the triple pressure of increasing demand, increased costs and reduced revenues that many water service providers feel during the crisis” said Midori Makino during a short presentation of the objectives and underlying principles of the new tool. Its main objective is to analyze the gap between available revenues and operational costs and project its development in the course of the crisis, and to demonstrate subsequently the need for support during, e.g. negotiations with governments or municipalities.

The tool helps utilities to compare revenues from water sales, sewerage sales, connections and other sources with operating costs like salaries, water extraction, electricity, chemicals, maintenance etc., working capital requirements and debt service obligations. After filling in the actual numbers and creating a baseline projection assuming normal circumstances in a step one, users can quite easily vary impact factors and timelines to create financial crisis impact assessments for varying crisis scenarios in a second step, and use the results to develop an emergency response plan in step three.

Mrs. Makino remarked: “We wanted this to be as low-threshold as possible. It is MS Excel-based, it comes in a full and a simplified version, both with a comprehensive user guide, and we are developing French, Portuguese and Spanish versions in addition to the existing English version.”



In part two of the webinar, Aldo Baietti took the webinar participants on a guided tour through the features of the tool he helped to develop as a freelancer for the World Bank. Although the tool itself and its operation are quite straightforward, the demonstration pushed the envelope of scheduled 75 minutes, cutting the allotted time for answering questions quite short, and those asked were mostly about first practical experiences, and the availability of support. “The user guide is quite comprehensive,” answered Mr. Baietti. “Nevertheless, training for users is planned to be available.”

Patricia Lopez closed the event, informing the participants that the tool will soon be made available and with an invitation to another two webinar editions scheduled on 17 June, covering the possible contributions of IAWD’s and the World Bank’s Utility Benchmarking Program to mitigating the impacts of the current crisis, as well as on 24 June on ‘Detecting and managing Covid-19 in sanitary wastewater’.

11.06.2020

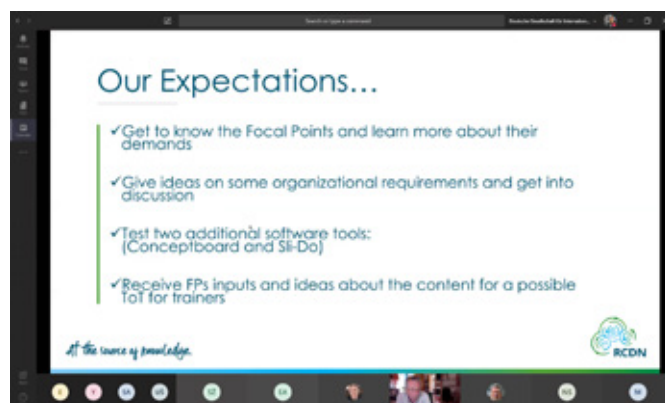
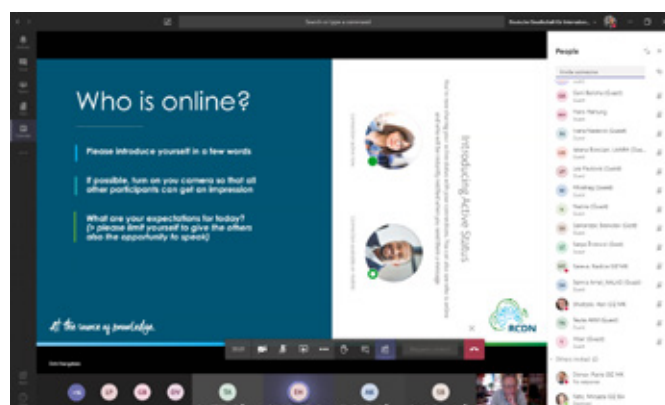
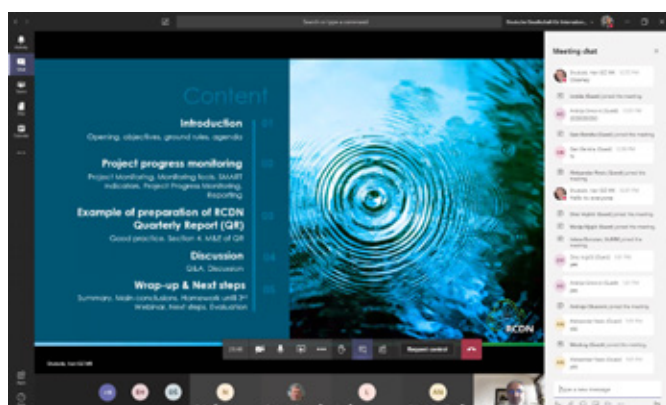
Online training on Project Management, No.2

On June 11, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized the second online training on “Project Management” for the training managers/focal points of the associations, part of this project.

The main goal of this online training was to improve the understanding and knowledge of the training managers/focal points on project monitoring, as part of the project management.

Lea Pavlovik, ADKOM’s Training Manager participated on this training as ADKOM’s representative.





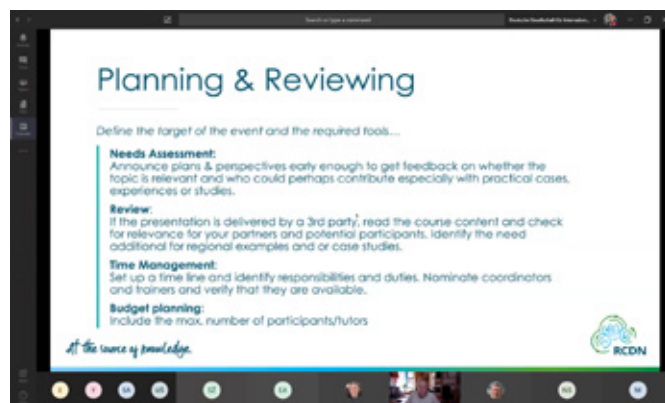
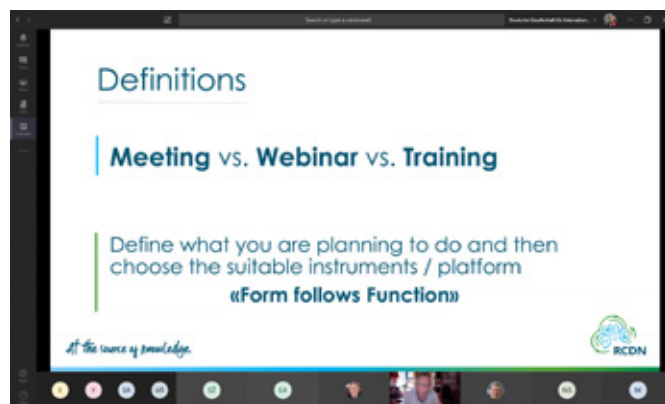
18.06.2020

Online training, “How to organize a webinar?”, No. 1

On June 18, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized a training on the subject of “How to Organize a Webinar?” for the training managers/focal points of the associations, part of this project.

The main goal of the training was to learn the organization’s needs for holding a webinar.

Lea Pavlovik, ADKOM’s Training Manager participated on this training as ADKOM’s representative.





24.06.2020

Webinar “Detecting and managing covid-19 in sanitary wastewater”

On June 24, 2020, the employees of the Executive Office of ADKOM participated on the webinar “Detecting and Managing COVID-19 in sanitary wastewater”, organized by the World Banka and IAWD.

The purpose of the webinar was to increase knowledge on the latest developments in wastewater technology and to assist in the handling of the global pandemic with COVID-19, and to mitigate its impact on the wastewater systems.

The participants of the webinar were given the opportunity to be informed on the technical advancement achieved during the crisis and the potential of the approaches for the protection of public health.

25.06.2020

Online training on Project Management, No.2

On June 25, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized the third online training on “Project Management” for the training managers/focal points of the associations, part of this project.

The main goal of the training was to improve the skills of the training managers/focal points concerning the implementation of the RCDN Project. On the training the training managers/focal points had an assignment, to present the monitoring matrix that they will use while reporting on the needs of the project.

Lea Pavlovik, ADKOM’s Training Manager participated on this training as ADKOM’s representative.



28.07.2020

Online training, “How to organize a webinar?”, No. 2

On June 28, 2020, the “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)” Project organized the second training on the subject of “How to Organize a Webinar?” for the training managers/focal points of the associations, part of this project.

The main objective of the online training was to improve the knowledge of the training managers/focal points concerning the organization of webinars. Specific tools that the training managers/focal points may use in organizing a webinar were shared as part of the training.

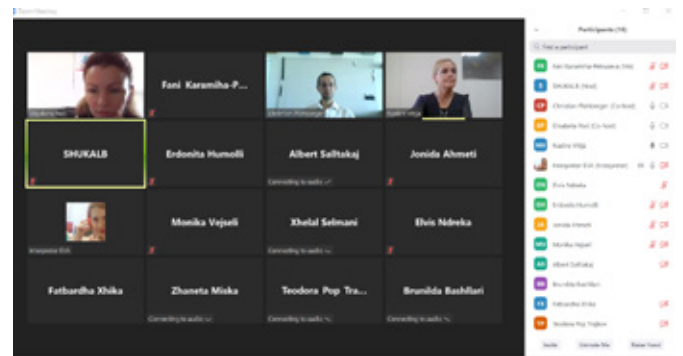
Lea Pavlovik, ADKOM’s Training Manager participated on this training as ADKOM’s representative.



The presenters and participants put special accent on the utilities as important response tools in disasters and hazards, at the challenge of maintaining the supply and safety of water during the COVID-19 crisis.

The presenter on the webinar, Christian Plohberger, from Austria informed the participants that last year ADKOM implemented successfully the “Water Safety and Crisis Management: Business Continuity Essentials for Disaster Risk Management” Program, in which four PUCs were included. The webinar was organized with the support from International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area – (IAWD), as well as Energie AG, within the framework of Danube Learning Partnership (D-LeaP).

The webinar was organized as a combination of presentations and statements from representatives of water regulatory agency from Albania and Kosovo, as well as other central authorities and institutions. All participants communicated with comments and questions.

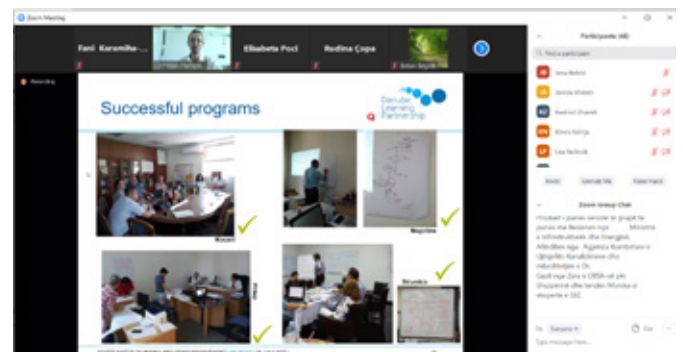


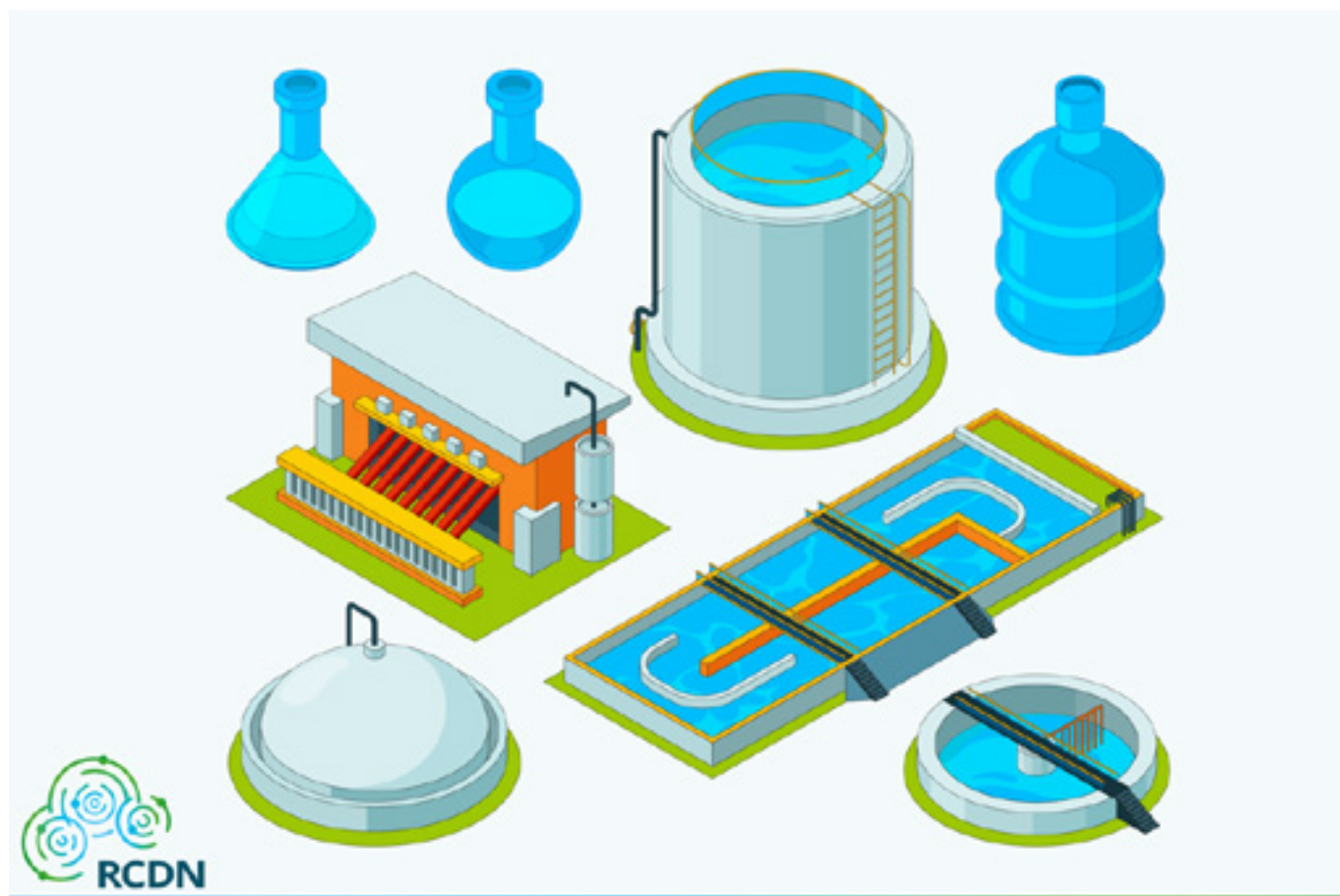
30.07.2020

Webinar “Water safety and crisis management – basic tools for water companies’ management”

On July 30, 2020, the employees of the Executive office of ADKOM, upon initiation from the Albanian Associations - SHUKALB and Kosovo associations - SHUKOS participated on the webinar “Water safety and crisis management – basic tools for water companies’ management”.

The purpose of the webinar was to stress the importance of developing water safety plans and crisis management plans.





Preparation of Training programmes for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater for the employees of the public utility companies and municipalities through participation of ADKOM in the Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services in South-East Europe

The Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services in SEE is developing new programmes in the area of collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater in addition to the existing offer of trainings.

This area has been identified as emerging challenge in the Western Balkan region. The topic is in accordance with priorities of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and the donors and at the same time it stimulates the collaborative approach among associations of municipalities and the associations of public utility companies (PUCs). The collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater are undoubtedly the priority of this region. Evidence is shown by an advanced coordination between the IFIs and the donors on a regional level. In

addition, the importance of the wastewater allows for a direct dialogue on a national and regional level (e.g. in terms of trends, experiences, policies etc.). This sector is of utmost importance for the associations of PUCs, as well as for the associations of municipalities, which means that the focus on the wastewater fosters immediate collaborative approach, which is one of the unique features of the RCDN as a regional network.

The pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus stressed even more the importance of the municipalities and the PUCs in the delivery of water supply and sanitation services to the citizens. Also, certain research conducted in Switzerland, the Netherlands and other countries demonstrated traces of the virus in the wastewater collection and treatment systems, which creates possibilities in the future for establishment of early warning systems concerning the occurrence and monitoring of the virus.

The new RCDN training programme is particularly focused on this sector, because:

- (a)** There is a solid rationale:
 - The process of preparation, development and implementation of capital infrastructure invest-

Wastewater treatment plant in Kichevo



ments projects for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater is characterised by lot of challenges, even failures.

- Currently, the focus of the municipalities and PUCs is mostly on the investment and construction works and the importance of the operation and maintenance (O&M) of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) is often neglected.
- Therefore, the municipalities and their PUCs face even more difficulties once the wastewater treatment plants are built, especially in the area of their O&M and sludge management.

(b) It is an opportunity:

- Over the past decade significant funds were provided in a form of grants, as well as credit support for the construction of the WWTPs by the national institutions, IFIs and the donors in all countries of the Western Balkans.
- The WWTPs are a good possibility for awareness

raising and a good example for capacity development as they are based on a clearly expressed demand by the PUCs and the municipalities, which are specifically and complexly included in the infrastructure projects for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater, and therefore confirm the need for trainings in this area.

RCDN conducted a detailed training needs assessment (TNA) in three steps by: (1) conducting a generic research on the assessment of the needs in the region, (2) visiting and interviewing the employees of the wastewater treatment plants in North Macedonia, mostly financed by SECO and EU and (3) organizing events for exchange of knowledge and experiences for further concretization and validation of the findings from the generic research.

The assessment identified a specific need concerning the following areas to be included in the training programmes for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater:

(a) Introduction to the wastewater systems for the

PUCs and the municipalities which are in the process of preparation, development and implementation of capital infrastructure projects and

- (b)** Strengthening the technical capacities of the PUCs for the operation and maintenance of the wastewater systems in the municipalities that already have constructed wastewater treatment plants.

The TNA detected that there is insufficient transfer of knowledge and acceptance of responsibilities by the municipalities and PUCs during the implementation of the projects by the contractors responsible for the construction and implementation of the wastewater treatment plants, as well as the training of the personnel, in order to provide operation and maintenance of the plant on a long run.

Therefore the new training programmes developed by RCDN give priority to:

- a)** Capacity development of local wastewater experts as trainers and
- b)** Involvement of RCDN partner association (Associations of PUCs like ADKOM and Associations of municipalities) in order to be able to deliver independently all these programmes to their members and facilitate the transfer of knowledge.

The initial plan is to pilot the training programmes in 3 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and North Macedonia). This process is led by the consortium of consultants consisted of Holinger from Switzerland and UNA Consulting from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in coordination with the national partner associations, as well as the RCDN Project Implementation Team (PIT), and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). Special support to the process is provided by the experts from the Swiss Water Association (VSA), as well as the German Association for Water, Wastewater and Waste (DWA).

As a member of RCDN, ADKOM takes active participation in the process and is responsible for the implementation of the activities in the country.

Currently, the partner associations of municipalities and PUCs, including ADKOM, work together on the preparation of a comprehensive set of 3 wastewater training programmes for the employees in the PUCs and the municipalities.

The target group for these programmes are: (a) Decision makers and managers in PUCs and municipalities

(e.g. Directors and Technical Directors of PUCs, Managers of Technical Departments in the PUCs, Mayors, Managers of Utility Services Departments in the municipalities etc.) as well as (b) Technical operational staff in the PUCs and the municipalities (e.g. managers and engineers in the WWTPs, employees in the municipalities that work in this field, etc.).

Besides the content development for the training programmes, crucial novelties would be the “capacitation of local staff” and “market orientation”. Both aspects contribute to their sustainability. The programmes include practical instead of theoretical instructions, which enables presentation of practical experiences, their transfer and application in real life situations.

In order to provide for capacitation of local staff, it is stipulated that the national associations of the PUCs and municipalities will nominate local experts who will be trained to become trainers. It is foreseen that at least half of the experts should come from the PUCs and/or municipalities. This would help to establish a group of trainers who could implement these programmes as part of the annual training programmes of the associations. In order to provide good coordination, the training coordinators in the national associations will be also included in the process.

The focus is put on the development of skills for facilitation and coaching of the group of trainers, as the experience so far demonstrated that the main bottlenecks appear after the expiry of the warranty period for the construction of the WWTP, when the contractor's agreement expires, and the need for maintenance of the plant starts to increase. Therefore special focus is put on training of local trainers who will be able to respond to these challenges.

The training programme will be implemented in accordance with the developed RCDN Quality Standards, as well as Quality Standards of the ADKOM Training center. The RCDN Quality Standards stress the orientation toward the partner associations (e.g. including the national associations in the development of the programmes in order to provide contextualization according to the specific situation in each country) and orientation towards the participants from the PUCs and the municipalities (e.g. flexibilities in adapting the programmes, facilitation of exchange and transfer of knowledge among the participants).

The three training programmes consist of different modules that include various topics and capacity development formats (e.g. trainings, peer exchange events, webinars, on-line exchange platforms, etc.).

According to the mapping prepared by ADKOM, there

Wastewater treatment plant in Strumica



are 19 operational WWTPs in the country, out of which 10 were built in the period from 2015 to 2019, seven were built in the period 2000 – 2010 and two were built before 2000. Three of those plants have a capacity of 95,000 – 120,000 population equivalent (PE), eight have the capacity from 12,000 to 53.000 PE, and eight are smaller plants with capacity from 1,250 to 8,000 PE. Besides these plants, there are additional seven WWTPs, which for various reasons are not operational. According to the estimates over 80 Million EUR have

been invested so far in the wastewater sector, and additional ten projects for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater are in preparation, including the biggest project for construction of WWTP in Skopje in amount of 136 Million EUR.

Having in mind that the operation and maintenance of the WWTPs is not possible without adequately trained staff, the focus of the ADKOM training center in the forthcoming period shall be on creating a group of lo-

Wastewater treatment plant in Kochani



cal trainers and implementation of the **Programme for strengthening the technical capacities of the PUCs for the operation and maintenance of the wastewater systems in the municipalities that have already built the WWTPs**. This is also a priority for the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), which is one of the major donors of the wastewater treatment sector in the country and the Western Balkan region.

The purpose of the programme is to enable the participants to assess various wastewater systems and to develop strategies for improvement of the current systems on organizational and practical level.

The specific objectives of the programmer are: (1) to improve knowledge, skills, methods and tools of the PUCs for management with the wastewater systems and (2) to raise the awareness of the municipal staff and the management of the PUCs on the challenges of operation and maintenance of the wastewater systems and their role and responsibilities in providing services for sustainable collection and treatment of wastewaters for their citizens.

The target groups of the Programme are: (a) PUC technical personnel: technical director; expert personnel; members of the project implementation team/ project implementation unit; lab personnel and (b) employees of the municipalities and PUC management: members of the PUCs Management Board; managers and employees in the department/unit for utility services; Director and Financial director in PUCs.

The duration of the programme is adapted according to the needs of the target groups. **The Programme for the Technical Personnel of the PUCs** includes 5 modules i.e. up to 10 days of training allocated into 7 measures for a period of 9 months. The Programme includes: 1 webinar (0.5 days), 1 one-day and 3 two-day trainings and 2 one-day peer exchange.

The Programme covers the following topics: Introduction to collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater, as well as Introduction to operation and maintenance of WWTPs, technologies for wastewater treatment (basic and advanced course), Energy Efficiency and sludge management, as well as other relevant topics related to the operations of the WWTPs (communication with the public, safety at work place, public procurement).

The programme for the employees in the municipalities and the PUCs' managers is shorter and includes 1 module, i.e. up to 2.5 days of training, allocated in 3 measures in a period of 2 months. The programme includes: 1 webinar (0.5 day), 1 one-day training and 1 one-day peer exchange.

The Programme covers the following topics: Introduction to collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater, as well as Introduction to operation and maintenance of wastewater treatment plants.

The Programme is implemented by local trainers from ADKOM, who will be trained themselves as trainers, coached by the Consultant's experts.

According to the plan it is expected that the Training of Trainers shall be implemented in the period October–November 2020, and at the end of the year/beginning of next year the pilot implementation of the Programme is supposed to start in the country with participation of representatives from the PUCs and the municipalities.

The participants in the programme will benefit from:

- The transfer of knowledge from the local and international experts, adjusted to the needs of the country.
- Exchange of experiences and learning from the other participants in the Programme, e.g. through moderated group discussions
- Learning from good practices based on gained experiences, determined challenges, and lessons learned from the operation of the WWTPs
- The onsite and the virtual visits of the WWTPs with practical examples, guided by experienced experts.
- The possibility for continuous peer exchange with the other participants through an established on-line platform.

The interested PUCs and municipalities can get more information on the terms and conditions for participation in the Programme from the ADKOM's office.

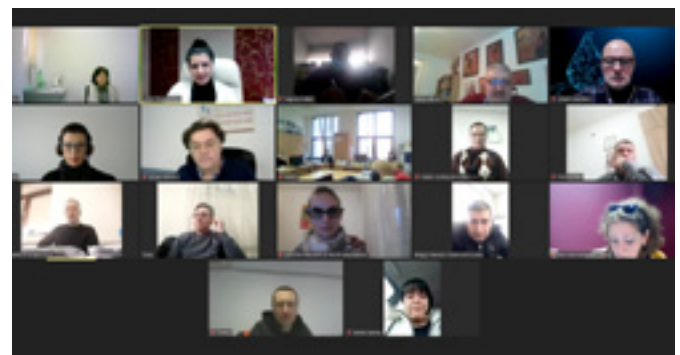
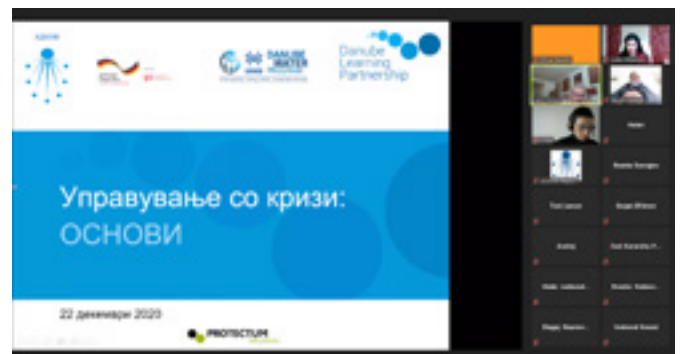
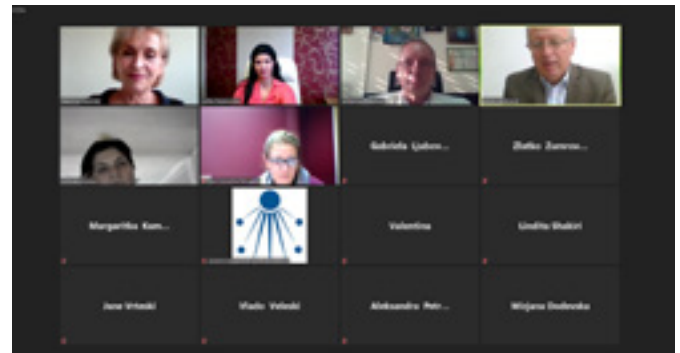
The RCDN project is financed jointly by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and is administratively embedded in the "Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe –Modernization of Municipal Services (ORF MMS)", implemented by GIZ on behalf of BMZ.

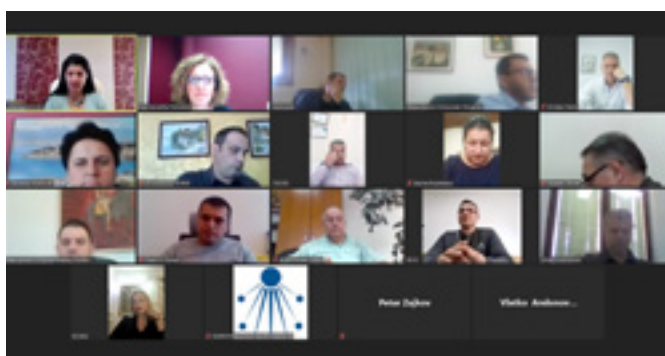
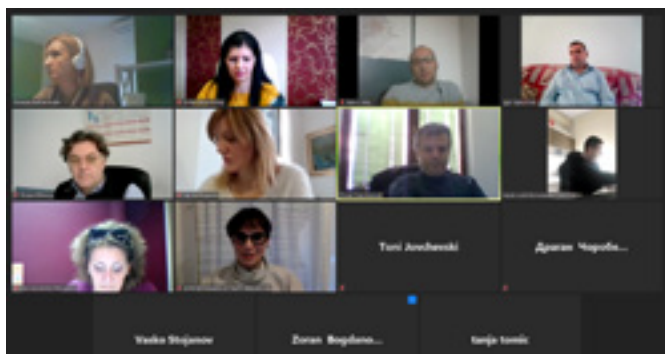
The Regional Capacity Development Network (RCDN) for Water and Sanitation Services in SEE includes 3 regional organizations: NALAS, IAWD и Aquasan Network in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as 15 Associations of PUCs and Associations of municipalities from 6 countries from the Western Balkan region.

Dear members,

Despite the extraordinary conditions caused by the pandemic COVID-19, ADKOM continued its work and realized the following activities:

- Preparation of a position paper “Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the PUC operations – Challenges and Solutions”.
- Preparation of two crisis management manuals
 1. “Crisis Management Manual – Concept and Practical Application”
 2. “Manual on safe management of drinking, sanitation and waste water during the COVID-19 pandemic”
- Preparation of a training catalogue. In order to offer improved informing to its members about the trainings and the programs it implements, ADKOM worked on the preparation of a training catalogue for 2021, as well as the design of training flyers.
- Attendance at the first virtual forum “Danube Water Forum”, which took place in the period 27–29 October, 2020. The main goal of the forum was to share information, opinions and experiences related to the water sector.
- ADKOM continued to work on the project for improving the water supply in Delchevo. The activities that were carried out in the period September– December were related to two components: Commercial Efficiency and Business Planning Support. The project offered direct support to PUC “Bregalnica” Delchevo, and the representatives of PUC “Usluga” Berovo and PUC “Komunalac” Pehchevo were invited as attendees to the workshops and activities stipulated for the PUC “Bregalnica” Delchevo, concerning the two components.
- During November 2020, ADKOM organized individual meetings with the Commissions for Water, Markets, Communal Hygiene, Parks and Greenery, Funeral Services, Parking lots, as well as the Legal and HR Commission.
- The Training Manager of ADKOM – Lea Pavlovikj



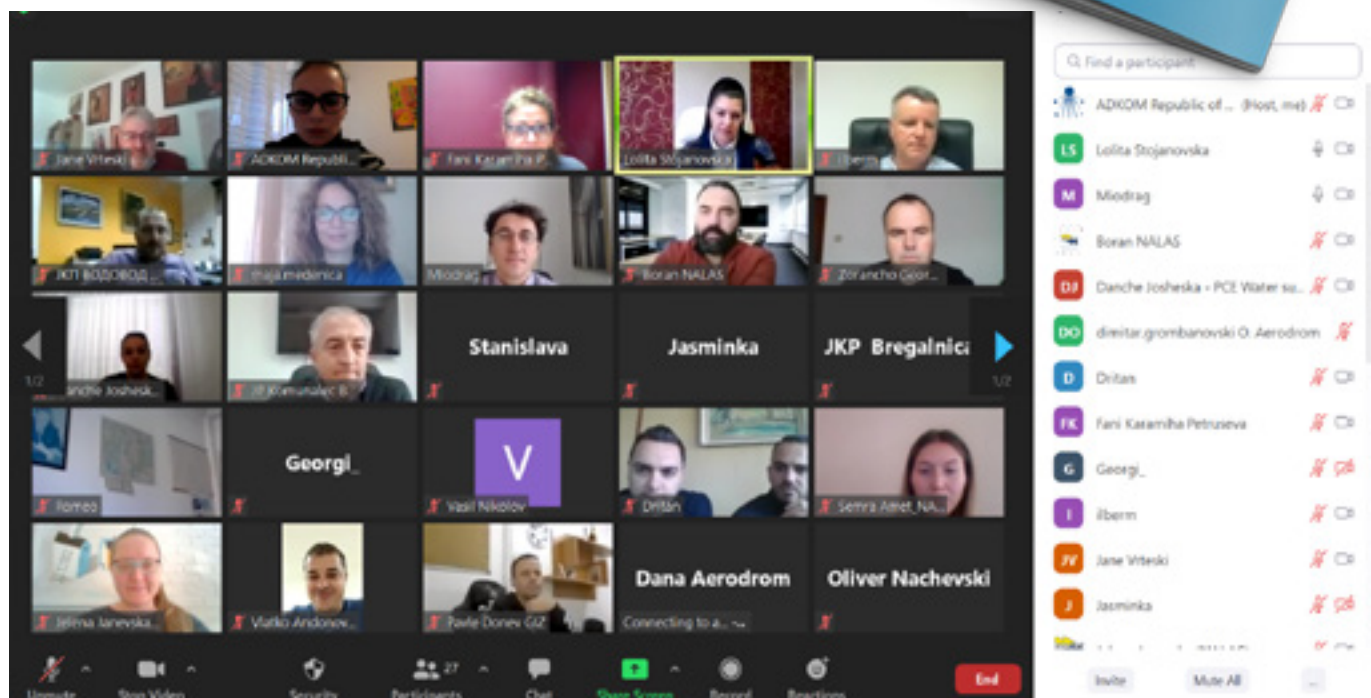


and 6 trainers of ADKOM, attended the Generic Training of Trainers, in the training program for collection, drainage and treatment of wastewater, intended for PUC employees and municipalities, through participation in the Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services in SEE (RCDN).

- The 22nd, 23rd, 24th and the 25th session of the ADKOM management Board were held online.
- **ADKOM, through the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, provided 2.3 million EUR to support its members in dealing with COVID-19.**
- Participation in a promotional event of “Managing Utility Services Training” – Master class on holistic management of the water sector. The main goal of this training is to “equip” current and future managers in the water sector, with tools and techniques that will support them in the decision-making process.
- Participation and presentation by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Lolita Stojanovska, regarding the results achieved by ADKOM in the past 2 years, before the Advisory Board of the project i.e., the Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services in SEE (RCDN).
- ADKOM through the Project “Open Regional Fund for Modernization of Municipal Services – Response to Covid-19” implemented by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) provided packages with materials and equipment for 23 public utility companies participating in projects funded by the German Government. The handover of the packages took place on November 16, 2020 in Skopje.
- Attending a meeting of the Advisory Board (No. 8) of Advisory Services for Water Utility Services Management in South East Europe. The main purpose of the meeting was to present the achievements and discuss the next steps of the project “ Advisory Services for Water Utility Services Management in South East Europe” with all participants, i.e. the associations of PUCs (providers of water services) and donors.

- In December 2020, ADKOM organized a meeting with the Public Revenue Office (PRO). It was attended by the Director of the PRO - Sanja Lukarevska and the PRO Head of the Tax Sector - Elena Petrova, some of the representatives of the Management Board of ADKOM and members of the Executive Office. During the meeting, Ms. Lukarevska mentioned that the PRO is familiar with the problem that PUCs are faced with, i.e., the need for write-off of interests, but added that without a legal decision by the Government, the PRO cannot act independently on the write-off of the interest rates owed by the PUCs. It was emphasized that the PRO is in communication with the Government and they are expecting an answer concerning this issue. At the end of the meeting, Lukarevska and Petrova reiterated that the PRO understands the problems and challenges that the PUCs have to face daily, in terms of settling tax liabilities and therefore there is a tendency to overcome them and to find a common language in addressing these issues.
- Preparation of a quarterly report on the operations of ADKOM (September - December 2020)
- Preparation of ADKOM Bulletin (September - December 2020)

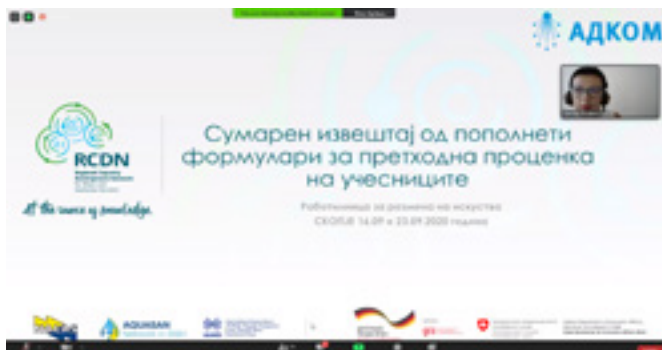
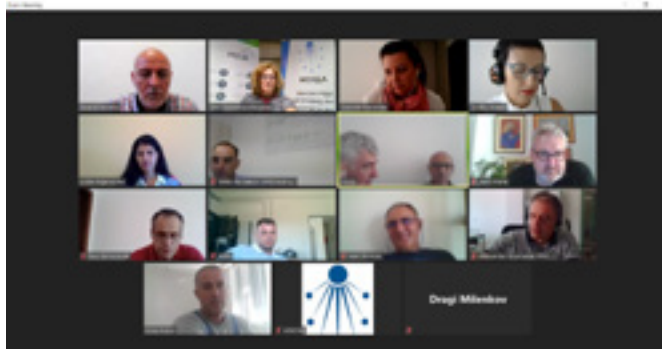
In the period September - December 2020, the ADKOM team organized a number of trainings, peer exchange, as well as round and expert tables, as you will read below.



17.09.2020

Twenty-second Session of ADKOM Management Board

On September 17, 2020, the members of the Management and Supervisory Board of ADKOM held the twenty-second online session. The session was chaired by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Mrs. Lolita Stojanovska. At the twenty-second session, the members of the Management and Supervisory Board worked according to the Agenda and discussed the re-submission of the requests prepared by the PUC to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, concerning the solving of the problem with the financial condition of the companies. The members of ADKOM were presented with the planned activities for the future.



16.09.2020 and 23 09.2020.

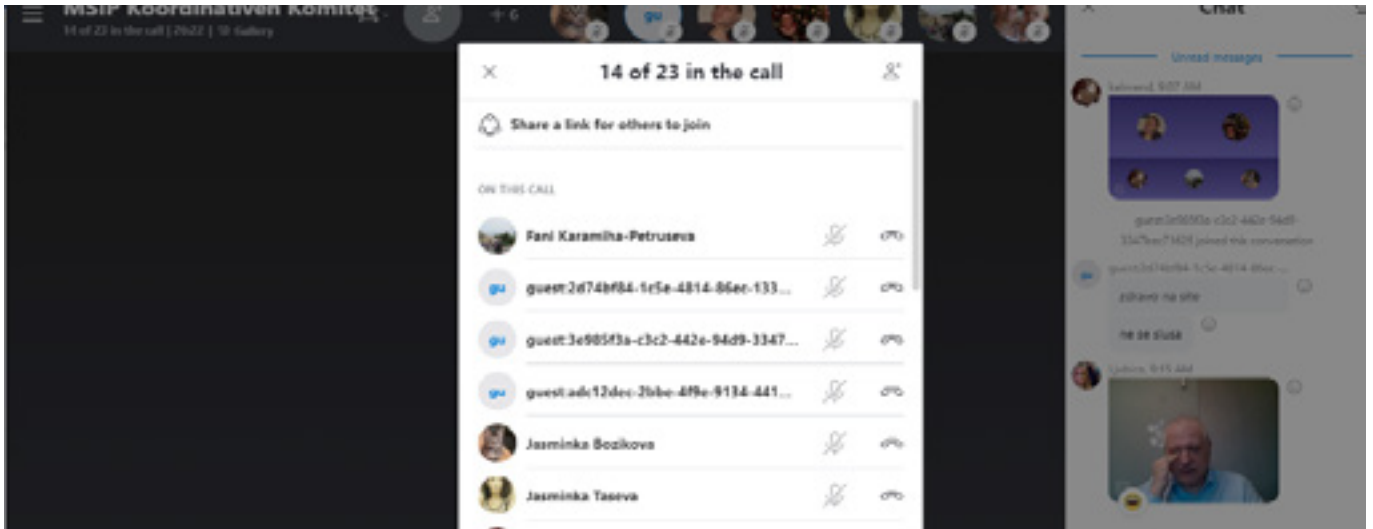
Two-day online workshop “Peer exchange - Reducing electricity consumption in wastewater treatment plants (WWTP)”

On September 16 and 23, 2020, ADKOM organized a two-day online workshop “Peer exchange - Reducing electricity consumption in wastewater treatment plants (WWTP)”

The main purpose of the peer exchange was to improve the knowledge of the operating staff of the WWTPs, as well as to demonstrate the possibilities for reducing electricity consumption in WWTP.

The peer exchange focused on presenting relevant examples of finding effective solutions to reduce electricity consumption in the technological process of the WWTPs, whereby participants were encouraged to adopt good practices and apply them in their own wastewater treatment technology processes or to develop their own solutions applicable for their WWTP.





Conclusions:

First online workshop (16.09.2020)

- Without electrical equipment and electricity consumption, wastewater treatment is virtually impossible.
- The technical staff of the WWTPs have little practical knowledge in calculating and comparing electricity consumption, as per the steps of the technological process.
- Insufficient number of trained operational staff, insufficient connection of the households to communal infrastructure, irrational use of water, unsatisfactory quality of the surface water, as well as insufficient protection of water quality leads to unnecessary consumption of electricity in the WWTPs
- Need for process automation (e.g. SCADA system)
- Development of an Action Plan - Good practices
- Need for analysis and selection of the most adequate Key indicators on electricity consumption
- Quality of polymers

Second online workshop (23.09.2020)

- There are opportunities to reduce electricity consumption with interventions in the operational and technological processes

- Exchange of experiences from own operations
- Use of own experience, research and selfless peer exchange
- Development of an Action Plan - Good Practices - undoubtedly needed
- Organizing workshops for peer exchange on specific measures in the operational and technological processes

28.09.2020

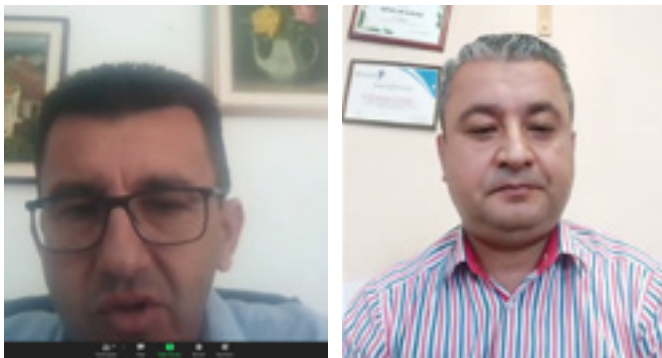
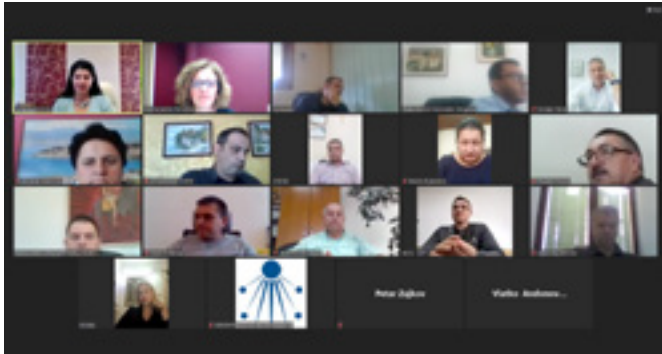
Seventy-sixth session of the Coordination Committee of the Municipality Services Improvement Project – MSIP

The 76th session of the Coordination Committee of the Municipality Services Improvement Project – MSIP was held. As a representative of ADKOM – member of the MSIP project, Ms. Fani Karamiha Petrusheva, attended the meeting. The session was held online, and on it the urban audit reports were reviewed for grants for the poor areas in the following municipalities: Lipkovo, Vrapciste, Novaci, Mogila and Dolneni. In all five municipalities, the activities were implemented in accordance with the submitted applications. In the municipalities of Lipkovo and Vrapciste, road reconstructions have been carried out in several settlements. In the municipalities of Novaci, Mogila and Dolneni procurements of mechanization for the needs of PUCs were executed.

01.10.2020

Regional meetings with the PUC Directors

On October 1, 2020, ADKOM organized an online meeting with the PUC directors.



On the meeting, the Directors gave a short elaboration on the operations of their company in the discussed the problems they have been facing since the beginning of the pandemic.

The following conclusions were adopted on the meeting:

1. To prepare a document concerning the writing off the interests on the debts of the PUCs, supported by a table of exact amount of debts per PUC
2. To request a reduction of VAT from 18% to 5% for PUCs that manage the parking lots and green markets

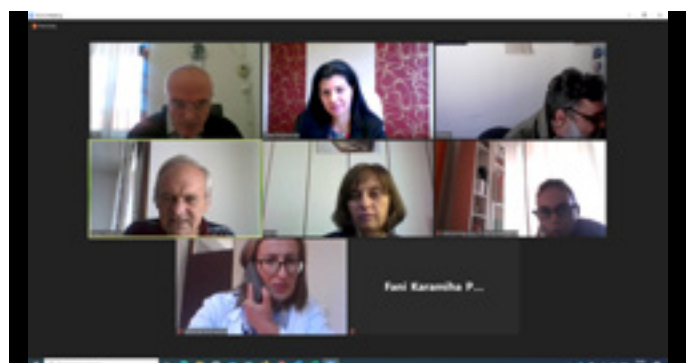
3. To request from the Government of R.N. Macedonia to subsidize the PUCs in terms of raising the minimum wage
4. To initiate an amendment to the Law on Utility Activities regarding the possibility for PUCs to sell electricity
5. To form a delegation of three to five members and to request a meeting with the Prime Minister of the Government of RNM in order to inform him on the situation of the PUCs.

15.10.2020

Meetings of the Legal Affairs Committee and HR Committee

On October 15, 2002, the members of both ADKOM Committees exchanged their experiences on the meeting concerning the following:

1. The exchange of material for the administrative management exam
2. The manner of obtaining consent for amendments and additions to the annual employment plans of the PUCs, (if some PUCs have not received consent from MISA due to the delay of the consent from LSGU should refer to Article 20b of the Law on Employment and then will receive consent from MISA)
3. Handing over of annual employment plans for 2021 (they should be submitted by 01.11.2020)
4. The manner and procedure of taking over an employee from another company (executed with a settlement between the two companies)



5. The early retirement of employees should be executed in accordance with the amendments to the Labour Law and the Law on Administrative Servants

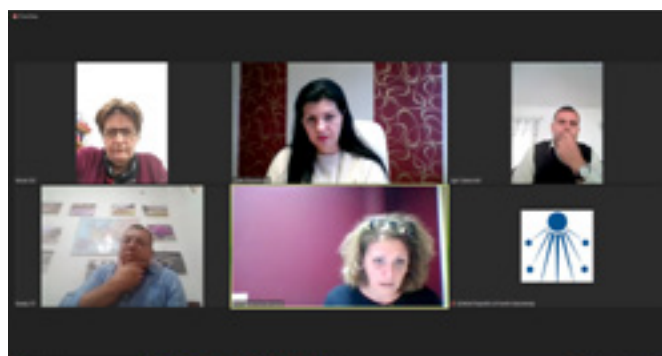
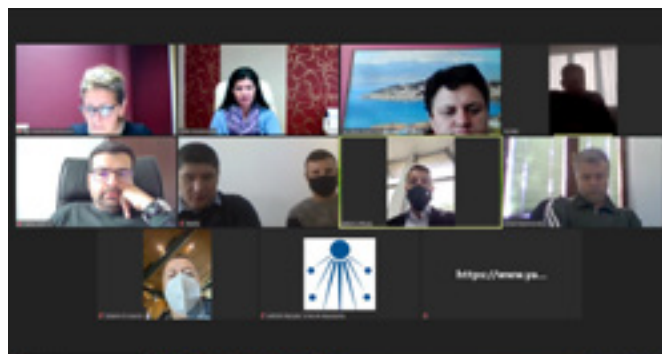
The participants discussed the implementation of certain changes in the Act of Posts Allocation, insertion of a new post that is not entered in the catalogue and so ADKOM agreed to schedule a meeting with Ms. Cukic from MISA, in order to address these dilemmas, resolve and give direction or answer other questions.

During the discussion, the members of the committees suggested to work in the next period on certain changes in the laws with which PUCs operate, as special attention should be put on those laws that have not been amended in the last few years.

20.10.2020 год.

Meeting of the Commission for water supply and sewerage and the Commission for treatment and control of water

On October 20, 2020, the members of the Commission for Water Supply and Sewerage, proposed that in the next period ADKOM should try to get in touch with employees of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Economy and MoEPP so that in the future, it would be easier to get answers to questions and unknowns that are part of the daily activities of the PUCs. The members of the commissions discussed about: the method of payment to the Water Fund (to be defined), the novelties in the part of possible privatization of the public water supply sector (they proposed that this topic should be brought before with members of the Management Board) of ADKOM), to prepare a proposal for amendments to the Law on Communal Activities with the members of the Committee on Legal Affairs. The members of the Commission for treatment and control of water exchanged experiences in accordance with the received document for conducting a risk assessment of the drinking water together with a summary of the results of the assessment (attendees expressed their views that a response should be sent to the Food and Veterinary Agency explaining that critical points are determined according to the HACCP system, which is regularly inspected by an authorized inspector).



21.10.2020

Commission for communal hygiene and maintenance of parks and green areas

On October 21, 2020, at the meeting before the Members of the Commission for Communal Hygiene, the member of the Commission from Debar, Mr. Omer Cami, informed the participants that they had an inspection, and they were instructed that the managers in the sector of communal hygiene should get trained on how to collect and select waste during a pandemic and after the training they should sign a statement that they will apply the rules of conduct. He gave a proposal for ADKOM to contact the MoEPP and Ms. Maznevska for more detailed directions on how to enrol and attend this training. During the meeting, the attendees exchanged experiences on how to act during a pandemic and the way they select the collected waste, the time interval for disinfection of containers, and other activities in accordance with the prescribed measures during a pandemic. The members of the Commission find that in this period it is necessary to work on raising the awareness of the citizens on how to dispose of the waste, especially in the urban areas.

21.10.2020

Commission on Funeral Services

On October 21, 2020, the members of the Commission for Funeral Services discussed the manner of burial of the deceased and burial of persons infected with COVID 19. All present members stated that the funerals are executed in accordance with the prescribed measures and in accordance with the Rulebook for burial of deceased persons infected with COVID 19. During the meeting, the members discussed whether this service should be taxed with 18% VAT, as during the inspections some PUCs were told that they should pay the tax even though the service was not taxed in the past period. The Commission requested that this issue be shared with the other PUC that deliver this service and that this problem be shared at a meeting of the Management Board of ADKOM. The members of the Commission concluded that if this activity is taxed, it should be taxed with 5% VAT.

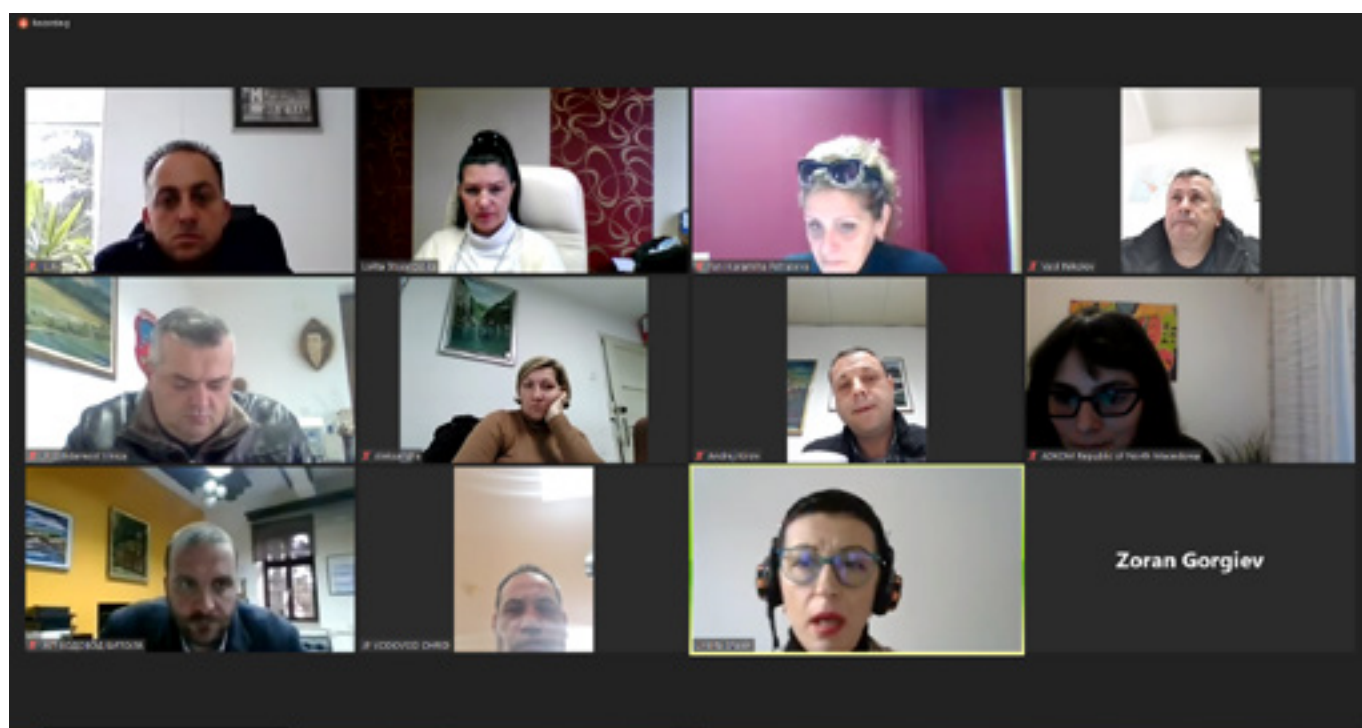
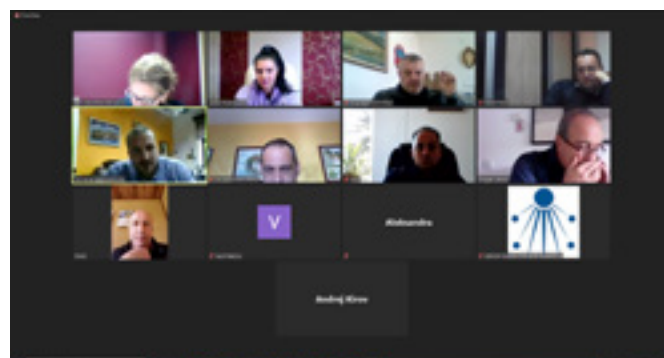
The session was chaired by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Mrs. Lolita Stojanovska, who introduced the members with the activities of ADKOM realized in the past period. The session was followed by a report from a meeting held with the Prime Minister of RNM, Mr. Zoran Zaev. The participants at this session unanimously adopted the draft Rulebook of the Training Centre of ADKOM for selection of consultants, trainers and moderators and adopted the amendment to the Rules of Operation of the Board of ADKOM by adding a new provision on online sessions.

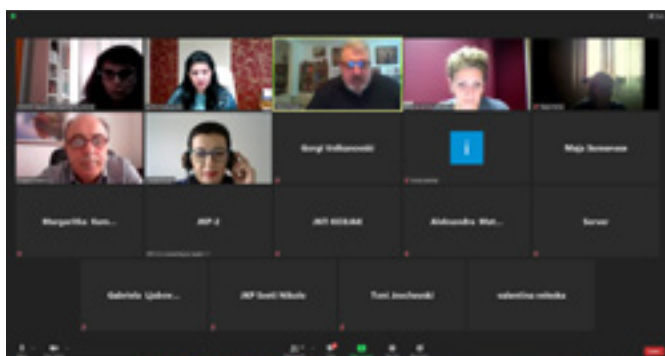
At this session, a new ADKOM Commission was established – the Commission for wastewater treatment plants. According to the operational plan of ADKOM, the members of the Board discussed the proposals of topics for an expert debate. Mrs. Stojanovska presented the members with the planned activities of ADKOM.

22.10.2020

Twenty-third session of the Management Board of ADKOM

The twenty-third session of the Management Board of ADKOM was held online, on October 22, 2020.





29.10.2020 and 05.11.2020

Two-day online workshop “Fundamentals of Drinking Water Safety Planning - Crisis Management and Risk Management in PUCs in accordance with the Macedonian Standards MKC EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 and MKC EN 15975-2:2013”

On October 29 and November 5, 2020, a two-day online workshop was held on the topic of “Fundamentals of Drinking Water Safety Planning - Crisis Management and Risk Management in PUCs in accordance with Macedonian standards MKC EN 15975-1: 2011 + A1: 2016 and MKC EN 15975-2: 2013”

The main goal of the workshop was to improve the knowledge of the participants on the basics of Drinking Water Safety Planning - Crisis Management and Risk Management in PUCs in accordance with Macedonian standards.

The workshop focused on introducing the participants with the internal and external context of crisis management at local and national level as well as with introducing the Macedonian standards MKS EN 15975-2: 2013 and MKS EN 15975-1: 2011 + A1: 2016.

First online workshop (29.10.2020)

The following topics were covered at the workshop:

1. Introduction of the participants with the Water Safety and Crisis Management - legal set-up and obligations of the water supply PUCs and introduction to the Macedonian standard MKC EN 15975-2: 2013 Safety of drinking water supply - Risk management guidelines and Crisis - Part 2: Risk Management
2. Directions for the homework
3. At the first session, the resource person Mr. Stevko Stefanovski gave a presentation on the topic of “Safety of drinking water and crisis management”. In his presentation Mr. Stevko Stefanovski gave an introduction to the legal set-up and obligations of the water supply PUCs in times of crisis.

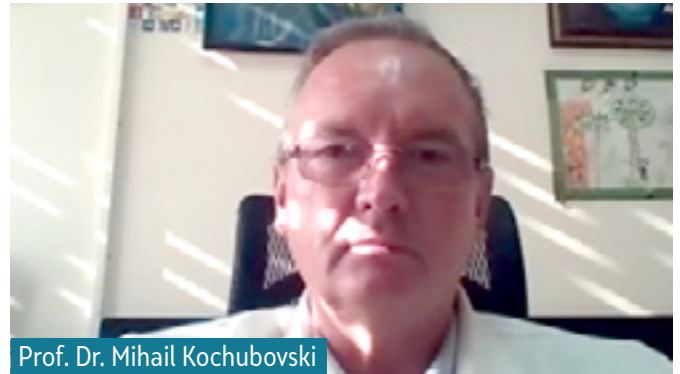
Second online workshop (05.11.2020)

The following topics were covered at the workshop:

1. Introducing the participants with the Macedonian standard MKC EN 15975-1: 2011 + A1: 2016 - Security of drinking water supply - Risk and crisis management guidelines - Part 1: Crisis management
2. Reviewing homework prepared by the PUCs



Dr. Stevko Stefanoski



Prof. Dr. Mihail Kochubovski



10.11.2020

“Manual on Crisis Management – Concept and Practical Application” and “Manual for Safe Management of Drinking, Sanitation and Wastewater during the COVID 19 Pandemic “

On November 10, 2020, ADKOM organized a presentation of the two manuals: “Manual on Crisis Management – Concept and Practical Application” by Stevko Stefanoski, PhD and “Manual for safe management of drinking, sanitation and wastewater during the COVID 19 pandemic “ by Prof. Mihail Kochubovski, PhD.

The general goal was to familiarize the PUCs employees with the contents of the manuals and to present their purpose and application, and the specific goals of this event were to present the institutional and organizational set-up and to emphasize the competencies and responsibilities of the institutions at national and local level.

Representatives of PUCs, ZELS, Municipalities, CMC, IPH, and representatives of the ministries were invited to the presentation.

Mr. Stevko Stefanoski, PhD, presented the “Manual on Crisis Management – concept and practical application”. The main purpose of this Manual is through a selected and adapted content, to present the general concept of crisis management, the function of the National Crisis Management System, to present its institutional and organizational set-up and to emphasize the competencies and responsibilities of the institutions at national and local level, and to ensure its proper practical application.

The end goal of this Manual is to help the employees of the PUCs, as providers of public utility services, to understand better the concept of crisis management and to increase their readiness to apply the measures of the “Internal Context” to the crisis management plan, in accordance with the adopted standards.

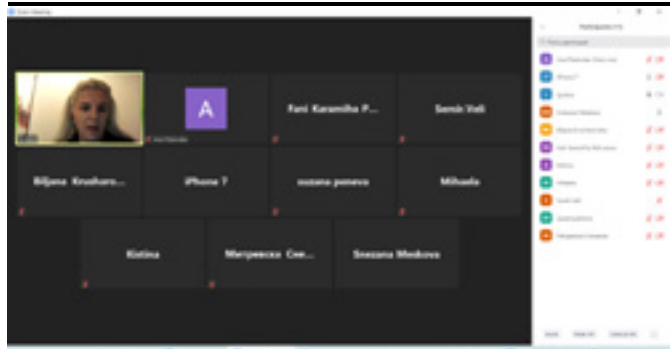
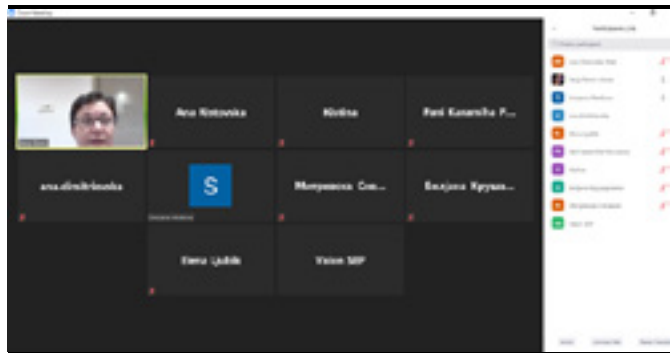
Prof. Mihail Kochubovski, PhD, presented his “Manual for safe management of drinking, sanitation and wastewater during the COVID 19 pandemic “. It was emphasized that the COVID-19 crisis presents three main challenges for water providers. The first, is the loss of revenue, the second is the reduced availability of crucial operational elements, and the challenges of covering labour costs and providing adequate equipment for personal protection for the staff at a time when revenue is running low. The third challenge comes from the delays of investments much needed to meet the urgent need for emergency response funding.

At the closing of the online promotion of both manuals by Katerina Canevska, she concluded that the pandemic caused by COVID-19 emphasized the importance of effective management and securing the provision of water supply and sanitation services. Both manuals are part of the measures taken by ADKOM to support PUCs in order to enable them to understand better their role and how to act when faced with a COVID 19 pandemic.

11.11.2020

Seventy-seventh meeting of the Coordination Committee of the MSIP project

The members of the Coordination Committee of the MSIP project held their 77th session online on November 11, 2020, as per the current situation with the Covid 19 pandemic in our country. The main coordinator of the MSIP project chaired the session as per the following items on the Agenda: review of the urban audit report on the grant for poor areas / social inclusion for the Municipality of Saraj, review of the grant agreement for poor areas / social inclusion with the Municipality of Mavrovo Rotuse, the agreements with the Municipality of Konce and the Municipality of Delchevo were reviewed as well. According to the presentation by the independent consultant, hired as technical assistance to the municipalities-beneficiaries of the sub-loan within the Second Municipal Services Improvement Project, for the preparation of urban audit and according to the given guidelines and explanations, the members of the Coordination Committee unanimously adopted all four reports. The General Coordinator informed the participants that the third call for allocation of



funds from the Second Project for Improvement of Municipal Services has been completed and applications have been submitted by 20 municipalities and they are being reviewed by the civil engineers of the Project Unit. After the completion of this process, the comments or approvals of the technical documentation will be sent to all municipalities at the same time. The municipalities of Kavadarci and Kocani have submitted their projects, as they are already participants in the Second MSIP project, and according to the Public Call the advantage in the distribution of funds will be given to municipalities that have not used funds from the Second Project for improvement of municipal services, and which fully meet the requirements of the Call.

12.11.2020

Public Debate - Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Report for the National Waste Management Plan 2020-2030.

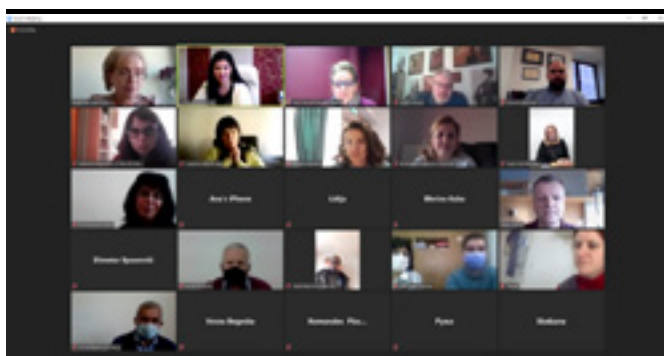
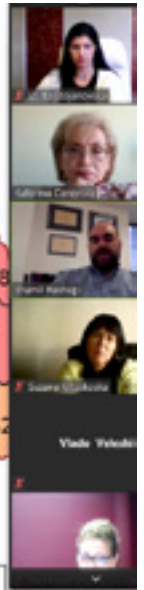
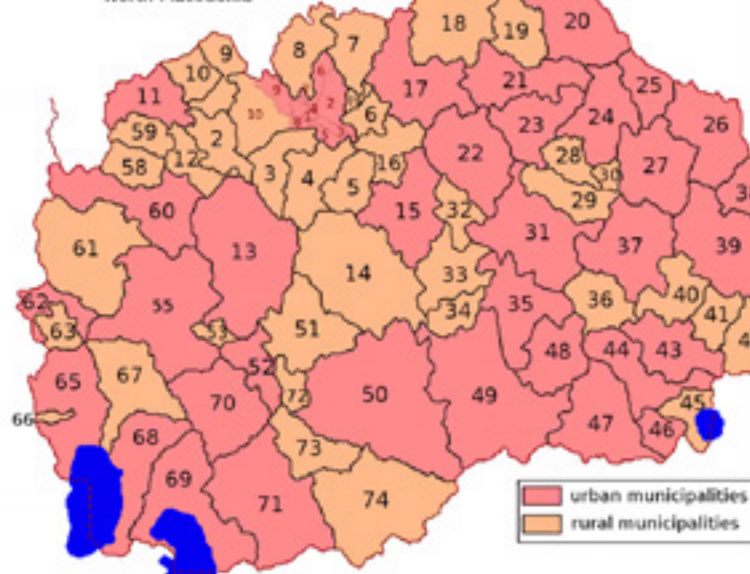
On November 12, 2020, a Public Debate was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning. It was opened by the Minister of Environment and Physical Planning, Mr. Naser Nuredini. The public debate was attended by some of the PUCs that work with waste. Ms. Ana Karanfilova Maznevskva,

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Rural and urban municipalities of North Macedonia

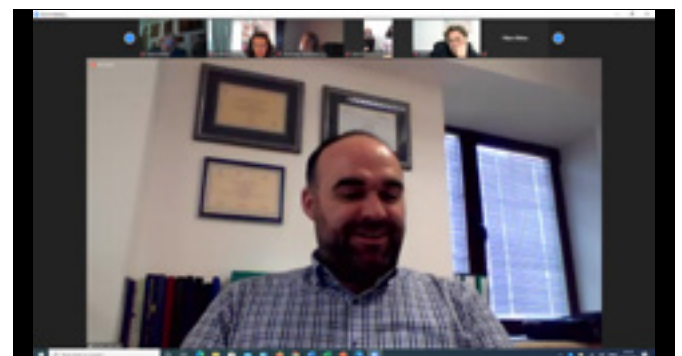


Head of the Waste Management Sector gave a short presentation of the National Waste Management Plan 2020-2030. Then, Mr. Marjan Mihajlov, Expert on Strategic Environmental Assessment through a short presentation talked about the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Report for the National Waste Management Plan 2020-2030.

20.11.2020

Round Table: “First regulated period – lessons learned and problems – Second Regulated Period, open issues and challenges”

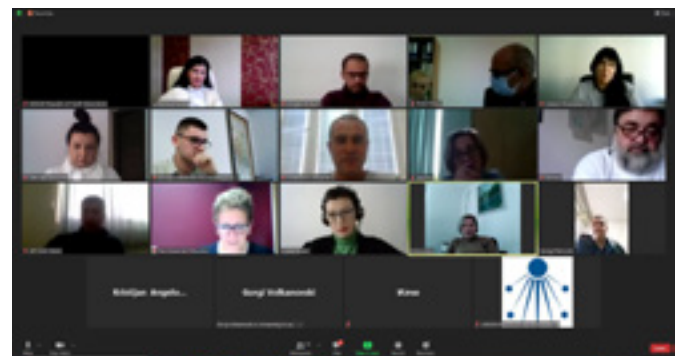
In order to support its members - the PUCs, in addition to the conducted trainings and programs to support the preparation of Business Plans, Tariff



Adjustment Plans and Annual Reports, ADKOM, started organizing round tables with EWSRC. These round tables foster coordination, regular exchange of information and cooperation among EWSRC PUCs and ADKOM, in order to increase the efficiency and quality of water services in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Guided by the new requirements, i.e., the submission of BP and TAP, as well as AR, ADKOM continued to organize round tables, so, on November 20, 2020, ADKOM organized a Round Table on the topic: “First regulated period – lessons learned and problems – Second regulated period, open issues and challenges”.

The round table was organized in cooperation with EWSRC, MoEPP and the State Environmental Inspectorate.



24.11.2020 and 10.12.2020

Two-day online workshop on Peer exchange: „Wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) – How to arrive from planning to a sustainable WWTP?”

The main purpose of the peer exchange workshop was to improve the knowledge and for the PUCs to obtain basic information on the importance of building WWTP in the municipalities.

The peer exchange focused on presenting relevant examples and introducing the participants with the stages of planning, preparation, and implementation of the WWTP and encouraging the participants to accept the good practices and apply them in their PUCs.

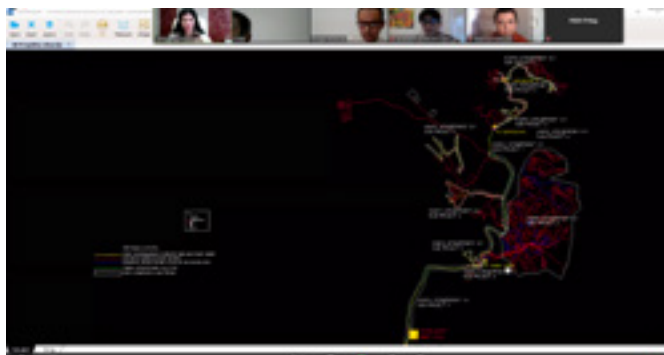
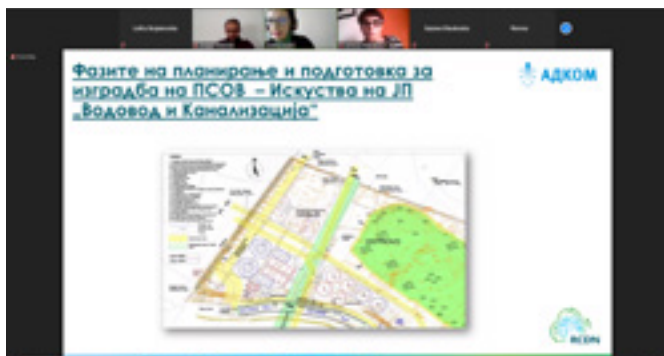
Two participants took part in the peer exchange online workshops:

- The Head of technical sector in PUC
- The Head of the technical sector in the LSGU

Conclusions:

First online workshop (24.11.2020)

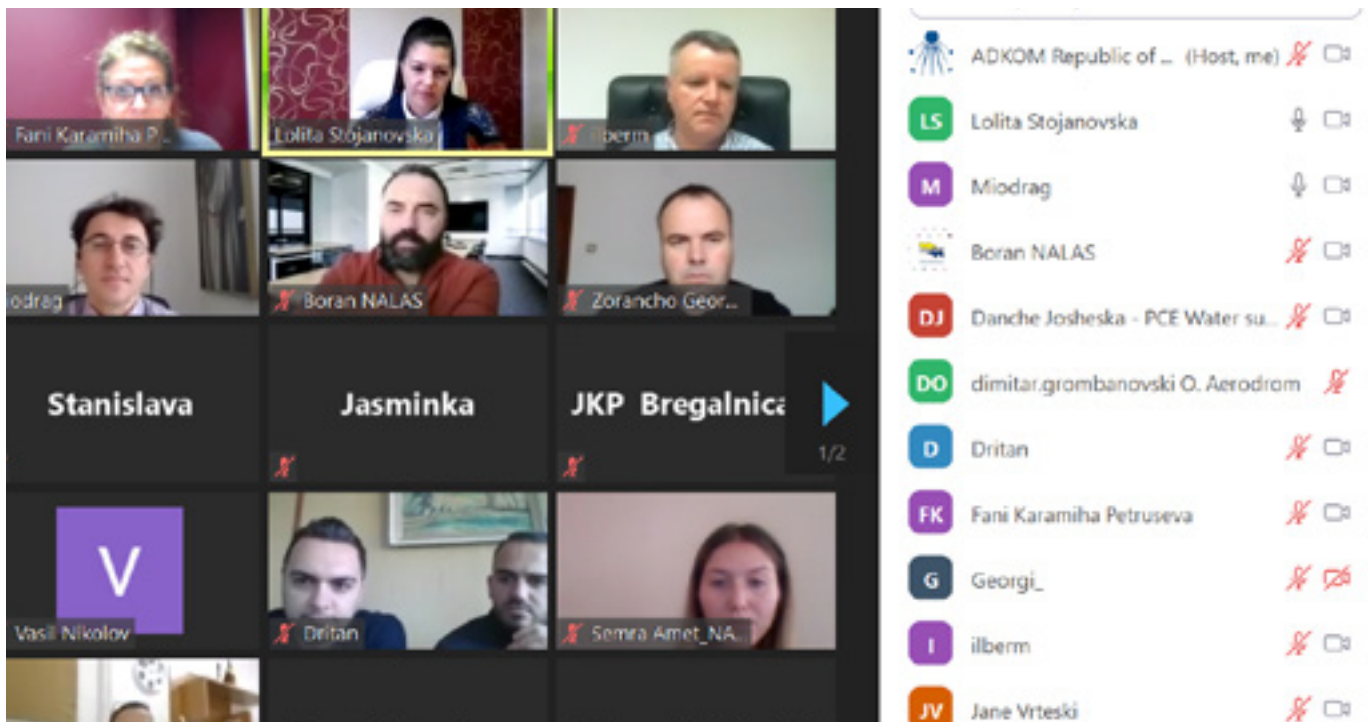
- There is a great need for WWTPs in those municipalities that don't have one
- The realization of the project for Construction of WWTP requires high awareness of the importance of a clean environment
- Insufficient number of educated operational staff, insufficient connection of households to the utilities infrastructure



25.11.2020

Twenty-fourth session of ADKOM Management Board

On November 25, 2020, ADKOM held the twenty-fourth online session of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board. The members worked in accordance with the adopted agenda and the session was chaired by the Executive Director of ADKOM, Mrs. Lolita Stojanovska. At the 24th session, the realized activities of ADKOM were presented. A discussion was opened on the preparation of an analysis for the water sector in the Republic of North Macedonia. The members of the ADKOM Management and Supervisory Boards also discussed the upcoming expert debate on the topic of Digitalization of utility services as well as the upcoming round table on bottlenecks in the legislation. The Executive Director of ADKOM presented the planned activities of ADKOM for the coming period.

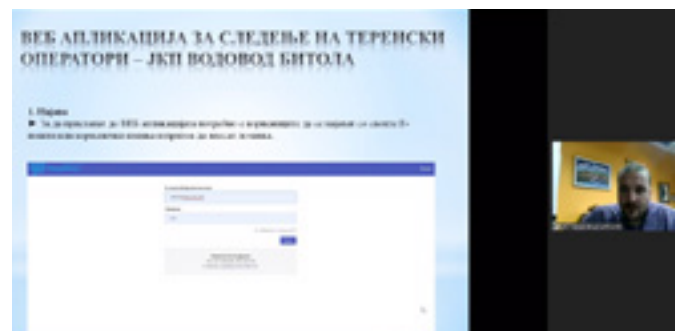


- Providing stable financial resources
- Development of an Action Plan - Good practices
- Need for educated staff who should be hired from the first day of Implementation of the projects for construction of WWTP until the completion of the construction, and then continue in the operational stage. The purpose of this is to have sustainable WWTPs.

-

Second online workshop (10.12.2020)

- The construction of functional and sustainable WWTP requires big investments in the sewerage network and in the separation of the atmospheric from the fecal sewerage system.
- Use the experience, research and share the experiences selflessly
- Development of an Action Plan - Good practices - undoubtedly needed.



26.11.2020

Expert Debate on the topic - Digitalization of utility services

On November 26, 2020 ADKOM organized an Expert Debate on the topic - Digitalization of utility services.

The general goal of organizing this debate was to raise the awareness and inform the experts from various institutions about the need for digitalization of utility services. The specific goals of the event were: 1) to enable debate and exchange of information on the digitalization of utility services; 2) to identify "bottlenecks" in the implementation of measures for digitalization of utility services; and 3) provide guidance on future steps to be taken by PUCs in the context of digitalisation of utility services.

SCADA систем-мониторинг и управување-водоводен систем



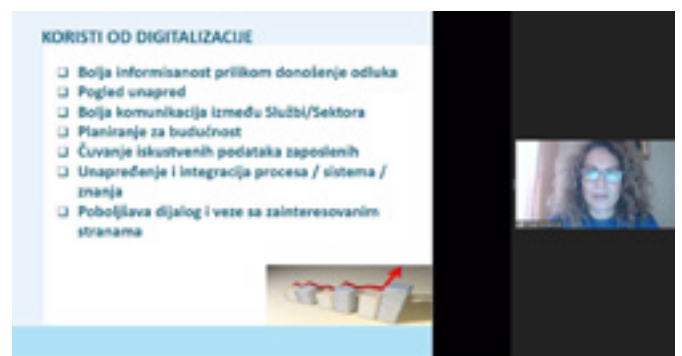
Today the digitalization of utility services is a reality and the value and impact of digital technologies in the transformation of utility services are more than clear, both globally and nationally. These technologies can also be used to accelerate the adoption of alternative solutions for utility services. This does not mean that these new technologies will completely replace traditional utility infrastructure and utility services.

Instead, it can be said that there is now an expanded “offer” of technological solutions in addition to traditional infrastructure solutions and service delivery models, and digitalization itself is a migration from a data-rich environment to a knowledge-rich environment.

The debate was attended by representatives of: PUCs, line ministries and other relevant institutions.

The moderator of the debate was Jane Vrteski, and the panellists who had presentations were: Maja Medenica (PUC Water Supply and Sewerage – Belgrade, Republic of Serbia); Goran Kozarov, MSc (General Director of PUC Water Supply – Bitola); Zorancho Georgiev (PUC Water Supply – Kochani).

ADKOM will launch initiatives and participate in events in order to emphasize the digital transformation of utility services by PUC as an important topic in the policies and programs of the central government. (e.g., by using the dialogue platform ...)

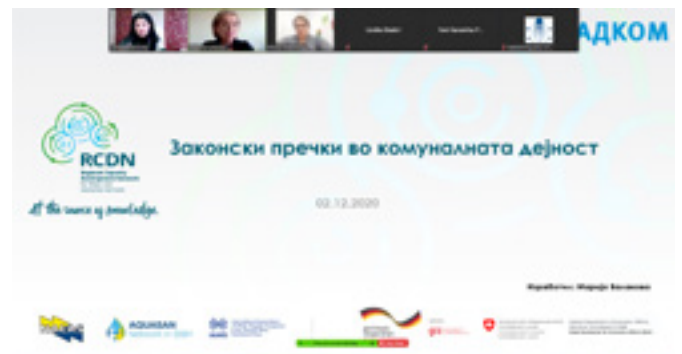
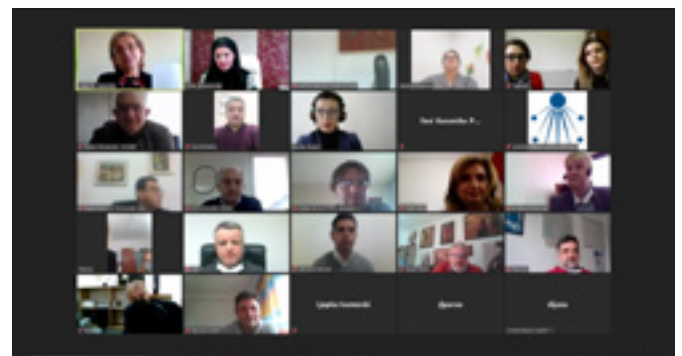
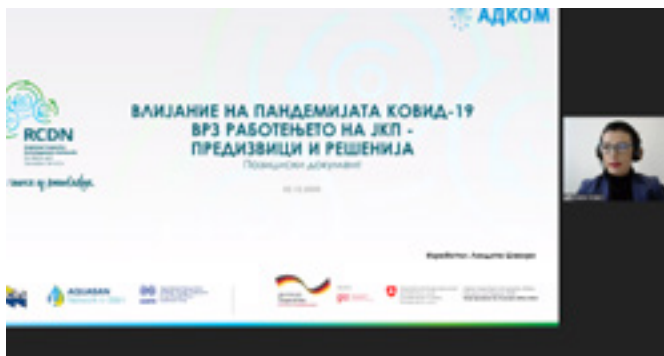


The Executive Director of ADKOM, Ms. Stojanovska closed the event, emphasizing that in 2021 ADKOM will continue to promote the digitalization of utility services among its members, by bringing closer the regional and domestic experiences.

30.11.2020

Twenty – fifth session of the Management Board of ADKOM

On November 30, 2020, the members of the Management Board of ADKOM held the twenty-fifth session online, and discussed the financial assistance provided by the Government of the RNM that will be awarded to PUCs – members of ADKOM and the activities to be implemented in accordance with the meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Zoran Zaev, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Fatmir Besimi and the online meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister in charge for economic issues, coordination of economic departments and investments, Mr. Fatmir Bitiqi.



02.12.2020

Round Table: “Operating during COVID-19 and ‘bottlenecks’ in the legislation – the impact on the operation of public utility companies”

On December 2, 2020, ADKOM organized a debate entitled: “Operating during COVID-19 and ‘bottlenecks’ in the legislation – the impact on the operation of public utility companies”

The purpose of organizing this debate was to gain information on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the operation of public utility companies and the challenges they face, what are the directions and the best solutions for successfully dealing with the pandemic so that citizens can get quality and healthy drinking water, and which at the same time will protect the employees of the PUCs.

At a time when our country is facing a crisis, caused by the COVID-19 virus, PUCs have a key role in the supply of drinking water, as well as maintaining hygiene and cleanliness throughout the country. In order to understand the operation and the challenges that the PUCs face during the pandemic, ADKOM prepared a questionnaire to survey the companies.

The analysis of the questionnaire imposed the need of a position paper with a detailed analysis of the operational challenges of the PUCs during the COVID-19 pandemic, detecting critical points in the operations, understanding the reasons for management decisions, and finding and offering solutions to solve the newly created situation in the operations.

The results and observations from the analysis were presented by the expert on the issues related to the operations of the PUCs, Lindita Shaqiri from PUC “Water and Sewerage” -Skopje. Shaqiri pointed out that the purpose of the position paper is to detect critical points in the functioning of the PUCs and to give recommendations for overcoming the new situation with the functioning of the PUCs.

As part of the debate, Marija Valakova from PUC “Plavaja” from Radovish and a member of the Legal Commission of ADKOM, presented the document “Bottle necks in the legislation on utility services.”

It was proposed that the Law on Drinking Water Supply and Drainage of Urban Wastewater, adopted in 2004, to be opened and considered for its complete revision and adjustment, taking into account the needs of both service providers and end users, as and in order to comply with the new regulations that have been adopted and according to which the price of water services is now determined. Amendments

are also necessary to the Law on Construction, in terms of issuing construction permits, especially for collective housing.

It was pointed out that the Law on Public Employees and the Law on Administrative Servants are also a “bottleneck”. The problem is that after including the PUCs in these laws and in the public sector in general, primarily because these laws are mandatory for application by the PUCs, the acts arising from them are approved by MISA, the local self-government is responsible and gives consent to financial part, in the area of collective agreements PUCs are practically nowhere. So, on the one hand with these laws the PUCs are part of the public sector, and on the other hand, the courts in their deliberations consider them as part of the private sector.

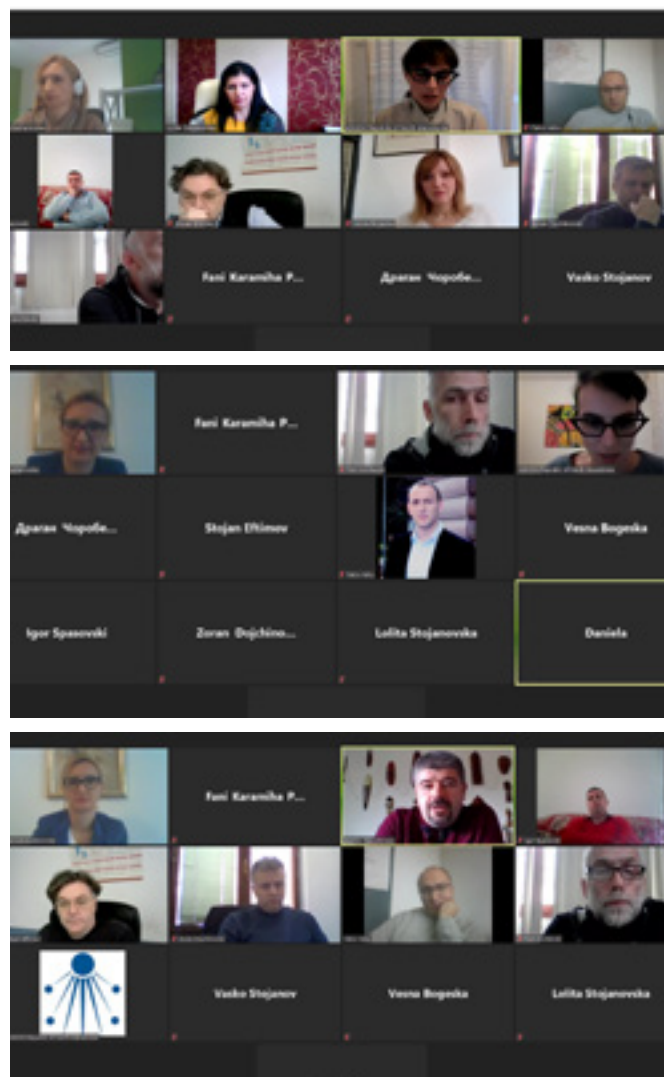
Amendments are also needed in the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, the Law on Utility Services and the Law on Public Companies, the Law on Cemeteries and Funeral Services, the Law on Obligations and the Law on Notaries Public.

In the debate, the representatives of the ministries and inspectorates welcomed the initiatives and the debate organized by ADKOM and pointed out that they are open for cooperation, that the findings of both documents are extremely important and will be welcomed when drafting new legislation or amendments to existing ones.

07.12.2020

Seventy-eighth meeting of the Coordination Committee of the MSIP project

The meeting of the MSIP project was held on December 7, 2020, chaired by the MSIP Financial Management Specialist. It was explained that the session envisages review of the sub-loan agreement with the Municipality of Kumanovo and the results of the Third Call for use of funds from the Second MSIP project. The members of the Coordination Committee were presented with the sub-project and the planning of the procurement of 12 vehicles and machines for the needs of 4 public enterprises in the Municipality of Kumanovo, as follows: construction machine combined backhoe loader; equipment for



waste loading and disposal; equipment for road maintenance in winter conditions; specialized vehicle for removal of illegally parked vehicles on public areas; and equipment for construction and maintenance of the gas distribution network on the territory of the Municipality of Kumanovo. All vehicles and machines will be procured by the Municipality, and then will be distributed for use to the appropriate utility company, such as PUC on Water Supply, PUC on Cleanliness and Greenery, PUC on Parking Lots and PUC on Gas. The realization of the project supported by this sub-loan agreement will enable proper maintenance and investments in the water supply and gas system, safe transport, and infrastructure for communal hygiene throughout the municipality and traffic safety. Improving the services provided by the public utility companies will contribute to flood prevention, efficient maintenance and investment in the water supply system and gas network, road maintenance

Видливост и комуникација

Сите активности треба да имаат соодветен визуелен идентитет. Активностите за јакнење на капацитетите треба да ги користат усвоените обрасци, брошури, лифлети, билтени и други помагала за видливост (банер, лого, знамиња, итн.).

Активност	Стандардизирани обрасци	Одговорен
Примена на елементите за видливост		
Логоата на другите партнерски организации треба исто така да бидат истакнати	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power point презентација • Банер 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • АДКОМ и Тренер
Присуство на социјалните медиуми, доколку е соодветно	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Лого • Брошури/лифлети 	
Објава на главните настани и активности, нивните резултати и постигнувања билтенот на АДКОМ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Фотографии 	

Стандард Видливост и комуникација

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows

RCDN

throughout the year and proper parking of vehicles, which will indirectly contribute to creating a better life in the municipality, improved local economy and appropriate conditions for social development.

11.12.2020 and 14.12.2020

Online introductory Training of Trainers - "INTRODUCTION to the quality standards of the Training Centre of ADKOM".

On December 11 and 14, 2020, an online introductory Training of Trainers was held - "INTRODUCTION to the quality standards of the Training Centre of ADKOM".

The main goal of the training was to introduce the participants (trainers) to the quality standards of the Training Centre of ADKOM.

Specific goals of the training:

1. The participants to improve their methodological competencies for quality training, according to the established quality standards of the Training Centre of ADKOM

2. Peer exchange and exchange of good practices among participants for quality training

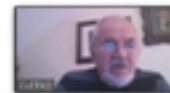
The training was attended by 8 participants, i.e., trainers from PUCs from Kumanovo, Strumica, Skopje, Vinica, Tetovo and Bitola.

Conclusions:

- The presented standards and appropriate templates are the first working version that will be applied from December 2020 / January 2021. Although ADKOM had several forms that it has applied so far in the implementation of its activities, these standards are the first official version.
- The quality standards of the Training Centre of ADKOM will be fully applied in the implementation of comprehensive program trainings, while for the short-term trainings (one-day or two-day) certain forms will be excluded. Specifically, the forms will be defined by the management team of ADKOM before the start of the training.
- It is expected that after a certain period of implementation it will be possible to see the advantages and disadvantages of this initial version of the quality standards and based on that experience, the standards will be further updated.



Предмет, функција и офат на Каталогот на обуки на Тренинг центарот на АДКОМ



- **Што е каталог?** Преглед на расположливите услуги/продукти на една организација за своите корисници/клиенти
- **Предмет на Каталогот на Тренинг центарот на АДКОМ:** Програмски развиените и ресурсно обезбедните обуки за потребите на институционалниот развој на АДКОМ
- **Функција на Каталогот:** годишно планирање на обуките на ниво на КЈП и вреднување на ефектите од обуките во кариерниот развој на вработените



15.12.2020

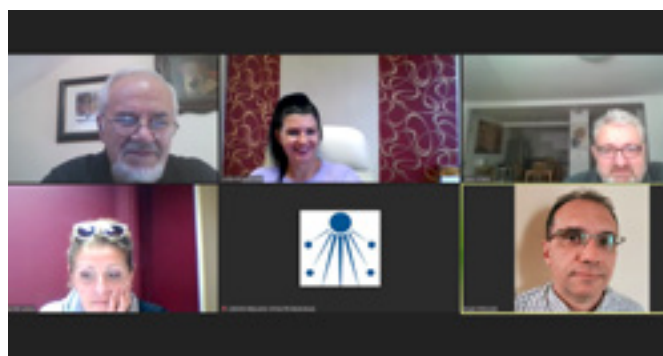
Promotion: “The role and function of ADKOM Training Centre’s training in strengthening the capacity of the PUCs”

On December 15, 2020, a Zoom debate was organized by ADKOM on the topic of “The role and function of ADKOM Training Centre’s trainings in strengthening the capacity of the PUCs”. This is part of the project “Regional Capacity Development Network for Water and Sanitation Services (RCDN)”.

The general goal of the debate was to obtain basic information and to improve the knowledge of PUCs on the need to strengthen the capacities of the employees.

ADKOM is working actively on capacity building and on organizing through its Training Centre many trainings, programs, it offers technical assistance, and implements activities for peer exchange with the stakeholders in the water sector.

Professor Cvetko Smilevski spoke about the role of training in individual and institutional development. The professor pointed out that training is a rational, safe, and focused form of acquiring competencies

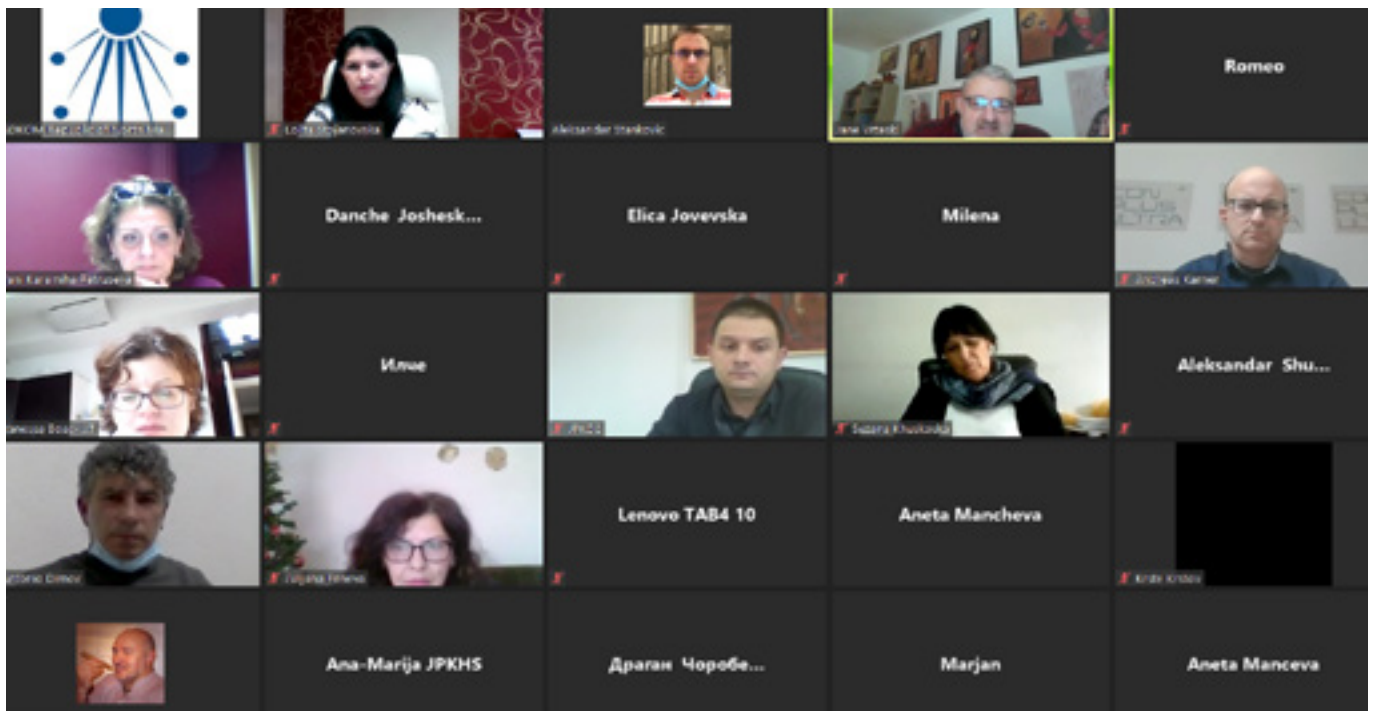


and it means acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes.

ADKOM offer three types of trainings:

- Basic training: for beginners and for new technologies
- Advanced training: for new services / products and for advanced technologies
- Corrective training: to improve work performance.

Professor Cvetko Smilevski presented the Catalogue of trainings for 2021, its content and function. This Catalogue is considered as intellectual capital of the Training Centre of ADKOM, a tool for managing the individual institutional development of the PUCs by the HR department of the PUC and is a promotional tool of the Training Centre of ADKOM.



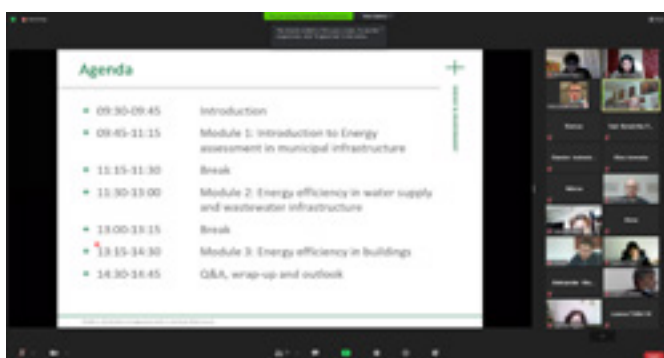
The Executive Director of ADKOM, Lolita Stojanovska, spoke about the planning and implementation activities for the 2021 trainings.

The participants pointed out that it is important for them to assume a more active involvement in the trainings as education is important.

17.12.2020

Online training on renewable energy sources and energy efficiency

ADKOM in cooperation with ConPlusUltra, Vienna and Balkan Development Solutions BDS from Skopje is implementing the Project “Capacity Building in the Utility Services Sector in the Republic of North Macedonia for more resilient, inclusive and sustainable provision of services to citizens.”



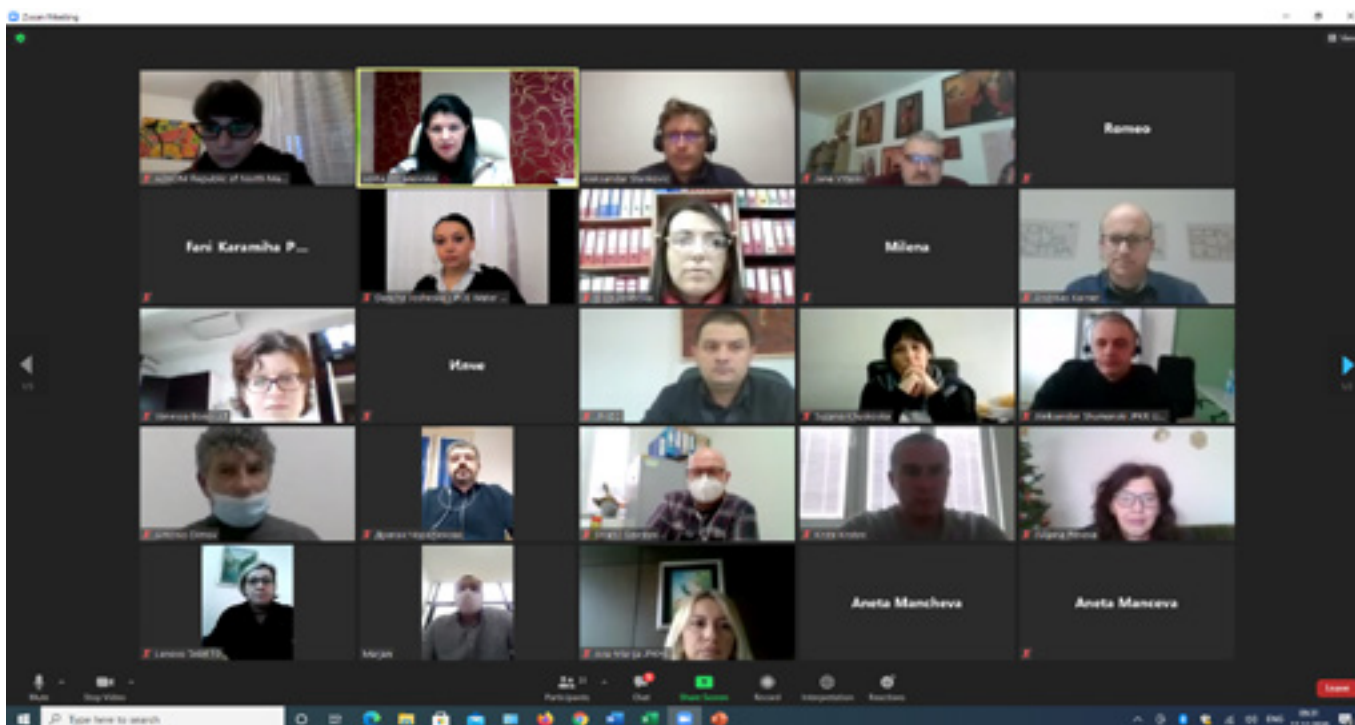
The activities are funded by the Austrian Development Agency through the grant scheme BACID (Building Administrative Capacities in the Danube and Western Balkans Region), managed by the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and the KDZ- Center for Public Administration Research.

Hence, as the first activity of the project, on December 17, 2020, ADKOM organized a capacity building training for skills development in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The main goal of the training was to increase local skills and knowledge related to renewable energy production and resource efficiency at the local level, especially in utilities and municipal facilities / infrastructure, in order to support the provision of better municipal services in the long run.

The following were defined as specific goals:

1. To enable participants to receive instructions for using simple energy assessment tools for municipal infrastructure
2. To upgrade / renew their knowledge of energy efficiency in buildings and in water services utility companies
3. To upgrade / renew their knowledge on the use of renewable energy sources in public infrastructure
4. To get acquainted with energy planning for the municipality



The training covered energy assessments for municipal infrastructure, energy efficiency in buildings and water services utility companies, use of renewable energy sources in public infrastructure and municipal energy planning.

The trainers, Andreas Karner, ConPlusUltra Vienna, Josef Buchinger, ConPlusUltra Vienna and Jane Vrteski, BDS Skopje, were responsible for conducting the training.

Additional training session for trainers will be held on 04.02.2021, after which the participants - trainers will be invited to disseminate their knowledge in the municipalities in the Republic of North Macedonia in order to strengthen local capacities for renewable energy and energy efficiency plans.

23.12.2020

Twenty-sixth session of the ADKOM Management Board

On December 23, 2020, the twenty-sixth session of the Management Board of ADKOM was held online and it was chaired by Mrs. Lolita Stojanovska, Executive Director of ADKOM. At the session, the present members of the Management Board and the Supervisory Board of ADKOM discussed the shared information by Ms. Stojanovska from the meeting held with representatives

of the PRO. Also, the members exchanged experiences about the donation received from the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. On this session, members of the Management Board were nominated for lobbying in line ministries in accordance with the prepared document Legal obstacles in the PUC operation that need to be overcome. The Executive Director of ADKOM presented the activities of ADKOM planned until the end of 2020.

Project: “Support to the municipalities and PUCs for handling the COVID 19 crisis”

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to last globally, which means that public utility companies (PUCs) in the Republic of North Macedonia will continue to provide their services under crisis circumstances.

The lack of established systemic approach in the PUCs for crisis management, the lack of planning documents in the PUCs for business continuity in crisis situations, as well as the existing ad-hoc communication between LS-GUs and PUCs, impose the need to enhance the planning and establishment of an organized approach to ensure business continuity in crisis.

For that purpose, in cooperation with GIZ and IAWD, through the project ““Support to the municipalities and PUCs for handling the COVID 19 crisis”, ADKOM started to upgrade the Program for Water Safety and Crisis Management in water supply and wastewater companies, with

The slide is titled "Introduction - Trainers" and features two columns of trainer profiles. The right side of the slide shows a grid of 12 video thumbnails from meeting participants.

Introduction - Trainers

Andreas Karner

- Vienna / Austria / Europe
- MSc - Environmental Management & Technology
- andreas.karner@conplusultra.com

With ConPlusUltra Ltd. since 20 years

- Partner
- Senior Energy Expert

Experience with

- Energy audits service sector, buildings
- EnMS: industry, service sector
- Municipal energy strategies/Smart cities
- Training: in-house, TVET, seminars
- Overall more than 20 years of professional experience, more than 10 years in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and Africa

Josef Buchinger

- Vienna / Austria
- MSc - Environmental Process Engineering
- josef.buchinger@conplusultra.com

working @ ConPlusUltra Ltd. since 7 years

- Senior Energy Expert

Experience with

- Energy audits of industry, service sector, infrastructure (railway, highway), transport/mobility
- EnMS: industry, service sector
- Solar energy (heating & cooling, process heat, PV)
- Training: in-house, TVET, seminars
- Countries: USA, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Caribbean, India, Bhutan, Europe, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

an emphasis on working under crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The choice for inclusion of PUCs is a result of last year's participation in the program "Water Safety and Crisis Management", where the teams of PUC "Komunalec" - Strumica, PUC "Water Supply" - Kocani, PUC "Komunalec" - Negotino and PUC "Water and Sewerage" - Prilep, had an active participation, which was implemented in the period July - September 2019.

This project aims at developing a model and methodology for developing an applied strategy and contingency plans for risk management and water and / or solid waste safety planning, including a Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) template for public utilities and municipalities.

The main goal of the project is to build the capacities of ADKOM in order to strengthen the resilience of the municipalities by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of their public utility companies, for better provision of water services.

The specific goals of the project are:

1. Develop a capacity building model at the association's level to enable public utility companies to create tailored institutional capacities for risk and crisis management related to COVID 19;

2. Upgrade D-LeaP training material on water safety and crisis management (to include wastewater collection, wastewater and solid waste treatment) and adapt to the national context of the Republic of North Macedonia related to the COVID-19 pandemic;
3. Develop a Guide / template for a standard Operational Response Plan model for emergencies / operational procedures for public utility companies and municipalities;
4. To provide training for the members of the crisis management and risk management teams of the PUCs.

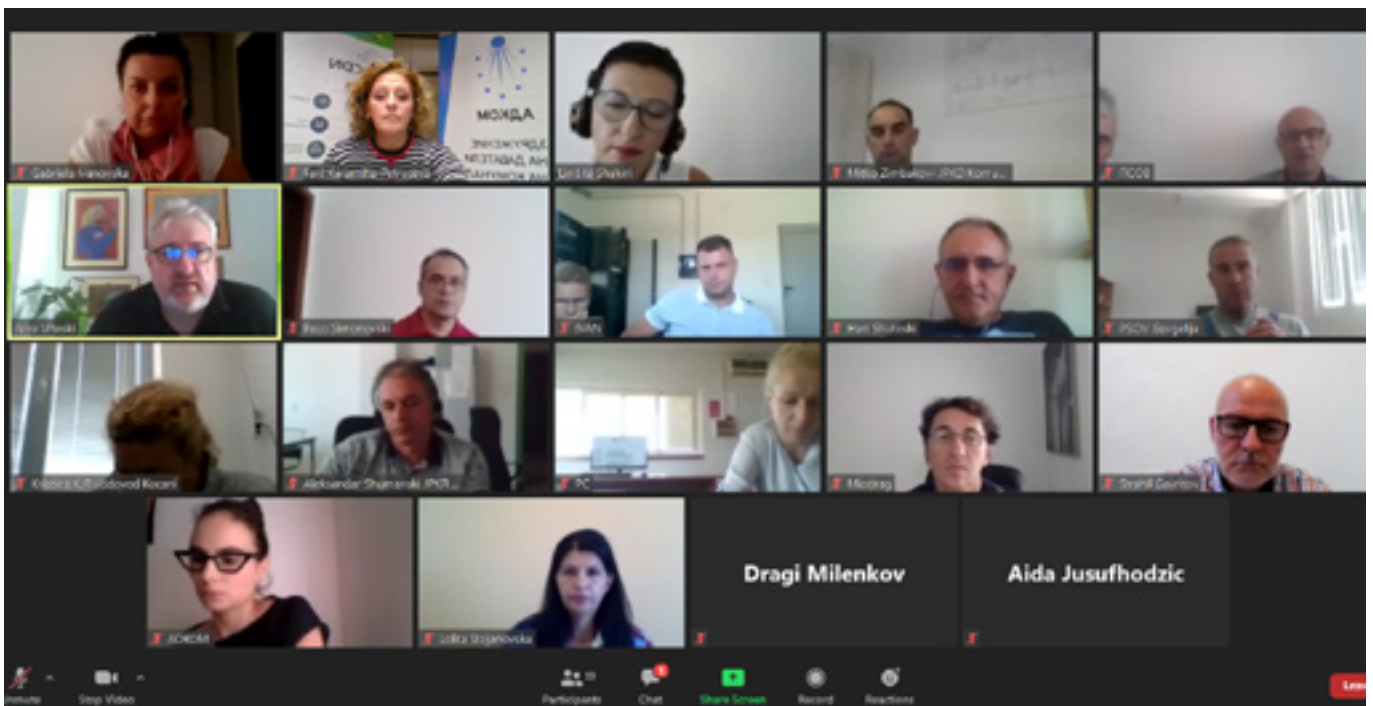
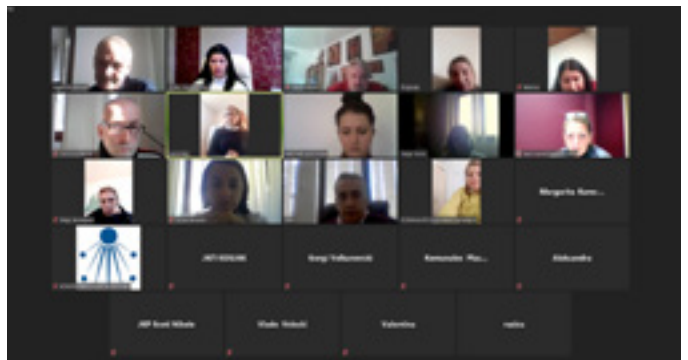
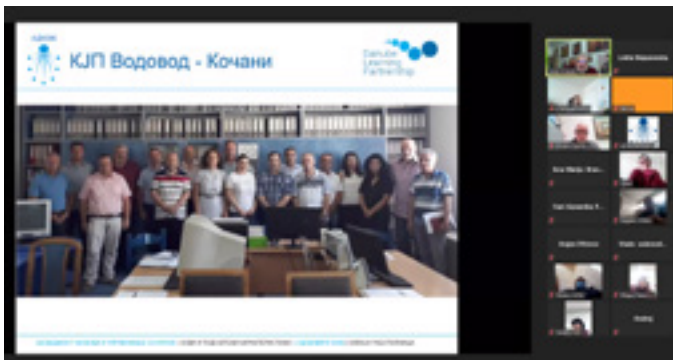
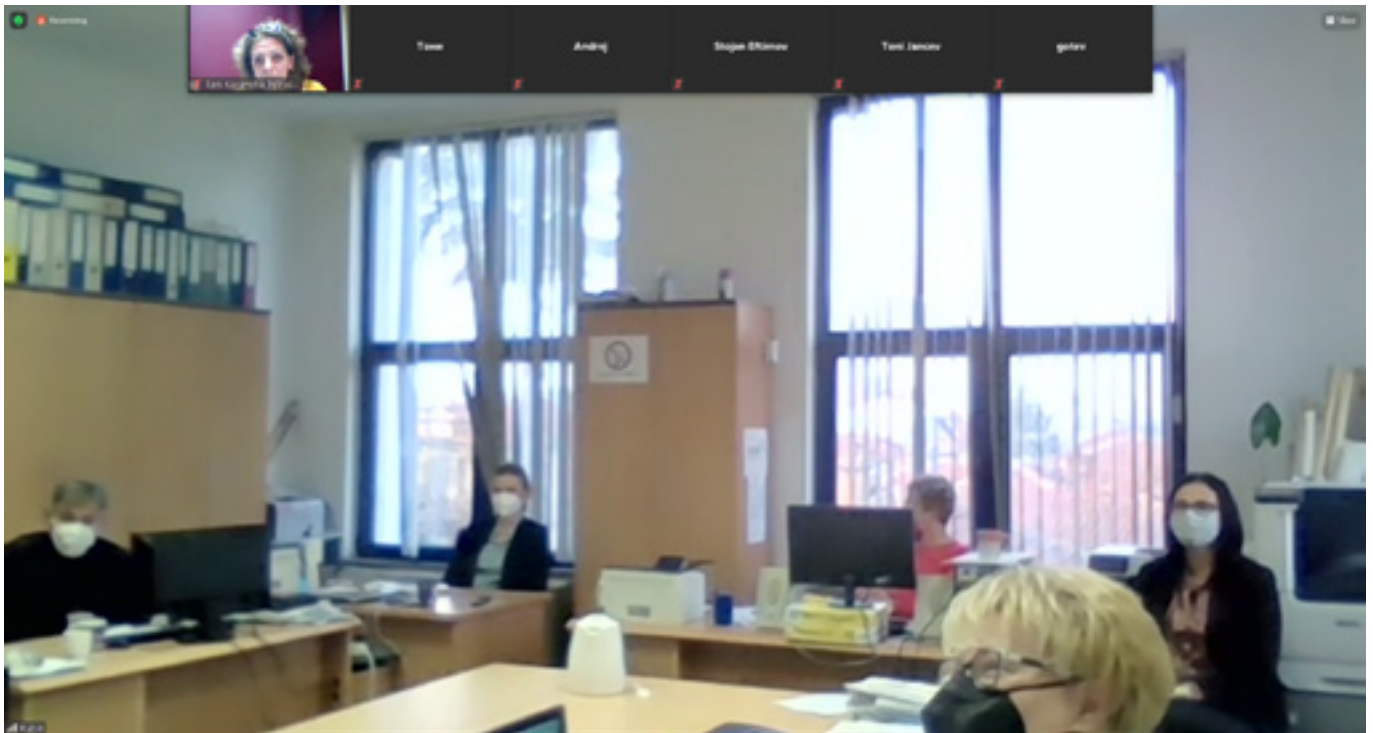
The project has a short time for realization and all its activities must be finalized by 31.01.2021.

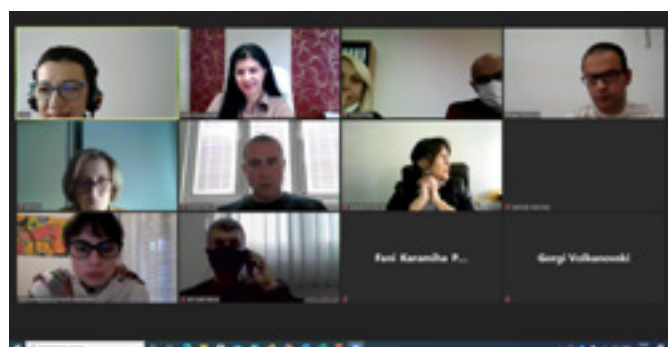
During 2020, three joint online workshops were organized:

- 03.12.2020 - Introductory workshop with all 4 PUCs
- 16.12.2020 - Workshop 1 - joint workshop with all 4 PUCs
- 22.12.2020 - Workshop 2 - joint workshop with all 4 PUCs

In January 2021, there will be one workshop for each PUC separately. ●

PHOTO GALLERY





Опис на постројката и оперативни правила на ПСОВ во Куманово

- Станицата е проектирана за 91 000 ЕК
- Станицата е проектирана за проток од 1300m³/h



Унапредување на оперативни правила со прочистителна станица врз основа на работно искуство во експлоатација

Добра пракса – ЈП „Водовод“ Куманово | 16/09/2020



Изработила: Габриела Ивановска



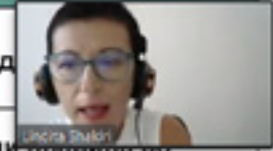






Размена на искуство – Акционен план

вање на потрошувачка на електрична енергија во пречистителните станици за отпад



вање на потрошувачка

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за можностите за намалување на

увачката на електричн

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Краен ро

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(До кога треба
се спроведува
активноста)

инување
ерка може
преземе за
надминат
звниците?)

Ресурси
(Што е потребно за
да активоста
биде спроведена?)

Резултат
(Што ќе се случи
со извршување на
активноста?)

Zoom Group Chat

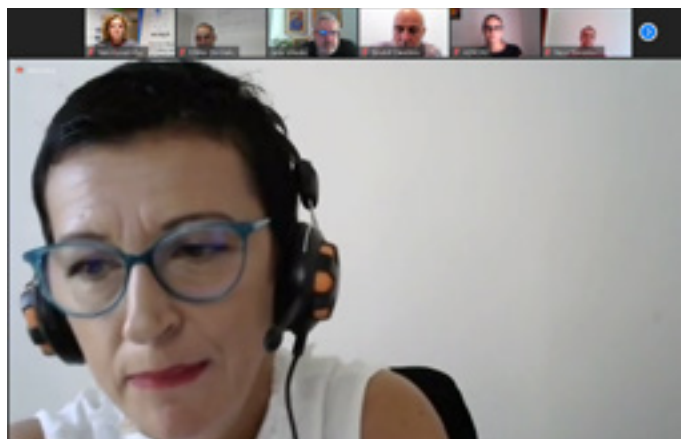
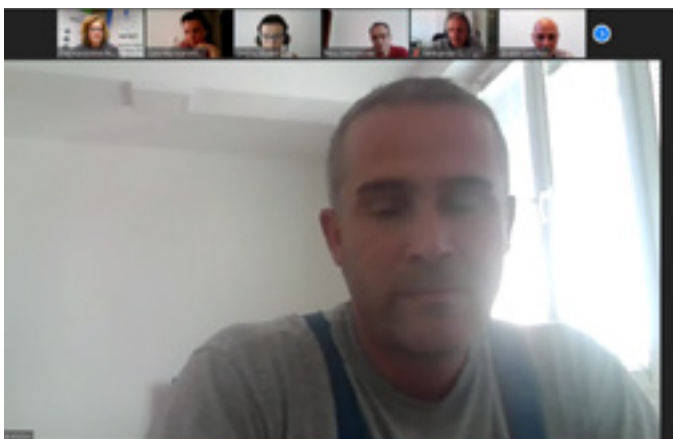
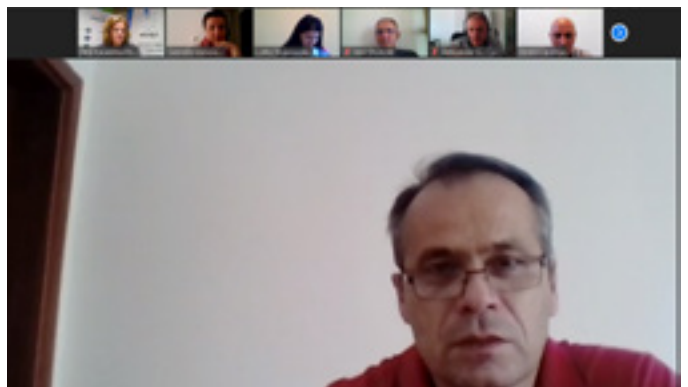
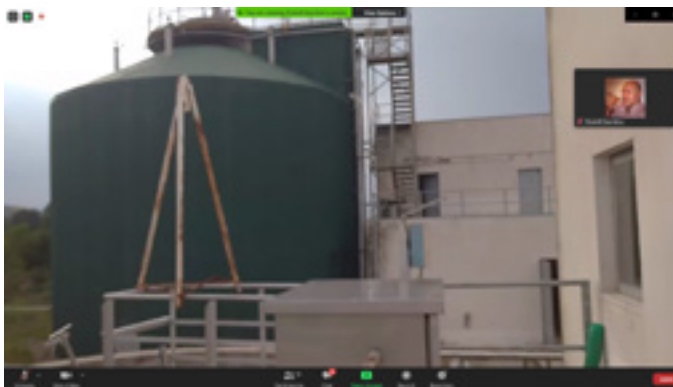
метан произведен во метантанкови како
спореаба

From Strahil Gavrilov to Everyone:
Радовилка има просечна дневна
потрошувачка од 1730kWh/ден во 2017,
1511kWh/ден во 2018 и до сега
1654kWh/ден.

From Milko Zimbakov - IPKO Komanaok Str... to Everyone:
Strumica za poslednite tri meseci ima 0.48
kWh/metar kuben chista voda, dali e dobro
li ne, neznam

To: Everyone

Type message here...



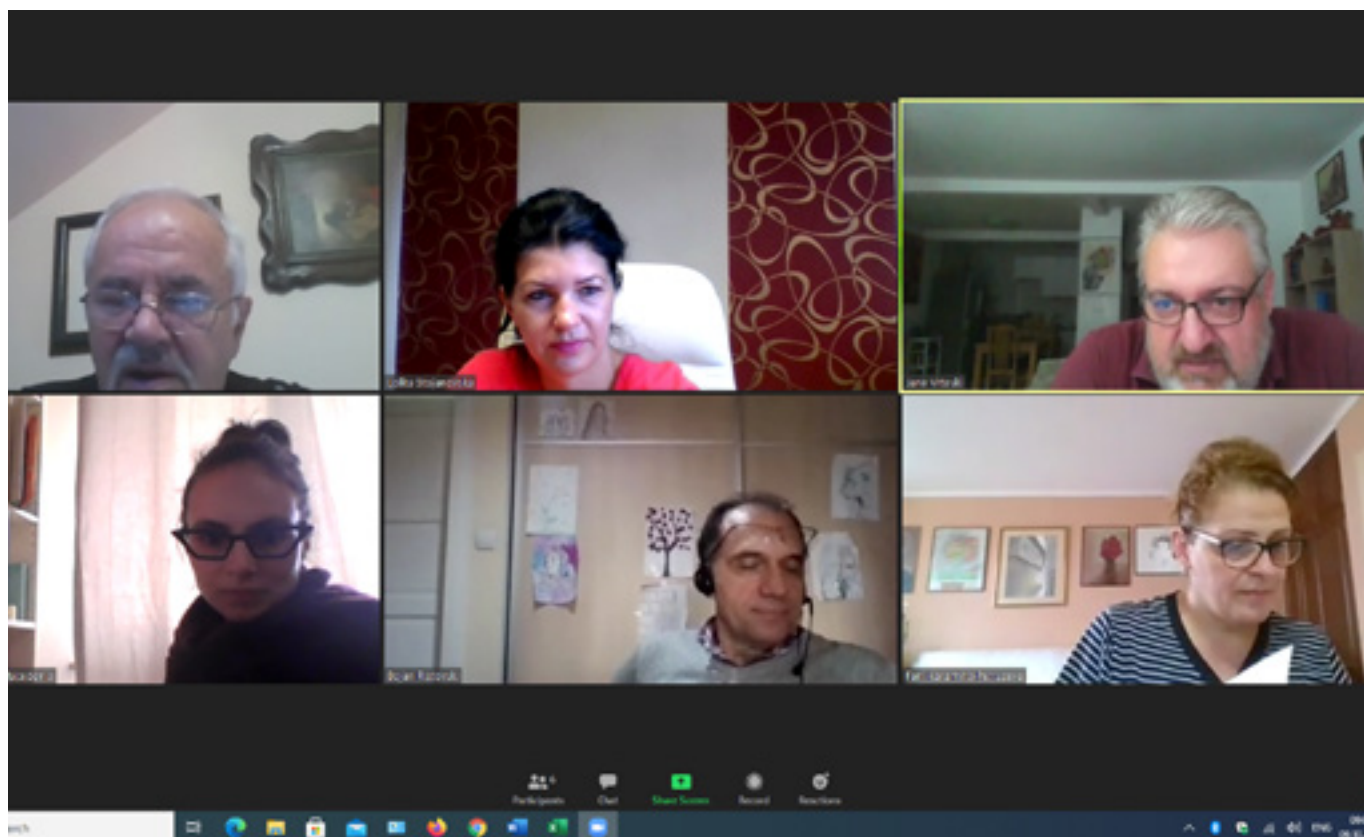
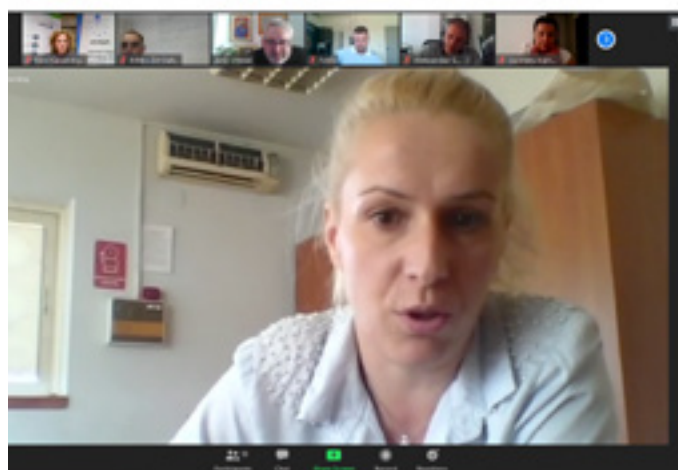
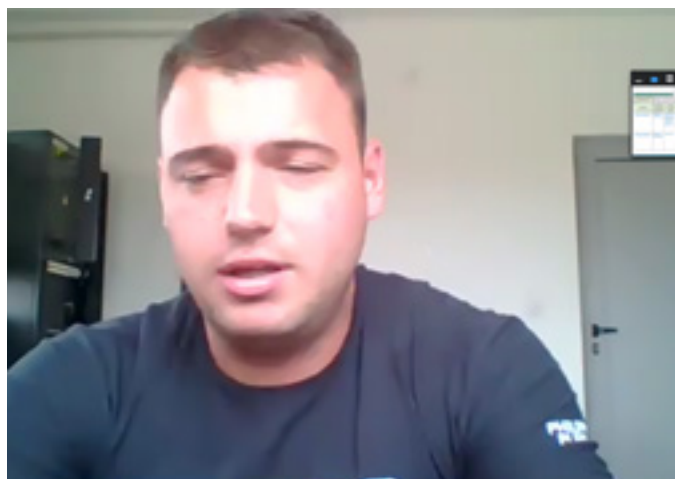
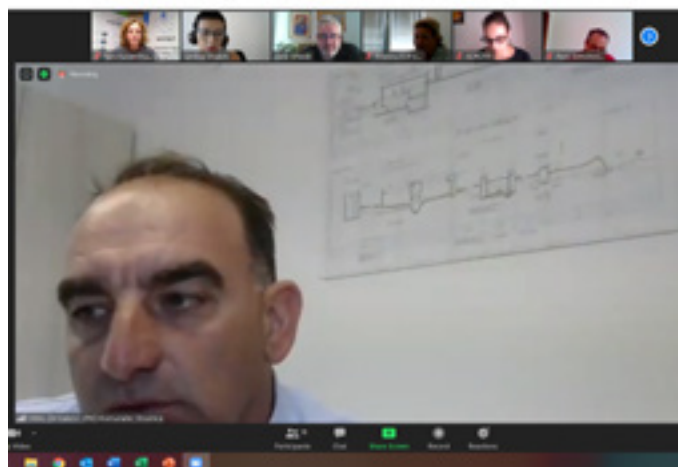
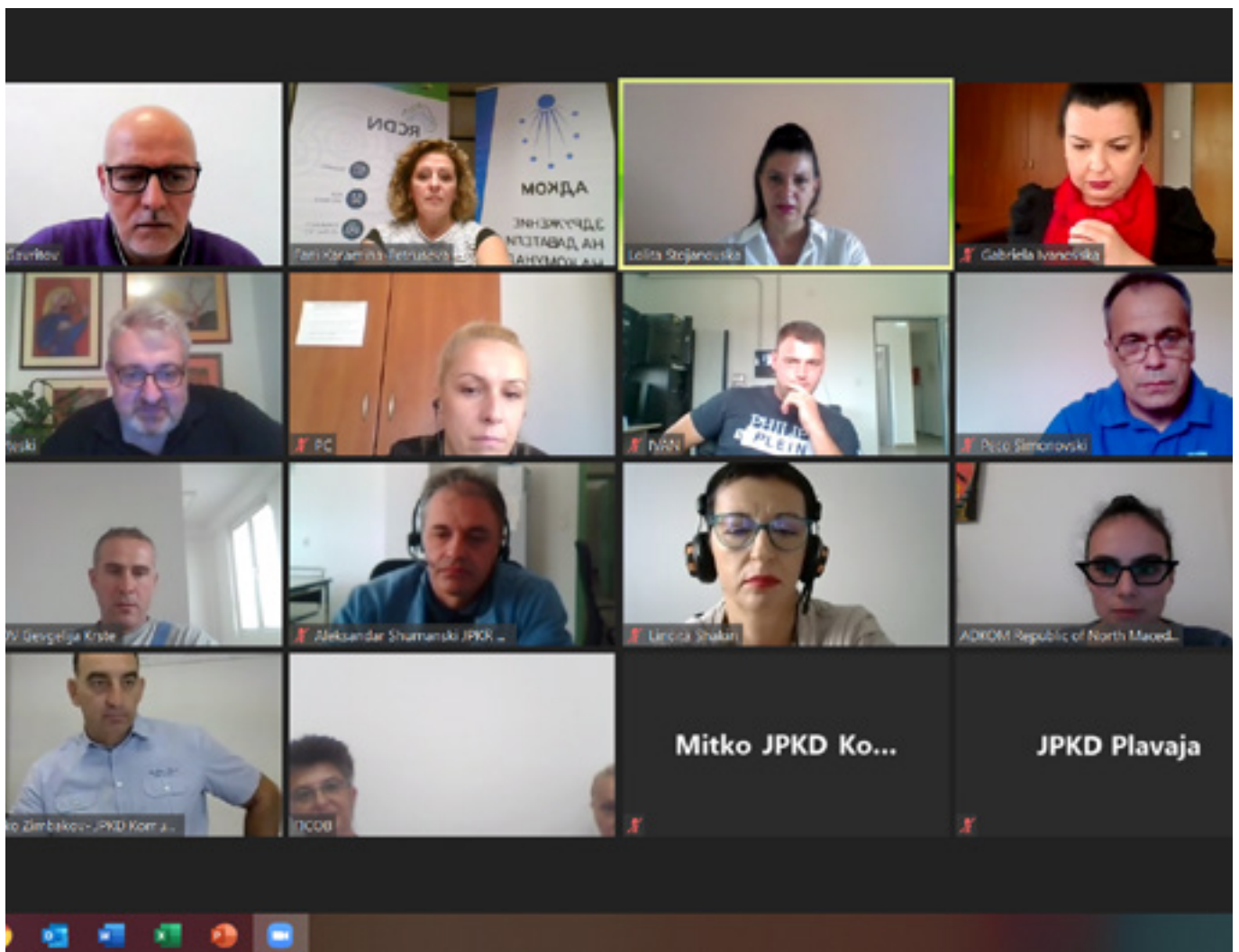
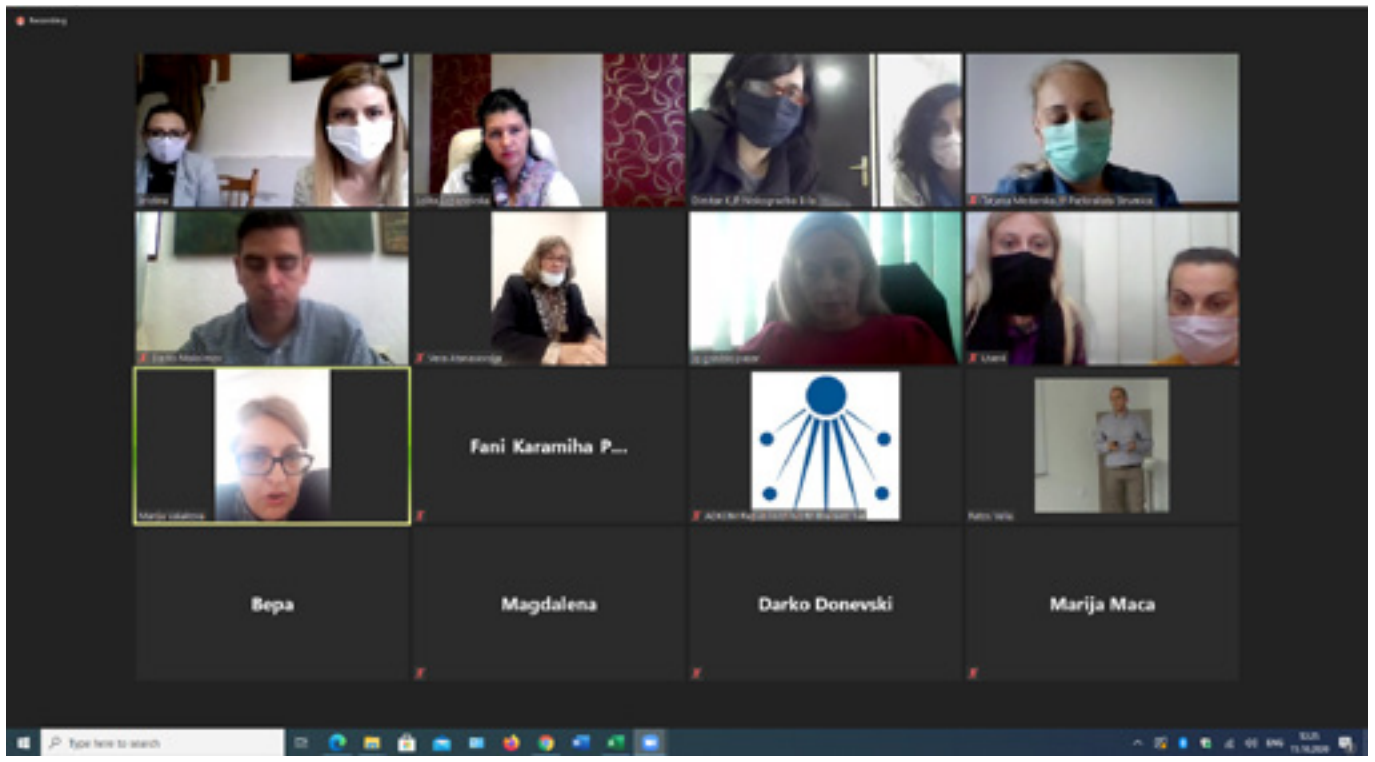


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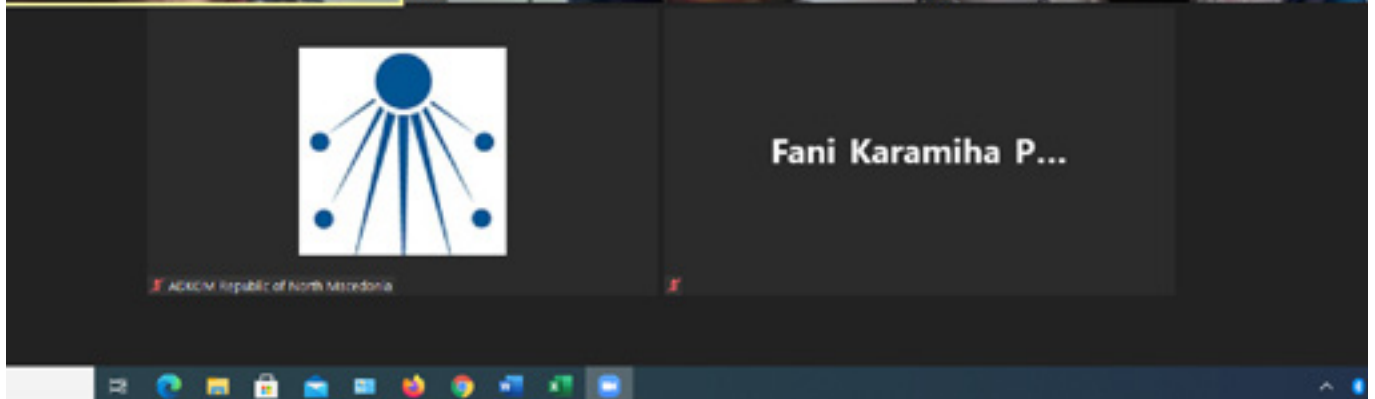
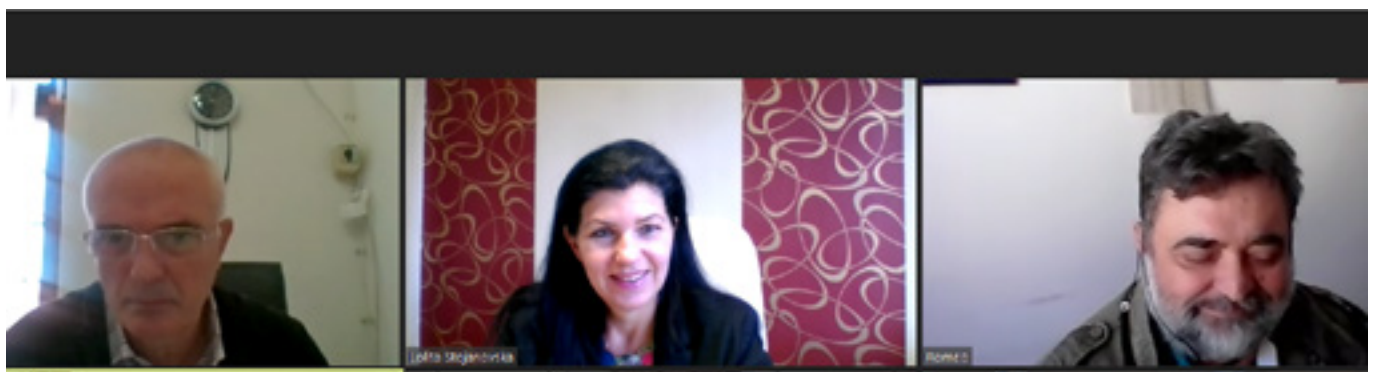
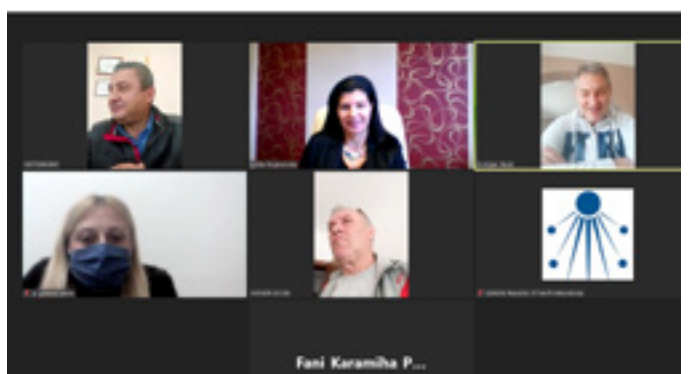
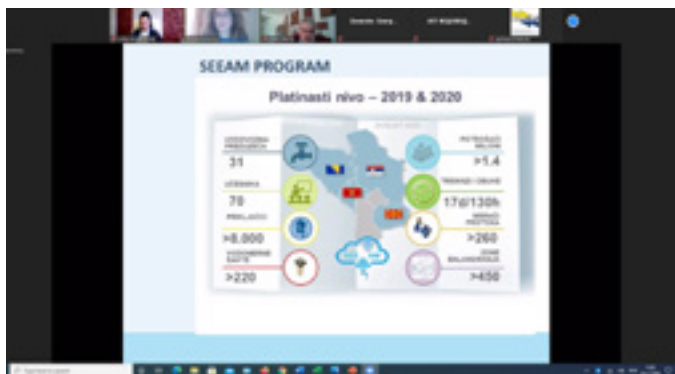
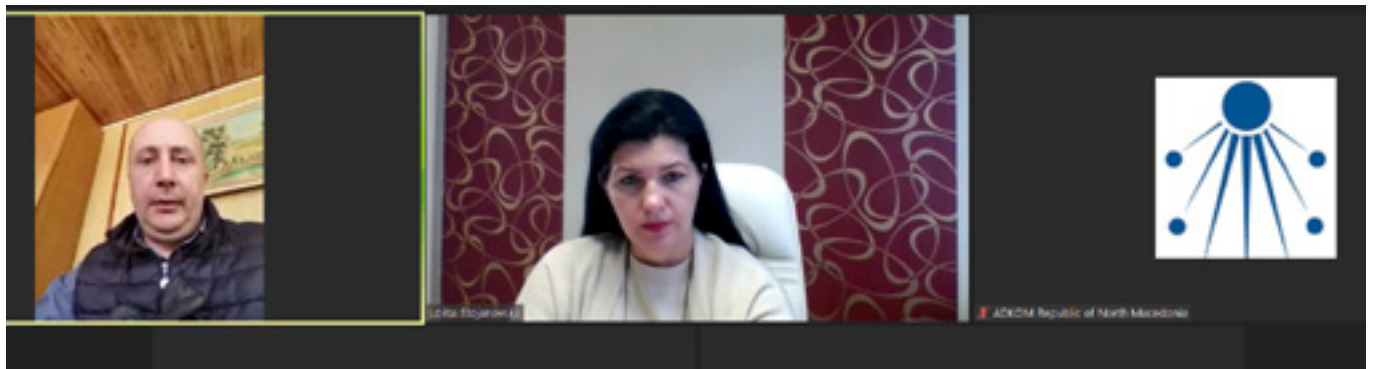
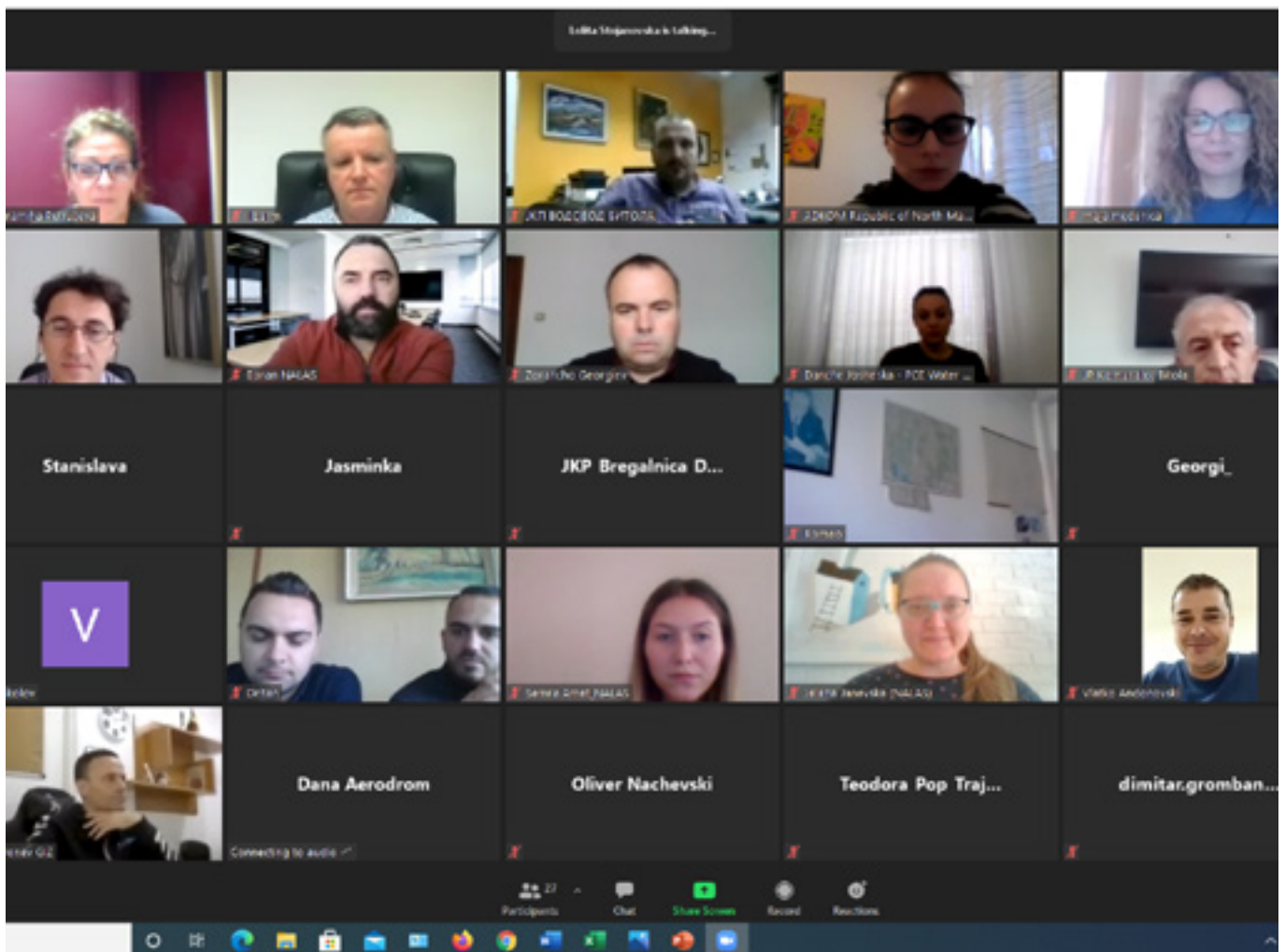
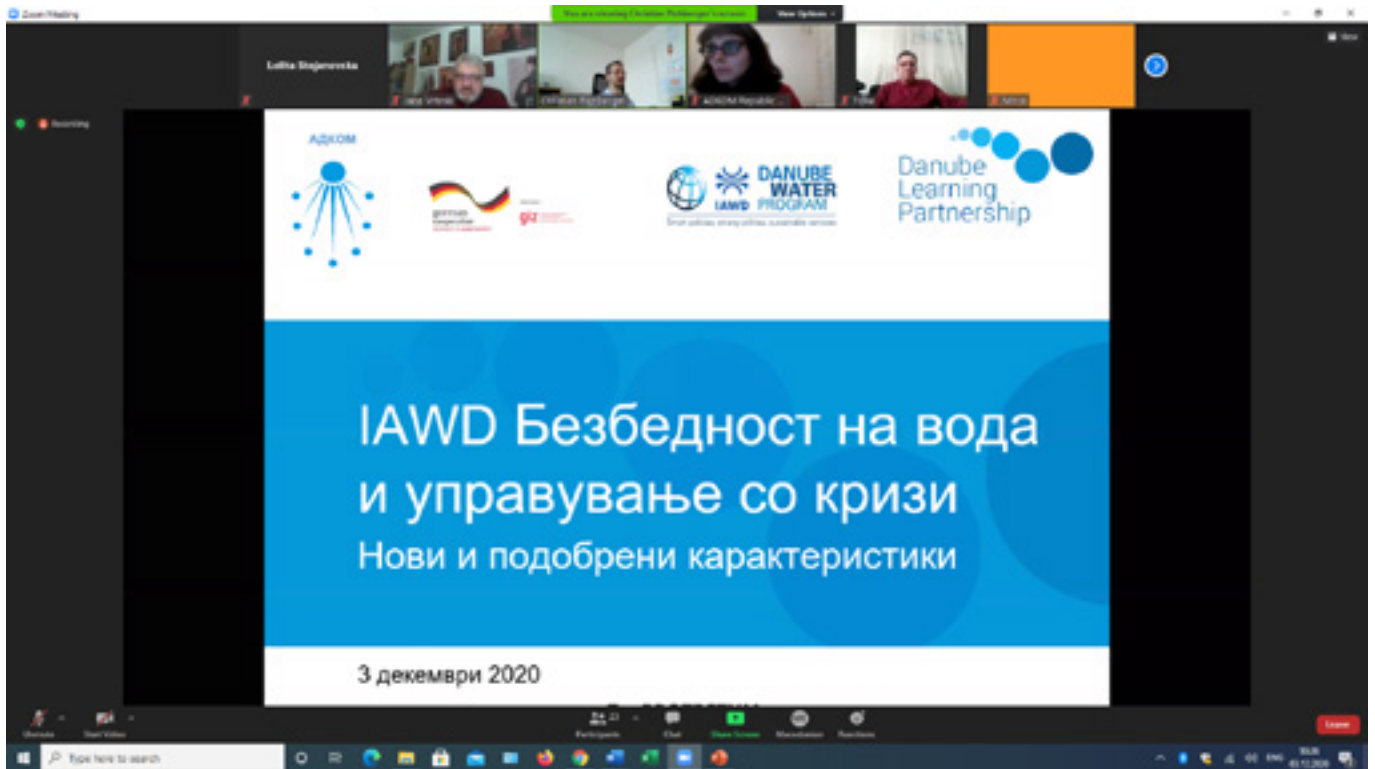
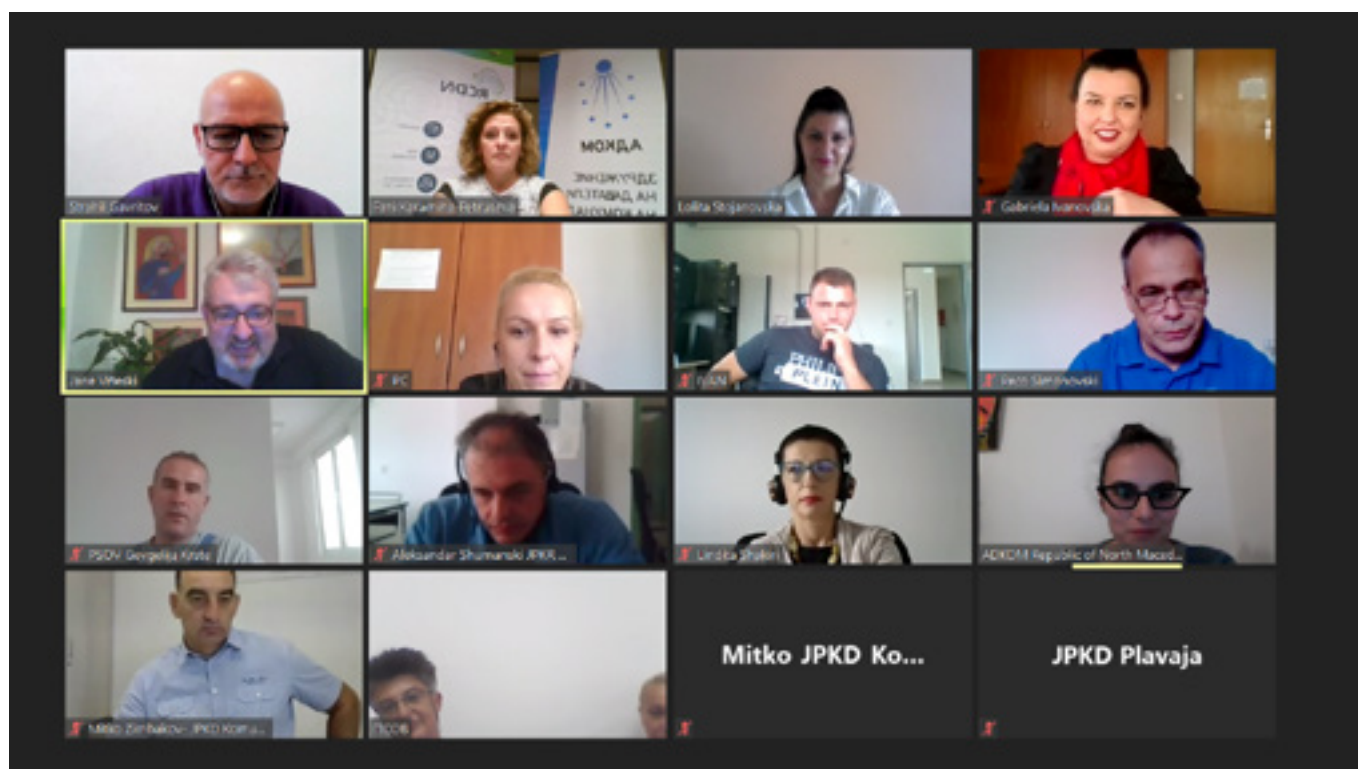


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2020 DANUBE WATER FORUM

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATER SECTOR DATA IN THE DIGITAL AGE



27-29 OCTOBER 2020

PHOTO GALLERY





ADKOM Danube Learning Partnership IAWD International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area uil lippuner ag waterconsulting EBP

ЧИСТА ВОДА ЗА ДЕЛЧЕВО
МАКЕДОНСКО ПРЕДПРИЕМАЊЕ ЗА КОМУНАЛНО-КОМУНИКАЦИОНИ УСЛУГИ

Он-лине состанок, 07 октомври 2020

**ПРАШАЛНИК ЗА САМО-ПРОЦЕНКА НА
ЈКП "БРЕГАЛНИЦА" ДЕЛЧЕВО**

Јане Вртески

Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra
Sveits
Confederaziun Svizra

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research (SEK)
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SEKO)

ADKOM

Онлајн Обука "Основи на Планирање на безбедност на вода за пиење - управувањето со кризи и управувањето со ризици во ЈКП во согласност со македонските стандарди МКС EN 15975-1:2011+A1:2016 и МКС EN 15975-2:2013"

29 октомври и 05 ноември 2020 година

NOELAS AQUASAN Network in B&H IAWD International Association of Water Supply Companies in the Danube River Catchment Area german cooperation giz Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft Confédération suisse Confederazione Svizzera Confederaziun svizra Sveits Confederaziun Svizra Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (SEK) State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SEKO)

ADKOM

