

## **Water and Sanitation Focused on Sanitation**

### **Description of an initiative:**

Designation of agglomerations, selection and definition of assessment criteria for defining priorities of public sewerage development (according to 91/271/EEC?) in Slovakia by 2010 or 2015

Participating organizations: Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic, Water Research Institute Bratislava, Slovak Water Management Enterprise, water joint-stock companies, communities and cities, private sector

This activity is new mainly because of its complex view on the environment not only as far as it regards establishment of agglomerations but also definition of priorities related to the sewerage networks and waste water treatment plant constructions.

Our initiative is aimed at working out a flexible strategic approach that will help us to meet Slovak Republic commitments towards the EU on time, i.e. by 2015.

The main principles of public sewerage development (establishment of agglomerations) draw from the provisions of the Slovak and European legislation and they were included in the draft sewerage agglomerations of Slovakia and in the list the public sewerage to be urgently constructed or reconstructed.

This initiative is based on identification of agglomerations and establishment of order of urgency related to the construction or reconstruction of the public sewerage by multilateral analysis based on priorities of the public sewerage development, environmental protection and financial criteria. This initiative was presented in more details on the 8th meeting of RR UNEP held in Jeju (Korea), March 2004.

### **Mainstreaming and sustainability**

The strategy for development of public sewerage system is based on application of sustainable development principles. This means it is necessary to ensure decrease of discrepancies between the quantity and quality of water consumed from the water bodies and quantity and quality waters discharged into receiving body. The values of discharged pollution must be met as required by the Council Directive 91/271/EEC on Communal Waste Water Treatment.

This conceptual development of the public sewerage system is a crucial and inevitable part of the integrated approach to the protection and rational use of waters, conservation of eco-systems and assurance of ecological stability.

The basic element for development of public sewerage is to apply policies of sustainable development respecting a care about environment and to provide all legal requirements on water use (water resources). Fulfillment of these requirements is possible through a consistent implementation of

approaches included in legislative, conceptual and strategic documents of the Slovak Republic related to water.

The above-mentioned initiative has been applied for preparation of the plan for public water supply and sewerage development in the territory of the Slovak Republic. The development of plans is legally confirmed by legislative regulations of the Slovak Republic (the Act No. 442/2002 Coll. on public water supply and public sewerage). The development plan comprises a conception of wastewater collection and treatment and together with regional plan of a large regional unit it forms a base for elaboration of the plan for regional development, which is being prepared by relevant regional authority. The implementation of the European and national legislations, such as protection of regional interests in water and environmental protection as a whole (Directive 91/271/EEC, Directive 2000/60/EC, Act No. 364/2004 Coll. on waters), is provided through these plans.

The objective of fulfillment of the plans for public water supply and sewerage development is to achieve, on the one hand, the development of municipal infrastructure and improvement of sanitation level, respectively, together with improvement of life quality and on the other hand to achieve enhanced protection and better status of natural water resources, water ecosystems as well as human health.

The given strategy of the public sewerage development will be respected by all centrally directed economic impulses such as allocation from the state budget or financial subvention from European Union or other international sources. At the same time, the flow of own investments will be directed in a suitable way, too, including the other public or commercial sources. In addition, application of negative stimulation (e.g. penalties) must be in accordance with the strategy of public sewerage development and it must support in maximum the subjects having an appropriate waste water treatment or making real steps towards efficient treatment of waste water. The financial viability of presented initiative is very high as it relates to a provision of know-how, which basically does not require any investments. Conversely, it enables effective use and allocation of available financial resources.

#### **Replicating of the initiative**

The above-mentioned way of drafting the agglomerations and setting the priority list with respect to construction of public sewerage can be applied in those countries that are transposing and implementing the European Union legislation, namely the Directive 91/271/EEC. The Slovak experts involved in this activity are willing to offer their consultations and professional assistance in this matter, if needed.

It is directly applicable in the CEE countries or in countries with comparable (medium) level of sewerage systems, respectively. Since this way is universally adjustable, it is possible to take into account any local requirements and aspects of receiver, either individually or in a broader context. Versatility and simplicity of the initiative is its main advantage.

The implementation of the given methodology has proved that optimum

solutions or the so-called win-win solutions can be reached by linking the ecological, technical and economic requirements.

Practical experiences from performed works underline a great importance of institutional and legal confirmation of the basic terms. It is especially important to introduce and properly apply the terms of agglomerations, development priorities and development plans to national provisions.