

Concept Note on Access to Information and Public Participation under the Protocol on Water and Health

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Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Second session

Bucharest, 23–25 November 2010

Item 7 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Capacity-building and sharing of experience: public
awareness, education, training, research and development
and information**

Concept note on access to information and public participation under the Protocol on Water and Health

Submitted by Women in Europe for a Common Future, in cooperation
with the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Romania

Summary

The present concept note was prepared pursuant to the decision of the first session



Contents

- Objective of the Concept Note
- Background
- Legal Basis
- Principles and Tools
- Challenges and Best Practices
- Outlook

Objectives



- Providing assistance to Parties in the implementation of articles 9 and 10 PWH
- Giving an overview of obligations on access to information and public participation under the PWH
- Demonstrating main challenges and best practices
- Discussing future needs and providing recommendations

Background



- MOP-1 in 2007 decided to provide assistance to Parties on the issue of PP
- PWH Workshop on PP June 2010 in Bucharest provided the input for the concept note

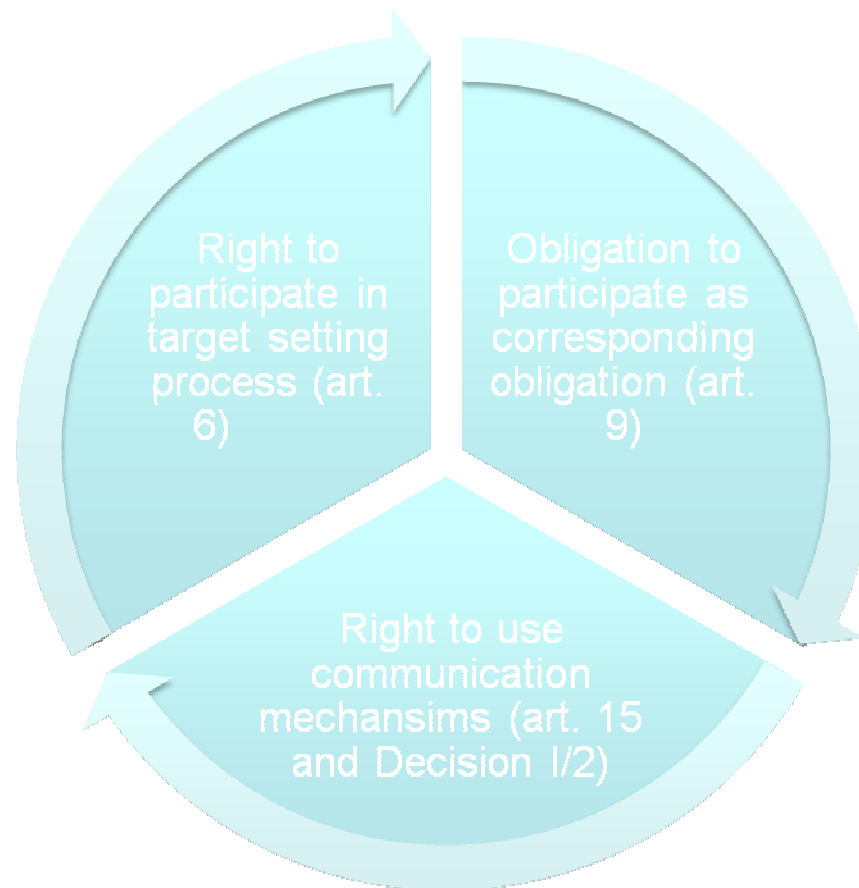


Legal Basis



- First mentioned in Rio Declaration (1992) Principle 10
- Aarhus Convention (1998)
- PWH: for the public and the Parties (right and obligation)

PWH: Access to Information and Public Participation – CIVIL SOCIETY



PWH: Access to Information and Public Participation - PARTIES



Access to Information

Publish information needed for implementation (art. 8 and 10)

Publish results of evaluations on progress made (art. 7)

Public Participation

Target setting (art. 6 (2))

Coordination between different authorities (art. 6 (5a))

Principles of Public Participation



- Equity
- Accountability
- Flexibility
- Effectiveness
- Speed



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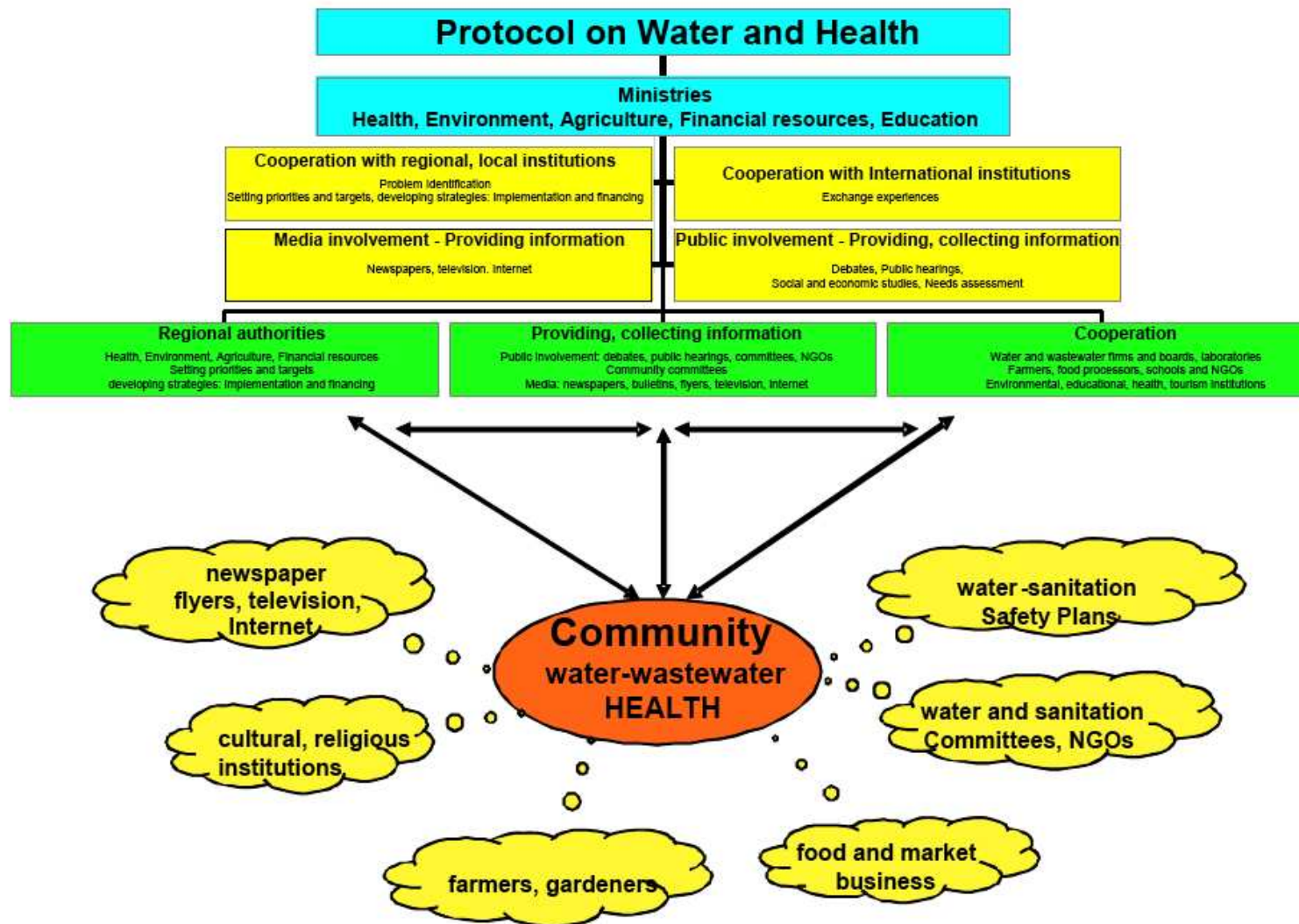
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Tools of Access to Information and Public Participation



- Referenda
- Public hearings/inquiries
- Public opinion surveys
- Citizens' juries
- Focus groups
- Expert panels
- Media
- List serves and e-mails etc.





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Best Practices cont.

- Aarhus centres in 7 countries



osce.org/eea

AARHUS CENTRES

Platforms for



Co-operation Participation Partnership

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters – the Aarhus Convention was adopted in Aarhus, Denmark on 25 June 1998, and is administered by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

osce.org/eea

HIGHLIGHTS

2. Public Participation

Public hearings are the primary mechanisms utilized by most of the Aarhus Centres and of the PEICs in contributing to the "public participation" pillar of the Aarhus Convention. They provide a means for communicating information between governments and citizens, interest groups, businesses and other parties. Through public hearings, Aarhus Centres provide a mechanism for obtaining input from all stakeholders about proposed regulations, permits or other changes that could affect the public.

Tajikistan The local environmental strategy and action plan for the city of Taboshar was approved on 27 December 2007. Initiated by the Aarhus Centre in Khujand, the strategy and action plan formulation process was conducted in a participatory manner involving all stakeholders. The inhabitants of Taboshar identified and prioritized the environmental problems and suggested necessary measures for inclusion in the action plan. The Aarhus Centre in Dushanbe continues to be a close partner to the Ministry of Environment in organizing public hearings on several environmental regulations.



Kyrgyzstan Building upon a number of trainings organized for the citizens of Osh on their environmental rights and responsibilities as per the Aarhus Convention, the Aarhus Centre hosted three major public hearings for projects dealing with waste management in Tashkomur, gold mining in Chatkal and cement factory construction in Kyzyl Kiya. The efficiency of these participatory processes encouraged the local government to make further use of the public hearing mechanism.



Georgia Upon request of the Ministry of Environment, the Aarhus Centre initiated a watchdog initiative for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. Through this initiative, the Aarhus Centre conducted a review and monitoring of each stage of the EIA process (from planning to implementation) and identified pitfalls and drawbacks along with a set of recommendations for improvement. These recommendations paved the way for an improved EIA system in Georgia that incorporates more efficient public participation mechanisms.



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Best Practices cont.

Different mechanisms to collect and disseminate data e.g.

– Italian “Portale Acque” www.portaleacque.it



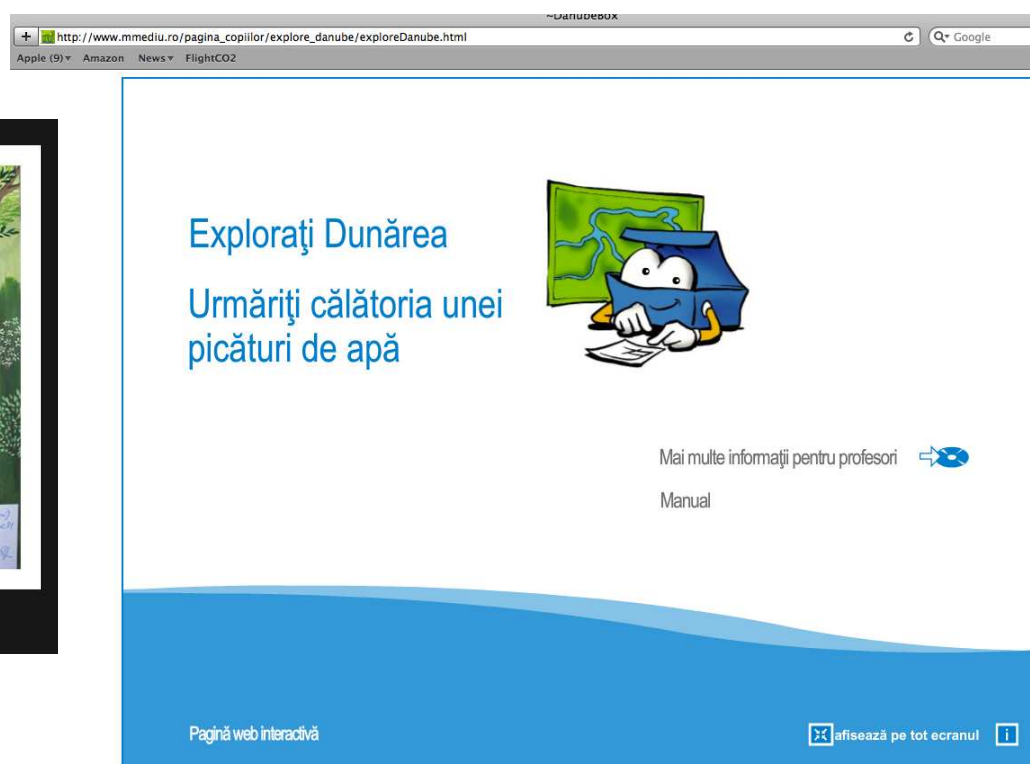
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Best Practices examples cont.

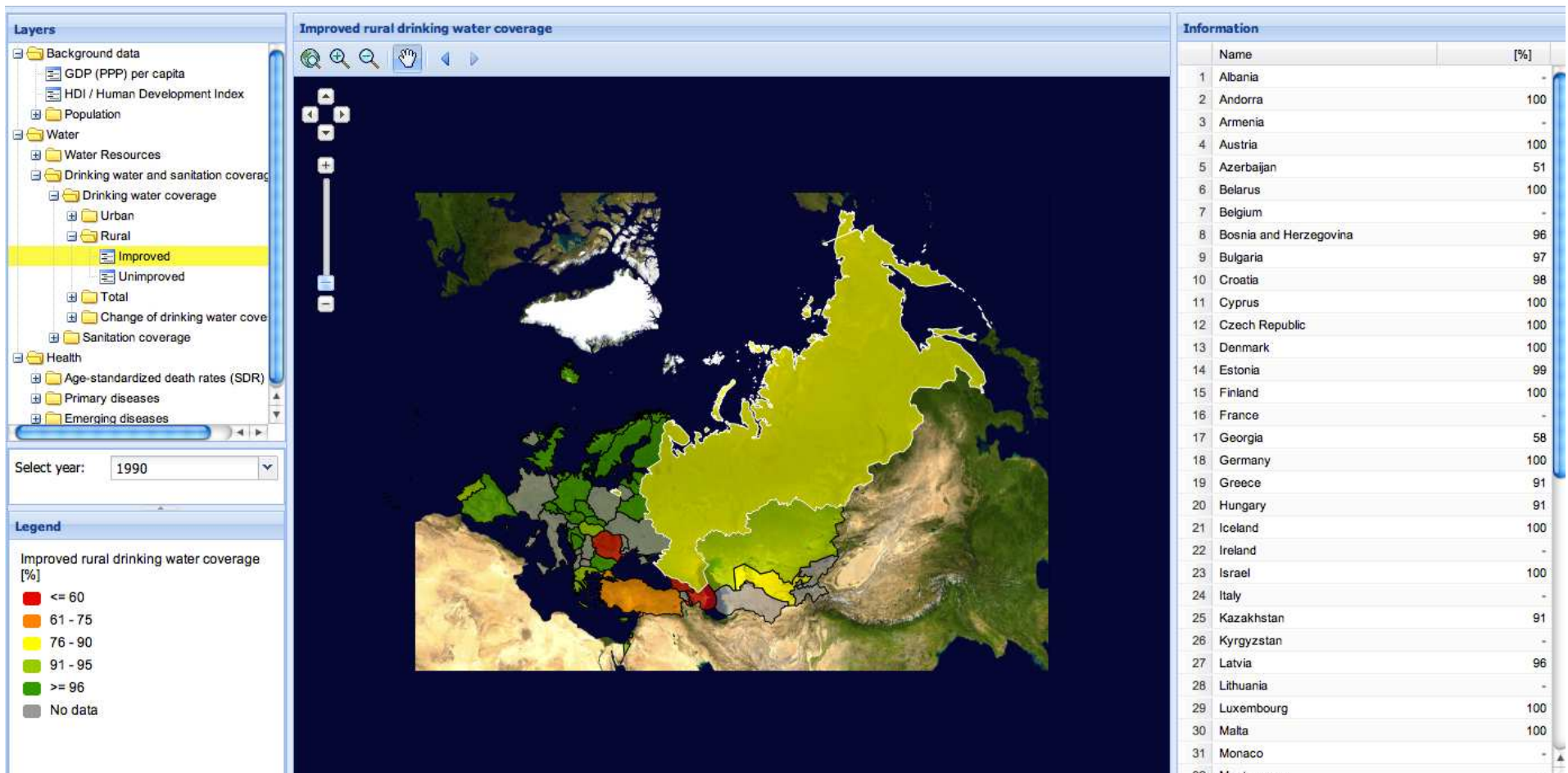
- Internet to provide information:
Romanian “Kids’ Page”

www.mmediu.ro/pagina_copiilor.htm



Best Practices cont.

“Atlas of Water and Health“ by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Promoting Water Management and Risk Communication: www.waterandhealth.eu



Layers

- Background data
 - GDP (PPP) per capita
 - HDI / Human Development Index
- Population
- Water
 - Water Resources
 - Drinking water and sanitation coverage
 - Drinking water coverage
 - Urban
 - Rural
 - Improved
 - Unimproved
 - Total
 - Change of drinking water coverage
 - Sanitation coverage
- Health
 - Age-standardized death rates (SDR)
 - Diarrhoeal diseases, under 5 years
 - Primary diseases

Select year: 1999

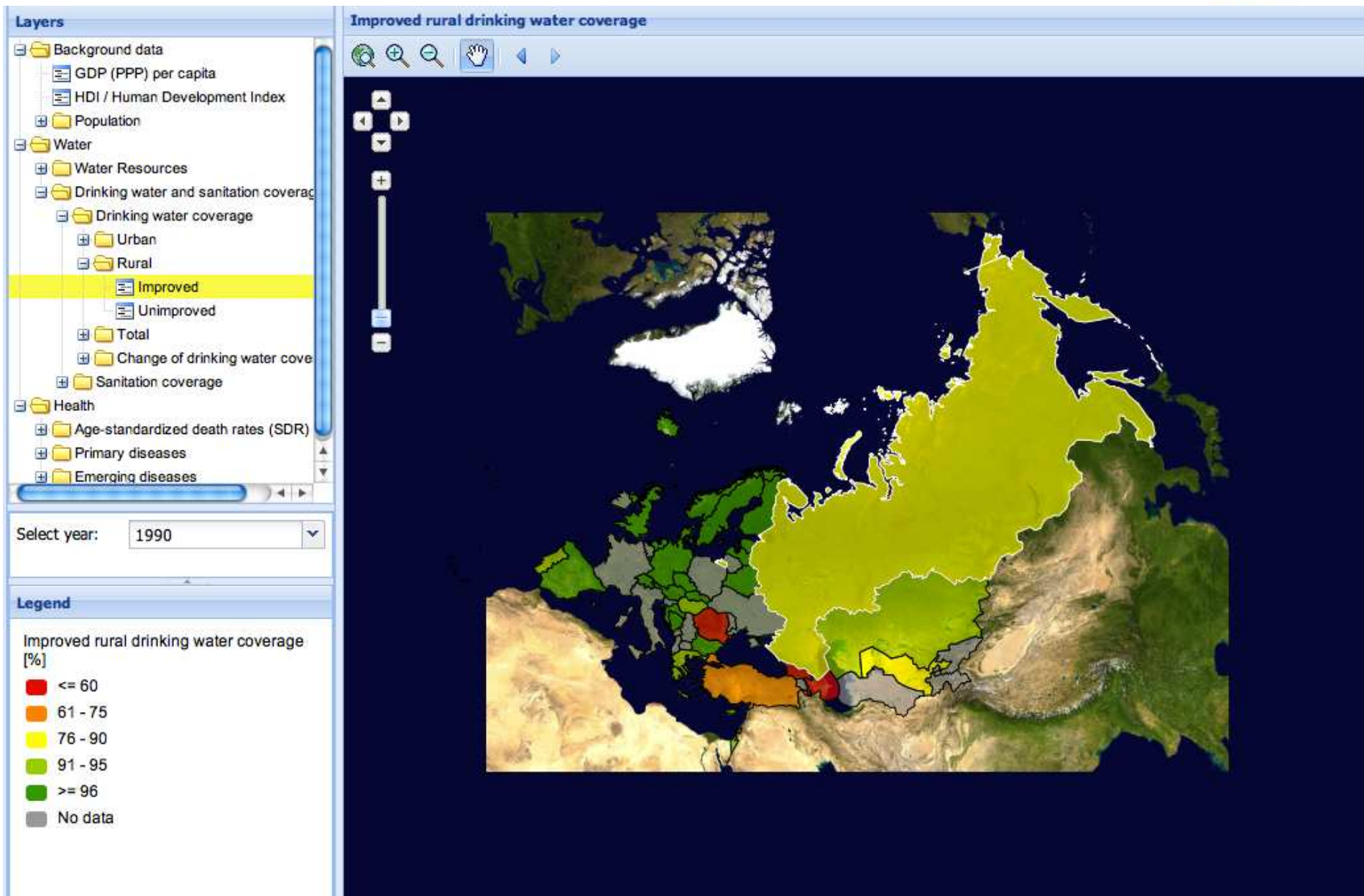
Legend

Age-standardized death rates of diarrhoeal diseases for children under 5 years per 100,000 population [SDR]

- ≤ 1.00
- 1.01 - 5.00
- 5.01 - 25.00
- 25.01 - 50.00
- ≥ 50.01
- No data

Age-standardized death rates of diarrhoeal diseases for children under 5 years per 100,000 population





Example: ToNI Finder



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Best Practices cont.

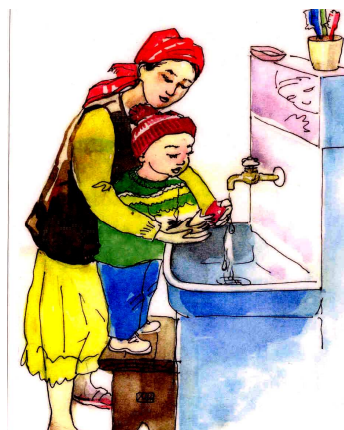
- Stakeholder identification and involvement:
 - “major groups” of Agenda 21
 - use existing networks (WFD, ICPDR, EcoTiras)
 - EBRDs “stakeholder engagement plans”



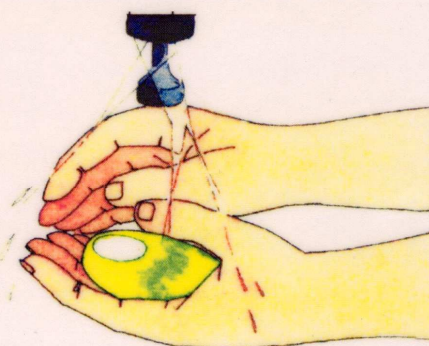


Best Practices cont.

Active community engagement: PHAST Participatory Hygiene And Sanitation Transformation



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Best Practices cont.

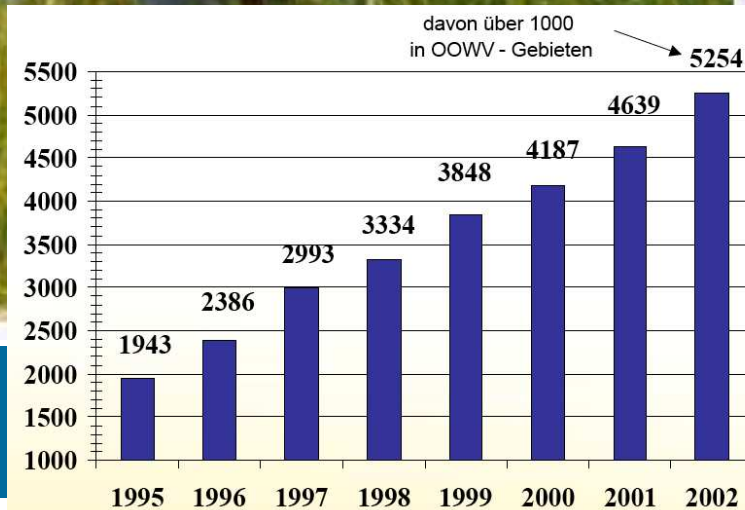
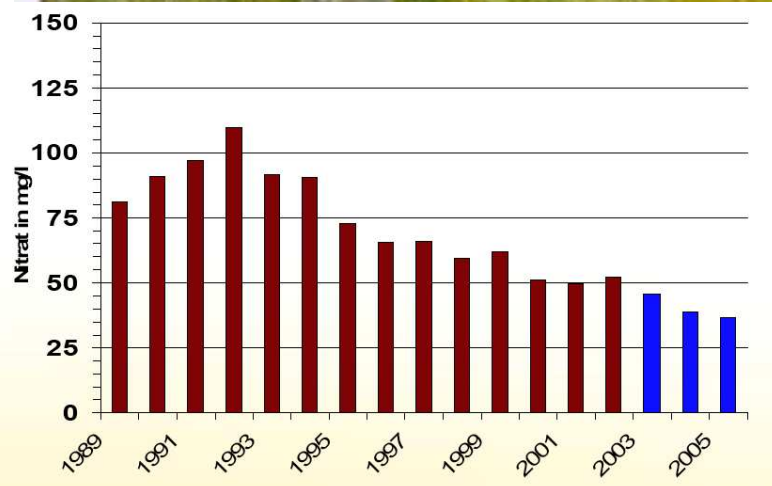
Ground Water Protection

Water Operator OOWV involving farmers and foresters

- OOWV serves 1.1 million consumers ->Agriculture lead to high nitrate levels (110 mg/l) in water

Measures taken:

- Cooperation with farmers and forest companies
- Farmers received free training on organic farming
- Cooperation with local stakeholders for voluntary additional charge/fee for water protection
- Results: 4000 hectares converted - nitrates reduced to <50 mg/l within 12 years



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Challenges

- Awareness/education
- Stakeholders
- Capacity building
- Political will
- Financing



Outlook



- Cooperation on national level and international level by using synergies
- Use of media
- Organisation of stakeholders/civil society – inventories of NGOs/networks
- Improve bottom-up approaches
- Capacity-building on both sides
- Establishment of financial mechanisms



Recommendations

- Develop manual/guidelines on public participation
- Cooperation with Task Force on PP in Decision-making of Aarhus Convention
- Adopt and support activities on public awareness, access to information and public participation scheduled under programme area 7 of the programme of work 2011-2013