Participation of public in implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health in Serbia

Example: “Self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation”

Biljana Filipovic
The Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia
Serbia became Party to the Aarhus Convention by adopting the (Aarhus Convention)

Serbia adopted the Strategy for the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and related Action Plan (“OG of RS”, No. 103/11).

PWH was the first international instrument to take the provisions of the Aarhus Convention explicitly into account
Role of Aarhus Centers

- From 2010, Ministry signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the four Aarhus centers (Kragujevac, Belgrade, Subotica, Novi Sad, and Nis).
- Aarhus Centres Network of Serbia was formed by signing a Memorandum of Understanding on July 10, 2013.
Campaign to raise awareness
Serbia’s case study

* During the pre accession to the PWH, Serbia organized the raising awareness campaign about the Protocols importance and benefits.
* Previous Ministry responsible for environment, invited government institutions, local authorities, experts, NGOs and media to take part in various events at regional and local levels (workshops, roundtables, focus group discussions)
* NGOs were important link between authorities and the public and there participation was vital to the success of the campaign.
Municipality of Kragujevac
Carrying out the public participation process

The Program of work of PWH foresaw the need to develop a mechanism for involving public in consultations and decision making process under the Protocol.

Representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection, was a member of the drafting Group that created the Guide to Public participation under the PWH, due to good practice examples that were already proven on national level.
UNECE Guide for PP, was a very useful tool for Serbia.

We used the Arhus convention as a main international agreement for promoting the principles of public promotion in relation to PWH.

And its rights and obligations concerning the Three pillars to enable effective public participation:

* Public participation
* Access to information
* Access to justice
Guide for PP as a tool

- Support of public authorities in setting targets and target dates and in developing programmes of measures in accordance with article 6 of the Protocol.
- Using advices on public awareness (article 9) and public information (article 10) helped raise awareness about the Protocol and ensure public information.
- Additional workshops were organized only for NGO sector.
- Access to information and justice was provided by Arhus centres in Serbia, that supported the promotional campaigns on water related issues, before setting targets.
- Government and public authorities organized campaigns and media events on important international days related water and environment, delivering lifelets and promotional materials.
Public participation through all phases of PWH implementation

- **Pre-target setting** - 5 Arhus centers, 8 Workshops, different stakeholders (local governments, NGO, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities, media, CSO)

- **Target Setting** National Workshop on Target Setting (December 2014, Belgrade supported by UNECE/WHO), National Joint Body for Protocol implementation

- **Post Target setting** - implementation of targets through expanding the NWG/Joint Body, project implementation and promotional workshops of the E&H process (14 Workshops, and 80 municipalities, auditorium consisted of different stakeholders)

- Within EH process, specific presentation dedicated to WH and
Important role of public in implementing the key provisions of the PWH

MoE, MOH and OSCE Mission had organized tens of workshops at local level, presenting the main rights and obligations of local self governments considering issues related to water and health.

- Before organizing these workshops, the specific institutional arrangements were set: With the support of WHO Country office, MoH and MoE, followed by NGO sector and a broad group of stakeholders (23 municipalities informed about their obligations and rights in the decision making processes related to PWH), through the promotional campaign of the EH process.
- NGO’s had an crucial role in transferring the information about the European EH process and within it, the PWH.
Promotional workshops in Serbia...
Example of Participation of public through project “Self-assessment of equitable access to water and sanitation”

- The project conducted from July to end December 2017.

- The institution that lead the project: Ministry of Environmental Protection.

- The implementation partner of the Ministry for the 1st phase (Score Card analysis) was REDASP - Regional Economic Development Agency for Sumadija and Pomoravlje.
  - self-assessment performed on the two districts, 13 local self governments:
    - Sumadija district (7 local self governments – population 293308 inhabitants)
    - Pomoravlje district (6 local self governments – 214536 inhabitants)
Initial workshop
Participation of stakeholders at the launching workshop

- 12 national stakeholders (Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Health, Institute for Public Health of Serbia, Serbian Agency for Environmental Protection, the Ombudsman)
- 17 representatives of 10 local self-governments and the Head of Sumadija District
- 6 CSO and
- 3 Media representatives
- Over 50 participants: 60% public sector, 17% civil sector and the rest of private sector representatives.
- Through vertical analysis, there were 60% of local level and 40% national level representatives.
- 62.74% were women
Public participation in communication and data collection

How the self-assessment was conducted?

Data collection was conducted on the basis of Guidebook created by the team of national experts.

- through desk research; direct communication with stakeholders and distribution of questionnaires; involvement of focus groups and final workshop
- Over 160 persons were involved as data sources through data collection in the field
Collecting key information and identifying priority issues

- **Questionnaires**
  - The questionnaires were designed along the structure of the score card, modified for target groups.

- **Focus groups**
  - The focus groups were formed around the thematic sections and target groups, of the local self-government representatives.
  - Four meetings were conducted where the groups discussed the findings from the field and summed up the results.
Access to information, cross sector cooperation

* **Stakeholders**

* **Public sector:**
  * Ministry of Environmental Protection, Ministry of Health; Office for Human and Minority rights, Ombudsman, Sumadija District Administration; Institute for Public Health of Serbia, Serbian Agency for Environmental Protection
  * Local self-governments: local economic development offices, public utility service departments/offices – water supply, sewerage, communal services; welfare and health protection departments, education departments
  * Health institutions, hospital, Social Welfare Centers, schools representatives
  * **CSO:** NGO „Stakleno zvono” dealing with environmental protection and information/broadcast; Arhus Center – environmental protection; Young Scouts of Serbia; Red Cross, UNHCR

* **Private sector:** Local coordinators involved a number of SME in collecting information regarding equitable access (about 10)
Direct involvement of institutions’ representatives

- Directly involved in data collection (marginalised and vulnerable groups were representatives from the institutions of the municipalities: 12 Health centers, 12 Welfare Centers of all municipalities, 5 Red Cross offices, elementary and high school principals
- over 50 schools directly interviewed, 3 Day homes for elderly persons, one Regional center for homeless persons, 3 prisons representatives.
- Representatives of Public Utility Companies directly provided data regarding water and sewerage supply system network, affordability and scales of prices for social welfare beneficiaries.
The final workshop took place on 6-7.12.2017.

- Broad participation of local and national stakeholders.
- Purpose: to present the results of the assessment to the stakeholders, to discuss and to collect additional information, comments and opinions of public and civil sector representatives.
- 50 participants: representatives of local self governments, directly engaged in self-assessment in the field,
- Goal: proposing the ways of further involvement of the stakeholders in the process of improving the equitable access.
The project articles and videos were broadcast on two local televisions (RTK and Channel 9).

The independent production “Glass bell” ("Glass bell“) also broadcasted on two TVs,

Information on the project published on the websites of REDASP and the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

The self-assessment was also promoted through social network - Facebook page of REDASP and the MoE.
Involvement of public in the implementation of SDG’s

Through the national campaign “The Serbia We Want”, as part of the global campaign “The World We Want”, over 250,000 citizens became aware of the consultation process concerning Agenda 2030.

Two rounds of consultations were held in Serbia: Over 28,000 citizens had an opportunity to participate in consultations (through online survey and a web portal, direct consultation, mostly through Facebook and Twitter).

- A wide range of population groups: persons with disabilities, the elderly, women, people living in remote rural areas, Roma, displaced persons, the unemployed, trade unions, workers, farmers, journalists, street children, children with autism, youth and others were also consulted.
The first Constitutional Meeting of the Government Working Group on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was held in Belgrade, Serbia, on October 23, 2017.

In its new composition, the working group consists of representatives of 26 ministries, offices and agencies, together with the Chair. While the working group consists of representatives of state institutions, its meetings will be open to civil, public and private sector representatives, depending on the topic under consideration.

The Statistical Office and the Environmental Protection Agency monitors most of the indicators related to Goal 6 (access to drinking water, access to sewage system, water quality, pollutants release into water, water purification, etc.).

The Agency specifically emphasizes which indicator is related to monitoring of indicators related to water, all relevant information being available on their website.
Involvement of public in the EU Accession process

- Within the EU accession process, Negotiation Group 27, and Ministry of environmental protection as a leading institution in this chapter, involved all interested parties (local, public utilities companies, institutes, Faculties, civil societies) in preparation of Directive Specific implementation plans as a main part of Negotiation position for this chapter.

- All interested parties have had possibility to participate in this process and to give main inputs in developing this important document for Serbia.

- It is good example of excellent cooperation with all stakeholders and raising public awareness regarding Directives in water sector.
Example of promoting PWH on international level

COORD Magazine

Publishing article about PWH in Serbia
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

Biljana.Filipovic@ekologija.gov.rs