A regulação como instrumento para a melhoria da eficiência e da eficácia nos serviços públicos de águas e resíduos

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Prémio Serviço ao Cidadão
PRÉMIO BOAS PRÁTICAS no sector público
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Good practices to ensure equitable access to water and sanitation in the pan-European region

Reducing geographical disparities

Workshop on equitable access to water and sanitation
Geneva July 2011

Entidade Reguladora dos Serviços de Águas e Resíduos

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The session

Equitable access to water and sanitation
Reducing geographical disparities

- **The session "Reducing geographical disparities" corresponds to the Chapter 4 of the report:**

Chapter 1 The challenge of ensuring equitable access	Chapter 2 International obligations to achieve equitable access	Chapter 3 Steering governance frameworks to deliver equitable access	Chapter 5 Ensuring access for vulnerable and marginalized groups	**Chapter 4 Reducing geographical disparities**
			Chapter 6 Keeping water and sanitation affordable for all	

- **This Chapter as two parts:**
  - **Addressing disparities in physical access**
  - **Addressing price disparities**
- **The objective of the session is to contribute for the improvement of this chapter.**

A general introduction about geographical disparities

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- **Addressing "disparities in physical access":**
  - **The problem:**
    - Different levels of physical access and levels of service between urban and rural areas.
  - **The reasons:**
    - Rural areas are in general more expensive to serve (unit cost), due to low population densities.
    - The ability to pay by rural population in general is lower than that of urban areas.
    - Investments are often biased towards urban areas, due to reasonable / no reasonable reasons.
  - **The approach:**
    - Can be preventive, minimizing those situations.
    - Can be curative (after mistakes).
    - In any case, an "holistic approach" for the water services is in general more effective and efficient.

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- **Addressing price disparities:**
  - **The problem:**
    - Different prices between urban and rural areas.
    - Different pricing structures.
  - **The reasons:**
    - Rural areas are in general more expensive to serve (unit cost), due to low population densities.
    - The pricing policy trade-off between different goals:
      - Ensure financial sustainability of the service + Promote economic efficiency + Promote environmental sustainability + Ensure affordability.
    - There are different subsidy policies.
  - **The approach:**
    - Can be preventive, minimizing those situations.
    - Can be curative (after mistakes).
    - Again, in any case, an “holistic approach” is in general more effective and efficient.

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- **What issues must be included in that "holistic approach" to water and sanitation services?**
  - Defining a clear **national strategy** for the sector, integrated with territory planning, where rural areas must be considered, with an independent monitoring.
  - Clarifying **institutional responsibilities** (ex. water services, water resources, public health), namely in rural areas where those responsibilities tends to be more diffuse.
  - Creating a sound **legal framework**, where rural areas can have a specific approach, avoiding too stringent rules originating too expensive services.
  - Defining clear **governance models** for water services, where part of then can be used in rural areas.
  - Promoting **utilities' organization**, to maximize scale, scope and process economies (note that integrated management do not means centralized infrastructures).

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- Implement **appropriate technologies**, avoiding using standard technologies in rural areas when they are too expensive, but taking into account social and cultural local context.
- Implementing **investment programs** and **subsidy policy** with adequate priorities for rural areas.
- Implementing **cross-subsidies schemes**, with urban areas paying a little more to decrease the tariffs in rural areas (ex. tariff harmonization fund).
- Promoting an adequate **tariff policy** (ex. fixed service and consumption charge with progressive blocks).
- Promoting **quality of service** monitoring and benchmarking, namely to avoid the trend to less quality in rural areas.
- Promoting **quality of drinking water** monitoring, namely to avoid the trend to less attention and quality in rural areas.

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- Promoting **consumer protection**, namely for poor, including social, family tariffs and other issues.
- Promoting **technical support to the utilities**, namely trough technical guides, training courses and promotion of innovation and technology in partnership with research centers and universities.
- Promoting **public participation**, according the social and cultural context.
- Generating sound and public **information** to all stakeholders, reducing information asymmetry and guaranteeing ease-of-use by consumers and press.
- Creating a **regulatory framework**, with functional, organic and financial independence from Government (this is a State function).

The presentations and speakers

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- **The presentations and speakers:**

– **Addressing national differences in terms of access to water and sanitation in the Ukraine**

Mr. Mykhailo Yatsiuk, First Deputy Chairman, State Agency of Water Resources, Ukraine

– **Reducing geographical disparities in the price of water in Wallonia, Belgium**

Mr. Cédric Prevedello, S.A. Aquawal, Belgium

– **Cooperation between Nablus Municipality and Kufur Qallil Village**

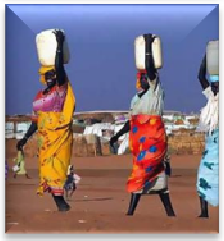
Mr. Mahdi Al-Hanbali, Councillor, Nablus Municipality, Palestine

– **Access to safe water in the outskirts of Gyula City - Analysis of local environmental conflicts**

Mr. Sandor Fülöp, Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations, Hungary

– **Providing access to remote rural areas in Uzbekistan**

Ms. Nadejda Vakhitova, Ecoforum of NGOs, Uzbekistan



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The end

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- **Workshop participants will discuss additional existing good practices and main messages on this topic. Discussion led by the session chair, who can initiate reaction to the following questions:**

– Do we know enough about existing geographical disparities in access to water and sanitation? What are the main gaps?

– What are the main barriers to reducing geographical disparities? How can progress in this field be achieved?

– How can progress in reducing geographical disparities be tracked? What type of targets can be set?

– Which policy, financial and technical measures are most suitable to reduce geographical disparities? (e.g. tax payers subsidies, cross-subsidies, public investment programmes)

– Which measures are suitable to close the access gap between rural and urban areas? How best to take into account the specific needs of rural populations (and their economic, cultural and social characteristics)?

– How best to promote community participation and ownership in all aspects of water and sanitation management?

– How should the KEY MESSAGES in Chapter 4 of the Draft Good Practice Document be refined?

– NB. Poland has prepared an intervention on measures targeting rural communities (Ms. Chjonika).