

Skat Consulting Ltd. News - December 2015

Skat Projects and Activities

* Governance *

Shaping Ukraine's decentralization reforms

Compared to the previous years of political turmoil, 2015 was a decisive and fruitful year for the overall process of reforms in Ukraine and in particular for the redesign of the country's local governance system. A number of key laws and policies were adopted in an effort to launch the decentralization reform and move the country a step forward to establishing a democratic local governance system compatible with the principles of the European Charter of Local Self-Governance. The Swiss-Ukrainian Decentralization Support Project, DESPRO, financed by SDC and implemented by Skat Consulting Ltd., contributed significantly to the national dialogue on reforming the public administration by providing commentaries and technical expertise to the process of drafting concepts, laws and policy briefs on local governance reform. The project engaged with legislators, Ministry of Regional Development and local governance practitioners to design and begin implementing policies and laws promoting democratic governance and decentralization, taking into account feasible models of public services delivery developed by the project. DESPRO has also been instrumental in the process of promoting the reform and strengthening the capacities of national authorities to communicate and engage with the general public. The variety of conferences, campaigns, panel discussions, web resources, radio and TV shows as well as newspaper features and training of journalists to report on decentralization, organized by the project, not only raised the public and political understanding of the reform but also the visibility of SDC and DESPRO and reaffirmed it as one of the key actors in the sector.

In the upcoming year, DESPRO will continue supporting the evolution and implementation of the reform process with a strong emphasis on linking the reform to the sectoral expertise and best practices developed by the project.

Strengthening the regulatory framework for rural water supply in Ukraine

DESPRO has supported the implementation of more than 60 water supply projects across rural areas of Ukraine, which not only provide households with access to safe piped drinking water but also ensure that there is an effective mechanism for operating and maintaining these water systems to ensure sustainability of investments. However, the fragmented policy and legal frameworks regulating the water sector in Ukraine has been identified by the project as the key obstacle to ensuring equal and unhindered access to water for all. In its current third phase the project is actively engaging with relevant ministers, legislators, decision-makers and water practitioners to come up with an integrated national water supply framework in which rural water supply management and sustainability is an integral part.

For more information about the activities of DESPRO please follow the link: <http://despro.org.ua/en/> or contact: juerg.christen@skat.ch or garnett@despro.org

* Water Supply and Environmental Sanitation *

Advisory services to Soluqa Foundation

As announced in our last newsletter, in October 2014 we started a new project to provide technical and strategic advice to Soluqa Foundation. Soluqa Foundation is a private foundation based in St. Gallen, striving to sustainably improve access to safe drinking water for people in the Himalayas region. Currently, there are two projects going on in Nepal, one of them focusing on the areas affected by the earthquakes in April/May 2015. A third one currently is being started in the lowland, where more than half of the population of Nepal lives. Skat provides advice on project management and on technical issues around water, sanitation and hygiene, but also building up Soluqa's capacity by strengthening its network. Topics include: household water treatment, hand washing, market driven approaches, and technology selection, among others. Soluqa and Skat jointly visit the projects in order to support the implementing organizations on site.

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Taking science from research into use

Skat has always been about knowledge sharing and about applying knowledge in a way that improves lives and livelihoods. An exciting new direction for this expertise has emerged through two major research programmes, funded by the United Kingdom. In both, Skat has a 'Knowledge Broker' role. This is about facilitating productive exchange between academics and those who could benefit from the fruits of their work, and translating technical, academic papers into materials that are useful for supporting decisions, investment or training.

UPGRO - Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for the Poor, is a seven year interdisciplinary programme aiming to improve the evidence and methods around the use and management of groundwater in Sub-Saharan Africa, to reduce poverty. REACH - improving water security for the poor, is also a seven year interdisciplinary programme led by Oxford University in collaboration with UNICEF, to research and apply methods of reducing the vulnerability of the poor to a wide range of water issues, including droughts, floods, pollution, and looking for opportunities for economic development that tackles some of these deep-rooted poverty issues. REACH has three main focus areas: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Kenya but will be working more widely as well. Both of these programmes are benefiting from Skat's extensive networks, including the Rural Water Supply Network, and expertise in knowledge management and communication.

To find out more about UPGRO visit: <http://upgro.org> and <http://reawater.org.uk> or contact sean.furey@skat.ch

31st AGUASAN Workshop: Disaster Risk Reduction in WASH - Towards Resilience and Adaptive Management in the Water Sector

More than half of the world's population is under threat from the forces of nature - 20% of the earth's surface is regularly affected by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, drought, landslides and storms. Incidence and severity of natural disasters has increased markedly in the last decades, as well as their impact in terms of economic losses, due mainly to increased exposure, population pressure, urbanisation and environmental/climate changes. On the other hand, human losses could be reduced over the past 10 years as a result of improved disaster risk reduction (DRR) measures. The prevention of disaster risk creation and the reduction of the existing disaster risk through measures which address exposure and vulnerability is therefore the aim of the post-2015 Sendai framework for DRR.

Water is key to tackling natural disasters and climate change, because it is the medium through which most of their impacts are felt. Water management and development strategies have a pivotal role in reducing vulnerability of people and assets to natural hazards. This year's Workshop was DRR in WASH, considering that inadequate WASH services can cause disasters, while disasters can further degrade WASH services, both resulting in increased risk. Hence, the key question of "How to best implement DRR principles in the WASH sector to strengthen resilience to natural disasters in a multi-hazard approach?" drove this year's AGUASAN workshop held June 22 - 26, 2015, in Spiez, Switzerland.

Based on thematic inputs, topic-specific cases and the broad expertise gathered by the 47 participants, the 5-day cumulative knowledge generation process aimed at preparing the practitioners' community to respond effectively to the post-2015 interlinked water and DRR challenges. The participants shared experiences and developed entry points regarding the workshop topic, and left the event with practical measures to apply back home as well as with a strengthened professional network across the different communities. A Briefing Note provides the main results of the event, having culminated in a series of findings associated with prototypes of respective tools, as well as a set of key recommendations about i) the relevance of DRR in WASH, ii) the importance of knowing the risk, iii) the logic of the risk reduction measures "staircase", iv) the main entry points for DRR in WASH, v) the recurrent call for "a" simple practical tool as well as vi) the need for additional capacity building and advocacy on the topic.

All AGUASAN Workshop reports can be downloaded at www.aguasana.ch or referred to in the publications section of the Skat website: www.skat.ch/publications/new_publications. For further information contact: roper.schmid@skat.ch or sanjay.gupta@skat.ch

* Building and Settlements *

Rehabilitation of earthquake affected schools in Sindhupalchok, Nepal

The earthquakes of April 25th and May 12th 2015 had devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people in Nepal. With most private houses and large parts of the public infrastructure destroyed, Sindhupalchok is one of the worst affected districts in the country. The aim of the project is to rehabilitate completely destroyed and heavily damaged schools in Sindhupalchok district. Overall, 34 schools in 6 village development committees will be rehabilitated to provide about 6000 students and teachers of the affected communities with safe and child friendly school environments. The new schools will offer earthquake-safe classrooms with appropriate sanitation facilities and safe drinking water supply.

Within this project, Caritas Switzerland takes the lead and will cooperate with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation who will be involved in the WASH component. Skat has conducted technical assessments in the field for the elaboration of the project document and developed the reconstruction concept as well as modular design options for the various school types. Skat will also provide technical backstopping and quality control during design and implementation.

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* Energy and Climate *

Deploying Photovoltaic (PV) Services for Regional Development

Since October 2015, Skat Consulting Ltd. is the official "Operating Agent" representing Switzerland in the so-called "Task 9: Deploying Photovoltaic (PV) Services for Regional Development" of the Photovoltaic Power Systems Programme (PPVS), the latter being one of the biggest programmes of the International Energy Agency (IEA). See also www.iea.org/energydata/energycenter

The Swiss participation in the International Energy Agency PVS Task 9 takes place through the support of the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Promotion in International Cooperation Platform (www.repic.ch), which is in turn supported by SECO, SDC and the Swiss Federal Office of Energy. The aim of the Swiss contribution is to increase the quality of projects and programmes which include photovoltaics within development co-operation. Skat as Operating Agent is supporting the new strategic positioning of Task 9; the enhancement of partnerships with other international organisations; and the improvement of task 9's visibility. Based on our broad experience in Renewables, as well as in networking and knowledge management, Skat Consulting Ltd. is well positioned for this complex task.

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* Knowledge Management *

Swiss Red Cross IC - Facilitation of Regional Workshops

In September and November 2015, Skat has been mandated by the Swiss Red Cross - International Cooperation to prepare and facilitate two workshops: one in Africa and the other one in Latin America and Caribbean. The purpose of the workshops was to develop in a participatory manner the respective continental programmes and to strengthen the synergies and cooperation between SRC delegation and headquarters staff, as well as to share knowledge and experiences between SRC staff. These workshops were part of the strategic planning process of SRC and consolidated the process that started with their programmes in Asia and in Europe.

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External review of the Swiss Malaria Group

The Swiss Malaria Group (SMG) is a multi-stakeholder group comprised by 15 organisations based in Switzerland. The goal of the SMG is to raise awareness about the devastation wreaked by malaria and the work of Switzerland together with other countries to defeat it. Synergies between the members contribute to the decline of malaria cases around the world through innovative control measures, knowledge and financial flows.

In 2015, an external review was considered necessary to examine and provide recommendations, which would help SMG's further work. Skat was selected to carry out this assignment for SMG. The External Review took place in June, 2015 and it included the review of documents provided by SMG and interview members. The analysis of the different perspectives allowed comprehensive and accurate results to be obtained and the elaboration of a report.

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Sustainable Artisanal Mining (ASM) Knowledge Hub

The Sustainable Artisanal Mining Project Phase 4 (SAM4) builds upon 10 years of implementation and aims at consolidating the progress towards responsible community mining within an enabling legal framework for Mongolia's artisanal miners. It is also the culmination of more than 20 years of artisanal and small scale mining (ASM) projects by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 4 countries spanning two continents. The SAM4 seeks to develop an International Knowledge Hub (IKH) and a Mongolian Knowledge Hub (MKH) for ASM, which aim at extending the outreach and impact of the project beyond the national level while bringing international knowledge and experience back to Mongolia.

The latest quarter of 2015, SDC mandated Skat Consulting to support SAM in the definition of the vision, purpose, and governance structure as well as the sustainability model of ASM Knowledge Hub. After a first fact-finding mission to Mongolia, Skat prepared an initial proposal of what could be the set-up of the International KH and the Mongolian KH. This work will continue in the first quarter of 2016.

For more information contact bertha.camacho@skat.ch

* RWSN Activities *

Study on the Thailand's experience in Rainwater Harvesting

With support from the RAN Foundation, Skat undertook a study on the experience of disseminating Rainwater Harvesting in Thailand. By the means of a review of existing literature and through a study tour to Thailand, Skat collected information about this case study. Rainwater harvesting is very common in Thailand, with 40% of the rural population using rainwater as their main source of drinking water, according to the Joint Monitoring Programme (www.waquo.org). The goal of the study was to find out more about this success story and make this experience more commonly available. The outputs of this project include a report (available shortly on our website) and a slide show.

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Webinar series

After having implemented two series of webinars (on-line seminars) in the first half of 2015, with a total of 13 webinars, RWSN implemented a second series with a total of 20 sessions in the second half of the year. The events covered a wide range of topics including sustainable groundwater development, rainwater harvesting, the use of ICTs for monitoring and handpump corrosion. This is an event on 24 November, where Leo Heller, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Right to Safe Drinking Water and sanitation will give a presentation. Presenters from more than 15 different organisations, working in over 15 countries shared their practical experiences and research findings. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and meet others with similar interests.

You can watch the recordings of all sessions and download the presentations here: www.rural-water-supply.net/en/resources/details/65/ or contact: kerstin.danert@skat.ch and matthias.salaudin@skat.ch

* A borehole that lasts a lifetime! RWSN films are hits

The Skat collaboration between UNICEF and Wateraid within RWSN has made ground with the two animated films in English and French on professionalizing drilling, which have been viewed over a thousand times in the first couple of weeks since being launched. You can find the films in both languages together on our "Professional Drilling - animated series" channel. We are looking at getting more produced soon.

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* Publications *

Work the Net: A management guide for existing and emerging formal networks

Second edition

The second edition of this hands-on guide for setting up, structuring, managing, monitoring and evaluating networks efficiently and effectively has been published by the GIZ. It focuses on the operational issues of networks and explains the most important aspects of making them work. The guide addresses networking practitioners as well as other professionals wishing to establish a network.

The guide has several aims to help you to access the information.

A flowchart showing a typical process for establishing and managing a network.

Many aspects of networking relate to each other. The guide has cross-references leading to related information. In order to illustrate better different aspects of network management, the guide presents real examples from existing networks. Bearing in mind that the guide is not exhaustive, there is a section on resources such as books, publications, and websites. The pdf-file of "Work the Net" is available for download for free.

You can request the printed version of this guide at: publications@skat.ch

For more information about this evaluation contact bertha.camacho@skat.ch