

2018 Performance Audit Report on Water Quality and Management Summary

The main objective of the audit mission - performance evaluation on water quality and management, during the period of 2015-2017, and the specific objectives referred mainly to the analysis of aspects such as:

- Institutional capacity analysis regarding water quality and management;
- Analysis of the aspects related to the water management in Romania, identification of the strategies and policies regarding the audited field;
- Analysis of water quality programs conducted at the central level.

Main findings and vulnerabilities

Regarding the institutional capacity of public authorities with responsibilities in the field of water quality and management, it was found that MAP has the obligation to develop, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Program for phasing out discharges, emissions and losses of priority hazardous substances in surface waters.

Outdated technical equipment does not allow the monitoring of all priority hazardous substances and, moreover, at the level of laboratories the human resources register a significant deficit resulting in non-monitoring of some indicators, overloading and delay in reporting the results.

Regarding the implementation of inspection and control activities in the water management domain performed by the central public authority in the water field, the Water Law 107/1996 established the State Water Inspection but this structure was not functional.

It is worth mentioning the significant risk of irrelevance of data on the quantities of pollutants discharged, as a result of self-monitoring procedures and polluters' payment for the water quality analysis service providers. The value of the revenues collected from the specific water management contributions does not directly finance the wastewater depollution activities.

The financial sources necessary for water management have been diminished by the establishment of undersized revenues.

In order to carry out studies in the field of water quality within specific program, there were not established performance indicators for assessing the efficiency of public spending in terms of efforts and their effects.

Regarding the implementation of the project "Integrated Control of Nitrite Pollution, this was a first for Romania, being the only project that financed direct investments for the implementation of the Nitrite Directive by rural communities. From the perspective of meeting the indicators, the project had achievements in terms of completing the proposed investments, enhancing equipment at the administrative-territorial units and the behavioral changes within the population, contributed to the reduction of water pollution by diminishing the amount of nitrogen from agricultural activities. Moreover, the development of the project highlighted a series of weaknesses consisting in the lack of pre-established indicators on quantifying the results of activities, and in terms of project sustainability.

On the basis of audit findings, Romanian SAI has developed the following recommendations:

- Ensuring the proper functioning of the "Water Inspection" department, ensuring the human and technological necessary resources for the operation of the water quality laboratories within ANAR in order to carry out, the water quality monitoring activity, as well as involvement, together with other responsible central public authorities, in completing the legal framework that regulates the financing and implementation of collection and treatment systems, in order to comply with the provisions of Council Directive 91/271 / EEC of 21 May 1991 on urban wastewater treatment;
- Prioritizing the necessary works at the level of central and local public institutions with attributions and responsibilities in the implementation of the provisions of Directive no. 91/271 / EEC regarding urban wastewater treatment, respectively planning of financing sources and necessary works, deadlines, based on a common agreement / institutional plan;

- Analyzing and identifying measures to stimulate the population to connect to sewerage networks and treatment plants in order to increase the level of connection and ensure the parameters for the operation of wastewater infrastructure;
- Identifying the possibilities for ensuring the financing of eligible projects, completing the requirements for ineligible projects, as well as making documentation and technical projects for agglomerations that have not yet submitted any projects;
- For territorial administrative units, monitoring the obligations assumed through the collaboration agreements regarding the maintenance and operation of the investments made within the project "Integrated Control of Nitrite Pollution".