

HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



SLE Publication Series – S 247

SLE – Postgraduate Studies on International Cooperation

Study commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Bridging the Gap – Participatory District Development Planning in the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector of the Republic of Moldova

André Fabian (team leader), Gabriele Janikowski (team leader),
Elisabeth Bollrich, Ariana Fürst, Melanie Hernandez-Sanchez, Katharina
Hinze, Jens Treffner

Berlin, December 2011



SLE Publication Series S 247

Editor Humboldt Universität zu Berlin
SLE Postgraduate Studies on International
Cooperation

Hessische Straße 1-2
10115 Berlin
PHONE: 0049-30-2093 6900
FAX: 0049-30-2093 6904
sle@agr.ar.hu-berlin.de
www.sle-berlin.de

Editorial Dr. Karin Fiege, SLE

Print Zerbe Druck & Werbung
Planckstr. 11
16537 Grünheide

Distribution SLE
Hessische Str. 1-2
10115 Berlin

1. Edition 2011 1-300

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ISSN 1433-4585

ISBN 3-936602-51-4

Photos Left: Well in Moldovan village
Top right: Round Table in Cahul
Bottom right: National conference
(all made by team)

Foreword

SLE Postgraduate Studies on International Cooperation at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin has trained young professionals in the field of international development cooperation for 49 years.

Three-month consulting projects conducted on behalf of German and international cooperation organisations form part of the one-year postgraduate course. In multidisciplinary teams, young professionals carry out studies on innovative future-oriented topics, and act as consultants. Including diverse local actors in the process is of great importance here. The outputs of this “applied research” are an immediate contribution to the solving of development problems.

Throughout the years, SLE has carried out over a hundred consulting projects in more than ninety countries, and regularly published the results in this series.

In 2011, SLE teams completed studies in Moldova, in Cameroon, in Uganda and in the Philippines.

The present study was commissioned and co-financed by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Prof. Dr. Dr. Ellmer
Dean
Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture

Dr. Karin Fiege
Deputy Director
SLE

Acknowledgements

Bridging the gap – this is no easy task to achieve on one’s own. We therefore want to express our deep appreciation to all individuals and institutions, to all the helping hands that supported us in constructing this bridge. Thank you for your cooperation in implementing the research project and making this study possible.

We are most grateful to the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, in particular Valentina Pleșca, our highly committed cooperation partner. Likewise, we thank the Ministry of Environment, the State Chancellery, the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CALM) and the Water and Wastewater Operators (Apa Canal) in Cahul and Riscani for their support. This also holds true for the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Romanian embassy to the Republic of Moldova and the Romanian General Consulate in Cahul.

Many thanks go to our visionary commissioner Philipp Johannsen from GIZ who not only initiated and followed this study closely during all stages of the assignment, but also unceasingly broadened our horizon.

Furthermore we would like to express our deep gratitude to Gabriele Janikowski, team leader GOPA expert pool. Her advice was indispensable to us, as was her friendship.

We would like to especially thank the local Moldovan colleagues who shared long working days with us and made working in a multi-cultural group a pleasure. The sharing of valuable experiences contributed greatly to the success of this study. The team gratefully acknowledges the support of the GIZ focal points, Margareta Vameș, diligently shaping and reshaping the design of the bridge to build; as well as Sergiu Pleșca who obligingly helped us to find ways securing this bridge against all storms. We also owe much appreciation to Inga Cojocar and Irina Popușoi, our close colleagues from the Regional Development Agencies (RDA), and their respective directors Ion Bodrug (RDA North) as well as Maria Culeșov (RDA South). They did not hesitate to join in the endeavour to become true bridge builders, facilitating a participatory planning approach on the local level. Many thanks also go to the Riscani and Cahul rayon administrations, namely president Ion Parea, vice-president Alexandru Cheptănar and Denis Țurcanu; as well as president Avram Micinschi, vice-president Veaceslav Bălănel and Janeta Ghețiu. Crucial to the success of our assignment was the work of the rayon assistants, who never tired of their task: Tatiana Condrîțaia, Rodica Knyazev and Dan Prisacari in Riscani, as well as Eugenia Negru and Evelina Nour in Cahul.

We express our deep gratitude for the indispensable backing of the GIZ office team in Chisinau, namely Ina Zmeu, Tatiana Bîlba, Natalia Iachimov and the vital interpreting

skills of Maria Posteuca for their input, translation, comments and overall support during the field phase of the assignment.

It was a great honour and pleasure to learn from the GOPA experts Pavel Panuş, Rafał Andrzej Stanek and Daniel Wiltschnigg who helped us through the whole process with their technical knowledge and farsightedness concerning the water and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova.

Sincere appreciation goes to the numerous stakeholders participating in the Round Tables and interviews. Without their commitment this assignment would not have been possible.

Our thanks also go to Frank Schwartze who provided very helpful support in the planning and implementation of the exposure visit to Germany. We are most grateful to Wolfram Nelk, Thomas Hemmerling, Harald Knauer and Günther Froböse and their respective colleagues, who readily and kindly received the Moldovan delegation in Germany. Likewise we thank the Romanian Water Association ARA, namely Silviu Lacatuşu for sharing their experiences with the delegation.

We would like to express our gratitude to the SDC-ApaSan staff that provided us interesting and helpful insight into other Water and Sanitation activities in Moldova: Jonathan Hecke, Aurelia Ciornei and Iulian Isac.

We also thank Danielle McCaffrey for the proof reading of our report.

The valuable support, comments, care and patience our families and friends contributed to our work should not be forgotten, and will be rewarded with more time spent together in the forthcoming months.

Last but not least, our thanks go to Gesa Grundmann and the whole team at the SLE Postgraduate Course in International Cooperation for pushing us towards expanding our own limits, for their advice, professional support and critical input.

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is about strategic, participatory infrastructure development planning on the district level in the Republic of Moldova (RoM). The purpose of the assignment was to design an approach for coherent, vertically integrated planning for public service provision on the local level. At the same time, it explains how the approach for district-level planning was embedded in the existing institutional framework, and covers the results and experiences had during pilot implementation. The assignment has been commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) for its contracting partner, the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC), and carried out in the two pilot districts (*rayons*) of Cahul and Riscani from August to October 2011, focussing on the Water Supply and Sanitation (WatSan) sector. The aim was to exemplify the potential of citizen's participation in strategic development planning; bringing together national policy objectives with civil society's priorities. Bridging the gap, in this report is understood as the endeavour to: firstly, show how the implementation of development policies can be more needs-responsive; and, secondly, link WatSan sector policies' objectives with their local level implementation via the regional development approach.

The Government of Moldova (GoM) created the MRDC in response to the challenges arising from post-Soviet governance legacy and the socio-economic problems. A key function of the MRDC is to increase efficiency and effectiveness of sector policy implementation through its three related Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). From 2010, GIZ carried out pilot projects in the WatSan sector on behalf of MRDC in Cahul city, Cahul rayon and Costesti town, Riscani rayon, respectively. Besides providing improved service quality to the people in the respective localities, these pilot projects have as an aim to train and strengthen RDA's capacities in project management. While choosing the respective sites, MRDC and its partners came to realise that a more systematic approach was required for identifying localities with the highest need for investments. Based on the regional development rationale of *overcoming disparities*, this identification was to be based on participatory decision-making.

The report outlines three elements at the core of this assignment; the first being the challenges surrounding the modernisation of local public service provision, using the WatSan sector as an example. It shows the steps taken in the design of a participatory district planning approach, and draws practical lessons and thematic conclusions from its pilot implementation.

This work contributes to the body of knowledge dealing with practical experiences in the domain of citizen's participation in infrastructure planning, needs-responsive development approaches as opposed to technocratic ones, and the design of dialogue processes on multiple governance levels and across sectors.

Scope and Objectives

Two important initiatives form the basis of the SLE team's assignment: the Investment and Action Plan (I/AP) recently developed by the Moldovan Ministry of Environment (MoE) for ranking WatSan investment project proposals, and supported by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the one hand; and the rayon's Socio-Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) on the other. SEDS are to become the rayon's planning tool, aligned with regional operation plans and national strategies. At present, SEDS and their respective sub-chapters lack a coherent, transparent prioritisation of measures, as well as specific, realistic and measurable targets; they are not operational. The newly established (2010) RDAs have a mandate to assist rayon administrations with drafting coherent strategies for all sectors.

The aim of the SLE team's assignment was to generate priority-ranked WatSan investment project clusters for localities within each rayon, as a first draft, for more detailed feasibility studies. These feasibility studies will be brought forward to the I/AP for funding. At the same time, as the SEDS chapter assists rayon administrations and RDAs with fulfilling their planning responsibilities and the development of a participatory vision, the WatSan chapter facilitates the functioning of the I/AP. The approach for updating the SEDS chapter incorporates key elements of the I/AP in order to guarantee the coherence of investment project proposals, and eventually increase the chances for financing.

Assisting the respective RDAs with the drafting of the two pilot rayon's SEDS' WatSan chapter served as Capacity Development for the rayon administration's planning departments, and RDA facilitators. Through this on-the-job training of RDA planners in process facilitation, the model of regional development as an effective form of policy implementation gained a stronger momentum. At the same time, the development of a rayon-level SEDS chapter for implementation of WatSan sector policies served as an exemplary planning approach for other sectors.

On the rayon level, the SLE team supported RDA facilitators and rayon administrations in Participatory Priority Definition (PPD) that would serve as the strategic guidance for identifying those localities where WatSan investments should be *targeted first*. Underlying the approach for PPD is the rationale that through involving people affected by policy measures in planning on the local level, policy

implementation will contribute to a high degree of citizen satisfaction and their identification with political decisions.

Methodology

The assignment was structured by various activities, which were led by RDA facilitators, GIZ focal points working in the RDAs on behalf of MRDC, and supported by the SLE team of junior advisors:

- **Identification of legal provisions and current practices pertaining to local-level planning documents.** The SEDS chapter's structure has been analysed, improvements proposed, and its function, structure and content approved by GoM's relevant institutions.
- **Analysis of the WatSan sector's institutional framework.** Funding mechanisms, responsibilities, sector priorities, and the normative framework for planning and implementing WatSan projects (investment *and* management) were studied, and the sector performance analysed through expert interviews, discussions during national-level meetings, and desk studies.
- **Development of an approach for updating and drafting the SEDS chapter on WatSan in a participatory way.** Public involvement in strategic planning was conceptualised, and the pathway for completing the chapter after the strategic input was outlined.
- **Pilot testing Participatory Priority Definition on rayon level.** Objectives for sector development stipulated by national policies were identified in order to define rayon stakeholder's room for manoeuvre to adapt policy priorities for the local strategy. The complementary local priorities were identified and weighted during the pilot implementation of Stakeholder Dialogues in the two rayons, comprising three Round Table sessions.
- **Design of a Manual for facilitators, drawing from the lessons learnt during pilot implementation of the participatory approach.** The experiences of and results generated by the RDA facilitators during the Stakeholder Dialogue were closely monitored and captured. Methodological knowledge on the specifics of participatory infrastructure planning can therefore be transferred to other rayons and sectors.
- **Drawing conclusions from other countries' experiences during WatSan governance transformation.** Exposure Visits were carried out to neighbouring Romania and the German federal state of Brandenburg. Moldovan representatives of WatSan governance on all levels joined together to identify relevant knowledge and experiences for the on-going transformation in the RoM.

- **Facilitation of the approach for participatory update of the SEDS chapter through multi-level Policy Dialogue.** Policy objectives and planning procedures were continuously discussed and approval for participatory strategic planning via regional development was sought from decision-makers.

Results of the Assignment

The structure of the SEDS chapter (using the example of the WatSan sector) in alignment with the legal framework was the point of departure defining the inputs to be delivered for the completion of the planning document. It comprises:

- A WatSan sector situation analysis on locality level
- The definition of objectives and investment priorities for the future development of the rayon's WatSan sector (the strategic part)
- Necessary measures to achieve objectives
- An action plan (the planning part)
- Monitoring and Evaluation

After the identification of the SEDS chapter's structure, the focus of the SLE team's support to rayon administrations and RDAs was on accomplishing the *strategic* component as the basis for technical and management planning, definition of targets, as well as the drafting of an action plan. National sector priorities were identified by GOPA¹ senior sector experts, and their respective weights were proposed and approved during a national-level meeting. Through a combination of rayon and national priorities, the attainment of national objectives and investment priorities is safeguarded, as well as the adaption of policy implementation to local level.

The updating of the SEDS' WatSan chapter, including strategic planning on rayon level was carried out following a two-tier approach. Prior situation analysis was to serve as the foundation on which strategic considerations were based by decision-makers (the strategic tier). Beyond the mere definition of priorities, the approach incorporated a process for weighing investment needs. Agreeing on these priorities and weights was the core objective of the pilot Stakeholder Dialogue conducted during three Round Tables in the two pilot rayons.

Parallel to the prioritisation process, the WatSan and socio-economic data assessed served to cluster investment opportunities (the planning tier). Technical and management solutions to group single localities into clusters was adopted for the sake of efficient service provision, and in order to enable economies of scale. As a

¹ GOPA Consulting provides expert inputs to the GIZ's project Modernisation of Local Public Services in the Republic of Moldova.

final step, priorities and viable solutions will be integrated, identifying those clusters with the highest priority for investments. After this final planning step, rayon decision-makers are to adopt the suggested, priority-based document in order to enable implementation of the strategy and the integration of locality-level plans. The identification of options to cluster localities in order to form regionalised service arrangements is on-going, while national strategic priorities and the priorities defined by stakeholders during the sequence of Round Tables are indicated in the table below. The rayon priorities reflect the **key results of pilot testing** the approach.

Table: National and rayon priorities with their respective weight

National priorities	Relative weight
Reduce water-related morbidity	0.25
Increase coverage of population with piped water supply	0.15
Ensure 24 h provision with drinking water	0.15
Increase coverage with improved sanitation	0.15
Halt deterioration of existing infrastructure	0.15
Improve access of (pre-)school students to improved WatSan facilities	0.15
Cahul rayon priorities	Relative weight
To improve economic development	0.41
Satisfy as many people as possible	0.32
Improve WatSan access of public institutions (health)	0.27
Riscani rayon priorities	Relative weight
Improve management of WatSan service providers	0.29
Improve living conditions in disadvantaged localities	0.28
Improve WatSan access of public institutions	0.22
Extend existing WatSan infrastructure	0.21

Lessons Learnt

The lessons learnt are structured into three sections: Embedding (the establishment of the approach within the Moldovan institutional context), Elaborating (the design of the approach) and Enabling (facilitation of the approach, and the lessons pertaining to the practical pilot implementation).

The following lessons were learnt during embedding the assignment:

- **I/AP constitutes a genuine link.** The suggested bottom-up approach for PPD was seen as necessary by policy makers to rank priority projects according to need while meeting quality standards. Their commitment was of critical importance for successfully embedding the approach in existing sector policies,

and added strategic practical momentum to the existing tool for WatSan sector expenditure management.

- **There are limitations of the SEDS chapter structure.** So far, a SEDS chapter's structure follows guidelines set by the Governmental Decision no. 33 (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2007). The document provides bullet points on what should be contained in a strategy, and served as a rather ambiguous point of reference.

Concerning the elaboration and enabling of the approach for updating the SEDS chapter the following insights were gained:

- Given the complexity of the assignment, it was **required to employ an iterative approach during the elaboration of the methodology.** It led to an extension of the initial idea (comprising participatory priority definition and ranking of localities based on need) to a regionalisation of WatSan service provision. Expert knowledge broadened focus to issues that had previously not been considered, such as the importance of an assessment of willingness or ability to pay.
- **Multi-level Policy Dialogue is indispensable for robust, broad based commitment of decision-makers.** Promoting continuous exchange between governance levels, line ministries, and international partners helped to identify single institutions expectations, and to align development strategies and implementation approaches both vertically and horizontally.
- **Exposure Visits helped to bridge the gap between single WatSan governance institutions.** Representatives from all governance levels profited from the inter-institutional exchange they had during a study tour; covering Romanian and East-German transformation experiences in the WatSan sector. This gave additional impetus to the on-going discussions about approaches and governance competencies in the RoM.

During pilot implementation of the approach, the team learned the following:

- **Data assessment and availability of information proved to be a time-consuming and limiting factor for the two-tier approach.** Current records in town halls or the books of service providers contain data of limited, often out-dated quality.
- **Effective involvement of all relevant stakeholders is a challenge.** The diversity of contributions underlines the strength of involving local people. Exchange on stakeholder groups' individual priorities, however, proved to be time-consuming, and a logistic challenge.
- **Participatory definition of sector priorities is new to most stakeholders.** The purpose of the complex prioritisation process has proven to be difficult to understand for some stakeholders. Questions posed by individual participants

during the discussion sessions showed that expectations for immediate project selection and funding remained high.

Conclusions

- At the time this report was printed, the clustering tier was not completed. Therefore, one cannot evaluate the impact that PPD had on the ranking of localities compared to a purely technocratic one, or compared to a ranking using just the national priorities. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence for the superiority of participatory strategic planning over exclusive specialist planning. Decisions become more robust through a participatory approach, in terms of well-reflected priorities and thorough exchange. It also diminishes the tendency to favour decision-makers' constituencies, as the consensus cuts across party lines.
- Differentiated considerations reflecting the particularities of rural public service provision are not yet commonplace in the RoM. For example with the given demographics, chances for so-called economies of density (e.g. the number of household connections per kilometre of water supply pipe) diminish drastically; therefore alternatives must be considered. Aggravating the technical-geographic cost factor is the urban-rural poverty gradient; the rural populations' capacity to pay for services needs to receive special attention.
- Availability of sufficient, good-quality data for planning infrastructure service provision is a major obstacle for both planners and strategic decision-makers. Though not surprising in the context of a chronically under-funded sector, the fact is that analysis of the current data will consume large amounts of time and resources; and will delay concrete measures to halt further degradation.
- The approach proposes inter-communal service arrangements, based on the assumption that mayors and commune councils will adopt the idea of regionalised WatSan service provision. However, local public administration does not currently have the capacity to master administrative endeavours such as inter-communal cooperation, and is not likely to easily join cooperation agreements dealing with large amounts of local budget.
- Multi-level governance for public service development in the RoM is at an initial stage. While during the Policy Dialogue fostered during this assignment commitment to cooperate on the basis of regional development as a tool for implementing MoE's policies was strong, the fine detail remains to be accomplished yet. Ambiguous and outdated provisions need to be removed from the framework to form a reliable planning base for administrative bodies and engineers; and in order to enable rapid sector development.
- The donor community, being an increasingly supportive force in the RoM's WatSan governance, needs to continue with the proposed implementation of the

approach for development. The complexities ahead and the knowledge to be established among Moldovan decision-makers and practitioners call for coordinated support.

Recommendations

The process of PPD should be continued in order to understand its potential for strategic planning. It provides a more needs-responsive, locally adapted planning. The key to the successful completion and replication of this process will depend upon the capacity of and resources available for RDAs.

The development of a framework for investment planning and prioritisation within the Moldovan WatSan sector is on-going, as is the will to support the GoM in creating a Moldovan approach. Representatives of GoM eventually should take the lead in this process, while international partners should coordinate donor activities where national institutions show the commitment to play their role. Development partners working in the domains of WatSan and regional development should also tackle concerns of the ability of the population to cover increased service costs. In order to establish realistic, and appropriate targets for diverse situations, the relationship between public service infrastructure development and user tariffs should be examined, especially in disadvantaged rural localities.

Zusammenfassung

Einführung

Die tief greifenden Veränderungen im Zuge der post-sowjetischen Transformation vom planwirtschaftlichen zum marktwirtschaftlichen System haben in der Republik Moldau zu einer Schwächung des Staates geführt. Institutionelle Defizite zeigen sich bei der effektiven Umsetzung staatlicher Politiken, sowie dem gesetzlichen und normativen Rahmen. Herausforderungen für die Bereitstellung öffentlicher, kommunaler Dienstleistungen, die aus der sozio-ökonomischen Lage und demographischen Veränderungen resultieren, manifestieren sich sowohl auf der Angebots- als auch der Nachfrageseite. Kapital für Investitionen ist knapp, während die abnehmende Bevölkerungsdichte im ländlichen Raum dazu führt, dass die relativen Kosten für die Bereitstellung von Dienstleistungen für die alternde, gering verdienende Bevölkerung steigen.

Dieser Bericht stellt die Ergebnisse einer Auftragsstudie vor, deren Ziel die Entwicklung eines Ansatzes zur partizipativen Entwicklungsplanung für die verbesserte Bereitstellung öffentlicher Dienstleistungen in der Republik Moldau war. Das Potenzial von Partizipation aller beteiligten Akteure bei strategischer Entwicklungsplanung auf Kreisebene wird mit Fokus auf den Sektor der Wasser- und Sanitärversorgung exemplarisch dargestellt. *Bridging the gap*, das Überbrücken der Kluft, wird dabei als Bestreben in zweierlei Hinsicht verstanden. Zum einen versucht der entwickelte Ansatz, die Umsetzung von politischen Zielvorgaben stärker an den Bedürfnissen und Prioritäten der lokalen Bevölkerung auszurichten. Zum anderen wird mit der regionalen Entwicklung ein Ansatz verfolgt, der es ermöglicht, nationale Sektorpolitiken auf lokaler Ebene umzusetzen. Um Effizienz und Effektivität bei der Umsetzung von Sektorpolitiken zu erhöhen, wurden 2010 drei regionale Entwicklungsagenturen (Regional Development Agencies, RDAs) gegründet, die dem Ministerium für Regionalentwicklung und Bauwesen (Ministry of Regional Development and Construction, MRDC) unterliegen.

In Auftrag gegeben wurde die Studie von der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) für ihren moldauischen Vertragspartner, das MRDC. Die Durchführung durch das SLE-Team fand von August bis Oktober 2011 in den beiden Pilot-Kreisen (*rayons*) Cahul und Riscani statt. Die GIZ führt im Auftrag des MRDC seit 2010 Projekte im Wasser- und Sanitärbereich in der Stadt Cahul, Rayon Cahul, beziehungsweise im Ort Costesti, Rayon Riscani, durch. Neben einer Verbesserung des Zugangs zu Wasser- und Sanitärleistungen für die ländliche Bevölkerung werden die Kapazitäten der neu gegründeten RDAs bezüglich des Managements von Projekten gestärkt. Während der Auswahl der beiden Projektregionen für diese Pilotprojekte stellten die beiden Partnerinstitutionen MRDC

und GIZ fest, dass ein transparenter Ansatz zur systematischen Auswahl derjenigen Ortschaften, in denen Investitionen am dringendsten gebraucht werden, nötig wäre.

Der Bericht dokumentiert drei Kernelemente der zugrunde liegenden Aufgabenstellung: 1. die Herausforderungen bei der Modernisierung kommunaler Dienstleistungen am Beispiel des Wasser- und Sanitärsektors in der Republik Moldau; 2. die Erarbeitung eines Ansatzes zur partizipativen Kreisentwicklungsplanung; und 3. die Lehren und Rückschlüsse die sich aus dessen erstmaliger Durchführung ergaben.

Dadurch liefert der Bericht wichtige Erkenntnisse über praktische Erfahrungen mit Bürgerbeteiligung bei Infrastrukturplanung, die im Gegensatz zu technokratischen Ansätzen strategischer Planung als stärker bedürfnisorientiert gesehen wird. Zusätzlich bietet der Bericht einen Überblick über die Ausarbeitungs- und Planungsschritte für Mehrebenen-, und übersektorale Dialogprozesse.

Rahmen und Aufgabenstellung

Zwei wichtige Initiativen liegen dem Auftrag des SLE-Teams fachlich zu Grunde. Zum einen wurde kürzlich vom moldauischen Umweltministerium mit Unterstützung der Organisation für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (OECD) für die Priorisierung von Wasser- und Sanitär-Investitionsprojekten ein Investitions- und Aktionsplan (Investment and Action Plan, I/AP) entwickelt, an den der vorgeschlagene Ansatz anknüpft. Zum anderen sollen Sozio-ökonomische Entwicklungsstrategien (Socio-economic Development Strategies, SEDS) ein mit regionalen und nationalen Vorgaben abgestimmtes Planungswerkzeug für die Rayons werden. Derzeit fehlt den bestehenden SEDS und ihren jeweiligen Unterkapiteln zu spezifischen Sektoren eine transparente Priorisierung von Maßnahmen, sowie die Formulierung realistischer, messbarer Zielgrößen. Dies macht sie als Planungs- und Implementierungswerkzeug weitgehend unbrauchbar. Die 2010 gegründeten RDAs haben das Mandat, die Rayonverwaltungen bei der Anfertigung kohärenter Strategien für alle Sektoren zu unterstützen.

Ziel des SLE-Auftrages war es, die RDAs und Rayonverwaltungen dabei zu unterstützen, priorisierte Projektideen für Wasser- und Sanitärprojekt-Investitionen als Basis für detaillierte Machbarkeitsstudien zu erstellen. Mit Hilfe dieser Machbarkeitsstudien werden zukünftig über das Umweltministerium bzw. das Finanzierungsmodell I/AP Investitionsmittel beantragt. Während ein SEDS-Kapitel generell dazu bestimmt ist, die Planungsaufgaben der Rayons darzulegen und eine gemeinschaftliche Vision zu entwickeln, erfüllt das SEDS-Kapitel zu Wasser- und Sanitärleistungen zusätzlich den Zweck, den I/AP praktisch umzusetzen. Der Ansatz für die Aktualisierung der SEDS-Kapitel beinhaltet Kernelemente des I/AP,

um die Kohärenz mit nationalen Zielsetzungen zu gewährleisten und die Chancen für eine Finanzierung zu erhöhen.

Die Unterstützung der RDAs dabei, die Aktualisierung der beiden SEDS-Kapitel durch die jeweiligen Rayon Planungsabteilungen zu moderieren (fazilitieren), verlieh dem Verfahren der Regionalentwicklung als effektivem Werkzeug für Politikimplementierung zusätzlich Antrieb. Die Entwicklung eines SEDS-Kapitels für Wasser- und Sanitär Dienstleistungen dient gleichzeitig als exemplarisches Beispiel für die Erstellung anderer Kapitel für andere Sektoren.

Auf Kreisebene unterstützte das SLE Team die RDAs und Kreisverwaltungen bei der partizipativen Definition von Prioritäten für eine strategische Identifizierung von Ortschaften, in denen Investitionen zuerst alloziert werden sollten. Dem Ansatz der partizipativen Definition von Prioritäten liegt die Überlegung zugrunde, dass durch die Einbindung derjenigen, die auf lokaler Ebene von Politikmaßnahmen direkt betroffen sind, die Politikumsetzung zu einem höheren Grad zur Zufriedenheit der Bürger und ihrer stärkeren Identifizierung mit politischen Entscheidungen beiträgt.

Vorgehensweise und Methodik

Folgende Aktivitäten wurden unter Leitung der RDAs und der in den RDAs tätigen GIZ-Mitarbeiterinnen und -Mitarbeitern durchgeführt und vom SLE-Team unterstützt:

- **Identifizierung des rechtlichen Rahmens und der Praktiken bezüglich lokaler Planungsdokumente.** Die Struktur bestehender SEDS-Kapitel wurde analysiert und Verbesserungen vorgeschlagen. Die jeweiligen Inhalte und die Feinstruktur wurden von den zuständigen moldauischen Institutionen befürwortet.
- **Analyse des institutionellen Rahmens im Wasser- und Sanitärsektor.** Finanzierungsmechanismen, Zuständigkeiten, Sektorprioritäten und die relevanten Normen für Planung und Umsetzung von Wasser- und Sanitärprojekten (Investition und Management) wurden untersucht. Die Leistungsfähigkeit des Sektors wurde während Experteninterviews, Austausch bei Meetings auf nationaler Ebene und Dokumentensichtung analysiert.
- **Entwicklung eines partizipativen Ansatzes zur Aktualisierung eines SEDS-Kapitels im Wasser- und Sanitärsektor.** Die Einbindung der Bevölkerung wurde konzipiert und Schritte aufgezeigt.
- **Pilotanwendung des Ansatzes zur partizipativen Definition von strategischen Prioritäten auf Kreisebene.** Die in nationalen Politiken vorgegebenen Zielsetzungen für die Entwicklung des Sektors wurden identifiziert, um den Spielraum für eine lokale Strategie auf Kreisebene aufzuzeigen. Die sich aus der nationalen Politik ergebenden Prioritäten wurden während eines

Stakeholder Dialoges in Form von drei Runden Tischen in den beiden Rayons um lokale Prioritäten ergänzt und diese gewichtet.

- **Ausarbeitung eines Leitfadens für Fazilitatoren, der auf den Erfahrungen der Pilotanwendung des partizipativen Ansatzes aufbaut.** Die Prozess Erfahrung und die Ergebnisse des Stakeholder Dialoges wurden kontinuierlich beobachtet und dokumentiert. Auf diese Weise kann methodisches Fachwissen zu partizipativer Infrastrukturplanung durch RDA-Fazilitatoren auf andere Sektoren und Rayons übertragen werden.
- **Durchführung einer Exkursionsreise nach Rumänien und in das Bundesland Brandenburg.** Moldauische Repräsentanten aller Ebenen nahmen an dem Austausch teil und identifizierten gemeinschaftlich relevante Transformationserfahrungen für die Entwicklung des Wasser- und Sanitärsektors in der Republik Moldau.
- **Verankerung des Ansatzes zur partizipativen Formulierung des SEDS-Kapitels durch einen Mehrebenen-Politikdialog.** Die politischen Zielsetzungen und Planungsprozeduren wurden kontinuierlich mit den politischen Entscheidungsträgern diskutiert und eine Unterstützung des Ansatzes zur partizipativen Strategieentwicklung mittels Regionalentwicklung gefunden.

Ergebnisse

Die mit dem rechtlichen Rahmen übereinstimmende Struktur eines SEDS-Kapitels (am Beispiel des Wasser- und Sanitärsektors) umfasst:

- Eine Wasser- und Sanitärsektoranalyse auf Rayonebene
- Die Definition von Zielsetzungen und Investitionsprioritäten für die zukünftige Entwicklung des Wasser- und Sanitätssektors im Rayon (strategischer Teil)
- Die Erklärung von Maßnahmen für die Zielerreichung
- Einen Aktionsplan für die schrittweise Umsetzung (Planungsteil)
- Einen Teil zu Monitoring und Evaluierung

Nachdem die SEDS-Kapitelstruktur identifiziert wurde, lag der Fokus der Unterstützung des SLE-Teams für die Rayonverwaltung und die RDAs auf der Vervollständigung der strategischen Komponente. Diese stellt die Grundlage für weitere technische Planung und Management-Überlegungen dar, als auch für die Festlegung auf Ziele und das Erstellen eines Aktionsplanes. Die nationalen Prioritäten für den Sektor wurden von erfahrenen GOPA² Experten erarbeitet, ihre

² GOPA Consulting stellt Expertendienstleistungen für das GIZ-Projekt "Modernisierung kommunaler Dienstleistungen in der Republik Moldau" bereit.

jeweiligen Gewichtungen wurden vorgeschlagen, und die definierten, gewichteten Prioritäten während eines Treffens auf nationaler Ebene angenommen. Durch die Kombination von Rayon- mit nationalen Prioritäten wird zum einen die Erreichung nationaler Zielsetzungen sicher gestellt. Zum anderen ermöglicht dies die Anpassung der Politikumsetzung an lokale Gegebenheiten.

Für die Aktualisierung der SEDS-Kapitel zum Wasser- und Sanitärbereich als Teil der strategischen Planung auf Rayonebene wurde ein zweigliedriger Ansatz vorgeschlagen. Die vorgelagerte Situationsanalyse soll als Orientierung für Entscheidungsträger bei strategischen Überlegungen dienen. Die erste Säule des Ansatzes beinhaltet neben der Definition von Prioritäten die Gewichtung der Prioritäten, um eine differenzierte, relative Priorisierung des Investitionsbedarfs zu ermöglichen. Die Einigung auf Prioritäten und ihre jeweiligen Gewichte während drei Runder Tische war das Hauptziel der Pilotanwendung des Ansatzes in den zwei Rayons.

Parallel zum Priorisierungsprozess erfolgte innerhalb der zweiten Säule das sogenannte "Clustering" (Regionalisierung). Hierfür dienten die erhobenen Wasser- und Sanitärdaten sowie sozio-ökonomische Kennziffern. Die Gruppierung mehrerer Ortschaften in eine gemeinsame Dienstleistungszone (Cluster), die gemeinschaftliche Nutzung von Management und Technik, wurde im Sinne der effizienten Bereitstellung von Dienstleistung und der möglichen Skaleneffekte gewählt. Im letzten Schritt werden Prioritäten und Cluster zusammengeführt und so diejenigen Cluster mit den höchsten Investitionsprioritäten identifiziert. Nach diesem letzten Planungsschritt sollen die gewählten Entscheidungsträger im Rat des Rayons das vorgeschlagene, auf Prioritäten basierende Dokument annehmen, um die Umsetzung der Strategie, als auch die Integration der Ortsentwicklungspläne zu ermöglichen. Die Identifizierung der technologischen- und Managementoptionen für die Gruppierung der Ortschaften dauert noch an. Nationale strategische Prioritäten und die von Interessensvertretern auf Kreisebene festgelegten Prioritäten werden in der unten stehenden Tabelle gezeigt. Die **Rayon-Prioritäten stellen die Kernergebnisse des Pilottestes** dar.

Tabelle: Nationale und Rayonprioritäten mit deren entsprechenden Gewichtung

Nationale Prioritäten	Relatives Gewicht
Wasserbedingte Sterblichkeit reduzieren	0.25
Abdeckung der Bevölkerung mit Rohrleitungs-Wasserversorgung verbessern	0.15
24-Stunden Versorgung mit Trinkwasser sicher stellen	0.15
Abdeckung der Bevölkerung mit verbesserten Sanitärdienstleistungen erhöhen	0.15
Verfall existierender Infrastruktur aufhalten	0.15
Zugang von (Vor-)Schülern zu verbesserten Wasser- und Sanitäreinrichtungen verbessern	0.15
Cahul Rayon Prioritäten	Relatives Gewicht
Orte mit höherem ökonomischen Potential fördern	0.41
Größere Ortschaften fördern	0.32
Zugang von öffentlichen Einrichtungen (insbesondere Gesundheitszentren) zu Wasser- und Sanitärdienstleistung verbessern	0.27
Riscani Rayon Prioritäten	Relatives Gewicht
Management der Wasser- und Sanitärdienstleister verbessern	0.29
Lebensbedingungen in benachteiligten Gebieten verbessern	0.28
Zugang von öffentlichen Einrichtungen (insbesondere Gesundheitszentren) zu Wasser- und Sanitärdienstleistung verbessern	0.22
Bestehende Infrastruktur ausbauen	0.21

Erkenntnisse

Die Erkenntnisse sind in drei Abschnitte unterteilt: 1. das Einbetten der Aufgabe in den institutionellen Kontext; 2. die Ausarbeitung und Verankerung des Ansatzes; und 3. die Erkenntnisse bezüglich der praktischen Anwendung in den Pilotrayons.

Folgende Erkenntnisse wurden während der Einbettung gemacht:

- **I/AP stellt eine Schnittstelle dar.** Der vorgeschlagene bottom-up Ansatz zur partizipativen Definition von Prioritäten wurde von politischen Entscheidungsträgern als wichtig erachtet, da es die Klassifizierung der Projekte anhand des Bedarfes ermöglicht und gleichzeitig Qualitätsstandards erfüllt. Die Zustimmung war von sehr großer Bedeutung für die erfolgreiche Einbettung des Ansatzes in die bestehenden Politiken des Sektors und den Anschluss an den I/AP als Werkzeug für Wasser- und Sanitärsektor-Ausgabenmanagement.
- **Die SEDS-Kapitelstruktur hat Schwächen.** Bisher folgt die SEDS-Kapitelstruktur den Vorgaben der Regierungsentscheidung Nr. 33 (Government of

the Republic of Moldova, 2007). Dieses Dokument skizziert stichpunktartig, was eine Strategie beinhalten soll, und diene als eher widersprüchlicher Referenzpunkt.

Bezüglich der Ausarbeitung und Verankerung des Ansatzes zur SEDS-Kapitel-Aktualisierung konnten folgende Erkenntnisse gewonnen werden:

- **Aufgrund der Komplexität der Aufgabenstellung war es notwendig, während der Methodenausarbeitung iterativ vorzugehen.** Dies führte zu einer Ausweitung der anfänglichen Idee (der partizipativen Definition von Prioritäten) hin zu einer regionalisierten Wasser- und Sanitärdienstleistung. Das Know-how von Experten trug zur Betrachtung von Aspekten bei, die vorher nicht hinreichend beachtet wurden, wie bspw. der Wille und die Möglichkeiten der Bevölkerung, für eine verbesserte Dienstleistung zu bezahlen.
- **Mehrebenen-Politikdialog ist für eine robuste und breite Zustimmung von Entscheidungsträgern unverzichtbar.** Die Unterstützung eines kontinuierlichen Austausches zwischen Governance-Ebenen, Sektor-Ministerien und internationalen Entwicklungspartnern war hilfreich, die Erwartungen einzelner Institutionen abzuklären und Entwicklungsstrategien und Umsetzungsansätze vertikal und horizontal zu harmonisieren.
- **Exkursionen intensivierten die Kommunikation zwischen Wasser- und Sanitär-Governance Institutionen.** Vertreter aller Governance-Ebenen profitierten vom institutionellen Austausch während der Exkursionsreise nach Rumänien und Brandenburg, die die Transformationserfahrungen im Wasser- und Sanitärbereich in den beiden Ländern zum Thema hatte. Das gab den aktuellen Diskussionen über moldauische Ansätze und politische Zuständigkeiten Anschub.

Während der Pilotdurchführung des Ansatzes konnte das Team folgende Erkenntnisse gewinnen:

- **Datenerhebung und die Verfügbarkeit von Informationen sind ein zeitraubender, limitierender Faktor für den zweigliedrigen Ansatz.** Existierende Aufzeichnungen der Gemeinden und Dienstleister für Wasserver- und Abwasserentsorgung beinhalten veraltete Daten von schlechter Qualität.
- **Die effektive Einbindung aller relevanten Interessensvertreter ist eine Herausforderung.** Das Spektrum der verschiedenen Beiträge unterstreicht die Stärken einer Einbindung der Bürger auf lokaler Ebene. Der Austausch über die jeweiligen, gruppenspezifischen Prioritäten erwies sich jedoch als zeitaufwändige logistische Herausforderung.
- **Die partizipative Herausarbeitung von Sektorprioritäten ist für die meisten Interessensvertreter ein Novum.** Der Zweck des komplexen Priorisierungsprozesses hat sich für einige Interessensvertreter als schwer

verständlich erwiesen. Während Diskussionsrunden wurde deutlich, dass einige Teilnehmer hohe Erwartungen bzgl. sofortiger Projektauswahl und -finanzierung besaßen.

Schlußfolgerungen

- Während der erstmaligen Anwendung des Ansatzes zur SEDS-Kapitel-Aktualisierung konnte die zweite Säule des Ansatzes, das Clustering, nicht fertig gestellt werden. Daher lässt sich noch nicht abschließend bewerten, welchen Einfluss die partizipative Definition von Prioritäten auf die Rangfolge der Ortschaften bei der Investitionspriorisierung im Vergleich zu einem rein technokratischen, oder auf einem auf nationale Prioritäten beschränkten Ansatz hat. Jedoch gibt es klare Hinweise darauf, dass der Ansatz des partizipativen, strategischen Planens einer exklusiven Expertenplanung vorzuziehen ist. Ein partizipativer Ansatz, der einen gründlichen Austausch ermöglicht, fördert eine nachhaltige Entscheidungsfindung. Partizipation verringert auch die Tendenz, den Wahlkreis von Entscheidungsträgern zu bevorzugen, da der getroffene Konsens über Parteigrenzen hinaus geht.
- In der Republik Moldau wird den Besonderheiten der öffentlichen Dienstleistungen im ländlichen Raum noch zu wenig Beachtung geschenkt. Mit dem derzeitigen demographischen Trend verringern sich die Chancen für Skaleneffekte (z.B. die Zahl der Hausanschlüsse pro Kilometer Rohrleitung) drastisch. Technische und geographische Kostenfaktoren werden durch den städtisch-ländlichen Armutsgradienten noch schwerwiegender. Daher verdient die Kapazität der Landbevölkerung, für marktbasierete Dienstleistungen zu bezahlen, besondere Aufmerksamkeit.
- Die mangelnde Verfügbarkeit von detaillierten, belastbaren Daten für die Planung von Infrastrukturdienstleistungen stellen ein Nadelöhr für Planer und Entscheidungsträger dar. Die zukünftige Erhebung hochauflösender Daten zur Analyse des Status Quo im Sektor wird viel Zeit und Ressourcen in Anspruch nehmen, die dann nicht für das Aufhalten des Verfalls bestehender Systeme zur Verfügung stehen.
- Der hier vorgeschlagene Ansatz macht sich für interkommunale Dienstleistungssysteme stark, wobei vorausgesetzt wird, dass Bürgermeister und Gemeinderäte sich auf die Idee regionalisierter Wasser- und Sanitärdienstleistung einlassen. Jedoch verfügen die lokalen Administrationsstrukturen oft nicht über ausreichende Kapazitäten und Know-how, um verwaltungstechnisches „Neuland“ wie das der interkommunalen Zusammenarbeit zu betreten. Ebenfalls ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass sie sich ohne weiteres auf Kooperationsabkommen

einlassen, bei denen es – wie im Infrastrukturbereich üblich – um große Summen für den lokalen öffentlichen Haushalt geht.

- Die Mehrebenen-Governance öffentlicher Dienstleistungen befindet sich in der Republik Moldau noch in einem Anfangsstadium. Der während dieses Arbeitsauftrages unterstützte Politikdialog führte zu einer breiten Zustimmung zum Ansatz der Regionalentwicklung von Seiten der moldauischen Entscheidungsträger. Jedoch muss der ordnungspolitische Rahmen als verlässliche und angepasste Planungsgrundlage im Sinne einer zügigen Entwicklung des Sektors von widersprüchlichen und veralteten Regelwerken befreit werden.
- Der von den internationalen Entwicklungspartnern angestoßene und auf den Weg gebrachte Ansatz der Regionalentwicklung zur Umsetzung von Entwicklungsstrategien muss entschlossen vollendet werden. Das noch zu etablierende Know-how moldauischer Entscheidungsträger benötigt eine wohl koordinierte Unterstützung.

Empfehlungen

Um zu verstehen, welches Potential die Einbezug der Bevölkerung in strategische Planung für eine stärker bedarfsorientierte, lokal angepasste Planung birgt, muss der mit der partizipativen Definition von Prioritäten begonnene Prozess zu Ende gebracht werden. Schlüssel für die erfolgreiche Ausweitung des Ansatzes sind die Kapazitäten und Ressourcen, die den RDAs zur Verfügung stehen.

Bezüglich des moldauischen Wasser- und Sanitärsektors dauert die vollständige Entwicklung eines Planungs- und Investitionsrahmens weiter an; ebenso wie der Wille, die Regierung der Republik Moldau bei der Entwicklung eines eigenen Ansatzes zu unterstützen. Regierungsvertreter sollten diesen Prozess federführend begleiten, während die internationalen Entwicklungspartner sich im Sinne einer höheren Effizienz koordinieren und diesen Bemühungen unterordnen sollten, wo die aktive Führung der jeweiligen moldauischen Institution dieses anbietet. Die Fragen nach dem Willen und den Fähigkeiten der ländlichen, ärmeren Bevölkerung für erhöhte Preise öffentlicher Dienstleistungen aufzukommen, sollten ebenfalls von den Partnern in den Bereichen Regionalentwicklung und Wasser- und Sanitärversorgung erhoben und beantwortet werden. Dies würde zu einer realistischen, angepassten Abschätzung von Aktionsräumen beitragen, und eine ehrliche Kommunikation über die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Sektorentwicklung zulassen.

Abbreviations

ApaCanal	Water and Wastewater Operator
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
CALM	Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova
CD	Capacity Development
EC	European Commission
EcoSan	Ecological Sanitation
EU	European Union
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoM	Government of Moldova
GOPA	Gesellschaft für Organisation, Planung und Ausbildung (Consulting Group)
I/AP	Investment/Action Plan (MoE/OECD)
IDA	International Development Association
LPA	Local Public Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none">- LPA 1: locality level (village, comuna, primaria, municipality)- LPA 2: rayon level
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRDC	Ministry of Regional Development and Construction
NCCRD	National Coordination Council for Regional Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PPD	Participatory Priority Definition
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RDC	Regional Development Council
RoM	Republic of Moldova
RT	Round Table
SCC	Sector Coordination Council
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy

SLE	Seminar für Ländliche Entwicklung (Postgraduate Studies on International Cooperation)
WatSan	Water Supply and Sanitation

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1 Introduction

Citizen's direct involvement in decisions about public issues has become a trend all over the world during the last three decades. Originating from civil society's request to play a more active role in policy-making, participation today has become a tool for elected decision-makers to consult with their constituency. There are countless forms of participatory processes; all of them are considered to be more needs-responsive compared to technocratic planning, whilst simultaneously bridging the perceived gap between the governing and the governed.

Similar benefits are ascribed to the process of decentralisation, which aims at improving governance of public services on administrative levels subordinate to central state institutions. The most prominent objectives of decentralisation are efficiency gains in reaching policy objectives, and creating higher acceptance of political decisions through connecting decentralised state institutions to the people. Participation can be understood as a powerful complement to decentralisation, especially because it creates an interface where people from different social groups interact, debate and decide on the things in which they share an interest. This aspect is of utmost interest for those contexts where administrative governance bodies are characterised by low accountability and the pursuit of individual agendas.

1.1 Context of the Study

In the post-Soviet Republic of Moldova (RoM), the decentralisation of governance and the concomitant reordering of authority are still underway. As a result, public administration is characterised by unclear responsibilities and a lack of resources (GIZ, 2011). Due to the profound economic and political transformations since the demise of the Soviet Union, the country today is considered to be the poorest European economy (European Commission, 2009). In 2010, GDP per capita was only € 1,210³. Limited economic opportunities and deteriorating living conditions drives many Moldovans to temporary and permanent migration. According to UNDP, more than 23% of the economically active population worked abroad in 2009 (Vaculovschi, Vremis, Craievschi-Toarta, & Toritsyn, 2011). Owing to the lack of resources and the legacy of Soviet governance style, public infrastructure provision from roads to health services continues to deteriorate.

³ World Bank (2011): GDP per capita (current US\$). URL: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD> (accessed 18.11.2011).

Box 1-1: Typology of local public administration

As a result of Soviet legacy, administrative bodies in the RoM consist of relatively low population numbers. According to Art. 17 of the Law on Administrative-Territorial Organisation (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 1998), a *primaria* (mayorality) has a population size of at least 1,500 inhabitants. Villages comprised of a rural population may join two or more villages to create a larger territorial-administrative entity, called a *comuna* (Art. 5 of the Law on Administrative-Territorial Organisation). A different form of administrative territorial unit is the *rayon* which is organised on a district-wide level.

The Moldovan water supply and sanitation (WatSan) sector is one of the public service sectors in need of reform, especially concerning investment policies. In the RoM only 45% of the population has access to potable water (European Commission, 2009: 2). Only 31 % of the population is connected to a sewerage system (European Commission, 2009: 2). In rural areas, the situation is even worse with about 46 % of the rural population using simple pit latrines with direct percolation to shallow groundwater which, in turn, enters the drinking water supply through the use of wells (European Commission, 2009: 2). Generally, wastewater treatment plants do not function properly and are often abandoned or not maintained properly due to financial constraints (World Bank, 2008: 2).

There are several obstacles to the effective and efficient functioning of WatSan provision in the RoM, which can be categorised into institutional and financial challenges. Firstly, financial resources for investments in the WatSan sector are limited. Even if national and international funds are available to support WatSan development⁴, there are no procedures for allocating these resources in a transparent and coordinated way. Secondly, there is a national strategic framework, but it is too broad to give information on how to define and implement investment at the district (*rayon*) or local level (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011: 6).

1.2 Scope and Objectives

In order to foster socio-economic development in the regions and overcome socio-economic imbalances between prosperous centres and disadvantaged rural zones, the Government of Moldova (GoM) adopted regional development. Regional development is a modality to facilitate the implementation of sector policies and

⁴ At present, the sum of € 45 million has been agreed for sector investments through the European Union's budget support to RoM.

strategies, e.g. with regard to water and sanitation, solid waste management, or energy efficiency of public edifices. To promote regional development in the RoM, the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC) was founded in 2009. It coordinates the regional implementation of ministry policies, where previously there had been overlapping responsibilities between ministries.

The executive body for regional development policy in the regions are the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), founded in 2010 (see Chapter 2.2.2). A key function of the RDAs is to support the rayon administrations in drafting or updating Socio-Economic Development Strategies (SEDS). Every rayon is supposed to have a SEDS covering all relevant public sectors in its respective chapters, with a validity of five years. It is supposed to serve as the rayon's tool for integrated planning and as the mechanism for implementing national (sector) strategies. At present, there is no general approach for drafting such a strategy, which is also true for the transparent identification of priority investments (GIZ, 2011). Hence, most SEDS rather resemble a wish list than a coherent, strategic and practical instrument for development planning.

To address this situation, the MRDC supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) is implementing the project "Modernisation of local public services in the Republic of Moldova" during the period of 2010 to 2014.⁵ The project focuses on enabling the access of citizens to improved local public services through better delivery and effective implementation of national sector policies, via coherent rayon and regional development strategies.⁶

The SLE team's assignment, commissioned by GIZ for its partner, the MRDC, is comprised of three components (see Figure 1-1), starting with the framework of the MRDC/GIZ project for modernising local public services. The WatSan sector is used as a pilot example in this study, as most aspects relevant for embedding the methodological approach correspond to other public service sectors. Secondly, as part of a comprehensive approach on participatory rayon development planning, a pilot methodology for updating a rayon's SEDS chapter on WatSan, was elaborated. It focuses on the strategic considerations necessary to prioritise the investment of scarce financial resources. The third component brings together the first two by testing the approach in two pilot rayons in the RoM in order to prioritise investment needs in the WatSan sector.

⁵ For further information see GIZ: <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/europa-kaukasus-zentralasien/moldau/31025.htm> (accessed 19.11. 2011).

⁶ Ibid.

The bringing together of participatory investment planning and WatSan sector policy implementation within the context of regional development, constituted uncharted territory in the RoM. Therefore, a key feature of the SLE assignment was to bridge the gaps between all involved institutions at all levels of governance.

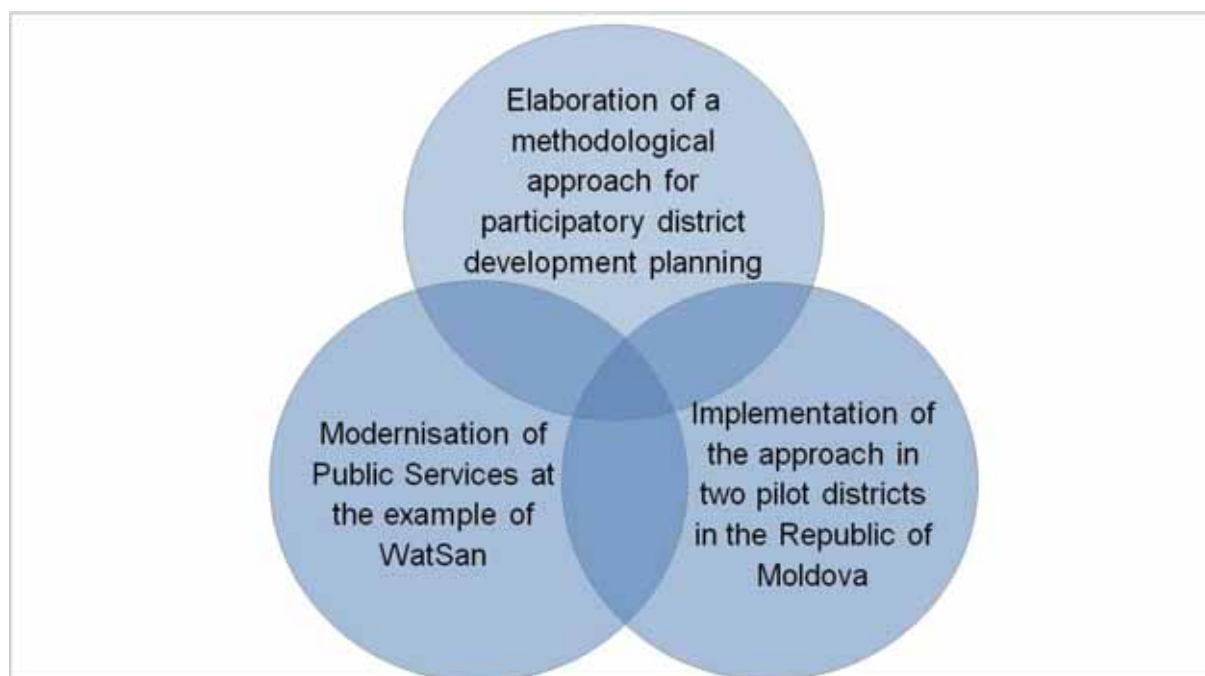


Figure 1-1: Study components integrated during the SLE team's assignment (source: own)

The system of objectives⁷, as elaborated at the beginning of the SLE assignment, was adapted during the field phase in Moldova in order to meet evolving objectives and circumstances.

The main outputs of the SLE assignment are:

- To elaborate a methodological approach for Participatory Priority Definition (PPD) as part of rayon development planning in the WatSan sector
- To support an update of the rayon's SEDS chapter on WatSan
- To design a Manual on the basis of the pilot implementation of PPD and the updating of the SEDS chapter on WatSan
- To facilitate a multi-level Policy Dialogue, integrating perspectives of the local, regional and national level
- To organise Exposure Visits to Romania and Germany for Moldovan counterparts, focusing on the WatSan sector

⁷ The system of objectives can be found in Annex I.

- To support Capacity Development

Due to the pilot character of this assignment and the frequent adaptations that took place over the course of developing and applying the methodology, the Manual and the SEDS chapter still need to be completed. Inputs for the completion were and will be provided by external consultants. The final Manual and SEDS chapter will integrate this study's results with the pending elements.

With this study report, the SLE team proposes a participatory planning approach at the interface of the domains of *water supply and sanitation* and *regional development*, in order to address the Moldovan population's need for improved access to WatSan services. By detailing the steps taken along the way, and discussing the experiences had, the team hopes to contribute to the improvement of planning procedures, policy implementation, and eventually the living conditions of the Moldovan people.

1.3 Structure of this Study

This study covers the considerations and experiences of the SLE team while working on the assignment over a period of two months preparation, followed by three months working in the RoM. It illustrates in detail what the team contributed to the much larger, dynamic framework of modernising local public service provision in the RoM. Due to the given circumstances, some final results are still pending, and are therefore not part of this report. The reader will however become acquainted with the design of an approach for participatory development planning on rayon level, and the lessons learnt during the process.

Following this introduction, the *conceptual framework chapter (Chapter 2)* deals with the theoretical aspects relevant for this study, and links the work to the current debate in the domains of development planning, participation, governance, and water supply and sanitation for development.

Chapter 3, methodology explains the way the SLE team approached this complex assignment, and why certain methods were adopted for accomplishing the tasks. The approach developed by the SLE team is subdivided into the three spheres of Embedding, Elaborating, and Enabling. The “3 E’s” were developed as a memory tool for workshop and facilitation processes to explain the approach. “Embedding” refers to the process of establishing the approach within the Moldovan context. “Elaboration” refers to the design and implementation of the approach, including the participatory component. Lastly, “Enabling” refers to the facilitation of Policy Dialogue, Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Development within the approach. The chapter also includes a guide for the reader to easily look up key results corresponding to these methodological elements.

The first results chapter is the *Manual (Chapter 4)*. It reflects the lessons learnt during the pilot implementation of rayon level Stakeholder Dialogues, and is presented in the form of a guide for future applications. It does not constitute a step-by-step, blueprint-like guideline that can be used without further reflections and adaption to the specific context, but explains elements relevant for a strategic, participatory planning process with stakeholder representatives.

Following the Manual, the concrete outcomes of the planning process are elaborated and rayon level Stakeholder Dialogues are dealt with in *Chapter 5*. The third results chapter (*Chapter 6*) deals with the outcomes of enabling activities that the team supported during the three months field assignment.

Chapter 7 deals with the *lessons learnt* by the SLE team and its counterparts during the course of the assignment. It is a complement to the Manual, and helps to understand the importance of its careful application.

The *conclusions chapter (Chapter 8)* draws from the lessons learnt, and looks back on the experiences made during the pilot implementation by linking them to the conceptual framework.

In the final *recommendations chapter (Chapter 9)*, the SLE team points towards necessary measures for the future facilitation of participatory development planning and implementation.

2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study results from a theoretical analysis and preliminary considerations regarding the underlying assignment. As part of an iterative process, the SLE team conceptualised “the main things to be studied – the key factors, constructs or variables – and the presumed relationships among them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 18). Accordingly, this chapter reviews basic definitions and sets the basis for subsequent work.

Chapter 2.1 Public Services discusses the factors affecting the modernisation of public services in the Republic of Moldova (RoM) such as decentralisation, governance, and restructuring efforts through inter-communal cooperation. Challenges for sustainably providing water supply and sanitation (WatSan) services and the main strategies for addressing them are to be found in *Chapter 2.2 The Water and Sanitation Challenge*. This chapter also shows the responsibilities of, and interdependencies between, stakeholders involved in the Moldovan WatSan sector. In *Chapter 2.3 Participation in Planning*, the merits of making use of multi-stakeholder dialogues in local development planning are expressed. Finally, *Chapter 2.4 Linking Research and Methodological Design* explains the links between research guided by the theoretical background and the methodology which was designed to accomplish the assignment.

2.1 Public Services

2.1.1 Decentralisation and Governance of Public Services

Equal access to public services is a human right.⁸ Yet, the delivery of basic public services remains a challenge in post-Soviet countries. Typically, public services were provided by monopolistic state-owned utilities. However, since the 1990s, the public service sector in post-Soviet countries has been restructured. State revenues were cut dramatically which reduced the ability of the government to provide adequate and effective public services (Baietti, Kingdom, & van Ginneken, 2006: 2).

A new market-oriented paradigm emerged to transform utilities into service delivery organisations, and to assure improved access for citizens through better local public service delivery. Organisational models range from complete public service provision to complete private service provision. The changing nature of the state-society relationship is reflected by a move towards privatisation through varied methods,

⁸ The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Art. 21(2) states that “Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country” (United Nations, n d).

including: contracting out, issuing grants for specific services, self-help and non-profit agencies (e.g. water consumer associations), as well as hybrid forms such as public-private partnerships (Kitchen, 2005).

Moreover, decentralisation reforms (see Box 2-1), which have been promoted in developing countries during the 1990s, fostered greater local responsibility for delivery of public services (Fuhr, 1999). Trying to close the gap in fulfilling the required service, the responsibility for water and sewers was handed over to local, decentralised, government units. However, it became clear that there were shortcomings with regard to these restructuring efforts, due to the local levels' limited capacity, the limited transfer of financial resources, and the lack of transparent monitoring (Lockwood, Smits, Schouten, & Moriarty, 2010: 5).

Box 2-1: A definition of decentralisation

Decentralisation is the reorganisation of responsibilities, authority, and financial resources between, and within, levels of government – following the guiding principle of subsidiarity which requires a careful assessment of the optimal level (GTZ, 2010). There are 3 dimensions of decentralisation: political, administrative and fiscal; as well as 3 forms of decentralised public functions: deconcentrated, decentralised, and delegated (UNDP, 2010a: 11).

The decentralisation of authority and resources attempts to (UNDP, 1999: 2):

- increase the overall quality and effectiveness of governance over services
- increase opportunities for participation
- enhance government responsiveness, transparency, accountability and legitimacy

The process of decentralisation has necessitated a move towards multi-level governance (see Chapter 2.2.2). The quality of governance is determined by the degree to which exercising authority through formal and informal institutions has an impact on the quality of life of the citizens (Huther & Shah, 2006: 40). The principles enshrined in the normative concept of *Good Governance* are ultimately linked to the assessment of government performance in the service delivery areas, such as: participation, rule of law, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, strategic vision (United Nations, 2006: 7).

According to UNDP (2010b: 94), half of the Moldovan population uses polluted water in their daily lives. Poor governance has resulted in problems related to poor water quality, regular shortages, water-related diseases, and a pollution of rivers and

ground waters. The WatSan sector in the Republic of Moldova is highly fragmented with numerous small WatSan service providers⁹ operating at low economies of scale. WatSan services are often provided at a tariff well below the one needed for financial and environmental sustainability in the long-run; too low to even cover operation and maintenance costs (European Commission, 2009: 5). Although the Republic of Moldova witnessed some key policy reforms since the 1990s¹⁰, public service delivery has yet to be modernised.

2.1.2 Inter-Communal Cooperation and Regionalisation

Responding to the high fragmentation and inefficiency of service provision in post-Soviet countries, inter-communal cooperation¹¹ (ICC) refers to the cooperation between localities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. In the recent past, communities worldwide have experienced the necessity to cooperate, being increasingly confronted with challenges for the supply of local public services such as: financial shortages, changes in demands on infrastructure due to demographic shifts, international competitiveness, and growing social and environmental problems (Klemme, 2002).

The delegation of governance over services can be initiated top-down, from the central level of government, in order to strengthen decentralisation for example, or bottom up, as a response to local actors' demands. The potential of ICC is jeopardised, however, if the communities' willingness to cooperate only addresses short-term solutions. For a successful ICC, it is necessary for the associated localities to be willing to develop a common long-term strategy, overcoming political differences and conflicting interests (Frick & Hokkeler, 2008: 79).

An important aspect of ICC is the regionalisation of public services. Regionalisation can be understood as a clustering, or grouping of utilities providing public services such as water supply and sanitation services, solid waste management, or public transportation. The regionalisation of public services is used to increase efficiency

⁹ Following decentralisation in the RoM, the responsibility to provide WatSan services was assigned to the local public administration and its water provider, the Apa Canal (see Chapter 2.2.2) (European Commission, 2009).

¹⁰ A special feature of politics in the RoM is that it is the only successor state to the Soviet Union which, after a decade of transformation, saw the communist party returning to power in 2001. Since a 2009 election, the political situation in the RoM is deadlocked because the now ruling pro-Western coalition has failed to elect a president (BBC, 2011).

¹¹ Within this study, the term inter-communal cooperation was chosen instead of the widely used term inter-municipal cooperation, because in the RoM "municipality" (*municipiul*) is envisaged for the cities of Balti, Bender and Chisinau (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 1998). Yet, in the view of the authors, inter-communal cooperation applies to the collaboration for local services delivery in both urban and rural localities in the RoM.

and to lower costs by making use of economies of scale, as opposed to stand-alone solutions. Available resources are used more efficiently and the sustainability of investments is increased (GIZ, 2011a: 2). Regionalised solutions comprise: (a) service agreements, where a provider offers public services for a larger area of adjacent localities, and (b) a joint enterprise formed by several localities with a common board committee (Osoian et al., 2010: 100).

In the RoM, most localities have a local government unit, which is responsible for providing WatSan services. While most of the three municipalities and 52 towns own a WatSan service provider, known as the Apa Canal (European Commission, 2009: 4; World Bank, 2008: 2), there is no formal service provision in many rural communities¹² (especially those meeting their water demands by accessing individual shallow wells). As in many other post-Soviet countries, the RoM faces difficulties in building infrastructure in cooperation with other localities. As stated by Osoian et al. (2010: 100), a prerequisite for ICC is mutual trust among the involved communities, which in the RoM is still lacking. In addition, legislative and administrative barriers are still to be overcome. On the other hand, overregulation or a restrictive legal framework, can prevent localities from entering into common service provision agreements (Osoian et al., 2010).

2.2 The Water and Sanitation Challenge

2.2.1 Water and Sanitation for Development

Water is a fundamental requirement to sustain human life and health (United Nations, 2010: 1). Yet, numerous international reports warn about the current water and sanitation crisis which is characterised by “increasing pressure, competition, and, in some regions, even conflict over the use of water resources” (OECD, 2009: 3). Root causes can be traced to poor governance and poverty, exacerbated by social and environmental challenges such as urbanisation and climate change (United Nations, 2010: 3).

Following the rights-based approach, water supply and sanitation must be made accessible in adequate quality and quantity (United Nations, 2010). In 2010, the UN General Assembly acknowledged the human right to water, making it legally binding. Key elements encompassed in the UN concept of a human right to water are:

¹² In some rural communities WatSan services are provided through water consumer associations (WCAs). The Swiss Water and Sanitation Project in Moldova (ApaSan) has been promoting this model in the RoM for 10 years. For further information see: <http://www.apasan.md/>; http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/moldova/en/Home/Programmes/Water_and_Sanitation (accessed 25.11. 2011).

availability, acceptable water quality following WHO guidelines, equal access, and affordability (Langford, 2005: 276).

There are basically two approaches to water supply and sanitation. Proponents of the legal approach see water as a public good, while proponents of the commercial approach perceive it an economic commodity (Arce & Maume, 2005).

Access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities is a basic need. The service to supply drinking water and provide for wastewater disposal comes at a cost, however, and user contributions are essential to ensuring effective coverage. It is crucial to obtain information on the beneficiaries' ability and willingness to pay before designing WatSan services (see Chapter 9).¹³ Such a user-focused approach is part of the demand-side component in water policy. In contrast, the supply-side focuses on investments in WatSan services on the basis of need (FAO, 1993). The financial sustainability of the service provision and the affordability of the service are two, often competing objectives which have to be reconciled.

In 2000, the international community committed to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. In this context, access to water supply services is defined as the availability of at least 20 litres per person per day from a protected, i.e. safe, water source within 1 km of the user's dwelling (OECD, 2009: 36). For the achievement of the WatSan-related MDG 7, the Republic of Moldova established national targets (UNDP, 2010b: 87):

Box 2-2: WatSan-related MDG targets of the Republic of Moldova

Target 3: Increase the share of people with permanent access to safe water sources from 38.5 percent in 2002 up to 59 percent in 2010 and 65 percent in 2015.

Target 4: Increase the proportion of people with permanent access to improved sewerage from 31.3 percent in 2002 to 50.3 percent in 2010 and 65 percent in 2015.

Target 5: Increase the number of population with access to sanitation systems from 41.7 percent in 2002 to 51.3 percent in 2010 and 71.8 percent in 2015.

Due to limited available finance, policy targets in the WatSan sector need to be prioritised (OECD & EU Water Initiative, 2008). Additionally, international donor support for the WatSan sector can help to diminish the financing gap. In order to better manage resources, various donor practices have to be harmonised, and

¹³ Information on the willingness to pay (WTP) which is partly conditional upon the ability to pay (ATP) is absolutely relevant for decision-making for improved WatSan services, as shown by Gunatilake et al. (2007). The ability to pay, or affordability of a service, is measured using empirical data showing whether a household's income is sufficient to pay for the services without seriously affecting its ability to pay for other essential goods and services (GIZ/GOPA, 2011).

aligned with national strategies as was outlined in the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) and the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) lay out (OECD, n d).

Box 2-3: Donor assistance to the Moldovan WatSan sector in 2011

A mapping of current (2011) donor assistance to the Moldovan WatSan sector reveals the following major development partners (in alphabetical order):

Austrian Development Agency (ADA)¹⁴; Czech Development Agency (CzDA)¹⁵; EC Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) financed under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) including technical assistance and pilot project components¹⁶; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)¹⁷; GIZ¹⁸ and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)¹⁹; U.S. Millennium Challenge Account/Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCA/MCC)²⁰; Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)²¹; UNDP²²; World Bank/International Development Association (IDA)²³.

The importance of taking action in the Moldovan WatSan sector is supported through substantial international assistance. Yet, despite the high priority of WatSan for the above donors and their subsequent financing and technical assistance, there is no coherent approach to meet urgent investment needs and no sufficient coordination by Moldovan institutions. This lack of coherence impedes synergy between

¹⁴For further information see http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/CS_Moldova_2010-2015_02.pdf (accessed 02.11.2011)

¹⁵For further information see http://www.mzv.cz/file/698492/Development_Cooperation_Programme_Moldova_2011_2017.pdf (accessed 02.11.2011)

¹⁶For further information see http://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/moldova/projects/overview/index_en.htm (accessed 02.11.2011)

¹⁷For further information see <http://www.ebrd.com/pages/project/psd/2010/40267.shtml> (accessed 02.11.2011)

¹⁸For further information see <http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/europa-kaukasus-zentralasien/moldau/31025.htm> (accessed 02.11.2011)

¹⁹For further information see <http://www.sme-finance.info/en/moldova/kfw-in-moldova/> (accessed 02.11.2011)

²⁰For further information see http://www.amcham.md/userfiles/file/2011/05/Presentations/John_Wilson_MCC_Presentation.pdf (accessed 02.11.2011)

²¹For further information see http://www.swiss-cooperation.admin.ch/moldova/en/Home/Programmes/Water_and_Sanitation (accessed 02.11.2011)

²²For further information see <http://www.undp.md/publications/NHDRs.shtml> (accessed 02.11.2011)

²³For further information see <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=64283627&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P107612> (accessed 02.11.2011); <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/IDA/0,,contentMDK:22302611~menuPK:4754051~pagePK:51236175~piPK:437394~theSitePK:73154,00.html> (accessed 02.11.2011)

stakeholders within this sector (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011: 6).

In 2009, the OECD began to provide support to the Government of Moldova (GoM), particularly the Ministry of Environment (MoE), in order to develop an Investment/Action Plan (I/AP) for the operationalisation of the 2007 *Strategy of Water Supply and Sewage in Communities of the Republic of Moldova*. The I/AP serves as a tool to overcome inconsistencies between existing strategic and policy documents, and to channel different sources of finance to where it is needed most; in accordance with what was laid out in the Paris Declaration. Another desired outcome of the I/AP is an improved “ability to absorb and cost-effectively use financing for [WatSan] sector priority investments” at the local level (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011: 6). This underlines the importance of aligning district (*rayon*) Socio-economic Development Strategies with the I/AP (see Chapter 3.2).

2.2.2 Multi-level Sector Organisation

As part of the post-Soviet transformation process, the Republic of Moldova witnessed several political reforms based on the principles of decentralisation and regional development which resulted in new institutions²⁴ and organisational change. Institutional reforms are intricate multi-level negotiation processes which have a major impact on interests of various actors involved in policy development and implementation. This kind of interaction between actors at different levels – local, regional, and national – is characterised as *multi-level governance*. In general, multi-level governance describes the dispersion of authority and policy-making across multiple tiers (from local to central, and from public to private).²⁵ The concept draws from the international discourse on decentralisation (see Box 2-1) which itself is rather a “practice in most countries to achieve primarily a diverse array of governance and public sector management reform objectives” (UNDP, 1999: 1). Decentralisation has created a system of interlinked relationships which influence local government performance: firstly, *horizontal* interaction between local government, civil society, and private sector; and secondly, *vertical* interaction between different levels of government (Fuhr, 1999). These interactions are dimensions of multi-level governance.

²⁴ Institutions are a set of formal rules (laws, regulations, and procedures), and informal norms of behaviour (North, 1990: 3). The institutional framework presented in this study contains information on the legislation and organisational structure of the WatSan sector in the RoM.

²⁵ For a detailed discussion of multi-level governance see Enderlei et al. (2010).

In parallel, a redistributive policy is taking place with regional development. Following the principle of subsidiarity, which should not be equated with decentralisation²⁶, several tasks, for which specialised planning capacities are needed, will be fulfilled at the regional level. This includes the harmonisation of various local initiatives (Rauch, 2009: 249, 287). In the RoM, regional development institutions have arisen which are concerned with alleviating regional inequalities²⁷. Following the experience of Western European countries (Ansell, 2000), Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) develop integrated strategies and bring together multiple actors across different levels and sectors.

²⁶ The principle of subsidiarity calls for a realistic allocation of authority, which implies that in some cases decentralisation might not be useful.

²⁷ See Regional Development Agency North (2010) and Regional Development Agency South (2010)

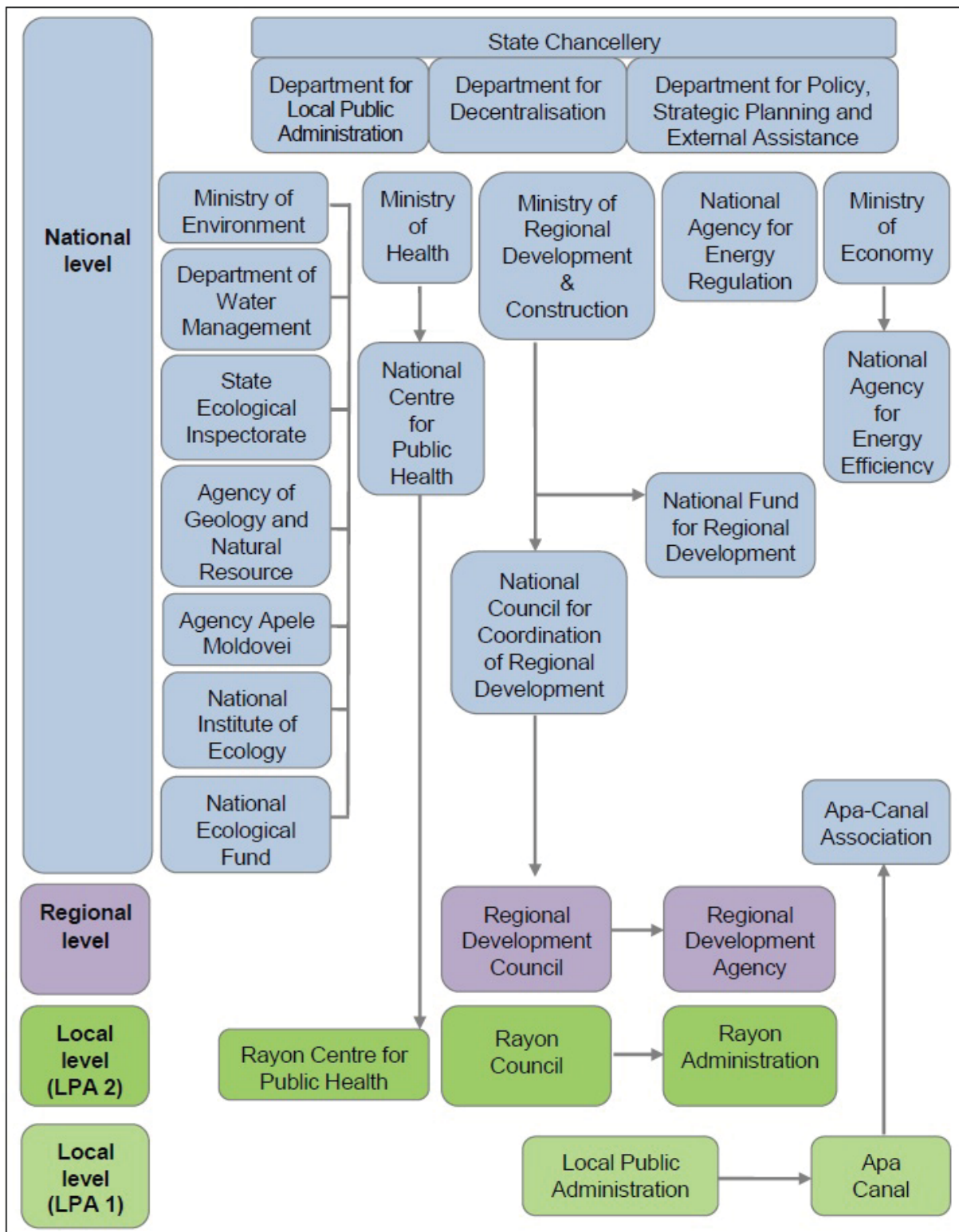


Figure 2-1: Sector organisation (source: own)

As shown in Figure 2-1, several institutions are involved in the WatSan sector coordination. Responsibilities are fragmented and the financing sources are weakly coordinated, which undermines policy coherence (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011: 7). While overlapping responsibilities result in

duplication on the one hand, there are gaps regarding functions and fulfilment of mandates on the other²⁸:

- Within the **Ministry of Environment (MoE)**, the Department of Water and Sanitation is responsible for strategic and policy issues in the WatSan sector.
- The MoE's integrated **Agency Apele Moldovei (AAM)** is responsible for the implementation of state policy in water resources management, water supply and sewage as well as operative administration.²⁹
- The **National Ecological Fund (NEF)** is one of the main domestic sources of finance for projects in the WatSan sector.
- The **State Ecological Inspectorate (SEI)** oversees local ecological funding, as well as controls and supervises environmental protection.
- The **State Agency on the Geology of the Republic of Moldova (AGeOM)** which reports to the MoE monitors ground water quality and assures the protection of underground water resources.
- The **National Agency for Energy Regulation (ANRE)** supervises the WatSan tariff-setting process.
- The **National Centre for Public Health (NCPH)**, a government agency under the aegis of the **Ministry of Health (MoH)**, is responsible for the monitoring of drinking water quality and, hence, carries out regular inspections.
- The **Sector Coordination Council (SCC)** on Environment, Water Supply and Sanitation serves as a platform for a policy dialogue in the WatSan sector, and the harmonisation and coordination of the donor community and the government.
- The **State Chancellery** is responsible for the organisational support of the Government. Its duty is to draft, implement and monitor policies elaborated by government authorities.

The WatSan sector is given priority in key policy documents such as the Regional Development Strategies (RDS).³⁰ With the imperative of regional development, the

²⁸ Presentation held by Philippe Bergeron, team leader of the EU Technical Assistance for the Implementation of Sector Policy Support Programme in the Water Sector (Water SPSP), at the SCC meeting on 18.10.2011.

²⁹ Several institutional reviews indicate that the information flow between AAM and MoE is weak. Yet, due to a lack of transparency, it seems to be difficult to assess the performance of AAM, e.g. with regard to data collection (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011: 27); Presentation held by Ludmila Gofman, deputy team leader of the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)/Millennium Challenge).

³⁰ Refer to Regional Development Agency North (2010), Regional Development Agency South (2010), Government of the Republic of Moldova (2010) and Government of the Republic of Moldova (2008) for details.

GoM aims at balancing regional needs and focusing on sectors, the latter being prevalent in the sector ministries and their subordinate bodies. Therefore, the water sector organisation cannot be seen in isolation from the regional development institutional framework:

- The foundation of the **Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC)** together with its subordinate bodies in 2010 can be considered the result of a shift towards regional development policy implementation.³¹
- The **National Fund for Regional Development (NFRD)** is the financial source for the achievement of regional development objectives, adding to the implementation of sector strategies in the regions.
- The **National Coordination Council for Regional Development (NCCRD)** approves national regional development documents and the allocation of NFRD financial resources.
- The **Regional Development Agencies (RDAs)** are the regional development policy executive bodies responsible for the facilitation, coordination and monitoring of regional development projects.³² Their key function is to facilitate local strategic planning through a broad-based participatory process which was critical for the pilot-testing of the approach documented in this study.
- The RDA is working under the guidance and supervision of the **Regional Development Council (RDC)**.³³ Every rayon (district) that is part of a development region is represented in the RDC.
- The **second level administrative-territorial units (LPA 2)** are the rayons. An elected **Rayon Council** approves strategies and monitors their implementation.³⁴
- Localities (i.e. comuna, primaria, and municipality) represent the **first level administrative-territorial units (LPA 1)**. The elected **local councils** approve the

³¹ This is set by the Law on Regional Development (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2006a) which was adopted in 2007.

³² It is stipulated by the national Regional Development Strategy (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2010) and Art. 8 of the Law on Regional Development (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2006a) that the RDAs shall draft a Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and a Regional Operational Plan (ROP) for which input will be provided by the rayons' SEDS. Up to now, RDAs were established in 3 out of 6 development regions (North, South and Centre).

³³ Though the RDC is the supervising and decision-making body, its link to the RDA is weak (Oxford Policy Management, 2011).

³⁴ The distribution of responsibilities is stated in the Law on Local Public Administration (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2006b).

local budget and socioeconomic development planning. The local public services are organised, coordinated, and monitored by the LPA 1.³⁵

- **Apa Canals** are semi-autonomous local water and wastewater utilities responsible to the local government (World Bank, 2008: 3). Most Apa Canals are members of the **Moldovan Apa Canal Association (AMAC)**.

2.3 Participation in Planning

2.3.1 Participatory Local Development Planning

Participatory local development planning attempts to make planning and resource allocation systems more responsive to the specific needs and possibilities of the local population. This concept is often missing in plans developed by external experts, in which ambitious goals are set with only limited linkages to realistic development needs and possibilities at local level. Easterly (2007) characterises those following the latter (external) approach as “planners” who impose top-down extensive development plans, in contrast to “searchers” who look for bottom-up solutions to specific needs.

Effective governance of service delivery requires participation of stakeholders in order to respond to local demand. This is why bottom-up solutions promote the involvement of a varied range of local actors – the public sector, civil society, the private sector and marginalised groups – in planning and managing local development. There are *normative* reasons for engaging citizens in governance according to democratic ideals, as well as *instrumental* reasons such as seeking approval and acceptance (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2011: 171). There is an unambiguous correlation between the quality of services and participatory local development planning, as the latter increases the pressure from below for local government performance, strengthening the accountability of political representatives (Goldman & Abbot, 2004: 10).

Appropriate local development planning, supporting multi-level governance, integrates different planning horizons and sectors (*horizontal integration*), and is aligned with regional and national policies (*vertical integration*) (UNDP & SDC, 2009a: 9).

There is not much experience with participatory local development planning in post-Soviet countries. One reason for this is the legacy of a very centralised (and non-participatory) top-down planning during Soviet times. In post-Soviet countries, low

³⁵ The LPA's responsibilities are set by the Law on Local Public Administration (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2006b).

levels of political efficacy and a lack of interest in civic affairs lead to political disengagement of the civil society (Hutcheson & Korosteleva, 2006).

Since the RoM is striving towards EU accession, local development planning has to be coherent with EU planning guidelines, in order to access financial sources and expert assistance for localities. For this, an alignment between sector policies and local priorities and capacities needs to be attempted.

However, the transfer of planning tasks to lower levels of government remains a profound challenge. Improved local governance for the provision of adequate public services is expected to result from the participatory formulation of Socio-economic Development Strategies (SEDS) at rayon level as part of a transparent mid-term strategic planning.

2.3.2 Stakeholder Dialogue

Grounded in participation theory, Stakeholder Dialogues (SD) enhance cooperation and communication among key interest groups.³⁶ SDs are a useful tool for participatory development planning, especially when different perspectives need to be integrated and broad acceptance of results is required. Building on consensus, a multi-stakeholder process is increasingly important regarding the sustainability of any undertaking (Vallejo & Hauselmann, 2004).

Proponents of the approach assume that the involvement of all affected stakeholders increases the quality of results by ensuring a synergy of responsibilities, a more efficient use of resources, sustainable decisions and credibility of decision-making (GIZ, 2011b: 5-7). Moreover, stakeholder involvement enhances community self-determination and citizen engagement (Buse & Nelles, 1978: 42). Yet, stakeholder involvement should never be reduced to an end in itself. If stakeholders have the feeling that their contribution in decision-making is not relevant, it may lower their willingness to participate in the long run (Selle, 2006: 20).

The spectrum of Stakeholder Dialogues comprises: consultative Stakeholder Dialogues, and Stakeholder Dialogues focused on collaboration and implementation (GIZ, 2011b: 10). While the former aims at integrating different perspectives and interests, the latter involves stakeholders in the implementation³⁷.

³⁶ Within this study, a stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that either is affected or could have an impact on the issue at stake.

³⁷ This classification is in line with other common typologies in participatory theory that establish a dichotomy between participation that has a rather consultative character and participation with a rather decisive character (Kersting, 2008: 28).

2.3.3 Multi-Criteria Decision-Making

Given financial shortcomings and policy trade-offs, it is important to set priorities within local development planning. A common element in the search for an optimal solution is Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM). The setting of priorities and making of decisions is an iterative and collaborative process. MCDM methods to aid decision-makers involved in WatSan investments to choose between options or alternatives consist of: ranking, rating, and pairwise comparison (Mendoza & Prabhu, 2000). MCDM is a preferred tool which assists in the avoidance of partiality and which gives equal space to both nationally set priorities and local priorities, within multi-stakeholder dialogues (Proctor, 2009: 76).

2.4 Linking Research and Methodological Design

The objective of the SLE assignment was to develop and pilot-test a participatory approach for updating the SEDS in Riscani and Cahul rayons, with the WatSan sector as an example for public services provision.

As illustrated in Figure 2-2, the theoretical background which guided the research revolves around three main topics: public services (see Chapter 2.1), the water and sanitation challenge (see Chapter 2.2) and participation in planning (see Chapter 2.3).

The methodology which was developed to fulfil the assignment; including updating and formulating a rayon SEDS chapter, and using Stakeholder Dialogues as a tool for facilitating integrated local development planning; consists of three pillars:

- the participatory approach to define priorities for WatSan investments in the rayon following the primacy of urgent investment needs
- the reorganisation of WatSan service providers in the form of clustering localities via inter-communal cooperation/regionalisation
- the integration of both stages in order to come up with a list of ranked clusters

Given the plethora of possible WatSan investments and options for clustering localities by organising common public services, multi-criteria decision-making was an essential element of the methodology (see Chapter 2.3.3).

The experiences had during the pilot implementation, as well as recommendations for the further use of the methodology in other rayons and/or other sectors, are contained in the Manual, which serves as a tool to facilitate the rayons' SEDS updating in the future (see Chapter 4). Multi-level Policy Dialogue (see Chapter 3.4.1), Knowledge Transfer (see Chapter 3.4.2), and Capacity Development (see Chapter 3.4.3) were activities employed to support the successful accomplishment of the assignment.

On-going processes and future activities which are beyond the scope of this study, but are an integral part of the model, appear in the boxes with a dashed line. The intention is that the updated SEDS chapters will function on a threefold level: at regional level it serves as a core element for the RDA's Regional Operational Plans; at rayon level (LPA 2) it is the basis for feasibility studies and the application for funding in line with the MoE/OECD Investment/Action Plan; at the local level (LPA 1) it shall guide the establishment of village development plans.

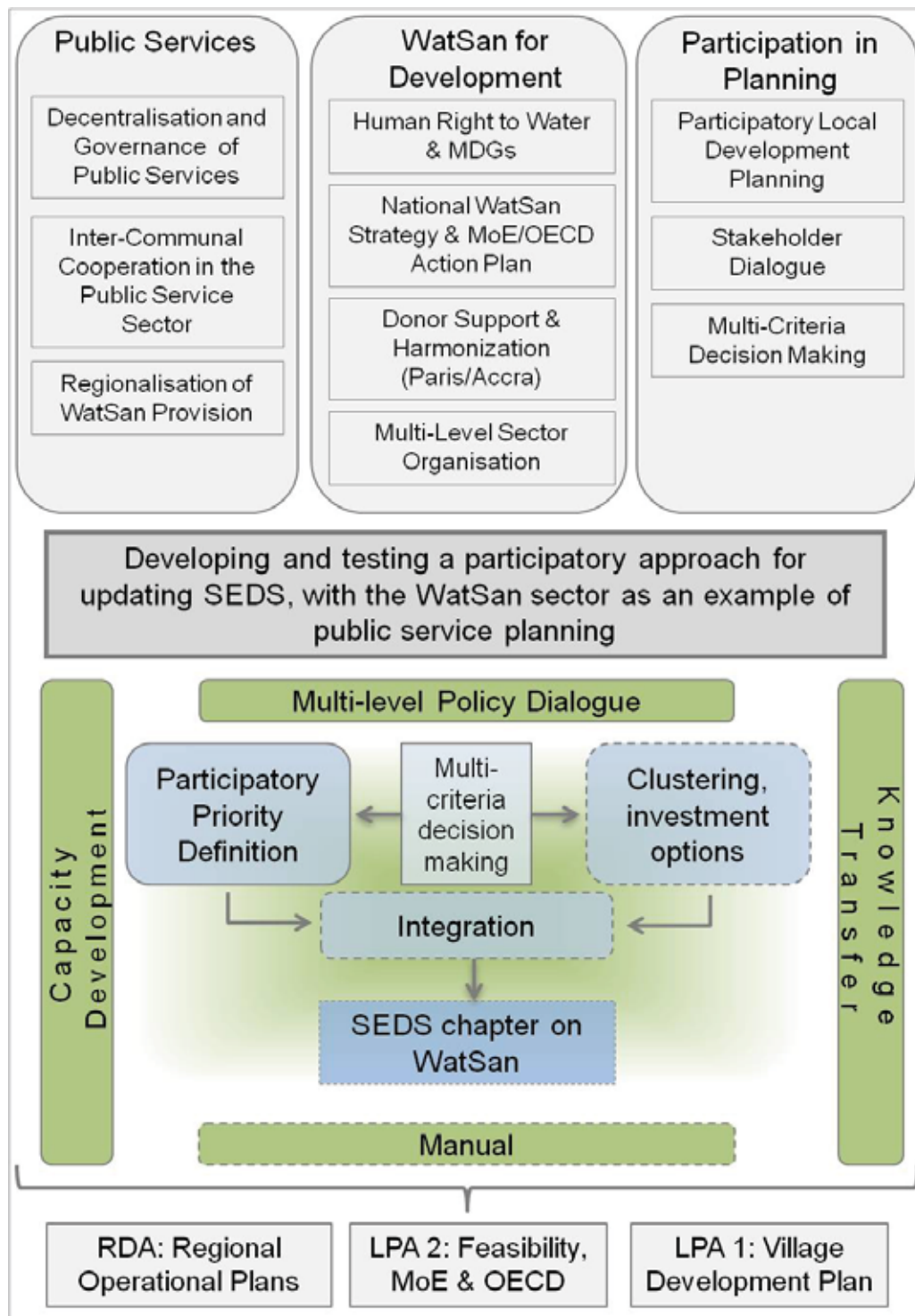


Figure 2-2: Conceptual framework (source: own)

3 Methodology

In this chapter the reflections and corresponding steps leading to an approach for updating a Socio-Economic Development Strategy's (SEDS) chapter on water supply and sanitation (WatSan) in two pilot rayons are introduced. *Chapter 3.2 Embedding the Approach*, outlines how the approach was established within the existing water sector framework and regional development context. *Chapter 3.3 Elaborating and Testing the Approach*, deals with details of an appropriate approach for the Moldovan context and its future implementation based on the pilot experience. *Chapter 3.4 Enabling Implementation and Coordination*, deals with the work supporting the activities which were carried out on the rayon level, the present-day and future implementation of the approach and the necessary horizontal and vertical coordination.

3.1 Methodological Overview

The table below indicates the activities and respective methodological steps carried out. References to the corresponding results can be found in the last column.

Table 3-1: Overview on activities and methods applied during the assignment (source: own)

	Activities	Methods	Cross reference to results
Embedding the approach	Connection to MoE/OECD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult senior national and international experts • Study of existing relevant documentation 	National WatSan priorities: Box 4-2
	Agreement on SEDS' function, structure and content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the Terms of Reference of the SLE team • Analysis of existing rayon development plans • Review of legal documents • Consult planning experts • Conduction of meetings to agree on structure 	SEDS structure: Chapter 4.1.2 and Table 4-1
Elaborating the approach	Outline of the approach for participatory district development planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of literature and documents • Definition of concepts and terms for priority definition • Outline of a concept for clustering • Conduction of expert interviews • Reflection and discussion 	Approach: Chapter 4.1.1 and Figure 4-1 Situation Analysis: Chapter 4.2.3, 5.1.2 Definition of Terms and Concepts: Chapter 4.3.1, Box 4-1 and Figure 4-2

	Pilot testing in two rayons using the Participatory Priority Definition (PPD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline of the Round Table process (Stakeholder Dialogue) together with counterparts • Support of organisation and logistics • Evaluation of Round Tables 	Stakeholder Involvement: Chapter 4.2.2, Chapter 4.3.3 and Table 5-4 Participatory Priority Definition: Chapter 4.3.2 and Figure 4-3 Scoring matrix: Table 4-2
	Manual design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing manuals • Monitoring of activities • Detail and writing of the Manual • Pre-test of the Manual 	Chapter 4.4 and Manual structure
Enabling the approach	Multi-level Policy Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of national meetings and conference • Conduction of the Exposure Visits • Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding between involved stakeholders 	National Priorities: Box 4-2 and Chapter 4.1.1, section "Alignment with the national framework" Events: Chapter 6.1
	Exposure Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of the program • Preparation of the reflection sessions • Support of organisation and logistics 	Chapter 6.2
	Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the job training • Conduction of moderation training 	Chapter 4.2.1 and 5.1.3

3.2 Embedding the Approach

3.2.1 Linking Existing Sector Policies with Local Development Planning

A recently developed mechanism for identifying priority investments in WatSan infrastructure was identified by GIZ, who commissioned this study, as the basis for the assignment. The assumption was, that the application of the so-called Investment and Action Plan (I/AP) on the local level would allow the rayon and regional planners to link prioritised project proposals of the SEDS chapter to sources of funding. The I/AP, developed by the Moldovan Ministry of Environment (MoE) with assistance of OECD, makes use of criteria to prioritise project proposals, and incorporates the development objectives defined by Moldovan policy makers in various strategy and

policy documents. Box 3-1 shows the key documents of the MoE/OECD Investment and Action Plan:

Box 3-1: Key documents of the MoE/OECD WatSan Investment and Action Plan

- **Inception Report** – Supporting the Development of an Investment/Action Plan to help Implement the New Strategy of the Government of Moldova for Water Supply and Sanitation (2010)
- **Action Plan 2010-2015** for the implementation of the Water Supply & Sanitation Sector Strategy and policies in the water supply and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova (2011)
- **Action Plan** (Annex I) of the Investment/Action Plan 2010-2015 for the implementation of the Water Supply & Sanitation Sector Strategy and policies in the water supply and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova (2011)
- **Investment Plan** (Annex II) of the Investment/Action Plan 2010-2015 for the implementation of the Water Supply & Sanitation Sector Strategy and policies in the water supply and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova (2011)
- **Action Plan** (Annex III) of the Investment/Action Plan 2010-2015 for the implementation of the Water Supply & Sanitation Sector Strategy and policies in the water supply and sanitation sector in the Republic of Moldova (2011)

It was necessary to adapt the I/AP's methodology to reflect the local realities in the Republic of Moldova (RoM). This was because the I/AP had been drafted to exclusively prioritise *project proposals* on the national level. Since available funding sources are limited, project proposals need to be selected according to criteria that allow ranking of projects following their correspondence to national priorities.

Due to the absence of feasibility studies for WatSan investment projects which could be prioritised; and to make the selection of investment projects strategic from the outset; *all localities* within a given pilot rayon had to be considered. Importantly, it was deemed necessary to plan for the possibility for local adaptation of general development strategies, and to propose the inclusion of local priorities to the national priorities for the pilot test. This approach is based on the assumption that only involvement of stakeholders affected by the WatSan situation can assure a comprehensive definition of priorities for effectively handling the challenges in their particular context.

To generate the appropriate criteria with which to prioritise localities' needs, the I/AP methodology was studied in detail. An international GOPA expert already involved in the design of the I/AP, separated project-specific criteria not applicable to the ranking

of localities, and derived generally applicable priorities based on long-term strategic objectives.

3.2.2 Agreement on SEDS' Function, Structure and Content

The purpose of the assignment was to develop a coherent approach for updating the SEDS chapters on water supply and sanitation as an example procedure for other sectors and other rayons after the pilot implementation. As explained in the introduction (see Chapter 1), WatSan services are a priority domain of action amongst other, locally provided public services. The GIZ's previous activities within the pilot rayons resulted in the SLE's assignment to develop an example approach for the WatSan sector, with possible future replicability.

First, existing SEDS of both rayons were studied paying particular attention to structure and content. Other Moldovan rayons' SEDS³⁸, which had come about through international assistance, were also studied and it became clear that within the scope of this assignment, the focus for updating had to lie on:

- Coherent priority definition in order to target investments in those localities identified as the most in need
- Vertical integration of the document with regional plans and existing national strategies and targets

Due to the low degree of strategic planning in the existing SEDS, the SLE team advised the rayon team to set up a coherent planning structure, and approach. Horizontal integration with other sectors would have to be accomplished through future interventions.

In close cooperation with experts working in the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) North and South, the SEDS chapter's scope and usability were checked and fine-tuned during frequent iterations, and finally proposed to the Moldovan decision makers. This included thorough review of the legal framework and any relevant documentation on the topic. Prior to this assignment, little information existed with respect to SEDS' updating procedure and use. It was therefore important to foster a process of idea exchange between the Moldovan authorities in order to generate a firm foundation for the assignment.

The United Nation Development Program's/Swiss Development Cooperation's miPRO approach (UNDP & SDC, 2009) from Bosnia and Herzegovina inspired and gave guidance for the coherent structure of SEDS chapters. Governmental decision

³⁸ An example is the *Strategy of Social and Economic Development of Gagauzia* (Gagauz Yeri) 2009-2015.

no. 33 (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2007) on unified rules and requirements for the development of policy documents was used as the reference for structuring the document following Moldovan standards. Dialogue on the SEDS' function and structure was facilitated in cooperation with the commissioner during national-level meetings (see Chapter 3.4.1).

3.3 Elaborating and Testing the Approach

3.3.1 Designing a Participatory District Development Planning Approach

Reviewing the context for sector policy implementation and local development planning practices revealed the necessity for the SLE team to include iterative reflections and discussion with the relevant Moldovan authorities, the GIZ and national as well as international planning experts, in the process.

A clear definition of terms and planning concepts was carried out, in order to establish a common understanding of required steps and the coherence of the results between all Moldovan authorities. Moldovan WatSan experts and representatives of all planning levels were consulted regarding their respective institution's perspectives on sector priorities and planning procedures.

The initial idea to base the SEDS chapter on priorities defined in a participatory way was extended to a two-tier approach (see Chapter 4.1.1 and figure 4-1). The decision about which localities to prioritise was combined with considerations about planning infrastructure solutions. This approach suggested that zones under joint service provision arrangements, so-called clusters, make use of economies of scale through the shared use of water resources, infrastructure, and a common management organisation (see Chapter 2.1.2). This addresses the difficulties localities have in providing basic public services on their own. It is consistent with the view of the development practitioners who were consulted, that only through cooperation will the communes be capable of providing these services.

In order to be able to make decisions about priorities, there needs to be a sufficient level of information on the current situation, and whether objectives and priorities are set on the national and local level. Establishing comprehensive information was thus considered indispensable for the purpose of updating the SEDS' WatSan chapters. Collection and analysis of data on the pilot rayons specific WatSan situation on locality level was provided by a senior national GOPA expert and his assistants at the beginning of the SLE team's assignment.

3.3.2 Pilot Testing and Adaption

The need for a Stakeholder Dialogue was determined before starting the fieldwork, and was fine-tuned on the ground with RDA facilitators and GIZ focal points working in the RDAs. The topics on which the rayon stakeholders had to work during the Stakeholder Dialogue were divided into three Round Tables (RT) (see Chapter 4). This was in order to keep the single RTs manageable in terms of time and content. Experiences had during each RT resulted in changes to the approach for the following one. For each RT, the SLE team supported the RDA facilitator in the preparation of an agenda that helped to structure the discussions. Selection of participants was done with special attention to obtain a balanced composition and representation of all relevant stakeholders. Some participants were interviewed prior to the start of the Stakeholder Dialogue in order to acquaint the SLE team with the respective representatives on the rayon level and to identify any potential conflicts and commonalities.

A mix of small group exercises and plenary discussions for common reflections was used to structure the exchange between the stakeholders, as well as a use of guiding questions. The rayon and RDA counterparts were supported in design of the participatory planning process, especially with the logistics and organisational aspects.

The pilot application of the Stakeholder Dialogue for rayon level participatory public service planning was phased in the two rayons. One team conducted the respective RTs two days ahead of the other in order to test and adapt the jointly developed workshops during the first implementation. While participants exchanged and worked together, monitoring sheets on the different RTs aspects were used, and participants were also asked to fill in evaluation sheets after each session.

3.3.3 Manual Design

The task of the SLE team was to design a guide that could be applied by RDA and rayon facilitators not involved in the pilot process, and for future SEDS updating processes. Therefore the methodology applied during the pilot testing had to be documented and adapted. For the Manual design, the approach's suitability for the purpose was examined according the following criteria (BMZ, 2006; GIZ, 2011b):

- Involvement of all key stakeholders
- Transparency
- Broad acceptance of results
- Replicability in other rayons and other sectors
- Effectiveness and

- Relevance of the approach for local strategic planning

In order to verify whether these criteria were met, the process was monitored and evaluated through: observing and documenting all activities, distributing evaluation sheets for RT participants, carrying out interviews, and organising feedback sessions and through a reflection workshop involving the facilitation team and the commissioner.

Existing manuals and how-to guides in the domains of participatory workshop design and development planning were studied. Drawing from these existing guides, the team consulted experienced Moldovan planners and the future users in the RDAs on the structure and content while designing the Manual. The condensed version of this revised pilot plan can be found in the Manual (see Chapter 4).

3.4 Enabling Implementation and Coordination

3.4.1 Multi-Level Policy Dialogue

An approach for on-the-ground implementation of WatSan policies via the mechanism of regional development requires coordination between sector institutions and the RDAs. Establishing an on-going exchange and clear definition of institution's roles and responsibilities in line with the legal framework was identified as very important for the design of the pilot process, and of course, its future implementation. Harmonising local initiative with national policy objectives, as well as establishing commitment for the suggested approach was the main objective of three events that were conducted with representatives from relevant institutions; the MoE, MRDC, and the State Chancellery being the most prominent ones. Representatives from RDAs, the pilot rayons, and advocacy institutions for the interests of local authorities were invited to participate in the exchange in order to make it truly multi-levelled.

Formal cooperation in WatSan policy implementation via regional development was enshrined in a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by MRDC, MoE, the State Chancellery, the two rayons of Cahul and Riscani, and GIZ.

In addition to focusing on WatSan governance transformation (see below section), the Exposure Visits also constituted a method for multi-level exchange between the abovementioned institutions.

3.4.2 Knowledge Transfer

Romania, and also the East-German federal states went through profound transformations in the way public service provision (in the field of WatSan) is governed. The terms of reference for the SLE team had a knowledge transfer component which led to the planning of excursions for a multi-faceted group of

Moldovan stakeholders to various sites. In collaboration with the SLE team, who supported the design of the excursions, consultants in the area of development planning and WatSan organised these so-called Exposure Visits for sites in Moldova's neighbouring Romania and the German federal state of Brandenburg. These Exposure Visits focused on the study of WatSan sector reforms, in conjunction with technical and management solutions corresponding to demand-based public service governance.

Besides supporting the logistics and organisation of the trip, the core task of the team was to facilitate joint reflections and exchange on what had been studied and observed during the respective site visits. Reflection sessions were conceived of as a unique opportunity to foster understanding between the participants, and to identify lessons that could be of value to their home country.

3.4.3 Capacity Development

Conducting participatory planning sessions is a demanding task in any context. In the RoM, such practices have not yet been institutionalised in the domain of public administration. In order to implement participatory planning, the SLE team had to work with and train Moldovan counterparts, who were to conduct similar workshops on their own in the future. Therefore, rayon staff and RDA facilitators received support in the design of workshops, received training in moderation methods, and had the opportunity to train in these aspects on the job during the subsequent RTs.

4 A Manual for Facilitators

This Manual was developed to assist facilitators with the preparation of a rayon's Socio-Economic Development Strategy's (SEDS) chapter update. It outlines a specific participatory approach which is recommended, based on experiences gained during the pilot testing of a methodology for updating a SEDS' chapter on water supply and sanitation (WatSan) in two rayons of the Republic of Moldova (RoM). Concrete results of the pilot implementation are documented in *Chapter 5 Results of the Pilot Testing in Cahul and Riscani Rayons* , while discussed and assessed in *Chapter 7 Lessons Learnt*. A more detailed Manual including a toolbox and description of those steps that are beyond the scope of this study will be developed for Moldovan practitioners in the future. This abbreviated version builds on conclusions and recommendations for the use of the participatory priority definition (PPD), the participatory pillar of the suggested approach (see Chapter 3.3).

4.1 About this Manual

4.1.1 Introduction to the Manual

Purpose and scope

The Manual is a step-by-step guide which is intended to be replicated in future development planning in other rayons and/or other sectors. It should not be used as a blueprint. Yet, it may be relevant to those who work in comparable post-Soviet contexts, trying to apply similar approaches in other domains. The Manual aims to:

- Explain the purpose of essential planning elements
- Provide a set of methods, principles and recommendations
- Depict what needs to be done, by when, and by whom

Framework for the facilitation of a participatory SEDS updating approach

The entire process of updating the WatSan chapter of rayon SEDS is designed as shown in Figure 4-1.

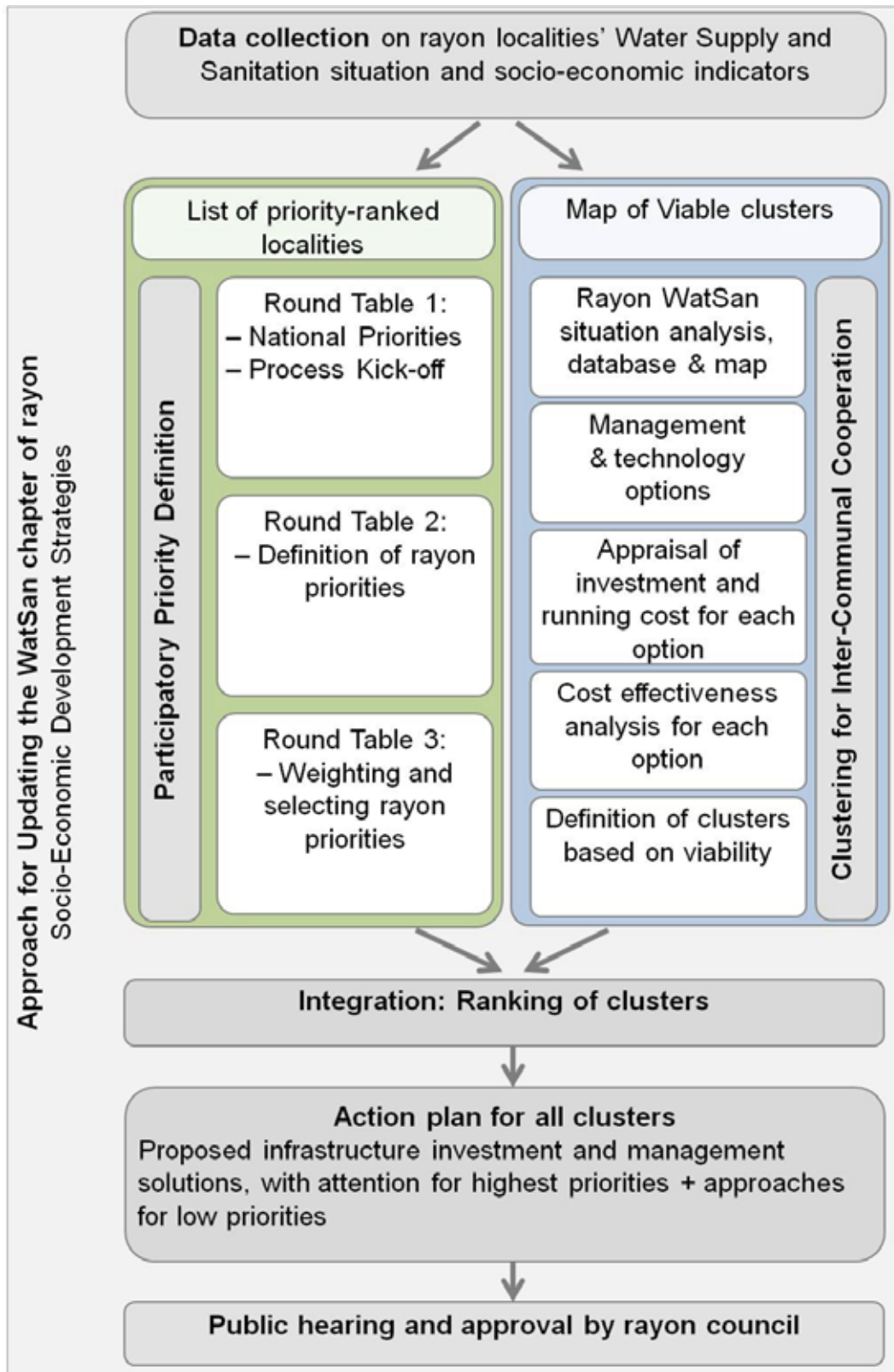


Figure 4-1: Relevant steps for updating a rayon SEDS chapter on WatSan (source: own)

The procedure broadly mirrors the structure of a SEDS chapter (see Table 4-1). First, data on the actual WatSan situation in the rayon needs to be collected and assessed (see Chapter 4.2.3). Second, a multi-stakeholder dialogue in the rayon enables the

participatory prioritisation of WatSan investment needs which is done by organising three Round Tables (see Chapter 4.3.2). The merit of such a participatory priority definition (PPD) is that the resulting list with ranked localities matches local need and reality while being in line with national priorities.

In parallel, localities are clustered to provide WatSan services more efficiently. The merit of clustering (regionalisation) is that available investment options for ranked localities are reduced by: a) organising common services, and b) making use of the same water source and/or infrastructure. After an analysis of existing water sources, water providers and water consumption, a number of investment options will be identified. A cost-benefit-analysis is then carried out for these options. The map of clusters will display the proposed optimal clusters for localities.

In a third step, both tiers of the approach, PPD and clustering, are integrated. The development of the action plan will address these strategic investment options with due consideration for highest ranked clusters. For each activity, the action plan takes into account responsibilities, time frame, costs, funding sources, and indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

At the end of the process, a public hearing to inform citizens, obtain feedback, and achieve approval for the implementation takes place. The final step, however, is the approval of the updated SEDS by the rayon council and the distribution and/or publication.

The process of organising localities into clusters as part of a holistic approach and the implications of this process remains to be considered as it exceeded the pilot implementation scope. The results presented in this Manual address the participatory part of the planning which focuses on setting priorities for future WatSan-related investments.

For decision-making in planning, priorities are needed (see Chapter 2.3.3):

Box 4-1: A definition of priority and criterion

A *priority* is defined as “action(s) to achieve a situation which is desired by the community”. The guiding question is: what is important for us? A priority is specified by a measurable *criterion* seen as “a rule to distinguish localities which fit the priority from those which do not”.³⁹

³⁹ GIZ/GOPA (2011): Presentation on the relation between problems/needs, priorities and selection criteria, given during the 2nd Round Table by Rafal Stanek.

The guiding principles in the design of an integrated strategic planning document in the rayon, are:

- To ensure broad-based participation
- To align the strategy's structure with the legal framework
- To assure the compliance with higher level international or national strategies

Alignment with the national framework

The suggested approach to update the rayon SEDS is a partial participatory approach, since national priorities have already been identified. The integration of national WatSan priorities in the update of the SEDS assures the alignment of the rayon strategy with the high-level policy and strategic framework. The purpose of such an alignment is to ensure that national stakeholders accepted the outcomes, thus ensuring planning security for local stakeholders.

On the basis of key sector strategies and (international) policy documents⁴⁰, six national priorities for WatSan investments were defined⁴¹ at the beginning of the pilot SEDS chapter updating⁴²:

⁴⁰ The documents on the basis of which national priorities were set are:

- Governmental "Strategy of Water Supply and Sewage in Communities of the Republic of Moldova", 2007 (2007-2015)
- UN Millennium Development Goal, target 7c (2000-2015)
- National Development Strategy (2008-2011)
- EU Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) in the water sector (Ref No 2008/163561)
- London Protocol on Water and Health (approved by joint ordinance of MoH and MoE No 91/704, 2010)

⁴¹ GIZ/GOPA (2011): Presentation on Moldova's water policy, given during the 1st Round Table by Daniel Wiltschnigg.

⁴² The national priorities were agreed upon during a national stakeholder meeting by representatives of MoE, MRDC, MoH, and the State Chancellery, on 4th of August 2011.

Box 4-2: National priorities for WatSan investments⁴³

1. Reduce water related morbidity
2. Increase coverage of the population with piped water supply
3. Ensure provision of 24-hour water supply
4. Increase coverage of the population with improved sanitation / Reduce pollution to critical discharges
5. Halt deterioration of existing infrastructure
6. Improve access of schools and pre-school students to the improved water supply and sanitation facilities



Facilitators need to stay updated on national priorities. It is recommended to regularly check relevant policy documents in order to adapt the set of national priorities, if necessary. This analysis should be carried out by a senior level policy expert familiar with relevant sector documents.

4.1.2 A Guide to the Reader

How is the Manual organised?

This Manual is a practical guide to update a SEDS chapter. It is organised along the general SEDS' chapter's structure⁴⁴:

- Reference to the general part of the SEDS
- Situation analysis
- Objectives and priorities for the rayon WatSan sector
- Necessary measures to achieve objectives
- Action Plan
- Monitoring and Evaluation

As Table 4-1 illustrates, drafting a rayon SEDS chapter starts with a preparation phase, followed by three phases which feed directly into the strategy's chapter. The

⁴³ For all national priorities with corresponding indicators, please refer to Annex II.

⁴⁴ The proposed structure is in line with the Governmental Decision no. 33 of 11.01.2007 and was agreed upon during a national stakeholder meeting on 29 September 2011 in Chisinau by representatives of the State Chancellery, MRDC and MoE and was put up for discussion during the 3rd Round Table. For a SEDS template please refer to Annex IV.

fourth phase is a process of review, and therefore part of the operational phase. Setting objectives and deciding to regionalise service provision are both strategic processes. The planning phase outlines the arrangements between the strategic phase and the implementation. The operational part covers the formulation of an action plan, its implementation and monitoring activities.

Table 4-1: SEDS chapter structure with updating phases and necessary steps (source: own; inspired by UNDP & SDC 2009a)

Chapter Structure		Steps for Chapter Design	Phase
SEDS Chapter		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define national priorities Build the facilitation team Involve all relevant stakeholders Gather relevant data 	Preparation
	Reference to the general part		
	Situation Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyse the sector situation 	
	Objectives and Priorities for the Rayon WatSan Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define objectives Define rayon priorities Rank localities Cluster localities Integrate prioritisation and clustering 	Strategic part
	Necessary Measures to Achieve Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define necessary measures to achieve objectives 	Planning part
	Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elaborate the Action Plan 	Operational part
Monitoring & Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish the Monitoring & Evaluation framework 		

How should the Manual be used?

Before getting started, a few words on the language of the Manual:

- Boxes contain important information and recommendations
- Questions are used for guiding facilitators
- A schedule for each Round Table is outlined in a table with information on the duration, expected outcome, preparation and procedure
- Information on resources, i.e. time and skills, needed is included only if deemed necessary, because it might differ from the pilot experience. For some activities it is recommended to draw upon assistance by external experts

4.2 Preparation Phase

4.2.1 Building the Facilitation Team

The task of the facilitation team is to organise and coordinate all the activities that lead to the update of the SEDS chapter. However, it will not carry out all the activities alone. Depending on the step, it may delegate tasks to WatSan experts, rayon staff or assistants.

Who should be part of the facilitation team?

The facilitation team consists of Regional Development Agency (RDA) and rayon (LPA 2) representatives. Regarding rayon staff, it is crucial to involve a representative from the department responsible for strategic planning. It is important for this person to keep his/her department colleagues informed. This serves to achieve a long-lasting institutional anchoring of the know-how independent of particular individuals. Other departments may also be included in the team, especially those which may make important contributions or are substantially affected by the strategy's update. It is recommended to form a core-rayon team of 3 to 6 people from RDA and LPA 2. The head of LPA 2 should be informed and consulted, but does not need to be part of the facilitation team, as the frequent coordination meetings are time-consuming.

What skills and competencies are needed in the facilitation team?

Apart from functional competencies, the facilitation team also needs to include the following skills: experience and methodological skills in the domain of strategic planning, skills or experience in moderation, facilitation of group work, complex organisation, the ability to work within a team and autonomous, good communication, and, in many cases, fluency in Romanian and Russian. Existing experiences within the WatSan sector are an asset, but they may also be acquired during the process. An open attitude and willingness to broaden ones knowledge are therefore crucial characteristics of the facilitation team's members.

Why is internal coordination and communication necessary?

Within the facilitation team, there should be a clear division of responsibilities and tasks. It is recommended to appoint one person as a coordinator for the whole team.

Internal communication is the key to the success of the facilitation team. It serves to create a common understanding about the next steps to take and common goals. It might be helpful to have one person responsible for communications who ensures communication flows within the facilitation team, especially between the rayon and RDA, the latter not being present every day.



Joint planning and feedback sessions as well as clear decisions on roles and responsibilities will enable an efficient division of work.

4.2.2 Involving all Relevant Stakeholders

Relevant actors are those who have a fundamental interest in the SEDS updating or are important for its successful implementation. They are to be found amongst all administrative levels (national, rayon, local), civil society and the private sector.

Why should all relevant stakeholders be involved?

There are different reasons for including relevant stakeholders:

- To ensure effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of the SEDS update
- To enhance communication and cooperation between different levels and interest groups
- To stimulate awareness of different needs/concerns and mutual acceptance
- To create ownership and commitment

How can relevant stakeholders be identified?

The analysis of stakeholders will help to identify direct and indirect stakeholders and their interests. Direct stakeholders are those that have decision-making authority regarding the SEDS chapter updating. Indirect stakeholders do not have decision-making authority regarding the SEDS chapter, but are relevant for the success of the SEDS update and implementation. To adequately involve different types of stakeholders first of all find out:

- Who has an interest in the outcome of the SEDS updating or is important for its implementation?
- What are the points of view and interests of these stakeholders?
- Do they exert influence in a positive or negative way?

Expert or focus group interviews can help to answer these questions. Once all stakeholders are identified, they should be divided into direct and indirect stakeholders, as described in the following.

How can direct stakeholders be involved?

Direct stakeholders comprise LPA 2 including the Rayon Council and all RT participants (see Chapter 4.3.3). They should be included in order to reduce the risk

of the updated SEDS chapters being questioned after the process is finished and to create commitment for the future implementation of the SEDS. Involvement can range from merely holding an introductory presentation for the rayon administration and council; to actively including their members in the facilitation team. The degree of active involvement of direct stakeholders will vary in every rayon and needs to be assessed according to the specific context.

All RT participants should receive preparation material in advance, so that inequalities of knowledge are reduced and all of them are encouraged to actively participate. After the SEDS updating process is finished, informing them on the results, implications and the relevance of their contribution will support their commitment to further participatory decision-making.

How can indirect stakeholders be involved?

Indirect stakeholders are the mayors, national level policy makers, the population and the media. In order to guarantee acceptance of the SEDS chapter, they need to feel integrated and become receptive to the process. Thus, they need to be informed on objectives, contents, approach and outcomes. Look for time slots in adequate events to present milestones/important activities. Inform all mayors about the SEDS update, e.g. in an information letter and at the regular mayors' meeting. Mayors should be informed that delegates will be able to participate at the RTs. The media is a useful tool to keep citizens informed about the process to update the SEDS, and gives them a chance for engagement. Publishing the outcomes and the follow up of activities to raise awareness and facilitate downward accountability to the citizens.



It is crucial to keep national policy makers informed. After having accomplished the SEDS chapter updating in several rayons, you may organise informational meetings with Regional Development Councils, Ministries, Agencies, or the Sector Coordination Council, as well as at the international donor community (see Chapter 2.2.2).

4.2.3 Analysing the Situation

A situation analysis helps in understanding the WatSan situation of the rayon. A comprehensive analysis of locality-level socio-economic data, geographical data and data on the existing WatSan infrastructure, needs to be carried out.

Why should a situation analysis be undertaken?

The situation analysis serves three main purposes. First, data is needed to provide a proper situation analysis as part of the SEDS chapter. This situation analysis should

also be made available to RT participants (see Chapter 4.3.5). Second, data is needed for prioritising the localities' investment needs. Last but not least, data is crucial for the clustering of localities into WatSan management units.

How is the data being collected?

The first thing needed is a clear vision of what information is relevant for the three purposes mentioned above. They require a different level of detail. However, it is wise to collect the full set of data initially, to avoid duplication of workload. In general, three categories according to the localities' performance in WatSan service provision can be distinguished. There are three corresponding questionnaires: one for bigger towns, one for smaller settlements with partial access to centralised WatSan service provision, and one for localities without organised service provision. The data collection is carried out as follows:

- The questionnaires are sent out to mayors or distributed to them during a mayor's meeting. It is important to clearly explain the purpose of the data collection.
- It is likely that the mayors will have difficulties in completing the questionnaires. Hence, assistance is needed. A team of (typically) two assistants should support the mayors in completing the questionnaires and to verify the information provided. Depending on the specific situation in the rayon, mayors usually come to the rayon council's administration frequently. This venue is the most appropriate for the assistants to review questionnaires with the mayors.
- The information, in many cases, already exists in the records of the rayon's localities. Depending on their time in office and the degree of organisation in the respective town hall, the mayors either dispose of the records; or make them available through assistants or Apa Canal staff.
- Information on the potential correlation between access to and quality of WatSan services, such as water quality data or health indicators, may not be available at the level of the rayon's localities, but in institutions such as the National Centre for Public Health. It is important to officially request cooperation and data from these state services from the outset.

How will the data be used?

The information needs to be passed to the experts who will prepare a situation analysis on the basis of the data and use it for prioritisation and clustering.

RT facilitators should use the situation analysis elaborated by the experts in order to provide RT participants with comprehensive, non-specialist information on the WatSan situation in the rayon. This is crucial for their well-informed strategy contribution. Questions that should be answered in a situation analysis for RT participants are:

- What is the water quality situation like? Is pollution an issue? In which zones of the rayon? Are there any seasonal differences?
- Are the elements of low water quality man-made or a natural phenomenon?
- What are the main problems for the households? Do they have access to a centralised water supply, and how many households are affected?
- What is (as a rough estimation) the average state of rural and urban WatSan infrastructure? What can be said about the respective management structures (Apa Canal, mayoralty department, etc.)?
- To what degree does poor access to WatSan services correlate with the size of the respective settlement, and its demography (like migration rate, no. of pensioners, etc.)?



Besides "hard fact" information gathering, it is very important that the facilitator team understands the situation on the ground based on their personal experience. Therefore, visiting villages and conducting expert or focus group interviews is recommended. The outside facilitator will otherwise only have a vague idea of what people experience in their everyday lives. Getting to know the situation on the ground can also help to identify the particularities of the WatSan situation in the rayon which may not be reflected in the "hard data".

What resources are needed for the situation analysis?



The questionnaire has to be prepared and analysed by an expert. Ideally, this expert is also responsible for formulating the situation analysis as well as carrying out the prioritisation and clustering. The expert is also responsible for the backstopping of the data gathering, i.e. to give guidance to the assistants in charge of the data collection. They are the contact persons for the mayors and ensure the integrity of the questionnaires filled in by the mayors. If possible, engage entry-level engineers or students knowledgeable in water- or civil engineering. However, they need training in advance.



Completing the questionnaires is time-consuming, and the workload increases with the level of WatSan services: The more there is in terms of infrastructure and services, the more detail is required for an analysis. Good estimates for filling in or completing a questionnaire together with mayors is about 2.5

hours, provided they bring records and are prepared. At least one more hour per questionnaire is needed to check on wrong numbers and inconsistencies.

4.3 Strategic Phase

4.3.1 Setting Objectives and Priorities

It is important, for the planning process to have clear objectives, based on needs, or preferences (see Chapter 2.3.1). Within a list of objectives, however, some objectives are more important than others and need to be prioritised. Once a set of priorities are agreed upon, they contribute to coherent decision-making in the planning process. It helps to focus on the achievement of priority activities within a given period of time, and helps to channel limited resources.

What are objectives and priorities?

There are different categories of objectives included in the strategy and, in Figure 4-2 it is illustrated how these are interlinked. The use of terms such as *objective* and *priority* might be confusing. *Objectives* are statements about how things, identified as a problem, should change (UNDP, 2009: 42). *Priorities* have been defined already in Box 4-1. They are distinguished from objectives as follows:

- *Long-term objectives* stem from a sectoral vision of the rayon. According to a Governmental Decision (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2007), a long-term objective is defined for a period of 15 years.
- *Priority statements* are needed for a comprehensive and transparent decision-making on prioritised investments in the WatSan sector of the rayon. Each priority is made measurable through corresponding criteria (priority criteria or selection criteria).
- *Medium-term objectives* are operational objectives derived from the set of stated priorities. They are defined according to SMART rules: Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic, Time-bound (UNDP & SDC, 2009b: 19) and are valid for 5 years which is the time period covered by the SEDS.
- *Short-term objectives* are achieved in the implementation of the action plan.



Figure 4-2: Hierarchy of objectives (source: own)

Who defines objectives and sets priorities?

During this approach, the identification of objectives is a partial participatory process. Stakeholders need to be given the opportunity to discuss the objectives that will affect them and give them a priority order. However, the actual formulation of concise objectives, the choice of criteria with indicators and scales (see example below) should not be done collectively but by an expert in the area. Proven expertise and technical knowledge is absolutely critical for the formulation of priority criteria and SMART objectives, which also directs the monitoring and evaluation framework.



National priority 1: Reduce water related morbidity

Criterion: Priority is given to localities with bad water quality, defined as: number of wells (including artesian) and springs where water quality does not correspond to standards⁴⁵ for drinking water.

Indicator: Number of wells (including artesian wells) and springs in the locality where water quality:

- does not correspond to 3 indexes and more: 1 point for each 10%
- does not correspond to 2 indexes: 1 point for each 20%
- does not correspond to 1 index: 1 point for each 30%

In this case, localities in which a lot of wells do not meet GOST indicators receive a high score. Note that national and rayon priorities with their corresponding criteria and indicators that were derived during the pilot testing are in Annex II.

4.3.2 Introduction to the Participatory Definition of Rayon Priorities

For the participatory definition of rayon priorities, a sequence of three Round Tables (RTs) was designed (see Figure 4-3). The sequence is to be read as a proposal and should be adapted to meet specific requirements and other circumstances, if necessary. The following RT sequence is proposed:

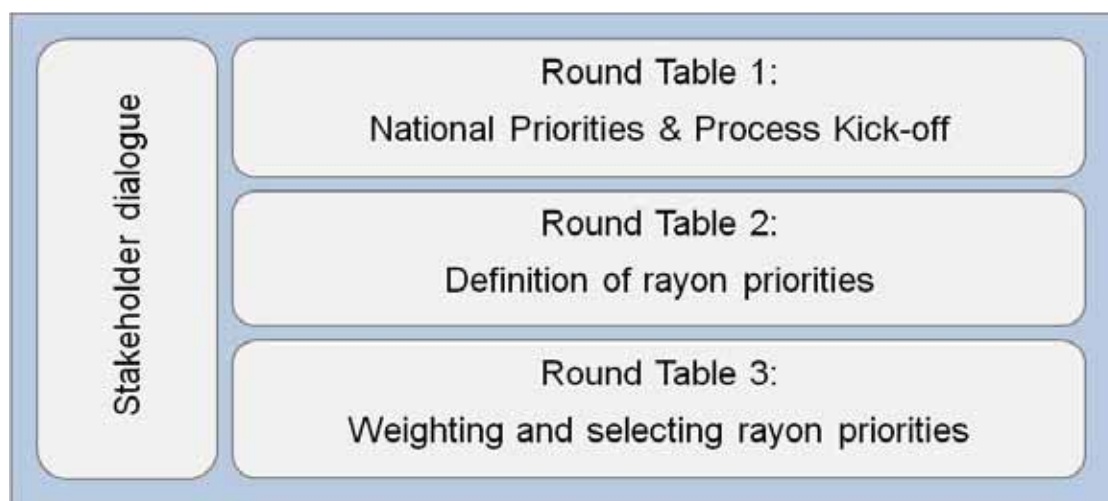


Figure 4-3: Round Table sequence (source: own)

⁴⁵ For drinking water quality, the Republic of Moldova still uses state standards, known as *GOST standards*, of the former USSR.

Between RT 1 and RT 2 you may plan a break of one week. Between RT 2 and 3 you need approximately four weeks (see Chapter 4.3.7).

The purpose of the Round Tables is to include key stakeholders in defining rayon priorities. Yet, with too many priorities, planning will not be focused. Also, not all priorities and respective criteria will be of the same importance to all stakeholders involved. For this reason, participants will be given the opportunity to weight each priority which will eventually be fed into the final ranking matrix (see example calculation in Table 4-2). For all national priorities, weights are already determined; this also applies to the relative weight between national and rayon priorities.⁴⁶

As demonstrated with the example calculation in Table 4-2, the rank (score) of localities is calculated by synthesising rayon and national priority criteria in addition to their respective weight. The resulting list of localities reflects different levels of investment needs (with regard to the time horizon) of localities in the rayon. However, the list remains to be combined with the clustering.

⁴⁶ For the pilot process, the weight has been set by an international consultant on the basis of a ranking method which is part of the MoE/OECD methodology (Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Moldova & OECD, 2011). It may be adjusted, however, if deemed necessary.

Table 4-2: Calculation of the weighted score for an example locality (source: GIZ/GOPA 2011)

Priority		Locality's total score for priority	Respective weight within national / rayon	Respective weight between national / rayon	Locality's weighted score
National priorities	National priority 1	3 out of 10	0.25	0.67	$3 \times 0.25 \times 0.67 = 0.5025$
	National priority 2	9 out of 10	0.15		$9 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.9045$
	National priority 3	4 out of 10	0.15		$4 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.402$
	National priority 4	7 out of 10	0.15		$7 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.7035$
	National priority 5	6 out of 10	0.15		$6 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.603$
	National priority 6	7 out of 10	0.15		$7 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.7035$
	Total national		100%		
Rayon priorities	Rayon priority 1	7 out of 10	0.40	0.33	$7 \times 0.40 \times 0.33 = 0.924$
	Rayon priority 2	1 out of 10	0.32		$1 \times 0.32 \times 0.33 = 0.1056$
	Rayon priority 3	5 out of 10	0.28		$5 \times 0.28 \times 0.33 = 0.462$
	Total rayon		100%		
Locality's total score					5.3

4.3.3 Selecting Round Table Participants

The selection of RT participants needs to be conducted in cooperation with LPA 2, as they know which institutions exist in the rayon, and their respective activities. A list of maximum 25 participants is to be prepared, taking into consideration the following criteria:

- Balanced representation of the public/administrational, civil society and private sector, avoiding any political bias and ensuring diverse expertise
- Participants should have an interest in the topic (be affected by it) and have the capacity to contribute substantially to decision-making, showing an analytical understanding of the issue
- Social inclusiveness regarding ethnicity, gender, age and social status



To overcome bias in the selection of participants, ideally, it should not be undertaken by one person, but by a steering committee with a balanced representation from all three sectors: LPA, civil society and private sector.

Selection of mayors: It is recommended that 4-7 mayors participate at the RTs. These representatives should not be selected by the facilitation team, but elected by all mayors of the rayon, e.g. in a regular mayors' meeting. Make clear that they are supposed to be present in all 3 RTs, but that their participation will not directly enhance their chances for funding. The mayors that participate at the RTs should come from different types of villages. The election of mayors can be based on criteria for representation such as: small village (< 1200 inhabitants), big village (> 1200 inhabitants), town, villages with centralized water supply, and villages without centralised water supply.

Selection of rayon administration representatives: The heads of LPA 2 departments involved in and affected by the update of the SEDS chapter on WatSan should take part in the RT discussion. Their participation in the dialogue amongst stakeholders of different areas will provide a holistic understanding of the sectors' challenges and make it easier to find adequate solutions.

Selection of private sector and civil society representatives: By publicly announcing the intention to update the SEDS well in advance in local media (including LPA 2 and RDA webpage), interested representatives of relevant groups can be called on to present themselves at the LPA 2. Organized groups and professional associations can also be identified and asked for delegates, especially water user associations⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ I.e. Water associations, primaria councils, WatSan service providers, teachers, private business, pensioners, nurses, women (professional meetings), minority groups.

4.3.4 Checklist for Round Table Preparation

Table 4-3: Checklist for Round Table preparation (source: own)

Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an annotated agenda with enough breaks and time buffer which will guide the moderation of the event • Prepare an abbreviated version of the agenda for the participants
Invitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send an invitation to the participants well in advance, stating the purpose and the dates of all three RTs • Make clear in advance that participants should attend all three RTs • Offer information material for preparation in advance • Follow-up the invitations via phone calls
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise an appropriate venue for the meeting with adequate space, lighting, and ventilation • Prepare the seating arrangement • Organise extra rooms for small group work, if needed • Prepare catering and equipment, e.g. name badges, files, flipcharts, pens (markers), a projector (if required)
Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare name badges for the participants • Prepare folders for the participants with: list of participants, agenda, important information (e.g. printed presentations), evaluation sheets • Prepare material for group work
Public Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a press release announcing the event • Put the information on the homepage of the rayon and RDA
Evaluation and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring a camera for the documentation of the group work results • Prepare sheets for the participants' evaluation
Follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a press release regarding the results • Publish the results on the homepage of the rayon and RDA

4.3.5 Round Table 1 – Getting Started

What are the objectives of the first Round Table?

- The participants get to know each other
- The participants learn about the WatSan situation in their rayon
- The participants understand the purpose of updating the SEDS and their role in this process
- The participants reflect on their expectations for this process
- The participants get to know national priorities

Step 1-1: Introduction to the WatSan situation

Duration: ca. 60min

Expected outcome: Participants are informed on the WatSan situation in their rayon. This will help them to better understand why planning and prioritisation is needed.

Preparation:

- Prepare rooms and material for group work (flipchart, pens)
- Prepare presentation on the basis of the situation analysis (see Chapter 4.2.3)
- Prepare handout

Procedure:

- Divide the whole group into small groups.
- The small groups have approx. 20 minutes to brainstorm on the following **questions**:
 1. What are the challenges and opportunities of WatSan in our rayon?
 2. How are other sectors (health, economy, education, social development, etc.) affected by the WatSan situation?
- The groups visualise their answers, e.g. on a flipchart.
- A group delegate presents the results in the plenary.
- After the presentation of the group work results, a brief presentation on the WatSan situation in the rayon is given by the facilitators. Thus, the participants can compare their image of the sector with the professional situation analysis.
- A more detailed version of the situation analysis on the basis of the data can be given as a handout.

Step 1-2: Presentation on the SEDS updating process

Duration: ca. 30min

Expected outcome: Participants understand the purpose of the SEDS updating and their role in this process. Participants' questions regarding the purpose are clarified.

Preparation: Prepare presentation and handout

A brief presentation is given by the facilitators. The following **questions** should be answered:

- What is the aim of the SEDS chapter update?
- What is the purpose of the RTs in the SEDS chapter updating?
- Why is prioritisation necessary?
- What is the content of the RTs?
- What is the role of the RT participants?

Step 1-3: Group work on contributions and benefits

Duration: ca. 60min

Expected outcome: Participants reflect on the SEDS updating and their role in the process in a way that their commitment and mutual trust is established.

Preparation: Prepare rooms and material (flipchart, marker)

Procedure:

- Divide the whole group into small groups.
- The participants have approx. 30 minutes to discuss the following **questions**:
 1. How do you think you could benefit from the RTs?
 2. What do you want to contribute to the RTs?
- The groups visualise their answers, e.g. on a flipchart.
- The groups present their results in the plenary.
- During the presentation of the group work results, the participants' understanding of the SEDS updating becomes visible. For the facilitators, this is a chance to clarify possible misunderstandings regarding the purpose of the SEDS update.



In the pilot experiences, the groups were divided according to sectors – e.g. civil society members formed one group, mayors another one – that encouraged the participants to give answers not from their personal point of view, but from the point of view of the interest group they represented.

Step 1-4: Presentation on the prioritisation method

Duration: ca. 30min

Expected outcome: Participants understand that the final product of the RTs is a scoring matrix. They know its function and its elements such as national priorities.

Preparation: Prepare presentation, ideally with examples to enhance understanding

A brief presentation is given by the RT facilitators. The following **questions** should be answered:

- What is a priority?
- What are national priorities and where have they been derived from?
- Why are national priorities and rayon priorities combined?
- How are national and rayon priorities combined in the final matrix?
- How will the final matrix be used for the ranking?

4.3.6 Round Table 2 – Defining Rayon Priorities

What are the objectives of the second Round Table?

- The participants deepen their understanding of the purpose of the RTs
- The participants deepen their understanding of the matrix and the ranking
- The participants propose rayon priorities

Step 2-1: Repetition of the purpose of the Round Tables

Duration: ca. 10min

Expected outcome: Key messages regarding the purpose of the RTs are repeated. New participants get the chance to catch up.

Preparation: Prepare a presentation with max. 2 - 4 slides

Procedure:

- Briefly repeat the purpose of the RTs
- Give participants the opportunity to ask questions

Step 2-2: Presentation on priority elaboration

Duration: ca. 20min

Expected outcome: Participants deepen their understanding of the scoring matrix, its use and its components. They understand how priorities are defined and made measurable.

Preparation: Prepare presentation and handout

This step combines new information with a repetition of the information given at the 1st RT (see step 1-4). The following **questions** should be answered:

- How are problems transformed into priorities?
- How can priorities be made measurable? (Prepare examples for criteria)
- Repetition: What are national priorities?
- Repetition: How will national and rayon priorities be used for the final ranking?

Step 2-3: Group work on rayon priorities

Duration: ca. 1h 15min

Expected outcome: Participants propose priority statements on the basis of which priorities can be defined (see next step).

Preparation:

- Bring results of the situation analysis of RT 1 (see step 1-1)
- Prepare material for group work (cards, marker, ideally an handout with a description of the task and an example for a priority statement)

Procedure:

- Present the results of the situation analysis from RT 1. Stress identified challenges and opportunities of WatSan in the rayon and their connection to other sectors.
- Divide the whole group into small groups.
- The groups get 30 minutes time to propose maximum four priority statements each group on cards. The problems defined in the situation analysis can serve as an inspiration.
- To formulate a priority statement, the following sentence must be completed: "Priority should be given to localities that..."



In the situation analysis, the participants argue that the WatSan situation constrains the development of tourism. On the basis of this stated problem, the participants could formulate the following priority statement: "Priority should be given to localities that have touristic potential".

Step 2-4: Grouping of priority statements and formulation of priorities

Duration: ca. 1h

Expected outcome: The cards with priority statements proposed by the participants are grouped.

Preparation:

- If you do the grouping of cards for the first time, you may wish to seek assistance
- Since the RT participants are not involved in this step, it is recommended that they recess for lunch break

Procedure:

- Group cards with similar priority statements into one cluster.
- Find a concise and clear heading (name) for the clustered cards.
- There is no limit for the number of clusters.



The participants come up with the following priority statements:

- (1) "Priority should be given to localities that have touristic potential"
- (2) "Priority should be given to localities with high economic activity"
- (3) "Priority should be given to localities with a high number of population"
- (4) "Priority should be given to localities with schools"

Priority statements (1) and (2) address the same aspect: economic potential. These similar statements are grouped (clustered) together under an appropriate heading which could be "to improve WatSan in localities with economic potential". In this example, priority statement (3) cannot be grouped with other statements. The name for this cluster could be "to meet as much people as possible". Priority statement (4) is already covered by the national priority "improve access of schools and pre-school students to the improved WatSan facilities" and will not be used as a rayon priority. It is not possible to consider rayon priorities that contradict national priorities.

Step 2-5: Presentation of grouped priorities

Duration: ca. 30min

Expected outcome: Participants understand the rationale of grouping cards. Adaptations can be made. The final clusters are approved by the participants.

Procedure:

- Present the clusters and explain the reason for grouping the cards with priority statements.
- Ask the participants whether they agree with the grouping of the priority statements and the names of the clusters.
- If participants do not agree with the clusters, regroup the cards or rename the cluster.
- Ask the participants to suggest data sources for the operationalisation of rayon priorities.
- Participants may be eager to express their opinion on the priorities proposed by their colleagues. You may plan some extra time for discussion.

4.3.7 Between Round Table 2 and 3 – Making Rayon Priorities Measurable

After RT 2, the priorities proposed by the RT participants are operationalised. The following steps are essential:

How can rayon priorities be made measurable?

- Check the results of RT 2: Were the cluster and their respective names defined correctly? If not, analyse the priority statements once more and re-group them. To ensure transparency, changes must be mentioned during the next RT.
- Appoint an expert who prepares criteria with indicators and sets scales for each priority. For rayon priorities with corresponding criteria and indicators see Annex II.
- Check the criteria and indicators with the facilitation team and experts in the rayon according to the following questions:
 - Are they realistic or misleading?
 - Is there any data available for these criteria?
 - If not, can data be gathered easily and how?
- Gather necessary data. Some data might be available in rayon departments or other institutions. Data that does not exist needs to be surveyed, e.g. by telephone interviews with mayors.

Which resources are needed for making the priorities measurable?



The formulation of criteria, indicator and scales must be done by an expert. The relevant data is proposed by the facilitation team, RT participants and rayon staff, but should be discussed with the expert. Depending on the type of priorities and criteria, assistants can support the data gathering.



If the data already exist at rayon level, gathering it might be fast. However, for some priorities and criteria, data needs to be surveyed. If this is the case, you need to plan at least ca. 30 minutes time for calling the mayor and documenting the information.

4.3.8 Round Table 3 – Completing the Ranking Matrix

What are the objectives of the third Round Table?

- The participants understand the criteria and indicators that were defined for the rayon priorities
- The rayon priorities are weighted by participants
- The number of rayon priorities is reduced to a manageable amount (max. 4)
- The final ranking matrix is completed
- The participants are informed on the way forward

Step 3-1: Presentation on rayon priorities with indicators and scales
Duration: ca. 30min
Expected outcome: Participants understand the criteria and indicators that were defined for rayon priorities.
Preparation: Prepare presentation and handout
The following questions should be answered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the steps between the 2nd and the 3rd RT? • How does the final matrix (including national priorities) look like that is going to be completed during RT 3? • Which rayon priorities were proposed during RT 2? • Which criteria, indicators and scales have been defined for rayon priorities?

Step 3-2: Weighting of rayon priorities
Duration: ca. 30min
Expected outcome: Participants assign weight to each priority.
Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are different weighting methods that can be used to give weight to the priorities. Their advantages and disadvantages have to be compared in order to choose an appropriate method. • Depending on the weighting method you choose, you may need an expert for support. • Prepare a presentation on the weighting method.

Procedure:

- Present the weighting method.
- Let the participants give weight to the priorities in individual work. The following sentence may guide them: “Which of these priorities is more important to you and should have more weight?”



In the pilot implementation of the approach, the **Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)** method was chosen: “At the core of the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) lies a method for converting subjective assessments of relative importance to a set of overall weights” (Dodgson, Spackman, Pearman, & Phillips, 2009: 127). The pairwise comparison of priorities seemed to be convenient for participants. Moreover, this method is very precise. However, its complexity requires expertise in the area of mathematics.

Step 3-3: Calculation of the final weights

Duration: ca. 30min

Expected outcome: The matrix is completed

Preparation:

- Depending on the weighting method, you may need an expert for the calculation.
- Since the RT participants are not involved in this step, it is recommended that they recess for lunch break.

Procedure:

- The facilitators calculate the final weights.
- A reasonable amount (as a general rule, max. 4) of rayon priorities with the highest weights is included in the final matrix.

Step 3-4: Presentation of the weighting results

Duration: ca. 10min

Expected outcome: The participants get to know the final matrix

Preparation: Prepare presentation

The following **questions** should be answered:

- How have the weights been calculated?
- Which priorities were ranked highest?
- What does the final matrix with priorities and weights look like?

Step 3-5: Presentation of the next steps of the SEDS chapter elaboration

Duration: ca. 30min

Expected outcome: The participants are informed on the way forward

Preparation:

- Prepare presentation
- You may also prepare a small gift for RT participants, e.g. a CD with photos or a certificate

The following **questions** should be answered:

- How will the scores of the localities and the clusters be combined?
- What other elements will feed into the SEDS chapter?
- When will the final SEDS chapter be presented to the public?

4.3.9 Hints for Round Table Facilitators

There are a couple of practical hints that help to manage the RTs successfully:

1) **Ensure message control:** Make sure that objectives and limits of the SEDS updating are clearly communicated in order to not create wrong expectations. The prioritisation of villages is a delicate issue. Participants may think that at the end of the prioritisation one village will be the “winner” and receive funds. In order not to cause misunderstandings, it should be made clear that:

- There will be no “winner village”. The score of each village will be used for calculating the scores of the clusters.
- The clusters with high scores will not automatically receive funds. The scores are used to identify measures that will be proposed in the action plan.

In addition, message control can be done informally, e.g. during the breaks by having short chats with participants.

2) **Enhance understanding:** The whole prioritisation process is complex. To enhance the participants’ understanding, it is recommended to:

- Do not strain the participants' concentration capacities. Keep presentations short and precise. Make sure the actual working time (i.e. excluding breaks) of each RT does not exceed four hours.
 - Always include question and answer sessions after the presentation and ask frequently, if there are questions, especially when participants look frustrated or puzzled.
 - Make use of visualisation. Put posters with important information (e.g. communication rules, objectives of the RTs, priorities) on the wall. This helps participants to absorb the information.
 - Give assistance to the group works, if needed.
 - Make clear how each activity is related to the final product of the RT.
- 3) **Link Round Tables with each other:** To enhance understanding, it is also useful to link the RTs with each other. There are a couple of measures you can make use of:
- Document outputs of group works and put them into the folders of the next RT. Make reference to the outputs of former RTs.
 - Make use of repetitions. They help to “digest” all the new information.
 - Always give an outlook on the next RT.
- 4) **Help participants to understand their role:** Participants were invited to the RTs as representatives of interest groups. It is important, to:
- Stress that each perspective is needed for a comprehensive set of rayon priorities.
 - Encourage participants to act as representatives of their group, rather than as individuals, e.g. in the group work.

4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

The SEDS updating requires establishing some form of learning mechanisms, for example procedures for Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E).

Why is M & E needed?

Proper monitoring is a prerequisite for the quality of an activity. It is carried out during the process. Lessons from monitoring should be discussed regularly in order to find out what kind of adaptations, if any, are needed in the process or workplan. It also serves to anticipate problems and to reduce the risk of having cost overruns or time delays. Evaluation is the final assessment of the process; identifying key drivers for success and factors for failure. It is done after the activity. The lessons learnt from the evaluation may help to improve the SEDS updating methodology for future

applications. However, monitoring and evaluation do not only enhance learning. They are also important to assure accountability and transparency.



Monitoring and evaluation covers both the *SEDS updating*, and the implementation of the *action plan*. While the former is related to the quality of the updating process, the latter relates to the progress monitoring of the measures defined in the action plan.

How can M & E be carried out?

There exist plenty of methods for M & E. Process monitoring, for which some activities are enlisted in Table 4-4, is best done in the form of a self-assessment. It is not an objective measurement, but rather a subjective assessment of the current status in the update of the SEDS. For self-assessment, the facilitation team has to define criteria that, according to them, are crucial for the quality of the process, such as: effectiveness, involvement of all stakeholders, transparency, or acceptance of results. The team then assesses in regular sessions whether these criteria are, partly, fully achieved or not.

These criteria can also be used for the final evaluation of the process, assessing them retrospectively and more profoundly. The M & E of the RTs is especially important. Thus, the self-assessment should be complemented by an evaluation done by the RT participants. For this purpose, evaluation sheets should be elaborated and filled out at each RT.

Table 4-4: M & E tools for the SEDS updating process (source: own)

Step	Tools
Document the observations made during activities	Factsheets stating preparatory and implementation steps, main results, material, time, costs
Feedback of involved stakeholders and partners	Evaluation sheets for participants of RTs; Formal and informal interviews
Reflection sessions within the facilitation team	Moderated discussion

5 Results of the Pilot Testing in Cahul and Riscani Rayons

The objective of this chapter is to illustrate the methodological steps of the participatory priority definition (PPD), explained in the preceding Manual chapter. The outcomes shown here should be understood as a complement to the Manual. The description of the preparatory phase covers a brief illustration of the respective rayon's water supply and sanitation (WatSan) situation and the involvement of facilitators and stakeholders. The outcomes of PPD are presented following the sequence of three Round Tables (RTs). The chapter can be seen as evidence for the potential of participatory district planning, as it reflects the diversity of opinions and priorities that became evident during the pilot implementation of the approach.

5.1 Results of the Preparation Phase

5.1.1 Profiles of the Pilot Regions

The team followed up on prior activities GIZ had carried out on behalf of the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC) in the two rayons of Cahul and Riscani. Two pilot WatSan infrastructure projects had been set up in Cahul city, Cahul and Costesti town, Riscani, respectively. Besides providing improved service quality to the people in the respective localities, these pilot projects have as an aim to train and strengthen the Regional Development Agencies' (RDAs) capacities in project management. While choosing the respective sites, MRDC and its partners came to realise that a more systematic approach was required for identifying those localities with the highest need for investments in the future.

Cahul rayon is situated in the South-West of Moldova and, like Riscani, borders Romania in the west along the Prut River. 77.2% of the population reside in rural areas, and 32.8% in urban areas. In contrast to Riscani, the demography of Cahul is constant at a ratio of 0,5% in 2010: the number of births (1,524) being higher than the number of deaths (1,466) (Biroul Național de Statistică al Republicii Moldova, 2011). Cahul's territorial-administrative structure consists of 55 localities in 36 primarias (Consiliului Raional Cahul, 2011). Cahul town, the administrative centre, (40,500 inhabitants) is one of the major economic and cultural centres in the South of Moldova, and together with Chisinau and Balti the only city in Moldova that hosts a university.

Riscani rayon is located in the Northwest of the Republic of Moldova and is to its west separated from Romania by the Prut River. 80.8% of the population reside in rural and 19.2% in urban areas. The demographic trend in the rayon is negative, with

646 births in 2008 being below the death rate (1,039) (Rayon Council Riscani, 2009: 5). The territorial-administrative structure of Riscani rayon consists of 54 localities in 28 primarias, with Riscani town being the administrative centre.

Table 5-1: Main characteristics of the pilot rayons (source: Rayon Council Cahul, 2008; Rayon Council Riscani, 2009)

	Riscani	Cahul
Total area	936 km ²	1,540 km ²
Number of inhabitants	69,400 (in 2009)	124,100 (in 2008)
Population density	74.1 inhabitants/km ²	80.6 inhabitants/km ²
Birth/Death ratio	-4.9% (2010)	0.5% (2010)
Official average income per employable person and month	72.9 €	67.5 €
Annual district budget	6.4 million € (2009)	10.3 million € (2007)
Agricultural land	76,592 ha (82% of total area)	98,871 ha (64% of total area)

Agriculture is Riscani rayon's main economic sector (Rayon Council Riscani, 2009: 6). The industrial production is strongly linked to the agricultural sector, with the largest industrial enterprises being dairy production and fruit and vegetable processing. Like in Riscani, agriculture is the main economic sector of Cahul district, followed by the food processing, construction and light industry (Rayon Council Cahul, 2008: 4).

5.1.2 Water Supply and Sanitation Situation

The tables below give an overview on the current state of WatSan service access in the localities of Cahul and Riscani rayons. For both, the national, water-related Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets are used to indicate the degree to which the rayons meet those targets. Cahul is slightly more urbanised, with Cahul town as one of the country's southern centres. Due to the size and importance of Cahul's urban centre, the access on household level to both centralised drinking water supply, as well as sewerage collection is higher compared to Riscani rayon. This probably has historical reasons, and is also due to the proximity of Cahul town to the Prut River. The total number of wells, compared to the number that is considered technically functional has to be considered with caution. A general evaluation of the water quality of the rayon's wells has yet to be made, as only part of the wells' quality data has been made available at the time of data assessment.

Overall, in terms of service access for the population, Cahul is more advanced than Riscani when comparing to the MDG targets⁴⁸ (see Table 5-2 and Table 5-3).

Table 5-2: Factsheet WatSan situation Cahul rayon (source: GIZ/GOPA 2011)

Total population Cahul: 124,400 (as of 01. 01.10)	Urban: 40,700		Rural: 83,700	
Drinking water access	With access to centralised water supply		Without access to centralised water supply	
No. of localities (out of 53 assessed)	31		22	
No. of households (total & relative)	20,097 / 49,25%		20,715 / 50,75%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	12,528 / 91,97%		1,095 / 8,03%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	7,569 / 27,8%		19,620 / 72,2%	
Compared to MDG target	2015 target: 65%; Present: 49.3%; Gap: 15.7%			
Sewerage access	With access to centralised wastewater collection / -treatment		Without access to centralised wastewater collection / -treatment	
No. of localities (out of 53 assessed)	5		50	
No. of households (total & relative)	12,082 / 29,6%		28,730 / 70,4%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	11,795 / 86,6%		1,828 / 13,4%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	287 / 1,06%		26,902 / 98,94%	
Compared to MDG target	2015 target: 65%; Present: 29.6%; Gap: 35.4%			
Decentralised Water Supply GOST Quality Indicators for sources	The 22 localities without access to centralised water supply use water from 2,136 mine wells and springs			
	657 wells or 30.7% have been tested on water quality, and compared to the GOST standards:			
	45.8% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	9.4% do not correspond to 1 indicator	35.3% do not correspond to 2 indicators	9.4% do not correspond to 3 or more indicators
Centralised Water Supply GOST Quality Indicators for sources	In the localities with centralized system of water supply analysis were made for 997 sources, the total number of wells is not available			
	80.8% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	7.4% do not correspond to 1 indicator	1.9% do not correspond to 2 indicators	9.9% do not correspond to 3 or more indicators

⁴⁸ The present table is not using the same units with respect to MDG targets and the data assessed. The comparison thus should be understood as an illustration.

Infrastructure, centralised	21,8% of the existing network exceeded the average useful life for the respective infrastructure category
Infrastructure, decentralised	Functional / non-functional tube wells: 57/49

The standards were set during Soviet times and since then many water sources have not been tested regularly. Information here is based on available data in official records, but is subject to change once all wells in the rayon are checked again.

Table 5-3: Factsheet WatSan situation Riscani rayon (source: GIZ/GOPA 2011)

Total population Riscani: 70,500 (as of 01.01.2010)	Urban: 18,800		Rural: 51,700	
Drinking water access	With access to centralised water supply		Without access to centralised water supply	
No. of localities (out of 55 assessed)	23		32	
No. of households (total & relative)	9,562 / 32.5%		19,834 / 67.5%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	4,527 / 70.5%		1,895 / 29.5%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	5,035 / 21.9%		17,939 / 78.1%	
Compared to MDG target	2015 target: 65%; Present: 32.5%; Gap: 32.5%			
Sewerage access	With access to centralised wastewater collection / -treatment		Without access to centralised wastewater collection /treatment	
No. of localities (out of 55 assessed)	4		51	
No. of households (total & relative)	2,118 / 7.2%		27,278 / 92.8%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	2,109 / 32.8%		4,313 / 67.2%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	9 / 0.04%		22,965 / 99.96%	
Compared to MDG target	2015 target: 65%; Present: 7.2%; Gap: 57.8 %			
Decentralised Water Supply	The 29 localities without access to centralised water supply use water from 2,091 mine wells and springs.			
GOST Quality Indicators for sources	41% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	22% do not correspond to 1 indicator	14% do not correspond to 2 indicators	23% do not correspond to 3 or more indicators
Centralised Water Supply	For households with a centralised water supply system analysis were made for 394 sources.			
GOST Quality Indicators for sources	72.3% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	16.8% do not correspond to 1 indicator	0% do not correspond to 2 indicators	10.9% do not correspond to 3 or more indicators
	Households w/o access to centralised water supply use 4,933 wells.			

	38% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	25% do not correspond to 1 indicator	5% do not correspond to 2 indicators	32% do not correspond to 3 or more indicators
Infrastructure, centralised	28.3 % of the existing network exceeded average useful life for the respective infrastructure category			
Infrastructure, decentralised	Functional / non-functional tube wells: 17 / 23			

5.1.3 Rayon Teams and Stakeholder Involvement

The SLE team supported the RDA facilitator in the pilot-testing phase. As on the job training for future implementation, the RDA counterpart managed a mixed team during the PPD process. This is indicated in the table below:

Table 5-4: Composition of the rayon teams (source: own)

Composition of the rayon team Cahul	Composition of the rayon team Riscani
1 RDA facilitator, Strategy and Planning Specialist	1 RDA facilitator, Head of Strategic Planning and Programming Section
1 Vice President	1 Vice President
1 Senior staff member, Economy Department	1 Head, Department for Resources and Sustainability of Investments
2 student assistants for logistics and data gathering	2 assistants for logistics and data gathering, 1 interpreter

Analysis of the RT's participant attendance list and the evaluation sheets filled in at the end of each RT session gave insight into both the presence of stakeholder representatives, as well as their opinion about the respective sessions, the latter being covered in Chapter 7.

The proposed composition of participants from three sectors in both rayons is indicated in the table below. Selection during the pilot implementation was carried out by the rayon administration and presidency with support by GIZ focal points familiar with the context.

Table 5-5: Proposed representation for the Stakeholder Dialogue in both rayons (source: own)

Sector	Cahul	Riscani
Mayors representing LPA 1	6	6
Rayon administration (LPA 2) and decentralised state services	11	13
Civil society, service providers and private sector	8	10
Total	25	29

For Cahul, out of 25 people on the list of invited participants, on average 80% of the people (RT 1: 21 persons; RT 2: 21; RT 3: 20) were present. Nine people (or 36%) were present at every RT. In Riscani, 29 stakeholder representatives participated at the first two RTs. Eighteen participants were present at the last RT, while altogether 16 people participated at each RT out of 29 invitees.

5.2 Results of the Strategic Phase

5.2.1 Round Table 1

The “kick-off's” main objective was to clarify the purpose of the Stakeholder Dialogue, and to make participants' roles and interests transparent to their fellow stakeholders (see Chapter 4.3.5). Below, two example statements about expectations towards the process and the potential contributions by the respective groups are illustrated.

Table 5-6: Expectations and contributions of stakeholder groups (source: own)

	Cahul, Group LPA1	Riscani, Group NGOs
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification and prioritisation of local needs • SEDS will reflect the true situation and provide concrete solutions for achieving the objectives, by using local and regional resources • Opportunities to attract investment • The management capacity of LPA will be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assurance of cooperation structures between NGOs and LPA2 (and also to other agents, i.e. Apa Canal) • Opportunities for design and implementation of projects on the basis of feasibility studies • The promotion of the NGO as a result of the involvement in the process • Assurance of improved living conditions for the population
Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution of information concerning the localities • Contribution to a good working environment for the round table process • The involvement of the local actors in the process of updating the local socioeconomic strategy • Awareness raising campaign informing the population about the SEDS concerning water supply and sanitation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of information concerning the updating process • Mobilisation of the community • Collaboration with LPA and mass media • Assuring the transparency of the activity • Evaluation of the activity and assessment of the impact created

5.2.2 Round Table 2

The priorities elaborated by the rayon stakeholders, still unweighted and not yet checked concerning the availability of indicator data were as follows:

Table 5-7: Unweighted, clustered priorities from the two rayons (source: own)

Cahul	Riscani
To meet as many people as possible	To support economic development
To improve existing service provision	To extend existing infrastructure
To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions (esp. health centres)	To make use of local contributions
To support economic development	To improve existing service provision
To make use of local contributions	To improve living conditions in disadvantaged localities
–	To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions

After the identification of potential priorities to be used for ranking localities, a GOPA sector expert assisted the facilitation team in formulating criteria and indicators in order to make the priorities tangible and comparable. These criteria and their respective indicators can be found in (see Annex II). Additional data for each locality, not assessed during the collection of WatSan data was gathered by using the rayon economy department's records, and by conducting telephone interviews.



Figure 5-1: Stakeholders at a Round Table in Cahul rayon (source: own)

5.2.3 Round Table 3

During the third step of Round Tables, participants weighted the priorities proposed by them during RT2.

Table 5-8: Priority weighting and selection in the two rayons (source: own)

National Priorities 66 %	Priorities		Weight	
	To reduce water-related morbidity		0.25	
	To increase coverage of population with piped water supply		0.15	
	To ensure 24 h provision with drinking water		0.15	
	To increase coverage with improved sanitation		0.15	
	To halt deterioration of existing WatSan infrastructure		0.15	
	To improve access of (pre-)school students to improved WatSan facilities		0.15	
	Sum of national priorities' weight		100%	
Rayon Priorities 33 %	Cahul		Riscani	
	Final, selected priorities	Relative weight	Final, selected priorities	Relative weight
	To support economic development	0.40	To improve existing service provision	0.29
	To meet as many people as possible	0.32	To improve living conditions in disadvantaged localities	0.28
	To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions (health)	0.28	To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions	0.22
	–	–	To extend existing WatSan infrastructure	0.21
	Sum of Cahul priorities' weight	100%	Sum of Riscani priorities' weight	100%

The finally selected priorities resulting from the weighting of priorities clearly illustrate how different the outcomes of participatory priority definition can be in different rayons. In Cahul, as well as in Riscani, participants voted for special attention to public institution's WatSan service access. The remaining two priorities in Cahul both have a nuance of economic sustainability: Support for economic development and meeting many people implicitly favours those localities that have a higher population and more economic activity and potential. While this is also true for the highest-ranked Riscani priority (to improve existing service provision implies prioritising those localities that are usually larger), the improvement of living conditions in

disadvantaged localities and the extension of infrastructure have a notion of welfare and of overcoming disparities.

6 Results of the Enabling Activities

Parallel to supporting the Round Tables (RT) on rayon level, the SLE team supported multi-level dialogue activities perceived as essential enabling factors for the process of updating the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS), as well as for the subsequent use, and future up-scaling of the approach. The Policy Dialogue formally served as a platform for reporting by the team of facilitators to national stakeholders. A second, important aspect was the bringing together of the two ministries, the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC) and the Ministry of Environment (MoE), recognising the need for joint and coordinated action. The multi-level Policy Dialogue facilitated by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), as the implementing agency of the process, supported activities related to tier one of the updating process. Tier one focused on the agreement on the priorities and the combination of national objectives with local ones.

Considerations of inter-communal cooperation and the regionalisation of public service provision in the Republic of Moldova (RoM) were brought to the fore both through the mechanism for integrating clusters with priorities raised during the national meetings; and the aspects studied for the Knowledge Transfer. The considerations on the use and adaptation of regionalised services in the Moldovan context received some additional momentum due to the "food for thought" provided during the study trip.

6.1 Multi-level Policy Dialogue

A sequence of three national level events, conducted over the course of the SLE team's three-month stay helped to promote the cause of policy implementation at the local level via the modality of regional development.

The **Inception Meeting** on August 4, 2011 served as a first gathering of all policy-making level representatives in order to: present the SLE team's approach; to have an agreement between all relevant authorities on the set of six national priorities (see Chapter 4.1.1); and to confirm commitment from the national stakeholders on the SEDS as a tool for rayon level planning (which was granted by both the MRDC and the State Chancellery during this meeting).

Active involvement of national level representatives in the definition of rayon level priorities was limited to participation during the first RT in both rayons. The actual contribution in terms of clarifying policy objectives and underlining ministries' commitment to a renewed planning approach remained limited, however.

During an **Information Meeting** on September 29, 2011, results of the prioritisation process from both rayons had been presented, as well as the structure and

procedures for updating the SEDS chapter. The meeting's main purpose was to again receive clear commitment to: a) go ahead with the promotion of (locally) prioritised investment needs; and b) illustrate the alignment of national priorities with local ones under a coherent, transparent planning approach that builds on viable technology and management solutions. During this second national-level meeting, participants who had attended the Exposure Visits (see below) shared insights on the practices of inter-communal cooperation in Romania and Germany. This generated broad consensus for the adoption of a two-tiered approach.

The MRDC and the MoE jointly held the **National Conference on Harmonisation of SEDS with National Sector Policies** on October 27, 2011. It had been the first time these two ministries hosted such an event together, and they stressed the will to continue their efforts in:

- Co-ordination on the implementation of sector policies via regional development planning
- Harmonisation of the institutional framework, beyond the approval (see above) of a local prioritisation procedure for updating SEDS

The international partners present at the meeting agreed to support the initiative further, and to harmonise their own policies with respect to the development of a national framework for WatSan sector planning and investment. Hence the presentation of the results of the pilot updating process also constituted the beginning of a broader joint effort by the Government of Moldova (GoM) and its international partners for the design of a Moldovan framework for WatSan development.

6.2 Knowledge Transfer

The main tool used in the Knowledge Transfer component of the study was the Exposure Visit⁴⁹. The results are separated into organisational and thematic aspects⁵⁰ below.

⁴⁹ The results were documented on the basis of comments formulated by participants and the organisation team as well as on the evaluation sheets filled by the participants at the end of the Exposure Visits.

⁵⁰ These findings were extracted from the presentations and discussions at the sites visited and from the reflection sessions during the Exposure Visits, as well as extrapolated from comments given by participants.

6.2.1 Organisation

A majority of the participants (85%) thought it was very useful to communicate with representatives from different Moldovan administrative levels during the Exposure Visits. The very **diverse background of the participants** generated interesting discussions within the group; and the participants' different functions in WatSan sector governance helped in gaining a more complex understanding on the WatSan sector in the RoM. One important aspect was that the combination of formal and informal activities during the Exposure Visits allowed participants from different levels to interact in an open way and supported the exchange of opinions.

“Communication with other administrative institutions' representatives allowed me to find answers to several open questions and gave me a clear overview of measures taken in the field of WatSan” (extracted from evaluation sheet).

The low decision-making authority was highlighted as problematic by the participants. It is not clear in what way the discussions and lessons learnt will influence national strategies and plans in the WatSan sector.

Concerning the **reflection sessions**, 85% of the participants thought that these sessions supported individual and, group reflection as well as discussion. Regarding Romanian and German experiences in the WatSan sector, the exchanges within the group provided significant insights. Nevertheless a greater accent should be put on the applicability and transfer to the Moldovan context.

Another relevant aspect of the reflection sessions, as stated by the participants, was that they helped in clarifying topics and terms. The presence of the GOPA WatSan expert was seen as essential for an enhanced comprehension. This is of special importance regarding the interdisciplinary character of the group, as participants with different professional backgrounds had different levels of knowledge concerning the WatSan sector.

“The lessons learnt sessions allowed us to clarify the aspects that were not discussed enough at the visited sites due to the lack of time” (extracted from evaluation sheets).



Figure 6-1: From the water treatment plant to the ministry, Brandenburg (source: own)

6.2.2 Themes

Inter-communal Cooperation

Inter-communal cooperation is understood to happen when communities join together and create special single or multi-purpose association for public service provision (i.e. WatSan services) under public law (see Chapter 2.1.2). In Romania, the establishment of Inter-Communal Development Associations (IDA), as part of the regionalisation process, was a prerequisite to access funds from the European Union. The IDA and the service provider are strongly linked counterparts, each with its own responsibilities. The association is a monitoring and control organ and is responsible for tariff approval. On the other side, the provider manages the operation and management of drinking water service provision. The IDAs contract a service provider on the basis of a 20-year (on average) concession.

In Germany, associations of communes can choose between two management models with respect to the structure and organisation of the service provider: Either a private concessionaire, or a functional corporation under public law (*Zweckverband*), that becomes the owner of public assets and has access to communal credits with special conditions. A council of commune member representatives, that has the final decision-making authority, governs it. Service providers under public law are non-profit, while they are obliged to cover the full costs of operation and investment by the collection of user tariffs and are allowed to receive additional communal funding only under exceptional circumstances.

Regionalisation of WatSan Services

As stated by Romanian counterparts who have witnessed the recent regionalisation process, information and lobbying campaigns related to advantages of inter-communal cooperation and regionalisation are absolutely essential for starting the

reform in the field of water supply. Also, local authorities require guidelines related to good practices and concrete steps for inter-communal cooperation and regionalisation, including information related to writing project proposals and accessing funds. The communes' budget and the areas' water resources are two major factors which need to be thoroughly considered before engaging in the endeavour, in order not to jeopardise the regionalisation potential for the future. Rehabilitation of existing infrastructure may in some cases be favourable to extension of services.

Regional Development Plans

Regional (or district) development plans coordinate and guarantee coherent investment strategies within the region. If a regional development plan is designed in a sound manner (preferably with assistance of specialists and also under involvement of the service providers), the probability of attracting investments and financial support is substantially increased. The plan can be the basis on which inter-communal associations elaborate their strategy in the WatSan sector. A prerequisite for such a plan is the willingness of communities to cooperate and to agree on why a common strategy is of importance. Planning in advance can help to reduce future expenses and prevent debts for communities, for example analysing future demographic trends in order to maintain viable and accessible public services.

Tariff Management

Tariffs have to be calculated in a way that guarantees the viability of the water provider (requirement of the EU). Tariffs have to cover operation, management, and capital cost. All subsidies have been eliminated from the tariff system in Romania and Germany. In Romania, the tariff structure is proposed by the operator, and subsequently has to be approved by the administrative council of the IDA (within which all communities are represented). Finally, it gets approved by the national regulation authority.

Regarding consumers, the low financial capacity of the population has to be considered when calculating tariffs, and a well-justified tariff policy has to be presented. Additionally, an information campaign explaining the reasons behind the establishment of water tariffs can increase the willingness of the consumers to pay for water services.

Management Structure of WatSan Service Providers

Different options to increase efficiency concerning the administration and operationalisation of WatSan providers are possible:

- Externalising certain services (e.g. maintenance) can be a solution for reducing costs
- Modern remote-controllable technology and economies of scale through the regionalisation of services (e.g. electricity and personnel costs)
- Finding alternative options to centralised solutions, if these are not financially viable: in Brandenburg, good experiences have been had with decentralised management of waste water (e.g. small treatment stations) in localities with a small and dispersed population structure

Framework Conditions in the WatSan Sector

To provide a legal framework conducive to the regionalisation of public services and the creation of inter-communal associations, responsibilities of each governance level have to be clearly defined. Related to this, rayon development planning in the WatSan sector has to be aligned with regional and national policies.

Nevertheless, there are crucial differences in the conditions framing the WatSan sector between Romania and Germany vis-à-vis the RoM. In the cases of Romania and Germany financial commitments from the European Union as well as from the central government (especially in the case of Germany) pushed development in the WatSan sector.

A further important aspect relevant for implementation of investment projects is the lack of a coherent normative framework in the RoM. Planning standards and procedures are essential, however, for the design of infrastructure projects, as well as the related environmental standards setting water and wastewater quality targets. At present, out-dated standards from Soviet times stipulate bulk supply of high quantities of water (incurring high cost) to every locality; whereas international minimum requirements (see Chapter 2.2.1) underline the necessity to meet drinking water needs for domestic purposes first; which would make alternative solutions possible.

7 Lessons Learnt

Lessons learnt on the future applicability of the methodology are already captured in the Manual (see Chapter 4). Other lessons learnt were drawn from the results (see Chapters 5 and 6) by comparing what happened with what was supposed to happen. It should enable the reader to follow best practices and avoid repeating mistakes. The lessons learnt will be completed in the conclusions (see Chapter 8) and recommendations section (see Chapter 9).

In this chapter the lessons learnt are presented in terms of:

- **Embedding** the methodological approach for participatory district development planning in existing sector policies and national regulations
- **Elaborating and enabling** the methodological approach for participatory district development planning
- The pilot **implementation** of the participatory priority definition (PPD) in Cahul and Riscani rayons in the Republic of Moldova

7.1 Lessons from Embedding the Approach

7.1.1 MoE/OECD Methodology – A Genuine Link

The main point of reference for the design of the approach was a project ranking and selection methodology for improved expenditure management, developed under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment (MoE) with support by OECD. The MoE/OECD methodology was designed for managing a project pipeline in the Moldovan water supply and sanitation (WatSan) sector. Currently existing project proposals, however, rest upon out-dated standards and baseline assessments. In addition, before actually implementing the MoE/OECD Action/Investment Plan, a ranking of localities according to the urgency of their investment needs was deemed necessary. The suggested bottom-up approach for participatory priority definition was seen as preferable by policy makers, to rank priority projects according to need while meeting quality standards. Their commitment was of critical importance for successfully embedding the suggested approach in existing sector policies.

7.1.2 Socio-Economic Development Strategy – Function Followed Form

So far, a Socio-Economic Development Strategy's (SEDS) chapter's structure follows guidelines set by the Governmental Decision no. 33 (Government of the Republic of Moldova, 2007). The document provides bullet points on what should be contained in a strategy, but a coherent structure is only referred to vaguely. It served as a rather

ambiguous point of reference. It soon became obvious that the clustering tier of the approach (see Chapter 4.1.1) would fit in the structure stipulated for a SEDS chapter, but at the cost of textual cohesion. This is because clustering contains both strategic considerations based on certain criteria and practical implications that would need to be worked out in an action plan.

The term 'strategy' was debated by national-level representatives in the beginning. In their view, the definition of strategies on *what* has to be done is strictly the responsibility of national institutions, while lower-level government bodies only 'plan' *how* things should be done. During a national stakeholder meeting, agreement about the ability of local government to effectively draft strategies was reached.

Looking at the overall purpose of updating the SEDS chapter, it is wise to involve the rayon administration's representative for strategic planning right from the start because she/he will be the one implementing the strategy, monitoring the progress and updating the action plan. The joint elaboration of the draft structure proved very helpful for comprehension and in order to clarify expectations.

The updated SEDS chapter needs to be agreed upon by the rayon council. However, the rayon council was not adequately involved. It remains unknown whether the rayon council will adopt the strategic document once it is complete; including other sectors' chapters as well as the action plan which probably needs to be renewed periodically; or if the single updated WatSan chapter will be adopted.

7.2 Lessons from Elaborating and Enabling the Approach

7.2.1 Frequent Review

Given the complexity of the assignment, it was required to employ an iterative process during the elaboration of the methodology. Apart from regularly consulting with the Regional Development Agency (RDA) and rayon departments, and exchange during multi-level stakeholder meetings, expert know-how was integrated to develop the approach for updating the SEDS. Feedback was used to refine and improve the procedure. It led to an extension of the initial idea (comprising participatory priority definition and ranking of localities based on need) of the clustering/regionalisation of WatSan service provision. Integrating the regionalisation of existing WatSan provision was seen as reasonable, considering anticipated efficiency gains.

Expert know-how also provided valuable insights into the Moldovan WatSan situation, extending attention to issues that previously have not been considered, such as, the importance of an assessment of willingness or ability to pay. The ability

and willingness of people in rural areas to pay for improved WatSan services is essential to understand, before designing WatSan development projects (see Chapters 2.2.1, 8.2 and 9.2).

7.2.2 Multi-level Policy Dialogue

The involvement of regional and national stakeholders proved to be of the same importance, as the involvement of local stakeholders for the success of process design and SEDS chapter updating. Promoting continuous exchange between governance levels, line ministries, and international partners helps to align development strategies and implementation approaches both vertically and horizontally.

Three events (see Chapter 3.4.1) helped to shed light on the legal basis, scope and content of planning documents, and allowed for the acceptance of locally adapted plans by national policy makers. In order to make this a truly multi-level exchange, representatives from RDAs, the pilot rayons, and advocacy institutions for the interests of local authorities were invited.



Figure 7-1: Multi-level Stakeholder Dialogue in the form of a national conference (source: own)

Broad-based, robust commitment provided from the highest levels helped to pave the way for up-scaling the practices. It was important to show to each institution, which had an interest in WatSan service governance, that their respective objectives had been considered. Repeating this message and asking for suggestions as well as commitment from the national representatives was indispensable. Success is contingent upon not only involving the right institution but also upon involving the

right person. This is due to the limited decision-making authority of delegates from some ministries in redesigning and confirming policies.

7.2.3 Knowledge Transfer

The aim of the Exposure Visits was to facilitate Knowledge Transfer from Romanian and German experiences in the WatSan sector to the Moldovan context. Several key lessons learnt can be drawn from this component.

Using **reflection sessions** as a main methodological tool during the Exposure Visits provided participants with an extra time slot in which they could discuss and reflect on the main aspects of the visits to institutions and operators. This is of special importance when taking into account the diverse structure of the group, with participants from different institutions having a range of perspectives and priority interests in mind. In this regard, it could be useful to provide differentiated programs to diverse subgroups (utility providers, local public administrations, central level institutions) in order to meet their specific interests. There should be time to discuss the knowledge gained at the separate visits at a meeting where all participants are present, in order to enhance comprehension regarding different perspectives and point of views.

Moreover, a balanced **mix between formal and informal meetings** proved to have a positive effect. Informal meetings, such as work lunches and evening programs, offer an open but still organised framework, in which the exchange of ideas and opinions between counterparts could run freely.

High-quality translation is crucial if Exposure Visits are organised to countries where a different language is spoken. It also helps if the interpreter has a good knowledge of the main thematic issues covered during the visits and is familiar with the corresponding terminology. Only a high-quality translation can ensure that complex key messages come across and that a profound discussion becomes possible.

Due to the **cultural proximity** between Moldova and Romania the exchange of experiences in the WatSan sector was easier, and informal meetings had a higher impact in Romania than in Germany. Lessons learnt obtained in countries with similar backgrounds provided a higher level of sustainability and applicability when transferring them to the Moldovan situation.

Generally, more **preparation and training time in advance** increases the potential of extracting relevant information and insights from the Romanian and German counterparts. Even though participants were given written information in advance, the experiences show that it is necessary to present this information in an oral way, in order to make sure that the information will reach them.

7.2.4 Capacity Development

During the SLE assignment, lessons learnt on Capacity Development emerged concerning specifics of international cooperation. The insights gained include:

- The benefits of working in international teams confirmed that external influences can serve as a “catalyst for change”, as (Thompson, 1995: 1522) calls it
- Different working approaches and mentalities in intercultural contexts require more time for joint reflection and adaptation than in teams with a common working background
- It is necessary to assess existing capacities and working styles. This allows for adequately designing training sessions and introducing new methods, approaches and standards
- Language skills of the interpreter proved to be crucial to fully understand opinions, concerns and team dynamics, and are a key to success of Capacity Development

A general lesson learnt refers to constraints of taking full scale advantage of strengthened capacities. The high workload of counterparts may pose limitations to the number of meetings and training sessions originally conceived. Lastly, a prerequisite for a long-lasting impact of Capacity Development lies with the beneficiaries’ actually transferring and establishing their improved skills and knowledge within their respective institutions. Concerning RDA staff, there is reason to expect that this will truly happen.

7.3 Lessons from the Pilot Implementation of the Approach

7.3.1 Data Collection and Analysis

The availability of aggregated WatSan information is paramount for informed decision-making on both PPD and the parallel preparation of economically and technically viable options via clustering. In the case of the pilot experience, the comprehensive analysis of the WatSan situation of the two pilot rayons was not available when the process was launched.

Firstly, the need for training in the WatSan sector and skills necessary to collect data, e.g. interview techniques and reasoning, was underestimated. It cannot be stressed enough that proper training must be provided in advance. Secondly, a comprehensive and critical data analysis which is best done by a sector expert with in-depth background and contextual knowledge (e.g. including cross-checking) needs enough time. Sufficient resources need to be available for data collection and

analysis before starting the subsequent steps. Apart from that, it should be possible to cope with data limitations and inconsistency.

7.3.2 Effective Involvement of all Relevant Stakeholders

The team learnt a multitude of lessons during the multi-stakeholder dialogue, which consisted of the PPD, in two pilot rayons; and three Round Tables (RTs) providing the platform for dialogue.

Overall, a large majority of participants evaluated both the organisation of the RTs, as well as their respective length as very satisfying and appropriate. A majority (of 80% or more) thought that the mix of different methods was very useful for the RTs, and that the explanation about local planning possibilities by external experts helped them understand the scope of the updating process. Nevertheless, experience shows that until the last step of PPD, some participants were not clear about the expected outcomes of the dialogue. This especially concerns:

- The purpose of the Stakeholder Dialogue and its respective steps
- The effect priorities will have on the selection of localities in clusters

A number of mayors perceived their presence at the RTs as a "pre-selection" and sign of eligibility. Therefore, it is important to continuously highlight examples concerning the use and influence of priorities from this pilot process' outcomes at the start of similar processes elsewhere. This could be combined with illustrations of where the priorities defined by stakeholders will be integrated into the SEDS chapter, and where inputs provided by experts will find their place.

"You always have to make very clear what each activity serves for. Interaction during presentation could also enhance understanding" (Member of Riscani facilitation team).

From the evaluation of stakeholders' opinions on the composition of the RT participants and the related quality of the discussions, the main lessons are:

- A strong wish for specialists' presence at and input to the RTs. This is most likely linked with the lack of a well-grounded WatSan situation analysis, which the facilitation team could not offer at the appropriate moment
- A wish for a better (a higher proportion) involvement of mayors, given the fact that the actual responsibility for WatSan service organisation rests with LPA 1. Besides, in Cahul, the fact that mayors' representatives were determined by LPA 2 instead of being elected caused irritation

Another lesson learnt for broad-based participation concerns the continuity of attendance by stakeholder representatives during the overall sequence of the steps, as well as their activity during each RT session which largely depends on the duration and intensity of each step. On average, only half⁵¹ of the participants had been present every time. There have always been newcomers to the process, raising the same "newcomer-questions" every time due to their different level of comprehension, which occupied time for more profound reflection. During the first two hours of a RT, attention gradually dropped, with the effect that during the second half of the sessions the moderator had to remind the participants much more about respecting communication rules. It is important to design an appropriate workshop in terms of duration, and to make use of individual work in-between the venues.

Some stakeholders took a rather passive role of "presence" at the RTs. Working in smaller, more focussed groups proved to be very valuable for the creation of a feeling of commonality among the groups. Group work increased both the activity of all participants, and was conducive to the mutual clarification of questions on the overall process.

"I liked that the participants were active and wanted to share their opinions. They got the opportunity to do so thanks to the group works" (Round Table participant, Cahul).

7.3.3 Introducing the Participatory Definition of Rayon Priorities

The impressive diversity of contributions during PPD within one rayon and comparing the two pilot rayons underlines the strength of involving local people. The presentation of stakeholder groups' individual priorities, however, and the subsequent generation of grouped (clustered) priorities, proved to be time-consuming. The way priorities had been formulated made it difficult to easily assign single statements to an overarching idea. To ensure that participants agreed with the grouping and the meaning understood by the moderator, clarification was frequently required.

The team had to learn that the concept of objectives is not easily separated from the concepts of priorities or criteria, as this caused some confusion. Provided facilitators acquaint themselves with the details of prioritisation and (e.g. pairwise) ranking, there is no need to extend the presence of (international) experts to the Stakeholder Dialogue.

⁵¹ In Cahul it was 43%, in Riscani about 60%.

Questions posed by individual participants during the discussion sessions showed that expectations for immediate project selection and funding remained high, and that some participants thought that prioritising meant selection. After the presentation of the final priorities, not all participants have been satisfied with the result. In Cahul, a few mayors claimed that if they had known what others valued as more important, they would have voted in a different way. They perceived the result as discriminatory towards smaller localities. Actually, the strength of individual pairwise ranking becomes apparent here, but it is also a challenge for its implementation with people not acquainted with this form of decision-making. In contrast, the Vice-President of Riscani rayon underlined that, even if she was not fully satisfied with the result of the ranking from her own point of view, one has to accept the outcome of such a joint decision-making.

“I liked that many people from different areas participated in the Round Tables, so the results were much more productive and the outcomes are longer lasting and also more realistic” (Round Table participant, Cahul).

Rayon administrative staff evaluated "non-expert" participation during PPD as "nice for the exchange" and "necessary for them to understand" during interviews conducted by the facilitation team after the last RT. Yet, they did not see this as a necessity or a process leading to broader acceptance of results and robust decisions. Further awareness-raising which highlights the benefits of involving the population into development planning in the future may motivate them to adopt the practices.

With regard to the use of rayon priorities, severe data limitations made their operationalisation via criteria and indicators difficult. There is a huge gap between official numbers and unofficial guess, e.g. with regard to unemployment rates or migration. The pilot experience revealed that a huge effort is needed to plan additional data collection for rayon priorities in between RT 2 and 3.

7.3.4 Process Monitoring and Evaluation

A well-proven method for the Manual design was the monitoring and evaluation of the pilot experience. The Manual brings together best practices, and lessons learnt. Two types of activities turned out to be valuable for the preparation of the Manual:

- Monitoring during the pilot implementation: observation and documentation of all activities, participants' evaluation and facilitators' reflection after each Round Table

- Evaluation after the pilot implementation: interviews with rayon and national stakeholders and RDA, reflection workshop on the accomplishment of the assignment with GIZ and RDA

8 Conclusions

This chapter draws from the detailed reflections of the Manual and results chapters; and interprets lessons learnt during the design and implementation of the pilot process to update the Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS), by relating them to the theoretical framework.

Six aspects are discussed here, starting with a preliminary evaluation of the participatory approach applied by the Regional Development Agencies (RDA) and supported by the SLE team. The second sub-chapter deals with the prevailing assumptions with respect to service governance levels in the Moldovan water supply and sanitation (WatSan) sector. Experiences had with the assessment of data and the quality of information resulting from it is dealt with in sub-chapter 3. As a fourth aspect, the effects of Moldova's WatSan and governance legacy for public services are discussed, as well as the potentials for integrated planning. The fifth sub-chapter reasons that co-ordination between international partners and the Government of Moldova (GoM) will be indispensable for efficient and effective co-operation and public service governance progress.

8.1 Participation in Planning

It remains to be seen what difference locally defined priorities have for strategic planning in Moldova's WatSan sector. A detailed account can only be established once all required information is available for the processing of priorities and localities, and once each rayon's localities are ranked according to the set of the combined six national and local criteria. The challenge to provide for participation that is *responsive to specific needs and possibilities* (see Chapter 2.3.1) by diverse stakeholders in strategic decision-making on the district (rayon) governance level, was not fully realised during the pilot process. One important obstacle was the absence of comprehensive information on the status (see Chapter 8.3) of the rayon's WatSan sector; the other was the methodological design. The respective stakeholder groups' specific needs could not be sufficiently discussed among the constituencies (e.g. the mayors' council) in order to generate a common position on priorities to be brought to the Round Tables (RTs).

Nevertheless, there is clear evidence for the superiority of participatory strategic planning over exclusive specialist planning. Here, we draw from the observations made by the SLE team, reflections by the team of facilitators and the evaluations of the RT process by participants. The generation of priorities during the SEDS updating process yielded a broad consensus, despite some criticism raised by individual stakeholders who were pursuing their individual agenda. Key to this

consensus was the acceptance of the necessity to identify priorities and follow a coherent strategic approach. The importance of this process was raised by the participants during and through the process followed for updating the SEDS chapter. Beyond awareness for the specific requirements of strategic planning, the process also contributed to stakeholders' understanding of WatSan aspects. Expectations of certain stakeholders towards the provision of water supply resembling planned economy conditions was contrasted by other participants experience of the drastic changes in the framework conditions of the market economy. They pointed out the necessity to consider both the cost-effectiveness of investments *as well as* the running costs generated by infrastructure investments that need to be covered by consumers. The transparency of politically sensitive decisions pertaining to prioritisation, created by the Stakeholder Dialogue and resulting from the presence of the media and broad representation adds to the aforementioned. Decisions become more robust through a participatory approach, in terms of well-reflected priorities and thorough exchange of opinions. It also diminishes the tendency to favour investments within decision-makers' constituencies, as the consensus enshrined in participatory priority definition (PPD) cuts across party lines. This will result in better quality solutions for the sector.

8.2 Rights and Pitfalls in the WatSan Sector

The argument that there is room for improvement in the strategic decision-making on rayon level also holds true for the WatSan sector on Moldova's national level. There have been repeated misunderstandings on the purpose and scope of using priorities inscribed in national strategy documents. The need for an agreement on a set of common denominator priorities for sector development has not yet been fully comprehended. These issues are certainly an effect of the first-time implementation of the updating approach; nonetheless representatives of the GoM are committed to the process. It is their turn now to take the lead in making the suggested approach a robust, reliable framework for implementation of sector policies. Low identification with current strategies was caused by the legacy of Moldovan policies that had, during the last parliamentary term, been dominated by overly ambitious views.

While reconsidering national strategies from a more realistic angle, one needs to set minimum objectives which need to be achieved urgently. Clear, unmistakable definition of targets and goals is required for the WatSan services' development targets to be attainable. Human dignity and the reduction of water-related mortality can be achieved with quantities of 20 litres per capita and day, which suffices for basic domestic uses like hygiene, drinking, and cooking (see Chapter 2.2.1).

During discussions with Moldovan policy-makers, national and international experts, the SLE team came to the realisation that the provision of such limited quantities may

be achieved through *alternative* approaches⁵² to centrally provided piped drinking water. There is a need for thorough consideration of both the supply and demand side of WatSan services, especially because there are worries about a poverty gap jeopardising WatSan infrastructure projects. When investing in infrastructure, costs need to be recovered through (often raised) tariffs; while especially in poorer households, the demand diminishes due to increasing burdens on the household's budget. Currently most actors in the domain of WatSan governance in the Republic of Moldova (RoM) expect that there will be piped water supply for the use in flush toilets, bathing, etc. In reality, many people in rural areas may not even be able to afford a bathtub, a boiler, or other costly installations related to increased consumption. Resulting from this fact is a financing gap on the side of service providers, their performance in maintaining the service, and long-term re-investment.

The ability to plan for the particularities of rural public service provision is not established in the RoM yet. The given demographic structure in rural Moldova (see Chapter 1) and its dispersed, sometimes sparse settlement structure, means that opportunities for economies of density (e.g. the number of household connections per kilometre of water supply pipe) diminish drastically. Aggravating the technical-geographic cost factor is the urban-rural poverty gradient. Larger settlements are usually more prosperous, while poverty is far more widespread among the older rural population. During the transition from a planned economy to a market economy consideration of market conditions and acknowledgement of both supply-side and demand-side constraints for those services need to be taken into account. What needs to receive special attention is the rural populations' capacity to pay for services provided.

8.3 Data Quality

An obvious conclusion from the experiences had during the pilot process is that more capacity and resources are required for the generation of informative data. Assessing on-the-ground infrastructure and service information cannot be achieved through mere questionnaire development, but needs to be supported by people sufficiently knowledgeable about the subject. The expertise and capacity needed for processing

⁵² Alternative approaches for providing WatSan services are usually referred to as *decentralised approaches*. Some examples of improved decentralised water supply technologies and approaches, are: filtration and purification of shallow groundwater at the point of use (on household/community level); collection and purification of rainwater, etc 23/01/2012 16:50:00. Some examples of decentralised sanitation solutions are: improved, ventilated pit latrines, EcoSan toilets, and constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment (on the level of communities and smaller localities). For further information see: http://www.apasan.md/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=105&Itemid=96&lang=en (accessed 18.11.2011).

and checking the data integrity should also not be underestimated (see Chapter 7.3.1).

An even larger hindrance for well-informed planning is the quality of existing data. Crucial information, e.g. on water quality (groundwater and surface water) is at present only partially available. The information contained in those records is of no help in drawing a comprehensive picture. Some data had been assessed during the 1980s, other data is not being gathered frequently enough to map changes and fluctuations, and still other data needs to be considered false. In order to design sound, coherent strategies for any sector, factual information has to be established to inform decision-makers on the link between the quality of accessible services and the people's quality of life.

The current debate of national and international experts about Moldova's WatSan sector development concentrates on the issue of the design of the most appropriate, Moldovan approach for planning infrastructure and services. The various international partners contributing their experience, from different levels and aspects of WatSan governance, can offer support, but the responsibility to decide about the preferable approach remains with the GoM. It will have to weigh the pro's and con's of modular, decentralised approaches for project identification, against the preparation of a master plan covering the whole country, for instance. Continuing with "business as usual" in the sense that project proposals are brought forward and designed following non-transparent procedures is however not an option, as the reflections during the design of the MoE/OECD Investment/Action Plan and during the Sector Coordination Council (SCC)⁵³ meetings show.

8.4 Inter-Communal Cooperation for Successful Regionalisation

The core task of updating the SEDS chapter on WatSan in the two pilot rayons was based on efforts to give momentum to the improvement of public service governance in the country. The approach suggested here, was to cluster localities into zones under a joint service scheme. This was based on the assumption that in the course of the development of projects covering several localities, the mayors and local councils will adopt the idea of joining forces and/or giving up some of their autonomy in decision-making on WatSan service provision (see Chapter 2.1.2). Local public administrations (LPA 1), by law provider of WatSan and other public services, often do not have sufficient capacity to engage in administrative endeavours such as inter-

⁵³ The SCC is jointly headed by the Moldovan minister of Environment and the country representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the lead donor (see Chapter 2.2.2).

communal cooperation. Additionally, the LPA 1 are not likely to easily join into cooperation agreements dealing with important amounts of local budget. Institutional development is thus required both concerning the legal framework for inter-communal cooperation, as well as inter-communal trust (a sense of community and commonality) that people can draw upon. Following up the process suggested by the SLE team, during this pilot implementation, could help establish inter-communal cooperation, and inform both law-makers and the everyday practitioners of public service governance about the required steps for successful regionalisation.

Regionalisation policies need to equally consider financial viability and technical feasibility, beyond the prioritisation of localities. The necessity to adapt the prevailing concept about regionalisation in the Moldovan debate was a key insight gained by participants of the Exposure Visits. The participants of the Exposure Visits agreed that, beyond the mere extension or construction of infrastructure (the physical regionalisation) for water supply and sanitation, it is much more important to foster the service aspect underlying WatSan sector development. Exchanges on the interlinkage between inter-communal cooperation, technology, tariffs and regionalisation helped to increase the decision-makers understanding about the administrative challenges local public authorities face in governing the provision of public services.

8.5 Multi-Level Governance for Public Service Development

Multi-level governance (see Chapter 2.2.2) in the RoM is only at the start of becoming a guiding principle for pursuing sector objectives and development goals. The commissioner MRDC is highly committed to its strengthening, and is itself a good example for governance structures corresponding to the complexity and need for integrating sector approaches. MRDC and its partners will have to work on a coherent framework for cross-sector integration on all levels in the future. The necessity for horizontal integration was identified by MRDC, but has to be supported by: legal provisions for an overall SEDS, pilot experiences on integrated district (rayon) planning and funding.

The approach for updating the SEDS chapter and inserting it into the national policy debate showed the potential brought about by multi-level coordination. The fact that various institutions of the GoM agreed upon the necessity to coordinate development of the institutional framework and the respective interventions (also by international partners) points to the huge potential of interventions embedded on multiple levels.

The design of the pilot approach for updating the SEDS chapter on WatSan helped to define reference points in the diverse and complex planning framework. The

implementation of sector policies via regional development modalities was a completely new approach but through the design of procedures and through continuous multi-level discussion, the way ahead became apparent.

The most important issue is the need for improving the legal and normative framework. This includes the institutional improvement of regional development (on the levels of service providers and inter-communal cooperation), as well as improvement of the framework for implementation of WatSan interventions. The normative framework concerning infrastructure planning standards and environmental values is out-dated and does not reflect the stark changes in actual conditions. Developing standards that correspond to policy directives means that a cascade has to be put in place that will guide planners on all levels. These standards need to give clear direction for planners that allow for flexibility and adaption to particular situations and help to make infrastructure development more robust. In the RoM, political decisions have been volatile due to the different political philosophies of various governments during the past 20 years. The resulting ambiguities in the legal framework will easily be overcome if the framework is developed with more attention to practical issues, and once reliability of the framework is established.

8.6 Supportive Donor Coordination

At present, the international partners of the GoM have offered their long-term support to assist the country in various ways. The capacity of Moldovan institutions to absorb this assistance needs further development. Donors and development partners can do their part through coordinating amongst themselves; the various interventions, and different approaches, bringing them together into one, coherent approach. The international community committed to this during the Paris & Accra declarations (see Chapter 2.2.1). What is required now is the implementation (similar to the consolidation of Moldovan WatSan policies) of efficient and effective cooperation. Continuing the process of developing a concise, efficient framework for the WatSan sector development would be a perfect example to test these commitments.

9 Recommendations

Key insights gained by the SLE team and their counterparts during the updating process have been distilled into the following recommendations for decision-makers on all levels of Moldovan public service governance. They make reference to the three intersecting domains outlined in the introduction. Aspects pertaining to the finalisation of subsequent steps, as well as for the future application of participatory approaches for rayon development planning are outlined in *Chapter 9.1*. Suggestions for the modernisation of the public service framework are discussed in *Chapter 9.2*.

9.1 Finalisation and Implementation

The key recommendation of this report is that the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction (MRDC) and GIZ should finalise the process for updating and implementing the rayon's Socio-Economic Development Strategy's (SEDS) chapter on water supply and sanitation (WatSan). The MRDC and GIZ have committed to this, but should consider the other suggestions outlined here.

The process of ranking localities and their integration into clusters which will take place in the forthcoming months needs to be closely monitored. Until the operational objectives of the SEDS chapters are completed, the lessons learnt during this process should be documented in the Manual for practitioners. Once the first clusters are integrated and ready to apply for funding (to study technical and economical feasibility in more detail), the results should be examined for their coherence with the priorities of policy-makers on all levels. Experiences and lessons could then be used to fine-tune the approach once again.

For the implementation of the whole approach, Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) need to receive further support. Supporting agencies should fund the RDAs' capacities and resources whilst they complete the updating process and integrate the steps into the manual. Three aspects need to receive specific attention:

- **RDAs' staffing and capacities:** In order to make use of the potential that the current staff has, they need to receive further training on the facilitation of regional development. Beyond planning, Capacity Development within RDAs should focus on developing a functional interface between local and national levels. Capacity Development could have a highly positive impact on RDAs' performance, and international partners have extensive experience with the design of such programmes.
- **RDAs' resources:** There is a lack of funding for the vital activities the RDA has to accomplish. Essential activities such as travel and provision of venues for exchange (workshops, town hall meetings, etc.) are extremely hampered by

budget constraints. Seed money could make a huge difference for the operation of RDAs.

- RDAs' institutional support: While the MRDC actively promotes the activities of RDAs in close collaboration with the National Coordination Council for Regional Development (NCCRD), sector institutions responsible for policy-making still have to realise the potential of regional development. Necessary support can be provided by unfettered access for RDAs to information that ministries assess during their own monitoring activities, and the transfer of policy *implementation* to functional, cross-sector entities.

Also the rayon administrations informed the team that for future implementation of the strategy they will require additional guidance, especially as concerns the application for funding, or the follow-up on monitoring and evaluation.

9.2 Modernisation

With respect to the Moldovan WatSan sector and regional development, international partners need to provide further consultation on the design of an appropriate (Moldovan) approach. The current development of a framework for investment and action in the country (to which this assignment contributed) eventually has to be conducted by representatives of the Government of Moldova (GoM). Support of various forms is available, as is the will to assist. The GoM has requested coordination amongst the donor community following the Paris/Accra principles, and international partners should hear the call where institutions show commitment. Responsibility for developing capacities to drive WatSan sector development also rests with the GoM, who should provide working conditions that attract qualified staff.

The development partners working in the domains of WatSan and regional development should also tackle questions concerning the ability of the population to cover increased service cost. The interrelation between public service infrastructure development and user tariffs should be examined, especially for the disadvantaged rural localities, in order to establish appropriate targets for the diverse WatSan situations. There is also the necessity to increase the population's awareness about public service costs, the individual health risks of poor public services, and the necessity for users to pay for the services. A dialogue on appropriate solutions to improve people's access to water supply and sanitation should be commenced.

Subsequently, the array of appropriate solutions for the Moldovan context needs to be supported by corresponding planning standards. The current norms will need to be transformed in order to reflect the drastic changes in framework conditions, and include solutions for the less affluent. Neighbouring Romania designed its own set of standards, borrowing from EU norms; another relevant example for Moldova could be

that of the Baltic States that transformed Soviet standards to correspond to current conditions.

9.3 Postscript

This report draws from the experiences had during the implementation of participatory methods to improve strategic planning for, and access to, the Moldovan WatSan service. The SLE team hopes that Moldovan decision-makers and its international partners appreciate the potential of participatory priority setting, and that the approach explained in this report will be applied and adapted in the future. The SLE team hopes that the approach will lead to successful outcomes for policy making, increasing administrative resources, and meet the needs of the people.

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Annex

Annex I: System of Objectives

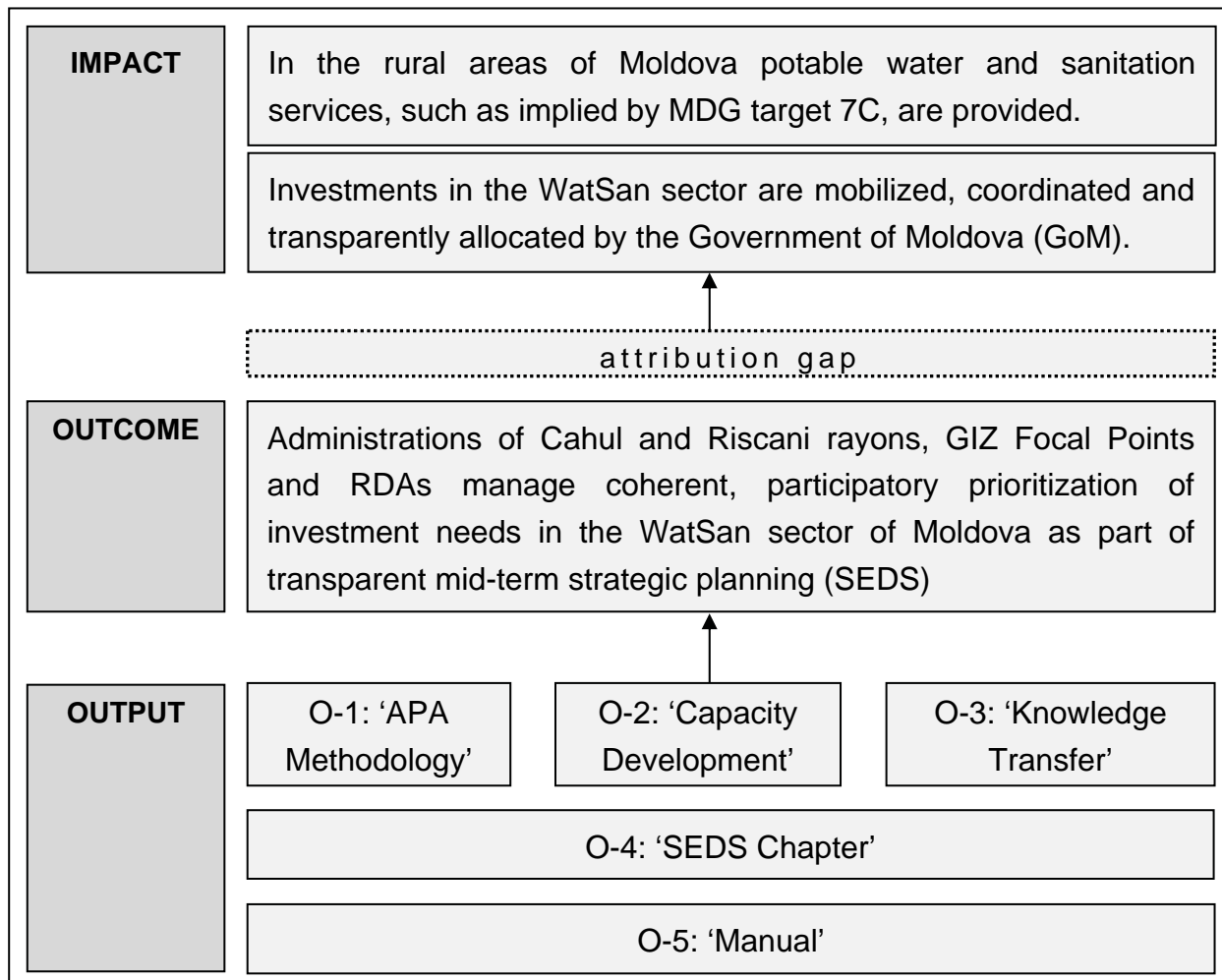


Figure: Original System of Objectives as agreed on in Terms of Reference, June 2011 (source: own)

Annex II: National and Rayon Priorities Including Criteria and Indicators

A. National Priorities

Priority	To reduce water related morbidity
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with the highest share of artesian wells in which water quality does not correspond to GOST "drinking water" standards. ⁵⁴
Indicators	<p>Number of wells (including artesian wells) and springs in locality for which water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does not correspond to 3 indexes or more of GOST "drinking water" standards: 1 point for each 10% of wells / springs • does not correspond to 2 indexes: 1 point for each 20% • does not correspond to 1 index: 1 point for each 30% <p>Example: there are 30 wells in the locality, 25% of them do not correspond to 3 indexes or more of GOST "drinking water" standards, 25% do not correspond to 2 indexes and the rest does not correspond to 1 index. The locality gets 5.4 points (25%/10% + 25%/20% + 50%/30%).</p> <p>Maximum number of points: 10 (when all wells do not correspond to 3 indexes or more).</p>

Priority	To increase coverage of population with piped water supply
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with a low percentage of population having access to piped water supply.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No piped water supply network in the locality: 10 points • Existing piped water supply network in the locality: the locality gets 1 point less for each 10% of piped water supply coverage <p>The piped water supply coverage is calculated as the number of households connected to the water supply divided by the total number of households in the locality.</p> <p>Example: locality of 400 households has piped water supply covering 100 households. This locality gets 7.5 points (10 – 10*100/400).</p>

⁵⁴ Several criteria were discussed and it was finally decided that the water quality will be measured. Data on number of diseases in the locality was not available.

Priority	To ensure 24 h provision with drinking water
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities where drinking water supply is provided with interruption.
Indicators	<p>Number of days per year when water supply was interrupted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • less than 5 days: 0 points • 5-9 days: 2 points • 10-19 days: 4 points • 20-29 days: 6 points • 30-39 days: 8 points • 40 and more days: 10 points

Priority	To increase coverage with improved sanitation
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with no sanitation system or limited coverage with a sanitation system.
Indicators	<p>Existing sanitation system and its coverage in locality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If sanitation system exists and it covers > 90% of the households: 0 points • If sanitation system exists and it covers > 75% of the households: 2 points • If sanitation system exists and it covers < 75% of the households in localities below 2000 PE (PE=population): 4 points • If sanitation system exists and it covers < 75% of the households in localities over 2000 PE: 6 points • If no sanitation system exists in locality below 2000 PE: 8 points • If no sanitation system exists in locality over 2000 PE: 10 points

Priority	To halt deterioration of existing WatSan infrastructure
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities where existing WatSan infrastructure is depreciated.
Indicators	<p>WatSan infrastructure in locality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No existing infrastructure: 0 Points • Existing infrastructure: 1 point for each 10% of the pipes built before 1995 <p>Share of the pipes built before 1995 is calculated as sum of the network length built before 1995 to the total length of the network in the locality.</p>

Priority	To improve access of (pre-)school students to improved WatSan facilities.
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with existing (pre-)schools
Indicators	<p>Schools in locality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If school in locality has no water supply and no sanitation facilities: 10 points • If school has water supply but no sanitation facilities (or has sanitation facilities but no water supply): 5 points • If in there is no school in locality or school has both water supply and sanitation facilities: 0 points

B. Rayon Priorities

Cahul

Priority	To support economic development
Proposed criterion	<p>Priority is given to localities with highest economic development potential. The economic potential is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of interest for tourists located in the locality with no piped water supply / sewage network: river, lake, forest with tourist path, monuments, museums, etc. • Restaurants or cafés with no piped water supply / sewage network • Regular food processing enterprises with no piped water supply / sewage network • Industrial enterprises with no piped water supply /sewage network
Indicators	<p>Points are summarised for each indicator of economic development potential (as defined below) and then divided by the number of inhabitants multiplied by 100. The formula yields points for the number of economic development indicators per 100 inhabitants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Places of interest for tourists in the locality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each place of interest in the locality with no piped water supply and with no sewage network: 3 points ○ For each place of interest in the locality with piped water supply covering less than 50% of population and with no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each place of interest in the locality with piped water supply covering more than 50% of population and with no sewage network: 1 point • Restaurants / cafés: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each restaurant / café with no piped water supply and with no sewage network: 3 points ○ For each restaurant / café with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 2 points • Food processing enterprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each food processing enterprise with no piped water supply and with no sewage network: 3 points ○ For each food processing enterprise with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 2 points • Industrial enterprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each industrial enterprise with no piped water supply and with no sewage network: 3 points ○ For each industrial enterprise with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 2 points

Priority	To meet as many people as possible
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with the highest population number.
Indicator	For every 100 residents: 1 point

Priority	To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions (esp. health centres)
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with the highest number of public institutions without access to the WatSan services.
Indicators	<p>Points are summarised for each public institution (as defined below) and then divided by the number of inhabitants multiplied by 100. The formula yields points for the number of public institutions per 100 inhabitants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical institutions (health centres and family doctor centres): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each medical institution with no piped water supply and no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each medical institution with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 1 point • Social assistance institutions (rehabilitation centres): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each social assistance institution with no piped water supply and no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each social assistance institution with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 1 point

Riscani

Priority	To improve existing service provision
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities which have experience in the improvement of their Apa Canals (WatSan service providers).
Indicators	<p>Number of actions Apa Canal or LPA have implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-communal cooperation: 2 points • Rules of organisation and operation of the service: 1 point • Service contract with the LPA 1: 1 point • Job descriptions: 1 point • Internal safety and prevention service : 1 point • Timeframe of sampling for chemical analysis / bacteriological analysis: 1 point

Priority	To improve living conditions in disadvantaged localities
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to small disadvantaged localities with low income.
Indicators	<p>Points are allocated for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of pensioners > 40%: 1 point • Population of the locality < 500: 1 point • The number of economic agents (enterprises) in the locality < 5: 1 point

Priority	To improve access to WatSan services for public institutions (except schools)
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to localities with the highest number of public institutions without access to the WatSan services.
Indicators	<p>Points are summarised for each public institution (as defined below) and then divided by the number of inhabitants multiplied by 100. The formula yields points for the number of public institutions per 100 inhabitants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical institutions (health centres and family doctor centres): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each medical institution with no piped water supply and no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each medical institution with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 1 point • Community centres: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each community centre with no piped water supply and no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each community centre with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 1 point • Social assistance institutions (rehabilitation centres): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For each social assistance institution with no piped water supply and no sewage network: 2 points ○ For each social assistance institution with piped water supply and with no sewage network: 1 point

Priority	To extend existing WatSan infrastructure
Proposed criterion	Priority is given to the localities with existing WatSan infrastructure but no 100% coverage.
Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For every 10% of water connection rate: 1 point • For more than 90% connection rate⁵⁵: 0 points

⁵⁵ Even in developed countries 100% coverage is very rare, especially in rural areas; thus 100% coverage in fact means a little below 100%.

Annex III: Exposure Visit Program for Romania and Germany

Table: Program of the Exposure Visits to Northern Transylvania, Romania and Brandenburg, Germany (source: own)

Date	Topic
Northern Transylvania, Romania	
29.8. Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive to Cluj-Napoca, Romania
30.8. Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at Turda city hall with mayor of Turda and president of Romanian Water Association • Visit of Aries water provider company in Turda with the managing director • Visit of wastewater treatment plant
31.8. Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at Salaj county council in the city of Zalau • Meeting at the Inter-communal Development Association in Zalau • Meeting with the branch manager of Somes water provider company • Discussion and reflection session
1.9. Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at Satu Mare county council • Visit of APASERV water provider company office • Visit of water treatment plant Martinesti • Discussion and reflection session
2.9. Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive to Potsdam, Germany
Brandenburg, Germany	
3.9. Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure activities in Potsdam
4.9. Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City tour and touristic program in Potsdam
5.9. Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection session • Introduction session by Mr. Schwartze (Consultant for the thematic organisation of the Exposure Visit in Brandenburg) • Berlin city tour
6.9. Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at Niemegk city hall with the director of the administrative department and water specialists • Visit of centralised and decentralised wastewater treatment plants • Meeting with the director of the Regional Planning Association of Havelland-Fläming
7.9. Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit of GWAZ water provider company in Guben with the managing director • Visit of a cross-border wastewater treatment plant in Gubin, Poland

8.9. Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion and reflection session• Meeting at Ministry of Environment, Health and Consumer Protection in Potsdam with director and representatives of Department of Water and Soil Protection• Evaluation session
9.9. Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drive back to Chisinau, Moldova

Annex IV: Template Socio-Economic Development Strategy Chapter for the Water Supply and Sanitation Sector

Disclaimer

This SEDS chapter on water supply and sanitation (WatSan) was elaborated by _____ rayon council with support of the SLE team of junior advisors, Berlin. The SLE assignment was commissioned by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Supportive inputs for completing the 1st sub-chapter, the 2nd sub-chapter and the 5th sub-chapter were provided by GOPA consultants xxx (Name) and xxx (Name). The 3rd sub-chapter and the action plan were prepared and written by xxx (Name).

Introductory Remark

In this chapter, rayon's goals for the provision of the population with improved access to household water supply and wastewater services are explained.

It represents the results of a) a comprehensive data assessment on the actual situation, b) a participatory prioritisation of needs for investment, and c) an implementation scenario for investments in the rayon's water and sanitation sector provided by a team of sector experts.

The rayon council approved the document on XX.YY.ZZZZ.

1 Current WatSan service situation in _____ rayon

The situation analysis represents the most important indicators for water and wastewater service access and -quality. As the data appraisal was carried out on the level of localities, the information on single household's WatSan situation is not available here.

The following paragraphs give a rough overview about the actual access to WatSan services for the population. Further, technical and economic details are provided in the sub chapter on potential technology options.

1.1 Overview

Introductory geographic information, if considered necessary.

1.2 Main indicators for the actual WatSan situation

Table: Template factsheet as basic information for the planning process

Total population _____ rayon: ____, ____ (as of DD.MM.YYYY)	Urban: __, __	Rural: __, __	
Drinking water access	With access	Without access	
No. of localities (out of __ assessed)	__	__	
No. of households (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Compared to MDG target ⁵⁶	2015 target: 65%; Present: __. __%; Gap: __. __%		
Sewerage access	With access to centralised wastewater collection / -treatment	Without access to centralised wastewater collection / -treatment	
No. of localities (out of __ assessed)	__	__	
No. of households (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Of which in cities (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Of which rural (total & relative)	__, __ / __. __%	__, __ / __. __%	
Compared to MDG target	2015 target: 65%; Present: __. __%; Gap: __. __%		
Decentralised Water Supply: GOST Quality Indicators for sources	The __ localities without access to centralised water supply use water from __, __ mine wells or springs		
	__, __ wells or __. __% have been tested on water quality, and compared to the GOST ⁵⁷ standards:		
	__% of the sources fully correspond to GOST	__% do not correspond to 1 indicator	__% do not correspond to 2 indicators
Centralised Water Supply: GOST Quality Indicators for sources	In the localities with centralized system of water supply analysis were made for __, __ sources, the total number of wells is __, __		
	__% of sources fully correspond to GOST	__% do not correspond to 1 indicator	__% do not correspond to 2 indicators

⁵⁶ The comparison is not using the same units as the MDG targets, and should be seen as an illustration.

⁵⁷ Information here is based on data in official records, but is subject to change once all wells have been checked. If GOST standards are replaced by other norms, these should be used as a reference.

Infrastructure, centralised	___% of the existing network exceeded the average useful life for the infrastructure category
Infrastructure, decentralised	Functional / non-functional tube wells: ___/___

1.3 Map of _____ rayon's actual WatSan situation

One map for water supply

One map for wastewater collection and treatment

1.4 Detailed situation analysis

The situation analysis resulting from the summary in section 1 of Annex A is presented here. It shows in more detail where priority zones for action are situated, and describes the main problems in the sector that can be addressed by investment, technology and inter-communal management.

2 Objectives and priorities for _____ rayon's WatSan sector development

2.1 Hierarchy of Objectives based on priorities

Long-term objectives stem from a sectoral vision of the rayon. As set by the governmental decision no. 33 (11.01.2007), a long-term objective is defined for a period of 15 years. **Medium-term objectives** have a validity of 5 years. Being operational objectives, they specify rayon priority statements that were generated to address urgent problems in the WatSan sector of the rayon and national priorities. The action plan aims at achieving **short-term objectives** and follows the primacy of priority investment needs.

The guiding question for the sub-chapter on objectives is: *What do we want to achieve?*

2.2 Long-term strategic objectives

The WatSan vision statement of the rayon is defined for 2012-2027.

2.3 Medium-term priorities and objectives in the WatSan sector

Medium-term objectives are more specific than the strategy's sectoral vision. They are defined according to the SMART rules: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ppropriate, **R**ealistic, **T**ime-bound (UNDP & SDC, 2009) and are valid for 5 years.

These operational objectives are derived from priority statements. Priorities are needed for a comprehensive and transparent decision-making on prioritised investments in the WatSan sector of the rayon.

The integration of national priorities assures the alignment of the rayon strategy with the high-level policy and strategic framework. National water policy and strategic objectives are defined by the following key documents and international agreements:

- Governmental “Strategy of Water Supply and Sewage in Communities of the Republic of the Republic of Moldova”, 2007
- UN Millennium Development Goal, target 7c (2000-2015)
- National Development Strategy (2008-2011)
- EU Sector Policy Support Programme (SPSP) for the Water and Sanitation Sector (Ref No 2008/163561)
- London Protocol on Water and Health (approved by joint ordinance of MoH and MoE No 91/704, 2010)

International experts derived the following 6 national priority objectives for WatSan investments from these policy papers:

- Reduce water related morbidity (highest priority)
- Increase coverage of the population with piped water supply
- Ensure 24-hour provision with drinking water
- Increase coverage with improved sanitation
- Halt deterioration of existing WatSan infrastructure
- Improved access of (pre-)school students to improved WatSan facilities

In addition, delegates of key rayon stakeholder groups defined rayon-specific priorities for investments in the WatSan sector in _____ rayon. Considering *where investments are needed most urgently*, the problem (negative) was transformed into an objective or priority statement (positive). The following priorities result from this transparent, participatory process:

- *Priority 1*
- *Priority 2*
- *Priority 3*
- ...

These priorities are mirrored by specific objectives, defined according to the SMART rules. As an example:

Outcome level	Rayon priority no. X: To improve _____	
Output level	Objective R-X.1: Percentage of __ _____ by year xy.	Objective R-X.2: Number of XYZ in cluster YZ by year xy.

2.4 Short-term implementation objectives

Short-term objectives are those implementation objectives inherently included in the action plan (see Action Plan in chapter 4 and in Annex B).



Figure: Relation of levels of development objectives

Three categories of strategic planning are illustrated in the above figure:

- In the left column, the level of **impact**, up from
 - The activities (concrete steps like tendering, design, fund allocation, time planning, responsibilities), to
 - **Outputs** (technical and management solutions to address WatSan sector problems), leading to
 - Expected **outcomes** (decreased water-related morbidity to a defined level, increased access to 24 hour piped drinking water to a defined level), and finally
 - The achievement of long-term sector objectives with the attained impact for development.
- In the reverse direction, the middle column details the actions to be taken in order to achieve long-term sector objectives, or in other words, the road to success. Main guidelines for the preferred way to achieve impact are national policies'

objectives and the ones defined by local decision making. Expert input is required for the definition of SMART operational objectives that take into account the actual score of performance indicators. Realistic target values for mid-term planning time frames are defined in parallel to the selection of priority activities.

- The left column, time horizons, shows how the level of impact (1) and aggregated goals (2) relates to a realistic time planning.

Table: Example matrix for a locality's score by use of priorities and weights

Priority		Locality's score for priority	Respective weight within national / rayon	Respective weight between national / rayon	Locality's weighted score
National priorities	National priority 1	3 out of 10	0.25	0.67	$3 \times 0.25 \times 0.67 = 0.5025$
	National priority 2	9 out of 10	0.15		$9 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.9045$
	National priority 3	4 out of 10	0.15		$4 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.402$
	National priority 4	7 out of 10	0.15		$7 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.7035$
	National priority 5	6 out of 10	0.15		$6 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.603$
	National priority 6	7 out of 10	0.15		$7 \times 0.15 \times 0.67 = 0.7035$
	Total national		100%		
Rayon priorities	Rayon priority	7 out of 10	0.40	0.33	$7 \times 0.40 \times 0.33 = 0.924$
	Rayon priority	1 out of 10	0.32		$1 \times 0.32 \times 0.33 = 0.1056$
	Rayon priority	5 out of 10	0.28		$5 \times 0.28 \times 0.33 = 0.462$
	Total rayon		100%		
Locality's total score					5.3

Each locality's data has been processed using this matrix.

2.5 Operational Objectives

The integrated results of the ranking and clustering as reported in the annex are then presented here in the form of abbreviated project fiches. These indicate the respective priorities for each cluster, and the most important measures to be taken in each of the clusters.

Operational, SMART objectives are defined by the integration of priorities and the particular planning requirements of the respective cluster.

Project Fiche no. 1

Project Fiche no. 2

.....

Project Fiche no. X

3 Necessary measures to achieve objectives

Linking objectives with the action plan: Step-by-step guideline for

- Tendering feasibility studies
- Application for funds
- Tender books / procedures

4 Action Plan

The activities necessary for the achievement of each medium-term objective are presented in the action plan. The guiding question is: What measures do we need to achieve the objectives? The action plan comprises in detail both priority investments as well as soft measures which contribute to the agreed priorities. Preparing the action plan, experts pay particular attention to projects implemented through inter-communal cooperation (ICC), even though there might be activities proposed for clusters which are not high-ranked.

For each activity, the action plan matrix takes into account responsibilities, time frame, costs (investment, operational, soft measures), funding sources, and indicators for monitoring and evaluation. Typically, the following activities are specified: infrastructure construction, planning documents (e.g. feasibility studies), monitoring and training.

Table: Example Action Plan (the Action Plan itself is included in the annexes)

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Sum (Mio. Lei)	Source of finance		Responsibility	Remarks
							Local	External		
Cluster 1: Locality A, C, D										
Planning documents										
Financial arrangements										
Construction										
Operation										
Cluster 2: Locality B, G, H										
Soft measures										
Rehabilitation										

5 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Once the complete updated SEDS is adopted by the rayon council, it is necessary to regularly monitor the successful and timely implementation of the action plan, in order to (UNDP, 2009):

- Identify difficulties with the timely and efficient attainment of implementation objectives
- Revise planned activities, modify the action plan and, if necessary, update the strategy
- Check whether the planned results are still relevant for achieving the envisioned objectives, the national and rayon priorities
- Deliver progress reports to the department which is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan
- Regularly communicate the progress on achieving results to the public
- For each implementation objective in the action plan, indicators are developed following SMART rules. Experts define appropriate M & E indicators.

The rayon council economics department is responsible for the monitoring of the strategy. For an ongoing and effective monitoring, a specialist with required technical

expertise is needed. M & E cost and activities have to be part of the budget and annual work plan.

The progress monitoring procedures include an annual report which should be distributed to key stakeholders, such as the rayon council, relevant departments of the rayon administration, and those involved during the definition of rayon priorities for WatSan investments at the round tables. The M & E framework contains: data collection and analysis, project documentation and feedback with beneficiaries and partners. The results have to be reported regularly to the lead department.

6 Annex A: Ranked Localities and Proposed Options for Clustering

This Annex is the detailed basis for the solutions proposed as *inputs* to realise the *outputs* of this strategy chapter.

6.1 Technology options

6.1.1 Water resources: Accessibility, quantity and quality

Water sources actually tapped for water service provision:

- List (by locality) indicating the capacity and quality

Potential water sources:

- List (by locality) indicating the capacity and quality

Pollution control:

- List of critical wastewater discharges into the environment (where known)

6.1.2 Existing infrastructure: Stations, plants, and pipe network

In this part, existing infrastructure is categorised, and illustrated on a map. The listing should comprise:

- Water purification stations (capacity, depreciation, etc.; same for the points below)
- Pumping stations
- Wastewater treatment plants
- Water supply network
- Wastewater collector pipe network

6.1.3 Consumption patterns and operational issues

Existing and potential future consumption are indicated here as crucial elements for planning capacities; likewise, the operational cost for future providers:

- Information on the quality of water in those localities without centralised water provision (from deep tube wells and shallow wells)
- Nice to have, but no must: relative density of wells as an indicator for accessibility (wells per inhabitant?); property rights
- Operational issues of water service providers: staff per km of pipes, actual water / wastewater tariff, degree of cost coverage (economic indication of operators viability and long-term quality)

- Total length of water supply network and total length of wastewater collection network, state of the technical infrastructure (qualitative) for distribution and collection network, as well as for water purification and treatment plants
- Indication of energy cost structure for pumping, etc.

6.1.4 Detailed situation analysis of major problems and options for WatSan management and infrastructure of _____ rayon

A synopsis of the three above sub-chapters is generated here to give a more detailed insight into the problems to be solved in order to attain long-term and medium-term goals.

6.1.5 Suggested technology solutions based on the analysis

Here, the three above chapters' information feeds into the proposition of adapted, best practice solutions for the respective situations. This means, for each locality as part of a cluster, there will be at least one solution for the improvement of the WatSan situation. However, the options may be too detailed to be covered within this annex, but rather be presented in an expert's report.

6.2 Management and capacity development options

6.2.1 Proposed inter-communal cooperation options

- Joint service agreements
- Long-term restructuration schemes for existing service providers (e.g. municipal enterprises or town hall departments), etc.

6.2.2 Capacity Development

- Training and expertise enhancement options for service providers following a comparison of qualifications and job complexities
- Awareness raising campaigns on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, etc.

6.2.3 Priority ranking of localities in _____ rayon

Here, the scores for localities of the rayon are presented, as they are a decisive input for the choice of options proposed. The methodology follows the matrix in the below table.

Table: Example priority ranking of _____ rayon's localities for WatSan investments

Name of locality	National priorities score						Rayon priorities score				Total score
	National priority 1	National priority 2	National priority 3	National priority 4	National priority 5	National priority 6	Rayon priority 1	Rayon priority 3	Rayon priority 3	...	
Mereseni											103
...											..
Zendovca											74
Alphanesti											69

6.2.4 Scoring values for each locality

Here, all localities of _____ rayon are listed alphabetically. For each indicator corresponding to the priority objectives indicated above, the score is detailed.

6.2.5 Score of localities

Example for the presentation of the scoring result. For each priority, the locality's value has to be indicated in order to ensure transparency.

6.3 Cost appraisal

Technical and management investment costs for technology and management options (see 6.1.4) are appraised.

6.3.1 Estimation of investment costs for each option

6.3.2 Estimation of running costs for each option

6.3.3 Cost-effectiveness appraisal for each option

6.4 Cluster definition

Management and technology options from chapters 6.1 and 6.2 are integrated here, suggesting combined solutions for the development of management and technical aspects. Clusters are determined by the paramount principle of economic viability: a) effectiveness of investments for attaining sector objectives and b) to ensure the operator's long-term service and reinvestment capacity.

6.4.1 Tariff and consumption threshold

For the effectiveness of infrastructure investments to improve the population's access to WatSan services, a threshold value for the tentative user tariff of 10 MDL (Moldovan Lei) per m³ of drinking water is suggested. For wastewater, a tariff per m³ of 6 MDL is suggested (this economic clustering criterion would help to determine economical options that are affordable).

6.4.2 Operator viability threshold

A second criterion for clustering could focus on the (projected) operator for the cluster: a viable cost structure, i.e. "best practice repartition" of operational (energy, material), service (technical staff) and administrative costs, etc.

6.5 Integration of priorities and viable clusters

The proposed clusters covering the whole rayon (or even beyond the rayon's borders) are presented here on a map, indicating the localities and their respective priorities, and the overall priority of each cluster.

Each cluster will be described, including the zone and localities covered, and the complete list of proposed technology and management solutions in one-page project fiches. These can be seen as the point of departure for the future elaboration of terms of reference for detailed feasibility studies, application for external funding, and the tendering of design services. Project fiches for the whole rayon are presented in section 2.5.

7 Annex B: Elaborate Action Plan

This part is not an integral part of the *strategy*, but in fact a second part detailing:

- The specific steps to be taken to implement the strategy's outputs⁵⁸. This will probably concern at least two clusters and the respective options to be realised according to their (aggregated⁵⁹) priority
- The responsibilities for each step
- Specific deadlines
- The sources and modalities of funding

⁵⁸ Depending on rayon' and partners' capacities with respect to manpower, time and money.

⁵⁹ In case the option foresees aggregated, inter-communal investments, the respective localities' average weight may be an appropriate way of defining their relative priority within the cluster.

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