Water supply – Kosovo

Clean drinking water for Pristina and the surrounding area

After the war in Kosovo ended in 1999, many people moved from rural areas to the city. The population increased rapidly and unemployment was high. Pristina, the capital, was where many people headed. The municipal utilities services providers (water supply and disposal company) were overwhelmed as a result. KfW Development Bank is financing the expansion of the water and sanitation systems in and around Pristina with the aim of improving conditions for the people living there.

Current situation

The population of the capital Pristina jumped from 225,000 in 1999 to about 380,000 in 2008. Today it is about 484,000. About a quarter of the population of Kosovo lives in the Pristina region. The influx of people pushed the antiquated water supply and sanitation networks to their limits, with running water available only 12 hours a day particularly during the hot and dry summer months. Sometimes the water was even scarcer. The period from June 2012 to March 2014, for example, saw much lower levels of average rainfall than in the past. As a result, the availability of drinking water had to be limited to only six hours a day at times. In February 2014, water levels in the Batllava and Badovc reservoirs – Pristina's most important sources of water – fell to 25% of their normal measurements. This drought clearly showed that Pristina and its surrounding municipalities need additional sources to provide residents with a reliable supply of drinking water and to allow for the conservation of their water resources. In view of climate change, it must be assumed that water resources will become even scarcer in the future.

Investments were also necessary because maintenance and modernisation work had long been neglected due to limited financial resources and inefficient structures. For example, 10% of residents were supplied with water from tankers because the water pressure in the pipeline networks was not sufficient to reach their houses, which were situated higher up. Water was siphoned off illegally in some cases. The suppliers generated no income for 73% of the water produced in 2008.

Project approach

KfW financed investment in Kosovo's water supply and sanitation systems on behalf of the German Federal Government. A total of EUR 50 million had been made

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As at: 08/2019
available for the project from funds provided by the
German Federal Government and the EU, with a further

Lake Gazivoda will also supply the people of Pristina with clean water in the future. Source: KfW, photographer: Dr Karl-Dankwart Kummer

EUR 10 million contributed by Kosovo with the City of Pristina.

The financing was made possible in part by the Development Bank of Austria, which shared EUR 10 million of the risk for KfW’s development loan. This makes the project a good example of successful collaboration and coordination among donors.

Work has been underway to improve the infrastructure and reduce water losses since 2008. First, two defective main supply lines were rehabilitated, filters were replaced in the Badovc treatment plant and the ailing distribution network in the oldest part of Tophane was refurbished. A total of 18,000 new house connections and water meters were installed. A new pumping station was also built. Another source of water, the Gazivoda reservoir, was also tapped. The water from the reservoir, which lies 50 km north of Pristina, will be routed via the Iber Canal to the capital region and treated in the new Shkabaj drinking water treatment plant. This drinking water will be fed into Pristina’s supply system through new connection lines. The system and lines are designed in such a way that 60 million litres per day can be produced at full capacity of 700 litres per second.

Impact

The measures contribute to ensuring a continuous and hygienic supply of drinking water for Pristina and the surrounding area in the next few decades — also during the summer months. The project was able to achieve an uninterrupted water supply of 23 hours a day.

The construction of a pumping station means that 6,000 inhabitants who live in the higher-up district of Kodra can now be reliably supplied with water. Overall, the water supply company increased the number of its customers by 15%. The coverage of operation and maintenance costs has steadily increased since 2008. The use of the new infrastructure improves the drinking water supply for the local residents, prevents further overuse of the Batllava and Badovc reservoirs and encourages the protection of water resources. In these times of climate change, the measures reduce future supply bottlenecks and preserve existing water resources. At the same time, more people were connected to the public drinking water supply.

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