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ZYRA RREGULLATORE PËR UJËSJELLËS DHE KANALIZIM
REGULATORNI URED ZA VODU I KANALIZACIJU
WATER AND WASTEWATER REGULATORY OFFICE



Water and Wastewater Regulatory Office

Communications strategy

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 WWRO was established in November 2004 by UNMIK Regulation 2004/49 as the independent body responsible for regulating the activities of Publicly Owned Enterprises (POEs) and Socially Owned Enterprises (SOEs) that provide water and wastewater services, bulk water supply, solid waste collection services and solid waste disposal services.
- 1.1.2 In simple terms WWRO's role is to protect customers. It makes sure that the water and solid waste companies do not abuse their monopoly position and that they provide customers with a good quality and efficient service at a fair price. It does this through: (i) licensing service providers, (ii) setting tariffs, (iii) setting and enforcing minimum service standards, and (iv) regulating relationships between licensed companies and their customers.
- 1.1.3 Under Law (No.3/L-086) – adopted in June 2008 - WWRO is an independent regulator governed by a Director and Deputy Director who are appointed by the Assembly on the recommendation of the Government. The regulatory office is accountable to the Assembly.

2. PURPOSE OF THE PAPER

- 2.1.4 It appears that stakeholders within Kosovo have a very limited understanding of the role of WWRO. This is particularly true amongst customers who should be the major beneficiaries of regulation but also amongst those whom WWRO regulates – the companies and even amongst key opinion formers. The regulated companies need to have a clear understanding of the reasons for, and requirements of, regulation and the legal powers vested in the regulator. Customers need to know how WWRO protects their interests and at the simplest level how they can complain about poor services from licensed suppliers. Other stakeholders, particularly politicians, the media and academics should also have a better understanding of the role of regulation which in turn should lead to better acceptance of its aims.
- 2.1.5 With the limited resources available both financially and in personnel terms within WWRO, it will be important for WWRO to prioritise its efforts. Even in the UK where regulation has been established for nearly 20 years, awareness amongst ordinary customers is still limited. A certain amount of realism is therefore needed as to what can be achieved in the short term.
- 2.1.6 WWRO has recognised the need for improvement in its external communications and public affairs. To this end, The Capacity Building for European Integration (CBEI) Project approved the engagement of an international public affairs and communications expert with considerable expertise in customer relations issues to assist WWRO in this area.
- 2.1.7 This paper sets out proposals for a comprehensive communications strategy aimed at increasing WWRO's profile and improving relations with all key stakeholders. It was drafted in 2008 and has been updated in 2011 as part of a further project funded by ECLO, and also at 2012 by WWRO.
- 2.1.8 The development of improved customer policies is a prerequisite for any improved communications with customers. The most important requirement for WWRO is to make sure that the companies have good customer service policies in place and that the WWRO's Consultative Committees (CCCs), who investigate complaints, themselves demonstrate good practice in this area.
- 2.1.9 WWRO will need to work with other stakeholders to raise its profile. It will be essential to work with the utility companies to get information to customers. It should explore ways in which it could work with other public bodies in high profile campaigns such as using water wisely if resources are scarce.

3. RISKS OF INEFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

3.1.10 If WWRO does not communicate effectively there are a number of risks.

- WWRO loses credibility as a strong and effective regulator. Nobody seeks out its views. This ends up being marginalized and seen as an irrelevance.
- The companies do not understand what is required of them and why. Relations with the regulator deteriorate and the regulator is unable to do his job properly.
- If customers do not understand how their interests are protected they could press for structural change, could have political ramification etc.
- If politicians do not understand how regulation can improve water and waste water provision they can propose alternative models.
- WWRO fails in its legal duty to customers because customers don't know they have an independent body they can complain to about poor service, and which can help them resolve complaints (the Customer Consultative Committees)
- In a country where water services are poor and intermittent, the regulator needs to be seen to be pressing for improvements. If he does not communicate well others can misrepresent the true position to media and stakeholders and seize the agenda.

3.1.11 In order to communicate effectively WWRO should:

- formulate a clear and agreed position on all relevant policy issues
- have a process in place which allows these views to be delivered to the appropriate bodies/media quickly
- have a spokesperson who is readily available and authoritative and has received training in handling the media
- be prepared to use the media to rebut inaccurate and misleading statements
- maintain a high profile so that its view is frequently requested on all water related issues
- ensure that all staff communicating with stakeholders deliver consistent messages
- be open and transparent not evasive and secretive.

4. DEVELOPING REGULATORY KEY MESSAGES

4.1.12 WWRO should formulate clear and consistent message about its role. All communications should reinforce these messages. By consistently repeating these messages in any press releases issued, greater understanding about regulation will be achieved.

- Regulation is here to stay!
- The Regulator operates within a clear legal framework
- WWRO has a duty to protect the interests of customers
- It has considerable legal powers to carry out its role
- It will act fairly and judicially in its deliberations
- It must ensure that the water and wastewater companies can finance their duties
- WWRO, not the utility, sets water tariffs. These will be fair, equitable and affordable and will be set after consultation. WWRO will scrutinise and challenge requests for rate increases.
- WWRO will monitor service standards to ensure that customers benefit and get the improvements they should expect from any increase in tariffs
- If standards are not met regulatory action will be taken – this could include public exposure of shortcomings, requirement for remedial action and, in certain circumstances, financial penalties.
- If customers have complaints about service, they can complain to the Customer Consultative Committees set up by WWRO who will take action on their behalf.

4.1.13 WWRO might also want to develop campaigns aimed at customer education either by itself or in conjunction with the water suppliers. The aim of these campaigns could be:

- To increase payment of bills by customers
- To encourage economy in the use of water if resources are short
- To understand the costs of using water in every day activities. If affordability is an issue this could help certain sectors reduce their bills through sensible measures to reduce consumption.

5. DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

5.1 General

- 5.1.14 A proactive approach to communications should enable WWRO not only to inform stakeholders about its role and increase its profile but also assist it in helping it achieve its policy objectives.
- 5.1.15 Leaflets and publications and a good website all play an important part in raising awareness but this alone will not be enough. A press conference once a year is not going to raise the regulator's profile. Communication with stakeholders needs to be regular. Policy development should be consultative.
- 5.1.16 A more fundamental approach is needed whereby policy development within WWRO and its communication activities go hand in hand. Many activities carried out by WWRO can be publicised through news releases to the media. It is not necessary to have a press conference every time there is something newsworthy to report. However a number of WWRO activities can be publicised. For example a proposed workshop on customer relations issues should be the subject of a press notice – explain why it is being held, what it aims to achieve. Publicising such initiatives shows customers that WWRO is working to improve the situation.
- 5.1.17 WWRO should develop a Regulatory Calendar which sets out its key tasks and timetable for the year. Part of this process should be a clear identification of stakeholders who need to be involved and how and when and why policies/decisions are to be communicated.

5.2 Identifying stakeholders

- 5.2.18 WWRO needs to develop a strategy for working with each of its stakeholders. Why does it need to work with each of them, what does it want to tell them, what does it want to achieve from the relationship, and how is it going to be delivered.
- 5.2.19 The following is a list of key stakeholders (not exhaustive – there must be others) with some suggestions for contacts should be built up with them.

a) Media

- 5.2.20 The media is one of the most important of all stakeholders.
- 5.2.21 They can be used to disseminate information to a wide audience.
- 5.2.22 They also help mould opinion and therefore building your relationship with them is essential in terms of influencing politicians and other opinion formers.

WWRO needs them on side!

- 5.2.23 Specific Actions:
- Greater use of press notices to announce policy initiatives, announce new tariffs, express concerns, criticise/praise performance of suppliers, education of customers (*see paper on writing effective press releases: prepared Dec 2007*)
 - Use media to publicise meetings of CCCs (this can be through press releases and paid newspaper advertisements). Encourage the CCCs to use the media to highlight issues locally.
 - Try to interest a TV station to do a programme on water issues (or a newspaper to carry articles on this subject). If the regulator's priority is to educate customers then this would be a good way of reaching them.
 - Only hold press conferences when something major to be announced. Certainly publication of the Annual Report and the results of the tariff review merit press conferences.
 - Provision of Fact Sheets for media. There are few specialist reporters in Kosovo so journalists coming cold to the subject need plenty of information to help them understand WWRO role.
 - Checklist on holding press conferences prepared – including things like up to date distribution lists, names/addresses etc.
 - WWRO should consider having dinner with Newspaper Editors once a year. Explain his priorities, his concerns etc. It is important to try to secure good editorial coverage.

- Build up relationship with the Express newspaper which takes contributor's articles. WWRO could try to place two or three articles a year on water/waste related issues under the Director's name.
- Make sure the website is kept up to date and provides the information journalists need. The website should be the most effective and cheapest way of getting information out to many stakeholders.
- Consider role of radio stations. Far cheaper than TV. Is there a role for short snappy adverts? Maybe to advertise the CCC's existence and to tell people how to complain or to educate customers to pay bills, use water sensibly etc.
- If there are misleading articles in the media about WWRO or about water companies that are unjustified ensure a correction is printed – either through a letter to the newspaper or by getting an apology.

b) Customers

5.2.24 Objectives for reaching customers:

- To help them understand their rights and obligations
- To explain how WWRO protects their interests
- To tell them how to complain about poor service and, through the CCCs to resolve their complaints

5.2.25 Reach them through:

- Media
- Leaflets and posters. Try to get water and waste suppliers to distribute these in their payment offices.
- Get companies to include contact numbers for CCCs on bills/posters in payment offices
- WWRO website
- CCC meetings and associated publicity (see section 8)

5.2.26 The development of customer service policies is a priority. WWRO needs to develop the CCCs as effective committees who have clearly defined roles. This will require considerable training, particularly in complaint handling and in understanding regulation.

c) Water/wastewater providers and their staff/other water organisations

5.2.27 Objectives for improved communication:

- Help them to understand regulation
- Help them to be clear about WWRO powers and why they need to co-operate
- Improvement in the services they provide
- Use them to get to customers
- Foster CCC/supplier relationship.

5.2.28 Specific Actions:

- WWRO should visit suppliers annually. Even though water suppliers will visit the WWRO office it is important for the regulator to visit suppliers himself. He should have a clear agenda for the visit which should be seen as an important event.
- Consultation in all areas of policy development. When policy decided it should, if possible, be publicised or at least be in the public domain (on the web site).
- Water company staff as well as senior managers, need to understand the role of WWRO.
- A CCC member could give a talk to staff (assuming they themselves understand regulation).
- Develop a no surprises policy. If WWRO is to announce something that involves water suppliers they should be told about it before the media. Make sure they are on distribution lists when sending out press notices.

d) Opinion Formers

5.2.29 Included in this group are politicians (national and local), editors, academics

5.2.30 Objectives for improved communications:

- To ensure they understand regulation.

- To avoid them criticising the regulator through failure to understand the regulatory role.
- To get them on side to gain their support if others criticise regulatory performance
- To get them to put pressure on suppliers to improve performance.

5.2.31 Specific Actions:

- Key politicians to be identified. If WWRO is accountable to the respective Assembly Committee then WWRO needs to ensure all its members understand Regulation.
- A formal meeting with the Committee once a year for the Regulator to outline his priorities. This could be following publication of the WWRO Annual Report for example.
- Make sure Members of the Committee are on the distribution list for press notices etc.
- Provide them with Fact Sheets
- Should be occasional meetings with Environment Minister/officials in the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning.

e) Other Regulators/Academics/Donor community

5.2.32 Objectives for improved communications:

- To develop a common approach to regulation, this adopts best practice. If all regulators use similar approaches to regulation their standing is enhanced.
- Gain academic approval for approaches to regulation.
- Demonstrate sound regulatory approach to donors to encourage investment/assistance
- Maintain links with external regulators to share best practice and learn how others regulate.

5.2.33 Specific Actions:

- Sector Regulators to meet 2 or 3 times a year with a clear agenda for discussion. There must be many areas where issues are of mutual interest e.g. payment of bills, use of resources, staffing, shared experiences.
- WWRO presentations to conferences/workshops.
- Build up relationships with relevant academic bodies. Perhaps persuade the university economics department to hold an event on regulation where the various regulators could explain their role.

f) CCC members

5.2.34 Although these members are appointed by WWRO contact with them seems to have been extremely limited. They are important stakeholders and need to be recognised as such.

5.2.35 Considerable training in understanding regulation needs to be offered to the chairmen as well as in handling customer issues and complaints. CCC members are appointed for three years. The latest appointments were made in July 2011. By November no training for these members had been offered. In the absence of any training or written instruction it is not obvious that the CCC members have a clear understanding of their role. The leaflet drafted in 2008 would help to improve the level of understanding by the CCCs.

6. PUBLICATIONS/LEAFLETS

- 6.1.36 WWRO's publications must always be in all official languages.
- 6.1.37 In 2007 there was a leaflet available which explained WWRO's role but it needs to be redrafted (see action below).
- 6.1.38 In November 2011 four leaflets were available for the public. These leaflets are on the website.
- 6.1.39 Specific Actions:
- The customer leaflet should be redrafted (example attached in Annex A) to provide a little more information about the role of the regulator. This was a recommendation made in 2007 (see comment above).
 - Once complaint procedures are in place, a leaflet should be produced which deals entirely with how to complain and more information about the CCCs. (again see comment above).
 - All leaflets to be on WWRO website.
 - Development of fact sheets on various aspects of regulation – to be lodged on the website
 - Publication of the Annual Performance Report on the sector. These are very informative documents but they are not written for ordinary customers. Their content, however, is very pertinent for customers and needs to be well publicised through a press notice and maybe a press conference.
 - Publication of the Annual Performance Report of the utilities needs to be well publicised through a press notice/press conference.
 - Annual Performance Report must be on the WWRO website
 - Publication of the WWRO Annual Report. This should set out:
 - Regulator's objectives and work plan for the coming year
 - Report on achievements and activities during the past year
 - Report on CCC activities and an analysis/breakdown of complaints received and handled by each CCC.
 - Publication of the WWRO Action Plan and Priorities for each year – should be on the website including possible press conference when published.

7. WEBSITE

- 7.1.40 Increasingly websites are replacing publication production. The WWRO website is a vital, cost effective method of communication.
- 7.1.41 Some leaflets will still need to be produced in bulk for distribution by water companies and at public points but most of the information about regulation and WWRO should be on the website.
- 7.1.42 The website needs to be informative and easy to navigate. It is important for there to be clear points of contact for further information.
- 7.1.43 Even more essential is for WWRO to develop an efficient system to ensure that information can be placed on the website quickly. The website has to be able to provide information on the day it is released.
- 7.1.44 The website also needs to be regularly updated and checked. It is important that there should be someone within WWRO proactively considering what should be on the website and ensuring that all content is current and relevant.

8. IMAGE OF WWRO

- 8.1.45 If WWRO wants to encourage a customer service mentality with water suppliers then it should itself be demonstrating best practice.
- 8.1.46 The current reception/entrance to WWRO could be improved and needs to be more welcoming to the public. There should be:
 - Clear WWRO signage behind the security desk – in all official languages
 - Display of leaflets in all languages
- 8.1.47 The answering machine for out of hours calls which tells people the working hours of the office or asks them to leave a message and that someone will phone them back should be in both official languages.

9. CUSTOMER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES (CCCS)

- 9.1.48 The CCCs have a dual role. They advise the Regulator and represent customers. They also have a duty to investigate and resolve complaints. Mention has already been made of the need to make sure all members understand regulation and their role within it.
- 9.1.49 The Committees currently have a very low profile. There are a number of ways in which their profile could be increased:
- Mention of the role of the CCCs could be made on the back of customer bills and customers told how they can be contacted.
 - The decision letter sent by water suppliers to a customer who has complained makes mention of the right to appeal to the CCC but gives no contact details.
 - Display of posters in payment offices and in the head offices of the water suppliers alerting customers to CCC existence and role. Posters could also be displayed in libraries and post offices.
 - Provision of a leaflet on how the CCC can help customers with their complaints and the procedure involved (attached Annex C)
 - More CCC meetings could be held in public
 - All CCC meetings should be advertised in the local media so that anyone can attend, including journalists. Any advertisements should take due account of minority requirements (and for the conduct of meetings).
 - A senior representative from the water supplier should always be present at meetings to hear the concerns of the committee.
 - Committees should consider issuing a press notice after a meeting if concerns about poor service/quality etc have been raised with the water supplier. This would demonstrate that the committees are fulfilling their role as representatives of customers. Such a press notice would also serve to publicise the existence of the committees.
 - If the CCCs are to increase their profile it is important that customers can contact them within normal working hours.
 - The Annual Report on company performance gives names and contact points for Committee members but if CCCs become better known and people begin to complain more then providing personal numbers would be unfair on unpaid volunteers. It is therefore essential to have a central point for questions/advice i.e. the contact point already provided within the WWRO office.
- 9.1.50 The CCC boxes in water company offices are a pragmatic and good solution provided that they are regularly emptied and any correspondence/complaints forwarded to WWRO.

ANNEX A: GENERAL CUSTOMER LEAFLET

Page 1

PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF WATER CUSTOMERS

What is WWRO?

WWRO is an independent body set up by the Kosovo Assembly to regulate water and wastewater (sewage) services provided by public sector enterprises. WWRO is funded through a levy paid by these companies.

Why do we need regulation?

Customers cannot choose their water and wastewater supplier. These are monopoly services. In the absence of any competition, WWRO protects your interests to ensure that you receive acceptable standards of service at a fair price. Regulation aims to secure a consistent, good quality and efficient service for all customers that is sustainable in the longer term.

Page 2

What does WWRO do?

- Issues operating licenses to the public water companies.
- Ensures that all water companies have a Customer Charter and that the basis on which services are provided is clearly set out in a contract between customer and supplier.
- Makes sure that information is provided so that you can understand your rights and obligations.
- Establishes regional Customer Consultative Committees who will help you settle any complaints you have about your water service if you feel your supplier has not handled your complaint properly.
- Listens to the views of water customers.
- Sets tariffs that allow the companies to finance their operations and improve services but are fair to customers.
- Ensures that services meet acceptable standards.
- Monitors and publishes an annual report on the companies' performance. Where performance is poor WWRO takes steps to secure improvements.

Page 3

How do customers benefit from the Customer Charter?

Every public sector enterprise that provides you with water and wastewater (sewage) services must be able to provide you with a free copy of its Customer Charter on request. You can ask for the Charter in the official language of your choice.

The Charter is a general statement of the rights and obligations of the supplier and your rights and obligations as a customer.

It covers:

- Your entitlement to a water service
- The need to have a contract
- How bills will be issued and the obligation on you to pay them
- How to complain
- What information can be held about you as a customer

Entitlement to services

You are entitled to receive water and wastewater (sewage) services where it is technically and financially possible to do so and on a non-discriminatory basis. Where these services are provided they must comply with a minimum standard of quality, safety and reliability. It is WWRO's job to monitor these standards.

If you do not pay your bill in time your water and wastewater services may be disconnected.

Page 4

Requirement for a contract

You and your water company are required to enter into a contract which sets out the terms and conditions for the provision of services. The terms and conditions must comply with the Customer Charter requirements and will have been approved by WWRO. The contract should be supplied to you in the official language of your choice.

Issuing and paying bills

You have an obligation to pay your water bill.

Your water company will send you a bill either based on your metered water consumption or based on a notional charge if you are not metered. It will also include a fixed charge and a wastewater charge. You should receive a bill at least once every two months, but preferably every month, in the official language of your choice. Your bill should set out how you can pay your bill and when payment is due. It should show if you have made any payments since the last bill and clearly state how much is owed. Any bill that is incorrect must be corrected and, as a result, you may receive a debit or credit to your account.

If you fail to pay what you owe by the due date you will receive a reminder from the company that will set out the penalty for non-payment. This may include an additional penalty charge or in the case of non-payment of an invoice for water and sewage services, the disconnection of those services.

Page 5

Information about you

In order to provide you with services and communicate with you, your supplier is entitled to collect and retain personal information about you. This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed to a third party or used by the company for any unauthorised purpose.

You are not required to supply any information about your ethnicity, gender, religion or political affiliations. You have the right to inspect the information held about you and can ask for wrong information to be corrected.

Customer complaints

You are entitled to complain to your service provider if you believe it has not complied with the terms and conditions of your contract, the Customer Charter or rules issued by WWRO. The company must respond to your complaint in a fair and timely manner.

If you are not satisfied with the way your supplier has dealt with your complaint you can ask the local WWRO Customer Consultative Committee to take up the matter on your behalf. Your water company must tell you how to contact your local Committee or you can contact WWRO offices in Prishtina at the address below.

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Contacting us

We would like to hear your views about water and waste services. You can contact us, preferably in writing, at WWRO: St. Ferat Dragaj 68 Prishtine. You can also e-mail WWRO at syle.syla@wwro-ks.org.

Our customer service telephone number is: (038)249 165 ext 113/101. Our office hours are from 08:00 to 16:00 Monday to Friday.

We also have a website which gives more information about WWRO and its work. Its address is www.wwro-ks.org

ANNEX B: WWRO FACT-SHEET

What is WWRO?

WWRO is an independent body set up by UNMIK in 2004. In 2008 its continuation was confirmed under Kosovo Law No. 3/L-086. WWRO is responsible for regulating the provision of water and wastewater (sewage) services, garbage collection and waste disposal by public service providers. These services need to be sustainable, reliable and affordable.

With change of the Law on Waste no. 04/L-060 Article 82 and 83 of Law, WWRO is not responsible for the waste sector regulation.

Now WWRO is responsible for the regulation of Public Enterprises that provide water and wastewater including sewage in general.

Designation of Regulatory amendment to the Law 03 / L-086 will be the Regulatory Office for Water and Wastewater (WWRO), in accordance with the MPA.

WWRO's primary purpose is to see that customers in a monopoly industry receive acceptable standards of service at a fair price and that the rights and obligations of both customers and the service providers are clear and enforceable.

WWRO is governed by a Director and Deputy Director appointed by the Kosovo Assembly on recommendation by the Government Collegiate Board. It is accountable to the Assembly.

What does WWRO do?

- Issues, renews and revokes operating licenses to all the public water and wastewater service providers.
- Sets the tariffs which these providers charge for their services.
- Ensures that the services provided to customers meet acceptable standards.
- Monitors and reports publicly on the performance of the service providers
- Establishes and supports Customer Consultative Committees who represent views of customers and help them settle complaints about water and waste service provision.

Setting charges for water and waste services

Every three years WWRO carries out a major tariff review and sets tariffs for the next three years. In the interim periods any changes in tariffs are normally restricted to increases in inflation. In setting new charges, the regulator has to ensure that the company can finance its activities, including the maintenance of its assets (such as pipe work and reservoirs) and the replacement of worn out assets. This has to be balanced with the need for customers to pay affordable charges. WWRO expects companies to become more efficient and will not allow prices to rise merely to maintain the financial viability of the provider.

Monitoring performance and standards of service

WWRO's Annual Report shows how each company has performed during the year against various criteria. This enables customers and stakeholders to see how a company is performing year on year and how their supplier's performance compares with other similar service providers.

Where performance is poor or deteriorating, WWRO will discuss the reasons for failure and work with the company to secure improvements. Particular emphasis needs to be placed on reducing the amount of water lost through leakage/bursts and through illegal connections and meter under-reading. The second key priority for both companies and customers is to improve revenue collection/bill payment. Performance in these two areas is unacceptable and threatens the financial viability of the service providers.

Helping customers

All companies have prepared a Customer Charter. This is a general statement of the rights and obligations of the companies and customers to each other. The Charters have been prepared according to rules issued by WWRO. They are available for inspection free of charge by customers.

The Charters cover:

- The requirement for a contract between a customer and a supplier

- The entitlement of the supplier to create a register of its customers and your rights in relation to this information
- The services that will be received by the customer and the standards of service that should be expected.
- The requirement for customers to pay their bills, how bills should be prepared and methods for payment.
- Sanctions for non-payment of bills.
- How to complain.

WWRO has set up regional Customer Consultative Committees in each of the seven regions to assist customers. If a customer has a complaint about the service provided or a dispute about a bill that has not been settled to his satisfaction by the service provider, he can complain to the Customer Consultative Committee who will take the matter up on his behalf. The Committees also play a part in consulting customers on any relevant service issues and advise WWRO on customer views.

WWRO priorities for 2012

These are summarised in very brief terms below. More detailed information is contained in the Regulator's Action Plan.

Legal

- Amendment of WWRO Law.

Improving service and financial performance of water suppliers

- Setting new tariffs to apply from 1 Jan 2012. Tariff setting to be based on a transparent process which will require the companies to prepare forward looking business plans and which aims to provide longer term sustainability for the sector
- Setting and enforcing minimum performance targets for financial, technical and customer related performance
- Continued development of a reporting regime on performance, the use of benchmarking and publication of reports on performance.

Improving customer service policies

- Development of the role of the Customer Consultative Committees
- Application of Customer Charters with improvements in the interface between supplier and customer
- Improving complaint procedures

A greater public profile for WWRO

- Increasing awareness of the work of WWRO through media briefings and improved stakeholder relations

For more information about work of WWRO please see our website: www.wwro-ks.org

Contact us: Water and Wastewater Regulatory Office, Ferat Dragaj Street, 68, Pristina

ANNEX C: COMPLAINT LEAFLET

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU IF YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT

Page 1

Picture of a tap running or someone drinking

Page 2

Who we are?

The WWRO is an independent body responsible for making sure that the publicly owned water and waste water supply companies give their customers a good quality, efficient service at a fair price. We are an independent body established under law.

- We have set up seven regional Customer Consultative Committees (CCCs) who have the duty to investigate and resolve customer complaints against licensed suppliers. There is one CCC in each water and wastewater supplier's region.

What the CCCs do?

CCCs represent the interests of all water and waste water supply customers. One of their main responsibilities is to help consumers with complaints that they have been unable to resolve with their suppliers.

Their service is free. The CCCs meet monthly.

In dealing with individual consumer complaints CCCs aim to:

- Provide a complaint handling service with simple procedures and clear responsibilities that has the confidence of both consumers and suppliers.
- Resolve complaints promptly and in a fair and reasonable way.
- Keep consumers informed about the progress of their complaint and give full reasons for any decisions.
- Tell consumers what further action they can take if they are not satisfied with the way the CCC has handled their complaint
- Ensure that consumers are well informed of their rights and the responsibilities of water and sewerage suppliers regarding their complaint.

Making a complaint

If you have a complaint about your supplier you should do the following:

- First speak or write to the supplier so they have a chance to put the problem right.

All licensed water suppliers are required to have a written complaint's procedure. You can ask your supplier to see its procedure.

- If you are still not satisfied after going through your supplier's complaints procedure, you can ask the CCC to investigate your complaint. Its services are free.

Contacting us

You can contact WWRO to make a complaint in the following ways:

- By post or e-mail. It is best to put your complaint in writing as this gives us a clear record in your own words of why you are unhappy and what you want us to do. If possible, please send us copies of any previous correspondence you have had with your water supplier. This will help us understand your complaint. If it is difficult for you to write to us, you may phone us instead.
- By placing your complaint in the CCC box provided in your water provider's offices.
- By phone. We can be contacted by telephone during office hours (8 am – 4 pm Monday to Friday). If we are not able to take your call you can leave a message on our answer phone. A member of staff will call you back as soon as possible.

- In person. If you would like to visit our offices please write or phone first to make an appointment.
- Via a third party. We need your consent in writing before we can deal with your representative.

We will communicate with you in the language of your choice.

How we will deal with your complaint?

We may refer your complaint back to your supplier if you have not given them the opportunity to put things right.

If we forward your complaint to the company:

- We will record your complaint and ask the company to resolve the problem directly with you.
- We will tell you within five working days of receipt what we have done with your complaint. We will normally send you and the company copies of all correspondence.
- You should receive a response from your supplier usually within 10 working days after we refer the matter to them.
- If you complain direct to your supplier they have ten working days from receipt of your letter to respond.
- If you remain dissatisfied once you have exhausted the company's complaint procedure please get back in touch with us and we will advise you of the next steps.

What happens if the company's complaint procedure is exhausted?

If the company's complaint procedure has been exhausted we will either begin an investigation or reply directly, explaining the reason if an investigation is not appropriate.

We may request more information from you and the company to help us complete our investigation. If we investigate your complaint, we will keep you informed throughout the process.

We will normally send you and the company copies of all correspondence.

If you are not happy with our service

If you are not happy with the way in which the CCC has handled your complaint, please tell us so that we have the chance to investigate further.

We operate an internal review procedure and will ask a more senior member of staff to review how your complaint was handled.

Complaints we cannot handle

We cannot deal with any complaints about the following:

- The quality of rivers and lakes.
- Matters which relate to questions of law or claims for damages. You should get legal advice about these matters.
- Services which are not related to supplying water or waste water services by licensed suppliers.
- We will not investigate any complaint that we consider is frivolous.

If you contact us with a complaint we cannot handle, we will always try to help by passing your complaint to the right organisation or by telling you who may be able to help.

Contacting WWRO

We would like to hear your views about water and waste services. You can contact us, preferably in writing, at WWRO: St. Ferat Dragaj 68 Pristine. You can also e-mail WWRO at syle.syla@wwro-ks.org or lule.aliu@wwro-ks.org

Our customer service telephone number is: (038) 249 165 113. Our office hours are from 08:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday.

We also have a website www.wwro-ks.org, which gives more information about WWRO and its work.