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Delineation and Characterisation of GW Bodies, Design of a GW Monitoring Network and Development of a national methodology for assessment of GW natural resources in mountainous regions in the Hrazdan and Sevan River Basin Districts under EUWI+

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The EU-funded European Water Initiative Plus for Eastern Partnership Countries (EUWI+) Program, which is the biggest commitment of the EU to the water sector in the EaP countries, helps Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to bring their legislation closer to EU policy in the field of water management, with a main focus on the management of trans-boundary river basins. It supports the development and implementation of pilot river basin management plans, building on the improved policy framework and ensuring a strong participation of local stakeholders.

The main objective of the project is to improve the management of water resources and groundwater resources in particular, by developing tools to improve the quality of water in the long term, and its availability for all. More specifically, the project aims at supporting the Republic of Armenia in bringing national policies and strategies in line with the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and other multilateral environmental agreements.

Project funding is provided by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and administered by the European Commission (DG NEAR). On a national level, financial support comes from the Austrian Development Agency, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism and from the French Office International de l'Eau. Preparation of management plans for selected Hrazdan and Sevan RBDs is implemented under the leadership of an EUMember State consortium headed by the Environment Agency Austria.

The first important step in moving Armenia's groundwater management system closer to the WFD is to identify and characterize groundwater bodies (GWBs) in the Hrazdan and Sevan River Basin Districts (RBDs), based on which qualitative and quantitative changes in groundwater under the influence of external pressures are determined.

Inventory of the existing hydrogeological monitoring network was also carried out with a purpose of equipping and furnishing some of the existing observation points.

During GWBs delineation, it was found out that not all GWBs have monitoring points. To fill this

gap and extend the hydrogeological monitoring network, additional sampling was conducted in 2018 and 2019.

Assessment of the quantitative and qualitative status of groundwater is an essential requirement under the WFD. The methodology for the assessment of the natural groundwater resources and its components in mountainous regions was developed, using the Hrazdan and Sevan RBDs as the case study areas.

As a result, the natural groundwater resources of the mentioned districts were assessed, according to the following concepts adopted in Armenia: usable water resources, strategic water resources and the national water reserve.

Based on the results of implemented works, the management plans for the Hrazdan and Sevan RBDs will be developed.