

Policy Options for the Blueprint to safeguard Europe's waters

Introductory questions

Your name -open reply-(optional) Isabel Skrine

Please select your country of residence Belgium
-single choice reply-(compulsory)

What organisation do you represent? QCEA
-open reply-(compulsory)

Please choose from the following categories the most relevant to the organisation you represent. NGO
-single choice reply-(compulsory)

Overview

Assessment of the first round of river basin management plans

The first round of river basin management plans (RBMPs) has been a central element in implementation of the Water Framework Directive. A key common goal for this first round of RBMPs was to achieve good water status. However, the approaches across Member States vary greatly.

An analytical review of the RBMPs is underway. We would also like to hear from EU citizens and organisations concerning the results of this first planning exercise.

What do you see as the five most important achievements seen in the preparation of the first round of RBMPs? -open reply-(optional)

1. The trans-national strategy, linking entire river basins, such as the Danube and the Scheldt, by the countries they pass through. 2. The inclusion of third countries, such as Bosnia Herzegovina. 3. The improvement of downstream water quality.

What do you see as the five most important problems seen in the preparation of the first round of RBMPs? -open reply-(optional)

1. The narrow definition of what constitutes 'water services' fails to take into account the 'polluter pays' approach to water management. There is also, currently no allowance under this policy for the costs associated with environmental or resource degradation or loss. 2. While there has been success in securing clean water resources in downstream reaches, there are still problems in the upstream reaches of river basins. The WFD needs to reinforce protection against morphological changes and agricultural pollution, and favour riparian areas and the restoration of habitat ecosystems (which must include capacity development, spatial land use planning, and long-term monitoring). 3. It is crucial that the WFD, the RBMP and the proposed Blueprint are aligned in association with other + linked EU policies. CAP, EULife, and the Nitrates and Habitats and Birds Directives all have a great bearing on water quality and quantity, but the RBMPs do not take all of these areas into account (particularly the relevance of water in energy production). 4. Micro-emissions and new pollutants (such as pharmaceuticals) have a subtle, yet undeniable effect on river basin ecology. Also urban storm water and REACH. The failure to clean micro-pollutants (for example, such as oestrogen from contraceptive drugs), from our watersheds is taking its toll on all communities dependent upon our river basins. 5. Disaster management is also a vital area that is not given thorough consideration in RBMPs, although separate disaster management policy is in place. The need for riparian areas and the replacement of floodplains to protect river basins from urban rainwater runoff are crucial in this regard. While E-Flows are necessary to maintain enough water, the land surrounding the water bodies and rivers are equally important for protecting our water supply from harmful toxins, especially during natural disasters.

Tools to improve water management

Develop guidance through a working group under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy to support Yes

<p>the use of water accounting and E-Flows at river basin level (including specific tests in pilot river basins); to agree a methodology for efficiency target setting at river basin level; and to update reporting to the EC to include E-Flows and river flows.</p> <p>-single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	
<p>Develop a Recommendation on the use of water accounting, efficiency target setting and environmental flows at river basin level and an indicative EU water efficiency target.</p> <p>-single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	Yes
<p>Specific recommendations are considered for Member States on water accounting, efficiency target setting and environmental flows at river basin level in the context of the European Annual Growth Survey for the European Semester.</p> <p>-single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	No
<p>Adopt technical annexes to the WFD on E-Flows that will require water accounting for river basins; specify the protocol for establishing E-Flows, making the use of the E-Flows definition compulsory in all water stressed river basins; and require the setting up of water efficiency targets on the basis of an agreed methodology.</p> <p>-single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	Yes
<p>Other</p> <p>-open reply-(optional)</p>	
<p>Enhance drought management planning into the next cycle of River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive for all drought-affected, or potentially affected, Member States.</p> <p>-single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	Yes
<p>Develop a European wide early warning system for droughts to timely alert Member States on the need to take counter-measures. -single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	No
<p>Establish a drought emergency fund which would group in a single instruments and enhance the funding possibilities currently available under the EU Solidarity Fund and rural development funding. The Fund would include appropriate conditionalities on drought prevention measures being taken. -single choice reply-(compulsory)</p>	No
<p>Establish a drought management directive to require Member States to develop and implement river basin drought management</p>	Yes

plans with specific drought measures to be reported to the Commission. -single choice reply- (compulsory)

Other -open reply-(optional)

Unlocking measures in key sectors to protect Europe's waters

The Commission to develop guidance clearly defining and providing an EU framework for green infrastructures that promotes natural water retention measures such as floodplains and wetlands restoration; sustainable drainage, the restoration of riparian areas and the re-meandering of rivers -single choice reply- (compulsory)

Yes

The Commission to develop guidance for integrated water – land use management, bringing together spatial planning and River Basin Management Plans in co-ordination with other areas of EU environmental policy (Biodiversity, Nature, Soil) -single choice reply-(compulsory)

Yes

Develop guidance through the agriculture working group under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy on the effective application of measures by farmers to deliver water quality and quantity objectives at catchment level. These measures include changing crop patterns, buffer strips, restoring riparian areas, increase irrigation efficiency, etc. In that respect, particular emphasis will be put on the use of the Farm Advisory System set up under the CAP -single choice reply-(compulsory)

No

The European Innovation Partnership on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability and the European Innovation Partnership on Water develop and disseminate innovative solution to ensure agriculture's negative impact on water are removed or minimised and beneficial effects are maximised -single choice reply-(compulsory)

No

Enhance the application of Environmental Impact Assessment to irrigation projects. -single choice reply-(compulsory)

Yes

Enlarge the scope of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive to cover all hydropower development plans -single choice reply-(compulsory)

Yes

The Commission to ensure that the

implementing rules for the post-2013 CAP Pillars I and II support and target the necessary measures to deliver water quality and quantity objectives. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Voluntary labelling of water using appliances -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Mandatory labelling of water using appliances -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Establish a WFD Common Implementation Strategy working group on water use efficiency for preparing “BREF-like” notes on water use/conveyance efficiency. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Minimum water efficiency requirements for water using appliances, e.g. under the Ecodesign directive -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Voluntary performance rating for buildings -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Mandatory performance rating for buildings -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Minimum water performance requirements for buildings -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
A directive on water efficiency requirements in buildings including a requirement on water companies to reduce final water consumption -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Promote leakage reduction in water stressed/potentially water stressed areas by prioritising it in Cohesion and Structural Funds spending -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Promote leakage reduction investment on the basis of public/private partnerships and European Investment Bank loans -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Develop guidance on best practices in leakage reduction -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Develop a harmonised method for determining the level of water leakage under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy at EU level and encourage Member States to integrate it	No

into their water management practices -single choice reply-(compulsory)	
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Develop EU guidance on certification schemes for water re-use -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
The Comité Européen de Normalisation (CEN) to adopt standards for use of recycled waste water in agriculture -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
An EU Regulation establishing standards for waste water re-use -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Economic Instruments	
Mapping all EU large irrigated areas via the remote sensing (GMES) initiative and match these areas with water abstraction permits to help Member States enforce them and tackle illegal abstraction. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Making EU funding for irrigation projects conditional upon the installation of metering devices, e.g. via the CAP implementing rules. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Making CAP direct payments to farmers (Pillar I) conditional upon the installation of metering devices, e.g. via cross compliance rules for the WFD. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Amend the WFD to make it explicit that the Article 11 requirement of a permit for water abstraction also includes mandatory metering of the quantities abstracted. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Amend the WFD to require metering of individual water consumption and/or use where relevant. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Implement the proposed rules for Cohesion & Structural and Rural Development funds to make the establishment of incentive pricing compulsory for (relevant) projects in areas with water deficit -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Do not know
Add national water pricing obligations for	No

farmers, based on Art.9 of the WFD, to cross-compliance rules under the CAP for the WFD -single choice reply-(compulsory)	
The Commission to promote the use of trading in water rights at river basin level through the development of guidance and tools under the WFD Common Implementation Strategy -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
The Commission to develop criteria for the sustainable production of bio-energy crops with specific reference to water protection -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Specific recommendations are considered for Member States on water pricing policies in the context of the European Annual Growth Survey for the European Semester -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Amend the WFD to require that the price of water reflects volumetric use. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
In regards to bio-energy crops, direct and indirect land use change must also be considered and protected.	
The WFD Common Implementation Strategy to develop guidance for the next cycle of River Basin Management Plans and a methodology for the calculation of an adequate contribution of the different water uses to the recovery of the costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs and ecosystem services' benefits -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
The Commission to propose an amendment of the WFD (an Annex) containing a mandatory methodology for the calculation of an adequate contribution of the different water uses to the recovery of the costs of water services, including environmental and resource costs and ecosystem services' benefits. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Governance	
On the basis of the Commission assessment of the River Basin Management Plans, the WFD	No

Common Implementation Strategy to identify and disseminate best practices in the EU. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	
To develop a peer review process for river basin district authorities within the context of the WFD Common Implementation Strategy with a view to help them identifying ways of improving their coordinating role -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Specific recommendations are considered for Member States on water governance in the context of the European Annual Growth Survey for the European Semester -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Develop initiatives on inspections and surveillance to improve the means of detecting and responding to water-related implementation problems such as over-abstraction -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Continue to promote the river basin management approach and the implementation of the EU water acquis through EU enlargement policy and international rivers agreements -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
To amend the WFD to strengthen the coordination powers of River Basin District authorities and the obligations for combined River Basin Management Plans in transboundary contexts -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Knowledge base	
Improve the sharing of data and other information by further developing the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) Implementation Plan -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Enhance minimum WFD reporting requirements and statistical obligations (e.g. through the Framework regulation on environmental accounts/statistics), especially with regard to inter-operability of data. This includes harmonising the reporting timetables of the	Yes

Urban Waste Water Treatment, Nitrates and Water Framework Directives -single choice reply- (compulsory)	
Develop a fully inter-operable, SEIS (Shared Environmental Information System) based, shared water knowledge system for use by Member States and EU institutions, reducing reporting requirements while prescribing interoperability standards for the information produced at local and national level and through GMES. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Develop a roadmap for water research priorities to be integrated in the next research funding cycle at EU and Member States level taking into account the need to improve the science policy interface. -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Global aspects	
Help developing countries to put in place integrated sustainable water management through EU development cooperation -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Raise consumers' awareness of the water footprint of products -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Keep under review water foot printing tools with a view to test their usefulness for voluntary product labelling (e.g. as part of EU Ecolabel). -single choice reply-(compulsory)	No
Mandatory labelling of most embedded water intensive products -single choice reply-(compulsory)	Yes
Other -open reply-(optional)	
Other issues	
Are there any other issues that you wish to raise or comments to make regarding the Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources? -open reply-(optional)	
<p>It is crucial that all areas of policy that can possibly affect Europe's water resources are considered. This, as G-8 scientists pointed out in their briefing to policy leaders (http://bit.ly/Kwc46W), includes water use in the energy production. The connections between water and energy are numerous and are frequently overlooked by policy makers. The G-8 scientists highlight the need for more integrated scientific research and innovation in energy optimization and the sustainable use of water, along with the necessity to fully integrate water and energy so that solutions are approached with an eye on their interdependency. Other areas that must be incorporated to safeguard Europe's water resources include CAP, which has a vital role as a consumer of huge quantities of water, and a polluter through waste-irrigation water runoff and which can be tackled through the Nitrates Directive. CAP policies and practices need to be</p>	

thoroughly compatible with good ecological practise. There are also areas that require more research, such as water in the energy industry and cleaning of micro pollutants from water before it is returned to a water body. To this end, river basin management and restoration needs to be evidence-based with adequate resources given to long-term monitoring. A trans-national approach is important. Although water policy cannot be a simple one-policy approach due to different issues in different areas, it is important to note that these areas do not stop at country borders. Therefore, coordination between Member States and third countries is crucial. Overall, the importance of the alignment and integration of multiple policies and the willingness to work with many countries, some outside the EU-27 is essential.