

13 Implementation of the Plan

The River Basin District is the basic unit of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting under the Water Framework Directive. The work to date on implementing the Directive has been organised and delivered on this basis, with the coordinating local authorities interacting with other local authorities, EPA and other public authorities and stakeholders. This interaction has posed a challenge and while progress has been made, full coordination has not been achieved. The process of developing the plans has been complex and a significant amount of work has been carried out in monitoring, assessment, classification and setting objectives for water bodies.

Delivery of the River Basin Plans will be challenging with responsibility for implementation of the plans currently assigned across a range of organisations with no single body having ultimate responsibility. The current administrative systems are fragmented along administrative lines and do not facilitate analysis, identification and implementation of the most cost-effective solutions to manage water quality at river basin level. An RBD can cover the areas of responsibility of a large number of bodies e.g. 18 local authorities in the case of the Shannon RBD. Furthermore, the implementation of many of the measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the plans is the responsibility of national rather than local authorities. Furthermore, it is recognised that improved enforcement of existing legislation is key to successful implementation of the RBMPs.

As we move to the implementation stage, there is a need to strengthen and adjust the existing administrative structures to ensure effective delivery of the plans including enforcement of relevant legislation, across local, regional and national levels. Recommendations in relation to revised structures for water management have been put forward over the past two years by the OECD, Forfás and in the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure.

In tandem with the finalisation of the River Basin Management Plans, proposals to introduce water charging are being advanced and a major report on the efficiency of local government is being finalised. It is likely that recommendations for structural change will emerge from both processes.

13.1 Review of arrangements

In the short-term, funding will continue to be provided to support the RBD Offices so that these can coordinate the efforts of the various authorities to oversee, manage, enforce and report on the implementation of the plans. The National Advisory Committee will continue to exercise an oversight role. In addition, the annual review provided for under the Water Services Investment Programme will continue to be guided by the information coming through from the river basin management planning process.

There are clear advantages in strengthening the delivery approach at a RBD level for both infrastructure delivery and implementation of the RBMPs. It is considered that this approach has potential to improve efficiencies and co-operation, build and retain appropriate expertise in identified areas and strengthen the capacity to plan and deliver strategically important projects, and give a broader strategic context for locally delivered programmes. It would also facilitate the collation of key data at a regional level, and support more coordinated and synchronised planning and decision making.

Against this background, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will review by end 2010 the governance and structures for implementation of the river basin management plans. This review will include, inter alia, consideration of the following priority areas: data management; sampling and monitoring; legislative requirements; inspection and enforcement; reporting; public participation. Since one of the key challenges will be the implementation and enforcement of WFD requirements over a wide range of public bodies, it is important that structures resulting from the review must have a clear RBD remit and be provided with the resources and statutory power to oversee and enforce implementation over all relevant public bodies.

13.2 Implementation process

The implementation of the RBMP at water body / WMU level will be an extremely complex exercise involving the reviewing and coordination of all water management practices and land-use practices that impact on water, to ensure they are in line with the plan, the relevant regulations (e.g. for surface waters and groundwater) and the Directive. To ensure consistent implementation across all RBDs and WMUs, the following principles must be adhered to when implementation plans are being developed and delivered:

1. All relevant information held by all public bodies shall be made fully available.
2. All information gaps shall be clearly identified with a timeline for completing necessary work to fill gaps in time for the review of the Article 5 characterisation analysis.
3. An appropriate standardised management system shall be developed by 2012 to assess all of the activities that impact water status in the catchment.
4. There shall be a whole-system management approach to implementation that takes account of cumulative impacts, to prevent deterioration in the status of any water body unless an Article 4-compliant exemption has been set out.
5. In the selection of supplementary measures and where appropriate and required by the Directive, a better environmental alternative check must be carried out before an Article 4-compliant exemption is applied.
6. Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000 objectives and requirements shall be addressed in an integrated manner, with implementation measures ensuring compliance with any standards and objectives for Natura 2000 sites by 2015.
7. Where the management system indicates that implementation of basic measures will not avoid deterioration of status or will not restore waterbodies to good status by 2015, a transparent cost effectiveness analysis, incorporating environmental and resources costs and benefits shall be conducted to select the most appropriate supplementary measures to achieve this, unless an Article 4 exemption is set out.
8. Public participation must be integrated into the Plan.

Critical to managing this complex implementation process will be effective data management and interpretation, the streamlining of the regulatory systems that control activities that may impact on waters and ensuring that the regulation of activities is consistent across public authorities.

These issues will be considered during review of water governance and structures mentioned above. However, there are several initiatives currently underway which will facilitate improvements in implementation.

The Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities with support from the Local Government Computer Services Board are developing the Environmental Data Exchange Network (EDEN). The aim of EDEN is to eliminate the difficulties encountered in the sharing and reporting of environmental data sourced from a wide range of environmental datasets, applications, and IT systems in place within the many organisations involved in work related to the Water Framework Directive. In time it is intended that EDEN will be a fully distributed data-sharing network allowing all stakeholders to easily share environmental data. The Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities are also currently investigating web-based catchment management systems that will best facilitate the management, visualisation and interpretation of environmental datasets at catchment level.

For the purpose of promoting consistency in environmental regulation and enforcement local authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government are also jointly involved in the preparation of guidance and training for local authority personnel through the Environmental Services Training Group (ESTG). Guidance and training currently being developed include; the authorisation of discharges to water and sewer under Water Pollution Acts and protocols for agricultural inspections and enforcement. Other guidance and training will be prepared as appropriate.

13.3 Public participation

Public participation is a central principle of the Water Framework Directive and a programme for encouraging active involvement and participation of the public in the implementation of the plan will be developed by 2011 and delivered as an integral part of the implementation process for the RBD. One of the mechanisms for ensuring participation from stakeholders has been through the operation of statutory Advisory Councils comprising of representatives of the local authorities (elected members), representative bodies, NGOs and the social partners.

As part of the review referred to above, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, following consultation with relevant stakeholders, will bring forward any necessary proposals for reform of existing structures in order to maximise the effective active involvement of stakeholder bodies in implementation of the plans.

In tandem with this and to support public participation, public awareness initiatives will also be implemented,

commencing with a programme of information and awareness-raising to be delivered through The Library Council. The disposal of dangerous household and gardening chemicals will be one of the issues addressed in the awareness campaign. This will include the development of 'ENFOpoints' building on the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government's plans to enhance the role of libraries in the provision of environmental information services. Access to information relevant to the implementation process will also be made publicly available in readily accessible formats to facilitate fully informed participation of the public.

Amendment made by Minister of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government when adopting Plan on 6 July 2010

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Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for Wicklow County Councilww.

Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for South Dublin

Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council

Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for Cavan County Council

Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for Westmeath County Council

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Mobile Monitoring Unit Report for Fingal County Council

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Eastern River Basin District – List of Technical Council Members

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Hydrometric Report for Kildare

Hydrometric Report for Westmeath

Hydrometric Report for Dublin City Council

Hydrometric Report for Meath County Council

Hydrometric Report for Wicklow County Council

Hydrometric Report for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown

Hydrometric Report for Offaly

List of Advisory Council Members

Chair: Kildare County Council	Cllr. JJ. Power
Vice Chair: Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council	Cllr. Jane Dillon Byrne
Dublin City Council	Cllr. Tom Stafford
Dublin City Council	Ms. Lorna Kelly
Meath County Council	Cllr. Tom Kelly
Meath County Council	Cllr. Nick Killian
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IBEC	Robert O'Shea
Irish Hotels Federation	Daniel O'Connell
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Technical Council Meetings were held in April 2006, October 2006, December 2006, April 2007, October 2007, December 2007, May 2008, September 2008, December 2008, and February 2009.