



WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE



CIS CD ROM - 2005 VERSION

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Water Framework Directive?

Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy or the Water Framework Directive is a legislative framework to protect all water resources throughout the European Union. The overriding objective of the Directive is that all of Europe's waterbodies achieve "good status" by 2015.

With ambitious objectives and clear deadlines the WFD introduces innovative elements into water policy, repealing several existing European Directives. Other elements of the Directive include:

- River Basin Management on a European-wide scale;
- Cross border co-operation in water management between all countries and all involved parties;
- Pollution prevention and control on the basis of a "combined approach" ;
- Public participation in water management, and
- Economic analysis of water use.

What is the CIS and how does it work?

The European Commission, Member States and Norway agreed the Common Implementation Strategy - CIS, in May 2001. It aims to support the implementation of the WFD and develop a common understanding and guidance on key elements of the Directive. Experts from the Member States, Norway and Candidate countries alongside stakeholders and non-governmental organisations are all involved in the CIS.

The activities of the CIS include raising awareness and act as an exchange information, develop guidance documents on technical issues affecting the WFD, perform integrated testing in pilot river basins and develop a European information management system.

These initiatives are achieved through working groups and joint activities, which are overseen by the Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG). The Working Groups report directly to the Water Directors of the European Union, Norway, Switzerland, the Candidate Countries and the Commissions.

Who are the Water Directors and what do they do?

The Water Directors are the representatives of the Member States and other countries administrators with overall responsibility on water policy. Since 2000, regular meetings between the Water Directors are held twice a year, which are chaired by the Member State holding the Presidency of the European Union. Participating countries currently include Member States, Accession Countries, Candidate Countries, the countries of the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. It was the Water Directors who initiated and directed the CIS and continue to monitor its progress, through the agreement of work programmes of joint activities. The Water Directors discuss all areas of relevance to European and international water policy as well as the Water Framework Directive.

What is the DG Environment?

The main role of the Directorate General Environment is to initiate and define new and environmental legislation, ensuring that measures that have been agreed, are put into practice in the Member States. The DG-Environment is based in Brussels and is one of 36 Directorates-General in the European Commission.

The DG Environment WFD team sits within the DG Environment's Water Unit that work on the implementation of the Directive. The remit of this group is to ensure that the CIS Work Programme is completed satisfactorily and that the requirements of the WFD are being met. The team undertake a number of activities:

- Preparing future legislation such as for the groundwater and priority substances,
- Organising the Article 21 Committee, the Strategic Co-ordination Group and the Water Directors meetings and,
- Participate in working groups.

What is CIRCA?

CIRCA is a software tool developed under the European Commission and stands for "Communication Information Resource Centre Administrator". The WFD CIRCA Interest Group "Implementing the Water Framework Directive" is the main tool for exchanging information under the CIS.

The initial use of CIRCA was to facilitate the different groups under the Strategy, the increase in interest lead to the expansion of access to CIRCA. There are over 1000 members, as well as a publicly non-password accessible part of CIRCA, which contain useful documents such as Guidance and Technical Documents.

What is the WFD replacing?

The Water Framework Directive is a comprehensive legislative document, and takes into account areas of water policy already covered by European legislation.

The following are to be repealed with effect from seven years after the entry into force of the Directive:

- Directive 75/440/EEC of 16 June 1975 concerning the quality required of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the Member States;
- Council Decision 77/795/EEC of 12 December 1977 establishing a common procedure for the exchange of information on the quality of surface freshwater in the Community;
- Council Directive 79/869/EEC of 9 October 1979 concerning the methods of measurement and frequencies of sampling and analysis of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking waters in the Member States.

The following shall be repealed with effect 13 years after the date of entry into force of the Directive:

- Council Directive 78/659/EEC of 18 July 1978 on the quality of freshwaters needing protection or improvement in order to support fish life;
- Council Directive 79/923/EEC of 30 October 1979 on the quality required of shellfish waters;
- Council Directive 80/68/EEC of 17 December 1979 on the protection of groundwater against pollution caused by certain dangerous substances;
- Directive 76/464/EEC, with the exception of Article 6, which shall be repealed with effect from the entry into force of the Directive.

The following transitional provisions apply for the Directive 76/464/EEC:

1. the list of priority substances adopted under Article 16 of the WFD shall replace the list of substances prioritised in the Commission communication to the Council of 22 June 1982;
2. for the purposes of Article 7 of Directive 76/464/EEC, Member States may apply the principles for the identification of pollution problems and the substances causing them, the establishment of quality standards, and the adoption of measures laid down in the WFD.

What is the timetable of implementation?

Year	Issue	Reference
2000	Directive entered into force	Art. 25
2003	Transposition in national legislation	Art.23
	Identification of River Basin Districts and Authorities	Art.3
2004	Characterisation of river basin: pressures, impacts and economic analysis	Art. 5
2006	Establishment of monitoring network	Art.8
	Start public consultation (at the latest)	Art.14
2008	Present draft river basin management plan	Art.13
2009	Adoption of river basin management plan including programme of measures	Art.13 & 11
2010	Introduce pricing policies	Art.9
2012	Make operational programmes of measures	Art.11
2015	Meet environmental objectives	Art.4
2021	Second management cycle ends	Art.4 & 13
2027	Third management cycle ends.	Art.4 & 13