



# The EU Water Framework Directive

Implications for Water Resource Management  
National Hydrology Seminar 2002

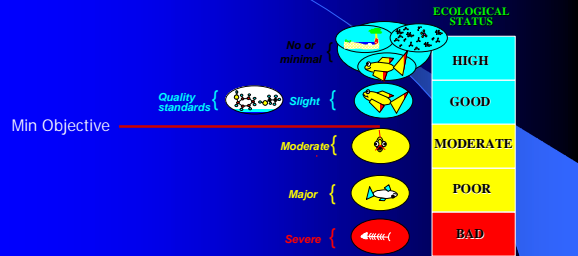
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## WFD Status and General Objectives

- Entered into force on 22 December 2000
- Water Quality Objectives (at least 'Good Status') established for all waters
  - ✓ prevent deterioration
  - ✓ protect, enhance and restore
  - ✓ progressively reduce pollution by priority substances
  - ✓ trend reversal (groundwater)
  - ✓ exceptions provided for (eg good ecological potential)
- 'Water body' is the basic 'compliance checking' and management unit

Good Surface Water Status equals good ecological status and good chemical status



- Applies to rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters
- Ecological Status determined by level of deviation from unimpacted conditions
  - ✓ biological quality elements, and
  - ✓ supporting physico-chemical and hydromorphological quality elements

Good Groundwater Status equals good chemical status and good quantitative status

- Must take account of
    - ✓ Associated surface water systems
    - ✓ Directly dependant wetlands
    - ✓ Protected areas
  - Proposal for new Groundwater Directive – Article 17
    - ✓ criteria for assessment of chemical status
    - ✓ Core list of substances at EU level
    - ✓ Complimentary parameters at MS level
    - ✓ Trend reversal
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## Maximum Ecological Potential

- Under certain conditions the WFD allows that waterbodies may be identified as AWB or HMWB
  - ✓ where good ecological status may not be achieved due to existing physical modifications (substantially changed in character)
  - ✓ specified uses include navigation (incl ports), water storage, power generation, irrigation, water regulation, flood protection, land drainage and others (ie major infrastructural projects)
- The beneficial objectives cannot be achieved by other means offering a better environmental option for reasons of technical feasibility or disproportionate costs
  - ✓ reasons and justification must be specifically stated in RBMP
- Provisional Identification of AWB and HMWB in 2004

## WFD - A Systematic Approach

- Map all surface water bodies, groundwater bodies and protected areas
  - ✓ 'water body' is the basic compliance checking and management unit
  - ✓ 'discrete and significant element of surface water'
  - ✓ 'distinct volume of groundwater' within aquifer
  - ✓ hierarchial / technical approach
- Undertake 'risk assessment' and impact review
- Set objectives (for each waterbody)
- Design and review measures, monitor progress
- Report and consult via RBMP

## Immediate Timeframes

- River basin districts to be identified by 2003
- Competent authority or authorities to be identified by December 2003
  - ✓ main requirement is that measures are co-ordinated for the whole of the RBD/IRBD
- Characterisation report and review of environmental impacts by December 2004
  - ✓ many technical, institutional and organisational challenges
- Register of protected areas by December 2004

## WFD Activities

- National WFD Co-ordination Group
- EU Common Implementation Strategy
  - ✓ technical guidance
- North-South Co-ordination
  - ✓ shared river basin districts
  - ✓ all freshwaters on island of Ireland lie within same ecoregion
  - ✓ shared ecoregion for marine waters (IRL-UK)
- Strategic Approach to GIS (EPA, 2002)
  - ✓ data management
- EPA research to support WFD
  - ✓ ERTDI Programme 2000-2006

## River Basin Management Projects

- Characterisation report required by December 2004
  - ✓ local authority led
  - ✓ funded by DELG
- must deliver cost effective and sustainable monitoring arrangements at river basin scale
- must develop supporting data handling arrangements
- must support implementation of measures
- must facilitate stakeholder involvement and public consultation

## The Challenge – Integration !

- Integration of all water resources at the river basin scale
- Integration of disciplines, analysis and expertise
- Integration of different decision making levels
- Integration of a wide range of measures
- Integration of stakeholders and civil society in decision making
- Integration of water management between Member States