

Integration of intercalibration into River Basin Management



Ursula Schmedtje
DG Environment D.1 Water
European Commission

WISER Final Conference
Tallinn, 25-26 January 2012

2012 – Year of water

COM Assessment of the river basin management plans reported by the Member States

Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Waters

-> Publication in November 2012

-> 3rd Water Conference: 24-25 May 2012; in parallel with Green Week on “water” - 22-25 May 2012

COM Assessment of the intercalibration results - Phase 2

-> COM Decision expected in autumn 2012



3rd EC implementation report

Assessment of the river basin management plans

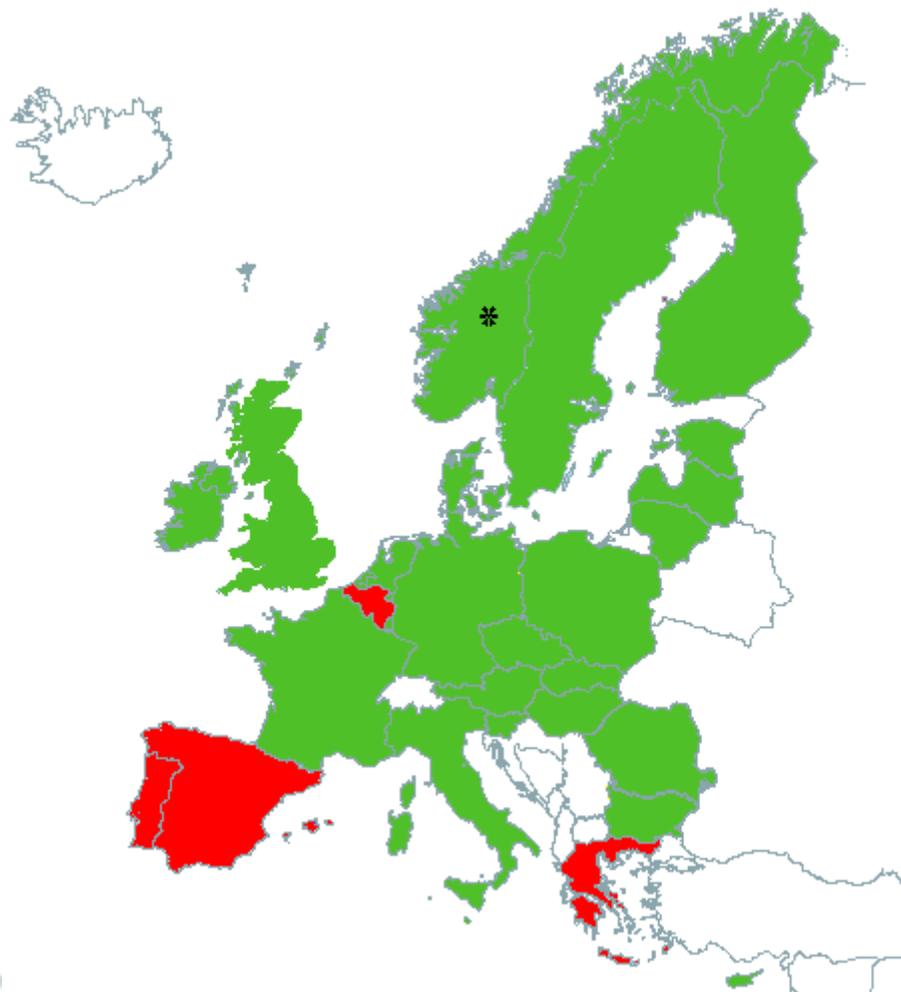
- Technical, legal and strategic analysis
 - Compliance check of WFD provisions
 - Analysis of RBMPs based on WFD main principles
- Based on a concept paper agreed with Water Directors in December 2009
- Review of the status of surface water and groundwater in cooperation with the EEA

Commission Report

- present findings across EU 27
- Annexes with summary information per MS (fiches)



State of adoption of river basin management plans - January 2012



RBMP adopted (23)

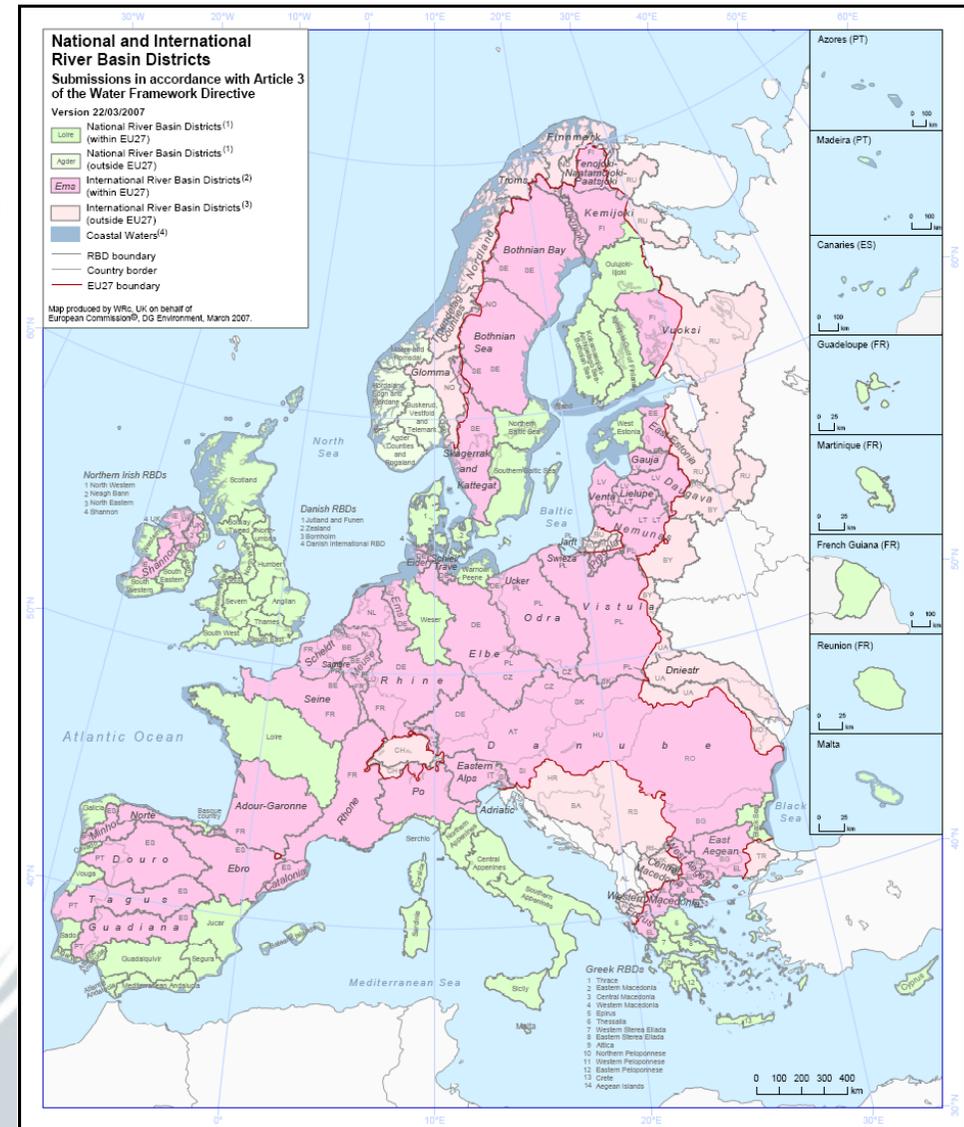
**Consultation on-going
or not started (4)**

(all 4 MS that have not adopted
are before the Court) ☹



WFD principles

- Protecting all water bodies,
- Achievement of good status in all water bodies and no deterioration of status
- Integrated planning process at river basin scale
- Comprehensive assessment of pressures, impacts and status, including the ecological perspective
- Economic instruments and water pricing
- Integration of water policy with other policies (agriculture, transport, energy...)
- Public participation and active involvement



WFD main objectives and elements

- **Good status in 2015**
 - Ecological status
 - Chemical status
 - Quantitative status (groundwater)
 - No deterioration
- **Key elements**
 - Ecological status defined in terms of biological QEs, physico-chemical QEs and hydromorphological QEs
 - Objectives set in river basin management plans
 - Programme of measures to achieve objectives as part of plans
 - Attention paid to socio-economic impacts through a process of duly justified exemptions
- **Other water-related EU legislation is contributing to these objectives**



Intercalibration in WFD

- Intercalibration ensures
 - the consistency of good ecological status with the normative definitions of the WFD
 - the comparability of the good ecological status assessments across the Member States.
- Phase 1 Intercalibration 2004-2007 -> substantial results achieved, but also significant gaps
- Phase 2 of IC (2008-2011) was agreed in order
 - to close the gaps assessed in the first phase (2004-2007) and
 - to improve the comparability of the results in time for the second river basin management plans due in 2015.
- Revision of the Intercalibration Guidance



Intercalibration – Phase 2

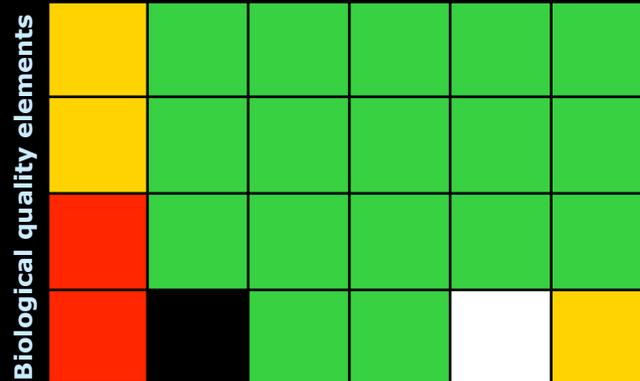
- The intention is to close intercalibration with Phase 2.
- Intercalibration is a very resource intensive exercise and we need to come to an end.
- Although it could be useful to revisit the intercalibration results when the Member States have collected more experience with using the results, this remains to be seen and is not planned for the near future.
- The only open issue that remains is the intercalibration of good ecological potential in heavily modified water bodies. This will be subject of future work under the ECOSTAT mandate.



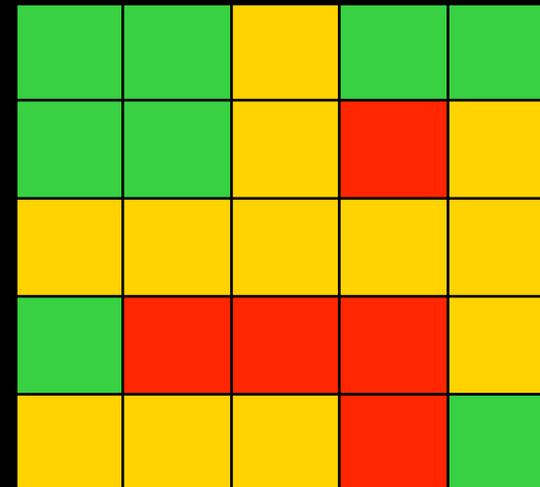
State of play – November 2011

rivers

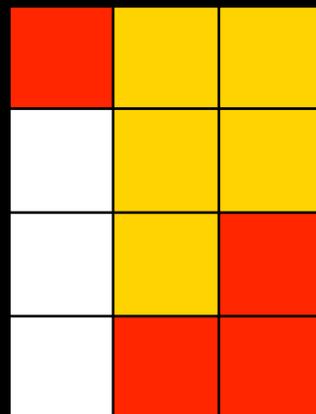
Geographical regions (GIGs)



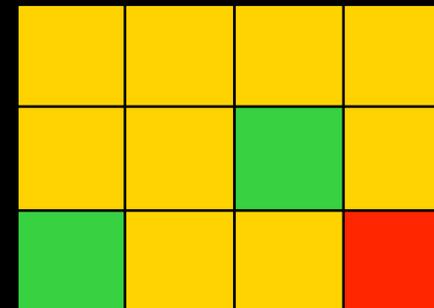
lakes



transitional waters



coastal waters



Limitations of intercalibration

- In some cases there may be scientific reasons why WFD compliant assessment methods cannot be developed or intercalibrated.
- The WISER Project has provided support to the IC groups
 - on the development or refinement of biological assessment methods
 - help develop common metrics for intercalibration
 - provide arguments where scientific knowledge is insufficient to develop methods fully compatible with WFD requirements
 - make proposals on how to at least partially intercalibrate such BQEs in order to implement the provisions of the WFD as much as possible.
- Where intercalibration reaches its limitations, GIGs were advised to provide justifications in the final IC reports on why intercalibration could not be completed.
- These arguments will be considered in the preparation of the Commission Decision.



Assessment of intercalibration results and preparation of COM Decision

- 31 December 2011 - deadline for delivery of intercalibration results
- January-March 2012 - compilation of the Technical Report on the intercalibration results by JRC
- April-May 2012 - assessment of results by independent Scientific Peer Review Panel
 - Scientific review of results achieved including an assessment of the justifications provided where results were not achieved
- June 2012 - discussion of draft COM Decision at WFD Committee meeting
- Autumn 2012 - expected adoption of Commission Decision



Intercalibration of good ecological potential

Concept paper prepared by ECOSTAT on possibilities to intercalibrate GEP

- A comprehensive intercalibration exercise that seeks to define a complete set of numeric class boundaries for good ecological potential is not considered possible.
- Reasons:
 - MS' definitions of GEP will always be influenced by their national judgements about the significance, and hence acceptability, of adverse impacts on the water use or on the wider environment
 - Scientific understanding of the ecological impact of hydromorphological alterations is less well developed for pollution
 - Considerable variability in the nature and extent of hydromorphological alterations, because of the wide range of uses for which water bodies have been designated HMWB and the wide variation in the associated hydromorphological modifications.



Intercalibration of good ecological potential

Proposed approach:

- review of the current state of play on defining good ecological potential;
- development of an updated methodological framework for defining and assessing good ecological potential; and
- simple comparisons of Member States' definitions of good ecological potential for common water uses

Workshop on hydromorphology and GEP

- to be held in Brussels on 12-13 June 2012

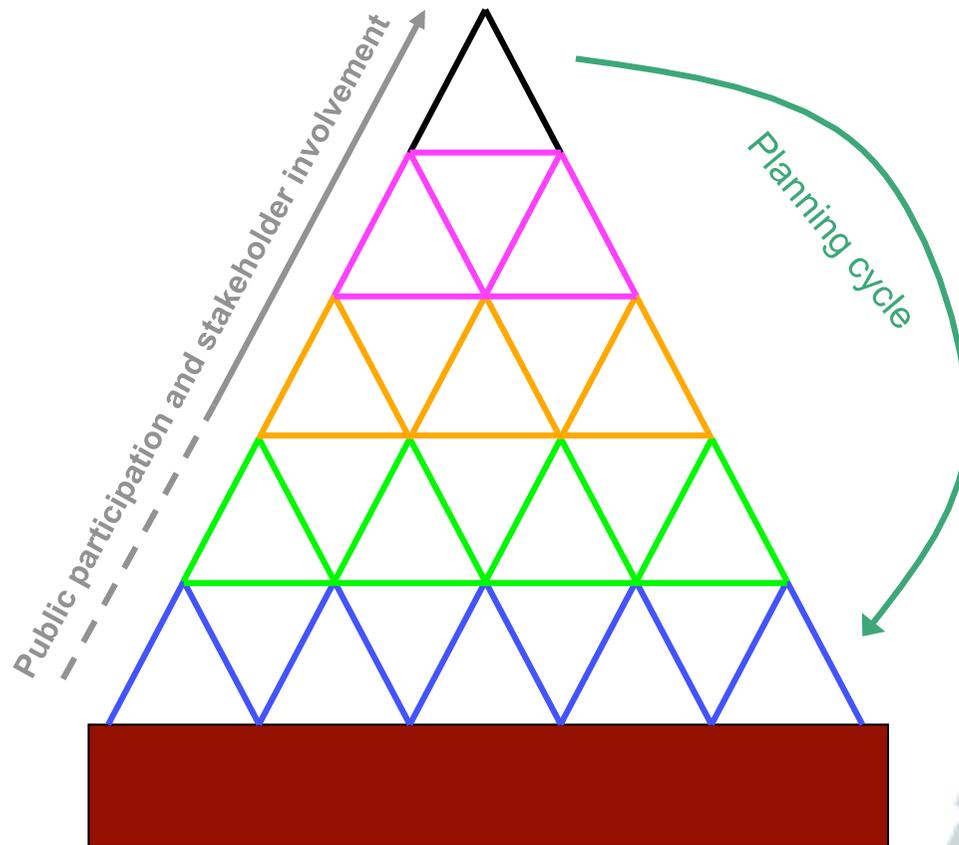


Assessment of RBMPs – 17 topics

1. Governance
2. Characterisation of the RBD
3. Monitoring of surface waters and groundwater
4. Classification of the ecological status of surface waters
5. Designation of HMWB and definition of ecological potential
6. Chemical status of surface waters
7. Assessment of groundwater status
8. Environmental objectives and exemptions
9. Programme of measures – general
10. Measures related to groundwater
11. Measures related to agriculture
12. Measures related to chemical pollution
13. Measures related to hydromorphology
14. Measures related to Article 9 (water pricing policies)
15. Additional measures in protected areas
16. Strategy to deal with water scarcity and droughts
17. Adaptation to climate change



Planning process



Implementation of measures

Programme of measures

Setting objectives

Monitoring and assessment

Characterisation, pressure and impact and economic analysis

Transposition, RBD delineation, competent authorities, administrative set-up, coordination arrangements



Some general preliminary findings

- + A lot of effort put into preparation of the plans
- + High uptake of the common framework and common language on water management provided by the WFD
- + Integration of ecological perspective into water management
- + Enhancement of international cooperation
- + Public participation, stakeholder involvement
- + Impressive improvement in the knowledge base

- Low ambition in many of the plans (extensive use of exemptions)
- Lack of concrete measures and expected achievements
- Lack of comparability in some issues (e.g. chemical status!)
- Dressing “business-as-usual” as WFD



Assessment of pressures and impacts

- Characterisation of the river basin
 - Improved knowledge of river basin characteristics, pressures and impacts and economic analysis
 - Unclear definition of significant pressures, potential disregard of relevant pressures
 - Not enough protection of small water bodies
 - Need for transparent criteria for establishing reference conditions
 - Weak economic analysis
- Monitoring of surface water and groundwater
 - Monitoring programmes in place, but low amount of data available: enough to detect pressures/impacts and for assessment of ecological status? Enough for assessment of upward trends in groundwater?
 - No transparent choice of which priority substances are being monitored
 - Some monitoring programmes reported in 2007 are not fully implemented
 - Lack of confidence in monitoring should not be a reason for delay in achievement of WFD objectives



Assessment of status (1)

Assessment of the ecological status of surface waters

- + Some good examples of countries that have developed methods for most of the quality elements
- + Very significant progress in knowledge and exchange of information among MS' experts (WFD and CIS process catalytic effect)
- Criteria for defining reference conditions are not always transparent or not defined at all.
- WFD-compliant methods for ecological classification not yet developed for all BQEs.
- Hydromorphological alterations are not being sufficiently detected by biological classification tools.
- Big differences in identification of river basin specific pollutants
- It is not always transparent how the intercalibration results have been translated into the class boundaries of the national methods
- It is not clear if the status assessments are actually the starting point for planning the programmes of measures



Assessment of status (2)

- Chemical status of surface waters
 - Early implementation of EQS Directive 2008/105/EC in some Member States
 - Variability in WFD implementation (water, sediments, biota)
 - Nearly impossible to compare chemical status results
- Groundwater status
 - First ever overview of groundwater status in the EU, but need for improving quality of data
 - Incomplete assessment: surface waters and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems not included
 - Lack of international coordination



Integration of water-related policies (1)

- Integration of policies affecting the hydromorphology of surface waters
 - Few examples of HMWB designation and GEP definition according to WFD and CIS guidance, but rather based on expert judgement
 - Weak assessment of 'significant adverse effects' and of 'significantly better environmental options'
 - GEP not defined at all in many plans, or defined as status quo
 - No clear justification of WFD requirements for use of Art 4(7)
 - No reference to Art 4(7) in most plans, although major projects in the pipeline



Integration of water-related policies (2)

- Agriculture

- Improved knowledge based on agriculture pressures
- Not enough consideration of hydromorphological impacts of agriculture in the plans
- Insufficient data available in some areas
- RBMP include technical and non-technical agriculture measures, including economic instruments
- Need for more precise PoM related to agriculture, including scope, timing, financing and expected efficiency of measures

- Measures for protected areas

- In most plans, no additional measures are being implemented to contribute to the achievement of objectives under other relevant EU legislation (e.g. Habitats, Shellfish Directives)



Economic analysis and use of economic instruments

- Pre-WFD pricing policies
- Water services only cover water supply, waste water treatment
- Contribution to cost recovery only by households and industry, unclear for other sectors (agriculture)
- Unclear calculation of financial costs
- Various methodologies: difficult to compare among Member States
- Environmental and resource costs are generally not calculated
- Incentive pricing is barely used, and there is no information on the use of water metering



Public participation and active involvement

- RBMPs easily accessible
- Background documents and sub-plans not always available
- Draft RBMPs (for consultation) lack some relevant information, e.g.
 - on the designation of HMWBs and setting GEP
 - on application of exemptions
- Public participation is well integrated in river basin management planning
- Considerable efforts have been carried out to consult the public and the stakeholders
- Impact of consultation in adopted RBMPs is not always clear



Further information

On EUROPA website:

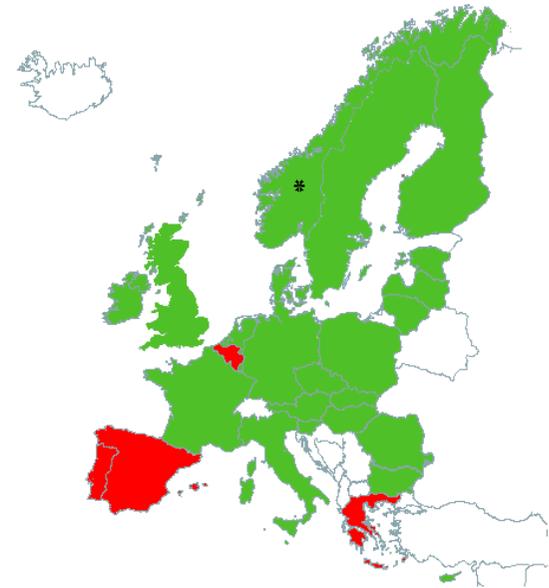
Link to map and river basin management plans of EU Member States

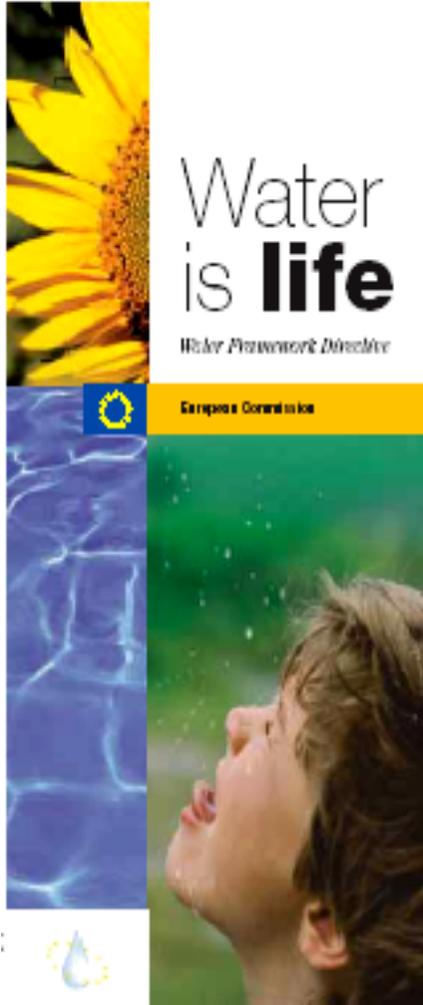
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/participation/map_mc/map.htm

On CIRCA (public):

Link to information officially reported by Member States:

http://circa.europa.eu/Members/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/implementation_documents_1/submitted_rbmps&vm=detailed&sb=Title





Thank you for your attention.



water.europa.eu

