

Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in England

The challenges and benefits

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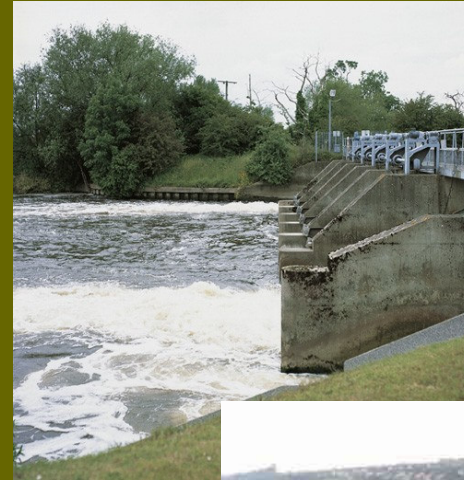


How have we achieved improvements in water quality to date?

- Major investments by water companies, paid for by consumers through water bills
- EU Directives have acted as a driver
- UK Government programmes and legislation, e.g. Water Bill, domestic targets on river quality and biodiversity
- Powerful environmental regulator (Environment Agency) issues discharge consents to industry and water companies

The WFD is an ambitious Directive

The WFD introduces new objectives and a new, integrated planning system for water based on river basin districts, using an ecosystem approach



Raising the bar

- River Basin Management Plans
- From catchment to coast (*applies to all waters*)
- Ecological, chemical & quantitative targets
- Hydromorphology - shape and flow
(*physical structures*)
- Diffuse pollution

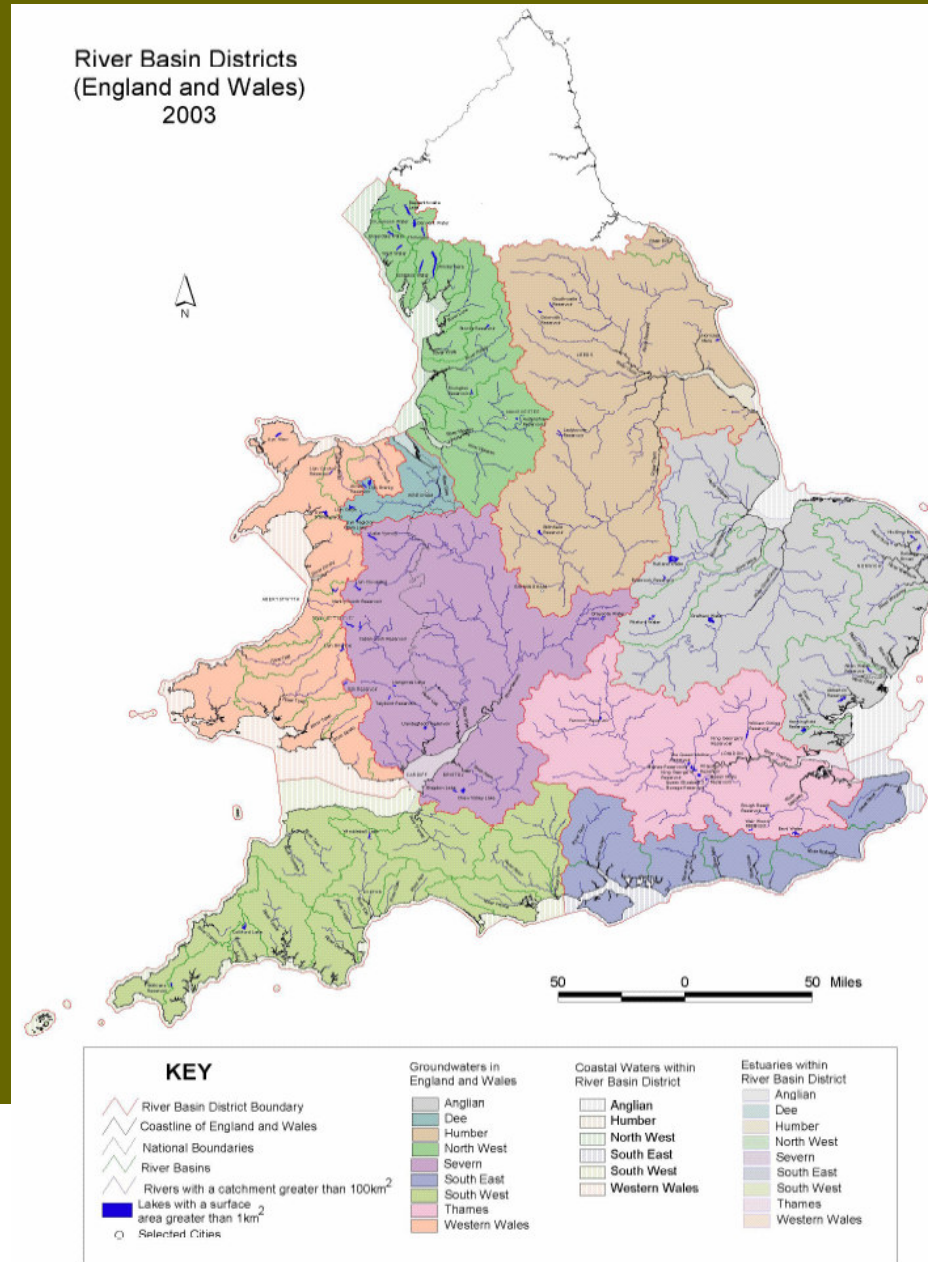


River Basin Management Plans

River Basin Districts

7 in England

2 cross border with Scotland and 2 cross border with Wales



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Principal WFD objectives

- All inland and coastal water bodies to aim to reach 'good status' by 2015
- Prevention of deterioration in status
- Progressive reduction of pollution in accordance with WFD daughter Directives
- Compliance with standards & objectives for protected areas
- Consultation and stakeholder engagement throughout

WFD challenges

- Tight timeframe: a lot to do in a very short time
- Creating a new holistic planning process
- Aligning WFD implementation with other policies
- Setting appropriate environmental objectives
- Tackling diffuse pollution
- Increasing consumer demand for water and effects of climate change
- Dealing with uncertainty



Major issues identified by the WFD Art. 5 reports

- **Diffuse water pollution** (mainly from agriculture) and **hydromorphology** are the most significant pressures operating on our water environment
- A large proportion of water bodies are either 'definitely at risk' or 'probably at risk' of not meeting WFD environmental objectives by 2015 if no action is taken
- There is a high degree of uncertainty in the first river basin planning cycle

Dealing with uncertainty – especially in the first planning cycle

Uncertainty must be built in to the planning process and resolved as knowledge increases. Uncertainties include:

- the definition of ‘good ecological status’
- current status of some water bodies
- source apportionment of different pressures on water bodies
- effectiveness of new measures

Lack of certainty is not a reason to do nothing!

Modern Regulation

The WFD requires consideration of social and economic factors, including cost-effective analysis

- when setting environmental objectives
- in designing programmes of measures

Balance between the social, environmental and economic consequences

Identifying Programmes of Measures

What is a measure?

- Any mechanism that can be used to help achieve WFD objectives (legislation, economic instruments, codes of good practice, negotiated agreements, educational projects)

Measures can be applied at national, regional or local scale.

They can be applied anywhere, not just in water bodies.

An example: Catchment Sensitive Farming Initiative in England

- 40 priority catchments identified, based on WFD Art. 5 analysis & other domestic priorities e.g. biodiversity
- Establishes network of Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers
- Targeted programme of advice to farmers, including 1:1 visits
- Enhanced take up of agri-environment schemes (CAP pillar 2)
- Capital grants scheme to help meet WFD objectives (e.g. livestock fencing, pasture pumps, sediment traps)

Benefits of the Water Framework Directive

- Improved water quality
- Better integration of surface/groundwater and quality/quantity issues
- Joined up management of water with other policy sectors that have an impact on the water environment
- Proportionate, cost-effective measures to tackle pollution
- Greater involvement of stakeholders through public information and participation

