



European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law

River Development Planning



Introduction

Many rivers and streams in Europe are far away from the good water status that they should have reached already in 2015 under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD). Experience in some countries has shown that the WFD system of river basin management plans and programmes of measures that should remedy this situation needs to be supplemented by more concrete and action oriented planning at sub-basin and catchment level. An IMPEL project was therefore started to prepare useful [guidance](#) for river (or catchment) development planning by water authorities or other competent organisations.

The [guideline](#) gives recommendations and shows good practice examples from participant states how to plan and implement relevant measures in collaboration with stakeholders, NGOs and the general public. The report outlines the objectives and structure of the project, the results of the survey, the evolution of the RDP guideline, and the issues and results of discussion.

TARGET GROUP

- Water authorities
- Other competent organisations
- Environmental NGOs
- Other stakeholders

EU LEGISLATION

- List with hyperlink
- Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)
- Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)
- Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)
- Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)

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Content

Under Article 4(1)(a) of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC, “WFD”), Member States have to implement the necessary measures to prevent deterioration of the status of all bodies of surface water, and to protect, enhance and restore all bodies of surface water with the aim of achieving good surface water status – signifying good ecological as well as chemical status - at the latest 15 years after the date of entry into force of this Directive. The aim of good water status should thus have been reached in December 2015. However, all EU Member States are still far behind schedule, especially those countries in Central and North West Europe that are densely populated and dominated by industry and/or intensive agriculture. Here rivers, streams and lakes suffer from pollution by wastewater, agricultural fertilizers and pesticides, heavy canalization, obstruction by hydro dam barriers, as well as urban sprawl and ground sealing in the catchment areas.

The WFD has established a system of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) and Programmes of Measures (PoMs) in all Member States to redress the situation. However, it has become apparent that planning at the level of central government and for whole river basins is often not concrete enough and too far away from administrative implementation to achieve effective improvements in the short or medium term. Some countries have therefore initiated policies focusing on smaller geographical areas (“catchments”) and on a collaborative approach involving stakeholders, environmental NGOs and the general public.

As a European network of administrative practitioners, IMPEL has taken up this idea with a view to exchanging experiences and researching best practices in the member countries, so that practical recommendations can be given on development planning for especially small rivers and their catchment areas, and on the effective implementation of such plans.

The [guideline](#) at hand aims to help water authorities with the planning and implementing of development measures for smaller rivers and catchment areas in their jurisdiction which are not in a “good” condition, especially by providing a structure and knowledge-based recommendations and showing best practices and useful tools to achieve this task.

LINKS

- [Guideline](#)
- [Water and Land Expert Team](#)
- [River Development Planning projects](#)

KEY WORDS

- Water Framework Directive
- Pollution of surface waters
- Small rivers and catchment areas
- Guideline