



Topic 4

The EU Water Framework Directive and Groundwater Daughter Directive: are these just rigid frameworks or do they provide effective incentives to develop groundwater management tools?

The Water Framework Directive 2000/60/CE (WFD) requires member states to protect, enhance and restore waters with the ultimate objective of achieving good status for both surface and groundwater bodies. For these latest, the good status concerns quantitative aspects as well as chemical aspects. If the “good quantitative status” is well defined in the WFD, the definition of “good chemical status” which is relatively complex, need further investigations after the publication of the WFD and a specific daughter directive. This daughter directive was published in December 2006 (2006/118/CE). This text sets criteria for assessing groundwater chemical status and gives specifications for the identification of significant and sustained upward trends. The implementation of the GWD also requires member states to take measures to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater.

With the reporting of the 1st River Basin Management Plans on the 22nd of March 2010, the WFD entered a new cycle. Along the last ten years, Member States have done efforts to characterise groundwater bodies, to monitor their chemical and quantitative status and to set cost effective measures to protect and restore groundwater in poor status.

The WFD is an iterative process where improvements are possible at each reporting period. Therefore the preparation of the 2nd River Basin Management Plans (to be reported in 2015) require to think about lessons learnt from the last 10 years.

Since the publication of the WFD and of the groundwater directive, there is also a strong need of broadening the fields covered by directives by integrating recent related legal texts or any other topics which requires a better protection of groundwater (e.g. climate change, emerging pollutants, etc...).

In this session, contributions are particularly expected in the following issues.

1. Lessons learnt from the previous WFD reporting: characterising groundwater bodies including the links between human activities and the status of groundwater bodies; monitoring groundwater bodies; assessing groundwater chemical and quantitative status; implementing an efficient programme of measures and assessing its efficiency. What are the difficulties met? How improving the relevancy of the information required by the WFD? Are the approaches and the methodology set by member States and recommended by the Commission sufficient? How can they be improved?
2. The development of tools facilitating the management of groundwater bodies at different scales (local, district, national, European): databases facilitating the reporting to

the Commission reporting tool WISE (Water Information System for Europe), GIS and databases supporting communication at the local level, etc...

3. What are future challenges for groundwater protection in Europe which are not covered yet by the WFD or by the groundwater directive? Experiences and views about the links between the WFD/GWD and other pieces of legislation are welcomed (e.g. measures taken to fight against climate change effects as geological CO₂ storage, the use of aquifers thermal energy; Soil protection; Agricultural policy, industries, etc...)
4. Share of experiences with non EU countries: lessons learnt and recommendations from countries which have applied some of the WFD concepts; successful approaches to implement a legal framework aiming at protecting groundwater in non EU countries.

Experiences at the groundwater body level or at the regional level are particularly encouraged.