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Just some of the features in this issue – and more ...

WELCOME to this Autumn issue of our Newsletter.

During 2006 the WFD UKTAG (the UK Technical Advisory Group), sought stakeholders' comments on the scientific principles underpinning the WFD environmental standards and conditions and, in September, published the final report 'UK Environmental Standards and Conditions (SR1-2006)'. Currently UK administrations are considering the issues for the government consultation on the standards.

We are, therefore, delighted that Jean Erbacher, the UKTAG Coordinator, has agreed to contribute to this Issue, which is focussing on the WFD Good Status for surface waters. Jean wrote the key article and also provided other information and references for the Key Resources and Projects sections

On page 4, Neil Tytler, WFDIC Manager, reports on meetings, presentations and other activities undertaken by the Information Centre during the last quarter.

For other relevant information about the WFD from the regulators, the water industry, NGOs and others please visit 'Latest News' on our website: (<http://www.euwfd.com>).

If you would like further information about any of the items in this Newsletter then please contact us (see details on the last page).

The Editor

WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE GOOD STATUS

EXPLAINING UK ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS FOR SURFACE WATERS

THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE requires us to protect the ecological status of water bodies from deterioration and, where necessary and practicable, restore water bodies to *good ecological status*.



Jean Erbacher UKTAG Coordinator

To work out what needs to be done to achieve these objectives, we have to identify environmental standards and conditions that support healthy aquatic plant and animal communities.

CLASSIFICATION

Classification is a way of reporting the state of the environment. If done properly it shows where the environment is of good quality and where it is worse than required. Classification provides a way of comparing waters and looking at changes over time.

Classification schemes are being developed by environment agencies across the UK for the WFD. Surface

water bodies will be assigned to one of the five ecological status classes - *High; Good; Moderate; Poor; or Bad*.

The elements relevant in assessing ecological status and ecological potential for surface waters are:

- **Biological quality elements** (covering algae, plants, fish and invertebrates).
- **General physico-chemical conditions** supporting the biology.

- **Environmental Quality Standards (EQSs)** for specific pollutants (i.e. synthetic and non-synthetic pollutants).
- **Hydromorphological conditions** (i.e. hydrology, water resources and morphology).

To classify water bodies, we need to monitor and assess the health of their plants and animals using our new methods of biological assessment. The biology which will be monitored, as described in the Directive under Annex V, is summarised in the table below. The agencies are defining their monitoring networks so data is collected in 2007. These will be designed to manage local circumstances e.g. pressures on the water body.

Rivers and Lakes	Transitional	Coastal
phytoplankton*	phytoplankton	phytoplankton
macrophytes & phytobenthos	macroalgae	macroalgae & angiosperms
benthic invertebrate fauna	angiosperms	benthic invertebrate fauna
fish	fish	

* Phytoplankton is not required to be assessed in deep and/or flowing rivers (as identified under CIS guidance).

WFD 'GOOD STATUS' story continues on page 2

ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS

For all water bodies, the achievement of relevant environmental standards will be taken into account, along with the results of biological monitoring, in deciding the status class. For example, if a water quality standard identified for Good Status is not met, the water body will be Moderate or worse. For a water body to be High Status, it must meet all the environmental standards and conditions associated with High Status – water quality, water flow, water levels, and morphology.

To establish the standards, the UK environment and conservation agencies, under the guidance of the UK Technical Advisory Group (UKTAG), have reviewed existing environmental standards.

This included international comparisons, checking relevant work under the European intercalibration exercise, scientific peer review and publication of the technical stakeholder review for UK stakeholders.

The first report was published in 2006 and covered:

- Water quality for rivers, lakes and transitional and coastal waters.
- Water flow for rivers.
- Water levels for rivers and lakes.
- Morphology, i.e. systems for assessing the physical structure and condition of the beds and banks of rivers.

In 2006 –2007 work is proceeding on:

- Specific pollutants (Annex VIII substances).
- Groundwater standards and classification reports.
- Other standards for surface waters (e.g. temperature, phosphorus for lakes, etc).

UKTAG aim to release these reports for comments early 2007.

ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES

Future river basin district plans will need to set objectives for the status class each water body should achieve. The Directive includes the following default objectives:

- Preventing deterioration of the status of all surface water and groundwater bodies.
- Protecting, enhancing and restoring all bodies of surface water and groundwater with the aim of achieving good surface water and groundwater status by 2015.

Although the emphasis is on striving to attain Good Ecological Status, the Directive also allows alternative objectives to be set where Good Status is technically infeasible or disproportionately expensive to achieve. Therefore, agencies will use the standards to estimate the conditions and status class that must be achieved, including where we may need an alternative objective for those water bodies that cannot feasibly achieve the Good Status objective. Any alternative objectives will need to be justified on the basis of a full socio-economic impact and feasibility assessment.

LATEST NEWS



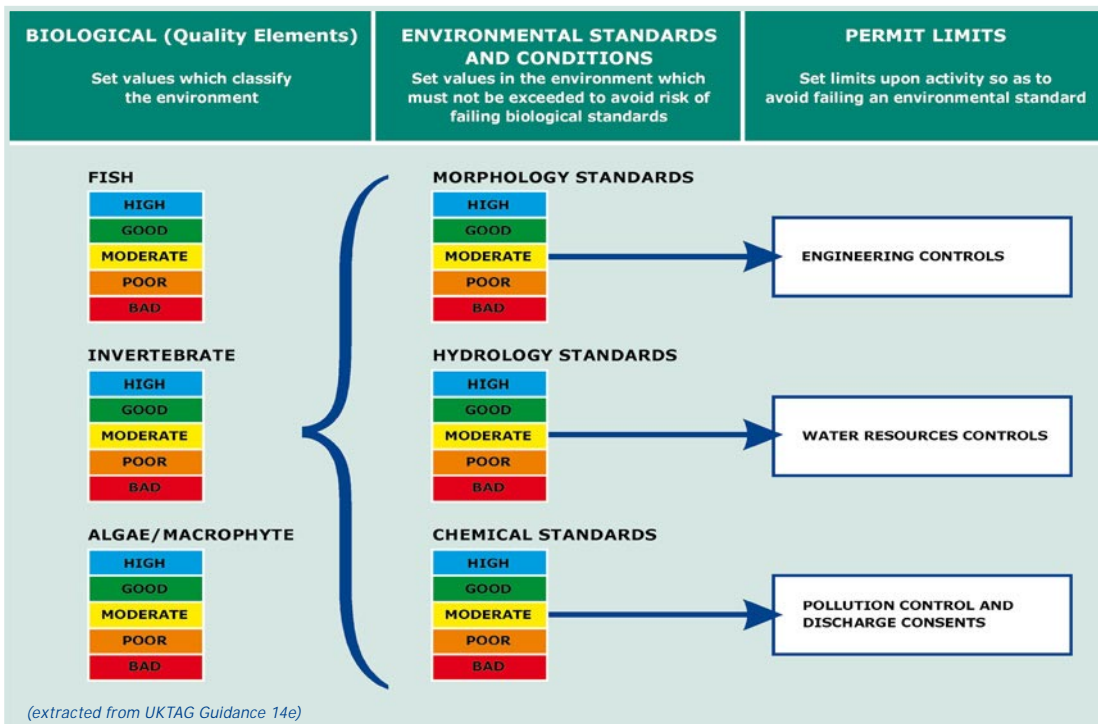
On 18 October 2006 the Scottish Executive released two documents to support implementation of the WFD in Scotland:

A Consultation on 'Proposals for environmental standards and conditions – phase 1' and the draft Policy Statement 'Principles for Setting Objectives in the River Basin Management Plan'.

The Executive is consulting simultaneously on the two proposals that cover key components of the river basin management planning process.

Copies of this document can be obtained from the Scottish Executive website at:

(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/Recent>).



Explanation of relationship between biological standards and environmental standards (excluding pollutants) and permit limits for surface waters.

HOW WILL THE STANDARDS BE USED?

The environmental standards will support different activities under river basin management planning, RBMP. This includes:

- Improving our understanding of risk and pressures as reported under the characterisation report (Article V).
- Ensuring permitting regimes are WFD compliant.
- Designing monitoring networks.
- Setting objectives & preparing management plans for each River Basin District.
- Developing guidance, sector plans and other activities to support design of Programme of Measures.

The standards will be used to assess and manage risk to the water environment. The WFD is the first directive to allow an approach that is truly based on risk, and where action can be taken in proportion to what it can achieve and what it will cost.



WFD UK TAG

Water Framework Directive
www.wfduk.org

What is the UK Technical Advisory Group (UKTAG) for WFD?

The UKTAG supports the implementation of the WFD. It is a partnership of experts from the UK environment and conservation agencies. It also includes partners from the Republic of Ireland.

UKTAG was established in 2001 to provide coordinated advice on technical aspects of the implementation of the WFD to UK administrations and agencies.

UKTAG's work includes:

- Developing technical guidance identifying approaches to WFD and meeting European requirements for classification, programme of measures, objective-setting, amongst others.
- Contributing to the development of European common approaches to implementation of the EU WFD (also known as the Common Implementation Strategy, CIS).
- Developing WFD compliant classification systems and environmental standards and conditions for the UK.

UKTAG is presently chaired by the Environment Agency with technical secretariat based in SNIFFER.

For further information contact:
wfduktag@sniffer.org.uk

Environmental Standards and Conditions

Key Resources

European Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) Guidance. WFD CIS Guidance document No 13:

Overall Approach to the Classification of Ecological Status and Ecological Potential. Issued by Working Group 2A (ECOSTAT), 2005:

(http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/guidance_documents&vm=detailed&sb=Title).

WFD: Note from the UK administrations on the development of environmental standards and conditions, Defra, 2006.

This explains the process of developing the environmental standards and conditions that support classification and their adoption:

(<http://www.defra.gov.uk/Environment/water/wfd/classification.htm>).

UKTAG (2006) report UK Environmental Standards And Conditions (Phase 1):

(http://www.wfduk.org/stakeholder_reviews/Standards_Jan_2006/).

UKTAG Guidance Papers:

(http://www.wfduk.org/whats_new/TAG_Guidance/view).

WP 11a(i) Overview of classification schemes in River Basin Planning.

WP 14e Environmental Standards for use in classification and the Programme of Measures for the Water Framework Directive.

WP 13c Draft principles for an objective setting framework for river basin management planning in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.

WP 13e Prevent Deterioration of Status.

Chemical pollution of surface waters and the Water Framework Directive.

A proposal for a new EU Directive to protect surface water from pollution (COM(2006)397 final), setting environmental quality standards for the priority substances which Member States must achieve by 2015, to ensure "good chemical surface water status".

(<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-dangersub/index.htm>).

Proceedings from the CIWEM Conference, WFD—Environmental Standards—Progress and Implementing WFD

June 8th, 2006, London

(http://www.coastms.co.uk/cgi-bin/ftpex/FTPex_conferences.cgi?browse&Outputs%20and%20Reports/WFD%20June%202006).

Projects

The European Intercalibration exercise –

aims to ensure that the boundaries for Good Status given by each country's biological methods are consistent with the Directive's descriptions of Good Status

Intercalibration has involved the development of biological methods across surface water categories. Many of UK national methods and datasets are being tested in different European geographic regions, for instance, the emerging method for assessing diatoms in rivers and lakes and our datasets and methods for macroinvertebrates.

Because of constraints on data, the first European Intercalibration exercise will consider only a limited number of the groups of plants and animals included in the Directive's descriptions of Good Status. It will also consider the effects of only a limited range of environmental conditions. The level of knowledge will improve over future river basin planning cycles.

Further information:

(http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/jrc/jrc_eewai/library).

Emerging biological classification methods.

The classification tools are being developed on a UK wide basis under UKTAG's research programme.

The work is being carried out both 'in house' and by consultants and funded from a number of sources including the environment agencies, SNIFFER, and the Irish North South (SHARE) project, which is INTERREG funded and is being managed jointly between authorities in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The methods for monitoring have been identified so that they can be used in the monitoring programmes from 2007 onwards.

From November 2006, the UKTAG website will provide information on the biological and monitoring methods.

As research reports are ready, they will be released during 2006 and 2007.

REBECCA – Relationships between ecological and chemical status of surface waters.

The objective of the REBECCA EU project is to provide underpinning for one of the key scientific principles on which the WFD is based, i.e. that relationships between the biological state and physical and chemical properties of surface waters are sufficiently well understood to enable the management of catchments and rivers to achieve ecological objectives.

The final conference of the project will take place in Oslo, Norway, on 22 & 23 May 2007.

Newsletters, reports and other information on the project and the final conference are available on the REBECCA website:

(<http://www.environment.fi/syke/rebecca>).



Future Conferences: Water Status Monitoring under the WFD

12-14 March 2007, Le Nouveau Siècle, Lille, France.

There will be a policy session (covering ecological status and chemical monitoring of the CIS of the WFD), a science session and an industry session on science and technology integration into WFD implementation:

(<http://www.wfdlille2007.org/>).

Chemical Analysis of Emerging Pollutants

27–28 November 2006, Mao, Menorca, Spain.

First thematic workshop of the EU project NORMAN

(http://www.norman-network.net/index_php.php?module=public/workshops/workshopss&menu2=public/workshops/workshops).

News from the Information Centre

AN UPDATE on the work of the Information Centre

THE PERIOD FROM JULY was just as exciting and as busy as earlier in the year. We had a stand at the Royal Berkshire Show at Newbury in September where the Sunday was the better of the two days because of the improved weather.

Though an agriculture show, environment appeared to be very popular with the public, based on the people who came onto our stand. Considerable interest was shown about the whole water environment and, from the amount of our literature taken by children to help them with their assignments, it appears that many schools include it in their curriculum.



Neil Tytler

The half - day Ribble Forum brought together a variety of speakers on a range of issues relating to the rivers and canals of the Ribble catchment.

We are starting to plan which events we shall support in the future and we have already agreed to be at the Environment Agency's Environmental Futures 06 conference and exhibition in November at Westminster, the Futures 2006 WFD – Skills and Training Needs conference in April at Birmingham, and the Inland Waterways Association National Festival & Boat Show in August at St. Ives. If you are attending any of these events, please come onto our stand and introduce yourself.

Work on expanding the website continues. The current focus is on highlighting how the WFD is being implemented by the devolved governments of the UK. In addition, now that we are in a period of rapid developments relating to the implementation of the WFD, it is important that the Centre provides the information on the progress in an accurate, clear and understandable form.

Finally, we are pleased that the first meeting of our Information Centre's Advisory Group was held last August. Representatives on this group include the Environment Agency, SEPA, Scottish Executive, Scottish Water, and Thames Water. Their advice and support is invaluable in developing the Centre's work programme. The next meeting is scheduled for December in Edinburgh.

Neil Tytler, Manager WFDIC

The Information Centre also had stands at the Ribble Forum at Preston in September and at the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's (SEPA's) conference and exhibition in October (see above right).



SNIFFER, Scottish & Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research, which supports a number of WFD - related research projects, was one of the exhibitors. Trevor Elliott and Emily Postan with a visitor.

State of Scotland's Enforcement Conference

Change tomorrow today

2 October 2006, Edinburgh

This SEPA's conference and exhibition were well attended by over 300 people from throughout the UK working in the environment sector, and 33 exhibitors.

The seminar was the launch of SEPA's 2006 State of Scotland's Environment report

(<http://www.sepa.org.uk/changetomorrowtoday/report/index.html>).

The report found that though the Scottish environment is generally of good quality there are still some problem areas, the most significant being climate change and its impacts on Scotland's environment, economy and people.

We are pleased that our stand generated a lot of interest in our work and it was difficult at times to speak to everyone. Of those who did leave their details universities were the most numerous.



Stuart Brook from the Scottish Wildlife Trust shares his interest in WFD implementation with Neil Tytler at the WFDIC stand (Photo by Murdoch Ferguson).

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