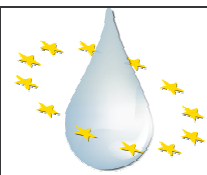


**Common Implementation Strategy  
for the Water Framework Directive  
“Work Programme 2007/2009”**



**Draft mandate for the continuation of the activity on  
“Water Framework Directive and Agriculture”**

**i. Introduction**

In 2005-2006, the EU strategic steering group (SSG) has mainly focused its activity on identifying the gaps between WFD requirements and what the existing CAP may deliver.

Options were also explored to bridge these gaps with the detailed assessment of rural development programmes opportunities, the question of cross-compliance standards and the importance of water pricing.

The level of analysis possible in the first round was limited as it was in advance of the river basin management plans and their associated programmes of measures (that must be drafted by 2008 and adopted by 2009). Few practical case studies were therefore available and part of this work remains theoretical. Furthermore, key questions still need to be addressed for 2007-09 (see the synthesis report of the 2005-06 activity of the SSG on "WFD and Agriculture").

In support to the SSG, nine Pilot River Basins jointly conducted a dedicated exercise on WFD related to agriculture pressures and impact. This PRB-Agriculture exercise, however, also indicated that linkages to integrated river basin management plans and rural development plans and their implementation remain largely theoretical and urgently need to be dealt with in depth.

Prospective questions, such as the impacts of new technologies, were also poorly addressed. In addition, regarding the recent developments of the issue of Water scarcity and droughts, a specific focus will be given on the way to address this question through agricultural measures.

With regard to the role of water management within the future Rural Development Programmes (2007-13), there is a need to continue the future development of rural areas considering demographic changes and changes in production caused by further reduction of direct payments, as well as other political development (e.g. energy policy) and climate change and the related interference with water management needs. The question of how these developments will affect water management in the future should be additionally addressed.

In 2007, the need for the evolution of current cross-compliance standards will be also assessed. This may be an opportunity to improve the analysis on water related issues.

Specific focus will be given on compilation of alternative ideas, measures and solutions and their impacts in a catalogue, as a broad collection of experiences and knowledge is lacking. The catalogue will include direct effects as well as possible secondary effects.

The need for and the added-value of enhanced dialogue and co-operation at all levels and scales between the "water" and the "agriculture" communities were also largely recognised.

Due to its balanced composition between the water and agriculture interests, the SSG is an interesting platform for such a dialogue at the EU level, while associated PRBs can provide experience at local scales.

Therefore, in Salzburg (1-2 June 2006), the MS Water Directors agreed on the continuation of the activity for 2007-09.

## **ii. Objectives and key subjects**

The activity should be targeted to the Member States authorities, the Commission and interest groups, including farmers, water services operators and environmental organisations who are dealing with the WFD and the CAP. The aim is to produce useful advice and to propose measures and best practices that can foster the common understanding and the integration of WFD and CAP policies throughout the EU.

In particular, the continuation of the exchange of information, in order to identify best practice or "success stories" will be more needed in this period where the first river basin management plans will be drafted.

Therefore, the objectives for the continuation of the activity will be:

- to support exchange of information on the forthcoming programmes of measures regarding quantitative and qualitative agricultural pressures on waters, with continued technical support from the PRB-Agriculture.
- to support exchange of information and views about some prospective issues,
- to provide feedbacks to DG AGRI and DG ENV for enhanced inter-linkages between the EU CAP and water policy.

### Exchange of information on the WFD programmes of measures

Some of the key questions emerging from the 2005-06 activity, which need further attention, are:

- How are the co-operation and exchange of information between the competent authorities for the relevant policies and stakeholders be organised at different levels in order that they make full use of their potential to support each other's objectives?
- What are the technical measures selected by the MS?
- What are the territorial targets and which are the criteria for their selection?
- What is the importance given to "non-material" or supportive measures (advisory and training systems, demonstration, education...)?
- What are the policy instruments used to support those measures (regulations, voluntary approaches...)?
- How can the effectiveness of the measures assessed?

- What are the expected costs and benefits of those measures?
- What are the sources of funding?
- How can WFD provisions be used for incentive water pricing and the polluter-pays principle used by the MS for agriculture?
- How far are WFD exemptions for the agriculture sector used? With which kind of justification?

Information from the PRBs and some LIFE projects (like TOPPS) may also complement the analysis.

#### Exchange of information and views about some prospective issues

A first list of issues that may be considered in more depth are as follows:

- Importance, impacts and condition of development of new farming systems (e.g. organic farming, integrated farming systems, expected improvements for new techniques and technologies, including irrigation techniques),
- Interaction of new policy development affecting rural areas with water management (e.g. development of bio-fuels)
- Exchange of information on scenarios developed by MS on the impact of new CAP on water resources

#### Enhanced inter-linkages between the EU CAP and water policy

##### ***Exchange of information on the Rural Development Programmes***

The exchange will be organised on the following questions:

- What is the importance given to WFD objectives within Rural Development Programmes (budget per axis...)?
- What are the expected measures and possible territorial priorities in order to address WFD issues?
- What impacts and follow-up indicators have been selected in order to estimate the effectiveness of the measures in achieving WFD objectives, and how can they be implemented?
- How are the different evaluations organised that are required within the framework of the rural development funds: environmental evaluation, 2000-2006 ex-post evaluation, 2007-2013 ex-ante evaluation? What are the main results? How are they taken into account?

This list is non-exhaustive and shall be reviewed at the time of the working group starting.

##### ***Specification of Article 38 of Rural Development Regulation*** (payments for WFD mandatory measures)

In order to support DG AGRI drafting the specific guidelines for this article and to make best use of this article, an agreement has to be reached between the water and the agriculture sectors on the general direction of the implementing rules. The SSG could develop a proposal for the future design of article 38.

##### ***Exchange of information on farm advisory systems (FAS)***

The implementation of cross-compliance standards can benefit from targeted advice to farmers on relevant environmental standards. At the same time, a key approach for achieving high environmental management standards (beyond cross-compliance) on farms with regard to nutrient management and water use is the availability of good technical advice to farmers on these issues.

The benefit from such advice depends on the approach to advice provision and available advisory tools as they influence the uptake and understanding of environmental management options by farmers. An exchange of information on good practice between Member States with regard to farm advice on water-related management standards would therefore be beneficial. Pilot River basins could help setting and testing local references.

Furthermore, exploiting results from the CIFAS study (study on environmental Cross-compliance Indicators in the context of the Farm Advisory System<sup>1</sup>) would be a good starting point for facilitating such an exchange. CIFAS results and specific experiences in Member States could be used to organise a seminar on farm advisory tools and approaches with a focus on water-related management standards.

### ***SSG acting as an informal forum for the cross-compliance question and the CAP "health check"***

The necessity for the evolution of existing cross-compliance standards will be assessed in 2007. In 2008, the CAP "health check" will assess the need for further evolution. The SSG may act as an informal forum to feed the debate on water-related issues (collection and share of information and data, discussions on the propositions that will be made).

### **iii. Organisation**

The activity will be organised like in 2005-06. The SSG should co-ordinate several parallel work streams and report work progress directly to the Strategic Coordination Group and the Water Directors.

The activity will be lead by UK (DEFRA), FR (Water Direction) and the EC (DG ENV with the support of DG AGRI).

### **iv. Expected outcomes and deliverables**

The exchange of information and views on the content of the programmes of measures, the rural development programmes, the farm advisory systems and on prospective issues will be carried out in specific workshops, involving the SSG members, PRBs as well as relevant other experts. For each event, a workshop

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<sup>1</sup> The CIFAS study is a two-year project of the European Commission that is carried out by the EEA under the supervision and the guidance of a steering group led by DG AGRI and including representatives from DG ENV and JRC. The study is meant to help the building and functioning of the farm advisory systems, which Member States have to set up by 1 January 2007 in relation to cross-compliance. Specific objectives are to contribute to the development of suitable farm advisory tools related to cross-compliance requirements in the area of the environment and to facilitate an exchange of information and experiences among Member States concerning farm advisory systems and tools.

summary report will be written, highlighting the main findings and the main conclusions and presented for information to the SCG and the Water Directors.

Additional concrete outcomes of these workshops will be:

- A catalogue of the potential measures for the farming sector
- A report on the use of exemptions for the agricultural sector (to which extent, with which kinds of justification)- A report on prospective issues.

For RDR Article 38, the SSG will draft a proposal for the implementing rules.

Ad' hoc meetings and written contributions of the SSG will be organised when its feedback will be required by DG AGRI and DG ENV for the specification of the rules of RDR Article 38, the assessment of the need of further evolution of cross-compliance standards or on the question of the CAP "health check".

A final activity report will be also written to inform the SCG and the Water Directors.

#### v. Contact person/s

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#### vi. Timetable

At least, one workshop should be organised per year. In line with the timeframe of the WS&D activity, a first focus on quantitative measures will be implemented by 2007. The proposal for article 38 specific rules is expected by mid 2008.

The discussions on cross-compliance in 2007 and CAP "health check" in 2008, will follow the time-frame indicated by DG AGRI, so that to be in line with the general schedule of the evaluation and inform the general process.

A yearly management phase will be organised by the leaders to identify the available resources opportunities to support this activity (relevant workshops, events, studies and research projects that are already planned) and to specify an (multi) annual work programme.

Time Actions	2007				2008				2009			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Management phase	X				X				X			
Seminar on FAS	X											
Workshop 1 (W1)			X									
Workshop 2 (W2)						X						
Workshop 3 on prospective issues (W3)											X	
Meeting on cross-compliance	X											

<b>Deliverables</b>												
Seminar on FAS		<b>X</b>										
W 1 summary report				<b>X</b>								
W 2 summary report							<b>X</b>					
W 3 summary report												<b>x</b>
First catalogue of the potential measures				<b>X</b>								
Proposal for RDR art 38 implementing rules							<b>X</b>					
Final activity report												<b>X</b>