

# **COMMON IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY**

## **EU WATER LAW**



### **Work Programme 2022-2024**

**As agreed by Water Directors at their meeting on 23 November 2021**

## Introduction

The Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) for the Water Framework Directive (WFD)<sup>1</sup> was launched in 2001, to work towards a successful implementation of the core legislation on water at EU level and in associated countries<sup>2</sup>. In the meantime, implementation of the Floods, Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) and Groundwater Directives became closely tied in with that of the WFD, and coordination with the implementation of other water-related Directives (Urban Waste Water, Drinking Water, Bathing Water<sup>3</sup>, Nitrates, Marine Strategy Framework and Nature Directives) is gradually improving.

This 2022-2024 CIS Work Programme has been drafted following discussion in the meetings of Water Directors, the Strategic Coordination Group and the existing CIS Working Groups and Ad Hoc Task Groups.

The European Green Deal<sup>4</sup>, adopted by the European Commission in December 2019 and endorsed at EU level, as well as the wider EU agenda for public health, offer a unique opportunity to influence the success of water policy in Europe and accelerate the implementation of EU water law thanks to the integration of both water quality and water quantity considerations into all relevant EU policies. The CIS structure, reinforced to better accommodate the enhanced cross-sectoral approach of the European Green Deal, offers the necessary framework to address the challenges water management is confronted with today (*see Annex I graphic overview of Green Deal ambitions and their links to the CIS and other relevant fora*).

Indeed, in particular, the *Farm to Fork Strategy*<sup>5</sup> sets targets on the reduction of nutrient losses, in the use and risk of chemical pesticides, in the sales of antimicrobials and an increase in the area of organic agriculture which, if well implemented, will significantly contribute to reduce pressures coming from certain polluting farming practices. It also promotes effective farm advisory systems and aims to ensure that the transition is supported by a Common Agricultural Policy which focuses on the European Green Deal overarching goals. The *Biodiversity Strategy for 2030*<sup>6</sup> calls for significantly greater emphasis on nature protection and restoration, including of the aquatic and marine environment. The *new Circular Economy Action Plan*<sup>7</sup> puts emphasis on a number of highly water-relevant sectors (textiles, food, plastics, etc), promotes water reuse and efficiency, including in industry, and refers to water reuse and circularity in urban waste water treatment. It also announced the development of an Integrated Nutrient Management Action Plan. The *Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability*<sup>8</sup> includes actions on hazardous chemicals and mixtures, on PFAS and on the reattribution of technical and scientific work to the EU Agencies and the streamlining the flow of chemical data between EU and national authorities. Furthermore, the *Pharmaceutical Strategy*<sup>9</sup>, along

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<sup>1</sup> Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000, establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22/12/2000, p. 1) as amended by European Parliament and Council Decision 2455/2001/EC (OJ L 331, 15/12/2001, p.1)

<sup>2</sup> Representatives of EEA/EFTA countries are associated with the EU Water Directors meetings and the Common Implementation Strategy.

<sup>3</sup> The Directives on Urban Waste Water, Drinking and Bathing Water are often referred to as the group of “Water Industry Directives”.

<sup>4</sup> COM(2019)640 final

<sup>5</sup> COM(2020)381 final

<sup>6</sup> COM(2020)380 final

<sup>7</sup> COM(2020)98 final

<sup>8</sup> COM(2020)667 final

<sup>9</sup> COM(2020)761 final

with the earlier Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment<sup>10</sup>, will lead to stricter standards on environmental impact of pharmaceuticals both in the EU and abroad. The *Renovation Wave*, aims at promoting more efficient and circular buildings. The *Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy*<sup>11</sup> promotes zero emission road, air and water transport. The *new Climate Adaptation Strategy*<sup>12</sup> aims to steer the EU to a climate resilient society by 2050, where managing water quantity will be a key instrument. The *Zero Pollution Action Plan for water, air and soil*<sup>13</sup> underlines the key challenges to eliminate pollution as a pressure on our water bodies and lays out a programme of actions to reduce pollution pressure.

The 2022-2024 period covered by this Work Programme will be particularly strategic, from a EU water policy perspective, because:

- a) an assessment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> River Basin Management Plans and 2<sup>nd</sup> Flood Risk Management Plans will be carried out;
- b) in 2023 both the new Drinking Water Directive and the new Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse will come in application;
- c) in 2022 and then in 2024 the first Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook Reports will be adopted, which will have to be underpinned by the corresponding Freshwater components;
- d) various pieces of EU law relevant to water will be evaluated and/or modernised (including the lists of Surface and Groundwater pollutants, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Industrial Emissions Directive, the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and the Bathing Water Directive);
- e) The Nature Restoration Law, including targets relevant for freshwater, is expected to be adopted.
- f) Implementation of the ‘one substance, one assessment’ approach of the Chemicals Strategy, such as reattribution of scientific and technical work to the EU Agencies and streamlining the flow of chemical data between EU and national authorities.

The CIS Work Programme 2022-2024 will kick in shortly after the first high-level segment of the CoP15 of the Biodiversity Convention. Sound water management is a key component in efforts to protect and restore biodiversity in Europe and worldwide. The goals and targets which will be agreed at the CoP in Kunming are expected to further underline the need to restore, preserve and better protect water resources as a basic ingredient to support life on Earth. .

It is thus crucial for the CIS work to stay focused on activities that are consistent with and supportive of all these important developments, embedded in the overall context of the European Green Deal.

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<sup>10</sup> COM(2019)128 final

<sup>11</sup> COM(2020)789 final

<sup>12</sup> COM(2021) 82 final

<sup>13</sup> Reference to be added after adoption

## 1. Objectives of the CIS Work Programme 2022-2024

As regards the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the EU is entering a crucial period. In 2027, it will no longer be possible to invoke the most applied exemptions for water bodies not in good status (those under article 4(4) WFD), unless in relation to natural conditions.

Back in 2019, the 5<sup>th</sup> Implementation Report of the WFD and the FD showed that, at the last count, less than 50% of water bodies were in good status and that exemptions were still being invoked in very high numbers. The main objective of this 2022-2024 CIS Work programme is to accompany, support and enable a much enhanced implementation of water legislation.

In line with the conclusions of the 2019 Fitness Check of EU water law, the work in the CIS will have to address its main findings in light of the more holistic approach entailed by the European Green Deal and related initiatives, with a view to achieve, in the most effective manner, the key objectives of EU Water policy, namely the areas of:

- Investments, valuation, incentives and pricing
- Implementation and compliance
- Integration with other policy areas (agriculture, energy, transport etc.)
- Chemical pollution (including substances of emerging concern)
- Administrative streamlining, monitoring and digitalisation

Furthermore, the work in the CIS will address new challenges in water management. Notably, climate change is expected to worsen the impacts of already existing stresses on water. Increasing frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, increasing water scarcity, as well as impacts on water quality, require enhanced efforts through policy, research and innovation, knowledge generation and capacity building. In line also with the relevant findings of the Fitness Check of EU water law, the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, adopted on 24 February 2021, sets the framework for the priority adaptation actions to be taken at EU level across sectors in the coming years in order to foster and support systematic efforts at local, regional, national and cross-border level. Jointly with the on-going reviews of the Urban Waste Water Treatment and Industrial Emissions Directives, as well as the entry into application of the new Drinking Water Directive and the Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse, this Strategy helps revamping efforts on water quantity management and water efficiency, with measures aiming at improving the planning coordination across sectors, promoting effective nature-based solutions, reducing climate-related risk and ensuring the availability and sustainability of fresh water.

The Recovery and Resilience Facility and the current Multi-Annual Financial Framework offer opportunities for funding water related investments, taking into account adaptation needs. It is essential to ensure that relevant water related investments included in Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans and Operational Programmes under ESIF are implemented to achieve WFD objectives, applying at the same time the Do No Significant Harm principle.

Furthermore, as the River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans are key instruments for water management in the EU, they are highly relevant to the

implementation of the commitments taken in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, of SDG6 and SDG13.

Building on the European Green Deal and its many deliverables directly relevant to water policy implementation, there is ample scope for the CIS to continue on the path of further exchanges of best practice. Reaching out to relevant networks in other policy areas will be key, thereby clearly reflecting the enhanced cross-sectoral approach of the European Green Deal. To best address the new challenges faced, in particular also due to the impacts of climate change, water reuse, water quantity management and water efficiency, as well as the economic and investment angle call for more visible and intensified work. New guidance may be needed in some areas, but it is clear that most ground has already been covered in the previous years of implementation. The focus should thus be put on securing greater public awareness, in a manner conducive to actions at both EU and national/local level, to put in place concrete measures (ranging from urban greening to incentivising water efficiency in buildings, from rain-water harvesting to enhanced flood protection via nature based solutions, to mention just a few) planned under the RBMPs and the FRMPs and/or otherwise required to achieve the EU's Green Deal objectives.

## 2. Overall structure and working methods

### 2.1. Overall structure

This CIS Work Programme is, as the previous ones, based on a three-layer organisation, with Water Directors meetings, the Strategic Coordination Group and the different Working Groups. The Strategic Coordination Group will also have specific activities assigned to it, for the implementation of which it can give a mandate to Ad-hoc Task Groups as needed.

The organisation of the CIS work will continue this well-established structure but remain flexible to be able to accommodate policy developments between CIS Work Programme periods or even within. Details of the structure are described in Annex I.

#### *Working Groups and Ad hoc Task Groups*

The consensus among Water Directors and within the Strategic Coordination Group was that the **existing CIS Working Groups (Floods, Chemicals, Ecological Status, Groundwater, Data and Information Sharing)** should continue to work for the next three years.

Given that the new Regulation on Minimum Requirements for **Water Reuse** entered into force and requires a number of tools to be developed to support its correct application, [it was decided] to transform the Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse that was in place in the 2019-2021 Work Programme into a permanent Working Group to support the implementation of the new Regulation and meet the EU's water reuse policy commitments.

There was also consensus among Water Directors and in the Strategic Coordination Group concerning the need to continue the work on **economic issues** linked to the WFD and, in particular, on the improved implementation of Art. 9 of the Directive (cost recovery, polluter-pays-principle, adequate incentives for efficient water use and the investments necessary to achieve the objectives on the WFD and the FD). Given the

importance and the need for sustained attention to the issues, it was decided to transform the Ad-hoc Task Group into a **Working Group Economics**.

Concerning the emerging need for an enhanced focus on water quantity management, water efficiency and in particular water scarcity and droughts, also in light of climate change adaptation, Water Directors and the Strategic Coordination Group discussed how to best accommodate the need for enhanced exchanges within the existing CIS structures. While several relevant issues can be integrated into the work of existing Working Groups, it was also noted that a **new Ad hoc Task Group on Water Scarcity and Droughts** could best deal with a number of emerging issues. A detailed listing of possible actions in this area is included in Annex II.

#### *Exchange platform for integration and outreach*

Taking into account the findings of the Fitness Check of EU water law in the area of integration, as well as the new approach to sectoral integration of the European Green Deal, it needs to be ensured that the CIS structures are actively seeking dialogue and cooperation with corresponding structures of key sectors/policies (agriculture, energy, navigation, industry, biodiversity, climate adaptation and disaster risk management etc.).

In addition, the CIS needs to establish links with the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform and the High Level Round Table on Chemicals, the expert group of Member States, EU Agencies and the Commission Services on ‘one substance, one assessment’, the Blue Forum for the marine/freshwater, the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, Nature Directors, Business for Biodiversity Platform, etc. In addition, the CIS should reach out and establish links with existing structures for compliance promotion (IMPEL, Forum on Compliance Assurance and Governance etc.).

The CIS should in that manner function increasingly also as interface for integration of water related policy implementation, both at strategic and expert level. This may take the form of exchange of information, mutual participation in respective meetings, or dedicated workshops/meetings of experts, dedicated to the different objectives of the European Green Deal (Circular Economy, Biodiversity, Zero Pollution etc.) A detailed list of areas and networks is included in the graphic illustration in Annex I.

## **2.2. Tasks for the Strategic Coordination Group**

In addition to its coordination role, the Strategic Coordination Group is assigned a number of tasks that do not fall under the remit of any of the existing Working Groups or that have a less technical and more strategic character. These tasks can be carried out by the Strategic Coordination Group itself (e.g. by organising back-to back workshops together with the meetings of the Group) or be mandated to an Ad-hoc Task Group.

The following tasks have been identified for the Strategic Coordination Group:

1. Exchange on relevant Green Deal initiatives and on potential coherence and synergies with sectoral policies and legislation, such as biodiversity, agriculture, chemicals, digitalisation, research and development and innovation, health, industry, energy, waste water treatment, disaster risk management, climate adaptation and water quantity management, transport and land use planning, and

on challenges linked to those policies, with a view to better mainstreaming sustainable freshwater management.

Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group and via exchange platform for integration and outreach, including targeted meetings.

Timing: 2022-2024

2. Exchange on the conclusions of the assessment of the third River Basin Management Plans and second Flood Risk Management Plans, with a view to improving the implementation, so that the objectives of the Directives can be reached

Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group and, where needed, targeted meetings.

Timing: 2023-2024

3. Exchange of experience on water quantity management, including water scarcity, drought management, water efficiency and relevant climate adaptation actions.

Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group and new Ad Hoc Task Group on Water Scarcity and Droughts

Timing: 2022-2024

4. Exemptions: building on the earlier workshops, further exchanges could be useful on the possible application of exemptions under Art 4 WFD, in particular as regards Art 4(5), less stringent environmental objectives. Concretely, this work could entail an exchange of methodologies and practices applied in Member States, focusing on the situation after 2027, creating a common understanding of exemption options under the WFD.

Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group and where needed, targeted meetings. Development of a best practice document on the application of exemptions.

Timing: 2022-2024

5. Climate change: Exchange of best practices building on the work done under the CIS and in other relevant groups, including the Climate Adaptation Group (cf Annex II)

Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group and where needed, targeted meetings.

Timing: 2022-2024

### **2.3. Working Group on Ecological Status (ECOSTAT)**

#### Tasks

- Task 1: Facilitating the intercalibration of new and updated methods for the classification of Ecological Status, in particular completing the intercalibration of methods for fish in very large rivers
- Task 2: Information exchange on the classification of ecological potential and intercomparison
- Task 3: Continuing the exchanges of information on nutrients and other physio-chemical elements (including links with MSFD) and exchange of information with the Nitrates Expert Group and other relevant working groups
- Task 4: Biodiversity strategy for 2030 target to restore at least 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers: exchange of information and technical support.
- Task 5: Information exchange on e-flows linked to the biodiversity strategy for 2030 target to restore freshwater ecosystems
- Task 6: Classification of status: improving comparability and shared interpretation on hydromorphological quality elements and their role in the classification
- Task 7: Exchange of information to define a common understanding on the definition and assessment of temporary rivers
- Task 8: Exchange of information on sediment
- Task 9: Exchange of information on litter
- Task 10 : Exchange of information on climate change in the assessment of ecological status, in particular with regard to the effects of rising water temperature, salinity and other impacts on ecological quality elements (potential work and deliverables subject to WG Members taking a lead and contributing to this task)

In addition to these tasks, ECOSTAT members and Member State experts may prepare and present discussion papers, propose and organise workshops under the umbrella of ECOSTAT to facilitate information exchange and achieve a common understanding on other relevant themes or issues, e.g. innovative monitoring and assessment methods (e-dna, remote sensing), alien species, best practice on monitoring.

#### Deliverables (timeline)

- CIS guidance / best practice document on sediment management in the context of the WFD (please note that work started during previous work program)

#### Leads

DG Joint Research Centre, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Norway (tbc), DG Environment

### **2.4. Working Group on Chemicals**

#### Tasks

- Work on legal provisions such as the review of the priority substances list and the updating of the surface water watch list of pollutants
- Exchange good practices and facilitate harmonisation of the classification of Chemical Status, i.a. the impact on chemical status of substances behaving like uPBTs (ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic) substances; the presentation of monitoring results (concentrations instead of exceedances; especially for mercury); the non-deterioration principle; the Programmes of Measures
- Facilitate and promote harmonisation of Environmental Quality Standards for River Basin Specific Pollutants and substances considered
- Follow up on Green Deal initiatives' actions related to chemicals in surface water, i.a. Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability, Zero Pollution Action Plan, Farm-to-Fork Strategy, Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment, Pharmaceutical Strategy, etc.
- Exchange experiences with and good practices on micro-plastics, pharmaceuticals, PFAS, and other Contaminants of Emerging Concern; coordinating relevant activities elsewhere in the CIS and with other relevant legislation.
- Exchange good practice on monitoring and monitoring schemes, i.a. of biota; sediment; resistant microorganisms and antimicrobial resistant genes
- Exchange information on techniques and analyses, i.a. on extrapolation and grouping techniques; calculation and application of "equivalently protective" EQS; trend and hotspot analyses; non-target analysis; passive sampling; effect-based methods; characterisation of mixtures and their toxicity; new analytical methods and new monitoring techniques
- Contribute to the updates of the Watchlist surface water, in coordination with UWWTD and DWD expert groups
- Contribute to the implementation of the 'one substance, one assessment' approach and its actions announced in the Strategy.
- Continue the exchange on assessment and reporting of emissions of pollutants (also in light of the Zero Pollution Ambition, amongst others in relation to mercury).
- Exchanging information on general issues relevant to chemicals in surface waters, i.a. the streamlining of reporting of chemical occurrence data including those listed in the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions; the development of statistically robust indicators on water quality (e.g. for the assessment of implementation of Sustainable Development Goals)
- Work together with other topic areas linked to chemicals in surface waters, i.a. other legislation on chemicals (Industrial Emissions Directive, REACH, Pesticide Regulation, etc.); other sectoral policies (Drinking Water Directive, Urban Waste Water Directive, Bathing Water Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, waste legislation); ongoing research projects
- Develop guidelines on the characterisation of groups/mixtures of pollutants and their possible toxicity
- Guideline on sampling frequency for priority substances (provided WG Members willing to lead and contribute)

#### Deliverables (timeline)

- Updated List of Priority Substances 2022

- Updated Surface Water Watch List and reporting on new data collections (2022-2024)

### Leads

DG Environment, DG Joint Research Centre, Italy

## **2.5. Working Group on Groundwater**

### Tasks

- The voluntary Groundwater Watch List process for contaminants of emerging concern (identification via data collection for specific substances or groups of substances, application and improvement of the methodology, Groundwater Watch List, List facilitating the Groundwater Directive Annex I and II review process); consider harmonisation of with Drinking Water Directive Watch list.
- Groundwater monitoring and assessment in the context of climate change.
- Groundwater indicators to show progress towards good status.
- Policy integration between groundwater management and drinking water as well as other relevant EU law.
- Exchanging information on other issues relevant to groundwater management: threshold values for pollutants, links to biodiversity and interaction between groundwater, surface waters and associated ecosystems (e.g. cavern habitats), DWD recast (Art,8, coordination of watch lists) impacts from agriculture and exchanges with the Nitrates Directive expert group, programmes of measures, reporting of groundwater-related information, groundwater measures and impacts of climate change, managed aquifer recharge and research activities.

### Deliverables (timeline)

- Updated Groundwater Watch List and List facilitating the review of Annex I and II of the Groundwater Directive. Reporting on new data collections (2022-2024).
- Groundwater monitoring in the context of climate change workshop (2022), technical report based on the workshop (2022-2023), and proposal to review Guidance Document 24 (2023).
- Groundwater proposed indicators (2022).
- Report on information exchange on DWD Recast art.8, including sharing experiences on ‘safeguard zones delineation’ and coordination of watch lists.
- Ad hoc exchange of information.

### Leads

DG Environment, Austria, Luxembourg

## **2.6. Working Group on Floods**

### Tasks

- Supporting the reporting by Member States, during the third cycle of implementation of the Floods Directive, including the ongoing reporting of Flood Hazard and Risk Maps and Flood Risk Management Plans as of 2022
- Exchanging information on good practices, ongoing projects and research activities and new approaches on flood risk management
- Workshops twice a year on issues related to the implementation of the Floods Directive (precise issues to be defined by the Working Group Floods)
- Exchanging information and providing input to other CIS activities or other EU-level or international activities of relevance to the management of flood risks, such as nature based solutions, cost benefit tools, management of hydromorphological pressures (incl. restoration), pluvial floods, impacts of climate change and climate change adaptation,
- disaster risk reduction and research linked to disaster risk management.

#### Deliverables (timeline)

- If necessary, revised documents on links between the Floods Directive and relevant policy areas, both within the EU water acquis and other EU policy domains
- Information to the Strategic Coordination Group and Water Directors concerning the planned organisation of workshops and/or on specific issues related to the implementation of the Floods Directive
- Reports of the workshops that will be organised on the initiative of the Working Group Floods

#### Leads

DG Environment, Austria, Luxembourg

## **2.7. Working Group on Data and Information Sharing**

#### Tasks

- Ensuring a timely reporting of the third River Basin Management Plans,
- Support for streamlining & digitalisation of water monitoring & reporting with the aim of improve the completeness and timeliness of data increase coherence with other data reporting, better demonstrate improvements of water quality, enhance better (public) access to data and increase the overall consistency and efficiency of the data cycle to reduce the administrative burden. Provided a Member State leads, follow up on the work of the subgroup on indicators from the previous work programme period.
- Contribute to the implementation of the ‘one substance, one assessment’ approach and its actions announced in the Strategy, especially to the initiative to remove legislative obstacles for the re-use of data and better streamline the flow of chemical data between EU and national authorities.
- Ensuring coordination with the reporting done under the Floods Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- Supporting the annual reporting by Member States on the Watch List required by the EQS Directive.
- Supporting the European Environment Agency and the Commission in the development of visualisation tools for the data reported under the WFD and

Floods Directive, with a view to be able to communicate effectively on the progress made in the implementation of the Directives.

- Support where possible the development of statistically robust indicators on water quality and quantity that can be used in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals or others
- Enhance cooperation with WG Chemicals, especially on:
  - The presentation of monitoring results (concentrations instead of exceedances; especially for mercury, but also other pollutants)
  - The impact on chemical status of substances behaving like uPBTs (ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic) substances
- In cooperation with other Working Groups and Ad-hoc Task Groups, improving the comparability of data reported, across River Basin Districts and Member States and from one implementation cycle to the next
- Consider water data needs in relation to both the Zero Pollution Monitoring and the Zero Pollution Outlook Reports to be produced in 2022 and 2024

#### Deliverables (timeline)

- Technical report on comparability of data (2024)

#### Leads

DG Environment, European Environment Agency, Denmark

### **2.8. Working Group on Water Reuse**

#### Tasks

- Provide technical support to the Commission in developing guidance and other deliverables as required by the Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse.
- Provide technical support to the work of the Commission to deliver on the Circular Economy Action plan's commitments, in particular by seeking synergies in other policy areas (e.g. industrial emissions, urban wastewater, climate adaptation).
- Exchange on topics of relevance to the advancement of safe water reuse practices in the EU, in collaboration with the JRC and with the possible involvement of a broader group of experts, including from other CIS Working groups.

#### Deliverables

- Input to a Commission guidance document on the application of the Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse (1Q 2022)
- Input to a delegated act setting out technical specifications on risk management (3Q 2022)
- Input to implementing act(s) on the format and presentation of the information to be reported (3Q 2023)
- Input on the promotion of water reuse in sectors other than agriculture (throughout the work programme)

#### Leads

## **2.9. Working Group on Economics**

### Tasks

- Exchange of views and sharing best practices as regards the economic dimension of the EU water acquis implementation, namely valuation, prioritisation, planning, financing and investing of measures.
- Consider the economic dimension of the implementation of the EU water policy, notably the Water Framework Directive, and the functioning of the water sector, namely the demand for and the provision of water services and uses and their main drivers; the recovery of the financial, environmental and resource costs of water services; the contributions of various users to the costs and the arguments to consider these contributions adequate; the effects of policy-induced incentives including through water pricing policies, in particular as regards the (anticipated) water scarcity; as well as the economic dimension of the functioning of the EU and national water sectors, including national water policies, and the interaction with EU policies and funding instruments affecting the water domain (cf. the implementation of the national Recovery and Resilience Plans, the EU taxonomy for sustainable activities, the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change, other policies, such as agriculture, et cetera).
- Follow relevant studies, publications and activities relevant for the implementation of the EU water acquis, such as
  - Relevant audits by the European Court of Auditors.
  - Development of statistics and indicators relevant for the economic dimension of the EU water acquis implementation, notably the EEA work stream on developing cost recovery and / or water pricing indicators as well as Eurostat work on the environmental-economic accounts, including the water accounts.
  - Discussion on how to apply the concept “Payment for Ecosystem Services” (PES) for water uses and water services.
  - Economic elements of the Biodiversity Strategy, the new CAP, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy and the Zero Pollution Action Plan.
  - Case studies for implementing and assessment of ERC (Environmental and Resource Costs).
  - Experience regarding the assessment of disproportionate costs linked to WFD implementation.

### Deliverables

- The WG is the main recipient of the work the OECD carries out under an agreement with the European Commission’s DG for Environment. This takes the form of a series of five workshops, to be held in 2022. The results and any possible follow up such as policy toolkits (through OECD) should be discussed in the WG.
- Reports on the exchanges of best practices as regards the economic dimension of water policy implementation (both water acquis and beyond), including the use of EU funding instruments.

- Guidance / overview on methodologies for estimating ERC (Environmental and Resource Costs)

## Leads

DG Environment, co-chair tbc

### **2.10. Ad hoc Task Group on Water Scarcity and Droughts**

*The allocation of relevant tasks across CIS structures is still subject to discussion. Annex II provides a full overview of actions linked to the new Climate Adaptation Strategy, including a proposal for allocation to CIS working groups, the proposed ATG and the SCG.*

## Tasks

- Exchange on implementation and enforcement actions concerning abstractions, including contributing to Working Group ECOSTAT task as regards the Biodiversity Strategy's action on ecological flow.
- Provide technical support to promote the wider use of drought management plans, warning systems, including the exchange on activities implemented by the JRC-EDO.
- Provide technical support, exchange information and jointly promote efficient water use regarding policies (eg Common Agricultural Policy) and legislation addressing the water-saving requirements for products, water efficiency measures in other sectors (buildings, energy, agriculture, industry) as well as other drought prevention and management best practices
- Exchange on NBS in water quantity management (together with Working Group Floods).
- Exchange on water allocation mechanisms (together with Working Group Economics)
- Exchange on the relevant indicators, such as WEI+ and potential new EAP8 indicator on drought impacts.
- Exchange on measures regarding sustainable and climate-resilient water management.
- Water scarcity and drought management in terms of RBMP and risk reduction, including the issue of water security.
- Transboundary cooperation on water scarcity and droughts within the EU.

## Deliverables

- Report on drought management policies and an in-depth assessment of drought management plans in the EU (EDORA outcome).
- Drought impact database and drought risk atlas created at the JRC-EDO (EDORA outcome).
- Adaptation measures to droughts in various sectors (EDORA outcome).
- Report on good practices on water allocation mechanism (together with WG Economics)
- Report on WS&D management in terms of RBMP and risk reduction (outcome of a contract on water quantity management)
- CIS Guidance 24 to be updated.

## Leads

DG Environment, JRC-EDO, EEA, Spain, Portugal,

### **2.11. Modification of the CIS Work Programme 2022-2024**

The Commission, the Water Directors, the Strategic Coordination Group, Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups can propose modifications of the CIS Work Programme. Any proposals for modifications will be discussed by the Strategic Coordination Group before forwarding to Water Directors for endorsement.

Changes in the co-leads of each Working Group can also be proposed, if necessary, by the Working Group concerned. Those changes will be presented to the Strategic Coordination Group for endorsement and to the Water Directors for information.

## Annex I – Organisation of the CIS

None of the Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups foreseen in this Work Programme are permanent by nature. However, the scope of the work of the Working Groups is generally wider than is the case for any Ad-hoc Task Groups and it is foreseeable that they will need to continue to work for the whole duration of this Work Programme. As discussed above, this may also turn which case this Work Programme should be revised to convert such Ad-hoc Groups into CIS Working Groups.

The Water Directors will meet, in principle, twice a year. The meetings of Water Directors will be organised by the Member State holding the EU Presidency and co-chaired by the Presidency and the Commission. Water Directors are responsible for deciding on the activities undertaken under the CIS (e.g. modifying the Work Programme if necessary) and for endorsing guidance documents or other documents with a strategic character prepared by one of the CIS Groups, as proposed by the Strategic Coordination Group. In the context of the European Green Deal and its strategies, the Water Directors may also collaborate with their counterparts from other policy areas (agriculture, energy, climate adaptation, transport, nature and biodiversity etc.).

The Strategic Coordination Group will be co-chaired by the Commission and one Member State. In addition to its role in ensuring the coordination among the work done by different Working Groups, the Strategic Coordination Group is also assigned in this Work Programme a number of activities that do not fall under the scope of one of the existing Working Groups. For that purpose, the Strategic Coordination Group can establish Ad-hoc Task Groups, to which it gives a mandate for specific tasks, with identified deliverables and deadlines. The Strategic Coordination Group can also, if and when this may be the best option to pursue an activity, set up workshops, possibly back-to-back with the meetings of the Group, to discuss specific topics. ***The Water Directors and the members of the Strategic Coordination Group are expected to ensure that information exchanged within the CIS process, e.g. guidance documents or Working Group reports, is passed down to all those involved in water management at national, regional or river basin level.*** The Strategic Co-ordination Group may also ensure exchanges and liaison with other relevant fora including new fora created by the European Green Deal initiatives (Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform; High Level Round Table on Chemicals; European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, etc.) as well as networks related to compliance promotion (IMPEL, Forum on Compliance Assurance and Governance etc.).

Ad-hoc Task Groups will be established by the Strategic Coordination Group on the basis of a proposal from the Commission, Member States and/or stakeholders, which identifies the future lead or co-leads of the Group. It is the responsibility of the leads initially identified in the proposal to draft a mandate, specifying the scope of the work, the working method, deliverables and timeline for the Group. The size and composition of the Ad-hoc Task Groups will depend on the complexity of the tasks included in their individual mandates. Members of the Ad-hoc Task Groups may be members of the Strategic Coordination Group or experts appointed by them and each Ad-hoc Task Group is expected to have a minimum of one and a maximum of three leads.

On specific topics, it could be envisaged that WGs or ATGs collaborate on short term deliverables. In addition, especially in the context of the different actions from the European Green Deal initiatives, Working Groups or ATGs may collaborate with

relevant Working Groups from other policy sectors outside the CIS (agriculture, energy, climate adaptation, transport, nature and biodiversity etc.).

The Strategic Coordination Group will inform the Water Directors about the mandates given to Ad-hoc Task Groups, indicating which of the activities identified in the Work Programme each Ad-hoc Task Group will contribute to.

Each Working Group will have autonomy in deciding when and where to meet and how to organise the work in order to deliver the products foreseen within the timetable set by the Work Programme. In this framework, Working Groups may decide to create smaller sub-groups to work on specific tasks. In this case, the Working Group leads need to inform the Strategic Coordination Group about the creation of such sub-groups and the tasks assigned to them.

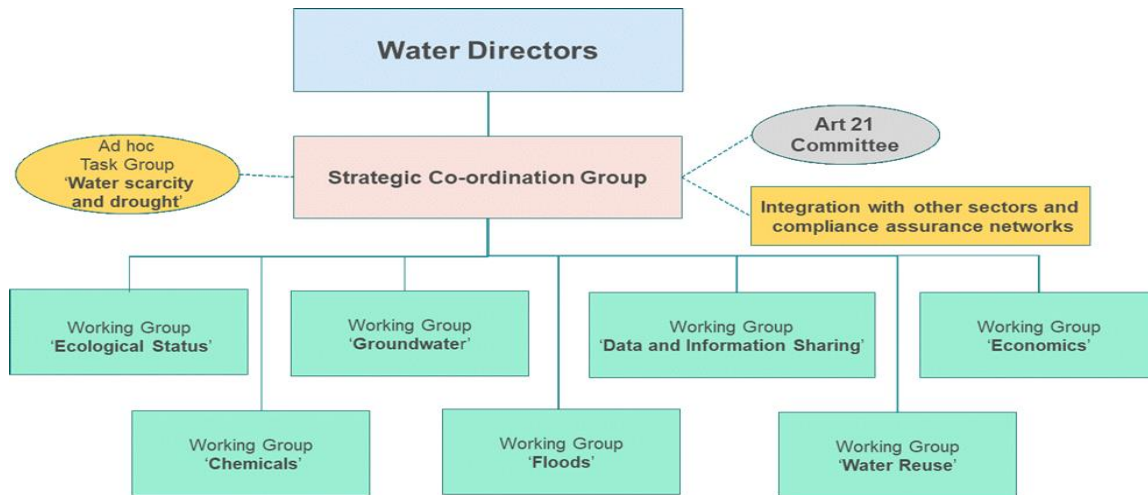
Each Working Group will have a minimum of two and a maximum of four co-leads, of which at least one from the Commission and one from a Member State. The initial co-leads of each Working Group are identified in this Work Programme and can be changed following a proposal from the Commission or a Member State, with the approval of the Strategic Coordination Group.

The co-leads of each Working Group are responsible for coordinating the work of the Group, ensuring that the requests from the Strategic Coordination Group are correctly understood by the members of the Working Group, reporting back to the Strategic Coordination Group on the activities of the Working Group, ensuring that the requested deliverables are produced on time and organising and setting up an agenda for the meetings of the Working Group. The co-leads are also responsible for ensuring coordination with the work of other Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups when relevant.

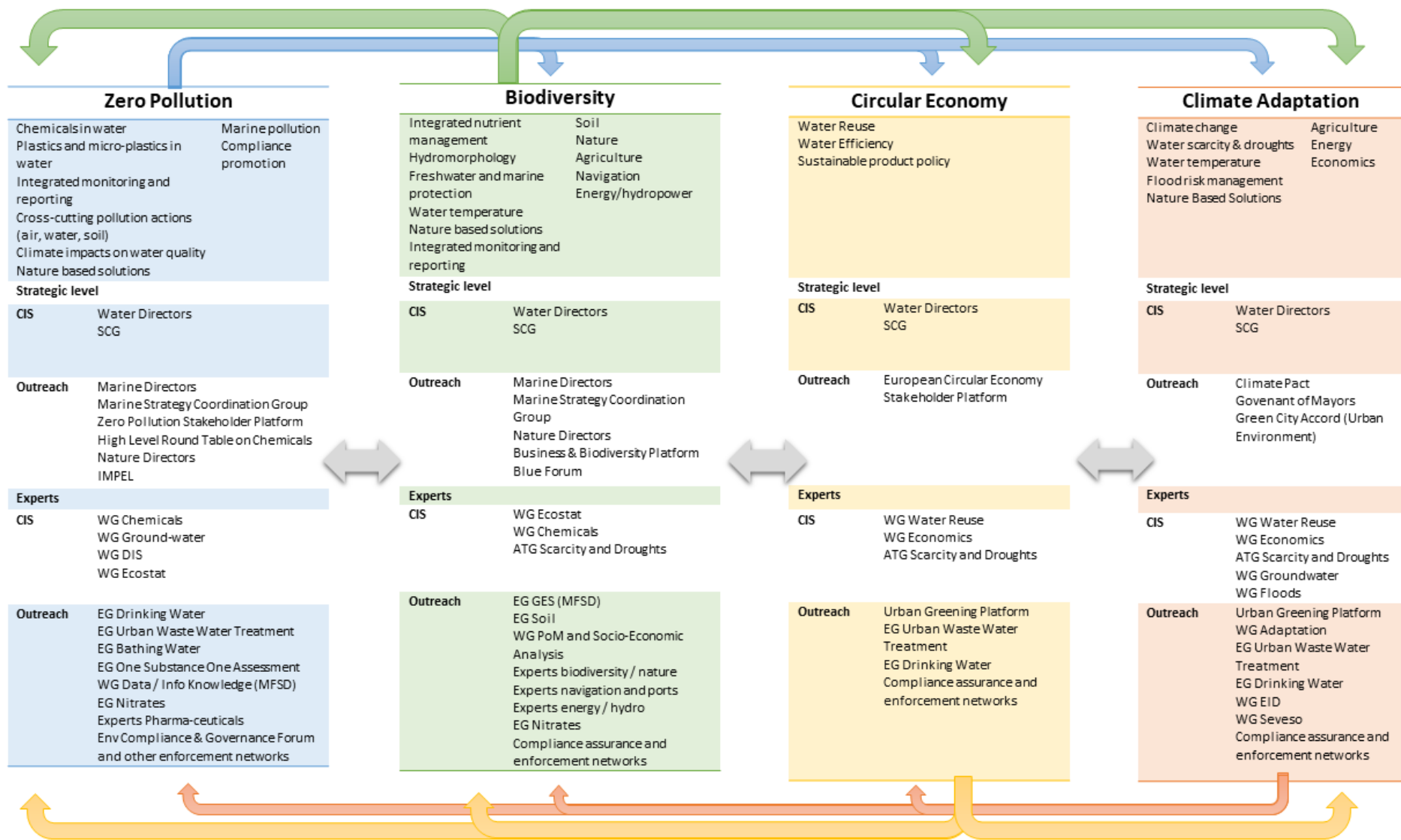
Members of the Working Groups are expected to have the necessary technical expertise to contribute to the work of the Group. This may lead, in some cases, to the participation in some activities of the Group by different experts from a Member State or stakeholder organisation in order to cover the different technical issues involved (e.g. the inclusion of hydro-morphology experts in activities of the Working Group on Ecological Status when necessary).

In organising their work, the Working Groups and in particular the co-leads need to make sure that the limited resources available are used in an efficient way. This may include, for example, the replacement of physical meetings with web or phone conferences when justified. In order for the meetings to be well prepared and have the necessary follow-up, it is important that all documents for a meeting are available in Circabc at least 10 working days before the meeting and that minutes of the meetings, or at least operational conclusions, are available no more than 15 days after the meetings

The CIS organisation is summarised in the figure below.



Increasingly, the work in the CIS should be steered towards the implementation of the European Green Deal, as regards its water-related aspects. While the CIS has a separate mission to fulfil that is determined by the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive, it also functions within the larger context of the European Green Deal, contributing to the objectives in key areas of zero pollution, biodiversity, climate change and circular economy. The figure on the next page underlines the different levels of involvement (strategic and experts) and indicates, per European Green Deal priority area, which existing forums and bodies need to be involved.



## **Annex II – Towards water resilience**

### *Context*

Climate change impacts are having far-reaching effects inside and outside the European Union. Every single region in Europe – without exception – is affected by the climate crisis. This ranges from unprecedented forest fires as far north as the Arctic Circle, to increasingly devastating droughts in the Mediterranean region; and from accelerating erosion on the Atlantic coast to forests in Central and Eastern Europe that are decimated by new pests.

Water plays a very central role in the climate context. Our fresh waters, oceans and seas are heavily affected by climate change. Floods, droughts and storms are taking a harsh toll on our economy and human life. There is no way the climate crisis can be solved without dramatically stepping up efforts to secure cleaner and better managed freshwaters and seas.

In the overall context of the European Green Deal, many of the solutions are largely enshrined in existing EU law. If implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the Floods Directive, the Groundwater Directive is stepped up, whilst investing into an early uptake of the new Regulation on Minimum Requirements for Water Reuse and the modernized Drinking Water Directive, the tools needed are available to manage flood risks, droughts, safeguard water ecosystems and ensure that a sufficient amount of high quality water is secured.

### *Way forward for water management*

The 2019 Fitness Check found that an increased focus on water quantity management is needed. The Water Framework Directive includes all elements needed to act upon when it comes to adaptation to climate change. The Floods Directive explicitly requires Member States to factor climate change in their flood risk management plans. Further contributions from a climate change perspective are the upcoming modernization of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive and of the Industrial Emissions Directive, notably focusing on further reduction of green-house gas emissions and securing the shift to a more circular management of water.

Water figures prominently in the European Green Deal and its initiative, such as the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Biodiversity Strategy, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and many more. In particular also the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change, adopted in February 2021, provides further stimulus for quantitative water management.

Based on the actions of the Strategy and the conclusions of the Informal Environment Council (April 2021) on water scarcity and droughts, the draft CIS WP 2022-2024 aims to improve coordination of planning across sectors, to promote effective nature-based solutions, to reduce climate-related risk and to ensure the availability and sustainability of fresh water.

To achieve this, all actions are built around the following work strands:

- 1) Enhanced implementation of the Water Framework Directive as a priority to achieve sustainable and climate-resilient management of water resources.
- 2) Support better implementation of ecological flow and water balances as key drivers in achieving ‘good status’.
- 3) Address untapped potential for water efficiency measures in all the main water-using sectors (agriculture, industry, distribution networks, households/buildings and energy production).
- 4) Better coordination and coherence of sectoral plans, including adaptation strategies.
- 5) Enhancing drought management in Europe and data on water quantity.
- 6) Promoting resilience to climate change, including addressing “too much water”, “too little water” and “too polluted water”.

The various actions may be integrated across the existing CIS structures both at strategic and expert level, whereas certain activities necessitate a new structure to be considered/established, namely a new Ad hoc Task Group on Water Scarcity and Droughts (ATG WSD). Sectoral coordination of climate adaptation action in the water sector will be also addressed within the Working Group Adaptation. The mandate of this group is currently under revision.

| <b>DROUGHT MANAGEMENT, WATER SCARCITY and FLOOD MANAGEMENT</b>   | <b>CIS / Other structure</b>                     |
|--|--|
| Help to close knowledge gaps on climate impacts and resilience   |  |
| <i>Research into alternative water resources, such as improving desalination technologies, aquifer recharge</i>  | Info-Exchange <sup>14</sup><br>(WG GW & ATG WSD) |
| <i>Research and data collection supporting wetland and floodplains restoration and nature-based solutions in drought and flood management</i>  | Info-Exchange<br>(WG F , WG DIS & ATG WSD)       |
| <i>Research in monitoring services by applying new technologies (such as smart sensors)</i>  | Info-Exchange<br>(WG DIS)                        |
| <i>Close the climate disaster loss and risk data gap ⇒ JRC-European Drought Observatory “EDORA”</i>  | ATG WSD  |
| Continue to incentivise and assist Member States to rollout nature-based solutions through assessments, guidance, capacity building, and EU funding  |  |
| <i>Mainstream nature-based solutions in water and land use management, by enhanced implementation of the CIS Policy Paper on NWRM.</i>   | WG F /ATG WSD                                    |
| <i>Prioritise nature-based solutions throughout the relevant EU funding and investment programmes for their cost-efficiency and economic, social and environmental benefits.</i>   | Info-Exchange<br>(SCG)                           |
| Help ensure climate-resilient, sustainable use and management of water across sectors and borders by improving coordination of thematic plans and other mechanisms, such as water resource allocation and water-permits.   |  |
| <i>Improve policy implementation for securing sustainable water use across sectors, through improvements to and intensification of among others: <b>water resource allocation</b> (respecting a clear water use hierarchy and considering measures to address imbalances between demand and supply), <b>water-permitting systems, cost</b></i> | WG Economics<br>ATG WSD<br>WG Ecostat            |

<sup>14</sup> Info exchange means that the topic is addressed by another structure (e.g. DG RTD) and the CIS will be informed about the relevant developments.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <i>recovery through water pricing incorporating externalities, or cost recovery rate calculations ⇒ Enhanced implementation of the relevant existing CIS Guidance documents, such as <b>water balances and environmental flows</b>.</i>  |  |
| <i>Improving compliance with existing water legislation with regard to abstraction and environmental flows.</i>  | SCG<br>WG GW<br>WG Ecostat<br>ATG WSD                                  |
| Help to guarantee a stable and secure supply of drinking water, by encouraging the incorporation of the risks of climate change in risk analyses of water management.  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Minimize the occurrence of contamination or acute pollution of fresh water due notably to climate impacts, such as low flows, higher water temperature or flooding;</i></li> <li>• <i>Ensure the availability of adequate quantities of clean tap water, through inclusion of climate change considerations in existing water management plans, the implementation of the revised DWD, and encouraging Member States to include climate change considerations in the DWD's risk-based approach.</i></li> </ul> | EG DWD<br>WG Ecostat<br>Info-Exchange<br>(WG Chemicals / WG GW / WG F) |
| <i>Continuous exchange on good practices on how to take into account the impacts of climate change on the ecological status and possible management measures (including impact on physico-chemical elements, hymo- and biological elements)</i>  | WG Ecostat   |
| Help reduce water use by raising the water-saving requirements for products, encouraging water efficiency and savings, and by promoting the wider use of drought management plans as well as sustainable soil management and land-use.   |  |
| <i>Promoting the use of drought management plans more widely in the EU.</i>  | ATG WSD  |
| <i>More ambitious requirements on water saving for products subject to eco-design, energy labelling, EU Ecolabel and green public procurement.</i>   | Info-Exchange<br>(SCG or ATG WSD)                                      |
| <i>Water saving and reuse in the revised Industrial Emissions Directive and its implementation</i>   | Info-Exchange<br>WG WR and<br>ATG WSD                                  |
| <i>Increase water efficiency among others through promoting water reuse, with special attention to agriculture</i>   | ATG WR   |
| <i>Water efficient sanitation systems in housing developments/buildings ⇒ the revisions of the Energy Efficiency Directive and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, the Renovation Wave and the Strategy for the Sustainable Built Environment.</i>  | Info-Exchange<br>(SCG or ATG WSD)                                      |
| Integrate adaptation in the update of Natura 2000 and climate change guidance, and in guidelines on biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation, and in the forthcoming Forest Strategy  |  |
| <i>Update of “Guidelines on Natura 2000 and climate change”</i>  | Info-exchange<br>(SCG / WG Ecostat / WG F /ATG WSD)                    |
| Develop an EU-wide climate risk assessment and strengthen climate considerations in EU disaster risk prevention and management   |  |
| <i>Improve Member States’ preparedness for climate change impacts on floods, including support land-use planning</i>   | WG F   |
| <i>Addressing storm water overflows and urban runoff under the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive.</i>   | EG UWWTD<br>Info-exchange<br>(WG F)                                    |
| <i>Sharing of best practice on prevention of water pollution through industrial accidents caused by flooding and droughts.</i>   | WG Seveso<br>Info-exchange<br>(WGF/ATG WSD)                            |

## HORIZONTAL

- *Coordinate planning across relevant instruments for sustainable water use (better links between River Basin Management Plans, Flood Risk Management Plans, Drought Management Plans, National adaptation strategies, National Climate and Energy Plans, CAP Strategic Plans, cohesion policy programmes, National risk assessment and resilience goals.)*
- *Enhance cooperation between adaptation and water management authorities, both nationally as well as across borders.*
- *Promote cooperation across borders between Member States and neighbouring countries in climate adaptation, including in transboundary river basins.*
- *Promote local climate and energy action through the EU Covenant of Mayors. ⇒ Support green, smart, climate resilient and sustainable growth.*
- *Enhance climate proofing guidance, and promote its use in Europe and abroad*
- *Water-energy nexus and expected availability of water in future.*

WG Adaptation  
&  
Info-exchange  
SCG