



Over the last year the Scottish Government, SEPA and relevant stakeholders have been evaluating the first RBMPs, and starting to focus on how to develop second plans. The second plans must build on the areas of success, and meet the management challenges required to deliver the ambitious objectives set for 2027. All river basin planning advisory groups met in autumn to discuss updates on progress and a projected risk assessment for the targets for 2015. There are some key highlights; in general pressures regulated by the Controlled Activities Regulations (CAR) are on track for projected first cycle improvements. The approach developed in partnership with the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group (DPMAG) for rural diffuse pollution in priority catchments is showing really encouraging signs of success as land managers are acting in response to the visits. However, it is clear the objectives we set for the first plans were over ambitious in areas of water management associated with land management, particularly dealing with the legacy of physical impacts on the water environment and diffuse pollution.

This bulletin includes updates on progress to date and provides a forward look to the development of the second round of RBMPs.

Finally – please take time to respond to the formal consultation on Current Condition and Challenges for the Future as your input is important in shaping and refining the second river basin plans.

Best wishes for the new year!

David

David Harley
NAG Chair and Water and Land Unit Manager (SEPA)

Current Condition and Challenges for the Future

These consultations provide you with a formal opportunity to contribute to the development of the second plans. They describe the current condition of the water environment and assess progress made towards the improvement targets set for 2015. They assess what is working well, and more importantly, describe the key management challenges that require a step change in management approach over the next two river basin planning cycles. To read and respond to the consultations online click below:

[Current condition and challenges for the future: Scotland river basin district](#)

[Current condition and challenges for the future: Solway Tweed river basin district](#)

Supporting technical information and our updated analysis of benefits provided by the water environment is also available:

[Current condition and challenges for the future: supporting data application](#)

SEPA has also published a baseline inventory of toxic substances of concern in the water environment for Scotland. Further development of this work, will improve SEPA's understanding of the environmental risks posed by such substances.

[Inventory of emissions report for Scotland](#)

If you have any questions about these consultations, would like to request a response form or you require assistance accessing the information in any way please get in touch via rbmp@sepa.org.uk

Greater transparency of RBMP procedure

Experience in taking forward river basin management planning has identified that greater transparency in certain aspects of the legislative framework would be beneficial, particularly in the lead up to the second plans. The Scottish Government has therefore brought forward regulations which provide additional detail on existing requirements contained in the Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003. The new Regulations describe in more detail the process of setting of environmental objectives, and provide clarity on the development and implementation of the programme of measures necessary to meet the objectives. They are more explicit regarding the role of responsible authorities in delivering the objectives.

The regulations can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/323/contents/made>

Engagement for developing the second plans

We are currently working to coordinate the development of actions and targets for Scotland's second River Basin Management Plans. To do this we want to engage with you, the responsible authorities and key stakeholders, to agree any proportionate actions which you could deliver which protect and improve the water environment. The [Tackling the challenges for Scotland's water environment](#) paper was developed from discussion at the National Advisory Group and sets a context for developing the second plans.

We hope to undertake this engagement in a number of ways including through providing data and maps for feedback, and discussing actions directly with key staff through meetings or workshops. We aim to have discussions with national public bodies and national partnership groups, area advisory group members and sector representatives early in 2014 for the majority of pressures. Discussions on the impacts on physical condition with local authorities and catchment groups will require a longer timeframe – so these are now to be scheduled over 2014.

The autumn of 2014 will be a key time to consider what the draft of the second plans look like and to review and refine them at a local level. As a consequence we plan to hold our next Area Advisory Group meetings in autumn 2014. Updates will continue to be shared with the groups and the actions from the last set of meetings completed.

We will be meeting with the National Advisory Group, Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group and Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group on the following dates in the early part of the year:

DPMAG - 30th January

FFAG - *to be confirmed shortly.*

NAG - 18th March (Later dates; 15th May and 30th September)

Two new supplementary plans for river basin planning

Last autumn saw the publication of the supplementary plan: [Improving the physical condition of the water environment](#) and the establishment of a Water Environment Fund Unit in SEPA. Work is now underway to review objectives for the physical condition of the water environment, and to ensure the fund is supported by a strategic framework for delivery for these pressures for the second plans.

Managing Invasive Non Native Species

Invasive non native species pose a significant threat to the quality of Scotland's water environment. It is clear that a more coordinated approach to preventing deterioration is required. The supplementary plan: [Managing Invasive Non-Native Species in Scotland's Water Environment](#) was published late December 2013. This plan was initiated by a sub-group of the National Advisory Group and will go on to be governed by the Statutory Group on Non-Native Species (SGNNS). They will be responsible for ensuring the actions set out in the plan are undertaken and assessing the effectiveness of the strategic approach to preventing the spread of non native species in Scotland that put our water environment at risk as the need for further changes to our management approach must continue to be monitored.

Consultation on environmental standards

In preparation for the second RBMP the Scottish Government has launched a consultation on new and revised environmental standards for a range of parameters. The consultation will run until the end of January 2014. The consultation can be found at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/12/9547>

Protecting shellfish waters for the future

The Scottish Government has now finalised a package of measures to ensure the continued protection and improvement of Scotland's shellfish growing waters. The legal framework, which began with new provisions in the Aquaculture and Fisheries (Scotland) Act 2013, has now been completed with a Designation Order identifying 84 waters as 'shellfish water protected areas' and the introduction of regulations on the setting of environmental objectives for those areas.

The Designation Order can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/324/contents/made>

The Regulations can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2013/325/contents/made>

The analysis of consultation responses is at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/2843>

Pilot catchments update - January 2014

2013 saw the delivery of phase 1 of this ambitious project which is looking at ways to combine improvements to river habitats with measures that will reduce the risk of flooding within the River Dee (Aberdeenshire), River South Esk (Angus), River Nith (Dumfries and Galloway) and the Glazert Water (East Dunbartonshire) catchments. For each catchment we now have catchment scale view and a prioritised list of locations which, if restored, would contribute most to improving the morphological status of downgraded water bodies and/or which provide natural flood management benefits. Over the winter and spring our aim is to start speaking with local landowners and land managers about developing implementation projects in these areas. We are currently taking one site in each catchment through to outline design, subject to landowner interest in the project, and are planning to work with stakeholders and land managers over 2014 to see which other locations can be taken forward.

A key purpose of the work is to enable a strategic approach to be developed to delivering improvements to physical condition which can be applied in other catchments across Scotland. Many of the lessons learned through phase 1 are being used to develop the second river basin plans.

Project outputs will be provided on

http://www.sepa.org.uk/water/river_basin_planning/implementing_rbmp/pilot_catchment_project.aspx as they become available. You can also sign up for updates about the specific catchments by registering your interest with us at rbmp@sepa.org.uk

Diffuse pollution update

Work on first cycle diffuse pollution priority catchments is continuing to progress. To date 5838 km in the 14 priority catchments have been walked, 1974 farm visits and over 419 re-visits have been carried out. The re-visits show that most land managers have started to make land management changes in response to issues highlighted at their first visit.

The Scottish Government held it's 'Mind the Gap - Working in partnership with Scotland's land managers to reduce pollution from rural land use' conference on 12 November 2013 in Peebles. Opened by the Environment Minister, Mr Wheelhouse acknowledged the success of the approach taken by all in Scotland in tackling rural diffuse pollution, something that which was fully endorsed by the EU speaker. The conference was attended by over 80 delegates from across Europe: Regulators, Government bodies, land manager representatives, research institutes and land managers themselves. The conference was used as the launching pad for "know the rules" a new simple guidance booklet for farmers, the new [Farming and Water Scotland website](#), and the Mind the gap safe distance sticker for land managers available by emailing; farmingandwater@sac.co.uk.

Please contact [Jenny Davies](#) if you have any questions, comments or feedback on this bulletin.