**Statement of consultation steps for the third Scotland river basin management plan**

4. Have we made the steps and consultation opportunities associated with the preparation of the third river basin management plans clear?

**YES**

5. If not, what additional information would you like?

Not answered

6. What other feedback would you like to provide to SEPA on plans for consultation?

Please provide details of any other feedback relating to consultation on the Scotland river basin management plan here.

Section 3 (working in partnership) set outs how SEPA will engage with the network of national and area-based partners. Whilst specific reference is made to the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group (DPMAG) and Fish and Fisheries Advisory Group (FFAG), no specific reference is made to the National Advisory Group or the Area Advisory Groups. We have found these fora very useful in the past, and we note that, with the exception of FFAG none of these groups have met for some years.

We have been in discussion with SEPA about the possibility of establishing a sector approach for engaging with the fisheries management sector in Scotland. This approach recognises that fisheries managers and SEPA share common purpose across a range of issues of importance to the health of Scotland’s freshwater environment, but sometimes the degree of consultation and partnership working is not what it should be to benefit both SEPA and local fisheries managers. We would like to progress this approach in the new year, and this will provide further opportunities to engage with the fisheries management sector as the third round of river basin management planning is developed.

Section 4 (links to other plans and policies) sets out the importance of linkage between RBMP and other plans and policies. We are currently working with the Scottish Government to develop a consistent process of fisheries management planning across Scotland. SEPA have been engaged in this process for some time and this process has the potential to generate important information and data for the river basin management plan and it is important to ensure that the plan compliments fisheries management objectives. It is vital that appropriate linkages are made between the river basin management plan and these fisheries management plans. We support the emphasis on strengthening links with land use planning and flood risk management planning, and believe that the fisheries management sector has an important role to play in this process.

We have responded separately to the Solway Tweed consultation.