



An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála,  
Pobail agus Rialtais Áitiúil  
Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government

# Environmental Services Training Group

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE  
2017

## Protecting the Environment for Future Generations

Minella Hotel, Clonmel Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017.



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# Protecting the Environment for Future Generations

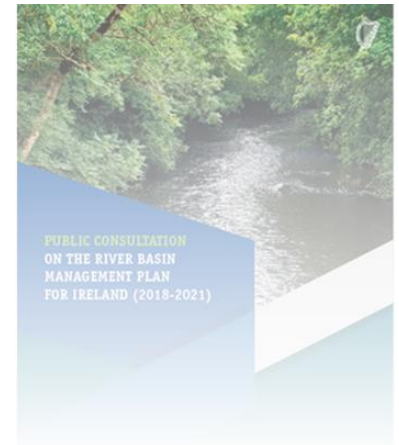
## 2nd Cycle Draft River Basin Management Plan Overview

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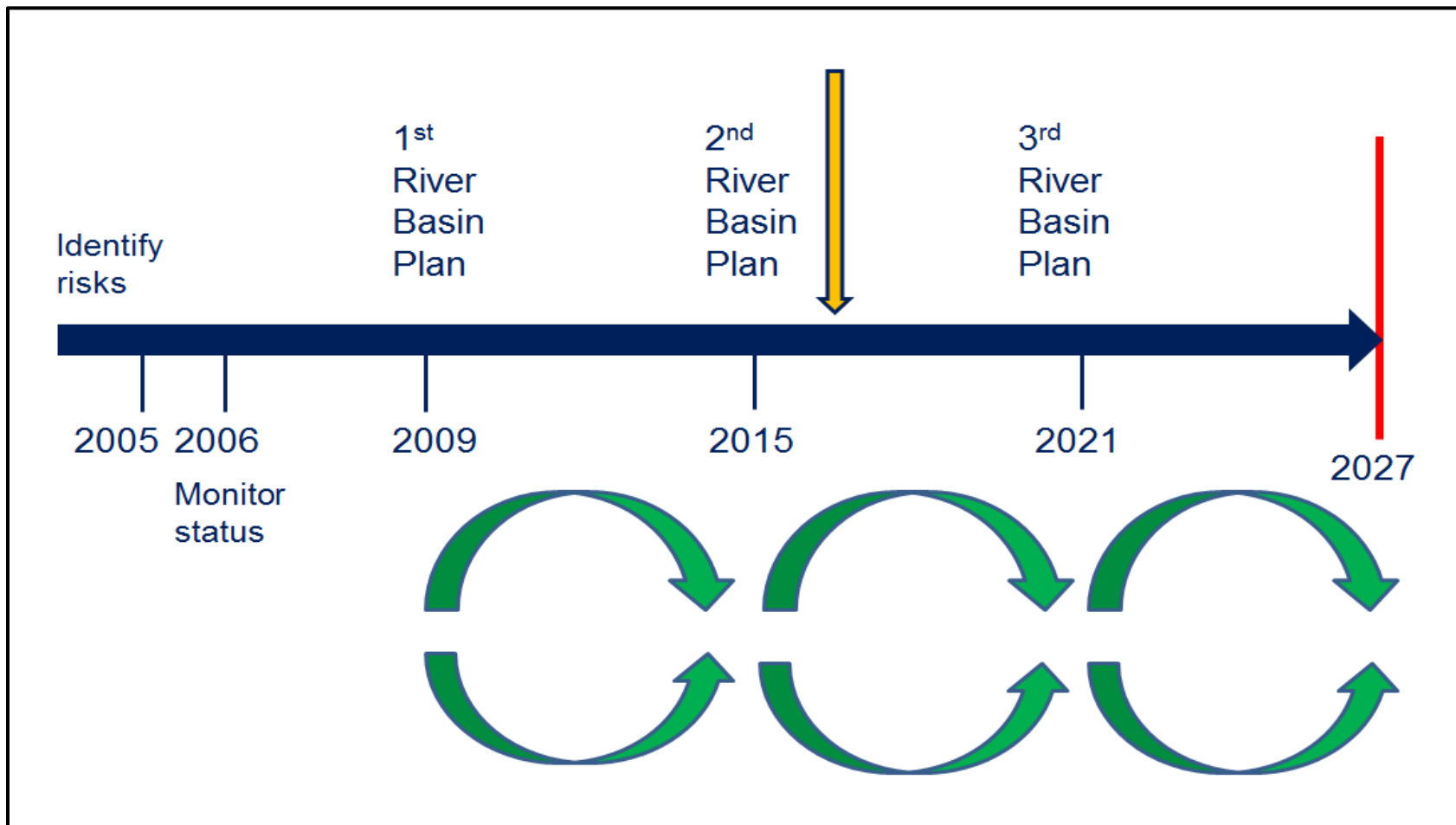




- WFD and developing the RBMP
- Approach to finalising the plan
- Programme of measures – further development
- Role of local authorities
- Next steps



# River basin planning cycles





# Water Framework Directive

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- Objective is to protect & restore water quality across EU
- Key goals – prevent deterioration & ensure all water bodies achieve at least good status
- Member States must develop River Basin Management Plans
- Programme of measures must ensure implementation of;
  - Pre-existing Directives
  - Supporting measures, where necessary
- Public consultation and engagement central to WFD



# Plan delivery

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- Draft published on 28<sup>th</sup> February
- 6 months public consultation process
- Final RBMP by December 2017
- Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement also published
  
- Substantial amount of work remaining to be done during 2017 to produce a final plan



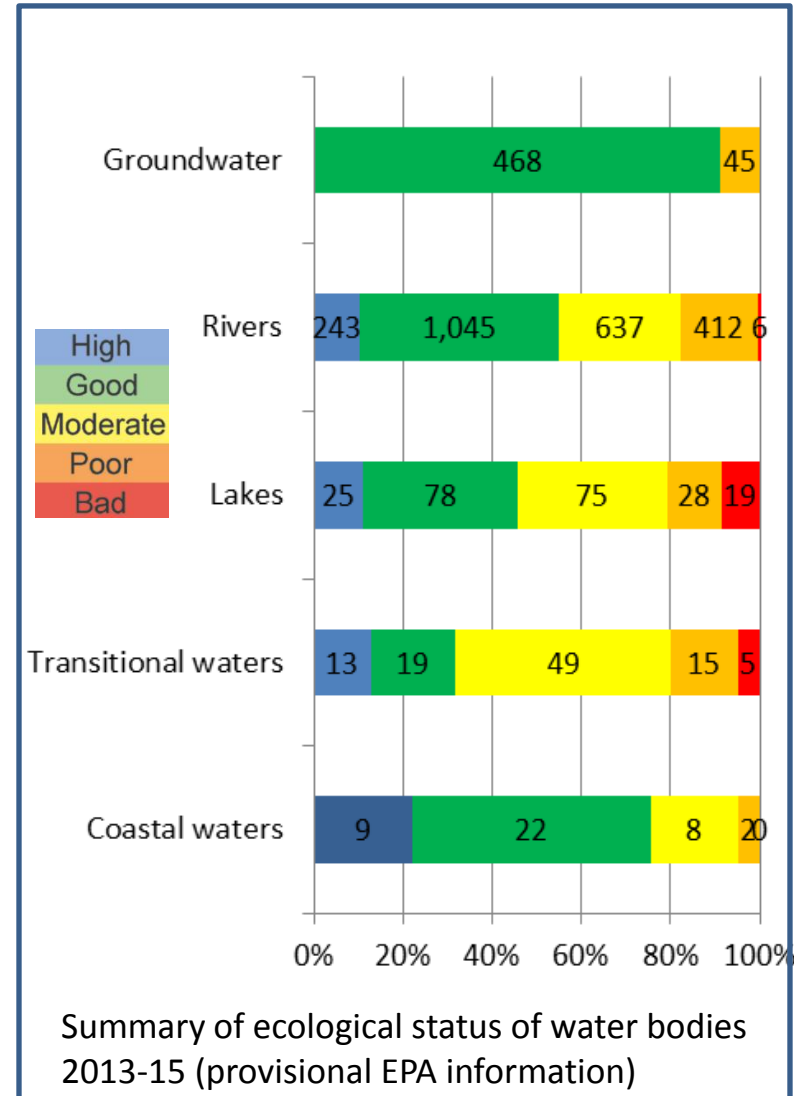
# Background

- Recognised that improvements required on 1<sup>st</sup> cycle:
  - Multiple river basin districts too complex and not effective
  - Evidence base needed improvement
  - Governance & delivery structures for supporting measures needed revision
- Have now moved to a single river basin district
- EPA characterisation work improving the evidence base
- Have placed a major focus on getting the governance and delivery structures right:
  - Structures need to continue the good progress on “basic measures” + drive delivery of supporting measures where required.
  - Communication and public engagement also a major focus of this plan.



# Water Quality Status

- 46 catchments consisting of 583 sub-catchments & 4,933 water bodies
- 2013-15 status for monitored water bodies shows 55% of rivers & 46% of lakes achieving good or high status
- Some 900 water bodies showed either “improvement or disimprovement” over the first cycle
- Continued loss of ‘high status’ sites







# Broad approach & priorities

- Identified priorities in the plan:
  - Compliance with existing EU legislation (e.g. UWWTD)
  - Prevent deterioration
  - Meet water objectives for designated ‘protected areas’
  - Protect high status waters
  - Priority catchments for targeted actions
- Overall approach:
  - implementation of basic measures by national authorities
  - prioritised supporting measures; and
  - building knowledge/expertise.
- 70+ specific measures contained in the draft plan.



# Programme of Measures

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- Agriculture
- Urban waste water
- Domestic wastewater treatment systems
- Hydromorphology
- Land use planning and water
- Water abstractions
- High status waters - “blue dot catchments programme”
- Forestry
- Invasive alien species
- Peat harvesting
- Protected areas
- Floods



# Developing the detail of the programme of measures

- Public authorities currently developing detail of measures:

- Tasks
- Timelines
- Milestones and deliverables
- Responsibilities

Steps	2017	2018	2019
Review of legislative provisions governing the abstraction of water	■		
<b>Water abstractions register</b>			
Initial consultations with sectors regarding the abstractions register	■		
Public consultation on the water abstractions register		■	
Business analysis and systems design		■	
Systems development		■	
Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)		■	
Drafting and adoption of legislation to give effect to the register		■	
Registration process			■
<b>Water abstractions authorisation system</b>			
Consultations with sectors regarding the authorisation system			■
Public consultation on the water abstractions authorisation system			■
Business analysis and systems design			■
Systems development			■
Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA)			■
Drafting and adoption of legislation – authorisation system			■
Licence application process			■

- Essential for:

- Enabling new governance structures to monitor and manage delivery
- Measuring performance
- Communicating progress to stakeholders and EU Commission



# Agricultural Measures

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- Nitrates action programme and associated inspection regime
- Agri-environment schemes – in particular the GLAS scheme
- Knowledge transfer in Agri sector to promote better nutrient management and farm point source management
  - National Dairy Sustainability Forum - Co-operative led programme to promote sustainable practices among dairy farmers
  - Knowledge transfer programme through the RDP to engage up to 27,000 farmers
  - On-line nutrient management planning system for use by all farmers



# Key messages re: agricultural measures

- Water quality is generally good overall. Issues in hot spot areas to be resolved.
- Water quality has improved since the introduction of the Nitrates Directive,
- Water quality has stabilised in recent years, with improvements and declines being offset.
- The physical setting, i.e. soils, geology and rainfall are important factors influencing water quality.
- Lessons learned - Targeted and local partnership approach is needed to drive further improvements. This will be complex and challenging !



# Wastewater measures

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## Urban wastewater:

- Focus on achieving full compliance with the urban wastewater treatment directive and EPA authorisation conditions
- Irish Water investment plan. €1.7bn (2017-2021)
  - 105 new or upgraded WWTP
  - 41 collection networks
  - Capital maintenance
  - Optimisation of plant performance
  - €12m budget for targeting priority small treatment plants
- Review of nutrient sensitive areas

## Domestic wastewater:

- New EPA national inspection plan 2018-21 for septic tanks
- National targeted engagement plan



# Water abstractions measures

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## **Register of water abstractions:**

- Over 25m<sup>3</sup>/day. Potentially up to 5,000
- Online register preferred

## **Water abstractions authorisation system:**

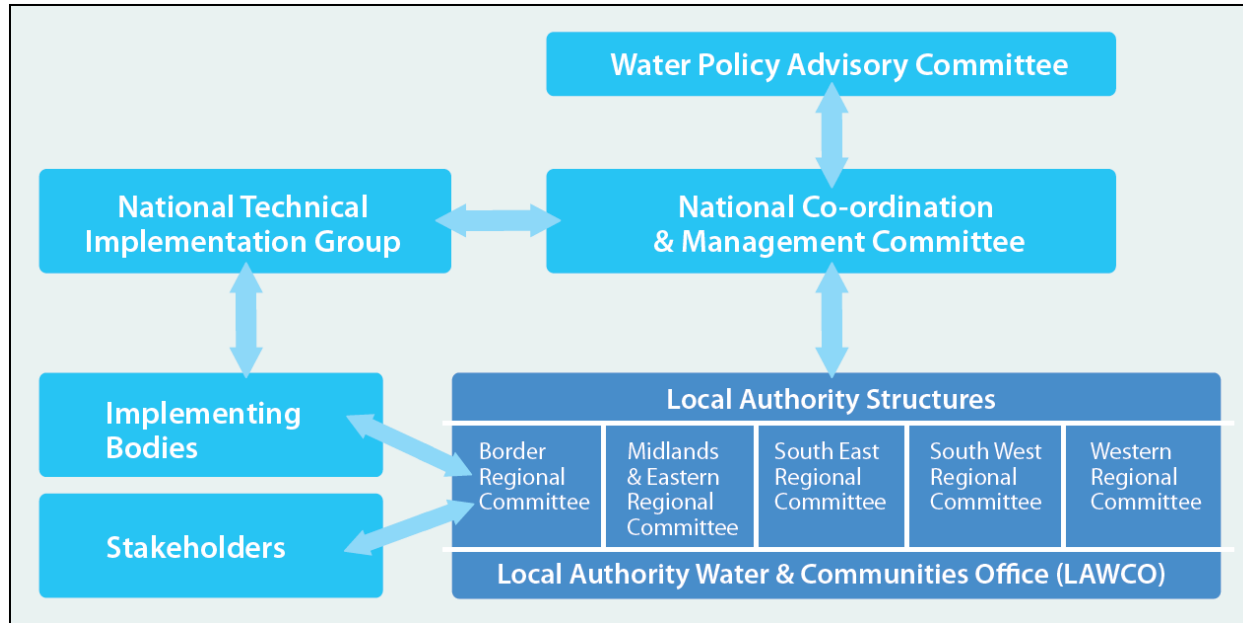
- Over 250m<sup>3</sup>/day. Likely to be over 500

## **Progressing**

- Initial consultations with key stakeholders
- Review of legislation governing water abstractions
- Governance arrangements, information requirements
- Most appropriate models for register and licencing
- Undertaking a Regulatory Impact Assessment
- Target dates for delivery



# Proposed Implementation Structures



- WPAC high level policy direction
- NCMC Sub-committee to oversee programme delivery and implementation
- NTIG for technical implementation, characterisation, reporting and environmental monitoring and tracking of measures
- LA Regional structures leading on regional delivery and implementation
- Essential that structures work together to achieve progress





# Role of local authorities in preparation of the plan

- Regional local authority structures
  - Public consultation on the draft river basin management plan
    - Feedback on draft RBMP
    - Input on regional prioritisation
  - Prioritisation of catchments for action, taking account of;
    - High level plan priorities – EPA recommendations are the starting point
    - Feasibility
    - Available resources while balancing competing demands
    - Ability of other national authorities to support actions in priority catchments (e.g. Irish Water, Department of Agriculture)
    - Feedback from consultation process (national and regional)
  - Develop regional work programme for priority catchments, specifying;
    - Measures to be implemented
    - Responsible bodies
    - Assigned resources
    - Expected timelines for implementation
    - Community and stakeholder engagement



# Role of local authorities in implementation of the plan

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- Regional local authority structures
  - Coordinated delivery of measures at regional and local level
  - Tracking progress and effectiveness of measures
  - Annual reporting of progress
  - Ensuring public and stakeholder engagement in implementation
  - On-going enforcement activities
  - Supporting national policy development and implementation through participation on NCMC and WPAC



## Next steps in finalising the RBMP

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- Public consultation closes on 28<sup>th</sup> August
  - Feedback will help to shape final measures
  - Will inform regional prioritisation
- Prioritisation of catchments for targeted action
- Public authorities working together to develop detailed work programmes for implementing each measure