

Water Services Training Group

20th Annual Conference

Meeting Standards and Expectations in the Water Industry

Lyrath Estate Hotel, Kilkenny



Meeting Standards and Expectations in the Water Industry

Environmental Compliance – A Policy Perspective

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Importance of the Water Sector

‘Water is essential for human life, nature and the economy. It is permanently renewed but it is also finite Freshwater constitutes only 2% of the water on the planet and competing demands may lead to an estimated 40% global water shortage by 2030’

A Blueprint to safeguard Europe’s Water Resources
European Commission, 2012

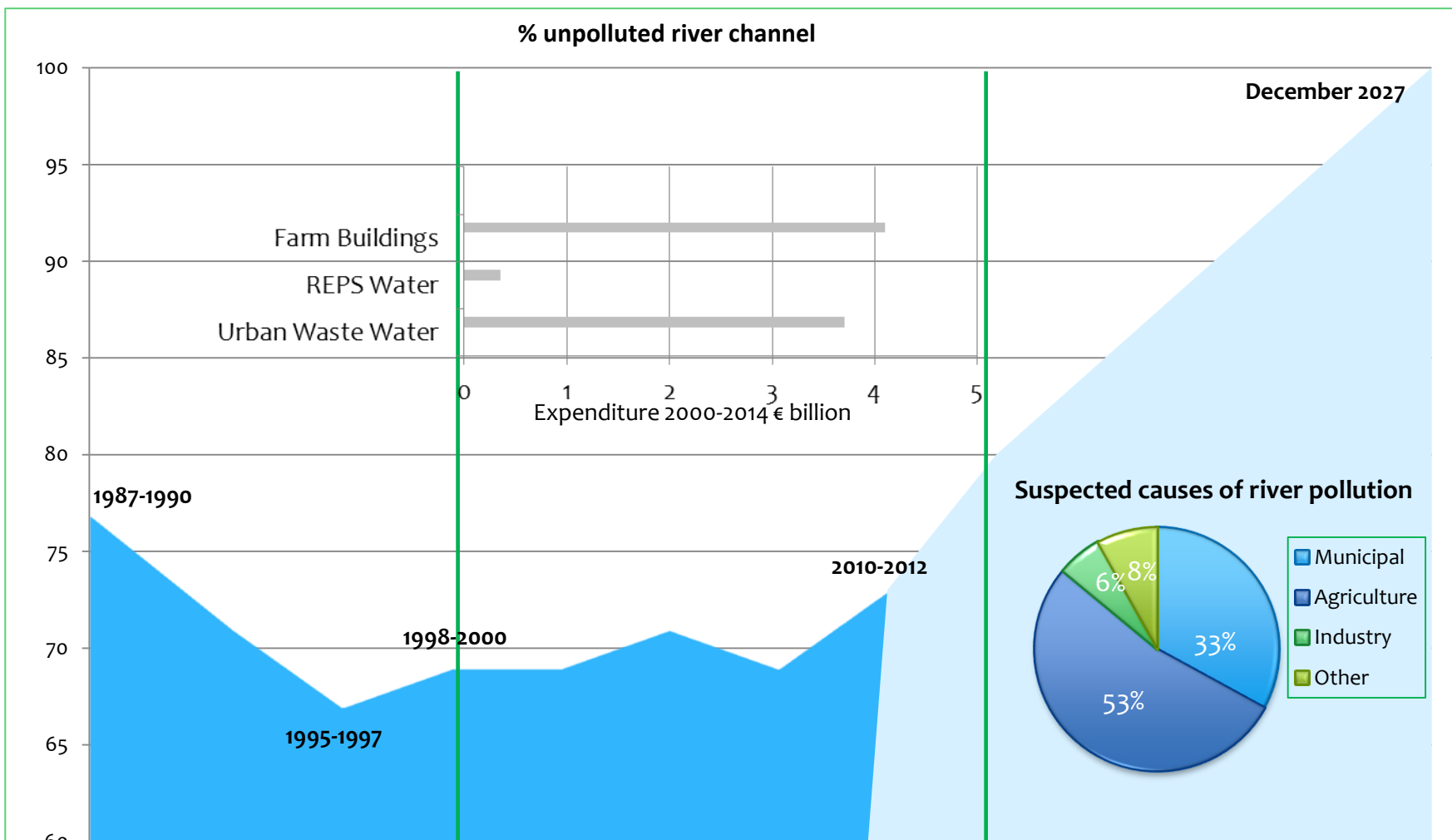
Opportunities

- * A clean environment and the provision of high quality drinking water and wastewater treatment are necessary to sustain human activity, to protect public health and to promote economic growth
 - Meet the day-to-day needs of society
 - Industry and trade (jobs)
 - Agriculture – e.g. Food Vision 2025
 - Leisure / tourism
- * In Ireland, we have an abundant supply of raw water
- * Water quality compares favourable with that in other EU countries

Challenges

- * Protect the environment – society rightly demands high standards
- * Protect public health – drinking water, bathing waters, shellfish growing waters etc.
- * Compliance with EU directives – water framework directive and the directives on drinking water and urban waste water
- * Underinvestment over many years
- * Sustained investment and improved operational efficiencies needed to meet the needs of society, to ensure environmental compliance and to support a growing economy

River Water Quality 1987-2012



Approach to next cycle of River Basin Management Plans

- * Must be seen to deliver positive environmental outcomes
- * Need to be realistic in terms of what we can achieve
- * EPA river basin characterisation provides an improved evidence base for informed decision-making
- * Capabilities and resources must be optimised to give the best environmental outcomes
- * Prioritisation, co-ordination and targeting of effort
- * Also – cycle 2 will be a time for consolidation and capacity building

WFD Priorities – Cycle 2

- * Compliance with EU water directives
- * Prevent deterioration in water quality
- * Meet the objectives for ‘protected areas’
- * High status waters
- * Prioritise other water quality improvements where we can reasonably expect to make improvements in the short and medium term with co-ordinated effort

Some Key Programmes

- * Programmes to –
 - Control urban waste water pollution
 - Address rural diffuse pollution
 - Deal with abstraction pressures
 - Protect drinking water sources
 - Protect high status waters
 - Improve the longitudinal continuity of rivers (river barriers)

- * Strategic Environmental Assessment / Appropriate Assessment

More Streamlined Delivery Structures

- * The Minister is responsible for
 - Setting environmental objectives and deciding priorities
 - Establishing programmes of measures, and
 - Making river basin management plans
- * EPA is responsible for the characterisation of river basin districts and advising and assisting the Minister
- * Local authorities will have a key ‘on the ground’ delivery role as well as providing support to the EPA and Minister

Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive

- * Infringement 2013/2056 – 70 No. non-compliant agglomerations (≥ 2000 PE) identified by EU Commission (Art 3; Art 4 and Art 5)
- * The Directive requires the collection of waste water for all larger agglomerations - collected waste water must be treated to the required standards (Art 4 and Art 5)
- * Works programme to secure compliance provided to EU Commission - 6 monthly progress reports
- * Data quality issues – generated load; treatment plant capacity, performance of collection systems

Drinking Water Directive

EPA Remedial Action List (Q2 2016)

	No of Supplies	Population Affected
Boil Water Notices	21	30,629
Trihalomethane Exceedences	74	484,082
Inadequate Treatment for Cryptosporidium	42	203,629
Total No of Supplies on RAL	117	850,479

Cost Recovery of Water Services

- * The WFD emphasises the importance of the ‘polluter pays principle’ and requires ‘adequate contribution of the different water users to the recovery of the costs of water services’
- * Domestic water charging suspended until end March 2017
- * Expert Commission established to make recommendations on a sustainable long-term funding model for the delivery of domestic water services
- * Oireachtas decision

Conclusions

- * Water management and the provision of water / wastewater infrastructure has national strategic importance
- * Many challenges remain, but we now have
- * Better working structures to deliver WFD
 - Better coordination between policy development, science and implementation
 - Stronger evidence-base to inform decision making
- * Single national utility - strategic approach to infrastructure delivery
 - Water Services Strategic Plan
 - Irish Water Capital Investment Plan
- * Opportunities for operational and capital efficiencies
- * Long-term funding model to be finalised

Thank You



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