

Establishment of a peer review mechanism for the improvement of Water Framework Directive (WFD) implementation

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) introduced in 2000 many new concepts and governance and technical challenges in an integrated approach to sustainable water management. The Common Implementation Strategy (CIS) process has been successful in delivering a range of guidance documents which have supported the performance of Member States (MS) and have contributed to harmonised implementation. A lot of effort has been put by Member States into the development of the first River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs), and knowledge of water status has considerably improved. However, the Commission's 2012 assessment of the RBMPs has shown important differences in implementation level across the EU and more efforts are needed to ensure the achievement of the WFD objectives in the 2015, 2021 and 2027 planning cycles.

The Commission, in the 2012 Blueprint proposed "*in the framework of the CIS, to set up a simple and voluntary **peer-review system** through which river basin district authorities could submit their draft RBMPs to the review by other district authorities, within the same or in other Member States. This is expected to favour mutual learning and improve the quality of the plans and their compliance with WFD requirements*".

In the CIS process, the EU Water Directors endorsed the approach proposed by the Commission to set up such peer-review system, by setting up an independent secretariat which coordinate the work: The secretariat is responsible for launching and collecting expressions of interest from RBDs and from experts to participate in the review, organisational issues, facilitating the contacts between peers, covering expenses, etc.

The International Office for Water, together with the National Institute of Hydrology and Water Management of Romania, and with the INBO, Europe-INBO, REMOB and CEENBO groups, are in charge of insuring the Secretariat of this peer review process. A website has been created for the participants and interested organisms to get information and specific documentation: <http://www.aquacoope.org/peer.review/>

Interested bodies involved in WFD implementation interested in benefiting from receiving a peer review on the one hand and on the other hand experts from public bodies motivated in participating to the peer review process are invited to express their interest by sending the correspondent templates to the secretariat, at the following e-mail address: peer.review@oieau.fr