



Government of the Netherlands

This plan is attached as an annex to
the National Water Programme
2022-2027

Policy Summary River Basin Management Plans

Policy Summary

Based on the Water Framework Directive (WFD), Member States draw up river basin management plans every 6 years. The first plans were adopted in 2009 for the period 2010 - 2015, followed in 2015 by an update of the plans for 2016 - 2021. This document concerns the period 2022 – 2027 and can be seen as an update of the document from 2015. The size of this plan has been reduced by integrating all river basin management plans and associated programmes of measures in one single national document, which is in line with the request of various stakeholders and organisations. Hence, it covers the Dutch part of the 4 river basin districts Rhine, Meuse, Scheldt and Ems.

The WFD's requirements guide the content of the river basin management plans. The document contains, among others, a general description of the area, the water quality goals including a justification of the use of exceptions, the condition of 745 surface water and 23 groundwater bodies, pressures, an economic analysis and the required measures. Some of the additional or background information can be found via references elsewhere, such as the regional water programmes, factsheets with more detailed information for each waterbody, and [substance data sheets](#) with information on key chemical substances that exceed the norm.

Each Dutch surface waterbody is assessed on more than 40 European standardised substances and almost 80 nationally standardised substances. In each waterbody, some substances were found that do not fulfil the norm. However, in general this concerns only a few and less than 10% of all substances. For most of these substances, the concentration level has declined in recent years. Compared to the previous period, there is now a more complete overview of the substances in each waterbody that exceed the norm, because water managers have greatly improved monitoring of all substances in recent years. At the same time, the 120+ assessed substances only constitute a limited number of substances present. And emerging substances, for example, also affect biology and the preparation of drinking water.

The biology in Dutch waterbodies is improving steadily, and biodiversity is increasing more and more. Biological parameters such as water plants and fish fulfil the goal in a third to half of the surface waterbodies. The biological parameters are insufficient or poor in only 10-20% of the waterbodies. Rising concentrations of nitrate after 2015 in the water leaching from agricultural soil are, however, a reason for concern.

Except for one water body, the general water balance of the Dutch groundwater bodies is good. There are regional challenges, however, particularly around nature areas. There are also challenges with respect to the quality of groundwater bodies, partly concerning the preparation of drinking water.

The current status of the water bodies (surface water and groundwater) still constitutes a major challenge that varies per river basin district. Supplementary measures will be taken in the coming WFD planning period. There will be a focus on policies that decrease chemical substances at the source and today's discharge permits will be updated. Attempts to reduce will continue. The most important sources of nutrient pollution are agriculture, wastewater treatment and a number of waterbodies in adjacent countries. Subsequently, sustainable use of nutrients policy will be tightened, wastewater treatment will be modernised, and nutrient pressures from adjacent countries will be placed on the agenda. More will be done to organise water systems in a natural way and to balance groundwater levels. Goals for water quality management will be considered in relationship with other challenges, such as the availability of sufficient freshwater now and in the future, drought issues and climate change. The aim is to implement all WFD measures by the end of the planning period in order to achieve the good environmental status in surface and groundwater bodies as quickly as possible.

Colofon

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Disclaimer:

This English translation is suitable for international consultation. However slight differences in the contents between the original Dutch text and this translation might occur, apart from grammatical imperfections. Therefore the only valid document is the Dutch version of the Stroomgebiedbeheerplannen Rijn, Maas, Schelde en Eems 2022-2027.

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