

ROADMAP	
TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water Resources
TYPE OF INITIATIVE	X CWP Non-CWP Implementing act/Delegated act
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	ENV.D1
EXPECTED DATE OF ADOPTION	Month/Year: 11/2012
VERSION OF ROADMAP	No: 1.1 Last modification: Month/Year: 09/2011

This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change.

It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content and structure.

A. Context, problem definition
<p>(i) What is the political context of the initiative?</p> <p>(ii) How does it relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?</p> <p>(iii) What ex-post analysis of the existing policy has been carried out and what results are relevant for this initiative?</p>
<p>i) & (ii) The Commission has undertaken a comprehensive review of a number of water related instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) requires the Commission to submit by 22 December 2012 to the Parliament and to Council a mid-term implementation report. b) Council Conclusions from October 2007 request the Commission to come forward with a review in 2012 of the policy on water scarcity and droughts set out in its July 2007 Communication (COM(2007) 414final) In October 2008, the European Parliament adopted a report on the Commission communication calling for a number of initiatives at the EU level. The European Parliament has also requested the Commission to initiate pilot projects in areas of key interest. In June 2010 the Council adopted conclusions on water scarcity & droughts where they inter-alia "welcomed the opportunity to consider a European water strategy ("Blue-print for Europe's Water"), to be presented by the Commission by 2012 on the basis of a review of the strategy on water scarcity and droughts and the WFD implementation report and in parallel to the EU climate change adaptation framework". c) A "Fitness Check" of freshwater policy is being conducted in 2011 as part of European Commission's smart regulation policy. The objective of the Fitness Check, to be published early 2012, is to assess the effectiveness of the environment policy measures taken and the degree of integration with other policy areas to achieve the current objectives of water policy. It will clarify whether any gap needs to be filled to deliver our environmental objectives more efficiently. d) The Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) requires the Commission to review the list of groundwater pollutants and the related environmental quality standards. This review is due by end-2012, as part of the Blueprint package, and is subject to a specific IA. e) The Commission has announced in its 2009 White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change (COM(2009) 147 final - http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/adaptation/index_en.htm) that it would review the need for adaptation measures in the area of inter alia water and nature policies and President Barroso has announced to the EP in 2009 that all EU policies would be examined for their ability to cope with the impacts of climate change. The European Parliament supported the White Paper in its resolution P7-TA(2010) 0154 emphasising the need to adopt a cross-sectoral approach based on ecosystem resilience, habitat and biodiversity protection and the services provided by ecosystems, and to ensure synergy and coherence among the measures to be taken as part of all relevant sector-specific policies. Water-related aspects of CC mitigation and adaptation will be revised as part of the Blueprint, further contributing i.e. to the 2013 EU Adaptation Strategy. <p>The Council has adopted Water Policy Conclusions on 21 June 2011 which provide a political steer to the development of the Blueprint and both the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee have adopted opinions on the same matter.</p> <p>The State of the Environment report 2010 by the EEA shows that the achievement of the objectives of the Water Framework Directive in 2015 is at risk. Water problems are both of a qualitative and quantitative nature including water scarcity, droughts and floods.</p>

The Commission is planning an Innovation Partnership on Water Efficiency (June 2012) which will constitute the innovation complement to the Blueprint by identifying innovative technologies and practices to fill the innovation gap in the water sector.

A policy response is needed at European level to address the implementation issues related to the current EU legal framework (e.g. the Water Framework and Floods Directives) and to develop measures to tackle in particular water availability and water quantity problems (e.g. a specific assessment of EU approach for water efficiency in buildings is being developed and will be part of the Blueprint package. It is subject to a specific IA.)

The Blueprint to Safeguard Europe's Water will be this policy response, with the aim to ensure good quality water in sufficient quantities for all legitimate uses. The time horizon of the Blueprint is 2020 since it is closely related to the EU 2020 Strategy and in particular to the planned Resource Efficiency Roadmap. The Blueprint will be the water milestone on that Roadmap. However, the analysis underpinning the Blueprint will in fact cover a longer time span up to 2050. The Blueprint will:

- Assess the implementation and achievements of the current policy while identifying gaps and shortcomings;
- Look forward to the evolving vulnerability of the water environment to identify measures and tools that may be needed in several EU policy areas in order to ensure the sustainable use of good quality water in the EU in the long term.

The Blueprint will synthesise policy recommendations building on four on-going assessments: 1) the assessment of the River Basin Management Plans delivered by the Member States under the Water Framework Directive, 2) the review of the policy on Water Scarcity and Drought; 3) the assessment of the vulnerability of water resources to climate change and other man made pressures and 4) the above mentioned Fitness Check of EU Freshwater Policy.

The Impact Assessment (IA) of the Blueprint will bring together the output of the above mentioned 4 assessments, by conducting several cross-cutting strands of analysis, covering gaps and making the link with other studies and research projects. It will focus on the identification of the key challenges for water resources management, with a high regional and sectoral level of detail, and the identification and assessment of a set of policy options. The Impact Assessment will pay specific attention to subsidiarity aspects and to the cost of the proposed measures and their relation with the financial perspectives.

The State of EU Water assessment, to be published by the EEA at the same time as the Blueprint, will be a relevant source of information for the Blueprint and its Impact Assessment.

(iii) The above mentioned review of the Water Scarcity and Droughts policy and the Fitness Check constitute ex-post analysis of the existing policy whose results are relevant for this initiative.

What are the main problems which this initiative will address?

The objective of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to achieve good status for European Waters by 2015. Member States were required to submit in 2010 their River Basin Management Plans, the establishment and implementation of which are the main policy obligations for the Member States in the Directive. In addition to freshwater, the Plans cover transitional waters (rivers' deltas/estuaries and coastal (marine) waters. DG ENV is undertaking an analysis of the 170 River Basin Management Plans from the Member States in order to assess their effectiveness in meeting the objectives of the WFD. The Commission is already aware of numerous cases in which the question of policy consistency between WFD objectives and sectoral policies that have an impact on water remains problematic. In particular there are still difficulties in ensuring that due account is taken of the impact of project development in some sectors on water resources and in ensuring that sufficient EU and national funding effectively address water policy objectives. The sectors in question include agriculture, navigation, hydropower, etc. As part of the review of the WFD problems in the implementation of the Directive will be identified and solutions proposed in the framework of the Blueprint. The Blueprint will only cover marine waters to the extent that they fall within the scope of the WFD (as mentioned above). This is because the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (2008/56/EC) is much more recent than the WFD and at an early stage of implementation. Therefore, an in depth assessment like the one carried out in the Blueprint would be premature.

With respect to water scarcity and droughts, studies carried out by the Commission have identified that a significant part of Europe suffers from water stress, that the cumulative impacts of economic development and climate change are likely to aggravate the situation in many areas where water stress already exists and that further significant parts of Europe are likely to be affected in the future. Moreover, studies carried out for the Commission have identified a very significant potential for water savings in Europe through improved water efficiency, in particular in agriculture, buildings, water distribution systems, etc.. Improvements in water efficiency will ceteris paribus contribute to reducing water stress in proportion to the water savings, provided appropriate policies are in place that ensure that the water saved is actually used to reduce water stress.

In addition, evidence obtained through reports and questions from stakeholders, Members of the European Parliament and individual members of the public suggests that the question of equitable sharing of water resources and of the cost of providing water is an issue, particularly in areas where natural water resources are subject to stress. The review of the policy on water scarcity and droughts will identify means to address the above problems in the framework of the Blueprint.

Climate change is already causing an intensification of extreme events such as floods and droughts. The Impact Assessment carried out for the Commission's White Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change concluded that land use and land management measures that strengthen the resilience of water and environmental resources had a potential for providing cost-effective adaptation to climate change inter alia through increases in water retention by soil and ecosystems. Such measures may provide multiple benefits in the form of water resource retention, water self-purification, biodiversity benefits, flood protection and soil improvements. However, current administrative set-ups do not seem to be geared to take full advantage of this potential. The Blueprint will examine whether adaptation is necessary to protect water and natural resources against the cumulative effect of man-made and climate change related pressures in order to be able to cope with the impacts of climate change. This question is clearly related to the WFD, the Floods Directive, the policy on water scarcity and droughts and to policies to improve the efficiency with which water is used (resource efficiency).

Efficient use of water and effective management of natural water resources in a world where water resources are under significant pressure is about ensuring that natural water resources are sustained in terms of quality and quantity to meet the needs of humans, nature and the economy through integrated management and about ensuring that water resources are used efficiently where they provide most added value. In this way effective water policy can contribute to EU2020 and to European competitiveness and the creation of sustainable jobs in Europe.

The Blueprint will also examine if EU funding is necessary in certain regions or sectors in order to catalyse investments. It will identify the necessary action to ensure integration of water policy objectives into other EU policy areas, including agriculture, transport, energy, industry, etc

Who will be affected by it?

Human life, ecosystems and all economic sectors are, directly or indirectly, affected by the problems set out above and by the foreseen initiatives.

- (i) Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity?
- (ii) Why can Member States not achieve the objectives of the proposed action sufficiently by themselves? (Necessity Test)
- (iii) Can the EU achieve the objectives better? (Test of EU Value Added)

The justification of the need and added value for EU action is based on 4 factors: (a) transboundary nature of water resources (b) repercussions on internal market (e.g. water efficiency) (c) need to ensure effective territorial cohesion and (d) need to maximise coherence and consistency in sectors regulated mainly at EU level (e.g. agriculture). On that basis, it is clear that Member States cannot achieve objectives by themselves, and action at EU level, complementing action undertaken at River Basin and National level, provides a clear added value.

B. Objectives of the initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

The general objective is to contribute to achieving sustainable use of EU water resources. This is an essential component of the Europe 2020 Strategy Goals e.g. in relation to resource efficiency and mitigation of climate change

Specific objectives will include :

- Ensuring availability of sufficient quantity of good quality water to support aquatic ecosystems, human needs and economic activities
- Enhancing Water Efficiency in Europe
- Building a robust policy framework to address extreme weather events such as floods and droughts and the potential impacts of global changes.

Operational objectives will include:

- Promote non-regret measures (e.g. measures which offer environmental and economic opportunities such as sustainable land management)
- Improve implementation of existing instruments
- Fill gaps in regulatory framework
- Improve knowledge base

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Improve integration with sectoral policy – Foster innovation – Ensure consistency with external policy (Neighbouring, Development, Trade)
Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas?
Yes. Measures in the following new areas will need to be considered:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of water demand 2. Promotion of water efficiency 3. Land use and land management measures to boost water retention and natural water availability
Measures to strengthen implementation of the reforms introduced with the Water Framework Directive and to strengthen support from other policies will be considered on the basis of the analysis of Member States' 170 River Basin Management Plans.

C. Options
<p>(i) What are the policy options being considered?</p> <p>(ii) What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered?</p> <p>(iii) How do the options respect the proportionality principle?</p>
<p>(i) The Blueprint will sum up policy proposals and recommendations based on the extensive ongoing analysis to ensure that EU policy is fit to ensure good quality water in sufficient quantities for all legitimate uses. This will include measures to maximize compliance with WFD objectives, to tackle Water Scarcity and Droughts (WSD) and to build a robust policy framework to address extreme weather events and the potential impacts of global changes.</p> <p>Policy options to achieve the above defined objectives will be developed in the 7 key areas listed below, on the basis of the IA and presented in the Blueprint.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land Use 2. Economic Incentives 3. Quantitative water resources use targets 4. Governance 5. Knowledge Base 6. Innovation 7. Global Dimension <p>(ii) Given the wide range of reviews being undertaken in water-related issues, a wide range of policy instruments will be considered. The instruments identified will depend on the policy options to address the problems identified in the various reviews but could include guidance or legislation, financial support and incentives eg deployment of EU RTD funds to support the Innovation Partnership on Water Efficiency.</p> <p>(iii) Some of the measures yet to be identified may go beyond routine up-date of existing legislation.</p> <p>The choice of alternative options will be based on an impact assessment that will take into account the proportionality principle.</p>

D. Initial assessment of impacts
What are the benefits and costs of each of the policy options?
The analysis will assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of the various options identified. It will focus on impacts on water quality and aquatic ecosystems and on water availability, on the efficiency and effectiveness of water management and of allocation of water, on water efficiency, the role of R&D and innovation, impacts on business and competitiveness, impacts on health and wellbeing and creation of new jobs.
Could any or all of the options have significant impacts on (i) simplification, (ii) administrative burden and (iii) on relations with other countries, (iv) implementation arrangements? And (v) could any be difficult to transpose for certain Member States?

(i), (ii) and (iv). The Fitness Check will address these issues and the Blueprint will translate the conclusions of the Fitness Check into concrete policy proposals targetting i.e. improving the effectiveness of the implementation (e.g. reporting requirements) while providing the reactive capacity needed to face emerging challenges (e.g. climate change adaptation)

(iii) It depends. Measures to help improve water management in developing countries could be envisaged. Also, some water efficiency measures might have a trade dimension

(v) will be assessed for potential regulatory instrument proposals in the options identified

(i) Will an IA be carried out for this initiative and/or possible follow-up initiatives? (ii) When will the IA work start? (iii) When will you set up the IA Steering Group and how often will it meet? (iv) What DGs will be invited?

(i) Yes

(ii) The impact assessment work started in October 2010

(iii) An IA Steering Group has been set up. It met for the first time on 4 April 2011 and will meet according to need, but at least every 3 months

(iv) IASG includes SG, AGRI, BEPA, BUDG, CLIMA, COMP, DEVCO, EAC, ECFIN, ECHO, ELARG, EMPL, ENER, ENTR, HOME, INFOS, JUST, MARE, MARKT, MOVE, R&I, REGIO, SANCO, SJ, TAXUD and TRADE

(i) Is any of options likely to have impacts on the EU budget above €5m?

(ii) If so, will this IA serve also as an ex-ante evaluation, as required by the Financial regulation? If not, provide information about the timing of the ex-ante evaluation.

(i) Yes, the options could lead to a different spending pattern for Regional Policy and Agricultural Policy Funds. The Blueprint will identify measures that provide benefits not only for the improvement of the management of water resources, but also for biodiversity, climate change policy, innovation, etc. It is therefore not likely to impact on the overall budget envelope, rather to improve the effectiveness of EU funding.

(ii) The ex-ante evaluation required by the financial regulation should be done separately, in the context of concrete proposals for the deployment of these funds.

E. Evidence base, planning of further work and consultation

(i) What information and data are already available? Will existing impact assessment and evaluation work be used?

(ii) What further information needs to be gathered, how will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor), and by when?

(iii) What is the timing for the procurement process & the contract for any external contracts that you are planning (e.g. for analytical studies, information gathering, etc.)?

(iv) Is any particular communication or information activity foreseen? If so, what, and by when?

(i) The Impact Assessment relies on an integrated analysis framework based on 3 main elements:

- The setup of water and ecosystem accounts, at river basin level, enabling a precise quantification of pressures on water resources and of sectoral/geographical variations.
- An integrated modelling framework, linking land-use, hydrological and resource efficiency models and enabling the proper quantitative assessment of the scenarios and the policy options.

A knowledge mapping, identifying the key relations between driving forces, pressures, states, impacts and policy responses, and providing access to reports, research projects and case studies. This mapping will also enable the identification of knowledge gaps.

This toolbox is being built on the basis of co-ordinated work between DG ENV and other services and bodies, in particular DG ESTAT, JRC, RTD and the EEA:

DG Environment has launched or will launch a set of contracts which cover large parts of the scope of the Blueprint Impact Assessment and listed below, with the completion date:

- Support WFD implementation: 06/12
- IA revision Groundwater Directive: 06/12
- Assessment of options for EU action on water efficiency of buildings: 03/12
- Assessment of the possibilities of introducing water related information on food and agricultural product labels: 08/11
- Water pricing & water allocation in agriculture: 12/11
- Assessment of the options for water saving in agriculture and the costs and benefits of the different options:

12/11

- Support in preparation of the Impact assessment of the 2012 review of the Water Scarcity and Droughts: 02/12
- Pilot Project - Development of prevention activities to halt desertification in Europe: 07/12
- Pilot project on the economic loss due to high non-revenue-water amounts in cities: 07/12
- Modelling water vulnerability & adaptation (ClimWatAdapt): 08/11
- Costs and benefits of natural water retention measures: 12/11

A first contract supporting the Fitness Check was delivered in June 2011. This preliminary study has explored the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the EU freshwater policy. These preliminary findings should now be the basis for a public consultation and be discussed with as broad a group of stakeholders as possible. A 2nd stakeholder workshop will take place in January 2012. A new contract will be launched in Sept 2011 to provide support for the public consultation, for the discussion of the preliminary study with key stakeholders and to produce a background document for the Fitness Check report.

(ii) (iii) A set of additional support contracts for the Impact Assessment will start in October-November 2011, with the objective of gathering all relevant information on policy options and their potential impacts in a structured framework, and performing additional assessment i.e. in the following areas: building of water accounts at river basin level, establishment of cost curves for water supply and demand curves, providing geographical and sectoral level of detail; quantitative assessment of water resources related vulnerabilities and of measures to strengthen resource resilience; valuation of water related ecosystem services; definition of changes needed in regulatory regimes or implementation strategies for integrated multipurpose land use measures; assessment of the effectiveness of the mix of policy instruments (in particular economic and communication instruments) in managing the vulnerability of water resources and trade-offs between sectors, regions & systems; development of relevant maps and indicators to support decision making; support to stakeholder workshop and conferences to discuss interim results of the Blueprint; etc.

The JRC is contributing to the Blueprint by the provision and improvement of an integrated assessment platform for the modelling of scenarios and policy options (based on an integrated Land Use Modelling Platform and the hydrological modelling framework LISFLOOD); by the spatial explicit mapping of numerous indicators on drivers, pressures, states and impacts, including changes in ecosystem services.

The EEA is contributing through the assessment of state and pressure from reporting information; the assessment of the vulnerability and integrity of water ecosystems; the setup of a more comprehensive indicator framework in particular for the Water Scarcity and Drought policy and for decoupling water management from its environmental impacts; a cross-sectoral 'water economics' assessment with a view to integration into ecosystems accounts; scenarios for key environmental and sectoral policy priorities, etc. The building of water asset accounts (at river basin level) by the EEA in cooperation with Eurostat and JRC, will be a central methodological element to underpin the IA of the Blueprint, in particular water balances, the fast track implementation plan for physical ecosystem accounts in Europe and statistics on overall water use and uses by sector.

The outcome of completed or on-going relevant research projects (FP6/7, ERA-NETs, national research projects, etc.) will be integrated in the impact assessment.

(iv) Yes. There is a plan for a communication and consultation campaign starting in 2011 and building on stakeholder consultations that have already taken place. These activities will culminate with a major European conference in the spring of 2012 to discuss the options identified for further action.

Which stakeholders & experts have been or will be consulted, how, and at what stage?

A wide range of stakeholders (Member States, economic stakeholders and NGOs) and experts has already been consulted in 2009 and 2010 on the organisation and content of the analyses undertaken for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the standards for groundwater in the Groundwater Directive and the issues relating to water scarcity and droughts. Further extensive consultations will take place in the course of 2011 and 2012 to ensure that optimal use can be made of input from stakeholders and experts on selected topics in relation to the development of the Blueprint.

The main instrument for stakeholder consultation will be the Group of Water Directors and the Strategic Coordination Group under the Common Implementation Strategy of the Water Framework Directive, and related working groups and expert groups.

In the context of the Fitness Check, specific consultations of stakeholders are taking place through interviews and meetings.