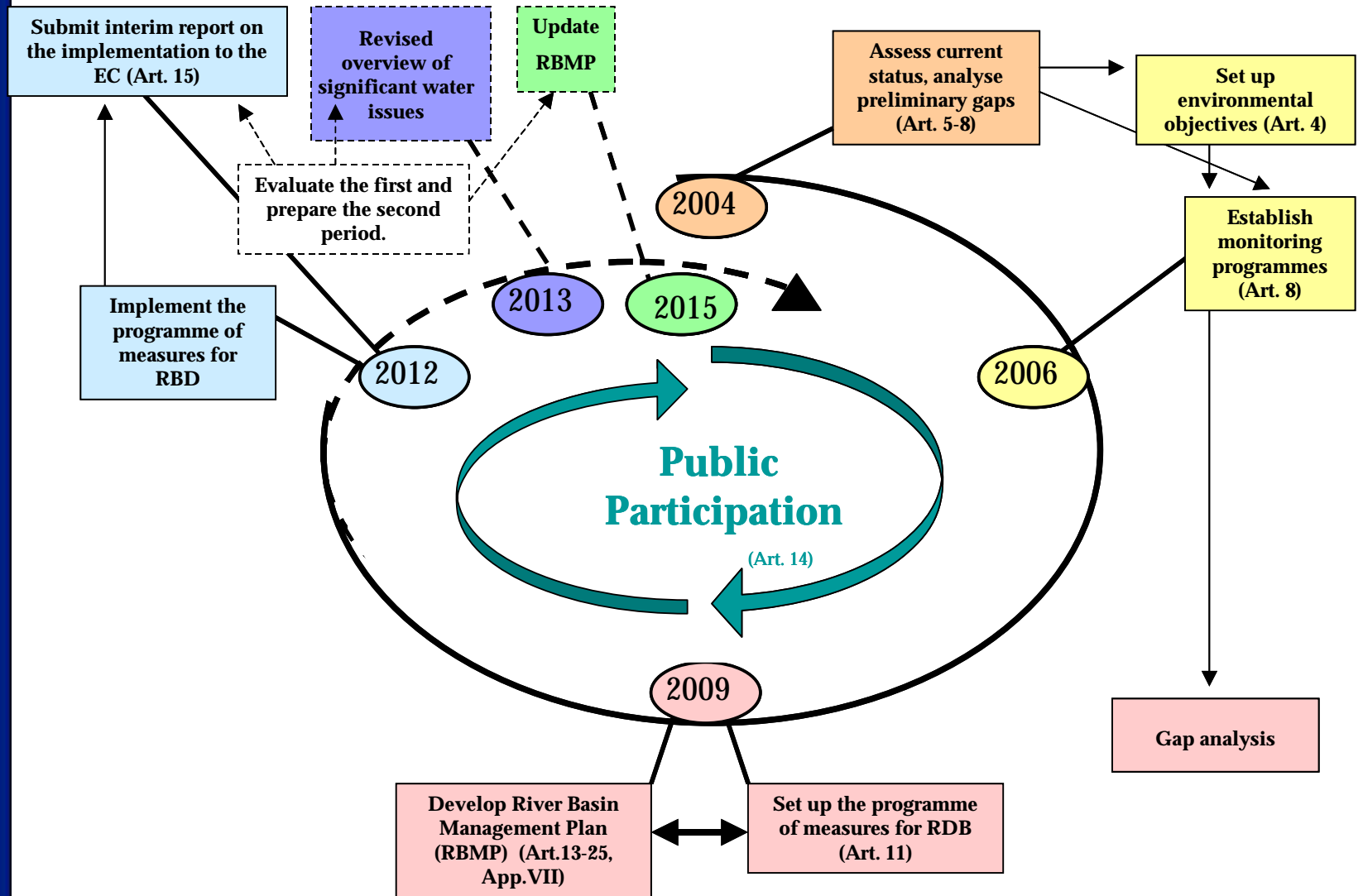


Checklist for Environmental Citizens' Organisations in the Baltic Sea Region on Good River Basin Management

Important components, from a CCB perspective, to be included in all RBMP (RiverBasinManagementPlan) in the Baltic Sea Region



- **Table 1: Steps in Water Basin Management Planning**
- *(Source: the EU Guideline on PP in RBMP)*
- **STEP 1 2003** River basins borders, WFD transposed into national legislation
- **STEP 2 2004** RB characterised, econ analyses of water use, env quality objectives; water prot. areas, human act impacts
- **STEP 3 2006** Planning program of measures, outline of RBMP, start of monitoring programme
- **STEP 3 2006** Publishing **TIMETABLE AND WORKPLAN for RBMP**, 6 months for comments
- **STEP 4 2007** Publishing **IMPORTANT WATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES**, 6 months for coments
- **STEP 5 2008** Publishing **DRAFT RBMP**, 6 months for comments
- **STEP 6 2009** Publishing final version of RBMP, progr of measures
- **STEP 7 2012** Implementation of programme of measures
- **STEP 8 2015** Evaluation and updating in every 6th year

Transboundary river basins with EU (Rus, Belr, Ukr)

A new aspect for many member states is the crossing of the administrative borders for discussing the river basin questions. Several river basins are shared not only by different counties but also by different states and in that case international public consultations are required.

- **River Basin Authority - A new element in the Water Framework Directive**
- **Public advisory boards** involve representatives from various groups of water users, as well as environmental organisations. Good models and examples can be found in Germany, Schleswig Holstein and in the international river basin Lielupe between Latvia and Lithuania.

- **Heavily Modified Waterbodies (HMWB)** – one of the issues to turn attention to is the designation of your local water body a Heavily Modified one. In that case there will be no obligation to guarantee its good ecological status by year 2015. In North of Sweden there have been cases when NGOs protest against such decisions as the real reason for the designation has been the plan to develop hydropower plant constructions on rivers that are today in a sufficiently good ecological status. (See EU guideline explaining HMWB
- **Nitrate sensitive areas** – are also determined during the very first stages of the River Basin Management Planning. In those areas the ground water is less protected from pollution by nutrient and more strict standards will be prescribed to agricultural entrepreneurs. NGOs can check what kind of proposals have been made and if the areas that are left out of the borders of Nitrate Sensitive Areas need more protection too.

Characterisation of the chemical and biological status of the water bodies . By spring 2005 all countries had to submit the first characterisation of their river basins to the central EU authorities. Due to lack of time, these reports mainly contained the chemical characterisation of the rivers while the wildlife data was not presented. NGOs may check what kind of information has already been collected on the river flora and fauna by their national research institutions.

- **Water quality classes and intercalibration** – CCB as a network of grass-root organisations is not aiming at commenting most of the results of the intercalibration process, as we do not have sufficient experts in this area. Still the local branch organisations are encouraged to find out what kind of decision has been made about their local water body and may be discuss it among their own circle. It is also interesting to find out if their river, lake or part of the coastal sea has been chosen to be one of the sampling sites on the EU level monitoring process.

- Water pricing
- All water use shall pay a price

Waste Water Treatment in small settlements and rural areas (Single-family homes)

The topic of nature friendly small scale waste waster treatment plants is often not covered at all in the final documents.

“What are the requirements for the treatment of waste waters originating from densely populated areas in your country? Has there been a recent change for more strict requirement already or not yet?

Requirements for hygienic safety-bathing water quality in river waters?

Does your country fulfill the requirements of the Urban Wastewater Directive by year 2010? Does your country have enough resources? Have you considered a longer (additional) transition period for fulfilling these requirements?

How is the construction of treatment plants going on in the rural areas? Are the requirements (concerning hygienic safety, water pollution, recycling of nutrients) from wastewater treatment enough sufficient? Do these activities meet the deadlines set in the projects? What is the ratio between properly working and non-working small treatment plants? Are the preliminary assessments about the technologies, number of inhabitants, and pollution loads adequate? Have there been cases if a newly constructed treatment plant is over- or underscaled?

Examples of treatment plants that are working well/not well.

- *Does the central and local authorities favour or unfavour sand/soil filters; forest irrigation of pre-treated wastewater; constructed wetlands for nitrogen removal (Building new ones)*
- *How are the processes on requirements and of constructing new treatment plants and of compiling water management plans for river basins be harmonised with each other?"*
- *Single family-homes wastewater treatment*
- *Many different considerations may come up on this subject.*
- *What will happen to inhabitants who send untreated wastewater to the ground (infiltration wells) soil-infiltration for wastewater?*
- *How should a citizen behave if his neighbour has an infiltration well that obviously threatens the water quality in their common drilled drinking-water well?*
- *Where and for which price can a citizen order water analyses?*
- *Where can an inhabitant of a single farm, far away from other houses, discharge its waste water and what does he have to do to be an obedient citizen?*
- *The solution should be that national/local government-authorities put up clear requirements for wastewater treatment/handling for single-family homes, that may fulfil same standards as for small-sized municipal wastewater treatment*
- *-Hygienic safe: Bathing water quality in water bodies exposed to the public and wildlife*
- *-Water protection-reduction to at least 90 % BOD7, 50-90% P, 25% N*
- *-Recycling: P 50 %, or all nutrients 25%*

Water protection measures in agriculture

Agricultural run-off of nutrient to the Baltic Sea contributes around 50 % of the total nutrient load to the Baltic Sea. A list of the CCB suggestions for good water management in agriculture contains the following:

- Modernising of infrastructure (housing, slurry and manure storage facilities;
- avoiding the atmospheric emissions of ammonia from animal production;
 - More efficient manure application techniques;
- Reducing industrial farming to sustainable levels in nitrate sensitive areas;
 - Maintaining extensive farming systems;
- More efficient use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides;
- Creation of multi species buffer zones for protecting water courses;
- Creation of constructed wetlands as sustainable pollution control structures; haymaking in floodplains.

Fish populations in rivers – protection of fish biodiversity

In the characterisation of water bodies the focus has normally been on chemical status (concentrations of nutrients etc), and the biological status is usually lagging behind.

Information on plant communities and bottom-fauna and especially fish populations are usually fragmentary.

1. Demand on proper characterisation of the fish populations in the river system. Such demands may require more inventories, and summaries of existing knowledge.
2. Require clear objectives for the status of fish populations. Set up goals such as – The management of the river system shall guarantee that all fish populations of the river system will be strong and sustained for the future.
3. Migratory fish species shall be able to migrate to all parts of the river system having suitable spawning and breeding areas. Larvae and smolts of migratory fish species shall also be able to migrate out from the river (obstacles shall be removed or fishways should be constructed) (Usually there are no measures to guarantee migration out. Smolts may be killed in turbines, or just cannot pass a dam on the way downstream).

Migratory fish versus small hydropower plants and dams

Support for promotion of migratory fish species, such as wild Baltic salmon, brown trout and vimba. Many constructions in rivers (hydropower dams, old mill-dams, old construction for timber transport in rivers, improperly constructed pipes/tubes under roads etc) stops migratory fish species. Such stops should be investigated in the river system. Strong requirements for such studies shall be made for rivers having threatened wild salmon populations.

Public Monitoring RiverWatch activities by NGOs to support River Basin Management

RiverWatch activities can be performed by both schools and by grownup local activists. In many Baltic Sea countries there is a long tradition of water watch for schools. They can easily include new elements in their work, for example use new techniques for monitoring. Public monitoring may give good qualitative results while quantitative results should mainly be expected from the “official” monitoring.

While the environmental NGOs from many EU member states (especially Germany) are actively participating in the classification of water bodies and intercalibration of monitoring sites, Coalition Clean Baltic has so far, as network of grassroots organisations not taking part in consultations that need so high level of expert knowledge.