

**COMMON IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY
FOR THE WATER FRAMEWORK DIRECTIVE
(2000/60/EC) AND THE FLOODS DIRECTIVE
(2007/60/EC)**



Work Programme 2019-2021

As agreed by Water Directors at their meeting in Vienna on 29 November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The Common Implementation Strategy (CIS for the Water Framework Directive (WFD) ¹ was launched in 2001, to work towards a successful implementation of the core legislation on water at EU level. In the meantime, implementation of the Floods, Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) and Groundwater Directives became closely tied in with that of the WFD, and coordination with the implementation of other water-related Directives (Urban Waste Water, Drinking Water, Bathing Water², Nitrates, Marine Strategy Framework and Nature Directives) is gradually improving.

The CIS Work Programme for the period 2016-2018 was based on the experience with the implementation of the WFD, EQS, Groundwater and Floods Directive between their entry into force and 2015. The activities that were foreseen in that Work Programme will be largely finalised by the end of 2018.

This 2019-2021 CIS Work Programme has been drafted following discussion in the meetings of Water Directors, the Strategic Coordination Group and the existing CIS Working Groups. It comes at a particular point in time, having to be finalised before the Commission's assessment of the second River Basin Management Plans and first Flood Risk Management Plans is completed and when a Fitness Check on EU water legislation is ongoing.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE CIS WORK PROGRAMME 2019-2021

The main objectives of the CIS remain, as was the case in the previous Work Programmes, to ensure a better implementation of the water legislation and to promote the integration of water-related issues in other environmental policies, as well as in other sectoral policies such as agriculture, transport or energy.

Furthermore, as the River Basin Management Plans and Flood Risk Management Plans are key instruments for water management in the EU, they are very relevant to the implementation of the commitments taken in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and, in particular, of SDG6.

The discussions that took place in the Strategic Coordination Group and in the meeting of Water Directors have shown a general agreement on continuing to shift the focus of the CIS more and more towards exchanges of best practices. It was generally agreed that most issues are already covered by guidance developed since 2001. It was stressed, however, that the objective of the experience-sharing should still be to improve implementation and that, in this context, additional guidance or revisiting existing guidance may be needed on some topics. This may be the case particularly for the Floods Directive, to take into account the preparation by the Member States and the assessment by the Commission of the first Flood Risk Management Plans.

3. OVERALL STRUCTURE AND WORKING METHODS

3.1. Overview

The consensus among Water Directors and within the Strategic Coordination Group was that the existing CIS Working Groups should continue to work for the next three years. Concerning the Ad-hoc Task Groups that were in place during the period of the 2016-2018 Work Programme, the

¹ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000, establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22/12/2000, p. 1) as amended by European Parliament and Council Decision 2455/2001/EC (OJ L 331, 15/12/2001, p.1)

² The Directives on Urban Waste Water, Drinking and Bathing Water are often referred to as the group of "Water Industry Directives".

one on Art. 4(7) has completed the task it had been assigned with and therefore does not need to be kept in the next Work Programme. The work of the Ad-hoc Task Group on hydromorphology will need to continue, but there was consensus about integrating that work in the Working Group on Ecological Status, modifying the composition of that group if and when needed, in order to include the necessary competence.

The Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse fulfilled the mandate given to it by the Strategic Coordination Group. However, a proposal for a Regulation on water reuse for irrigation has, in the meantime, been adopted by the Commission. The Circular Economy Action Plan³ also includes non-legislative initiatives concerning water reuse that will need to be followed. There was a discussion in the Strategic Coordination Group and Water Directors meeting about possibly converting the Ad-hoc Task Group into a more permanent CIS Working Group, but this was considered to be premature before a Regulation is adopted. This 2019-2021 CIS Work Programme therefore includes activities on water reuse that are independent of the existence and final text of a Regulation and need to be continued in any case. These activities are assigned to the Strategic Coordination Group, with the understanding that a mandate will be given by the Strategic Coordination Group to the current Ad-hoc Task Group on water reuse to carry them out. Once a Regulation is adopted, the status of this Ad-hoc Group may be revisited, either by converting it into a CIS Working Group or extending its mandate to include activities made necessary by the Regulation in its final form.

There was also consensus among Water Directors and in the Strategic Coordination Group concerning the need to continue the work on agriculture and to revive the work on economic issues linked to the WFD and, in particular, on the implementation of Art. 9 of the Directive.

Concerning agriculture, there was broad agreement that the current working method, outside the CIS process in order to involve fully the agricultural sector in the Member States and in the Commission, needs to continue and be reinforced. The Strategic Coordination Group will be kept informed about any developments in this area and joint meetings, at technical level or among Water and Agriculture Directors may be organised when necessary.

On economic issues, such as financing of measures and implementation of Article 9 of the WFD, the 2019-2021 CIS Work Programme includes specific activities which are assigned to the Strategic Coordination Group, on the understanding that the Group will give a mandate to a new Ad-hoc Task Group on Economics to implement those activities. Depending on the progress of the work in that Ad-hoc Task Group, the creation of a CIS Working Group on Economics may be envisaged at a later stage.

Several other areas were discussed in which it was felt that work within the CIS would be useful, but there was agreement that the resources available in the Member States, stakeholder organisations and Commission would not be sufficient to pick up any more subjects for work in the period 2019-2021. Along the same line, there was also agreement that the same concern on availability of resources imposes some restraint on the activities planned for the Working Groups and the Strategic Coordination Group.

3.2. Organisation of the CIS

This CIS Work Programme is, as the previous ones, based on a three-layer organisation, with Water Directors meetings, the Strategic Coordination Group and the different Working Groups. The Strategic Coordination Group will also have, as was already the case in the 2016-2018 Work Programme, specific activities assigned to it, for the implementation of which it can give a mandate to Ad-hoc Task Groups as needed.

None of the Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups foreseen in this Work Programme are permanent by nature. However, the scope of the work of the Working Groups is generally wider than is the case for any Ad-hoc Task Groups and it is foreseeable that they will need to continue to work for the whole duration of this Work Programme. As discussed above, this may also turn out to be the case for the proposed Ad-hoc Task Groups on water reuse and on economics, in

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy", <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52015DC0614>.

which case this Work Programme should be revised to convert such Ad-hoc Groups into CIS Working Groups.

The Water Directors will meet, in principle, twice a year. The meetings of Water Directors will be organised by the Member State holding the EU Presidency and co-chaired by the Presidency and the Commission. Water Directors are responsible for deciding on the activities undertaken under the CIS (e.g. modifying the Work Programme if necessary) and for endorsing guidance documents or other documents with a strategic character prepared by one of the CIS Groups, as proposed by the Strategic Coordination Group.

The Strategic Coordination Group will be co-chaired by the Commission and one Member State. In addition to its role in ensuring the coordination among the work done by different Working Groups, the Strategic Coordination Group is also assigned in this Work Programme a number of activities that do not fall under the scope of one of the existing Working Groups. For that purpose, the Strategic Coordination Group can establish Ad-hoc Task Groups, to which it gives a mandate for specific tasks, with identified deliverables and deadlines. The Strategic Coordination Group can also, if and when this may be the best option to pursue an activity, set up workshops, possibly back-to-back with the meetings of the Group, to discuss specific topics. The members of the Strategic Coordination Group are expected to ensure that information exchanged within the CIS process, e.g. guidance documents or Working Group reports, is passed down to all those involved in water management at national, regional or river basin level.

Ad-hoc Task Groups will be established by the Strategic Coordination Group on the basis of a proposal from the Commission, Member States and/or stakeholders, which identifies the future lead or co-leads of the Group. It is the responsibility of the leads initially identified in the proposal to draft a mandate, using the template in the Annex to this Work Programme, that specifies the scope of the work, the working method, deliverables and timeline for the Group. The size and composition of the Ad-hoc Task Groups will depend on the complexity of the tasks included in their individual mandates. Members of the Ad-hoc Task Groups may be members of the Strategic Coordination Group or experts appointed by them and each Ad-hoc Task Group is expected to have a minimum of one and a maximum of three leads.

The Strategic Coordination Group will inform the Water Directors about the mandates given to Ad-hoc Task Groups, indicating which of the activities identified in the Work Programme each Ad-hoc Task Group will contribute to.

Preparatory meetings ("Prep-SCG"), with the participation of at least one lead of each of the Working Groups, Ad-hoc Task Groups and the co-leads of the Strategic Coordination Group, may be organised when necessary to ensure coordination between the different Groups. These meetings will be decided and chaired by the co-chairs of the Strategic Coordination Group, may be physical meetings or web conferences, and do not have a pre-established periodicity.

Each Working Group will have autonomy in deciding when and where to meet and how to organise the work in order to deliver the products foreseen within the timetable set by the Work Programme. In this framework, Working Groups may decide to create smaller sub-groups to work on specific tasks. In this case, the Working Group leads need to inform the Strategic Coordination Group about the creation of such sub-groups and the tasks assigned to them.

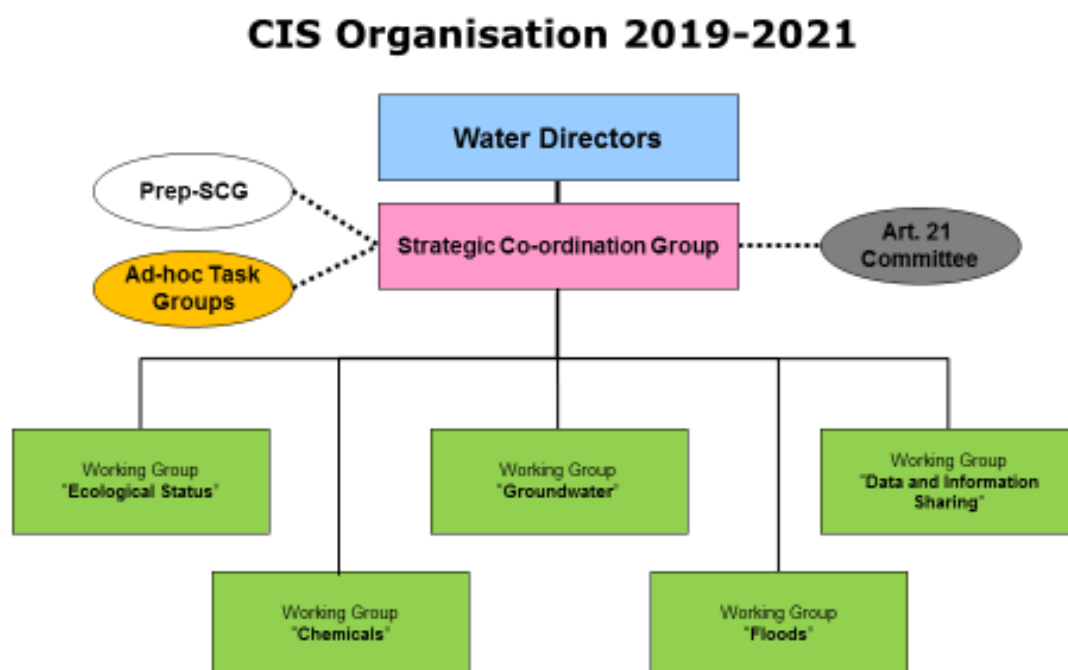
Each Working Group will have a minimum of two and a maximum of four co-leads, of which at least one from the Commission and one from a Member State. The initial co-leads of each Working Group are identified in this Work Programme and can be changed following a proposal from the Commission or a Member State, with the approval of the Strategic Coordination Group.

The co-leads of each Working Group are responsible for coordinating the work of the Group, ensuring that the requests from the Strategic Coordination Group are correctly understood by the members of the Working Group, reporting back to the Strategic Coordination Group on the activities of the Working Group, ensuring that the requested deliverables are produced on time and organising and setting up an agenda for the meetings of the Working Group. The co-leads are also responsible for ensuring coordination with the work of other Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups when relevant.

Members of the Working Groups are expected to have the necessary technical expertise to contribute to the work of the Group. This may lead, in some cases, to the participation in some activities of the Group by different experts from a Member State or stakeholder organisation in order to cover the different technical issues involved (e.g. the inclusion of hydro-morphology experts in activities of the Working Group on Ecological Status when necessary).

In organising their work, the Working Groups and in particular the co-leads need to make sure that the limited resources available are used in an efficient way. This may include, for example, the replacement of physical meetings with web or phone conferences when justified. In order for the meetings to be well prepared and have the necessary follow-up, it is important that all documents for a meeting are available in Circabc at least 10 working days before the meeting and that minutes of the meetings, or at least operational conclusions, are available no more than 15 days after the meetings.

The CIS organisation is summarised in the figure below.



3.3. Tasks for the Strategic Coordination Group

In addition to its coordination role, the Strategic Coordination Group is assigned a number of tasks that do not fall under the remit of any of the existing Working Groups or that have a less technical and more strategic character. These tasks can be carried out by the Strategic Coordination Group itself (e.g. by organising back-to back workshops together with the meetings of the Group) or be mandated to an Ad-hoc Task Group, following the procedure described in the previous section of this Work Programme.

The following tasks have been identified for the Strategic Coordination Group, in no particular order:

- a) Exchange of information on potential synergies with other sectoral policies, such as agriculture, energy, transport and land use planning, and on challenges linked to those policies
Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group

Timing: 2019-2021

- b) Conclusions of the assessment of the second River Basin Management Plans and first Flood Risk Management Plans, with a view to improving the implementation, so that the objectives of the Directives can be reached
Working method: Discussion at the level of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019-2020
- c) Fitness Check of EU water legislation
Working method: The Fitness Check is a formal process, with its own mechanisms, including for the participation of Member States and stakeholders. The Strategic Coordination Group will be informed of progress of work and may trigger follow-up action where appropriate
Timing: 2019
- d) Financing of measures (following up on previous studies on financing needs and on valuing costs and benefits of implementing water policy, taking into account the concept of eco-system services where relevant)
Deliverable: Technical report on good practices for the identification of investment needs and financing sources for the WFD Programmes of Measures.
Working method: An Ad-hoc Task Group on Economics will be established to carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019-2020
- e) Exchanging information on implementation of cost recovery
Deliverable: Technical report identifying the approaches currently in place for cost recovery for water services in line with the requirements of Art. 9 of the WFD, and examining data and information needs on this topic
Working method: An Ad-hoc Task Group on Economics will be established to carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019-2020
- f) Exchange of experiences on risk management for water reuse for agricultural irrigation
Deliverable: CIS guidance to be endorsed by Water Directors
Working method: The Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse will be maintained and carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019-mid 2020
- g) Water reuse-specific input to the Guidance for aquifer recharge, if requested by the Working Group on Groundwater
Deliverable: Contribution to a CIS guidance on aquifer recharge that may be produced by the Working Group on Groundwater
Working method: The Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse will be maintained and carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019
- h) Information exchange on other actions developed by the Commission and on other topics of relevance to the advancement of safe water reuse practices in the EU
Deliverable: Regular written reports to the Strategic Coordination Group on the information exchanges
Working method: The Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse will be maintained and carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group
Timing: 2019-2021
- i) Exchange of experiences on the use of exemptions
Deliverable: Updated CIS guidance to be endorsed by Water Directors
Working method: An Ad-hoc Task Group on Exemptions could be established and carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group (depending on interest in participation and leadership of such a group by members of the Strategic Coordination Group)
Timing: to be defined in the mandate of a possible Ad-hoc Task Group
- j) Updated guidance on climate change

Deliverable: Updated CIS guidance to be endorsed by Water Directors
Working method: An Ad-hoc Task Group on Climate Change could be established and carry out this task under the direction of the Strategic Coordination Group (depending on interest in participation and leadership of such a group by members of the Strategic Coordination Group)
Timing: to be defined in the mandate of a possible Ad-hoc Task Group

- k) Exchanging experiences on how to communicate progress in the implementation of the Directives
Working method: Discussion in the SCG
Timing: 2019-2021
- l) Exchanging experiences of the water authorities concerning their involvement in the preparation of the CAP Strategic Plans
Working method: Discussion in the SCG
Timing: 2019-2020
- m) Exchanging experiences on the reporting and assessment of the 2nd River Basin Management Plans and 1st Flood Risk Management Plans with a view to optimising similar exercises in the future
Working method: Discussion in the SCG
Timing: 2019

Several Member States and stakeholders have expressed interest on other topics, such as water scarcity and droughts, communication and public participation, and links with spatial planning. It is difficult to see how the Strategic Coordination Group would have the necessary resources to deal with all these topics, irrespective of their importance. However, if resources allow, the Group can propose a modification of this Work Programme to include additional tasks at a later stage, as described in the section on modifications of the Work Programme.

3.4. Working Group on Ecological Status (ECOSTAT)

Tasks

- Facilitating the intercalibration of new and updated methods for the classification of Ecological Status, in particular completing the intercalibration of methods for fish in very large rivers
- Finalising the guidance on Good Ecological Potential; further exchange of information and intercomparison of Member States' approaches to Good Ecological Potential
- Continuing the information exchanges on hydromorphology concerning rivers, lakes and coastal and transitional waters
- Continuing the exchanges of information on nutrients and other physico-chemical elements: nutrient boundaries, links with the MSFD and regional sea conventions, nutrient reduction targets
- Contributing to the exchange of information, within the Working Group on Chemicals, on the use of River Basin Specific Pollutants for the classification of ecological status
- Exchanging information on other topics relevant to ecological status of surface waters, namely comparability of ecological status classification, use of CEN standards in the implementation of the WFD, use of innovative methods in classification (e.g. e-DNA, remote sensing), sediment management, plastics, invasive non-native species and temporary rivers
- Providing specific contributions, in cooperation with the Working Group on Data and Information Sharing, aimed at improving the comparability of reported data, across River Basin Districts and Member States as well as from one implementation cycle to the next.

Deliverables (timeline)

- Appendix to CIS Guidance on Heavily Modified Water Bodies concerning the determination of Good Ecological Potential in rivers (2019)
- Best practice document on nutrient concentrations that support Good Ecological Status (2019)

- Discussion documents and workshop reports documenting the outcome of the information exchanges (2019-2021)

Leads

DG Joint Research Centre, Germany, Italy, Sweden

3.5. Working Group on Chemicals

Tasks

- Completing the development of guidance on the implementation of Environmental Quality Standards for metals
- Contributing to the next Commission Decision updating the surface water watch list of pollutants, including exchange of good practices on sediment monitoring
- Exchanging good practices on monitoring, assessment and reporting, including as regards:
 - Extrapolation and grouping techniques (including for biota monitoring)
 - Other issues related to biota monitoring
 - Calculation and application of “equivalently protective” EQS
- Increasing comparability in the assessment and reporting of emissions of pollutants
- Exchanging good practices on programmes of measures and the use of exemptions (including improving coordination with the implementation of other legislation)
- Continuing work on a holistic approach to chemicals, including consideration of the practical application of effect-based methods
- Exchanging good practices on micro-plastics and pharmaceuticals
- Exchanging information to increase the harmonisation of Environmental Quality Standards for River Basin Specific Pollutants
- “Back-burner” work on a review of the priority substances list (e.g. to flag new information on candidate substances, to discuss data requirements for including substances in the list and criteria for removing substances from the list, to support the development of analytical methods)
- [Exchanging good practices on adaptation to climate change]
- Exchanging information on other issues relevant to chemicals in surface waters, namely concerning the non-deterioration principle, new analytical methods and new monitoring techniques, links with other legislation on chemicals, such as the Industrial Emissions Directive and Reach, communication on the impact on chemical status of substances behaving like UPBTs (ubiquitous, persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic substances), coordination with other sectoral policies such as drinking water or the marine strategy, streamlining of reporting on substances listed in the Stockholm and Minamata Conventions

Deliverables (timeline)

- CIS guidance on Environmental Quality Standards for metals (2019-2020)
- Good practices document including a library of measures that can be used towards reaching good chemical status

Leads

DG Environment, DG Joint Research Centre, Italy and Romania

3.6. Working Group on Groundwater

Tasks

- Improving comparability of methods used to set threshold values for groundwater pollutants
- Completing the development of a first voluntary watch list for contaminants of emerging concern, in cooperation with the Working Group Chemicals

- Explore the need and, if necessary, develop a guidance document on aquifer recharge practices that comply with the WFD and Groundwater Directive, in cooperation with the Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse
- Exchanging information on good practices to deal with water abstraction pressures taking into account climate change
- Contributing to policy integration between groundwater management and other sectoral policies, namely agriculture and drinking water
- Exchanging information on other issues relevant to groundwater management, namely trend assessment, interaction between groundwater, surface waters and associated ecosystems, programmes of measures, management of transboundary groundwater bodies, reporting on groundwater status

Deliverables (timeline)

- CIS guidance on aquifer recharge (2019-2020)
- Revised CIS guidance on climate change, if necessary (2020-2021)
- Technical report on options to improve comparability of threshold values (2019-2020)
- Technical report on the first voluntary watch list (2019)
- Workshop on integration of drinking water into river basin management planning, in cooperation with the Drinking Water Directive Committee (2020-2021), in continuation of the two workshops which have taken place in the past

Leads

DG Environment, Austria, Luxembourg, United Kingdom

3.7. Working Group on Floods

Tasks

- Supporting the reporting by Member States during the second cycle of implementation of the Floods Directive, including the reporting on Preliminary Flood Risk Analysis/Areas of Potential Significant Flood Risk in 2019, Flood Hazard and Risk Maps in 2020 and Flood Risk Management Plans in 2022
- Exchanging information on good practices, ongoing projects and research activities and new approaches for flood risk management
- Reviewing and, if necessary, amending the existing document on links between the Floods Directive and the WFD
- Contributing to a document on flood risk management and Natura 2000, on the basis of the zero-draft produced in 2018
- Workshops on issues related to the implementation of the Floods Directive (precise issues to be defined by the Working Group Floods)
- Exchanging information on how to determine the severity of flood events based on damage caused rather than on extent
- Exchanging information and providing input to other CIS activities or other EU-level activities of relevance to the management of flood risks in the EU, such as nature based solutions, management of hydromorphological pressures, climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, INSPIRE and scientific research linked to disaster risk management

Deliverables (timeline)

- Technical report on good practices in flood risk management (2019-2020)
- If necessary, revised document on the links between the Floods Directive and the WFD (2020)
- Information to the Strategic Coordination Group and Water Directors concerning the planned organisation of workshops on specific issues related to the implementation of the Floods Directive
- Reports of the workshops that will be organised on the initiative of the Working Group Floods

Leads

DG Environment, Austria

3.8. Working Group on Data and Information Sharing

Tasks

- Preparing the reporting of the third River Basin Management Plans, ensuring, as much as possible, stability in the reporting schemas
- Ensuring coordination with the reporting done under the Floods Directive and Marine Strategy Framework Directive
- Supporting the annual reporting by Member States on the Watch List required by the EQS Directive
- Supporting the European Environment Agency and the Commission in the development of visualisation tools for the data reported under the WFD and Floods Directive, with a view to be able to communicate effectively on the progress made in the implementation of the Directives
- Developing statistically robust indicators on water quality that can be used in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals or others
- In cooperation with other Working Groups, improving the comparability of data reported, across River Basin Districts and Member States and from one implementation cycle to the next

Deliverables (timeline)

- Revised reporting guidance documents where needed (2019-2021)
- Technical report on water quality indicators (2020)
- Technical report on comparability of data (2021)

Leads

DG Environment, European Environment Agency, Germany


3.9. Modification of the CIS Work Programme 2019-2021

The Commission, the Water Directors, the Strategic Coordination Group, Working Groups or Ad-hoc Task Groups can propose modifications of the CIS Work Programme. This is particularly the case, as mentioned above, for a possible change of nature of the Ad-hoc Task Group on Water Reuse once a Regulation is adopted. Any proposals for modifications will be discussed by the Strategic Coordination Group before forwarding to Water Directors for endorsement.

Changes in the co-leads of each Working Group can also be proposed, if necessary, by the Working Group concerned. Those changes will be presented to the Strategic Coordination Group for endorsement and to the Water Directors for information.

Annex: Template for Terms of Reference of Ad-hoc Task Groups

[When filling in the template please delete the guidance text in square brackets]

Common Implementation Strategy for the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive - Work Programme 2019-2021 Terms of Reference for Ad-hoc Task Group under the Strategic Coordination Group	
Status/Version/date: [Provide the status of the terms of reference, the version and the date. For example "Draft version 1 of 23/01/2016" or "Final agreed by SCG, version 4 of 15/04/2016".]	
Name of the Ad-hoc Task Group (ATG) [Name of the activity / the ATG – see section 4.2 of the CIS Work Programme 2016-2018 for the tasks potentially covered by ATGs]	
Scope of the work [Describe the scope of the work that will be developed. Which issues will be covered, which will not? What are the links to other CIS activities (Working Groups or ATGs). Do not include here information on the process (workshops, meetings, lead, etc) as this is reported below under Working method.]	
Working method [Describe the way the ATG will operate: membership, expected meetings (of leads, of participants), foreseen discussions at the SCG meetings and/or ad-hoc workshops, estimated length of meetings, etc. Include the estimated timing of the key milestones of the activity (when the meetings, discussions, workshops will happen etc).]	
Expected deliverables and timetable [Describe the expected deliverables and timetable]	
ATG leads [Leads prepare the terms of reference]	
Involvement of other CIS partners The following Member States and/or organisations have indicated they will be actively participating in this activity: The following Member States and/or organisations have indicated they will not expect to actively participating in this activity but are interested in using the results: [Fill with the relevant Member States and organisations following consultations with the SCG.]	
Other useful information: [Any other information considered useful]	