

PILOT RIVER BASIN  
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP  
FINAL REPORT

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## SUMMARY

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The PRB Research Fellowship project represented Ireland's participation in the European Commission DG-ENV led initiative to test implementation of the WFD in a network of fifteen pilot river basins as part of the EC Common Implementation Strategy (CIS). The overall aim of the PRBs at European level was to ensure that the guidance documents produced by the CIS Working Groups are applicable to and workable within all RBDs across Europe. Being a participant in several EU workshops on WFD and a member of CIS Working Group C on Groundwater facilitated exposure to WFD implementation in other countries and provided a valuable feedback mechanism to the national working groups in Ireland.

In general terms the guidance documents provided useful support for carrying out the Article 5 Characterisation Reports. The characterisation report is primarily a technical exercise. Whilst the Directive itself is also a very technical document, like much legislation it is not very user friendly from a practitioner's perspective. Therefore the guidance documents provide a useful role in translating the legislative requirements of the Directive into usable guidance for individuals and organisations involved in the implementation of the WFD.

During the course of the PRB project several reports were produced on the testing of the CIS guidance documents for the Article 5 report in the Shannon river basin. This output included several case studies, which have been reported in peer-reviewed journals, technical reports and conference proceedings. Guidance on WFD implementation issues was provided on: water body delineation/aggregation, RBD boundaries and karst groundwater bodies, screening for pressures, groundwater and wetland management, economics, and risk assessment. Two of these case studies prepared during this project were included in the PRB Outcome Report published by the European Commission (DG-Environment and DG-Joint Research Centre) in 2005.

Several outputs, especially concerning groundwater, were used in the development of national guidance for Article 5 implementation in Ireland. Towards the conclusion of the PRB project the author acted as national EPA coordinator to collate RBD characterisation and risk assessment results into the format required for EPA's formal reporting on Article 5 to the European Commission. This experience at national and European level provided a solid base for the follow-up fellowship called WATER Fellowship (WFD Application, Testing and Evaluation Research Fellowship) planned to run from 2006 to 2008.