

Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies and the Water Framework Directive

The Water Framework Directive gives us an opportunity to protect and improve the water environment by driving towards more sustainable use of water as a natural resource, with integrated catchment (land and water) management through River Basin Planning to maximise synergies and minimise conflicts.

Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS) is the tool we use to manage the water resources of a catchment, and will contribute to our implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

Key points

- The six-year CAMS planning cycle fits well with the Water Framework Directive river basin planning cycle
- CAMS will form a valuable set of supplementary plans to the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans, which will be published in 2008 onwards.
- CAMS first cycle does not include some of the water bodies covered in the Water Framework Directive, particularly lakes, estuaries (transitional waters) and minor aquifers
- Elements of the CAMS process are being revised so that the CAMS second cycle outputs fit better with Water Framework Directive requirements for rivers, lakes, estuaries and groundwater

Objectives of CAMS

CAMS is a relatively new process, the first cycle taking place over 2002-2008. The main objectives are to:

- inform the public about water resources and licensing practices in their area;
- provide a consistent approach to the management of water resources in a catchment while recognising the reasonable needs of water users and the environment;
- provide a framework for management of time-limited licences
- involve the public in managing the water resources in their area.

CAMS enables management of water resources at a local river catchment scale with further subdivision into smaller surface water and groundwater management units. As CAMS areas are based on river catchments, CAMS assessments will help to inform the eleven River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) for England and Wales, which are based on River Basin Districts.

The scale of sub-units (river reaches and groundwater management units) used for water resource management in CAMS is not the same as water bodies under the Water Framework Directive. The initial Water Framework Directive river water bodies are considerably smaller than river reaches used in CAMS, whereas many of the

Water Framework Directive groundwater bodies are larger than CAMS groundwater units. The second cycle CAMS assessments will take account of Water Framework Directive classification at the water body scale.

Using Resource Assessment and Management towards achieving Water Framework Directive objectives

The Water Framework Directive helps us to focus on the ecological 'health' of our water environment. Its primary objectives are to prevent deterioration of ecological status, and where necessary to restore 'good ecological status' for surface water or 'good status' for groundwater.

There are new water resource standards for rivers and lakes in the UK. These are precautionary standards aiming to ensure that water resources activities do not cause or contribute to failure of Water Framework Directive objectives.

Our Resource Assessment and Management (RAM) framework for CAMS includes some of the principles of the Water Framework Directive, such as applying flow targets to prevent ecological deterioration of rivers. We will use elements of this framework (enhanced where necessary) to help classify significant aquifers and to determine hydrological impacts on rivers, lakes and estuaries. In 2004 we applied a rapid assessment method based on the principles of RAM to provide an initial report to the EU of hydrological pressures on rivers, lakes, estuaries and aquifers.

We will adjust RAM flow targets for the second cycle of CAMS, bringing them into alignment with new UK water resource standards.

CAMS and Water Framework Directive Programme of Measures

Measures to be outlined in the River Basin Management Plans are the means of achieving environmental objectives under the Water Framework Directive. Abstraction control is just one of several 'basic measures' that include measures to promote efficient and sustainable water use, to control diffuse and point source pollution, and to control physical alterations to water bodies.

CAMS is one of the main vehicles for delivering abstraction control. The Water Framework Directive requires that a combination of measures be applied in the most cost-effective way; therefore a cost effectiveness analysis will accompany the Programme of Measures for each river basin. Second cycle CAMS decisions will be guided by the results of this analysis.

Stakeholder and public participation

Both CAMS and the Water Framework Directive require us to work with our partners, stakeholders and those with an interest in our water environment, to create a cleaner, healthier water environment in a fair and balanced way.

The public participation elements of CAMS complement our approach to River Basin Planning as outlined in the summary framework document "Water for life and Livelihoods" published in February 2006. We will take note of lessons learned during CAMS consultations when talking to different groups of people about the Water Framework Directive.

CAMS and Water Framework Directive timetables

CAMS are produced on a rolling programme with start dates spread through a six-year cycle. Each of our areas has a schedule to develop their first cycle CAMS by March 2008, with provision for a second CAMS cycle to be completed by March 2014.

Our current schedule means that the first CAMS cycle should end before the deadline of December 2008 for completing the draft River Basin Management Plans required by the Water Framework Directive. This will enable River Basin Management Plans to draw on information gathered for CAMS.

Further developing our Water Resource processes to help deliver integrated river basin planning

We will be looking in detail at how the various water planning processes can come together to allow a more integrated approach to river basin planning and management in the future.

We manage water resources in England and Wales by means of four related processes which will all make their contribution to integrated river basin planning.

- Water Resource Strategic Planning – operating at national and regional scales
- CAMS – operating at the catchment scale
- Restoring Sustainable Abstraction (RSA) programme - operating at a site scale
- The abstraction licensing system – individual licence applications

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Water Framework Directive timetable with CAMS cycles for comparison

Year	Requirement
2003	Transpose Directive into domestic law Identify river basin districts and the competent authorities that will be empowered to implement the Directive
2004	Complete first characterisation and assessment of impacts on, river basin districts Complete first economic analysis of water use Establish a register of protected areas in each river basin district
2005	Identify significant upward trends in Groundwater and establish trend reversal
2006	Establish environmental monitoring programmes Publish a work programme for producing the first RBMPs Establish environmental quality standards for priority substances and controls on principle sources
2007	Publish an interim overview of the significant water management issues in basin district for general consultation
2008	CAMS: First CAMS cycle complete March 2008 Publish draft RBMPs for consultation
2009	Finalise and publish first RBMPs Finalise programme of measures to meet objectives
2010	Ensure water pricing policies are in place
2012	Ensure all measures are fully operational Publish timetable and work programme for second RBMPs Report progress in implementing measures
2013	Review characterisation and impact assessment for river basin districts Review economic analysis of water use Publish an interim overview of the significant water management issues
2014	CAMS: Second CAMS cycle complete March 2014 Publish second draft RBMPs for consultation
2015	Achieve environmental objectives specified in first RBMPs Finalise and publish second RBMP with revised Programme of Measures
2021	2021 Achieve environmental objectives specified in second RBMPs Publish third RBMPs
2027	2027 Achieve environmental objectives specified in third RBMPs Publish fourth RBMPs