

# Water Quality in Northern Ireland

## Governance, Co-ordination and Future Challenges

Dave Foster

Director of Regulatory and Natural Resources Policy  
Division, DAERA

15<sup>th</sup> “Europe-INBO 2017” International Conference, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2017

# Current state of the water environment in Northern Ireland



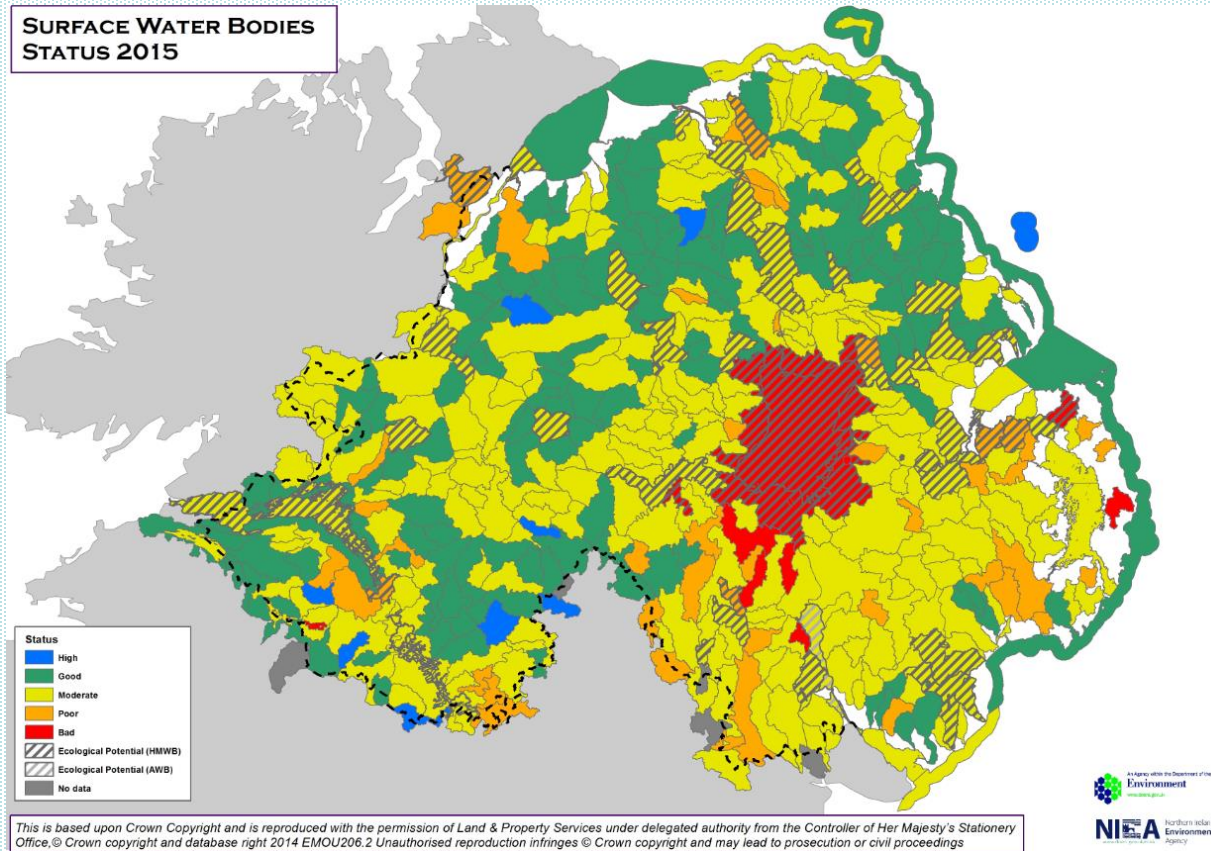
- 33% of river bodies and 24% of lakes were at good status or better in 2015 (Water Framework Directive – WFD)
- 37% of water bodies overall at good status or better
- 11 bathing waters met the ‘Excellent’ standard and a further 9 met the ‘Good’ standard in 2016 (out of 23)
- Overall compliance with drinking water standards was 99.86% in 2016
- 98% of NI population served by WWTW in compliance with WWTD



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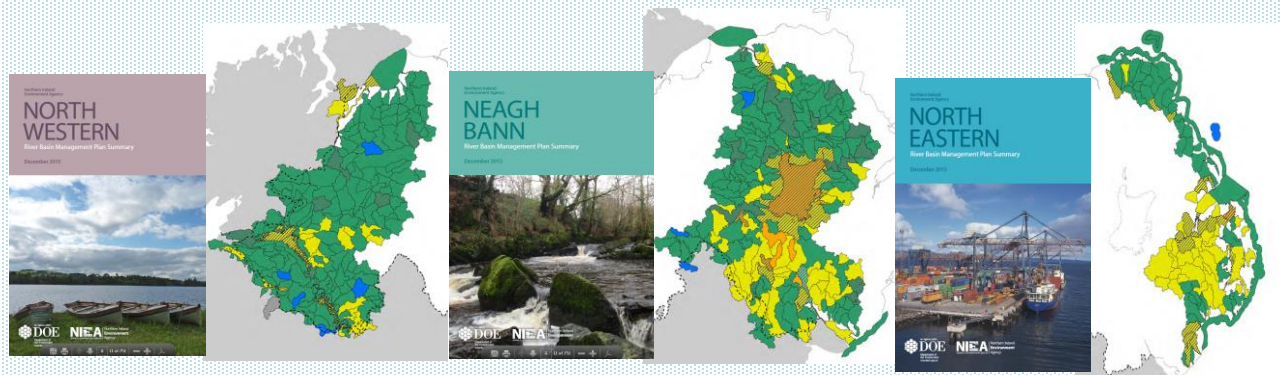
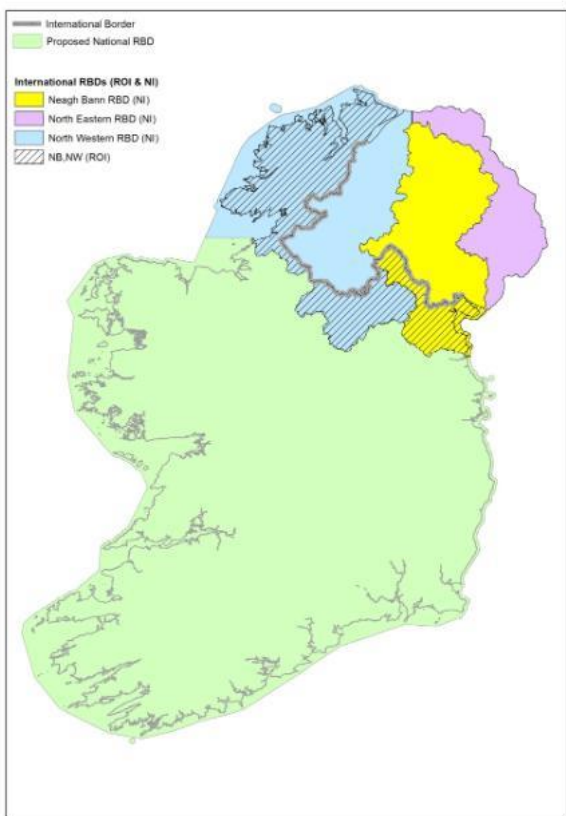
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# Water Framework Directive Status (Dec 2015)



# Targets for NI Water Environment - 2nd WFD Cycle

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle RBMPs set target for 70% of water bodies being at good status by 2021
- Plans created for each individual river basin district in Northern Ireland
- Currently monitoring status at 500 sites



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# NI GOVERNMENT

## – NINE (NEW) DEPARTMENTS

- **Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)**
- Communities
- Economy
- Infrastructure
  
- Education
- Finance
- Health
- Justice
  
- The Executive Office

# DAERA Vision

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**A thriving and sustainable  
economy, environment and  
rural community**



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# DAERA Strategic Goals

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## Strategic goals

- To work with stakeholders and partners to:
1. develop sustainable agriculture, fisheries and industrial sectors
  2. protect and improve the environment
  3. champion rural needs

## How we operate

4. deliver high quality services innovatively, effectively and efficiently within teams

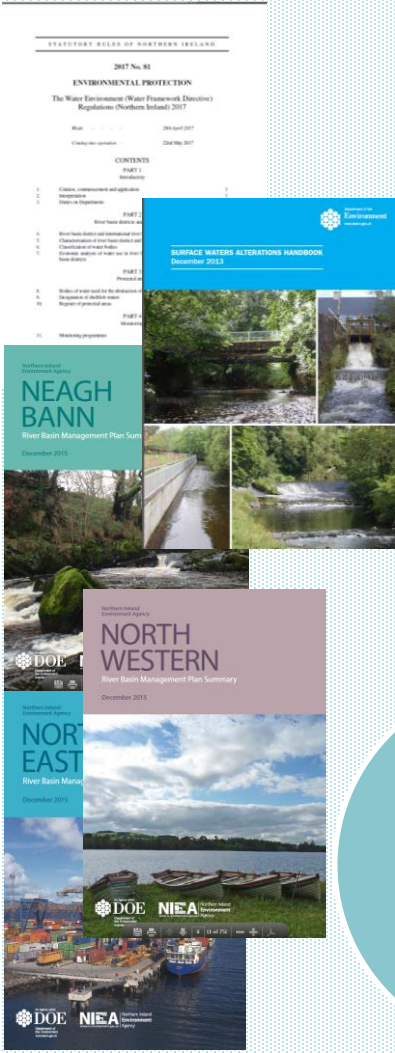


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# DAERA's Work on Water Quality



**Natural Resource Policy Division**  
Policy and Legislation

**DAERA**

**NI Environment Agency**  
Operational Delivery

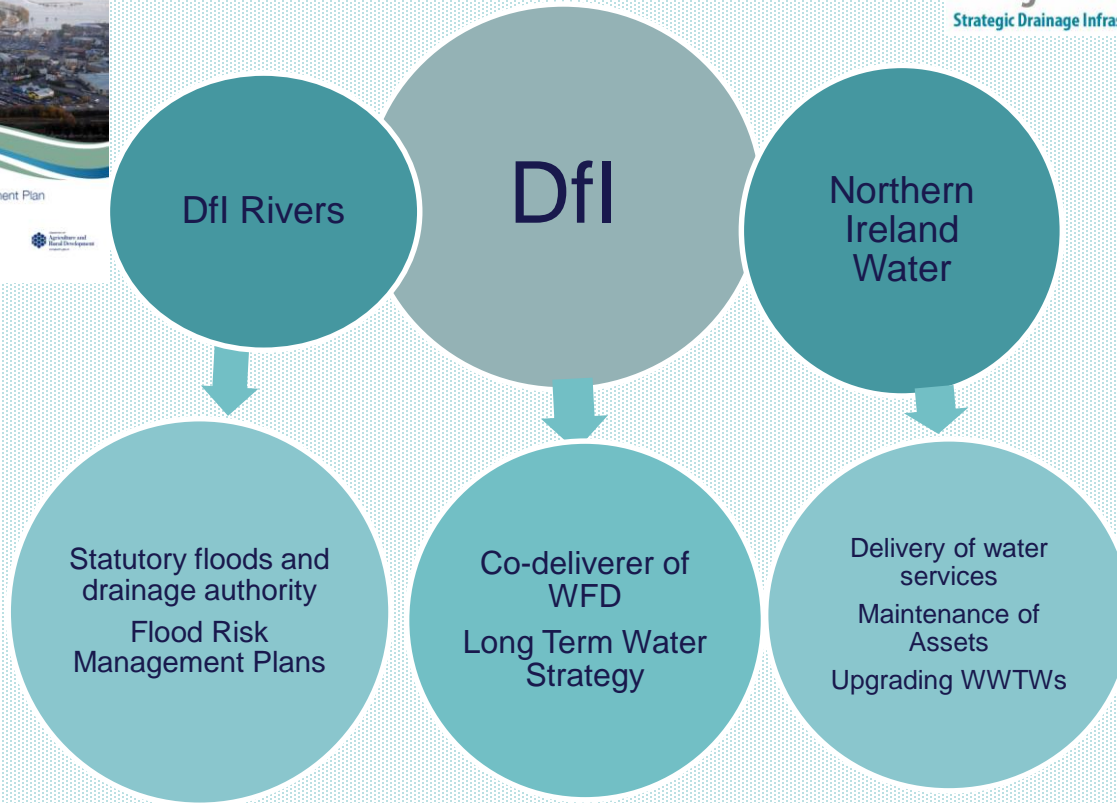
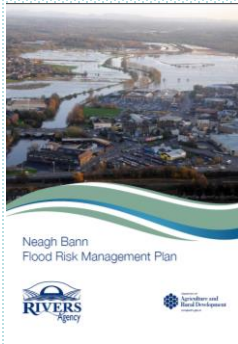
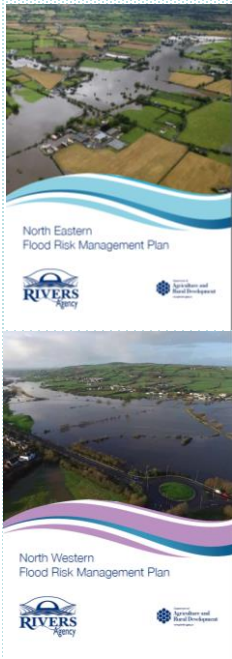
Water Framework Directive  
Groundwater Directive  
Drinking Water Directive  
UWWTD

Production of RBMPs  
Monitoring  
Enforcement  
Regulation  
Reporting





# Department for Infrastructure (DfI)



## Living With Water Programme Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan



Social and Environmental Guidance for Water & Sewerage Services (2015-21)



**DRD**  
Department for Regional Development

October 2014

**Sustainable Water**  
A Long Term Water Strategy for Northern Ireland

Part 1:  
Strategy Overview



Department for  
**Regional Development**

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**  
June 2014

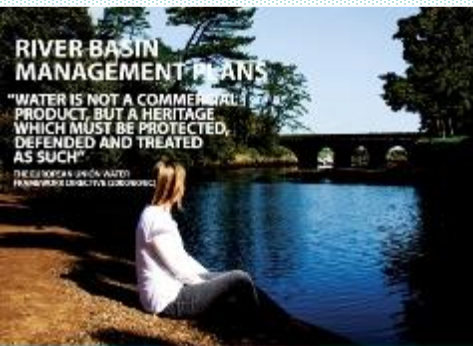


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# NI Long Term Water Strategy (LTWS)

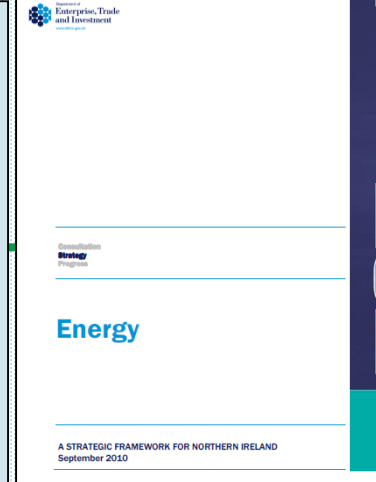
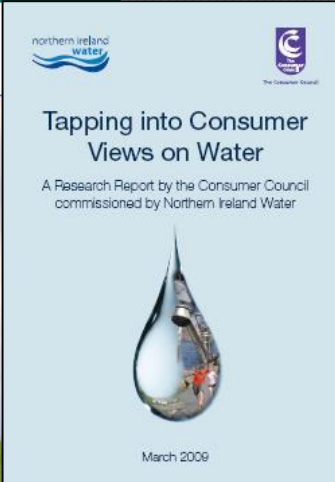
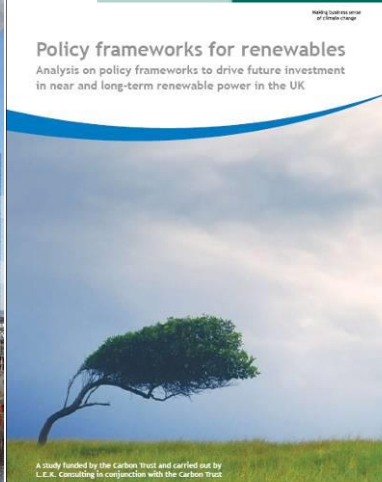
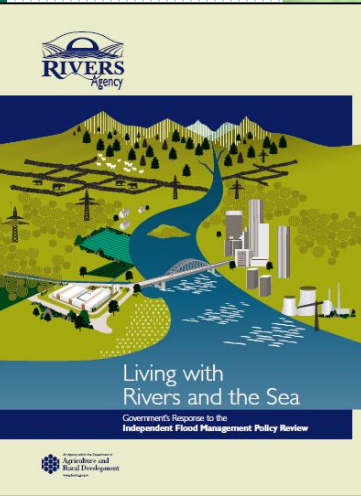
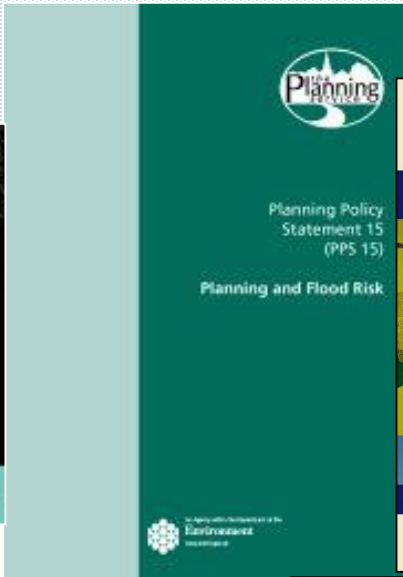
- aims to integrate all the policies and strategies policies that affect water



**NORTH EASTERN** River Basin Management Plan Further information: [http://www.drd.gov.uk](#)

**NORTH WESTERN** River Basin Management Plan Further information: [http://www.drd.gov.uk](#)

**MEAGH BANN** River Basin Management Plan Further information: [http://www.drd.gov.uk](#)

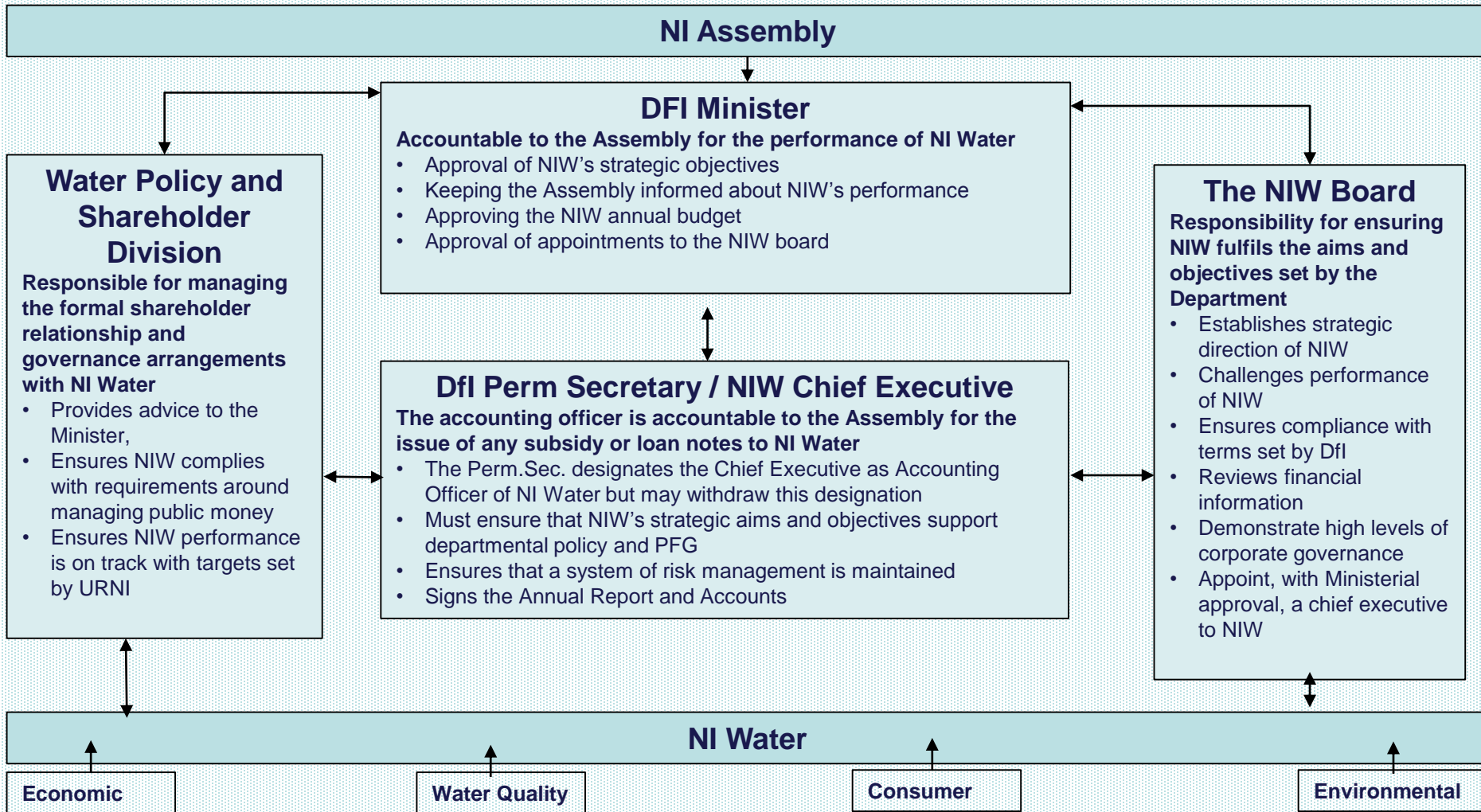


# Water Sector Governance in Northern Ireland

- **Northern Ireland Water**, a government owned company, is responsible for delivery of water services in NI
- **NI Water** is also classified as a non-departmental public body and is subject to public expenditure rules
- **NI Water** has a key role in maintaining and investing in infrastructure to ensure compliance with the Drinking Water and Urban Wastewater Treatment Directives
- The **Department for Infrastructure** pays a subsidy to **Northern Ireland Water** in lieu of domestic consumers' contributions
- The **Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland** regulates **Northern Ireland Water** to ensure that customers receive value for money water and sewerage services. One way in which it does this is by setting prices (through the price control process) which allow NI Water to deliver objectives at the lowest reasonable overall cost



# Governance Framework for Northern Ireland Water



# Policy Engagement - UK and beyond...



## UK

- At a policy level, NI engages with other UK administrations through the WFD UK Administrations Group on general WFD policy areas
- Meets twice a year - Membership from Defra, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and UK environment agencies



## EU

- Defra lead contact with European Commission
- NI attendance at Nitrates Committee on request (NAP Derogation)



## Ireland

- DAERA engages with counterparts in DCCAE through the North South Working Group on Water Quality (NSMC)



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# UK Co-ordination at a Technical Level



- NIEA sits on the UK Technical Advisory Group (UKTAG)
- UKTAG provides coordinated advice on the science and technical aspects of the WFD, particularly environmental standards
- UKTAG operates through technical task teams, including:
  - Chemistry Task Team
  - Freshwater Task Team
  - Groundwater Task Team
  - Marine Task Team
  - River Basin Planning Task Team



# North South Ministerial Council



North South Ministerial Council  
An Chomhairle Aireachta  
Thuaidh Theas

- Established under the Belfast Agreement (“Good Friday Agreement”) (1998) to develop consultation, co-operation and action within the island of Ireland
- The Council meets in the Environment Sector to make decisions on common policies and approaches in areas such as pollution and water quality management
- Issues of discussion and co-operation with respect to water include:
  - Progress with implementing the requirements of the Water Framework Directive
    - Joint consultation on delineation of river basins
  - Bathing Water Directive
  - Marine Strategy Framework Directive
  - Water Sector



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# Examples of Co-operation - North/South

## EU Interreg VA Projects

- **SCAMP** (Sustainable Catchment Area Management Plan)
  - Develop a range of best practices and techniques, aimed at improving raw water quality in the Erne and Derg cross-border catchments (**€5m**)
- **SWELL** (Shared Waters Enhancement and Loughs Legacy Project)
  - Deliver a programme of measures including upgrades to Wastewater Treatment Works to improve water quality within Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle (**€30m**)
- **Catchment CARE**
  - Water quality improvement projects on the Finn, Blackwater and Arney. Covering issues such as hydromorph improvements, diffuse sources and groundwater monitoring (**€14m**)



**Comhairle Contae  
Dhún na nGall**  
Donegal County Council



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# Challenges under Brexit



- **Brexit presents a number of challenges and opportunities:**
  - Need for continued compliance with standards
  - The need for common standards and UK wide frameworks
  - The operability of current legislation
  - Priorities and Day 1 issues
  - Resource requirements
  - Potential for more focussed outcomes and flexible approaches designed around local variabilities
- **Cross border engagement and cooperation will continue as:**
  - Environment is an area of co-operation under the Belfast Agreement
  - Article 3 of the WFD requires Member States to establish co-ordination with relevant non-Member States with the aim of achieving the objectives of the Directive; and
  - **It makes sense** - Practical co-operation pre-dates EU membership...

**Thank you for your attention**

**Dave Foster**  
**Director, Department of Agriculture, Environment and**  
**Rural Affairs**

E-mail: [dave.foster@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dave.foster@daera-ni.gov.uk)

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