

## PUBLICATION

Report  
Water

# Steps for Defining and Assessing Ecological Potential for Improving Comparability of Heavily Modified Water Bodies

GUIDANCE DOCUMENT NO. 37



[1]

The CIS Guidance Document No. 37 proposes a common practical framework for defining the good ecological potential which is the environmental objective of heavily modified water bodies designated under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The Guidance aims to assist the comparability of approaches between Member States. Its recommendations are based on a common understanding of the WFD requirements on this topic and good practice for implementation developed within the [Common Implementation Strategy](#) [2] (CIS) of the WFD.

This document is a deliverable of the CIS working group ECOSTAT. It was developed and drafted by a core-group of experts, with the support of Eleftheria Kampa (Ecologic Institute) as consultant. The Guidance was endorsed by the EU Water Directors at their meeting in Helsinki on 26 November 2019.

The Guidance is accompanied by a [European library](#) [3] of mitigation measures for heavily modified rivers, lakes, transitional

and coastal waters.

### **Main Link**

Download: Steps for Defining and Assessing Ecological Potential for Improving Comparability of Heavily Modified Water Bodies Guidance Document No. 37 [pdf, 3.9 MB, English]

### **Ecologic Related Articles**

- WG ECOSTAT Report on Common Understanding of Using Mitigation Measures for Reaching Good Ecological Potential for HMWBs (Part 3)
- WG ECOSTAT Report on Common Understanding of Using Mitigation Measures for Reaching Good Ecological Potential for HMWBs (Part 2)
- Harmonisation of Good Ecological Potential for Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWB)
- CIS Guidance on Article 4(7), Inter-comparison of Good Ecological Potential and Hydromorphological Assessment Methods

### **Further Links**

- N° 37 - Mitigation Measures Library [xls, 1 MB, English]

---

### **Citation**

CIS working group ECOSTAT 2020: Guidance No 37 – Steps for defining and assessing ecological potential for improving comparability of Heavily Modified Water Bodies.

### **Language**

English

### **Credits**

This documents was developed and drafted by a core-group of experts, with the support of Eleftheria Kampa (Ecologic Institute) as consultant.

### **Funding**

- European Commission, Directorate-General Environment (DG Environment)

### **Publisher**

- European Commission, Directorate-General Environment (DG Environment)

### **Year**

2020

### **Dimension**

134 pp.

### **Project**

Guidance on WFD Harmonised Environmental Requirements for HMWB and Hydromorphology

### **Project ID**

2626-02

### **Table of Contents**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 A new Guidance Document No.37 on the ecological potential of heavily modified water bodies: What for?

1.2 Overview of CIS activities relevant to HMWB and GEP

### 2 ROLE OF HYDROMORPHOLOGY IN WFD

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Characterization

2.1.2 Pressure and impacts and risk analysis

2.1.3 Monitoring

2.1.4 Ecological status

2.1.5 Reference conditions and typology

2.1.6 Measures

2.1.7 Exemptions

2.2 Hydromorphology in HMWB designation and assessment of ecological potential

### 3 WATER USES, WIDER ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER SUSTAINABLE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

### 4 RE-CAPPING THE DESIGNATION OF HMWB

4.1 Recap of key issues relevant to the designation of HMWB

4.1.1 Substantial changes in character

4.2 Review of HMWB designation in the river basin management planning cycles

### 5 STEPS FOR DEFINITION OF ECOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

5.1 Approaches for defining ecological potential in 1st & 2nd RBMPs

5.2 Approximation of ecological continuum

5.3 Overview of key steps for defining ecological potential in a comparable way

5.3.1 "Route" of the reference approach

5.3.2 "Route" of the mitigation measures approach

5.3.3 Overview of individual steps

5.4 Detailed key steps for defining ecological potential in a comparable way

5.4.1 Information from earlier planning cycles (pre-step)

5.4.2 Identification of the closest comparable water category and related quality elements (Step A)

5.4.3 Is the closest comparable water category for HMWB always clear?

5.4.4 Identification of relevant mitigation measures (MEP) (Step B)

5.4.5 Derivation of hydromorphological conditions for MEP (Step C)

5.4.6 Derivation of physico-chemical conditions for MEP, taking into account the closest comparable water body type (Step D)

5.4.7 Derivation of BQE conditions for MEP (Step E)

5.4.8 Derivation of BQE conditions for GEP (Step F)

5.4.9 Derivation of supporting quality elements (SQE) conditions for GEP (Step G)

5.4.10 Identification of mitigation measures (GEP) (Step H)

5.5 Moderate, poor and bad ecological potential

### 6 IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TO ACHIEVE GEP

### 7 INTERCOMPARISON OF ECOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

### ANNEX I - ILLUSTRATIVE CASE STUDIES ON THE STEPS FOR DEFINING ECOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Case study 1: River impoundment (reference approach and mitigation measures approach)

Case study 2: River straightening and bank fixation for navigation (reference approach and mitigation measures approach)

Case study 3: Estuary with flood defence/embanking (mitigation measures approach)  
Case study 4: River affected by drainage (reference approach)  
ANNEX II - EXAMPLE ARTIFICIAL WATER BODIES: Ditches - hydromorphological  
mitigation as an exception, mitigation by maintenance as a rule  
ANNEX III - GLOSSARY

### **Keywords**

Guidance, Water Framework Directive, heavily modified water bodies, ecological  
potential, Common Implementation Strategy, hydromorphology, Europe

---

**Source URL (modified on 04/22/2020 - 14:33):** <https://www.ecologic.eu/17302>

### **Links**

[1] <https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/presentation/2020/cis-guidance-document-37.jpg>

[2] [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/objectives/implementation\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/objectives/implementation_en.htm)

[3]  
<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/group/9ab5926d-bed4-4322-9aa7-9964bbe8312d/library/67f969f9-5abe-4765-a952-2f8e2bf5b664/details>