

Water Information System for Europe (WISE)

<http://water.europa.eu>
"Your gateway to water!"

Introduction

WISE is a partnership initiative of the European Commission (Directorate-Generals for Environment, Joint Research Centre and Eurostat) and the European Environment Agency.

Protection of Europe's water resources is one of the core objectives of the environment policy of the European Union. But how good (or bad) is the quality of our waters in Europe? Are we making any progress? Are the EU policies effective enough?

Now there is one "gateway" to answer these questions and to access all the water-related information and data that are collected by the European Commission and the European Environment Agency. It is called the "Water Information System for Europe" or "WISE".

What is WISE?

WISE has been launched for the public on 22 March 2007 – World Water Day as part of the European Water Conference 2007

(http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/2007conference/index_en.htm).

Currently, WISE brings together several partners of the European Commission (the Environment Directorate General, the Joint Research Centre and Eurostat) and the European Environment Agency. However, other partners inside and outside the European Commission have already expressed their interest to join WISE.

Practically, WISE is a collective database build around the subject of water management in Europe. It contains all the relevant information on this matter. And thereby constitutes a new, comprehensive, shared EU data and information system for water, including river basins.

It provides water-related information and data organised in four broad areas:

- Policy
- Themes and Data
- Projects
- Links

A significant amount of information is already available. However, the available system is only the start. WISE will incrementally develop over the years ahead with a view to be implemented as a fully distributed system by 2010.

What data can be found in the different areas?

The WISE POLICY area provides all information related to EU water policy, e.g. information on directives, implementation, new policy developments etc.

The WISE THEMES & DATA area is a thematically organised web-portal with an integrated web mapping service. It allows to search for information on different subjects or to view more and more data in the map viewer.

The WISE PROJECTS area is designed to compile information and allow easy access to projects that are co-financed by the European Commission. To start with, the WISE-RTD portal has been developed to allow a first overview in particular research projects.

The WISE LINKS area lists a number of web pages hosted by the European Commission services which also provide water-related information but where a better integration into WISE is only envisaged in the future.

Some examples of what you can find:

Bathing water quality: the annual bathing water report up to the latest version is incorporated into the WISE map viewer. So you can easily find the bathing water quality at your holiday beach.

River basin districts: water is now being managed in its natural boundaries, the catchment or river basin. Approximately 120 river basin districts have been designated in the European Union many of them being international. The coordinated river basin management will become increasingly important if you are interested in your regional or local water affairs. Which river basin district are you living in? And which authority is coordinating the river basin management efforts and the public consultation processes? Find out in WISE.

Municipal wastewater treatment: the management and treatment of our sewage is regulated throughout the EU since 1991. But does your municipality have an appropriate treatment in place? Does your treatment plant discharge into a “sensitive area” and therefore must fulfil more stringent standards? In WISE, you can now look for this information.

Information on the state of the water environment: The European Environment Agency collects and assesses information on states and trends regular together with its Member States. If you want to access the water information in the European Information and observation network (EIONET) WISE gives you the best entry point.

There is much more to explore on WISE, data on water quality, or other particular themes. And much more is going to be there in the future as data become increasingly available from the Member States of the European Union. The information system will permit the effective cross sharing and use of data that are collected for different purposes and by different EU bodies.

What are the main aims?

The main objectives of WISE are:

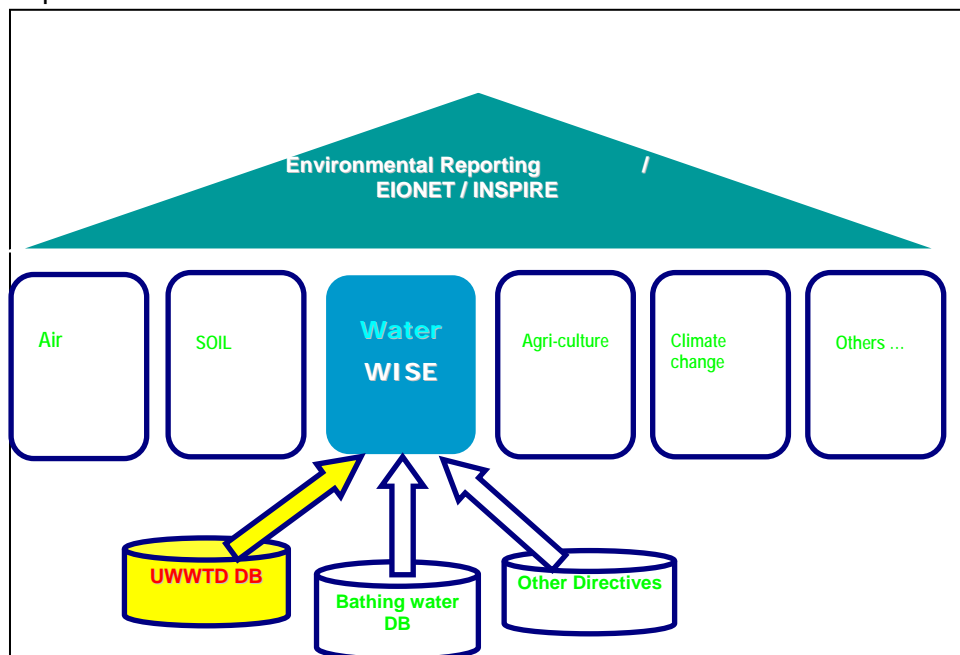
- To provide a single entry point to access harmonised and high quality European water data and information provided by mainly Member States.
- To assess and compare environmental status and trends related to water and their associated pressures and impacts from human activities including the underlying socio-economic driving forces.
- To check the compliance with and implementation of European water legislation and national laws and inform the citizens thereof.
- To use the collected information to assess the effects and the effectiveness of the EU water policy.

In WISE for the first time information from different water-related directives (such as the Water Framework Directive, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Bathing Water Directive, the Drinking Water Directive and the Nitrates Directive) is linked and integrated also with the state of Environment reporting from EEA. Newer legislation will be phased in as it is implemented such as the Flood Risk Management Directive. The access to information supporting good, efficient and effective governance by informing citizens about the effects that EU policy has on their water environment around them and encouraging them to engage actively in its protection.

WISE in the wider context

WISE is not an isolated system but an integrated project as part of wider initiatives, in particular:

- **the water-related component of INSPIRE¹ on European level.** However, WISE is more since it covers also non-georeferenced information (e.g. numeric data, textual or administrative information). It will therefore be the platform of ensuring interoperability of data between the national systems and the EU level. In addition, the link to related initiatives such as GMES² is established.
- **a formal compliance reporting tool.** Thereby, it facilitates the information exchange between the Member States and the Commission in relation to water-related directives. This implies that formal rules are established for this part in order to avoid parallel or double reporting. However, only part of the data in WISE are relevant for compliance.



- **a shared information system of water-related data available on European level.** Extensive amounts of data are being collected by European and international bodies. The sharing of water-related data and information from all available sources will provide a more efficient use and improve quality and consistency of assessments an European and national level. WISE is thereby the water-related component of a wider

¹ Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Union – Directive 2007/2/EC (<http://inspire.jrc.it/home.html>)

² Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (<http://www.gmes.info/>)

Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) currently under development which will cover other thematic themes (see figure).

- **a platform for cooperation.** The WISE process is built upon a close cooperation of four EU bodies, namely DG Environment, Joint Research Centre, Eurostat and the European Environment Agency. Furthermore, it provides the platform for cooperation with the Member States, the main data holders, and international organisations in the field of water policy.
- **a harmonised data flow:** To harmonise the technical and organisational processes will create a streamlined reporting of high quality. Moreover, resources can be concentrated on developing jointly standardised procedures and helpful tools for all partners involved in the data flow process.

Contacts

Any questions? Any suggestions on how to improve WISE? We are interested to hear from you.

Any feedback related to WISE can be sent through the EEA public enquiry service:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/help/infocentre/enquiries/>

Or you can send an email to

env-water@ec.europa.eu

Links

Welcome:

<http://water.europa.eu>

Policy:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/>

Themes and Data:

<http://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/water>

Projects:

<http://www.wise-rtd.info/>