European Environment Agency

09 October 2009
BCL

Guidance feedback on first draft "Freshwater" contributions for SOER 2010 Part C

As of 7 October 2009, 19 of 38 countries have provided first draft versions of the Freshwater part under the commonality section of SOER 2010 Part C. The deadline for delivery was 30 June 2009.

The aim of the present feedback exercise is to help ensure that, by the end of November, a set of comparable assessments under the Freshwater heading is available from all countries.

We therefore request countries, which have already delivered first draft contributions, to submit second draft versions by 30 November 2009. These revised versions should, in the first instance, take into account the requirements of the latest version of the SOER Part C guidance document http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/part-c-guidance. In addition, we are providing feedback in this paper which is based on deliveries up to 7 October 2009, as well as specific comments to be developed in the coming weeks.

At the Eionet Freshwater workshop on 22-23 October 2009 a session is dedicated to the discussion of Parts B and C of SOER 2010. Please ensure that your relevant freshwater NRCs come prepared for this discussion.

The countries which have not yet delivered a first draft are requested to do so by the end of October at the very latest in order to be able to take part in the above-mentioned revision exercise ending on 30 November.

Towards more comparability

There are two main reasons why it is necessary to secure better comparability between the country-level freshwater contributions: a) to make the contributions more useful and meaningful to the reader, whether the external reader or the EEA staff member who analyses or makes a synthesis of these submissions, and b) to enable a smooth transition to a web-based solution. A comparable set of outcomes is also consistent with the EEA Regulation.

The main reference point for securing a reasonable amount of comparability is the SOER Part C guidance document. The set of guiding questions provided for freshwater in the guidance document is the basis for the country contributions. We would therefore once again like to emphasise the importance of following the structure of the guiding questions for freshwater,

including the use of the questions themselves as section headings in the contributions.

Several of the countries have followed the guiding questions closely (see for example the Czech Republic http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/czech-republic/commonality/SOER_2010_-_part_C_-_freshwater_.doc, Spain http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/spain/commonality/SOER_2010_Spain_contribution_COMMONALITY_Freshwater_Draft_1.0-Spanish_version.doc and Slovakia http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/slovakia/commonality/SK_SOER_C_Air_pollution_1.doc-1). Countries which do not follow this structure have generally nevertheless provided the relevant information. We therefore request those countries to restructure the information according to the guiding questions in order to achieve better comparability between the freshwater assessments.

General observations and further guidance

Country contributions as of 7 October 2009:

	Length in pages	Word Count	Language
Bulgaria	16	1,096	BG
Czech Republic	9	1,767	EN
Estonia	16	4,118	EN
Finland	28	10,300	EN
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	3	884	EN
Germany	14	2,943	DE
Greece	7 files – 41 pages	2,300 (overall assessment)	EN
Iceland	11	3,263	EN
Italy	6	1,337	EN
Latvia	7	PDF	EN
Lithuania	5	1,958	LT
Netherlands	5	988	EN
Norway	4	681	EN
Romania	4	1,318	EN
Serbia	3	778	EN
Slovakia	4	1,273	EN
Spain	27	13,153	ES
Sweden	3	553	SV
Switzerland	3	671	EN

As can be seen in the table above, the length of contributions varies widely between countries and we would ask that countries refer to the Part C guidelines in this regard: *"For web publication, the conventional wisdom is that, for any final text used in the analysis, we should consider 500 to 1000 words per theme supported by links, graphics and multimedia"*. This is our

recommendation and does not necessarily mean suppressing relevant information, rather applying broader use of links. With appropriate editing, certain sections can be summarised in a sentence or two supported by links to underlying information. Short, rich, linked text will greatly facilitate the web publication process.

From an analysis of the contributions so far, we recognize the following:

Countries have delivered information which ranges from useful to really valuable. In most cases, EEA freshwater indicators or similar national equivalents have been used, and the contributions are accompanied on average by three to eight relevant diagrams.

All countries have delivered text and indicators on water quality, including (for most countries) information on the ecological/chemical status of freshwaters (rivers), indicators on trends in nutrient concentration (CSI 020 / CSI 019) and overviews of wastewater treatment (CSI 024).

More than half of the 19 countries have delivered information on water quantity (CSI 018: water abstraction and water use). We recognize, however, that water quantity is not a priority issue in all countries.

We have observed that assessments related to questions b) and c) are quite well covered, while information relating to the other questions is less well developed. Please attempt to address this imbalance when revising your contributions.

In this context, we recognize the fact that many countries have limited activities regarding forward-looking information. For inspiration, please see the contributions from Finland http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/finland/commonality/Finland_Freshwaters_first_draft.doc, Netherlands http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/netherlands/commonality/090710_SOER2010_part_C_Freshwater.doc, Latvia http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/latvia/commonality/Freshwater_Latvia.pdf and Estonia http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/estonia/commonality/Soer_water_EE_16.07.09.doc.

We would also like to suggest that when addressing the guiding question "Why should we care about this theme?" it would be most useful for you to look at this from a national perspective. Some countries have already managed to do this in an interesting way: please take a look at the contributions from Greece http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/greece/commonality/freshwater/freshwater-greece and Germany http://soer2010.ew.eea.europa.eu/part-c/eionet-countries/germany/commonality/freshwater/Water-Quality_GERMANY-SOER_final_2009-09-14.doc.

A higher degree of overall comparability can also be secured through the consistent and more explicit use of the EEA freshwater indicators from the

core set. We recommend that assessments related to the guiding questions below contain the following information and, if possible, use the following proposed indicators:

What are the state (S) and impacts (I)?

Water quantity:

- Water exploitation index (CSI 018) and other information on water scarcity and drought as wells as overexploitation of water resources

Water quality:

- Ecological/chemical classification of freshwater bodies – generally based on results from WFD classification or existing national classification schemes
- State and trends in nutrient concentration (CSI 020) and pollution by oxygen-consuming substances (CSI 019)

What are the related key drivers (D) and pressures (P)?

Water quantity:

- Water abstraction and water use (CSI 018)

Water quality:

- Emissions of pollutants from point sources, in particular:
  - discharge from wastewater treatment and level of wastewater treatment (CSI 024)
  - emissions from non-point sources, in particular diffuse pressures from agricultural land use, fertilizer input or livestock operations

Which responses (R)?

- Short text describing the implementation of the Water Framework Directive in the given country

Water quantity:

- Information on national activities regarding water scarcity and droughts if relevant.
- Measures related to water saving and conservation; information on water pricing

Water quality:

- Implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
- Implementation of the Nitrates Directive

Use made of EU or national funding instruments for improving water management, e.g.:

- Financing of wastewater treatment plants
- Improvement of efficiency of irrigation infrastructure
- Better management of diffuse pollution risks, e.g. through agri-environmental programmes under Pillar 2 of the CAP