

Status box

Title: WISE reporting arrangements for Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive

Version no.: 1.1

Date: 23 October 2008

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Comment</u>
1.0	27/10/2008	DG ENV	Final draft for consultation with Member States on 28/10/08 and on 11/05/09
2.0	12/06/2009		FINAL version

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Circulation and received comments:

This document is based on background document on *WISE reporting arrangements* that was endorsed by Water Directors on 01/03/2007 that is available from CIRCA at: http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/w-wise_background . The document was introduced to the experts from other EU water legislation (Nitrates directive, Bathing and Drinking water directives) as a room document and agreed afterwards.

Draft document of *WISE reporting arrangements for UWWTD* has the same text as the original endorsed on 01/03/2007, only the introductory chapter was adapted to relevant directives as well as for UWWTD explaining the updated information on WISE development. The draft of the document was available for consultation on CIRCA from 25/10/2008 at:

http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/env/wfd/library?l=/framework_directive/drinking_directive/workshop_reporting

Version 2.0 is the final version of the document presented second time on UWWTD-WISE workshop on 11-12 May 2009.

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**GUIDANCE ON PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT FOR ELECTRONIC REPORTING TO THE
WATER INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR EUROPE (WISE)**

“WISE REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR UWWTD”

**FINAL DOCUMENT
(12/06/2009)**

Note: Document was agreed by Water Directors on 01/03/2007. Adaptations of the text for UWWTD concerns only Introductory part; Presented to UWWTD workshops in October 2008 and May 2009. No comments received. This is a final version for UWWTD

1. Introduction

The development of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) has been triggered by the Concept Paper¹. Since then, the implementation has led to the development of a prototype in which the reports for the Water Framework Directive in 2004 (Art 3) and 2005 (Art 5, 6 and 7) have been submitted on a voluntary basis and in addition to the official submissions on a paper-based report.

One of the objectives of WISE is to streamline and facilitate reporting from the Member States to the Commission and to improve its effectiveness. Hence, an electronic reporting system does only make sense if it replaces the traditional ways of reporting. To this end, an updated WISE submission procedure is introduced since 2007 that allows Member States to use WISE.

The first reporting obligation for which the new electronic system was used, was reporting of monitoring networks under the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) on the basis of Article 8 and 15 (deadline 22 March 2007). Subsequently, during 2007 and 2008 more and more reporting obligations were integrated into WISE covering also other water-related directives, in particular Bathing Water Directive (BWD), Nitrate Directive (NiD), Drinking Water Directive (DWD) and other mandatory or voluntary reporting to the EU level, in particular submissions to the European Environment Agency (EEA) and ESTAT. As concerns Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWD)², the output side of WISE – i.e. visualisation of reported data in the frame of the 4th reporting exercise as well as the 5th (launched in May 2007) was already partly in place and will be finalised in the course of 2008-2008. Furthermore, for the next reporting exercise that is planned to be launched in 2009 WISE will be fully operational for UWWTD.

Moreover, WISE is already contributing as a building block to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) which will cover data and information of all environmental themes.

¹ Reporting for water – concept document: towards a shared Water Information System for Europe (WISE), November 2003. http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/pdf/concept_report.pdf

² For example, the reporting for Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive on the basis of Articles 15(4), 16, 17 is foreseen via WISE in 2009 at the latest.

Furthermore, it is clear that the geo-referenced information management within WISE is consistent with and building on INSPIRE.

This document sets out the practical arrangements, which clarify those issues of relevance when Member States wanting to submit official reports to the Commission. The document shall ensure that the Member States and the Commission have a common understanding on the process and make transparent who is responsible for what and what will happen with the data once submitted. It can therefore be considered the reference document for the Rules and Procedure when using WISE.

The document is presented to all those Committees or expert groups on reporting for which Directives the system shall be used³.

2. General approach for reporting

Reporting in the context of EU water legislation has been regulated and implemented in different over the past 30 years. For example for the remaining 'old' directives (UWWTD – 91/271/EEC, BWD – 76/160/EEC, NiD – 91/676/EEC, DWD – 98/83/EC) and new Bathing water directive (2006/7/EC, concerning management of bathing water quality and repealing Directive 76/160/EEC), reporting is based on several articles⁴. Some of the 'old' directives had clearly defined procedures for reporting adopted through the Committee procedures in the form of Commission Decisions (e.g. reporting on 'old' Bathing Water Directive is based on the provisions of Commission Decisions 95/337/EC). However for the others, the reporting process had various backgrounds – sometimes through Committee procedures (e.g. reporting under Article 17 of UWWTD was set up via Commission Decision 83/481/EEC, while reporting under Article 15(4) was based on the Commission duty to issue the questionnaires (request of information) to the Member States with the duty to reply within six months.

For some other directives (stemming partially from the Seventies), streamlined monitoring was introduced with Directive 91/692/EEC with a reporting cycle of three years. On the basis of this directive, the water questionnaire was introduced in 1992 and the latest version agreed by Committee in 1995 (Commission Decision 95/337/EEC). The experiences from this reporting exercise are summarised as follows:

- Information was often not submitted or was incomplete;
- The format of the information provided varied (e.g. electronic vs paper copy) and often did not follow the format of the questionnaires in the 1995 Decision;
- It was not clear to Member States what information had to be reported for the second reporting return, and what could be omitted and it was not clear to those carrying out the assessment what information had been submitted in previous returns;
- The quality of the information submitted by Member States is very diverse and often difficult to read, validate and process; and

³ For WFD it was agreed in 01/03/2007, for BWD – 14/12/2007, for NiD – 05/11/2007, for DWD – 21/10/2008 during the meetings/workshops with member states.

⁴: For UWWTD – articles 17, 16, 15(5); for 'old' BWD – article 13 and decision 95/337/EC (Annex VIII) amending decision 92/446/EEC; for 'new' BWD – article 13; for NiD (91/676/EEC) – article 10; and for DWD (98/83/EC) – on article 13.

- There are often differences between Member States in the interpretation of the questions and information needs within the questionnaires. This leads to information being incomparable between Member States and for year-on-year comparisons to be difficult to draw.

Also for reporting for some 'old' water directives the experiences were mixed. Some of the reporting was organised without providing specifications and /or technical guidelines what to report and how. This led to a set of inconsistent, incomplete information with the different levels of details which were difficult to compare.

On the basis of all these experiences, there is a clear need to streamline the reporting exercise under the directives mentioned above WFD in order to use more consistent approach taking into account the reporting foreseen under WISE.

For the newer pieces of legislation, most of them have general provisions for reporting but include possibilities to specify the explicit requirements and needs in more detail. For example, Article 20 WFD stipulates in paragraph 2:

“(2) For the purpose of transmission and processing of data, including statistical and cartographic data, technical formats for the purpose of paragraph 1 may be adopted in accordance with the procedures laid down in Article 21.”

Once approved by the Regulatory Committee and adopted by the Commission, such formats would become legally binding. In other words, if a Member States fails to submit even parts of the agreed information, it is infringing the law. Moreover, the procedures to develop such formats are time consuming and lack flexibility in case adaptations and improvements should be introduced on short notice. Furthermore, the agreement on the required specifications for reporting may be driven by the lowest common denominator and may not have been able to incorporate a feedback and testing process as applied now.

For these reasons, no such legally binding reporting formats have been developed (yet). Even if it had been considered, the ambitious deadlines for implementation of the WFD would have made it difficult to publish legally binding reporting formats with sufficient lag time to allow Member States to implement the system. Any delays would have triggered complex legal and formalistic discussions rather than focusing on the implementation of the Directive.

The past experience demonstrated that reporting without any further specifications and guidelines results in a divers set of documents with different levels of details and with information which is hardly comparable. Furthermore, the development of the Water Information System for Europe (WISE) requires some form of agreement on the contents and the technical specifications of data exchange. Therefore, and having the successful consensus-based cooperation under the Common Implementation Strategy in mind, it was decided to prepare and agree guidance documents for the different reporting requirements using the format of reporting sheets. These reporting sheets are prepared by the Working Group on Reporting and agreed by the Water Directors on consensus basis. These reporting sheets are informal arrangements between the Member States and the Commission and thus are not legally binding. It is voluntary commitment by the Member States to submit this information to WISE. Current experiences show that this approach results in a similar or even higher success rate in comparison to past legally binding reporting requirements. Therefore streamlining the reporting foreseen within the WISE on some remaining ('old') water directives (e.g. UWWD) by using the approach

elaborated for WFD would be worth exploring. However, in the light of the future experiences, this approach may need to be reviewed on a regular basis.

In order to clarify the rules and procedures for this approach, a number of issues are addressed subsequently.

3. General approach for data dissemination

Access to data and data dissemination in the context of environmental legislation has been regulated by several pieces of legislation, in particular Regulation (EC) No. 1367/2006 on the application of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters to Community institutions and bodies. For spatial data, the recently agreed INSPIRE Directive applies. Data dissemination in the context of WISE should be in accordance with this legislative framework.

4. Roles and responsibilities of the EU bodies

Editorial note: The subsequent elaboration of roles and responsibilities refers solely to the issues relating to compliance checking reports in relation to all EU water legislation, in particular the Water Framework Directive. The scope of this document may be extended at a later stage.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) has a central role in the management of WISE due to its role as data centre for water. The reporting services of the EEA will be used and further developed towards the needs of WISE. The EEA is acting as a WISE operator (with the assistance of DG Environment, JRC and Eurostat) which is responsible for the provision and operation of the WISE infrastructure at EU level.

DG Environment has the responsibility for the compliance reporting issues specifically required by EU water legislation. DG Environment chairs the Committees responsible for reporting issues and leads the working groups which elaborate the reporting requirements and the electronic tools for compliance reporting. Any issue in relation to compliance reporting can be addressed to DG Environment.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) and Eurostat have supporting roles to develop tools for compliance reporting including GIS tools and tools for data exchange. In particular, both services will ensure consistency with REPORTNET and coordination with the developments under context of INSPIRE.

The WISE partners are the Member States and other countries reporting to WISE, together the WISE operators.

Responsibilities in the creation, validation and processing of the information content of WISE will be made available to the users. A detailed strategy will be developed in 2007 and 2008.

5. Language regime

Member States have the right to submit reports on the implementation of the EU legislation in their national languages. This basic right is not altered by introducing WISE as the main reporting tool. However, in practical terms and taking account the budgetary constraints of the Commission, the presentation of the WISE tools and the help

documentation will only be provided in English. It is the intention to expand to other language in the future subject to budget availability.

When submitting information electronically into WISE, Member States are allowed to use any Community language (i.e. if they choose to report in their national language or in English only). In order to make the reports accessible to a wider public, all submissions should then be translated to English (resulting in the original and the English version displayed next to each other). The translation may be done by the Member States, allowing them to ensure a control over the information. However, if Member States choose not to translate the texts into English, the Commission will aim to ensure appropriate translation before publication, subject to budget availability.

When delivering IT tools (web sites or desktop applications), efforts will be made by the WISE operators to provide them with internationalisation capabilities. This will allow WISE partners, on a voluntary basis, to localise the user interface in their own languages, by the provision of a single file per language.

6. Access rights and management

The question of allowing access to WISE needs to be addressed for the input and the output side independently.

6.1 Access rights to input data

The right to upload information and data for official compliance reporting needs to be regulated and implemented thoroughly. There should be a limited number of officially nominated individuals to submit, update and validate data on behalf of a Member State. The nominations of an authorised WISE data providers will be accepted by a written nomination of the official WFD Committee member⁵ or by a letter submitted through the Permanent Representation to the Commission. Changes to the nominations can only be made in writing or during WFD Committee meetings. The initial list of authorised WISE data providers is enclosed in Annex 3.

The European Commission (DG Environment, unit D.2) will forward the list of authorised WISE data providers to the EEA which is the responsible body for managing the access rights through Reportnet. The EEA – through the EIONET / Reportnet helpdesk - will contact the authorised WISE data providers to provide a username, password and relevant supporting material. Member States should take the appropriate actions to prevent any misuse of their username and password.

In addition, Member States may identify other individuals for allowing submission of reporting information for other purposes than compliance checking such as the submissions to the EIONET Water. This means there will be several user profiles (reporting roles) and only the officially nominated individuals would be able to upload information to the compliance database.

⁵ References to other Committees will be introduced when relevant.

6.2 Quality checking and quality control

Following submission, the data holders (i.e. Commission or EEA) will carry out automatic, semi-automatic and manual procedures to check and control quality of the information. Such procedures will be developed and agreed jointly by the WISE partners. Once agreed, the data providers will be informed about these procedures so to be aware on the data processing. In some cases, it will be necessary to go back to the data providers for clarification (see also section 11).

6.3 Access rights for viewing and downloading data

All authorised WISE data providers which have the right to upload data into WISE, which are officially nominated for compliance reporting or submitting other data (see Annex 3), will be able to view all the submitted data. After the data submission has been finalised, the correspondent folder will be released by the authorised WISE data providers of the Member State. This means that viewing and download of datasets will be possible for all other authorised WISE data providers unless the data provider has explicitly restricted the data dissemination (see Annex 1 (3)).

7. End user tool(s)

If agreed with the WISE partners, the Commission will develop and provide a desktop application to the Member States which will allow the preparation of the reporting files before online submission. The application will have viewing features (stylesheets) which will allow the validation and print out (filing) of the reported information before submission. Once this end user tool is finalised and made available free-of-charge, Member States may introduce any modifications, e.g. for adapting the tool to their own needs. Whilst such modifications should be possible, the Commission services cannot be made responsible/liable to any consequences that these modifications may cause.

In the future and depending on the characteristics of the reporting there may be other alternative methods for submitting the information. These will be addressed whenever necessary.

8. Confirmation of submission

The authorised WISE data provider (see section 0 and Annex 3) is able to submit files step-by-step or in one process. Once all the relevant files have been uploaded into the Reportnet, the authorised WISE data provider must confirm that the submission is completed (ideally through a process in the system).

Following this confirmation, the authorised WISE data provider will receive an automatic message from the system to confirm that the files have been accepted. In addition, the system will issue an automated but **official confirmation letter** (model letter see Annex 2) which will specify the date and time of submission, the files that have been submitted, the legal obligation that they refer to and the user that has submitted them. This official confirmation letter can be used for various purposes including the notification process (see below).

9. Notification process

Member States can discharge their legal obligation to notify the reports to the Commission by submitting the above-mentioned official confirmation letter to the Commission via their Permanent Representation. Any additional information or documents can be provided if the responsible authorities of a Member State feel the need to present more explanations/clarifications.

10. Backup arrangements

Once submitted, the EEA will ensure that a backup is made of the originally submitted files. The backup also includes relevant metadata including the time and date of submitting the files, the username, contact details (email, phone, fax) and the Member States of the data provider and the legal obligation that they refer to. Any changes and updates are recorded as well and kept as separate files. Further specifications on metadata will be developed in the context of the WISE GIS guidance, the INSPIRE process and other related processes. If relevant for WISE and once agreed, metadata profiles will be communicated to the Member States.

Through the backup process, it should be possible to trace back the original submission in order to clarify any discrepancies which may be introduced through the data processing process.

The backup files shall be kept for a minimum of six years after their submission.

11. Updating and validation of submissions

Principally, the quality, accuracy and validation of the information and data in WISE will be the responsibility of the Member States. At the same time, quality assurance and control process will be carried out by the WISE partners (see section 0). Furthermore, the Commission, the EEA or its contracted partners may address the Member State in case there is an indication that any of the data may be misleading. Overall, it will be the responsibility of the Member State to update and correct its own information.

Member States will be allowed to update their information and data at any point in time. Whilst the updating of information in-between the reporting deadlines is voluntary, it will be beneficial to always ensure that the latest, correct information is available in WISE since it will be the one used for compliance checking and publication (adding a reference year to the data).

12. Data policy – use of submitted data

The WISE data policy (for spatial and non-spatial data) defines the arrangements for use and publication of the information and data submitted to WISE.

As a matter of principle, all information and data will be used within the EU bodies mainly for the purpose that they have been defined for in the approved reporting sheets. However, such data will be also made available for other uses inside the European Commission and the EEA on the basis that such use is appropriate and that the original information and data is not made publicly available (internal use only).

Furthermore, the intention is to minimise the restrictions on publication and in any case to make WISE data available free-of-charge in accordance with INSPIRE and the conditions set out in section 6.3 (external use).

Specific arrangements for a spatial data policy regarding GIS data, copyright, etc. are listed in the Annex 1. The data policy may have to be reviewed in the light of the developments under INSPIRE Directive and the related Implementing Rules, once adopted.

13. Helpdesk

The EEA will provide a content related help desk for questions related to these rules and procedures which will be informed related to the WISE data flow concerned. EEA will provide a central helpdesk for all technical questions. The EEA may delegate these tasks to contracted partners. The contact details of the WISE technical help desk are:

Phone: +32 2 714 87 87 from Monday through Friday 9:00 to 17:00 CET

Email: helpdesk@eionet.europa.eu

Web page: <http://nmc.eionet.europa.eu/>

WISE SPATIAL DATA POLICY |**(Document on the conditions of use of spatial data)**

This data policy has been considered with regard to the principles set in the INSPIRE Directive, establishing an infrastructure for spatial information in the European Community.

(1) Data Storage

The European Commission (EC) and the European Environmental Agency (EEA) will store the geographic datasets on servers managed and accessible by the staff of the EC and the EEA. DG Environment will distribute parts or the entire datasets within the Commission, the EEA and to contractors, these last for the sole purpose of activities executed for the Commission and/or the EEA and limited to the duration of those activities.

(2) Data usage

The Commission and the EEA are authorised to use the geographic data in the context of environmental policy definition, implementation, assessment and analysis

- as geographic reference, i.e. creating a geographical context for other data;
- for the production of maps, publications, posters, presentations, web sites and any other electronic publication on the Internet. Electronic publication will be in the form of image maps;
- for spatial and statistical analysis;
- for deriving new geographic datasets by applying data manipulation procedures, e.g. combining different geographic datasets, generalisation procedures including smoothing and dropping of spatial features, adding new attribute information⁶.
- For inclusion of the geographic data in other applications provided that it will not possible to extract the original geographic data.

(3) Data Distribution

The Commission and the EEA are authorised to distribute geographic data, if

- the source is acknowledged and,
- the data is not used for commercial purpose – unless approved by the provider - and,
- the data provider has not explicitly restricted their dissemination beyond what specified at point 2

Users of distributed data enjoy the same rights of data usage and distribution, provided this WISE data policy is bound with the distributed data.

Distribution media of geographic data are paper publications, electronic publications, offline distribution on physical supports (e.g. CD-ROMs) and online distribution via the Internet services. Geographic data may be distributed as feature services on the Internet or vector data on physical support, only if data distribution conditions are met as specified in the metadata.

⁶ Examples of derived geographic data are the Main Rivers map

The metadata related to the geographic data and the derived geographic data will be distributed via a data catalogue service within the Commission, the EEA and to the public without any restrictions.

The source, copyright and branding will be acknowledged if the geographic data are used in Commission and EEA products. The acknowledgement will be displayed as “©copyright text” on the map or in an acknowledgement text. The size of the text on the map will be proportional to the size of the map. The maximum length of copyright texts on electronic maps (web maps or electronic applications) is 20 characters. No copyright text will be applied for online icon maps with less than 150 x 150 pixels.

An acknowledgement of source including statement on legal constraints on access and use of geographic data, where appropriate, will be supplied with geographic data and derived products as part of the metadata information or as an accompanying document.

Categories for distribution of geographic data and derived products as part metadata element on data constraints:

Category 1:

Internal use within Commission and EEA, publication as maps on paper or in electronic format as image maps

Category 2:

Distribution of derived data and products under predefined conditions with the aim of decreasing the spatial accuracy or resolution of the geographic data.

Category 3:

Distribution of original data electronically as feature service or on physical support

MODEL OF OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION LETTER

European Environment Agency
Kongens Nytorv 6
DK 1050 Copenhagen K

In support of WISE - The Water Information System For Europe

To Whom It May Concern:

This confirmation letter shows the status of national data submissions to Reportnet based on the European Reporting Obligation

< display obligation from ROD (including name of directive and reporting article concerned)>

The letter is automatically generated when the authorised national data reporter has released the respective reporting information inside the Central Data Repository (CDR).

The following files have been submitted for country

< display country name from CDR >

into the (River Basin District) envelope

< display envelope name and URL from CDR >

and are made available on *< display date from CDR >*.

List of files:

< filename and URL file 1 >

< filename and URL file 2 >

< >

< filename and URL file N >

The above-mentioned files were submitted by:

< display username and full name of authorised WISE data provider> on behalf of the < display institution or competent authority which is reporting >

at the following date/time:

< display date and time >

This confirmation letter is electronically generated by the Reportnet system and therefore not signed

Authorised WISE data providers for UWWTD

version of 12/06/2009

Member State	Name	Contact details
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