

Follow-up Questionnaire on the Implementation of the Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – DG ENVIRONMENT

Follow-up Questionnaire on the Implementation of the **Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC)**

For completion by Expert Group on Bathing Waters – Member State Representatives

HOW TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

- For multiple-choice questions: tick the box(es) that best reflect your situation (☐). Where more than one box may apply, tick all relevant.
- If more than one factor applies, but multiple ticks/answers are not possible due to technical issues in EUSurvey, please describe them below in the elaboration box.
- For open text fields: please be concise. Where elaboration boxes appear after closed questions, use them only if the fixed options do not fully capture your situation.
- **Deadline for submission: 09 September 2026.** Please return to: ENV-BATHING-WATER@ec.europa.eu

Registration (mandatory)

Please register the person filling the questionnaire.

We expect each Member State to provide a single, consolidated reply reflecting the agreed national position.

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Member State

Estonia

Name of the competent authority

Health Board

Section A: CONTEXT & IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Governance structure, designation of bathing sites, and seasonal trends

A1. Competent Authority Structure

1. How is responsibility for BWD implementation organised at national level?

- ☐ Single national competent authority (Ministry of Environment or equivalent)
- ☐ Single national competent authority (Ministry of Health or equivalent)
- ☒ Split between two or more national ministries – please describe in the elaboration box
- ☐ Delegated to regional/local authorities under national coordination
- ☐ Other – please describe in the elaboration box

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

Responsibilities is divided between the Ministry of Climate and the Health Board.

2. If responsibility is split or delegated, how frequently do the bodies involved coordinate on data sharing and site management?

Skip if single national authority.

- ☐ Weekly or more frequently
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☒ Ad hoc (no regular schedule)
- ☐ Rarely / only for annual reporting

A2. Site Designation

1. What primary criterion does your Member State use to determine whether a location meets the threshold of a 'large number of bathers' for designation purposes?

- ☐ Fixed numerical threshold (e.g., minimum number of bathers per day)
- ☒ Discretionary assessment based on local custom, infrastructure, or historical use
- ☐ Hybrid approach (fixed threshold combined with discretionary assessment)
- ☐ No formalised national criterion – designation is entirely case-by-case

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

In addition the number of bathers using the site is also taken into account, based on the size and location of the bathing place, as well as factors affecting the waterbody,

2. Based on local observations or data, has the practice of swimming in non-designated ('wild') locations changed over the last 3 years?

- ☐ Significantly increased
- ☐ Slightly increased
- ☒ Stable
- ☐ Slightly decreased
- ☐ No data available

3. Does your Member State have information on locations regularly used for bathing by significant numbers of people that are NOT officially designated as bathing waters?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unknown / no systematic assessment conducted

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

4. What approach does your Member State apply to non-designated ('wild') bathing sites that are in regular use?

- ☒ Monitored voluntarily alongside designated sites
- ☒ Subject to public information or safety warnings without formal designation
- ☒ Being assessed for potential formal designation
- ☐ Not monitored or addressed under BWD processes
- ☐ Other – please describe in the elaboration box

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

A3. Bathing Season

1. Has your Member State observed a lengthening of the actual bathing season (i.e., earlier opening or later closing) compared to the formally declared season?

- ☐ Yes, clearly observed
- ☐ Partially observed in some areas
- ☒ No change observed
- ☐ No systematic assessment

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

2. Does the declared bathing season in your Member State accurately reflect the period of actual bathing activity?

- ☒ Yes, it is well aligned
- ☐ Partially – some sites have activity outside the declared season
- ☐ No – there is a significant gap between declared and actual seasons
- ☐ Varies significantly between regions

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

SECTION B: MONITORING & SCIENTIFIC PARAMETERS

Sampling frequency, methods, and supplementary parameters

B1. Monitoring Frequency

1. Does your Member State apply a variable sampling frequency beyond the minimum prescribed by the BWD (Annex II), based on site-specific risk factors?

- ☐ Yes – fully implemented across most sites
- ☒ Yes – partially, for selected sites only
- ☐ No – we apply the minimum standard frequency throughout
- ☐ Under consideration / in planning

2. If variable sampling is applied, what factors trigger increased sampling frequency?

Skip if variable sampling is not applied.

- ☒ Poor or Sufficient water quality classification at the site
- ☒ High tourist/bather volume
- ☒ Historical pollution incidents
- ☐ Proximity to pollution sources (e.g. wastewater overflows, agriculture)
- ☐ Extreme weather events or heavy rainfall forecasts

- ☐ Cyanobacteria risk
- ☒ Other – please describe below

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

Lot of owners of bathing sites take 5 samples during the season, because it is easier to keep required sampling frequency. Also Blu Flag beaches take 5 or more samples.

B2. Analytical Methods

1. Are the current mandatory analytical methods (ISO 9308-1 for E. coli; ISO 7899-2 for intestinal enterococci) considered fit for purpose in your Member State?

- ☒ Yes, fully fit for purpose
- ☐ Mostly, with minor limitations
- ☒ Partly – modern techniques are needed for at least some sites
- ☐ No – they should be updated

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

We would like to use the Colilert method and/or some new modern techniques

2. Is your Member State currently piloting or has it adopted alternative/faster analytical methods (e.g., qPCR/molecular techniques) for bathing water monitoring?

- ☐ Fully adopted at a significant number of sites
- ☐ Active pilot under way
- ☐ Planning stage
- ☐ Explored but not pursued
- ☐ Not considered

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

So far, it has not been possible to implement new methods without the approval of the Microbiology Expert Group.

B3. Supplementary Parameters – Cyanobacteria & Chemical Risk

1. Does your Member State currently monitor cyanobacteria at bathing sites (Article 8 BWD), beyond what is required for the bacteriological classification?

- ☐ Yes – systematic monitoring at all or most sites at risk
- ☐ Yes – at selected sites only

- ☒ Only when blooms are visually observed
- ☐ No routine monitoring

2. When a cyanobacterial bloom is detected, does your Member State have a mechanism to issue immediate public health advice, even if the bacteriological status remains 'Excellent'?

- ☒ Yes – robust protocol in place
- ☒ Yes – on an ad hoc basis
- ☐ No – no formal protocol exists

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

amples are taken to identify the species and quantities of cyanobacteria. Appropriate warnings and advice are also provided both at the beach and on websites

3. Does your Member State monitor supplementary parameters beyond E. coli and intestinal enterococci (e.g., chemical pollutants, microplastics, other microbial indicators)?

If yes, please list the parameters monitored and briefly explain the rationale in the elaboration box.

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Under consideration

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

Vibrios

4. Has your Member State used the Bathing Water Profile (Article 6) to publicly warn bathers about chemical pollution risks (e.g., industrial or agricultural sources), separate from the bacteriological classification?

- ☐ Yes – used frequently
- ☒ Yes – used rarely
- ☐ No – not used for this purpose

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

There is list of pontentsial pollustion sources in profile.

SECTION C: SHORT-TERM POLLUTION & CLIMATE ADAPTATION

STP events, prediction systems, and flexibility mechanisms

C1. Short-Term Pollution Management

1. How does your Member State currently manage the declaration of 'abnormal situations' (short-term pollution events)?

- ☐ Formal national protocol with clear criteria and timelines
- ☐ Guidance exists but application varies between competent authorities
- ☒ Managed on a case-by-case basis without formal guidance
- ☐ Challenges remain – Commission guidance would be welcome

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

2. Does your Member State use predictive modelling (e.g., combining weather forecasts with historical contamination data) to anticipate short-term pollution events 24–48 hours in advance?

If no, please indicate the main barriers in the elaboration box (e.g., cost, technical expertise, data availability).

- ☐ Yes – widely deployed
- ☐ Yes – pilot projects only
- ☒ No

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

But we have considered this option of modelling, and several related plans or research projects are currently underway at universities

3. When a short-term pollution event occurs, how quickly is the public typically informed? Via digital channels (apps, website, social media)?

- ☐ Within 4 hours (near real-time)
- ☐ 4–12 hours
- ☐ Next day
- ☒ Inconsistent – varies by site or region

4. Which digital channels do you use for informing the public about short-term pollution events (apps, website, social media)?

500 character(s) maximum

websites, social media, information on the bathing site.

C2. Flexibility Mechanisms

1. Does your Member State consider that existing flexibility mechanisms in the BWD (e.g., provisions on abnormal situations, short-term pollution exemptions) are applied consistently across your territory?

- ☒ Yes – applied consistently
- ☐ Mostly consistent, with minor variations
- ☐ No – significant variation between regions or authorities
- ☐ Insufficient information to assess

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

2. Would your Member State benefit from European Commission guidance on the application of flexibility mechanisms?

- ☐ Yes – guidance on abnormal situations declarations
- ☐ Yes – guidance on short-term pollution risk management
- ☐ Yes – both of the above
- ☒ No – current provisions are sufficiently clear
- ☐ Other – please describe in the elaboration box

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

SECTION D: PUBLIC INFORMATION & DIGITALISATION

Communication, digital tools, and data interoperability

D1. Public Communication

1. Is the information provided to the public about bathing water quality (e.g. signage, websites, apps) consistent in format and content across different regions within your Member State?

- ☒ Fully harmonised nationally
- ☐ Mostly harmonised, with minor regional variations
- ☐ Fragmented – significant inconsistency between regions
- ☐ No national-level coordination of public communication

2. Would your Member State support the development of a voluntary harmonised template for country profiles to improve comparability of information provided to the public?

- ☐ Yes – would actively participate
- ☒ Yes – would use a template if developed by the Commission

- ☐ Neutral / no strong view
- ☒ No – existing national formats are adequate

D2. Digital Tools & Remote Sensing

1. Does your Member State use real-time sensors or satellite/remote sensing data (e.g., Copernicus) in bathing water monitoring or management?

If no, please indicate the main barriers in the elaboration box.

- ☐ Yes – operational at a significant number of sites
- ☒ Yes – pilot projects under way
- ☐ Under evaluation
- ☐ No

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

One research project is currently underway: UrbanSplash: <https://finestcentre.eu/et/pilootprojektid/linnasulps/>

2. Is your Member State exploring or using AI / machine-learning approaches for early warning purposes (e.g., predicting algal blooms or pollution events)?

- ☐ Yes – operational
- ☐ Yes – pilot/research phase
- ☐ Under consideration
- ☒ No

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

D3. Data Interoperability

1. Does your Member State currently use INSPIRE-compliant standards or open-data APIs to feed national bathing water data into the EEA's systems or third-party applications?

- ☐ Yes – automated, with no manual intervention required
- ☐ Partially automated
- ☐ Manual upload only
- ☐ Not yet – in progress
- ☒ Not applicable

2. How do bathing water quality data and assessment results feed into WFD or UWWTD implementation in your Member State? (tick all that apply)

- ☒ Bathing water quality drives WFD measures or investigation of pollution sources
- ☒ Data are shared between BWD and WFD competent authorities but not systematically used
- ☐ Limited interaction – authorities operate largely independently
- ☐ Other – please describe in the elaboration box

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

500 character(s) maximum

SECTION E: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & CITIZEN SCIENCE

Site identification, public involvement, and transparency

1. How does your Member State currently involve the public in the identification or review of bathing sites?

- ☐ Formal public consultation mechanism (regular cycle)
- ☐ Online platform or app allowing citizens to suggest new sites
- ☒ Engagement with local authorities and NGOs
- ☐ Ad hoc consultation only
- ☒ No formalised mechanism in place

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

2. Do you integrate citizen science data (e.g., swimmer reports, NGO monitoring) into the Bathing Water Profile as supporting information (distinct from official monitoring data used for classification)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Interested, but concerned about data quality and/or legal liability
- ☒ No – compliance approach only

If yes, please elaborate how (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

SECTION F: ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY & CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

Cost reduction, transboundary coordination, and reporting burden

1. For transboundary water bodies shared with one or more other Member States, is there an established mechanism for sharing real-time pollution alerts beyond annual reporting?

- ☐ Yes – formal protocol in place
- ☐ Yes – informal contacts exist
- ☒ No – limited or no coordination
- ☐ Not applicable (no transboundary bathing waters)

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

SECTION G: STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & COMMISSION SUPPORT

Guidance needs, best practices, and overall assessment

1. In which areas would EU-level guidelines most improve implementation of the BWD? (tick and rank your top 4 by placing 1, 2, 3, 4 in the elaboration box)

- ☐ Risk-based monitoring approaches
- ☐ Management of 'abnormal situations' and short-term pollution
- ☐ Cyanobacteria and harmful algal bloom management (Articles 8–9)
- ☐ Designation criteria for 'large number of bathers'
- ☒ Integration of digital tools and real-time monitoring
- ☐ Cross-border alert and cooperation procedures
- ☒ Harmonised public communication and country profiles
- ☐ Other – please specify in the elaboration box

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

500 character(s) maximum

2. Does your Member State have best practices or innovative approaches in BWD implementation that could serve as models for others?

If yes, please briefly describe the practice(s) in the elaboration box.

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Possibly – further reflection needed

If relevant, please elaborate (optional):

200 character(s) maximum

3. What single most important step could the European Commission take to support your Member State's implementation of the BWD?

500 character(s) maximum

Contact

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