



European Union (EU) Water Framework Directive

Canada and the European Union both face growing problems of water supply and water quality. Both share similar national government structures and societal values, yet Canada lags behind in establishing coordinated environmental policies.

The EU's Water Framework Directive is a National Policy that coordinates water resources within the EU's 25 Member States and aims to guarantee sufficient quantities of good quality water across Europe. Key goals include:

- expanding the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater
- achieving "good status" for all waters by a set deadline
- water management based on river basins
- "combined approach" of emission limit values and quality standards
- getting the prices right
- getting the citizen involved more closely
- streamlining legislation

The Directive sets water improvement targets and provides financial incentives and legal enforcement mechanisms. As part of the coordinating the Directive, information and data is gathered and shared between Members States and is made available to the public. A central data depository called *Water Information Systems for Europe (WISE)* helps identify problem areas and promotes collaborative monitoring while enhancing public confidence. Significant water management and infrastructure investment in the EU has improved the water quality and water resource management. The EU has clearly shown that improvement to water quality and cooperative management works by implementing a national water strategy. Canada could learn from this model of cooperative water governance to improve its water quality and protect its limited water supply.

