The rural diffuse pollution partnership for improving Scotland's waters

dpmag

Rural diffuse pollution plan for Scotland (2015-2021)

1. Introduction

It is important that key stakeholders in Scotland work in a co-ordinated way to reduce diffuse pollution from rural sources. The river basin management plans (RBMPs) for the Scotland and the Solway Tweed river basin districts set out our ambition to improve from 62% of water bodies in Scotland at good status to 88% by 2027, and 93% in the longer term (as some measures will take time to deliver good status).

This implementation plan will be key to delivering improvement of these water bodies and protected areas by enabling stakeholders from a range of sectors and organisations to co-ordinate activities and resources to tackle rural diffuse pollution. It will also help to ensure that resources are used efficiently.

The delivery of this plan is the responsibility of the Diffuse Pollution Management Advisory Group (DPMAG) which was set up on the request of the Scottish Government at the start of the first RBMP cycle. Now that the principles and approaches introduced in the first RBMP cycle are well-established, the role of DPMAG is evolving toward the role of a project management group that will ensure the effective delivery of this rural diffuse pollution plan. The group will focus on planning, coordinating, implementing and tracking the delivery of these measures.

This plan will be reviewed regularly through the river basin management planning cycle.

Extract from the Scotland river basin management plan
Scotland is renowned worldwide for the environmental quality of its river, lochs, wetlands and seas. They are some of the country's greatest natural assets; attracting visitors, contributing to the health and well-being of its people, supporting a rich diversity of wildlife and providing for the sustainable growth of its economy. Maintaining this enviable reputation is important for Scotland's continued economic success and well-being.

2. The strategy

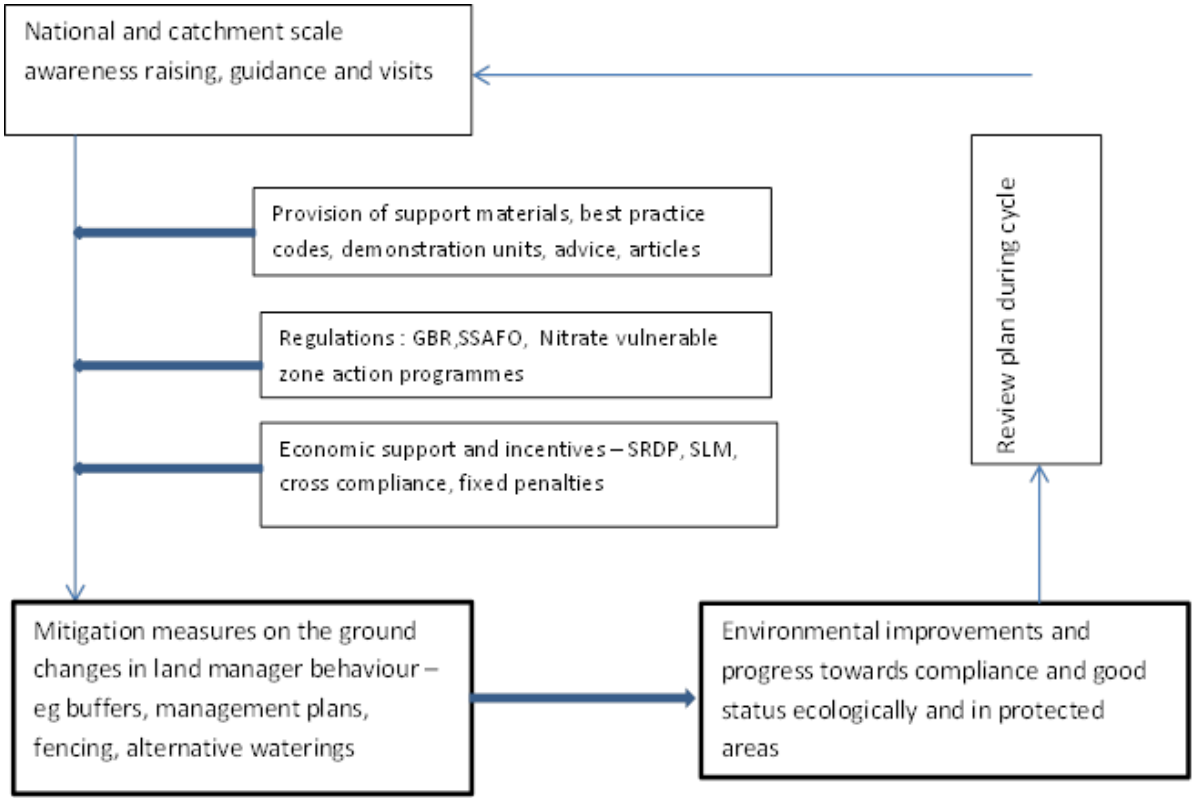
This section provides an overview of the strategic approach DPMAG has developed to mitigate rural diffuse pollution and to achieve our RBMP objectives.

The strategy for the second river basin management planning cycle (2015-2021) will involve national co-ordination and management of the implementation plan via DPMAG. As with the first river basin management plans (2009-2015) Scotland will need to:

- continue to improve understanding of the cause of rural diffuse pollution co-ordinate resources, not only within SEPA but also with other public bodies
- develop and deliver a communication strategy and implementation plan for Scotland
- monitor the resultant changes in behaviour and in the environment.

Some actions within the plan will be delivered at a national scale, others will be more relevant to the local scale. The strategy will rely on a mix of effective communications, economic drivers and regulation. Much of the evidence gathered during delivery of the first river basin management plan will be used as our evidence for the period 2015-2021. The figure below summarises how we expect the delivery of these various elements to result in land managers changing behaviours and existing management practices to address rural diffuse pollution issues on their land:

Figure 1: Summary Diffuse Pollution Strategy



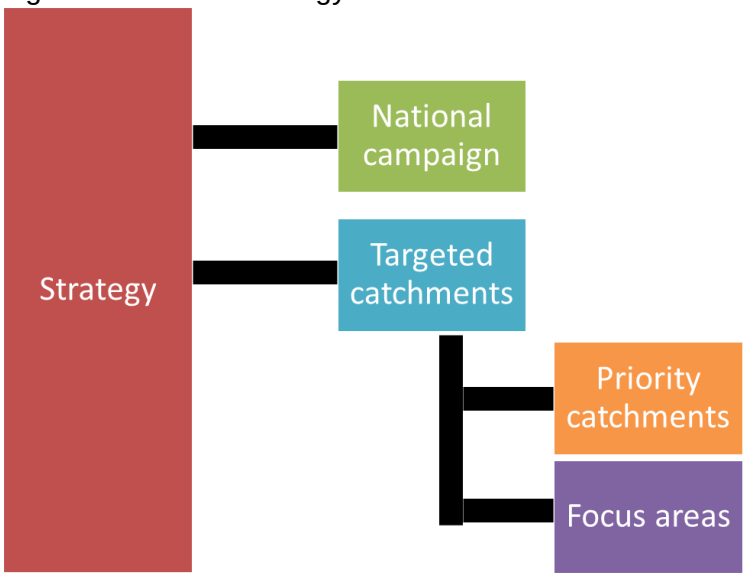
To ensure we target resources to where they are needed, we have identified water bodies impacted by rural diffuse pollution. These have been prioritised on the potential they have for impacting upon drinking water supplies, shellfish waters, bathing water, habitats / species important on a European scale and ecosystem services. The high priority for action has been given to those areas with the greatest impact on human health (i.e. drinking water protected areas and catchments draining to bathing waters).

During the prioritisation process SEPA also identified catchments which were smaller and where the farming was much less intensive. In these areas the ‘cycle 1 priority catchment approach’ was

not considered suitable; however these areas still require measures to mitigate rural diffuse pollution. To distinguish these catchments from the priority catchments they have been given the name 'Focus Areas'.

As in cycle 1, it is still the intention to have a two tiered approach to delivery, with a national awareness-raising campaign and work on the ground to target improvement to water bodies in all priority catchments and focus areas (Figure 2).

Figure 2 – Overall strategy



Tier 1: National campaign of awareness raising	Land manager workshops, promotion of 'Farming and Water Scotland' messages; training courses, best practice guides, and engagement and inspection by SEARS partners on land out-with our targeted areas. This approach will aim to prevent deterioration of water bodies and may improve some that are very close to the boundary
Tier 2: Targeted approach for priority catchments and focus areas	**Priority catchments** : awareness raising, 1 to 1 farm visit and if required revisit to non-compliant farm **Focus areas**: May involve evidence gathering and monitoring, local awareness raising and land manager visits similar to priority catchment delivery.

3. Actions to mitigate rural diffuse pollution

This section provides an overview of the approach DPMAG members will take to mitigate diffuse pollution.

RBMP1 Priority catchments

The approach

SEPA started working in these catchments in 2009. The approach included a catchment walk, awareness raising of diffuse pollution issues and site visits.
At the end of the first River Basin Management Planning cycle, a good rate of compliance has been achieved in these catchments, however there are still some non-compliance issues that have not been addressed after the third re-visit.
SEPA has developed in consultation with DPMAG members an enforcement approach to tackle the remaining non-compliance in these catchments.

Where

Map1: RBMP 1 Priority Catchments



Who is doing what?

- SEPA will continue with revisits to non-compliant farms in these 14 catchments using the 3rd revisit to initiate enforcement actions if required
- NFUS and SLE will inform their members in these catchments of SEPA's enforcement policy and where possible help to encourage compliance with the regulatory requirements.

RBMP2 Priority catchments

The approach

The priority catchment approach is described below.

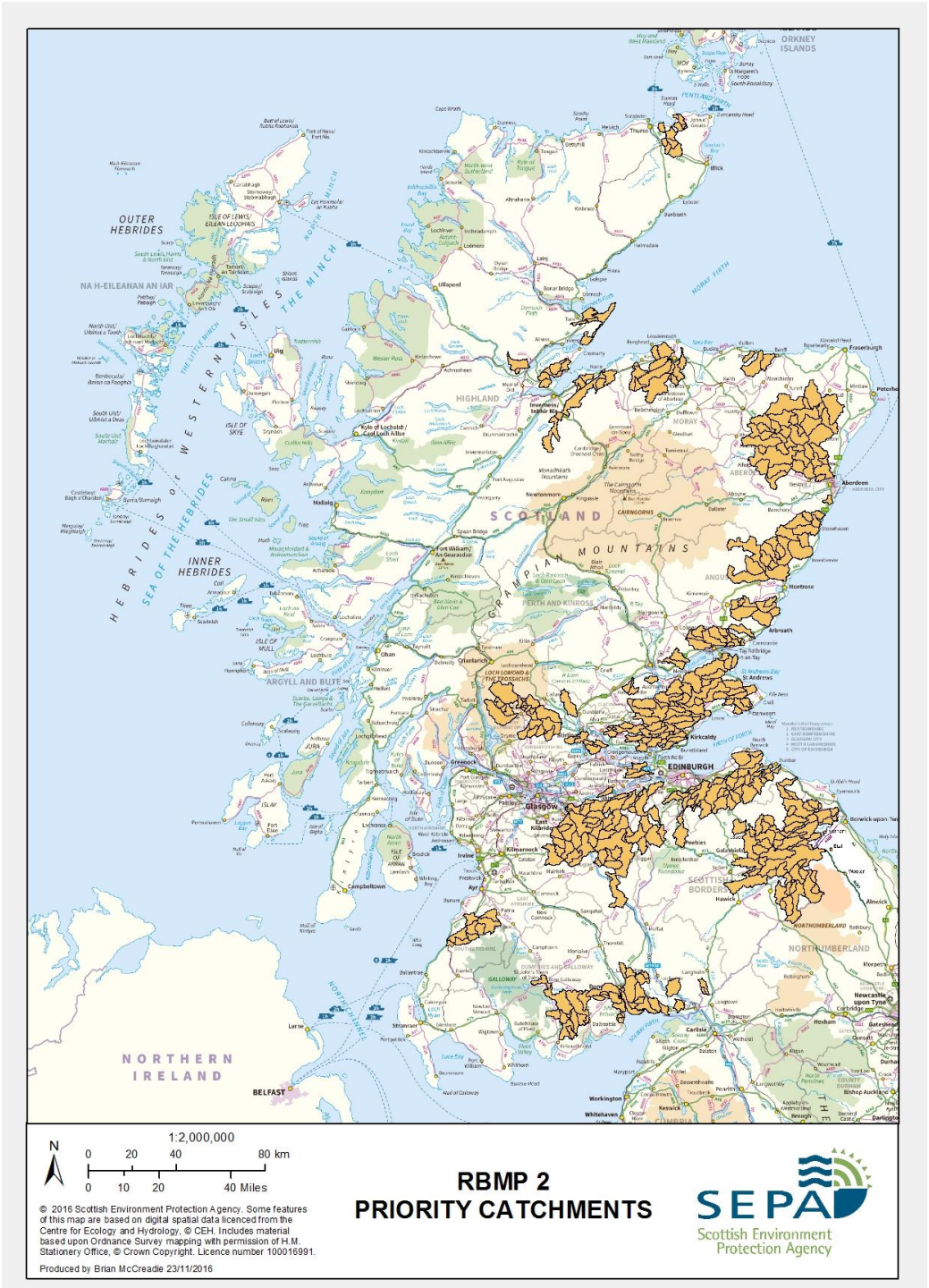
Priority catchment approach	**Awareness raising**	Each catchment co-ordinator will work with stakeholder groups (NFUS, SLE, Fishery boards etc) within each catchment and the SRUC to deliver targeted key messages to the land managers in these areas. SEPA will work with farming organisations to arrange workshops and events, while offering support and guidance.
	Land manager engagement **1 to 1 visits**	SEPA will continue with 1 to 1 engagement visits with land managers. To enable more catchments to be visited in cycle 2, SEPA staff will take a risk based approach in identifying the area to be visited. The visits will include a steading inspection and walking 50% of the farmed land. The areas of land (fields) identified for walking will be risk assessed based on the risk to the water environment from the land use in each field. This will enable two visits to be undertaken in one day. The findings from the visit will be fed back verbally to the land manager, identifying non-compliant issues and/or where pollution was observed in the areas inspected. Land managers will be encouraged to inspect the remainder of their land mass, not inspected by SEPA, looking for non-compliances. Areas of good practice will also be discussed. This verbal feedback will be reinforced with a letter. During the feedback, links will be made to SRDP / Scottish Water measures and other appropriate funding sources to effect improvements above and beyond regulatory compliance.
	Land manager engagement: **revisit**	Given the observed behavioural change of land managers to improve their activities by the 1st revisit in cycle 1, it is SEPA's intention to carry out only a single revisit to non-compliant farms before initiating enforcement action. If a land manager has taken no action towards compliance by the time of SEPA's revisit, the most appropriate enforcement powers available to effect behaviour change at this time will be applied

In addition to the priority catchment approach, SEPA will carry out extra monitoring in Bathing Waters catchments that are at risk of failing the new Bathing Waters Directive to identify and implement measures to mitigate the impact on the Bathing Waters.

Where

In addition to the 14 first cycle priority catchments, a further 43 catchments have been identified as priority catchments. Initially, the focus will be on catchments impacting on Bathing Waters.

Map 2: RBMP 2 Priority Catchments



Who is doing what?

- SEPA will be responsible for planning and undertaking the inspection programme for each priority catchment. Each catchment will have an identified catchment co-ordinator (point of contact) whom stakeholders can contact at any time.
- Forestry Commission Scotland will undertake inspections and awareness raising in catchment with forestry land use
- SGRPID will assess and promote SRDP application in priority catchments

- NFUS & SLE will support engagement with land owners in priority catchments

Focus Areas

The approach

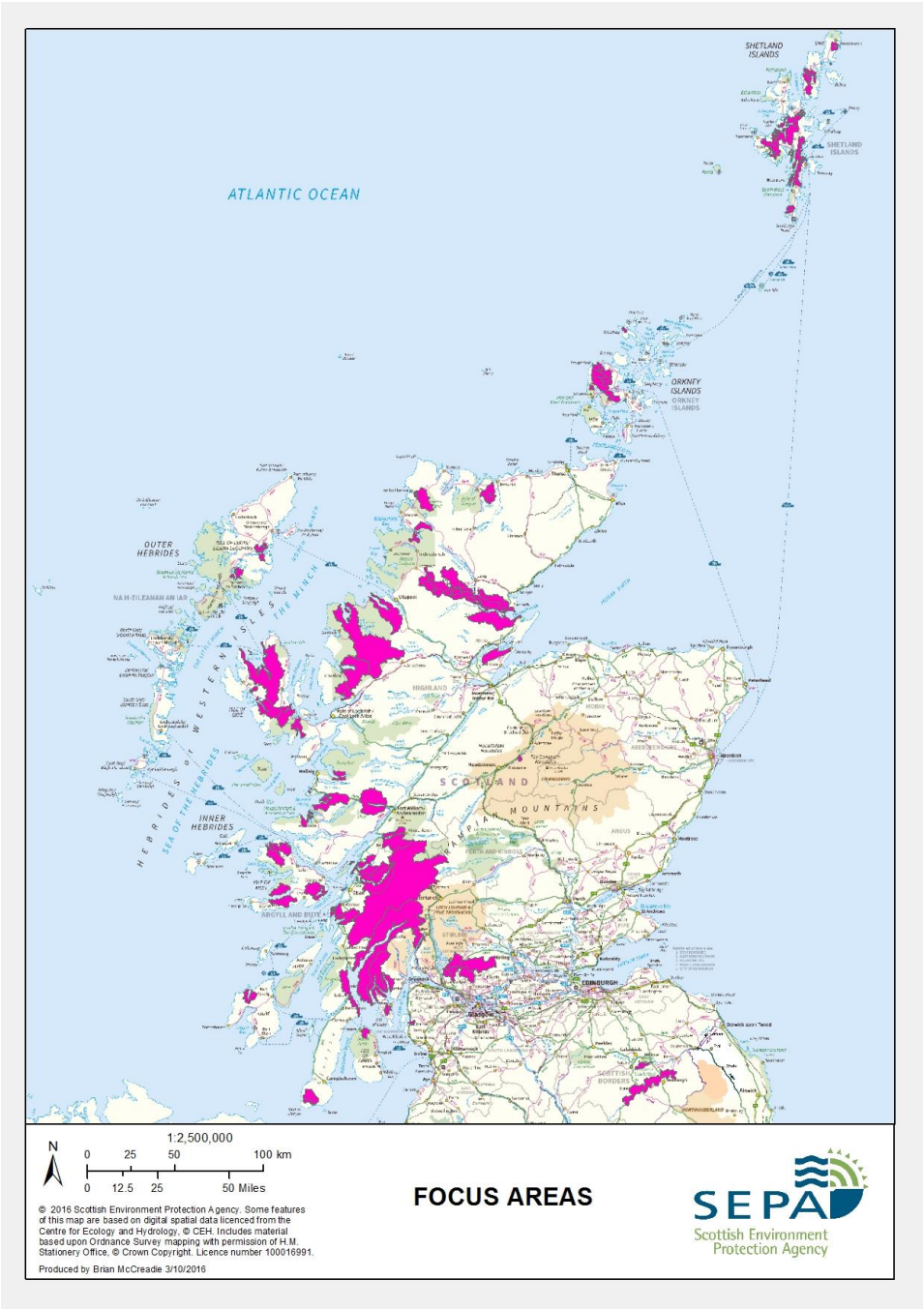
The focus areas are smaller areas with less intensive land use. The approach in these areas will have to be tailored to the land use and impact on the water environment. We have identified 5 categories of focus areas:

- Focus areas that impact on Protecting Drinking Water Areas
- Focus areas that cause a WFD downgrade on a water body
- Focus areas that cause a downgrade on protected conservation areas
- Focus areas that cause a downgrade on Shellfish waters
- Focus areas where the land use is mainly forestry.

In many cases, the first step will be to identify accurately the sources of rural diffuse pollution by carrying out further investigation and/or monitoring. Once the sources of the major pressures have been identified, the most appropriate package of measures will be implemented. This could include awareness raising events, mailshots to householders or farm visits.

Where

Map 3: Focus Areas



Who is doing what?

- SEPA will lead improvement in the 7 focus areas that have been identified because of rural diffuse pollution impact on water bodies.
- SEPA will lead improvement in the shellfish Waters Focus areas by working with others stakeholders to identify the pressures and the appropriate package of measures.
- Scottish Water will lead improvement in the focus areas which impact on Drinking Waters Protected areas.
- SNH will lead improvements within those focus areas which have been identified as being in 'unfavourable condition' due to rural diffuse pollution.
- SNH and FCS will work with other stakeholders in the focus areas which impact on protected conservation areas and where forestry is the dominant /significant land use.

National campaign

The approach

To prevent deterioration in water bodies and deliver improvements generally, a number of awareness raising campaigns and a national inspection programme will be implemented.

Who is doing what?

- SEPA and SRUC will continue to work together to implement and further develop the diffuse pollution awareness raising campaign for the agricultural sector- Farming and Water Scotland
- NFUS and SLE will advise SEPA, SRUC and others on how best to interact with the agricultural sector and support the engagement with the sector.
- Forestry Commission Scotland will lead the development and implementation of the diffuse pollution awareness raising campaign for the forestry sector. This includes further development and promotion of the Forestry and Water Scotland brand, Know the Rules Guide, mind the gap sticker and guidance videos.
- CONFOR and Forestry contracting association will advise on how best to interact with the private forestry sector and support the engagement with the sector.
- Scottish Golf will advise on how best to interact with the Golf sector and support the engagement with the sector.
- RPID, SNH and FCS will undertake rural diffuse pollution inspection as part of their national inspection programme where appropriate.
- SEPA will provide training on diffuse pollution for RPID, SNH and FCS staff undertaking diffuse pollution inspections.

Working in Partnership

This plan aims to set out the various roles and responsibilities that are integral to the successful delivery of the plan. Whilst these are generally set out on an individual organisation basis, a key element of the successful implementation of the plan involves partnership working. The challenge for meeting the objectives and targets set out within the river basin plans is a shared goal for Scottish Government, SEPA, SNH, Scottish Water, FCS, responsible authorities and sector representatives. It is only by working together, providing support and where appropriate taking the lead that we can achieve these objectives and make use of the opportunity to contribute to our wider goals such as biodiversity, resilience to climate change and sustainable land use.

The membership of DPMAG has been established with the delivery of the diffuse pollution plan specifically in mind. As such the required skills, level of expertise and specialist knowledge which is required to implement the plan exists within the membership and organisations represented. Only by making best use of this expertise and targeting combined resources effectively can we

maximise opportunities to achieve multiple benefits and make the best use of the resources available.