

# water matters

*"Our plan!"*



## **Neagh Bann International River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015)**

*Incorporating amendments of the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government issued on 6th July 2010*











## Foreword

Clean water is one of our most important national resources. Human activities have led to deterioration in water quality over many years. The Water Framework Directive was adopted by the EU in order to halt and reverse the decline in water quality. The Directive sets very strict deadlines for meeting water quality objectives, especially in protected areas. This plan sets out how we aim to achieve the objectives of the Directive in the Neagh Bann International River Basin District.

Informed by pilot projects from the 1990s and through extensive research carried out since 2003, local authorities have developed this plan to provide an objective scientific approach to meeting the required water standards. In preparing the plan all known pressures on waters have been identified and quantified at the level of individual water bodies. Measures to address the pressures have been examined and the likelihood of water quality recovery has been assessed. All public bodies and other stakeholders have been consulted extensively in the process.

The plan targets are ambitious yet they are no more than we are obliged to do under current EU and National legislation. Further legislative change may be required to control specific activities. Responsibility for taking measures lies with all public bodies whose activities impact on water quality or who regulate such activities. Local authorities must perform their own activities in a way that will promote achievement of objectives and additionally must carry out a range of environmental monitoring and enforcement activities to ensure that other stakeholders' actions will lead to water quality improvements.

Local authorities today face an immense challenge to meet an ever increasing demand for services across all of their functions. We are required to work within tight resource constraints and depend heavily on funding provided by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for capital works and indeed day to day expenditure. Under the circumstances it is ever more important that we plan carefully for the application of resources to satisfy obligations placed upon us by National Legislation and to lead the general development of our administrative areas.

Following adoption of this plan, local authorities will develop implementation programmes and identify all resource implications and funding requirements. It is likely that the resource requirements will exceed the current capacity of local authorities. Meeting the commitments contained in the plan will depend on the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government together with other Government Departments making provision for the required resources and funding.



# Glossary and Abbreviations

<b>AA:</b>	Appropriate Assessment for Natura 2000 sites as required under the Habitats Directive.
<b>Acidification (artificial):</b>	The rough canopies of mature evergreen forests are efficient scavengers of particulate and gaseous contaminants in polluted air. This results in a more acidic deposition under the forest canopies than in open land. Chemical processes at the roots of trees, evergreens in particular, further acidify the soil and soil water in forest catchments. When the forests are located on poorly buffered soils, these processes can lead to a significant acidification of the run-off water and consequent damage to associated streams and lakes.
<b>ACP:</b>	Agricultural Catchment Programme
<b>Artificial water body:</b>	A body of surface water created by human activity
<b>Biodiversity:</b>	Word commonly used for biological diversity and defined as assemblage of living organisms from all habitats including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.
<b>Coastal waters:</b>	That area of surface water on the landward side of a line, every point of which is at a distance of one nautical mile on the seaward side from the nearest point of the baseline from which the breadth of territorial waters is measured, extending where appropriate up to the outer limit of transitional waters.
<b>COFORD:</b>	The National Council for Forest Research and Development
<b>DAFF:</b>	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.
<b>DCENR:</b>	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.
<b>DEHLG:</b>	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.
<b>DETE:</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.
<b>Diffuse sources (of pollution):</b>	Non-point sources primarily associated with run-off and other discharges related to different land uses such as agriculture and forestry, from septic tanks associated with rural dwellings and from the land spreading of industrial, municipal and agricultural wastes.
<b>EC:</b>	European Commission
<b>ECJ:</b>	European Court of Justice
<b>Ecological status:</b>	An expression of the structure and functioning of aquatic ecosystems associated with surface waters. Such waters are classified as being of good ecological status when they meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.
<b>Ecology:</b>	The study of the relationships among organisms and between those organisms and their non-living environment.
<b>Ecosystem:</b>	A community of interdependent organisms together with the environment they inhabit and with which they interact; community and environment being distinct from adjacent communities and environments
<b>EDEN:</b>	Environmental Data Exchange Network
<b>EIA</b>	Environmental Impact Assessment
<b>EPA:</b>	Environmental Protection Agency.
<b>ESTG:</b>	Environmental Services Training Group
<b>EU:</b>	European Union

<b>Eutrophic:</b>	Having high primary productivity, the result of high nutrient content.
<b>Eutrophication:</b>	The process of enrichment of water by nutrients (principally phosphorus and nitrogen). The nutrients accelerate plant growth, disturbing the balance of aquatic plants and animals and affecting water quality.
<b>Good status:</b>	A collective term used to refer to the status achieved by a surface water body when both its ecological status and its chemical status are at least good or, for groundwater, when both its quantitative status and chemical status are at least good.
<b>Groundwater:</b>	All water which is below the surface of the ground in the saturation zone and in direct contact with the ground or subsoil. This zone is commonly referred to as an aquifer, which is a subsurface layer or layers of rock or other geological strata of sufficient porosity and permeability to allow a significant flow of groundwater or the abstraction of significant quantities of groundwater.
<b>GSI:</b>	Geological Survey of Ireland.
<b>Heavily modified water body:</b>	A water body that has been changed substantially in character as a result of physical alterations by human activity.
<b>HSE:</b>	Health Service Executive
<b>Hydromorphology:</b>	A study of the quantity and dynamics of water flow within a water body that has variations in its width, depth, structure and substrate of bed and riparian zone.
<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland:</b>	State agency responsible for inland fisheries and sea angling.
<b>Inland surface waters:</b>	All standing or flowing water on the surface of the land (such as reservoirs, lakes, rivers) on the landward side of the baseline from which the breadth of territorial waters is measured.
<b>Invasive alien species:</b>	Invasive alien species are non-native plants or animals that successfully establish themselves in aquatic and fringing habitats and damage natural flora and fauna.
<b>Leachate:</b>	The liquid containing dissolved and suspended contaminants that is formed as percolating water passes through potentially polluting materials. The term is generally associated with landfills.
<b>Mitigation measures:</b>	Measures to avoid, prevent, minimise, reduce or, as fully as possible, offset or compensate for any significant adverse effects on the environment, as a result of implementing a plan or programme.
<b>NAP:</b>	National Action Programme
<b>Natura Impact Statement (NIS):</b>	The statement prepared following Appropriate Assessment for Natura 2000 sites as required under the Habitats Directive
<b>NGO:</b>	Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>NPWS:</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Service.
<b>OECD:</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>On-site system:</b>	Septic tank or other system for treating wastewater from unsewered properties.
<b>Oligotrophic:</b>	Water bodies that are poorly nourished or unproductive.
<b>OPW:</b>	The Office of Public Works
<b>PRP:</b>	Pollution reduction programme
<b>Programme of measures:</b>	Those actions, defined in detail, which are required to achieve the environmental objectives of the Directive within a river basin district.



<b>Protected area:</b>	Water protected by European legislation including drinking waters, shellfish waters, bathing waters, urban wastewater nutrient sensitive areas or sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas
<b>Quantitative status:</b>	An expression of the degree to which a body of groundwater is affected by direct and indirect abstractions. If this complies with Directive requirements the status is good.
<b>River Basin District (RBD) &amp; International River Basin District (IRBD):</b>	Administrative area for coordinated water management, composed of multiple river basins (or catchments), with cross-border basins (i.e. those covering the territory of more than one Member State) assigned to an international RBD.
<b>River basin:</b>	The area of land from which all surface water run-off flows, through a sequence of streams, rivers and lakes into the sea at a single river mouth, estuary or delta.
<b>SEA:</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>Sedimentation:</b>	The deposition by settling of a suspended material.
<b>SIMBIOSYS:</b>	Sectoral Impacts on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
<b>SNIFFER:</b>	Scotland Northern Ireland Forum for Environmental Research.
<b>Special Area of Conservation (SAC):</b>	Site designated according to the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora).
<b>Special Protection Area (SPA):</b>	Area designated under the European Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds)
<b>Statutory Instrument (SI):</b>	Any order, regulation, rule, scheme or bye-law made in exercise of a power conferred by statute.
<b>Surface water:</b>	Inland waters on the land surface (such as reservoirs, lakes, rivers, transitional waters, coastal waters) within a river basin.
<b>SWAN:</b>	Sustainable Water Network
<b>Transitional waters:</b>	Bodies of surface water in the vicinity of river mouths which are partly saline in character as a result of their vicinity to coastal waters, but which are substantially influenced by freshwater flows.
<b>Water body:</b>	A coherent sub-unit in the river basin (district) to which the environmental objectives of the directive must apply. Hence, the main purpose of identifying “water bodies” is to enable the status to be accurately described and compared to environmental objectives
<b>Water Framework Directive (WFD):</b>	The Water Framework Directive is European legislation that promotes a new approach to water management through river basin planning. It covers inland surface waters, estuarine waters, coastal waters and groundwater.
<b>WMU:</b>	Water Management Unit – geographical sub unit of a river basin district consisting of a number of water bodies relevant to a particular sub catchment.



## Executive summary

The Neagh Bann International River Basin District is a mix of fertile valleys, small drumlin hills and urban centres. It hosts good quality waters and protected sites, including internationally important wetlands that depend on water, whilst most of the main urban areas are located beside rivers. The district's waters provide fishing and boating with some areas attracting many tourists. Water is critical to the economy, generating and sustaining wealth through activities such as agriculture, commercial fishing, industry, services, transport and tourism. However, water is a fragile resource that needs to be protected.

The Water Framework Directive (WFD) was adopted in 2000. It requires governments to take a new approach to managing all their waters: rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries (transitional) and coastal waters. Member states must ensure that their waters achieve at least good status, generally by 2015, and that status doesn't deteriorate in any waters. To achieve good status and preserve the best waters, it is necessary to prepare and implement management plans for those waters.

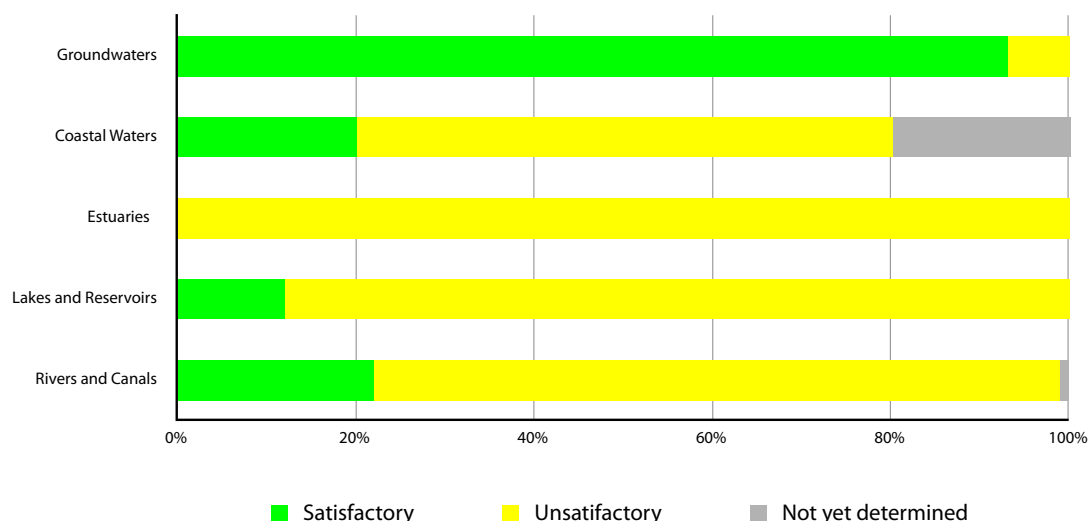
This plan is for the portion of the Neagh Bann IRBD in Ireland. It covers the period 2009–2015 and has been prepared in consultation with all stakeholders. It sets out the measures to be taken by all stakeholders and the tools to prioritise the application of available resources to those measures, with the aim of achieving the objectives of the directive. The key parties in its implementation are:

- the district's local authorities (Monaghan, Cavan, Louth, and Meath), which acted jointly to make the plan; Monaghan County Council, as the coordinating local authority in the district will aim to coordinate the work of the authorities and public participation in the district and to coordinate work with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency;
- the Environmental Protection Agency, which is responsible for reporting to the European Union, coordinating activities at national level and certain other tasks such as assigning status, monitoring programmes and review of the plan;
- the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government which has a coordinating role in relation to implementation of the Water Framework Directive, and through the Local Government Fund and Water Services Investment Programme plays a significant role in determining priorities for investment in infrastructure and the availability of resources to local authorities;
- other public authorities identified under the 2003 Water Policy Regulations, which are required to exercise their functions in a manner which is consistent with the objectives of the river basin management plan;
- the Water Framework Directive National Advisory Committee which will oversee implementation of the plan at national level. It is chaired by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and involves representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Environmental Protection Agency, the County and City Managers Association (representing local authorities) and other Government Departments as appropriate.



The Environmental Protection Agency has, in an interim status assessment based on the results of the monitoring up to 2008, classified the surface waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD according to their ecological status and chemical status; groundwater is classified on a system combining chemical and quantitative status:

- 22% of rivers , 12% of lakes and 20% of coastal waters are satisfactory, with high or good ecological status (by number);
- 77% of rivers, 88% of lakes, all of the estuaries and 60% of coastal waters are less than good (moderate, poor or bad);
- 1% of rivers and canals and 20% of coastal waters are yet to have status assigned.
- Most of the surface waters tested so far have good chemical status;
- 93% of groundwaters have good status.

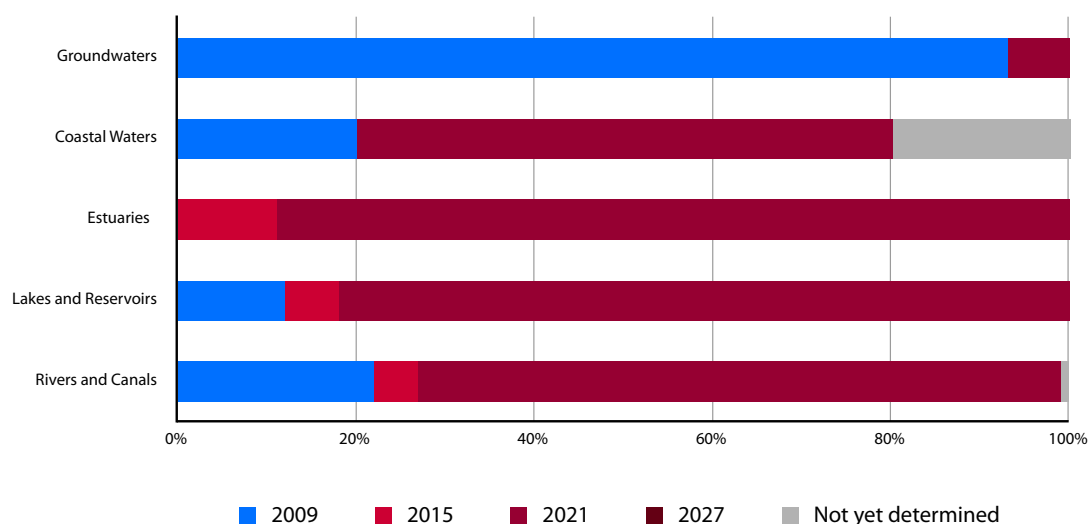


The final status assessment based on the data collected during the first monitoring cycle (2007-2009) will be presented by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2011.

The Water Framework Directive sets out four core objectives to be achieved by 2015:

- prevent deterioration;
- restore good status;
- reduce chemical pollution;
- achieve protected areas objectives.

The Water Framework Directive also allows alternative objectives to be set for certain waters. It is considered that implementing the measures in this plan will mean that good status will be achieved by 2015 in 27% of rivers, 18% of lakes, 11% of estuaries, 20% of coastal waters and 93% of groundwaters, with further improvements during the second and third planning cycles.



The principal suspected causes of less than satisfactory water in the State are discharges, principally of nutrients, from agricultural activities and from municipal wastewater treatment works. Industrial discharges, wastewater from unsewered properties and discharges from several other activities have also been identified as contributing. Action should concentrate in the first instance on these issues which pose the greatest threat to the water environment, but it is also important to address other possible sources of water pollution and impact, including issues such as water abstraction and physical modification and issues specific to the Neagh Bann IRBD. This plan identifies a programme of measures to protect and restore water status by addressing the main pressures (that is sources of pollution or status impact) in the district.

Many of the measures are already provided for in national legislation and are being implemented. These include, for example, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 to 2010 and the *Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations of 2009*. Other measures have been recently introduced (for example new *Bathing Water Regulations, 2008*) or are under preparation (for example proposed authorisation regulations for abstractions and physical modifications). The key measures include:

- Control of urban waste water discharges;
- Control of unsewered waste water discharges;
- Control of agricultural sources of pollution;
- Water pricing policy;
- Sub-basin management plans and programmes of measures for the purpose of achieving environmental water quality objectives for Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection of Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations;
- Pollution reduction programmes for the purpose of achieving water quality standards for designated shellfish waters; and
- Control of environmental impacts from forestry.

The action programme intended to achieve the plan's environmental objectives sets out:

- what the measure is;
- where and when it will be applied;
- who will take the action.

More detailed information is also set out in a series of water management unit (WMU) action plans. WMUs are at a smaller geographical scale than river basin districts, and allow for more focussed planning and implementation. There are seven water management units for the rivers and lakes in the Neagh Bann IRBD plus action plans focusing on groundwaters, estuaries and coastal waters. These action plans will be developed further to become implementation programmes and will be revised to reflect any updates (for example in relation to status) as implementation of the plan proceeds.





# 1 Introduction

This River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District, covering the period 2009 to 2015, aims to protect all waters within the district and, where necessary, improve waters and achieve sustainable water use. Waters include rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, groundwaters, protected areas (including wetlands and other water-dependent ecosystems), estuaries (transitional) and coastal waters.

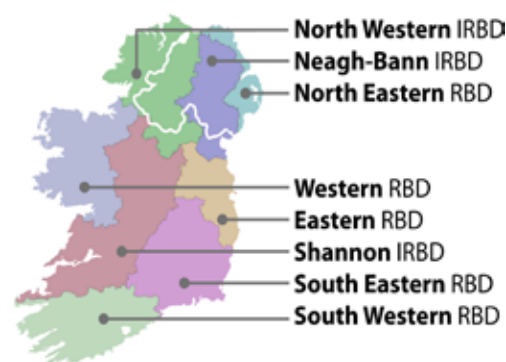
In accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, Ireland is committed to manage all waters through a catchment based process, and the River Basin Management Plan is the mechanism for achieving this.

The implementation of the plan will bring incremental improvement leading to the majority of waters reaching at least “good status” by 2027 at the latest, benefiting the whole community by providing long-term sustainable access to and use of those waters. Where waters are currently at less than good status, they must be improved until they reach good status and there must be no deterioration in the existing status of waters.

## 1.1 The Neagh Bann International River Basin District

Planning is based on river basins or catchments, so that all activities with a potential to impact on waters are managed in an integrated manner. Individual river basins are grouped into river basin districts; the districts cross administrative boundaries and are defined by the catchment areas of rivers. There are eight river basin districts (RBDs) covering the island of Ireland: four wholly within Ireland, one in Northern Ireland and three cross border. These cross-border districts are called International River Basin Districts (IRBDs).

The Neagh Bann International River Basin District is cross-border: 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> is in Ireland and 6,000 km<sup>2</sup> in Northern Ireland. It takes in all of County Armagh, large parts of Antrim, Louth, Monaghan and Londonderry, significant areas of Down, Meath and Tyrone and small areas of Cavan and Fermanagh. The district is flanked by the Sperrin Mountains to the north-west, the Antrim Plateau to the north-east and the Mourne Mountains and uplands of Monaghan and Meath to the south. The northern part contains the broad, very fertile Bann valley; the southern part is dominated by small drumlin hills from the last ice age.



Map 1.1 Ireland's River Basin Districts

This plan relates to the portion of the Neagh Bann International River Basin District (IRBD) within Ireland. The principal river systems within Ireland are the Castletown, Fane, Dee and Glyde rivers draining to Dundalk Bay.

The district is home to over half a million people. Most of the main urban areas — Ardee, Dundalk, Carrickmacross, Castleblaney, Dungannon, Monaghan and Newry — are located beside rivers. In rural areas, many people live in small villages or single dwellings. The growing population increases pressure on the systems that deliver drinking water and treat wastewater.

Agriculture, mostly livestock grazing on pasture land, is the main activity. The district has internationally important wetlands, which support a wide range of plants and animals, and its waters provide fishing and boating: some areas within the district are popular holiday destinations. All of the activities in the district have the potential to impact our waters and therefore must be managed sustainably.

## 1.2 The authorities and their roles

A detailed list of the authorities involved in the management of the Neagh Bann IRBD is included in the *contacts background documents* available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

This plan has been developed by the local authorities of Monaghan, Louth, Cavan, and Meath. These local authorities, acting jointly, are the competent authorities for making this plan as defined by the *European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (S.I. No. 722 of 2003)*. Similar plans have been drawn up by local authorities in the adjoining districts (the North Western IRBD, North Eastern and Eastern RBD).

Public bodies, identified in the 2003 Water Policy Regulations, are required to exercise their functions in a manner which is consistent with the objectives of the river basin management plan.

Monaghan County Council is the coordinating local authority in the Neagh Bann IRBD. Public authorities at district level have been coordinated through a Public Authorities Forum and public participation has been facilitated through an RBD Advisory Council.

The Environmental Protection Agency is the competent authority for reporting to the European Union, coordinating certain activities and for other tasks assigned in the 2003 Water Policy Regulations. In relation to the plan's development the Agency's particular responsibilities include assigning status, monitoring programmes and the review of the plans. Under Section 63 of the *Environmental Protection Agency Act (No 7 of 1992)*, as amended by the Protection of the Environment Act (No 27 of 2003), the Environmental Protection Agency is authorised to supervise the performance of all public authorities with statutory functions in relation to environmental protection.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government which has a coordinating role in relation to implementation of the Water Framework Directive, and through the Local Government Fund and Water Services Investment Programme plays a significant role in determining priority for investment in infrastructure and the availability of resources to local authorities.

Implementation of the plan will be overseen at national level by a National Advisory Committee chaired by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government with representatives from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Environmental Protection Agency, the County and City Managers Association (representing local authorities), and other Government Departments as appropriate.

This plan has been prepared in consultation with all stakeholders. Implementation of the plan will be challenging and will place obligations on all relevant authorities and stakeholders. Local authorities, through this plan, are committed to achieving the aims and objectives of the Water Framework Directive by implementing the measures specified to the best of their ability.

A plan has also been prepared for the portion of the district in Northern Ireland [www.ni-environment.gov/wfd](http://www.ni-environment.gov/wfd). Preparation of these plans has been closely coordinated between the two jurisdictions. Coordination arrangements are outlined in the *Working Together background document* [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

## 1.3 The development of the plan

Public authorities have undertaken technical work, co-ordination and consultations since 2000 in the preparation of this plan.

### 1.3.1 Investigation and technical work

River, canal, lake, reservoir, estuary and coastal water bodies and ground water bodies in the district have been delineated based on physical characteristics (typology). Potential sources of pollution (pressures) were identified and impacts assessed. Monitoring was carried out and the status of waters was classified based on the results of this monitoring. The *characterisation report* and *monitoring programme background documents* are available from [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

A draft of this plan was published in December 2008. The main technical studies undertaken to finalise the plan during 2009 included:

- An assessment of the timescales for water quality to recover once remedial measures are implemented in order to determine likely restoration timescales. This included an investigation of the rate of nutrient loss from agricultural lands and the likely timescales for status recovery following implementation of the *Good Agricultural Practice Regulations (SI 101 of 2009)*;
- Prioritisation of wastewater treatment plants for investigation and, where necessary, remedial works based on an assessment of compliance with the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations*, current operational performance and known impacts on water quality. Protected areas (for example bathing waters, shellfish waters and water dependent Natura 2000 sites) were also taken into account, where impacted by discharges ;
- Preparation of catchment management plans for designated freshwater pearl mussel populations and Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters in order to develop measures for these protected areas;
- An assessment of the cost of measures for wastewater discharges and on-site systems.

During 2009 the Environmental Protection Agency updated the delineation of water bodies. This involved splitting some water bodies in order to better represent their status. The Agency also updated status classification based on 2008 monitoring information.

The outputs from the above studies were used to modify and update the objectives and measures presented in this final plan. Detailed action plans were prepared for more locally focused catchment areas called Water Management Units. These extract the key measures and objectives in the overall plan, presenting them for the geographical areas in which implementation will be coordinated.



### 1.3.2 Consultation

Consultation has been an important aspect throughout the development of this plan. The following *public participation background documents* (at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)) were produced:

- the administrative arrangements for implementing the Water Framework Directive, *Managing our Shared Waters* [2003];
- the process of characterising basins and assessing the impacts of human activity on them, including an economic analysis of water uses, *The Characterisation and Analysis of Ireland's River Basin Districts* [2004];
- the milestones for developing river basin management plans, *Timetable and Work Programme for making a River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District in Ireland* [2006];
- the identification of the most significant water issues and how they affect waters, including what is being done and what is planned to do about them, *Water Matters – Have Your Say! Neagh Bann International River Basin District* [2007];
- a summary of consultations and stakeholder engagement, *Digest of submissions and responses to Significant Water Management Issues Reports for Ireland, North Western and Neagh Bann International River Basin Districts* [2008];
- the strategic environmental assessment scoping process; *Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures – Neagh Bann IRBD – Scoping Document* [2008];
- the draft river basin management plan; *Water Matters “Help Us Plan!” Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District* [2008];
- the strategic environmental assessment environmental report; *Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures – Neagh Bann IRBD – Environmental Report* [2008];
- the digest of submissions on the draft plan which details the comments made and their responses and summarises where these have been addressed in the preparation of the final plan: *Digest of submissions and responses to the draft River Basin Management Plan for the North Western and Neagh Bann International River Basin District* [2010].

The management plan was considered during its preparation by the RBD Advisory Council, which consists of representatives from local authorities (County and Town Councillors) and community and stakeholder groups (agriculture, angling, industry and non-governmental organisations).

Voluntary groups are also involved in River Basin Planning activities primarily through the activities of SWAN (Sustainable Water Network) [www.swanireland.ie](http://www.swanireland.ie). SWAN is an umbrella network of 25 of Ireland's leading national and local environmental organisations specifically constituted to address public participation requirements of the Water Framework Directive.



The plans were also considered by a Public Authorities Forum which facilitates information exchange, consultation, cooperation and liaison within and between Ireland's public authorities.

Significant water management issues were discussed with interest groups and county councils and at a series of public consultation events in 2007 and 2008. Draft plan public consultation events were held between December 2008 and June 2009 including the following public meetings:

Date	Location	Venue	River Basin District
5 May 2009	Cavan	Cavan Crystal Hotel	Neagh Bann, North Western & Shannon
7 May 2009	Ballybay	Ballybay Wetlands Centre	Neagh Bann & North Western
12 May 2009	Dundalk	Fairways Hotel	Neagh Bann & North Western

A total of 32 written submissions were received in relation to the draft River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann IRBD across the following sectoral interest groups: local and public authorities; non-governmental organisations; business; and private individuals. A summary of the issues raised and responses is contained in the draft plan submissions digest in the **public participation background documents** which can be available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).





### 1.3.3 Planning

This plan is the result of a systematic process of identifying risks to waters, assessing the status of waters, setting objectives and developing measures to achieve those objectives. It has resulted from a significant body of technical preparatory work and public stakeholder participation.

This plan establishes water status objectives and identifies the measures to achieve those objectives. It also identifies the organisations that are responsible for implementing measures. The plan will remain in force until 2015. The data used to develop the plan (for example status assessments and the results of research and investigation programmes) will be continually updated and reviewed to ensure that measures achieve their objectives. A second plan will be prepared to cover the period 2015–2021 and a third, covering the period 2021–2027.

Much of the detailed information behind this plan has been incorporated into a computer-based interactive plan tool, *Water Maps* on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie). The plan is also supported by a large number of background documents, also on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie). They provide in-depth information about technical and detailed aspects of the plan including pressures, status, economic analysis, public participation arrangements, competent authorities and related plans and programmes.

## 1.4 Layout of this plan

Chapter 2 describes the Neagh Bann IRBD identifying its waters, protected areas and the key water management issues.

Chapter 3 establishes the status of the waters in the district summarising the monitoring programme and classification of waters.

Chapter 4 covers the objectives for protecting and restoring waters during the first and, where necessary, subsequent planning cycles.

Chapter 5 identifies the measures to achieve the objectives, the Neagh Bann IRBD action programme is supported by a series of more locally focused Water Management Unit action plans.

Chapter 6 considers the linkages of this plan with other plans and describes the wider climate change and environmental assessments of this plan.

Chapter 7 considers the implementation of this plan.

This River Basin Management Plan sets out a realistic approach to securing environmental objectives, and is in compliance with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive. Its contents have been checked against the Directive's requirements to ensure that the plan provides all the information needed. The *compliance statement background document* is available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).



## 2 Description of the Neagh Bann IRBD

### 2.1 The waters of the Neagh Bann IRBD

#### 2.1.1 Surface waters

There are 96 rivers and canals in the portion of the district within Ireland. The principal river system is the Blackwater, which drains to the Neagh Bann system in Northern Ireland. Smaller basins include the Castletown, Fane, Dee and Glyde rivers draining to Dundalk Bay. There are 17 lakes and the main lake is Lough Muckno, almost 4 km<sup>2</sup> located east of Castleblayney. Other lakes include Emy Lough (0.5km<sup>2</sup>), Lough Brackan (0.1km<sup>2</sup>) and Glaslough Lake (0.2km<sup>2</sup>).

Marine waters include 9 estuaries and 5 coastal waters and account for just over 200 km<sup>2</sup>. There is a short length of coastline to the north where the Bann enters the North Channel at Portstewart Bay. To the south the Newry River Estuary flows into the Irish Sea at Carlingford Lough and the Ballymascanlan and Castletown estuaries meet the Irish Sea at Dundalk Bay.

#### 2.1.2 Groundwaters

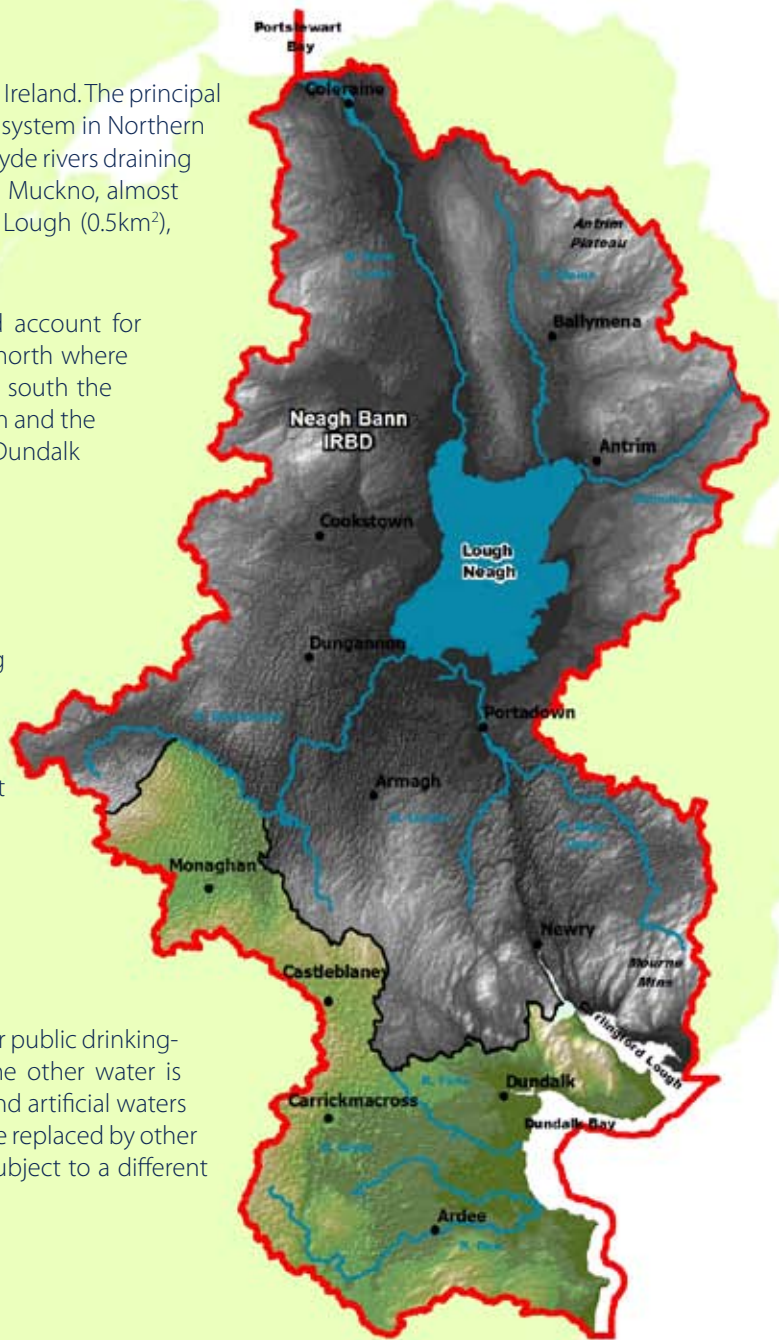
There are 28 groundwater bodies in the Neagh Bann IRBD ranging in size from less than 1 km<sup>2</sup> to over 1 km<sup>2</sup>. In the south and west of the District, including the areas adjacent to Carrickmacross and Monaghan, permeable rocks and soils allow groundwater to be stored in underground aquifers, but most of the District has rocks and mixed clays that hinder water seepage.

#### 2.1.3 Heavily modified and artificial waters

Two surface waters in the district have been heavily modified for public drinking-water supply. These are Emy Lough and Lough Muckno. One other water is man-made (artificial). This is the Ulster Canal. These modified and artificial waters provide important uses and benefits to society, which cannot be replaced by other means and need to be retained. Therefore, these waters are subject to a different set of objectives.

#### 2.1.4 Protected areas

A significant proportion of waters in the district are protected under existing EU legislation and they require special protection due to their sensitivity to pollution or their particular economic, social or environmental importance. All of the areas requiring special protection in the Neagh Bann IRBD have been identified, mapped and listed in a *register of protected areas background document* (available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)). They include drinking water sources such as Glaslough Lough, shellfish waters such as parts of Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay, bathing waters such as Seapoint and Clogherhead, nutrient sensitive areas such as Lough Muckno and River Blackwater, Special Areas of Conservation such as Dundalk Bay, Carlingford Shore and Clogherhead (qualifying interests include tidal mudflats, salt marshes perennial vegetation of stony banks and drift lines, dry heath and vegetated sea cliffs) and Special Protection Areas including Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay (hosting grazing birds such as Brent geese and Widgeon, and Great Crested Grebe, Cormorant, Ringed Plover and Red-Breasted Merganser).



**Table 2.1 Water dependent protected areas in the Neagh Bann IRBD**

Protected area	Implementing Legislation	Number
Drinking waters	The European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007 (SI 278 of 2007)	14 surface 28 groundwater
Shellfish waters	European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations 2006 (SI 268 of 2006) as amended in 2009	2
Bathing waters	Bathing Water Quality Regulations SI 79 of 2008	4
Nutrient sensitive areas	Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (SI 254 of 2001) as amended in 2004 and 2010.	6
Special areas of conservation	European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94 of 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005. Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations (SI 296 of 2009)	5
Special protection areas	European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94 of 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005	4

A full list of all the protected areas in the Neagh Bann IRBD is presented in Appendix 3. Map 2.2 provides an overview of the protected areas.

## 2.2 Key Issues for the Neagh Bann IRBD

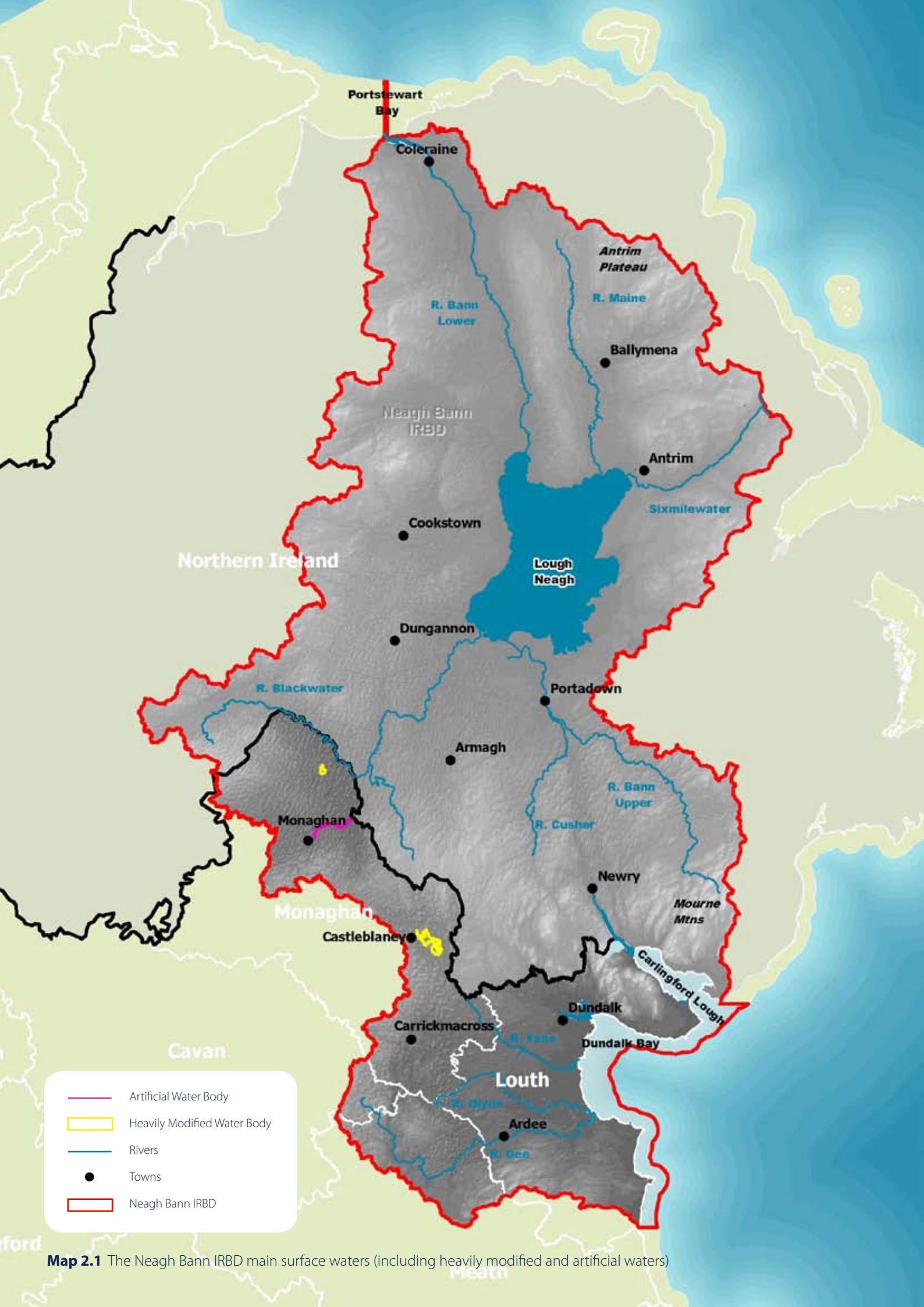
The key water management issues in the Neagh Bann IRBD and their possible effects on water status are set out in this section. The location of these impacts and pressures are shown on Maps 2.3 to 2.9.

### 2.2.1 Protecting high quality areas

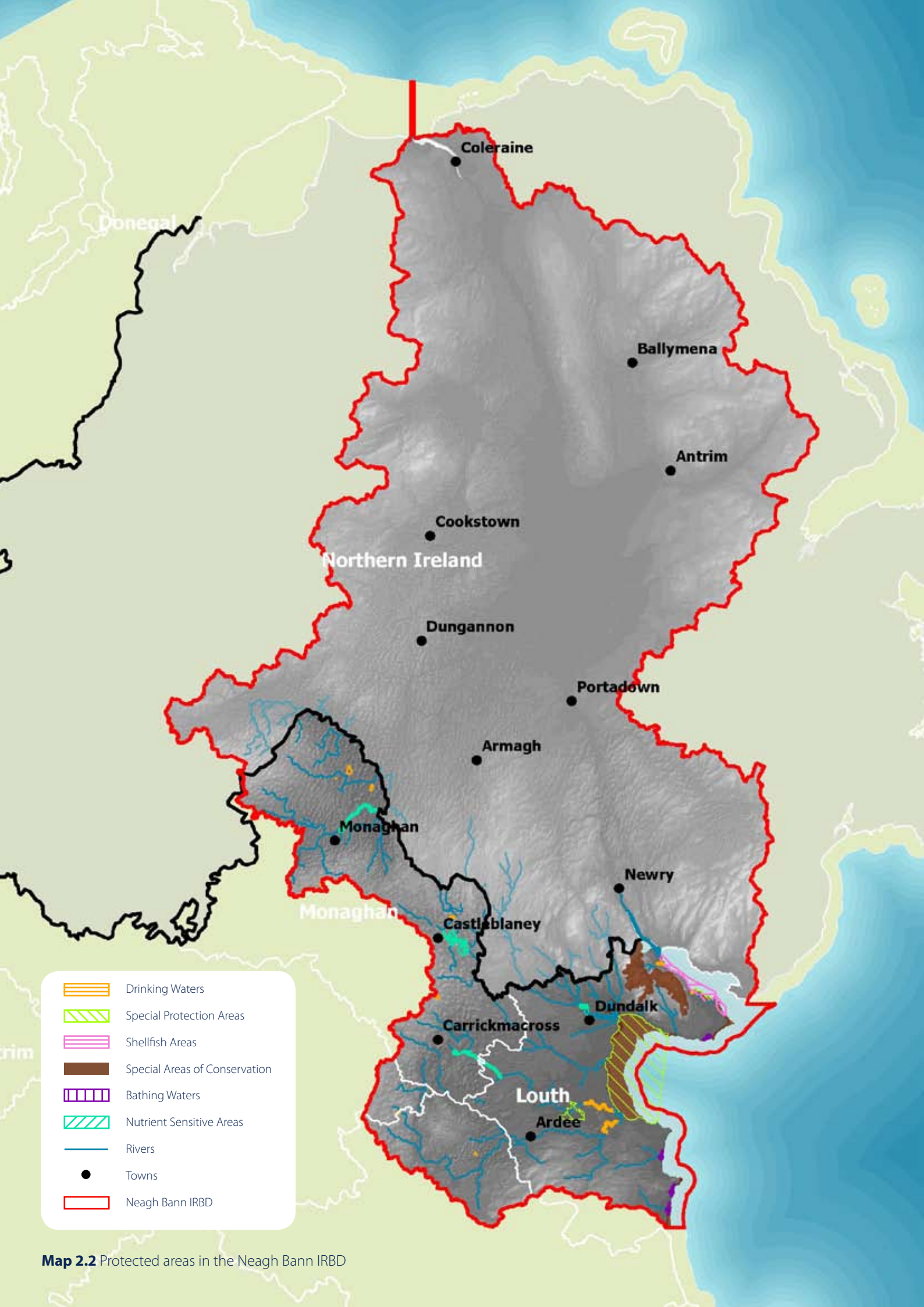
High quality areas include rivers, lakes and estuarine and coastal areas little affected by human activity; they are still near natural or pristine conditions, supporting a naturally diverse mix of aquatic wildlife. According to the 2009 Environmental Protection Agency indicators report the number of high quality river sites, nationally, has almost halved over the last 20 years with the greatest decline in the North Western, Neagh Bann and Shannon districts. At present there are no high quality waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD. Other designated special areas are specifically protected under legislation: drinking waters, bathing waters, shellfish waters and areas designated for special habitats and species (Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas). The deterioration or loss of high quality and protected areas is often due to their sensitivity to land use changes in surrounding catchments, such as agriculture, forestry, peat harvesting and rural development activities.







**Map 2.1** The Neagh Bann IRBD main surface waters (including heavily modified and artificial waters)



**Map 2.2** Protected areas in the Neagh Bann IRBD



## 2.2.2 Pressures

### Agriculture



The Environmental Protection Agency's diffuse risk model indicates that 57 rivers in the Neagh Bann IRBD are at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to diffuse pollution. Sources of diffuse pollution include agriculture, forestry, peatland and urban land uses. Nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) can be carried into waters from farmyards, from manure store leaks or from fields treated with nutrient-rich organic and chemical fertilisers. Animal slurry, manure and silage effluent can cause organic pollution. Nutrient enriched water accelerates plant growth and disturbs the balance of aquatic plants and animals and affects water quality. Nutrient enrichment is the most widespread threat to water quality in the Neagh Bann IRBD. The breakdown of organic material uses up oxygen that aquatic plants and animals need to survive, and suspended solids and ammonia can cause fish kills. Slurry can also contaminate drinking water with bacteria, parasites and viruses. Agricultural land uses in the Neagh Bann IRBD are illustrated in Map 2.3.

### Wastewater and industrial discharges



In the Neagh Bann IRBD there are 22 rivers and lakes, 2 estuaries and 3 coastal waters at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to municipal and industrial discharges. According to the Environmental Protection Agency 2009 report on urban waste water discharges, there are 28 agglomerations nationally requiring secondary treatment that did not have the required level of treatment in place and were non-compliant with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations. However, none of these agglomerations are in the Neagh Bann IRBD. Urban sewers carry wastewater to treatment plants from homes and industrial or commercial sources, as well as storm water from roads, roofs and recreational areas. The wastewater is treated, to remove many pollutants, and then discharged to surface waters. Inadequately treated effluents and spills or leakage from sewerage networks can impact on receiving waters, damaging water quality and downstream uses (for example bathing waters or shellfish waters). Urban runoff can be contaminated with pollutants (such as from vehicle exhausts) and impact on surface and groundwater quality through direct discharges. Overflows from sewer networks, leaking from defective underground pipes or seepage from containment areas can also lead to surface and groundwater pollution. The location of wastewater and industrial discharges in the Neagh Bann IRBD are illustrated in Map 2.4.

### Wastewater from unsewered properties



In the Neagh Bann IRBD there are approximately 15,000 unsewered properties located in areas where the hydrogeological characteristics mean that inadequate percolation is available. There are 6 rivers that have been assessed to be at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to unsuitable hydrogeological conditions and high density and location of unsewered properties in these areas. Many rural houses and businesses rely on on-site systems (conventional septic tanks or proprietary systems), via soil percolation areas, to treat and dispose of wastewater. To work properly, these treatment facilities must be located in suitable areas and designed, constructed and maintained to appropriate standards. If they are not working properly, nutrients, organic material, chemicals and bacteria may seep from wastewater into groundwater, contaminating nearby drinking water wells or damaging the quality of receiving rivers, lakes or marine waters. The location of unsewered properties in the Neagh Bann IRBD are shown in Map 2.5.

### Landfills, quarries, mines and contaminated lands



Assessment of groundwaters in the Neagh Bann IRBD indicates that 2 groundwater water bodies are at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to contamination from landfills etc. An additional 2 are at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to pollution from contaminated/urban areas pressures. The status assessment by the Environmental Protection Agency shows that all groundwaters in the Neagh Bann IRBD currently are at good status. Pollutants (mainly metals and fuel) from landfills and urban areas can seep into the ground and travel through groundwaters to enter surface waters, affecting their quality, damaging aquatic plants and animals and impairing water uses. Water table lowering at some quarry sites can affect nearby wetland areas, and the transfer of groundwater to surface waters can change water chemistry. Quarries can also be significant sources of silt which can adversely affect downstream aquatic habitats and species. These issues are site specific; knowledge of these sites in the Neagh Bann IRBD (shown in Map 2.4) is being updated by the Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities to assess the extent of the pressures and confirm the scale of any problems or impact.

### Physical modifications and damage



In the Neagh Bann IRBD 42% of river channels have been drained and 6% of the coastline is protected against erosion. There are 40 waters where status has the potential to be impacted. Further investigative monitoring is underway to confirm impact on status. Waters are physically modified for water supply, navigation, transport, flood protection, hydropower, aquaculture and land drainage. Such modifications can reduce the diversity of plant and animal communities either directly by affecting habitats or indirectly by changing natural processes. Rivers need a mix of pools and shallow riffles and variation of flow



patterns, to provide habitats for fish. Where rivers have been drained these features are often removed. Migratory fish need to access upstream spawning areas. However, weirs can restrict fish access if they are not designed to allow fish passage, consequently spawning success and population sizes can be reduced. Hard structures like ports and harbours can replace or reduce natural habitat. Overgrazing can increase erosion rates, significantly disturbing siltation and hydrology regimes, and can cause physical damage and loss of habitat in rivers. Similarly, land drainage and development, deforestation and cattle access can cause impacts such as bank erosion and siltation or increased risk of flooding due to faster runoff. Map 2.6 shows the rivers that have been physically modified and coastline that has been reinforced in the Neagh Bann IRBD.

## Water Abstractions



Most water abstractions are currently sustainable in the Neagh Bann IRBD, however abstraction poses a potential risk to 9 rivers due to their possible impact on river flows particularly during periods of low flow. Large amounts of water are abstracted daily for domestic use and for use in agriculture, industry and recreation. Most of this water is treated to a high standard to remove impurities and make it fit for consumption. Too much abstraction reduces flow in springs and rivers and lowers water levels in lakes, wetlands and wells. That can make water supplies unsustainable and adversely affect aquatic plants and animals and wetland areas. In extreme cases river beds may dry up, lake shores can become exposed and, in coastal areas, salt water may seep into groundwater. Future population growth and climate change may reduce the available water resource in some areas in the future. Map 2.7 shows the abstraction locations in the Neagh Bann IRBD and the volumes of water abstracted.

## Dangerous substances



The monitoring programme for dangerous substances has identified one transitional water body in the Neagh Bann, Inner Dundalk Bay, which is failing chemical status due to a breach of the lead standard. A wide range of chemicals, harmful to the water environment and which may be toxic to people, plants and animals and are harmful to the water environment, are contained in everyday products used in households, industry, forestry, agriculture, construction sites and water or wastewater treatment works. Runoff from roads and urban areas can contain dangerous substances from motor vehicle emissions. Some dangerous substances can be toxic to aquatic plants and animals at very low concentrations. They can persist in waters and sediments and slowly build up in the bodies of aquatic organisms, poisoning them and causing problems higher up the food chain or interfering with their natural breeding processes.

## Aquaculture



The Neagh Bann IRBD has 2 designated shellfish waters and 65 licensed aquaculture areas one of which is a fish farm. Mussels, pacific and native oysters, clams and scallops are the main shellfish species farmed in Ireland; salmon and rainbow trout are the principal finfish. Counties Galway, Cork and Donegal have the highest numbers of aquaculture licences. Aquaculture activities (including harvesting) unless appropriately managed and controlled, can affect water quality, physical habitat, biodiversity and indigenous species populations. Finfish farming can cause increased nutrient loading and organic pollution around cages. Misuse of authorised chemicals and medicines to control disease and possible infection of wild fish with sea lice if not appropriately managed are other concerns. Map 2.8 illustrates the location of aquaculture activities in the Neagh Bann IRBD.

## Forestry



In the Neagh Bann IRBD there are approximately 4,000 hectares of private forestry and 4,000 hectares of public forestry. However a risk assessment of acidification, eutrophication and sedimentation pressures based on percentage forestry cover and underlying geology and soils indicates that no rivers are at risk of failing to achieve the required standards due to potential impacts from forestry. Where mature plantations of evergreen trees have been established on acid-sensitive soils, it can lead to increased acidity and heavy metal concentrations in the run-off waters from such soils. Forestry activities can introduce extra nutrients; in naturally nutrient-poor areas, that can lead to problems such as excessive algal growth. Road-making and stream-crossing can cause erosion and sediment loss on susceptible soils, afforestation and clearfelling of forests may change flow patterns: and pesticides can damage aquatic organisms if applied incorrectly. Map 2.9 shows the locations of private and public forestry in the Neagh Bann IRBD.

## Invasive alien species



Alien species including Common Cord Grass and Japanese weed have been found in the waters of the Neagh Bann IRBD (notably Carlingford Lough). Nationally the Environmental Protection Agency has identified eight key aquatic species of non-native animals or plants that have successfully established themselves in aquatic and fringing habitats and are damaging natural flora and fauna and poses the threat of spreading into more waters within the Neagh Bann IRBD. These species pose a major threat to the diversity of native plants and animals, for example by preying on them, out-competing for habitat or food, altering habitat or introducing pathogens or parasites.

## Shared waters issues



The Neagh Bann IRBD includes 30 cross-border surface waters shared with Northern Ireland. It is important that efforts to protect shared waters are coordinated between the two jurisdictions. There has been a high level of coordination in developing these plans and this will be continued throughout the implementation phase.

## Cruising and boating



Cruising and boating are important recreational and tourism activities. These activities can give rise to localised water problems including discharge from onboard toilets, physical disturbance by boat wakes and potential engine oil spillage.

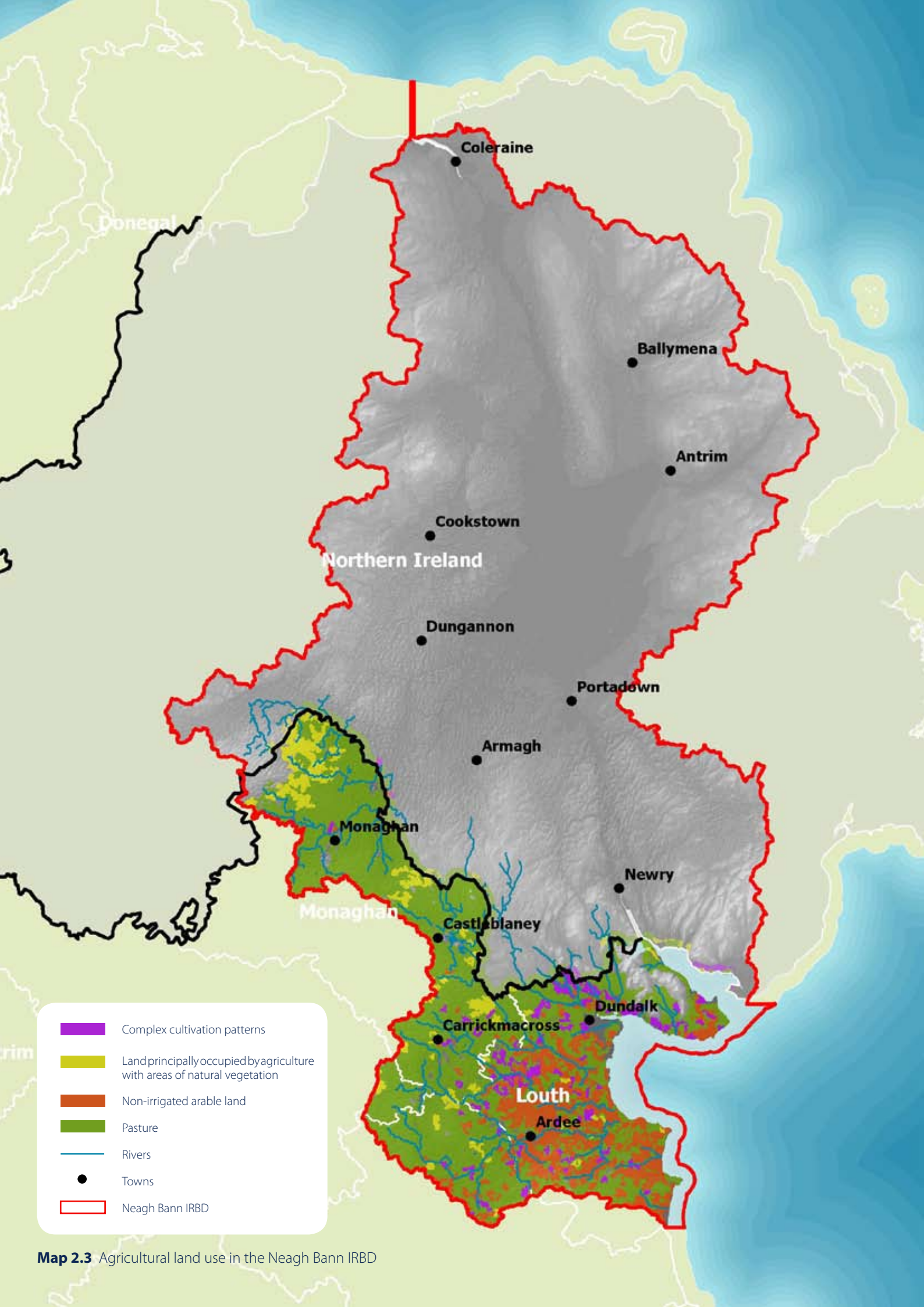
## Climate change



The specific impacts of climate change are difficult to predict, but it is likely that they will add to water management challenges in the future. Heavier winter rainstorms may cause more flash flooding, increasing diffuse pollution loads from soil run-off and raising demand for flood controls. Summer droughts are more likely and there may be a reduction in drinking water supplies. Temperature changes might give invasive alien species a competitive advantage, thus affecting biodiversity. Sea level rise may also impinge on water management. More detail on how climate change has been considered in developing these plans is provided in Chapter 6.

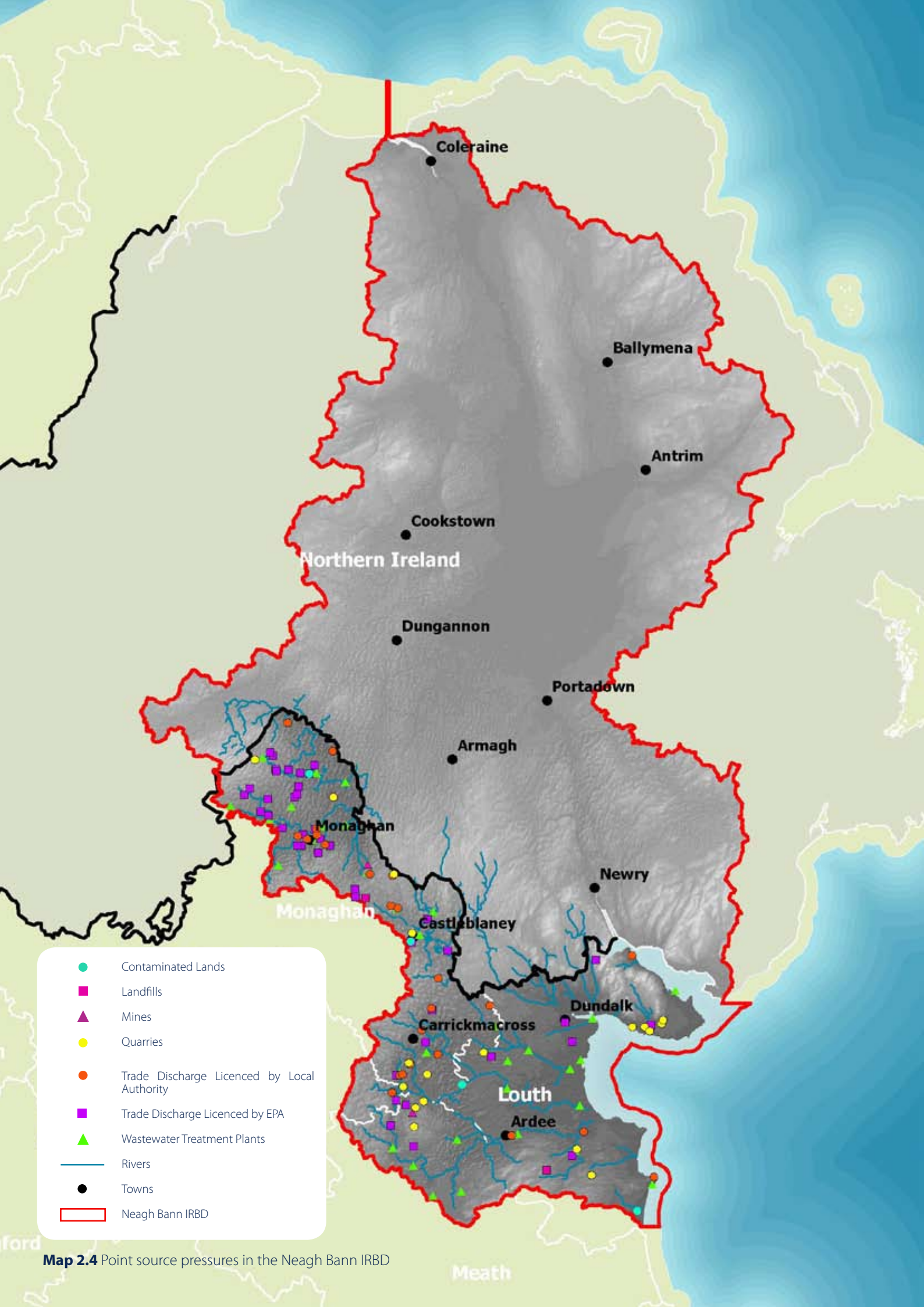




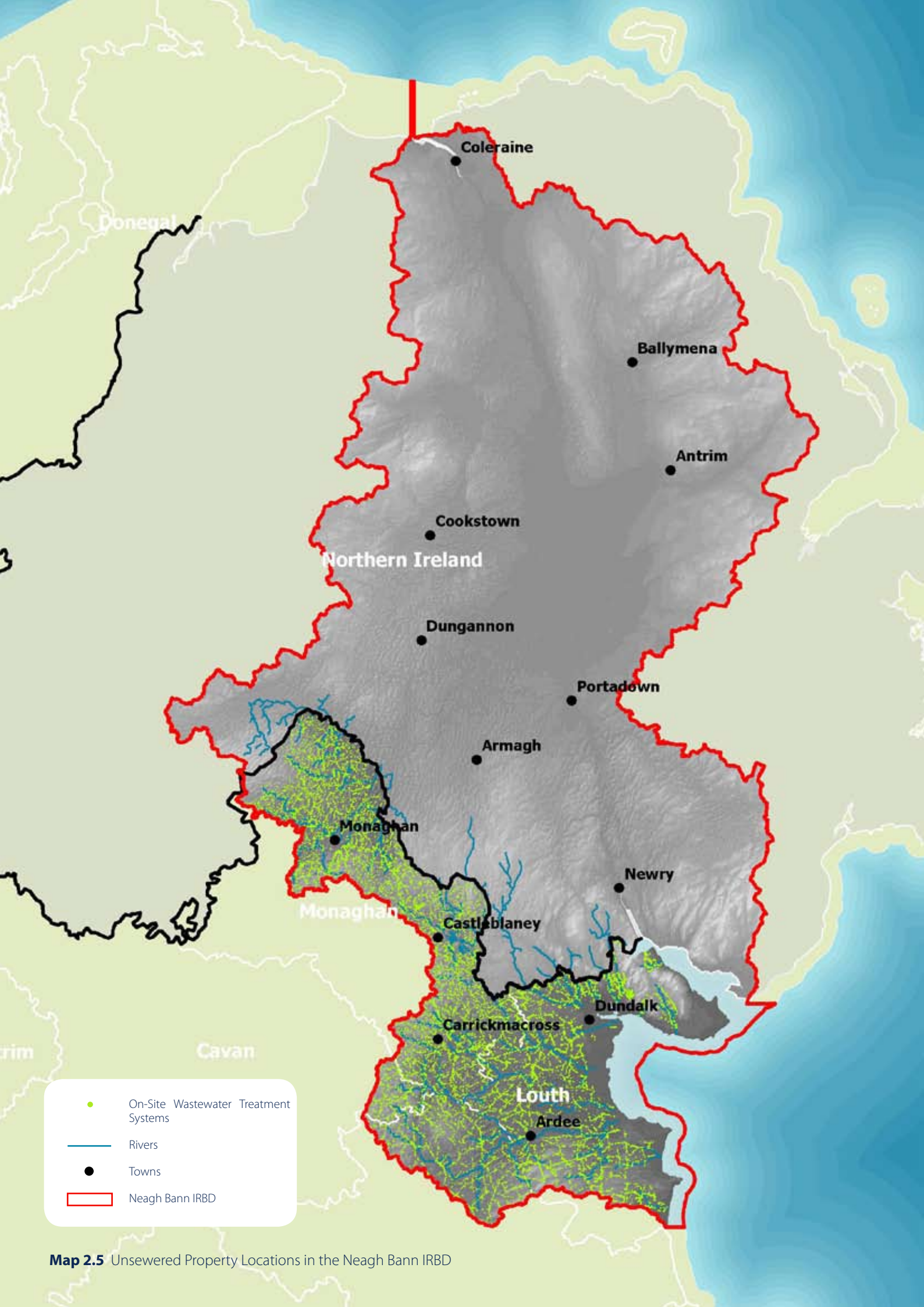


**Map 2.3** Agricultural land use in the Neagh Bann IRBD



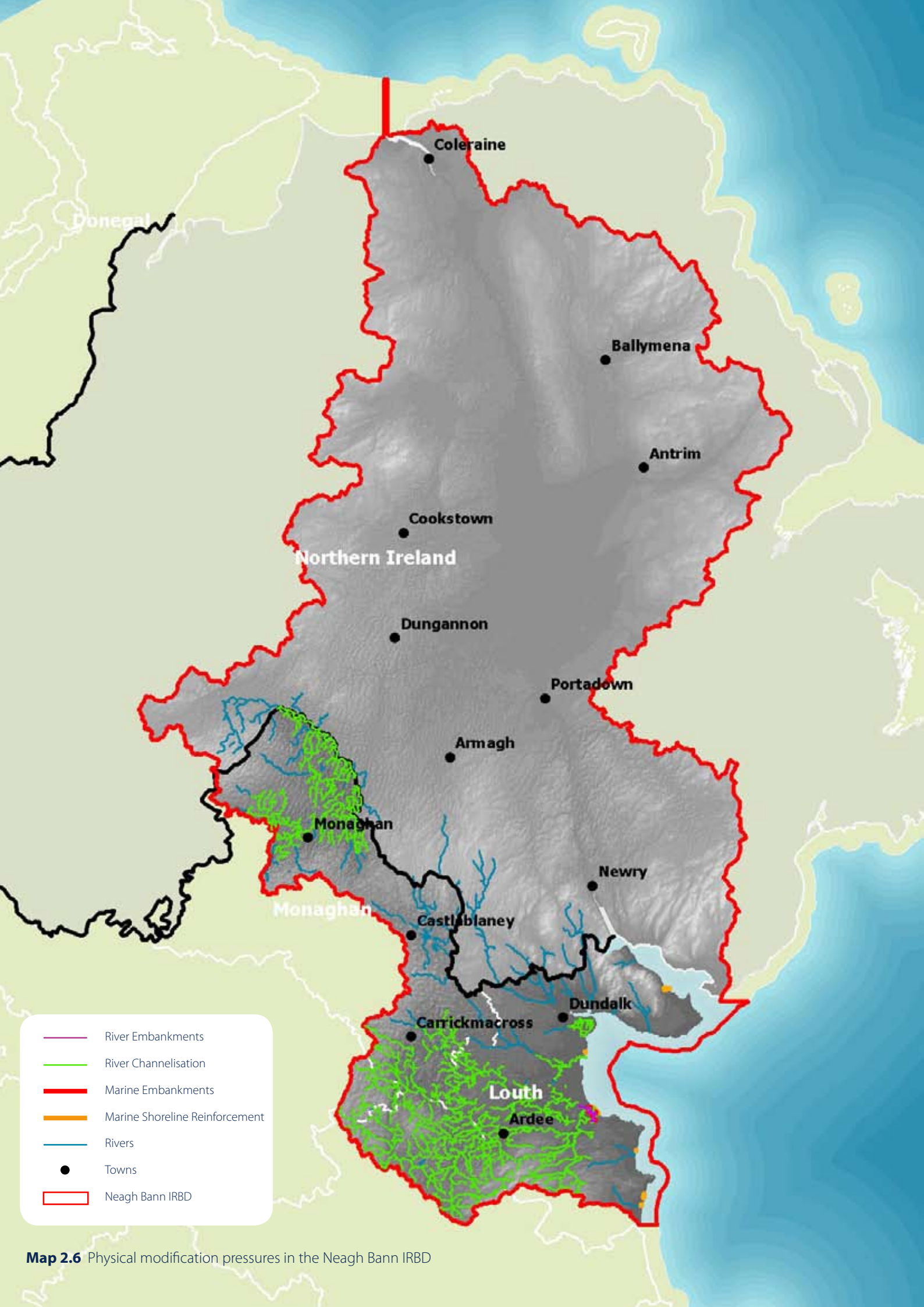


**Map 2.4** Point source pressures in the Neagh Bann IRBD



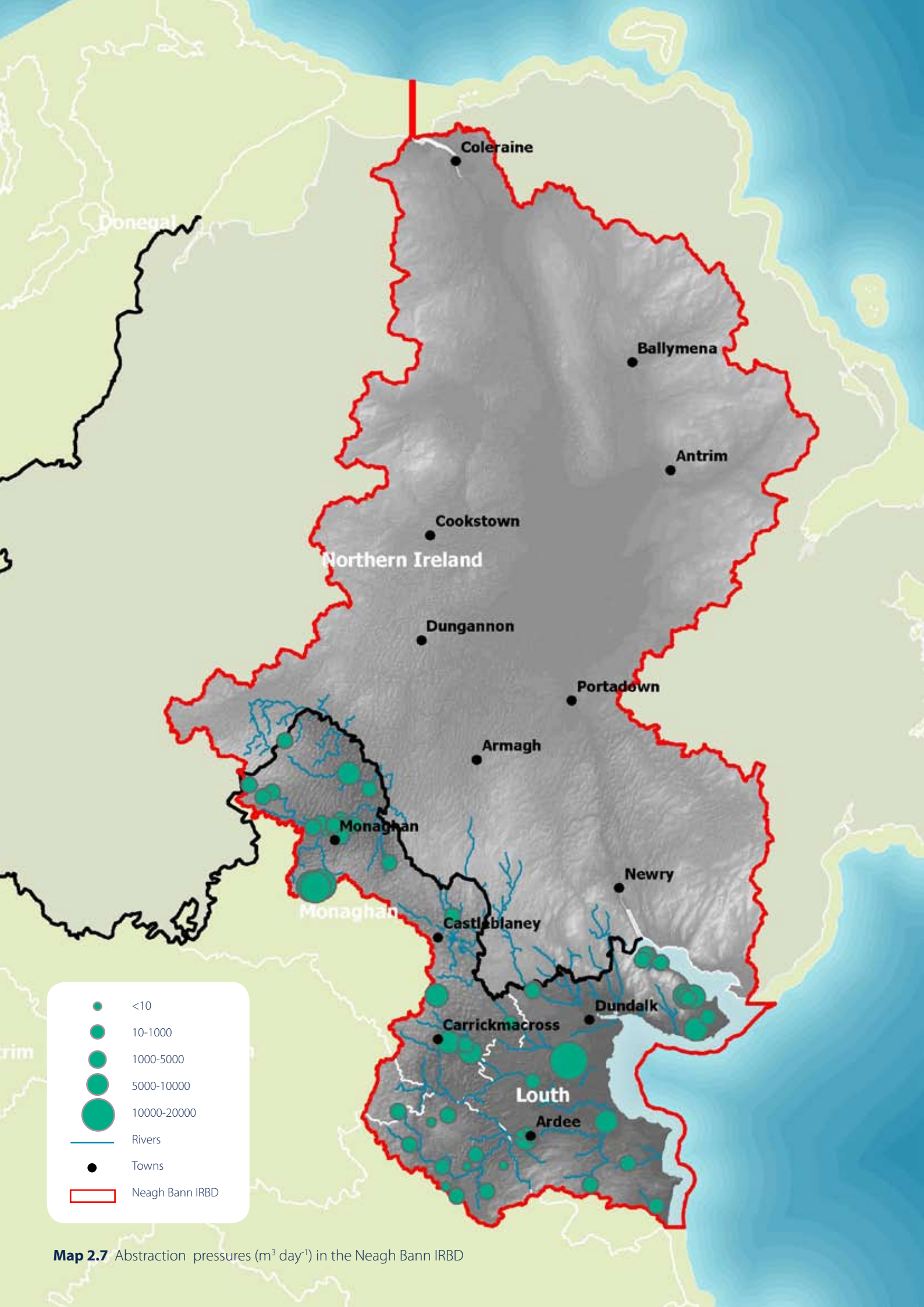
**Map 2.5** Unsewered Property Locations in the Neagh Bann IRBD



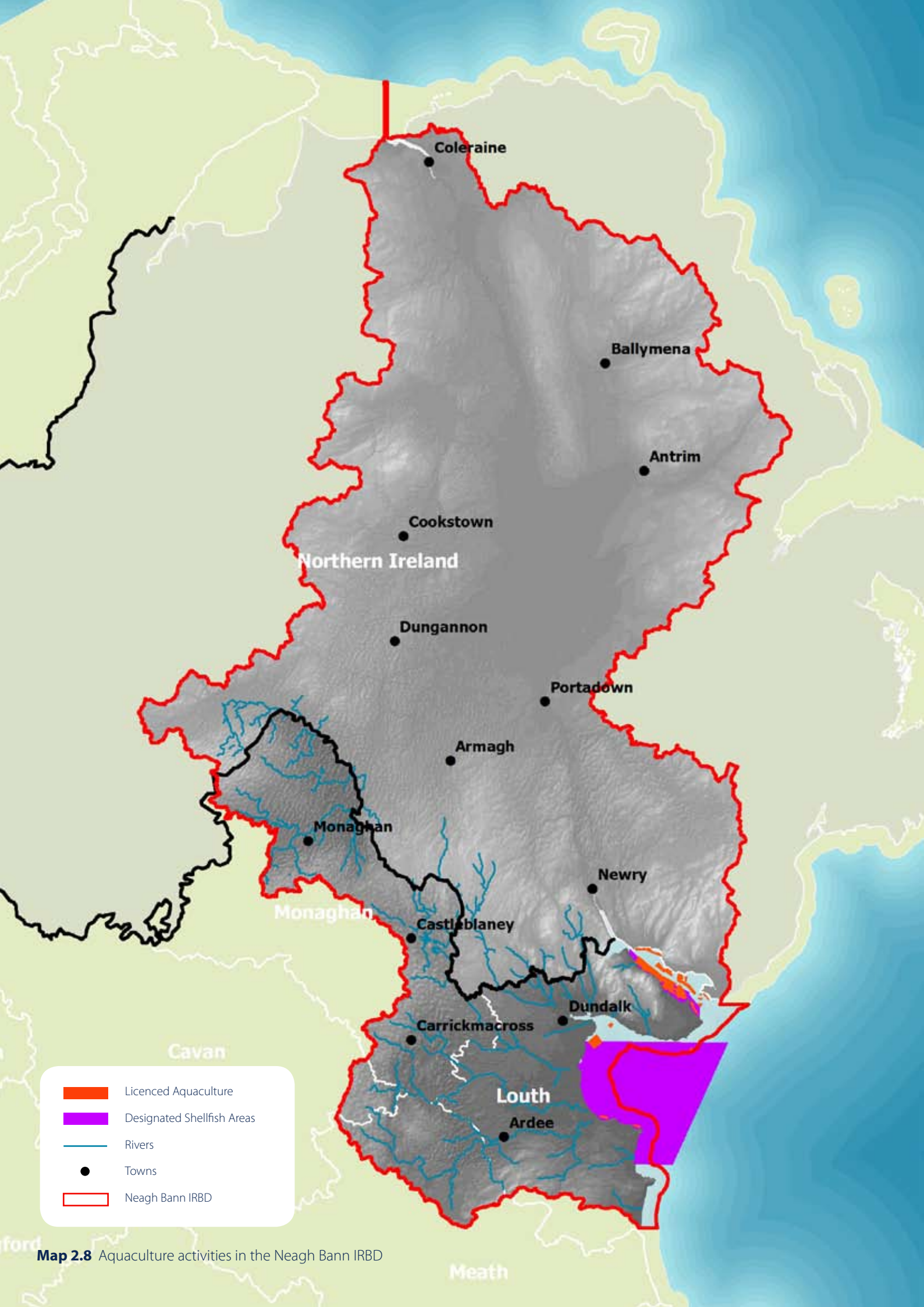


**Map 2.6** Physical modification pressures in the Neagh Bann IRBD



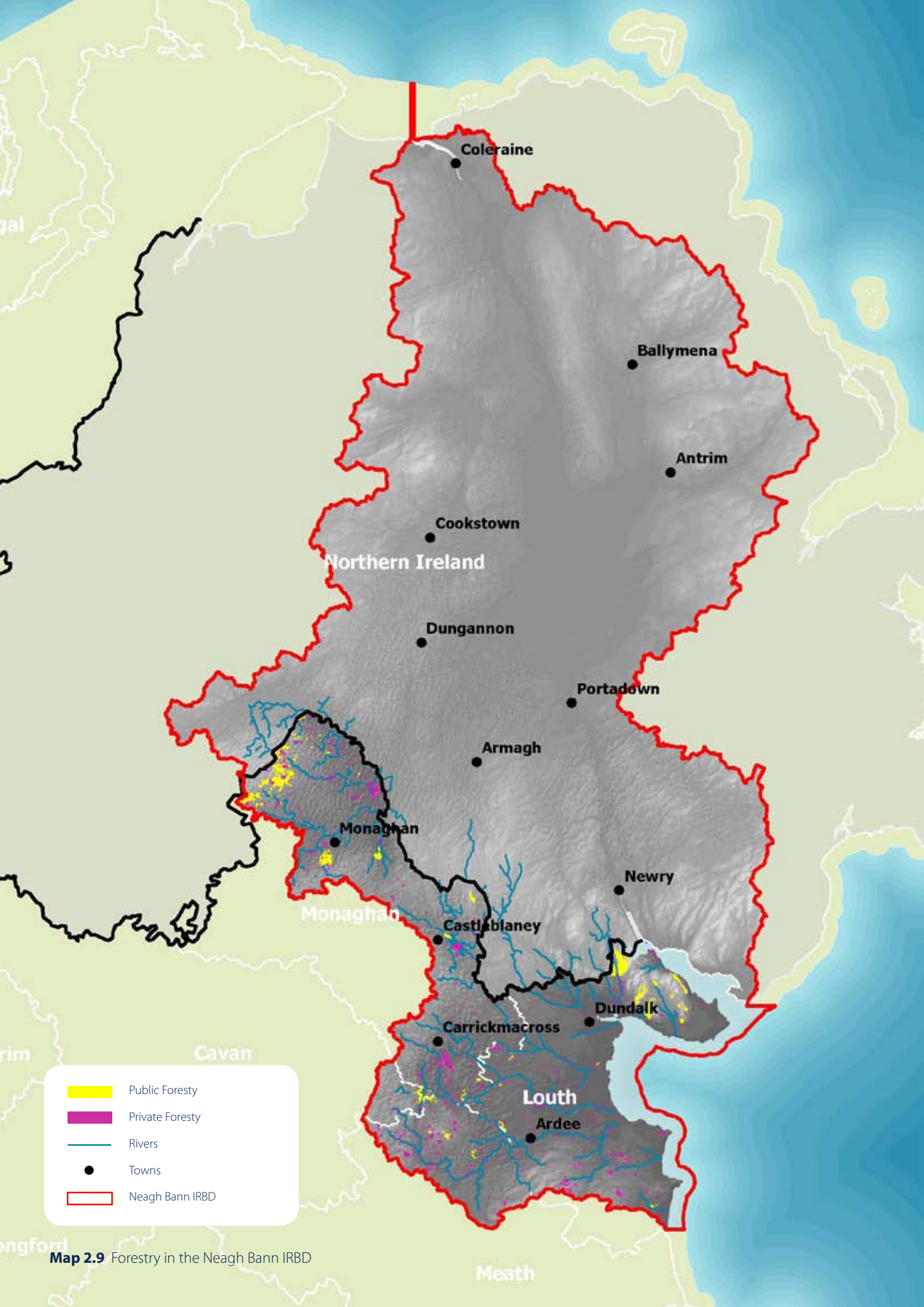


**Map 2.7** Abstraction pressures ( $\text{m}^3 \text{ day}^{-1}$ ) in the Neagh Bann IRBD



**Map 2.8** Aquaculture activities in the Neagh Bann IRBD





Public Forestry

Private Forestry

Rivers

Towns

Neagh Bann IRBD

Map 2.9 Forestry in the Neagh Bann IRBD



## 3 The status of the waters of the Neagh Bann IRBD

### 3.1 Monitoring and Classification

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a new, Water Framework Directive compliant, monitoring programme to establish a coherent and comprehensive overview of water status within Ireland. This programme was specifically introduced to implement the Water Framework Directive. It builds on previous monitoring programmes providing a more comprehensive assessment of water quality and quantity. It includes three primary monitoring networks: surveillance, operational and investigative.

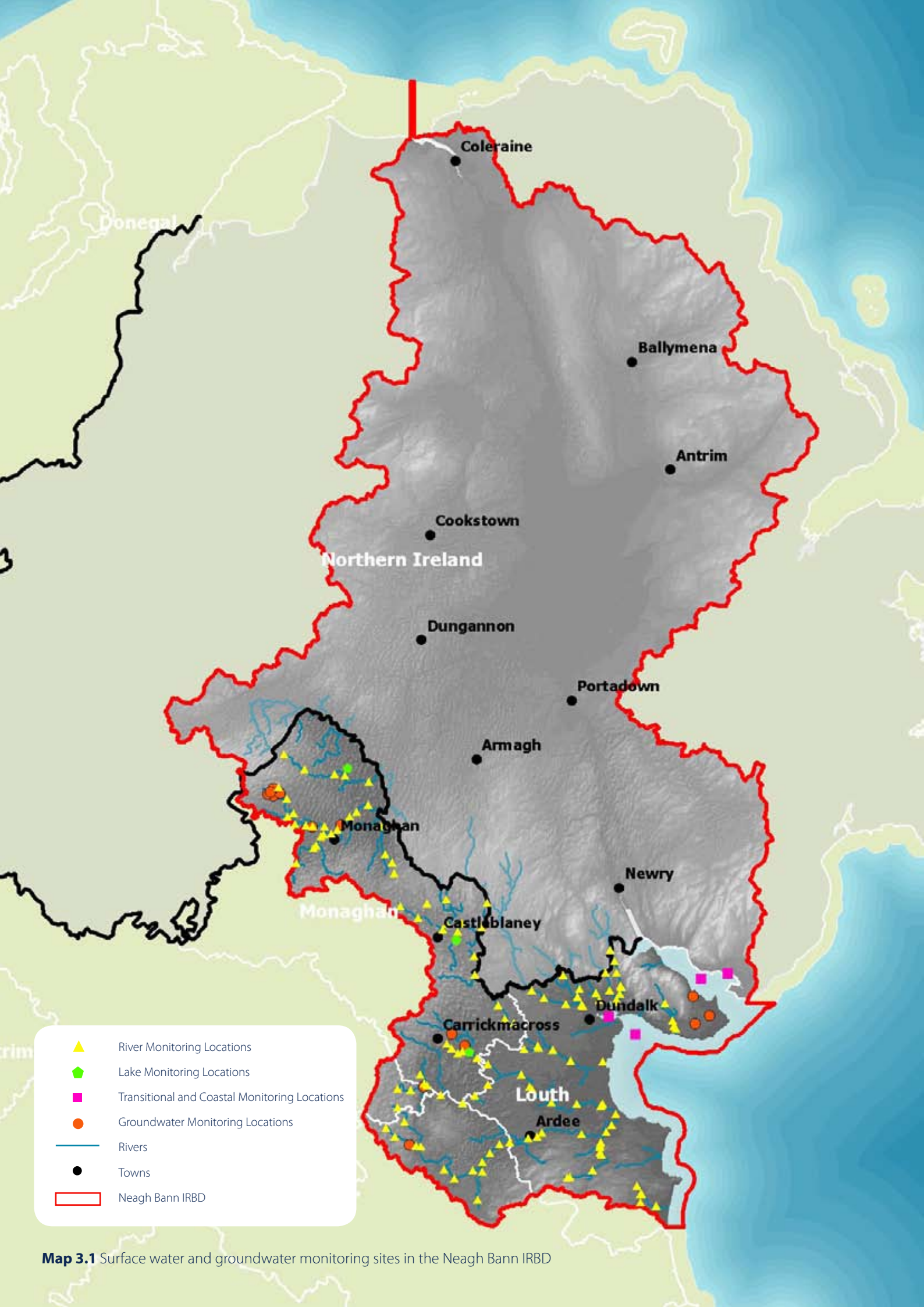
- The surveillance monitoring programme is designed to be representative of general status providing data on long term trends, large and significant international waters and validating risk assessments undertaken to characterise water bodies. A full range of parameters are examined at surveillance monitoring sites.
- Operational monitoring is intended to assess the effectiveness of programmes of measures including measures for combating pollution, measures for addressing other impacts and measures for maintaining high or good status. The monitoring programme therefore includes both water bodies that are below good status and water bodies that are at good or high status.
- Investigative monitoring is applied where the reason for status failures is unknown, to ascertain the magnitude and impacts of pollution and to establish the factors causing water bodies to fail to achieve environmental objectives.





Monitoring of surface waters includes ecological and chemical parameters and also water level and rate of flow. For groundwater bodies the programme covers the monitoring of chemical and quantitative status. Protected areas and wetlands are also monitored. The new monitoring programme became operational in 2007. It includes monitoring required under other specific EU Directives and replaces existing programmes for monitoring rivers and lakes, groundwaters, coastal and estuarine waters. The structure and content of the monitoring programme are the outcome of a major research and development process undertaken to implement the Water Framework Directive. Monitoring tasks are assigned to the Environmental Protection Agency, Inland Fisheries Ireland, Marine Institute, Office of Public Works, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Waterways Ireland and local authorities.



The national monitoring programme is 'representative', which means that certain water bodies are considered to be representative of others with similar physical characteristics (typology), and with similar risks to water status. These representative (donor) water bodies are monitored and their status is extrapolated to the unmonitored (recipient) water bodies. Monitored water bodies may have more than one monitoring site in some cases. Nationally, monitoring is carried out at 1,840 out of 4,585 river water bodies (this includes 3,077 sites), 224 out of 816 lake water bodies, 151 out of 757 groundwater bodies (this includes 297 sites) and 117 out of 309 coastal and transitional water bodies (this includes 185 monitoring sites). The Neagh Bann IRBD monitoring programme assesses 42 out of 95 river water bodies (at 136 sites), 4 out of 17 lake water bodies, and 6 out of 28 groundwater bodies (at 14 sites) and, 3 out of 14 coastal and transitional waters (at 4 sites).

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed new biological classification systems for seven biological element descriptors (rivers – macroinvertebrates [quality element] and phytobenthos, lakes - phytoplankton biomass and macrophytes, coastal and transitional waters - phytoplankton biomass, opportunistic macroalgae and rocky shore reduced species list) to assist in the status



-  River Monitoring Locations
-  Lake Monitoring Locations
-  Transitional and Coastal Monitoring Locations
-  Groundwater Monitoring Locations
-  Rivers
-  Towns
-  Neagh Bann IRBD

**Map 3.1** Surface water and groundwater monitoring sites in the Neagh Bann IRBD



assessment of surface water bodies. These classification systems have been intercalibrated to ensure comparability of results across EU member states. New standards for seven physico-chemical parameters and 62 chemical substances have also been developed. The new standards have been established by the *Surface Waters Environmental Quality Objectives Regulations (SI 272 of 2009)* and *Groundwaters Environmental Quality Objectives Regulations (SI 9 of 2010)*. The Environmental Protection Agency will continue to develop the required biological classification systems and have them intercalibrated at EU level. The Agency is continuing to review water quality standards and may recommend additional standards where considered necessary. The new classification systems are more rigorous than previous systems as they measure a greater range of biological elements and pollutants. Failure of a single biological element or chemical standard can downgrade the overall status of the waters.

Details of the Water Framework Directive monitoring programme, new classification standards and the status setting process for surface and groundwaters are available in the **monitoring and status background documents** on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

The Environmental Protection Agency has made interim status assessments of surface waters according to their ecological status and chemical status based on the results of the monitoring carried out in 2007 and 2008. Groundwaters have been assessed based on a system that combines chemical and quantitative status. This plan presents the best current understanding of status of the waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD using these new classification systems, standards and monitoring information.

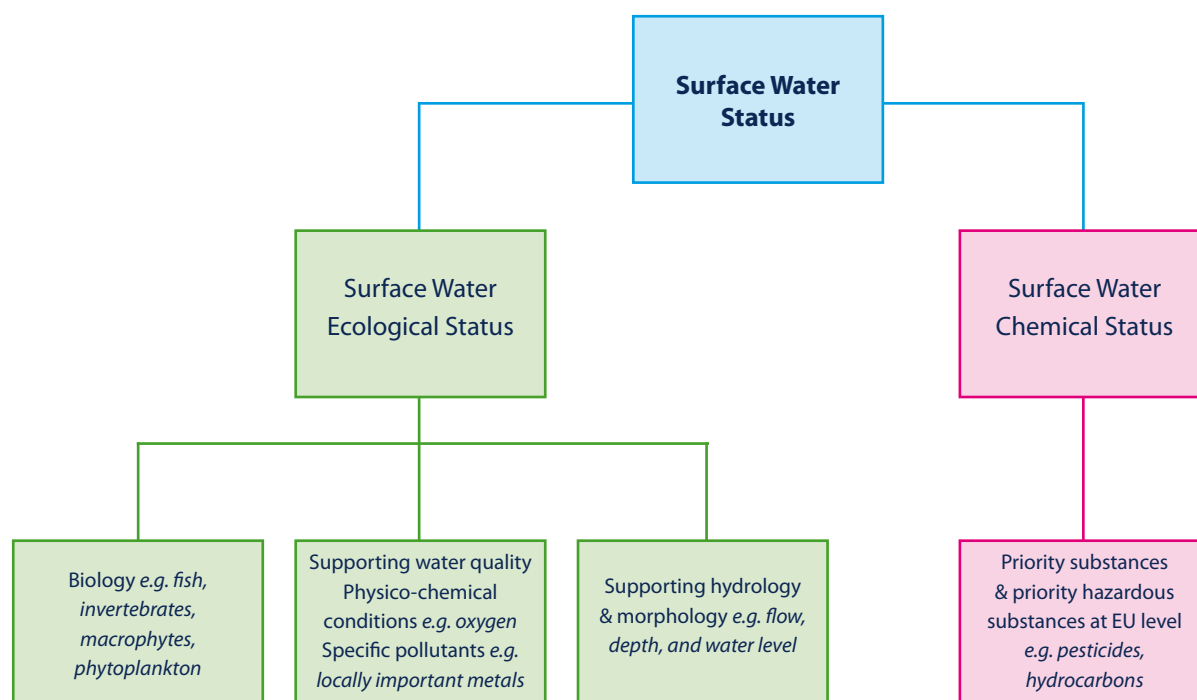
Status will be updated by the Environmental Protection Agency as monitoring data, and the new scientific tools used to interpret it, are applied and improved. Final status based on the results of the completed first monitoring cycle carried out in 2007-2009 will be reported in 2011. Monitoring of inland waters, including rivers, lakes and groundwaters, is now well established. The coastal and estuarine monitoring programmes have yet to be fully implemented. Status will be updated as monitoring information becomes available. A fully compliant WFD monitoring programme for transitional and coastal waters will be initiated as a matter of priority and made operational at the latest by December 2011. The classification of all transitional and coastal waters will be completed as soon as Environmental Protection Agency deems sufficient monitoring data is available.

To complete an interim classification of transitional and coastal waters, a project, led by the Marine Institute and scheduled for completion in September 2010, is underway. The project will identify and process existing data in respect of these waters that can be used to assign status for the reference period 2007-2009, where such information is currently unavailable.

The programme of measures will be reviewed and revised if there are significant changes to status as a result of updates.

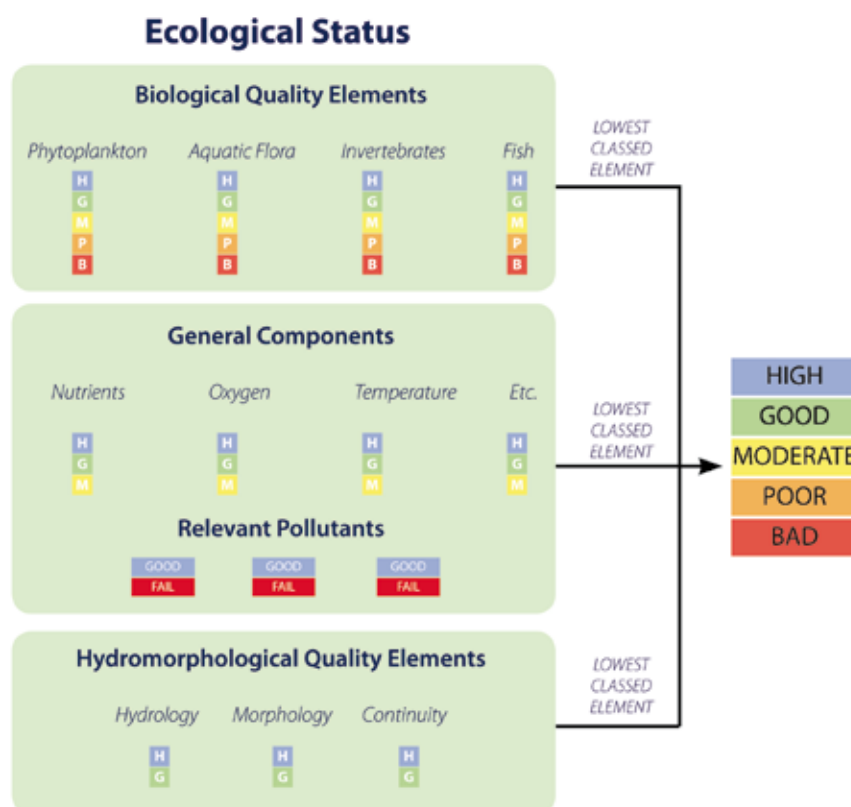
The detailed status of the district's individual rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, estuaries, coastal waters or groundwaters can be viewed using the interactive map **Water Maps** on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie); details are also mapped and tabulated in **Water Management Unit action plan background documents** (available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)).

## 3.2 Surface water status





### 3.2.1 Surface water ecological status



Quality elements, representing plants, insects and fish, along with supporting water quality, hydrology and morphological conditions are sampled and analysed in rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, estuarine waters and coastal waters to allow water bodies to be classified into one of five classes of ecological status; high, good, moderate, poor and bad:

In order to make the biological classification systems comparable and consistent with the Water Framework Directive the value for the boundaries between the classes of high and good status, and between good and moderate status were established through an EU intercalibration exercise involving all member states.

Heavily modified or artificial water bodies are classified according to ecological potential which is the expression of the quality of the structure and functioning of their associated aquatic ecosystems. These waters are classified as either good ecological potential or better, that is maximum ecological potential, or moderate ecological potential or worse.

The surface water ecological classification combines three factors:

- biology;
- supporting water quality conditions (general conditions and specific pollutants);
- supporting hydrology and morphology (physical condition).

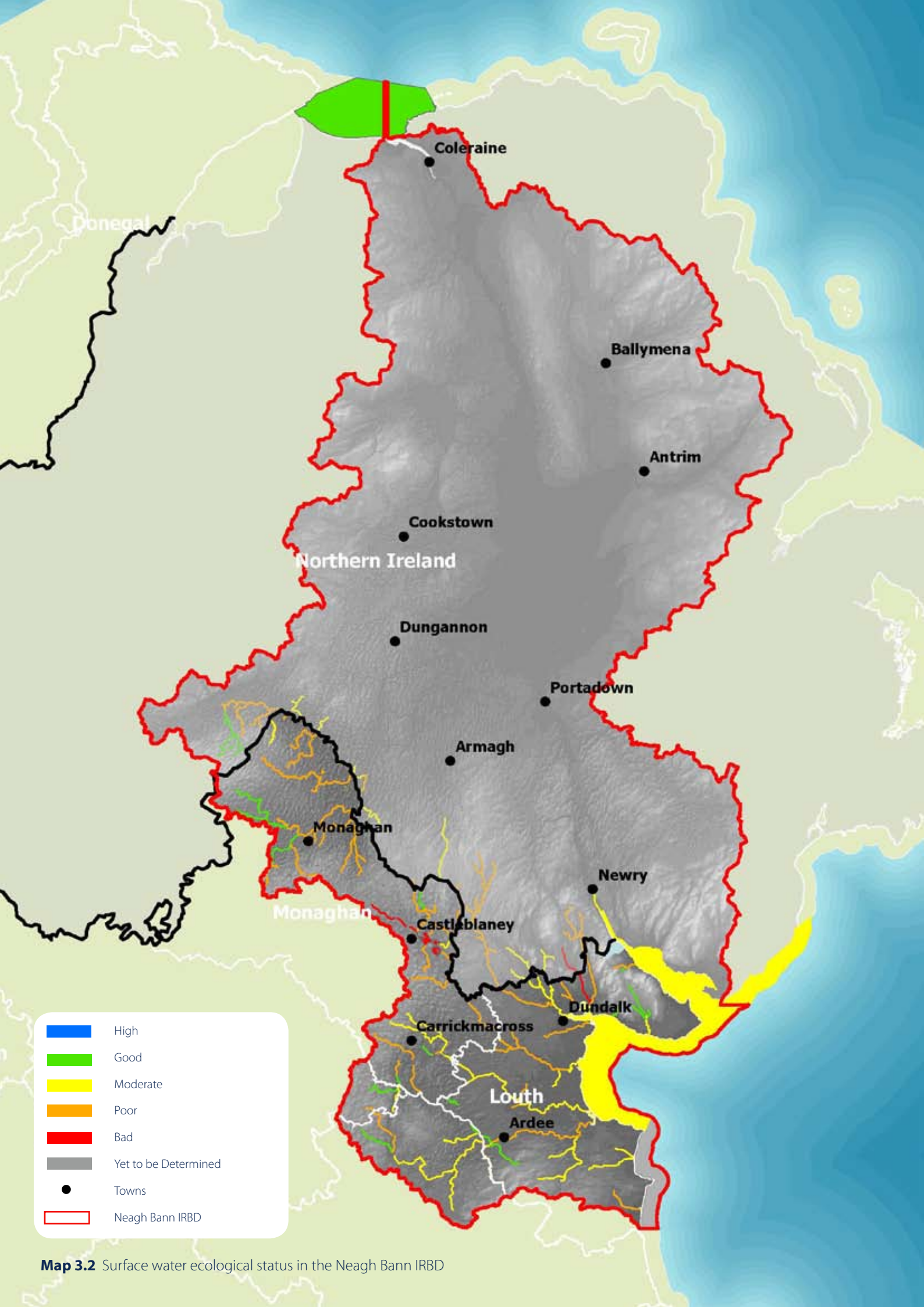
Overall ecological status is determined by the poorest scoring element assessed in the water body.

#### Biology

The biological classification systems describe the extent to which human activity has altered aquatic animal and plant communities by comparison with undisturbed conditions. The animals and plants are:

**Table 3.1 Aquatic plants and animals in the surface water biology classification system**

	Rivers and lakes	Marine (estuaries and coastal waters)
<b>Animals</b>	Fish Aquatic invertebrates (for example insects, crustaceans, molluscs, worms)	Fish (in estuaries) Aquatic invertebrates living in soft sediments on the seabed and rocky shores
<b>Plants</b>	Diatoms (microscopic plant organisms) Macrophytes (larger aquatic plants) Filamentous algae Phytoplankton (a microscopic plant containing the green pigment chlorophyll) in lakes and deep rivers	Seaweeds Seagrasses Marine phytoplankton



**Map 3.2** Surface water ecological status in the Neagh Bann IRBD

## Supporting water quality conditions

Water quality conditions must be adequate to support a healthy aquatic biological community. Environmental standards have been established for general physico-chemical and specific pollutant parameters which aim to protect ecological status. These supporting water quality factors that affect ecological status are:

- general physico-chemical conditions which include oxygen, nutrients, transparency (water clarity), temperature, acid status and salinity;
- specific pollutants of concern in Ireland including; certain metals, pesticides and hydrocarbon compounds.

## Supporting hydrology and morphology

Hydrology and morphology (physical) conditions must be adequate to support a healthy aquatic biological community. Hydrology conditions include river flow, lake level and tidal patterns and are assessed using the national hydrometric monitoring programme. Morphology is assessed by surveying channel, substrate and bed shape using new classification systems developed for the purpose of river basin planning.

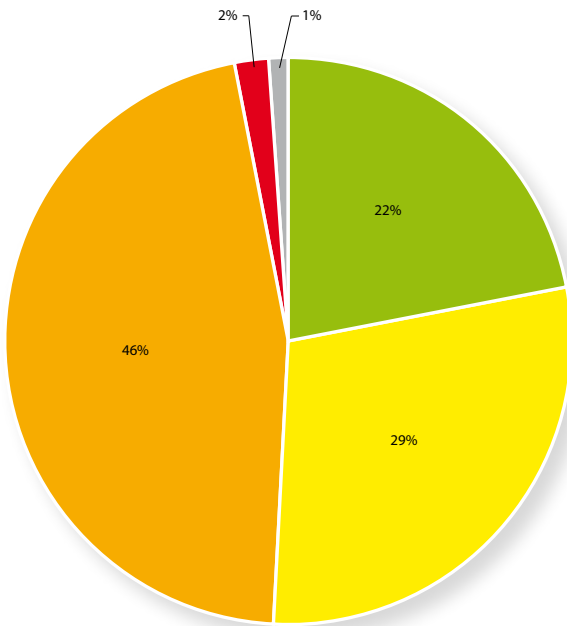
The overall ecological status (or ecological potential) of water bodies in the Neagh Bann IRBD based on all three combined factors is summarised in Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Surface water body ecological status/potential in the Neagh Bann IRBD**

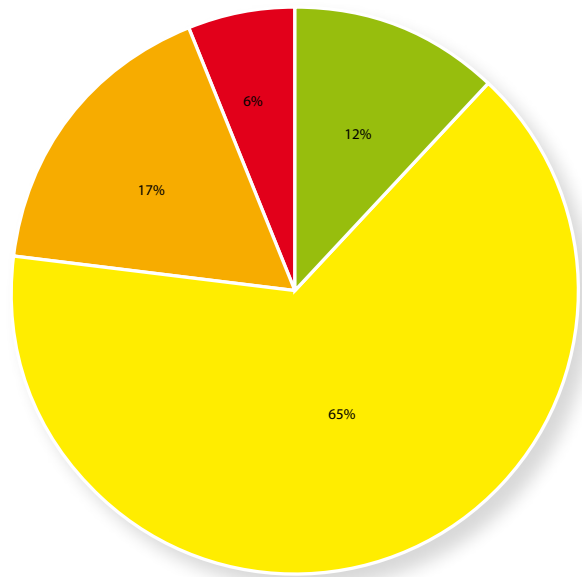
	River & canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
High	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)
Good	21 (22%) 101 (13%)	2 (12%) 0.2 (3%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	1 (20%) 0 (37%)
Moderate	28 (29%) 259 (33%)	11 (65%) 1.2 (20%)	9 (100%) 39 (100%)	3 (60%) 171 (52%)
Poor	44 (46%) 391 (50%)	3 (17%) 0.7 (12%)		
Bad	2 (2%) 18 (2%)	1 (6%) 4 (64%)		
Yet to be determined	1 (1%) 8 (1.0%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	1 (20%) 38 (11%)



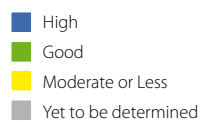
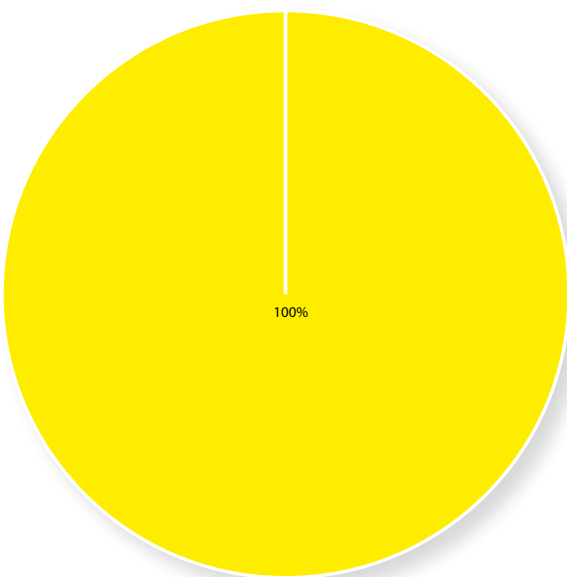
### Rivers and Canals Status



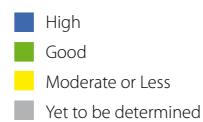
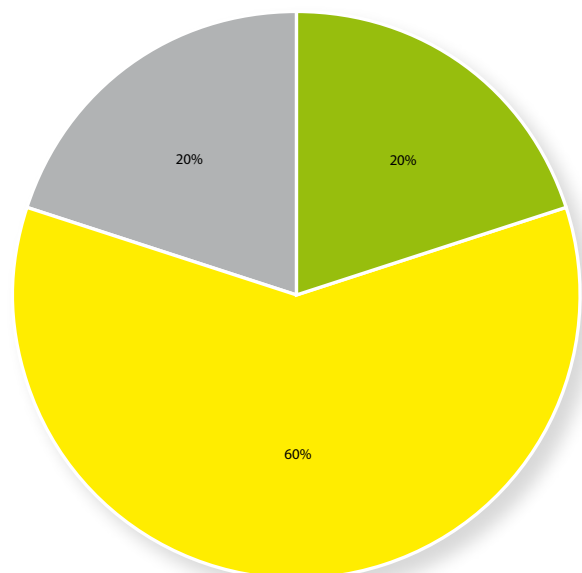
### Lakes and Reservoirs Status



### Estuaries Status



### Coastal Status



**Figure 3.1 Ecological status of surface waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD**

### 3.2.2 Surface water chemical status

EU wide standards have been established for priority substances and priority hazardous substances which include certain metals, pesticides, hydrocarbons, volatiles and hormone-disrupting compounds. These standards have been transposed in Irish legislation (SI 272 of 2009). Exceedance of a standard results in a water body failing good chemical status.

There are two classes for the chemical status of surface waters: good or fail.

**Table 3.3 Surface water body chemical status in the Neagh Bann IRBD**

	River & canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Good	1 (20%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)
	22 (3%)	4 (100%)	0 (0%)	108 (100%)
Fail	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)
	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	33 (92%)	0 (0%)
Yet to be determined	4 (80%)	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)
	783 (97%)	0 (0%)	3 (8%)	0 (0%)

## 3.3 Groundwater

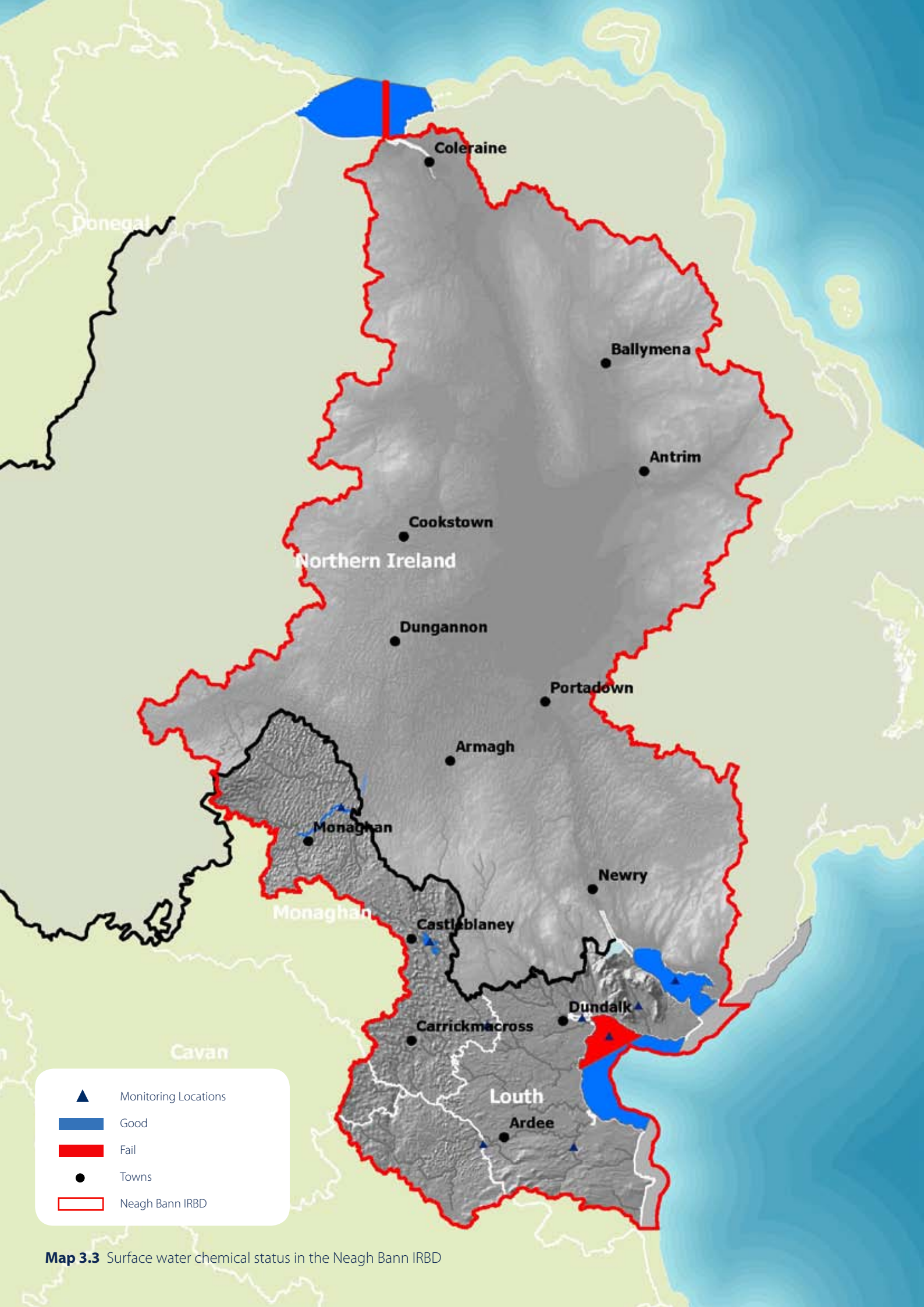
The groundwater monitoring programme (Map 3.1) has been developed to be representative of such waters in Ireland; to improve knowledge of groundwater quality and quantity, and the links between groundwater and the ecological health of associated surface water receptors. Monitoring points were selected to be representative of the variations in hydrogeology and human pressures across a groundwater body and to reflect the 'average' concentrations for pollutants across the whole groundwater body. The monitoring programme includes:

- a quantitative monitoring network (based on the assessment of water levels and water balance estimations);
- a surveillance and operational water quality monitoring network;
- appropriate monitoring to support the achievement of protected areas objectives, for example drinking water and Habitats Directive protected areas.

The number and location of monitoring points is influenced by the hydrogeological characteristics of the Neagh-Bann IRBD. In the south and west of the District, including the areas adjacent to Carrickmacross and Monaghan, permeable rocks and soils allow groundwater to be stored in underground aquifers, but most of the District has rocks and mixed clays that hinder water seepage. Seven groundwater quality and five groundwater level monitoring points are located in areas underlain by productive bedrock and sand/gravel aquifers (7% of the district). Poorly productive rocks, which underlie 93% of the district, are characterised by high surface runoff, low bedrock transmissivity and storage properties, low well yields, small localised underground flow systems and occasional narrow high transmissivity zones. Consequently, achieving a representative network in these rocks is problematical. One monitoring well has been located in the zones of high transmissivity of such bedrock around Kilmainhamwood in County Meath. These monitoring points will provide high quality groundwater chemistry and level information, which will aid understanding of groundwater in similar rock types in the Neagh Bann IRBD and in other areas in Ireland.





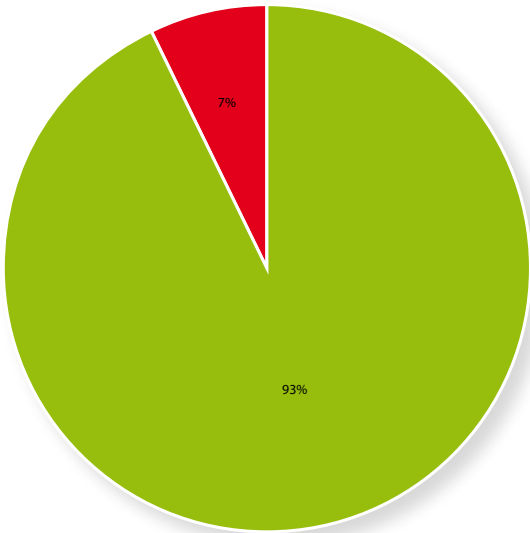


**Map 3.3** Surface water chemical status in the Neagh Bann IRBD

Classification of groundwater bodies differs from that undertaken for surface water bodies, in that the surface water standards relate to ecological status and these standards define the classification boundaries. Groundwater status does not directly assess ecology, but the classification process takes account of the ecological needs of the relevant rivers, lakes and terrestrial ecosystems that depend on contributions from groundwater. Another key component of the groundwater classification is assessment of the impact of pollution on the uses (or potential uses) of groundwater from the groundwater body, for example water supply. Threshold values have been developed by the Environmental Protection Agency for forty pollutants that are causing a risk to groundwater bodies. They include inorganic substances, metals, pesticides and organic substances. Exceedance of a relevant threshold value at a representative monitoring point triggers further investigation to confirm whether the criteria for poor groundwater chemical status are being met. If the criteria for poor chemical status are met a body or a group of bodies of groundwater is classified as being at poor chemical status.

Table 3.4 Groundwater body status in the Neagh Bann IRBD

Groundwater	Chemical status Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Quantitative status Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Combined status Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Good	26 (93%) 1720 (95%)	28 (100%) 1805 (100%)	26 (93%) 1720 (95%)
Poor	2 (7%) 85 (5%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	2 (7%) 85 (5%)



Groundwater Combined Status

- Good
- Poor

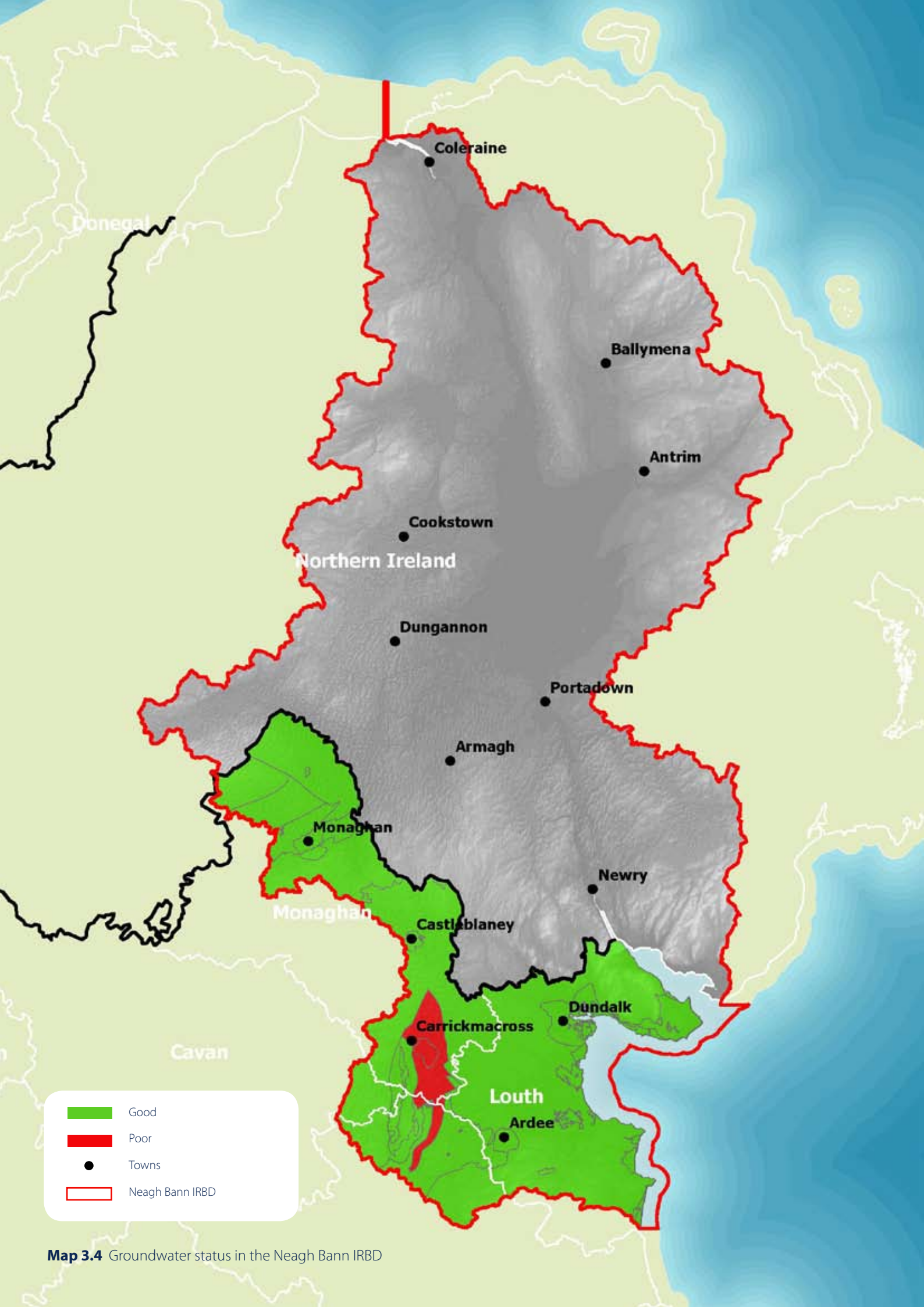


Figure 3.2 Combined status of groundwater in the Neagh Bann IRBD

### 3.4 Protected areas

For water bodies containing water dependent protected areas, the assessment of status takes into account the water related objectives set for that protected area by the EU legislation under which the individual protected area was established. Where standards or objectives for protected area water bodies are not met, arising from a failure to meet the required water quality or hydrological standards, then less than good ecological status is assigned by the EPA in accordance with the provisions of the *Surface Water Environmental Objectives Regulations (SI 272 of 2009)*. However, no water bodies had their status downgraded based on protected area standards in the Neagh Bann IRBD.





**Map 3.4** Groundwater status in the Neagh Bann IRBD

## 4 The objectives for the Neagh Bann IRBD

Having identified the status of the waters according to the best available information, the next stage is to set environmental objectives for the waters. Objective setting considered waters that require protection from deterioration as well as waters that require restoration and the timescales needed for recovery. This section of the plan sets out the objectives that the plan aims to achieve. The Water Framework Directive has four core environmental objectives; it also allows alternative objectives to be set in certain circumstances.

The *Surface Waters Environmental Objectives Regulations (SI 272 of 2009)* and new *Groundwaters Environmental Objectives Regulations (SI 9 of 2010)* establish the legal basis for setting objectives for waters. These regulations also place a legal obligation on public authorities to aim to achieve these objectives through their functions.

Local authorities have set objectives for waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD. These have been coordinated with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, which is responsible for setting objectives in Northern Ireland.

### 4.1 The core objectives

The plan establishes four core environmental objectives to be achieved generally by 2015:

- prevent deterioration;
- restore good status;
- reduce chemical pollution;
- achieve water related protected areas objectives.

Tables 4.1 to 4.4 show which of the objectives apply to the waters of the Neagh Bann IRBD. More information is available in the *objectives background documents* and the web-based interactive map *Water Maps* on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

#### 4.1.1 Prevent deterioration

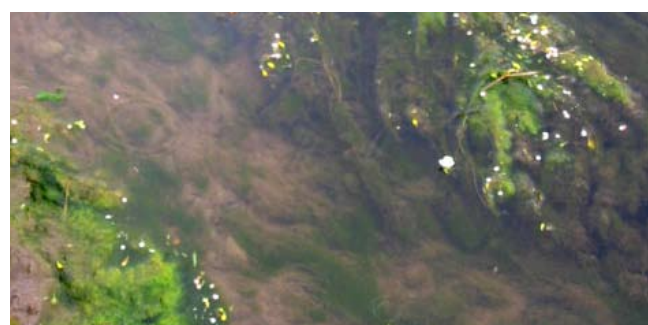
The Directive requires implementation of the measures necessary to prevent deterioration in status of all surface waters and groundwaters.

The Environmental Protection Agency has highlighted, as a key concern, the national decline in high status waters over the past two decades. There are currently no sites designated as high quality by the Environmental Protection Agency in the Neagh Bann IRBD.



**Table 4.1 Water bodies currently at high or good status**

Current status	Rivers & canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Groundwater Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
High or Good	21 (22%) 101 (13%)	2 (12%) 0.2 (3%)	0 (0%) 0 (0%)	1 (20%) 122 (37%)	26 (93%) 1720 (95%)



#### 4.1.2 Restore good status

The objective for surface waters is to improve waters where necessary with the aim of achieving at least good ecological status.

The objective for groundwaters is to restore good status, reversing significant and sustained declining quality trends.



Restoring good status is to be achieved generally by 2015 where it is technically feasible, environmentally sustainable and not disproportionately expensive to do so. However, despite the implementation of measures some waters will take longer than others to reach their target because of the slower natural rates of recovery caused by local conditions (for example existing high soil phosphorus levels, soil characteristics and hydrogeological conditions).

**Table 4.2 Water bodies currently at less than good status**

Current status	Rivers & canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Groundwater Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Less than good	74 (77%)	15 (88%)	9 (100%)	3 (60%)	2 (7%)
	668 (86%)	6 (98%)	39 (100%)	171 (52%)	85 (5%)

### 4.1.3 Reduce chemical pollution in surface waters

The core objective is to progressively reduce surface water pollution from priority substances and cease or phase out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances. Chemical standards for forty-one substances were established by the EU. The chemical monitoring programme has been completed for freshwaters and groundwaters, but the full set of results for 2009 were not available for consideration in the current assessment. The corresponding data for transitional and coastal waters is not available. Based on the information available to date, the level of failure appears to be very low. One estuary (Inner Dundalk Bay) out of all the sites monitored in the Neagh Bann IRBD is failing chemical status; the source will have to be found to determine appropriate measures to restore chemical status.



**Table 4.3 Water bodies currently failing chemical pollution standards**

Current status	Rivers and canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes and reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Failing chemical status	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)
	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	33 (86%)	0 (0%)



### 4.1.4 Achieve protected areas objectives

Some protected areas do not currently meet their protected areas objectives due to water quality conditions. The objective for the water bodies associated with these protected areas is to restore them so that they meet all applicable water standards.

**Table 4.4 Water bodies associated with protected areas**

	Rivers and canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes and reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Waters supporting protected areas	30 (32%)	11 (65%)	9 (100%)	5 (100%)
	317 (41%)	5 (93%)	39 (100%)	331 (100%)

## 4.2 Alternative objectives

The Water Framework Directive allows alternative objectives to be set in certain specified circumstances:

- technical, economic, environmental or recovery constraints. In some cases extended deadlines have been set for waters where necessary;
- the nature and uses of certain artificial or heavily modified waters. Alternative objectives have been set to account for their sustainable use;
- proposed new physical modifications and sustainable developments. Alternative objectives may have to be set to cater for future projects.

In these cases, measures must still be taken to achieve best possible status by 2015, even where alternative objectives are set. This plan establishes alternative objectives for certain water bodies in accordance with the *Surface Waters Environmental Objectives Regulations* (SI 272 of 2009) and *Groundwaters Environmental Objectives Regulations* (SI 9 of 2010). Further information on **alternative objectives** can be found on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).



### 4.2.1 Extended deadlines

Extended deadlines, usually of one planning cycle (6 years, to 2021) and in some cases two cycles (to 2027) may be applied to some water bodies due to technical, economic, environmental or recovery constraints.

In some cases further investigations are required to confirm the extent of impacts or to identify appropriate measures and implement them. The effectiveness of some measures is uncertain and status recovery is expected to take longer than the first planning cycle. The reasons why timescale extensions are required to restore certain waters to good status in the Neagh Bann IRBD are set out in Table 4.5. The waters where timescale extensions have been set are presented in Maps 4.1 to 4.4.

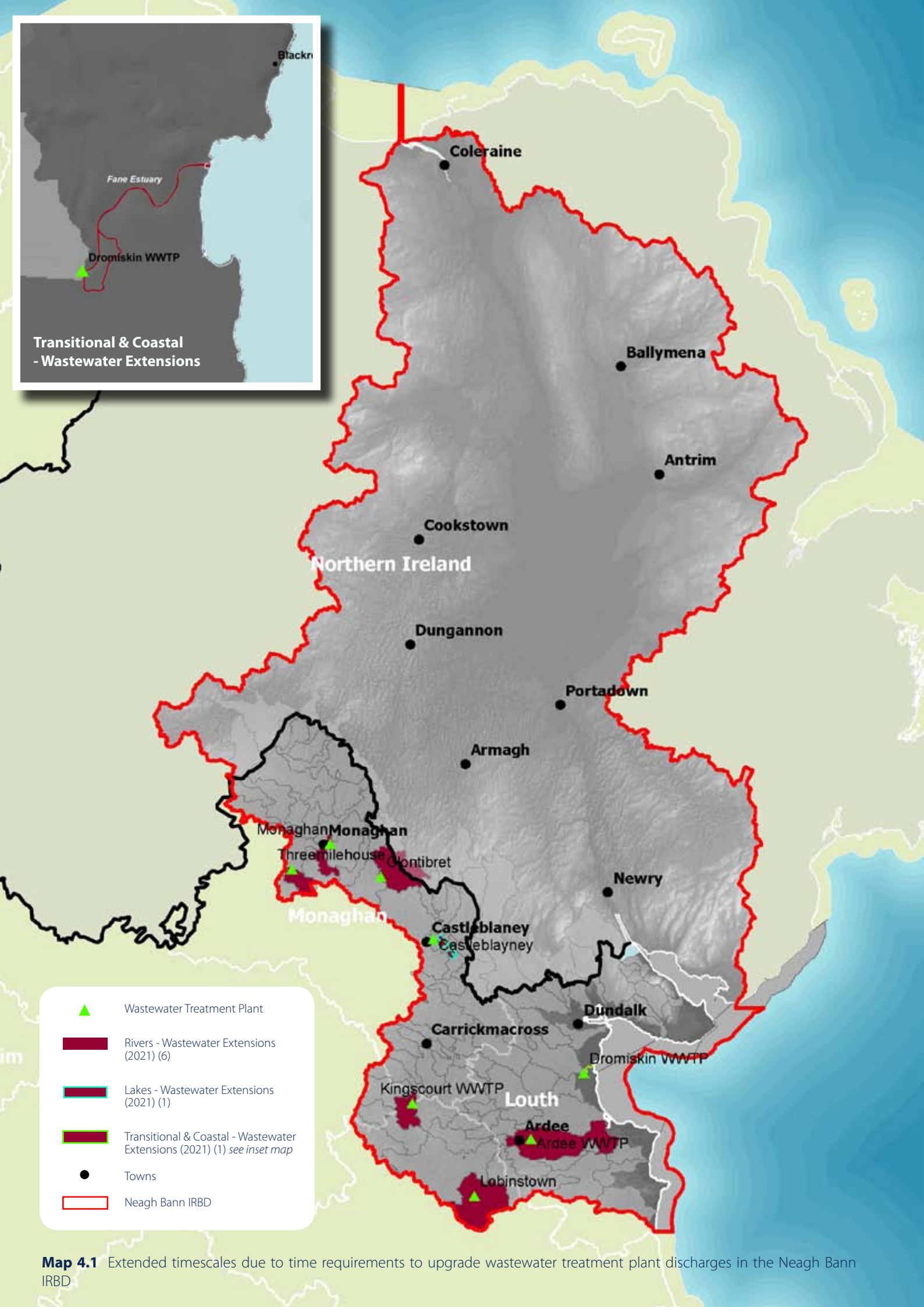
Objectives will be kept under review during each planning cycle. In some limited circumstances it may be necessary to apply a less stringent objective if assessments demonstrate that good status cannot be achieved by 2027.



**Table 4.5 Reasons why extended timescales are required in certain water bodies in the Neagh Bann IRBD**

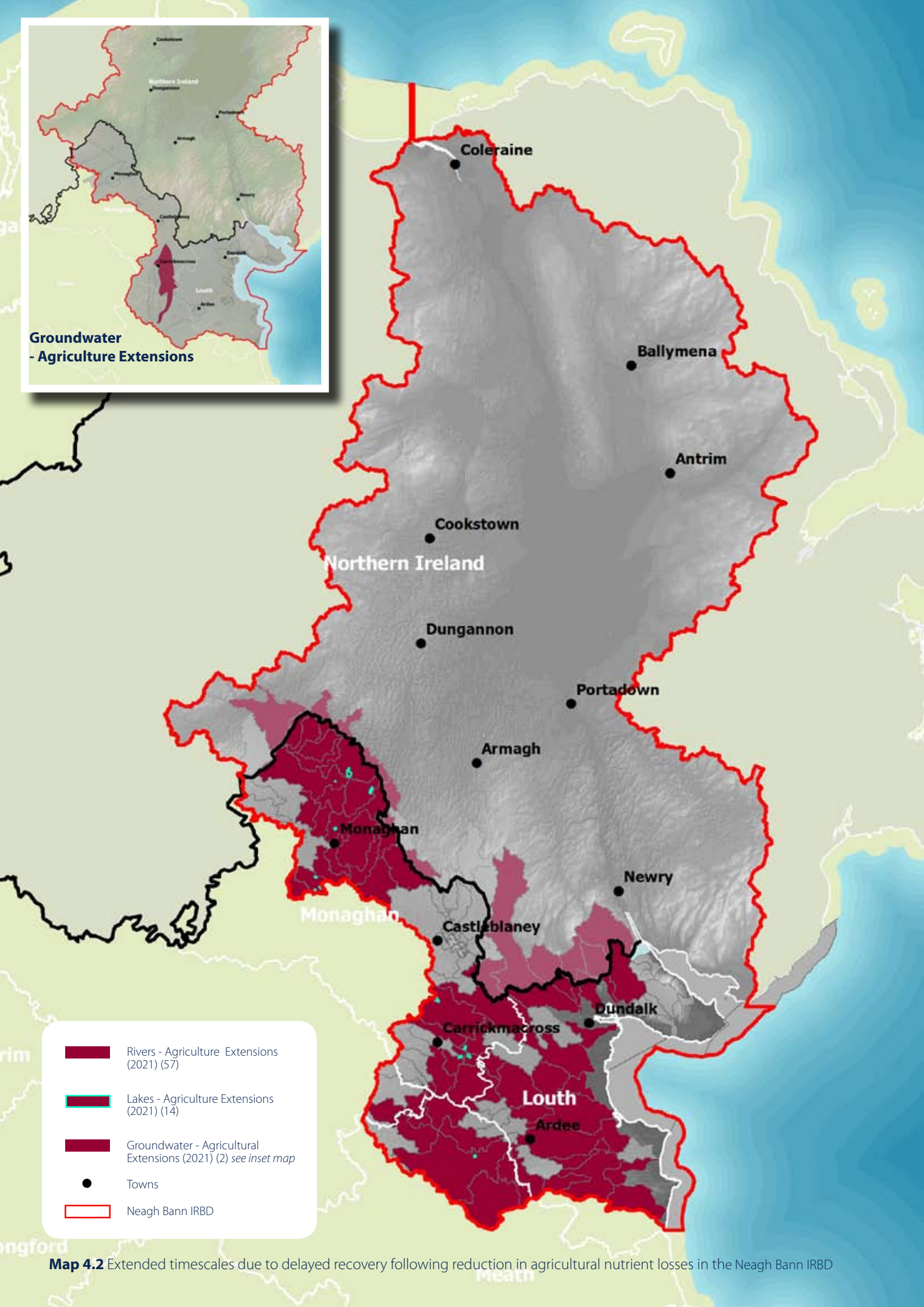
Issue and extension required	Rivers	Lakes	Estuaries	Coastal	Groundwater	Likely failing status element	Constraint	Action to 2015
Wastewater discharges from some treatment plants <b>Extend to 2021</b> <b>Map 4.1</b>	6	1	1	-	-	Mainly phosphorus levels or oxygen conditions supporting ecological status	Practical constraint: the time required to plan and design upgrades to treatment plants and to achieve approvals and licensing means it is not technically possible to achieve good status in 2015. Case by case assessment showed that infrastructure provision is critical to achieving good status.	Local authorities to upgrade plants through the Water Service Investment Programme and operate and manage plants in accordance with discharge authorisation
Agriculture: phosphorus losses to surface waters by runoff <b>Extend to 2021</b> <b>Map 4.2</b>	49	10	-	-	-	Phosphorus levels supporting ecological status	Physical recovery: research (Schulte, et al, in press), has found that reductions from high soil phosphorus levels (Index 4) to environmentally sustainable levels (Index 3) takes an average of 7 to 15 years, even with full implementation of the Good Agricultural Practice Regulations (SI 272 of 2009), and therefore nutrient losses to waters may persist. The downstream catchment effect on lake recovery is dependent on river recovery timescale.	DAFF/DEHLG to review outcomes of agricultural catchment programmes (ACPs) and Nitrates Action Programme (NAP)
Agriculture: phosphorus losses to surface waters via groundwaters in karst areas <b>Extend to 2021</b> <b>Map 4.2</b>	8	4	-	-	2	Phosphorus levels supporting ecological status	Certainty of cause: where groundwaters contribute significantly to surface water phosphorus loadings in karst areas, the extent of impact and potential measures need to be investigated. This poses a technical constraint as the cause of the problem has not yet been established with certainty and it is not yet clear what (if any) additional agricultural measures are required or how effective technical solutions would be.	Review outcomes of ACPs and NAP: DEHLG - NPWS to map turloughs' zones of contribution. DAFF to increase farm inspections in karst areas with turloughs and consider piloting of environmentally friendly farming scheme
Dangerous substances: chemical pollution & chemical status failures <b>Extend to 2021</b> <b>Map 4.3</b>	-	-	1	2	-	Priority substances	Certainty of cause: the national monitoring programme has been recently expanded to include a much broader range of substances. More time is needed to find the extent, causes and sources of chemical status non-compliance and to investigate and implement measures. In that light, there is a technical constraint and objectives will need review in 2015.	EPA to monitor waters and establish a register of discharges, emissions and losses. Local Authorities to prepare pollution reduction programmes in accordance with the Surface Waters Environmental Objectives Regulations 2009.

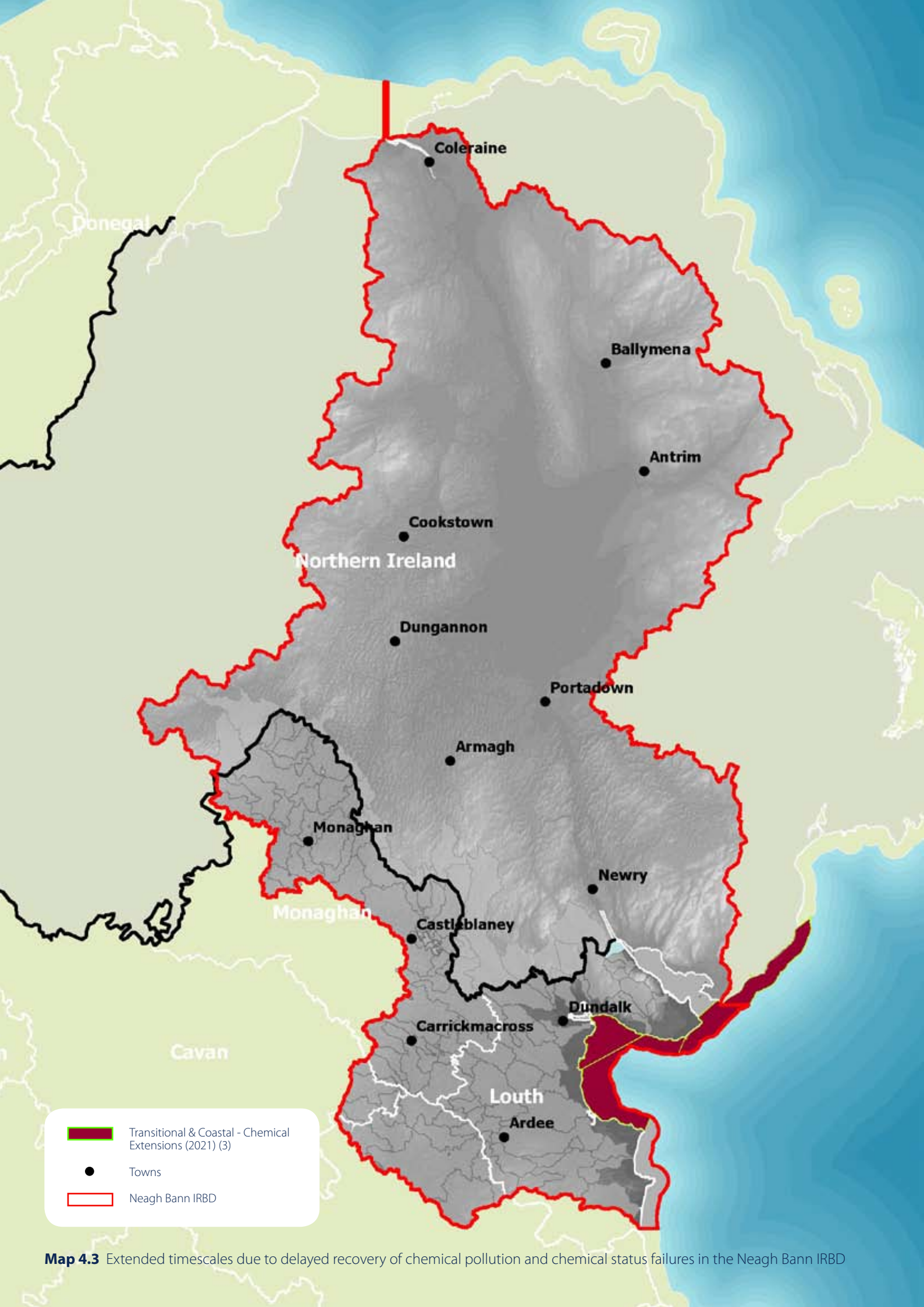
Issue and extension required	Rivers	Lakes	Estuaries	Coastal	Groundwater	Likely failing status element	Constraint	Action to 2015
Delayed recovery of highly impacted sites Extend to 2021 Map 4.4	15	-	7	2	-	Overall ecological status	Recent EPA surveys suggest that recovery is slower for waters where status is more than one band below good (i.e. poor or bad). Recovery rates have been assessed on a case-by-case basis considering the pressures acting. It is expected that, as a result of the complex mix of pressures present and the level of impact restoration of status to good in certain poor and bad status sites will extend beyond the first plan period.	Programme of measures to be implemented and EPA to monitor and report on status recovery rates
Combined total number	69	10	8	3	2			
Total as % of all waters	72	58	89	60	7			



**Map 4.1** Extended timescales due to time requirements to upgrade wastewater treatment plant discharges in the Neagh Bann IRBD

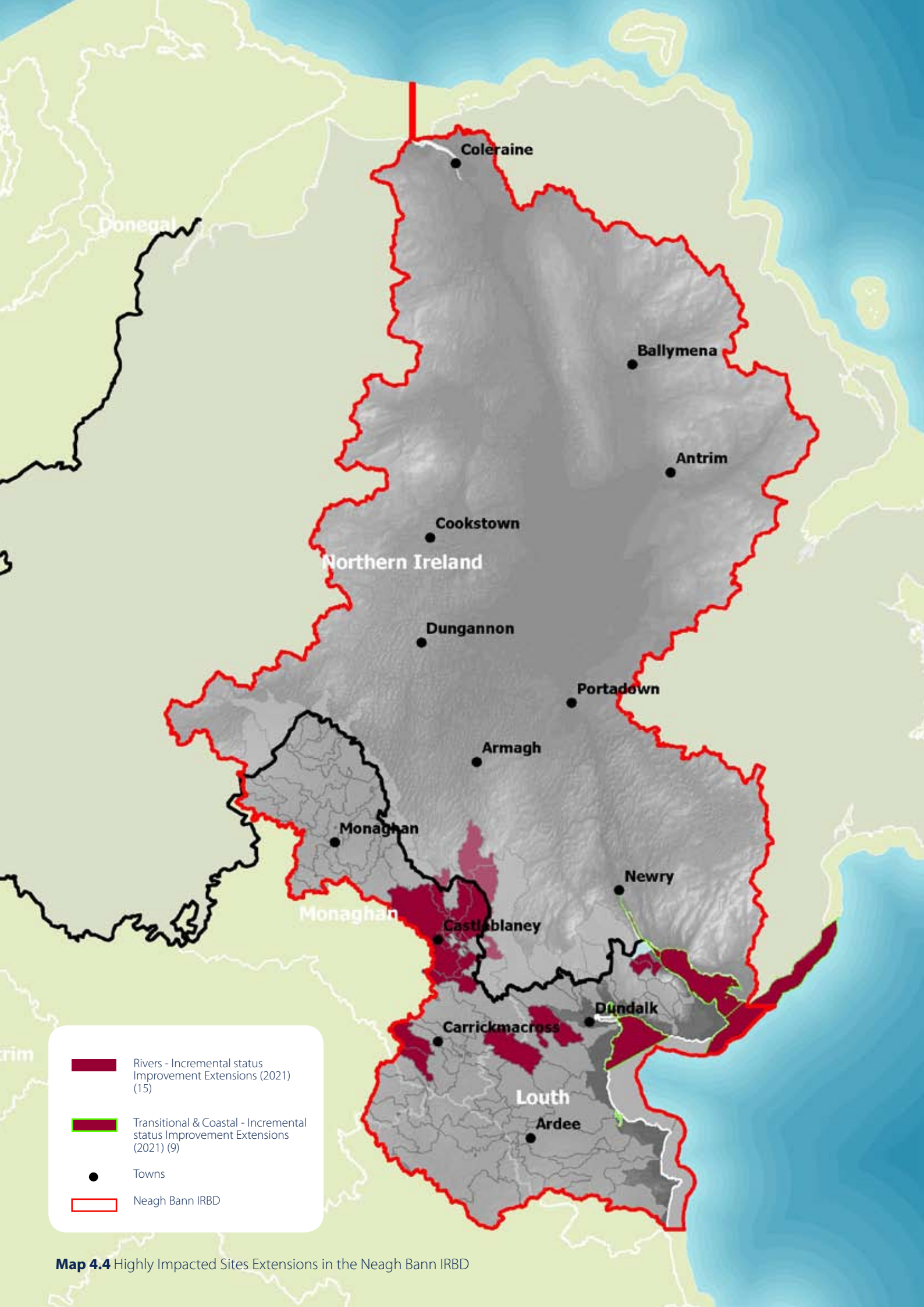







**Map 4.3** Extended timescales due to delayed recovery of chemical pollution and chemical status failures in the Neagh Bann IRBD





 Rivers - Incremental status Improvement Extensions (2021) (15)

 Transitional & Coastal - Incremental status Improvement Extensions (2021) (9)

 Towns

 Neagh Bann IRBD

**Map 4.4** Highly Impacted Sites Extensions in the Neagh Bann IRBD



## 4.2.2 Heavily modified waters and artificial waters

Some surface waters have been substantially changed in character or have been artificially constructed for uses such as water storage, public supply, navigation, flood defence and land drainage. Two such waters have been designated as heavily modified waters or artificial waters in the Neagh Bann IRBD.

The objective for heavily modified waters and artificial waters is to achieve good ecological potential generally by 2015. This objective allows the important function of these waters to be retained while ensuring that the ecology is protected or improved as far as possible. A detailed screening process was undertaken to designate artificial and heavily modified waters and to establish objectives for these: see the *artificial and heavily modified background document* on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie). The method used is based on a common approach, agreed between EU member states. The method requires that a set of agreed mitigation measures are implemented to improve the hydromorphological characteristics (water flow and physical conditions) as much as possible without having significant adverse impacts on the function of these waters or the wider environment.

The application of this methodology required case specific knowledge and judgements to be made on whether a mitigation measure would have a significant impact on the use. Where ecological monitoring data is available and all appropriate mitigation measures are in place, a water body is assessed as meeting good ecological potential otherwise the action plan includes the investigations and mitigation measures needed to achieve good ecological potential.

Artificial waters	Action by relevant public authority
Ulster Canal	Study to investigate ecological potential
Heavily modified waters	Action by stakeholder
Emy Lough: water supply	Study to investigate ecological potential (agricultural pressures in the catchment)
Lough Muckno: water supply	Ensure compensation flows to River Fane



**Table 4.6 Heavily modified and artificial waters**

Category	Rivers & canals Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
Artificial waters	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	8 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Heavily modified waters	0 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	0 (0%)	4 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Total as % of all waters	1%	2%	0%	0%

Northern Ireland Environment Agency has applied similar designation tests and identified mitigation measures and objectives for heavily modified water bodies due to pressures within Northern Ireland (<http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk>). There are no designations in the shared waters of the Neagh Bann IRBD. Assessment of further candidate waters for designation will be undertaken during the first planning cycle.

### 4.2.3 New modifications or sustainable development

Alternative objectives can also be set in cases where certain developments may cause a failure to achieve good status or to maintain high status. This is subject to the developments being of overriding public interest and/or there being overriding benefits to human health and safety. Alternative options for delivering these benefits must be considered and all practicable steps must be taken to mitigate adverse impact on the water body as required by *Regulation 33 of the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations, SI 272 of 2009*.

The proposed increase in water abstraction rate from a groundwater source through Kingscourt Water Supply Scheme is a new modification in the Neagh Bann IRBD, which may require alternative objectives. This may require detailed assessment if the scheme progresses.

The absence from the plan of possible future developments does not preclude them from progressing, but they must be reported to the EC during subsequent plan updates. Such developments may include Flood Relief Schemes or specific road projects by the National Roads Authority through the Transport 21 initiative and National Road Development Strategy.





**Table 4.7 Waters where there may be new modifications or developments**

Type	Rivers and canals Number (%)	Lakes and reservoirs Number (%)	Estuaries Number (%)	Coastal Number (%)	Groundwaters wNumber (%)
Total as % of all waters	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (4%)

## 4.3 The full picture

Table 4.8 shows target timescales for improvement of the Neagh Bann IRBD's waters over the Water Framework Directive's three cycles. By 2015 many surface waters that are currently of moderate quality will be restored to good status; most bad and poor waters will improve in status.

**Table 4.8 Timescale for achieving at least good status in surface waters and groundwaters**

Deadline	Rivers & canals* Number (%) Length km (%)	Lakes & reservoirs Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Estuaries Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Coastal* Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)	Groundwaters Number (%) Area km <sup>2</sup> (%)
2009	21 (22%)	2 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (20%)	26 (93%)
	101 (13%)	0.2 (3%)	0 (0%)	122 (37%)	1720 (95%)
2015	26 (27%)	3 (18%)	1 (11%)	1 (20%)	26 (93%)
	116 (15%)	0.3 (5%)	2 (5%)	122 (37%)	1720 (95%)
2021	95 (99%)	17 (100%)	9 (100%)	4 (80%)	28 (100%)
	768 (99%)	6 (100%)	39 (100%)	293 (89%)	1805 (100%)
2027	95 (99%)	17 (100%)	9 (100%)	4 (80%)	28 (100%)
	768 (99%)	6 (100%)	39 (100%)	293 (89%)	1805 (100%)

*\*Objectives have not been set for water bodies where status has not yet been determined.*

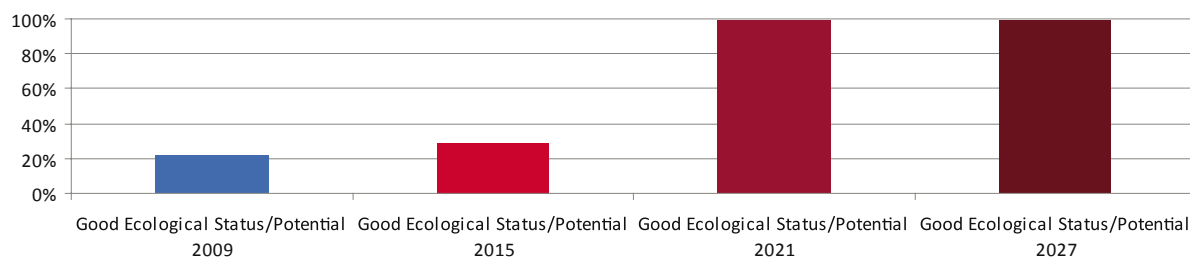
It is estimated that implementing the measures in this plan will achieve good status by 2015 in 26 rivers and canals, 3 lakes and reservoirs, 1 estuary, 1 coastal water and 26 groundwaters, with further improvements during the second and third planning cycles. Graphs 4.1 – 4.5 illustrate the expected trends in status expected over three planning cycles to 2027. Maps 4.9 and 4.10 summarise the environmental objectives for the district's surface waters and groundwaters.

Between publication of the draft plan and finalisation of this plan a detailed assessment was made of the expected timescales for recovery of waters following implementation of measures. This assessment indicates that longer recovery timescales can be expected for a larger number of water bodies. In the draft plans 79% of rivers and canals, 100% of lakes and reservoirs, 100% of estuaries, 80% of coastal waters and 100% of groundwaters were expected to achieve good status by 2015. It is now expected that good status will be achieved by 2015 in 27% of rivers and canals, 18% of lakes and reservoirs, 11% of estuaries, 20% of coastal waters and 93% of groundwaters.

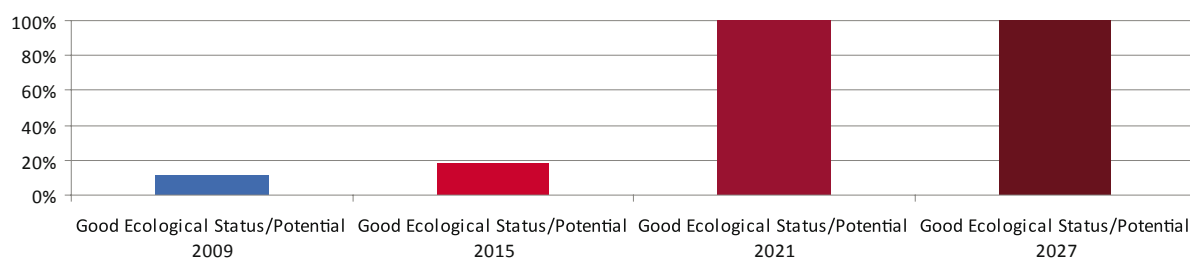
Objectives will be reviewed and may need to be amended during the lifetime of the plan and in 2015 where significant new information on status, pressures or recovery rates becomes available. For example, the status of certain waters experiencing morphological pressures has yet to be determined. Impacts due to morphological alterations and damage are being assessed for the first time. Fish status is believed to be the most sensitive biological element to morphological impact; however, fish status is also being assessed for the first time. Consequently it will take several years before an adequate knowledge of morphological impacts is established.



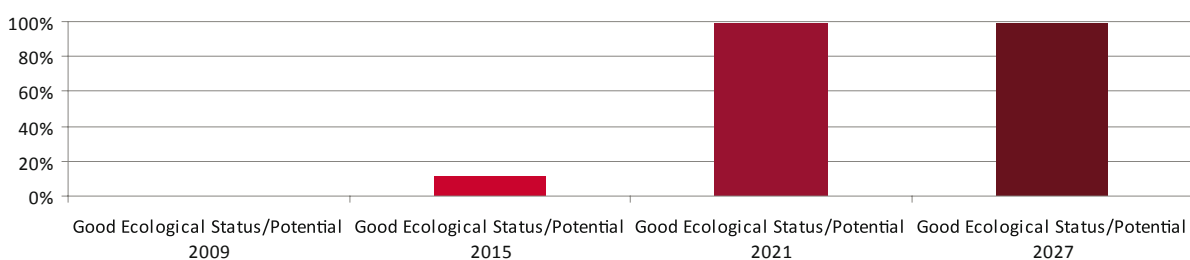
**Graph 4.1 – Status trends over three planning cycles rivers and canals (number)**



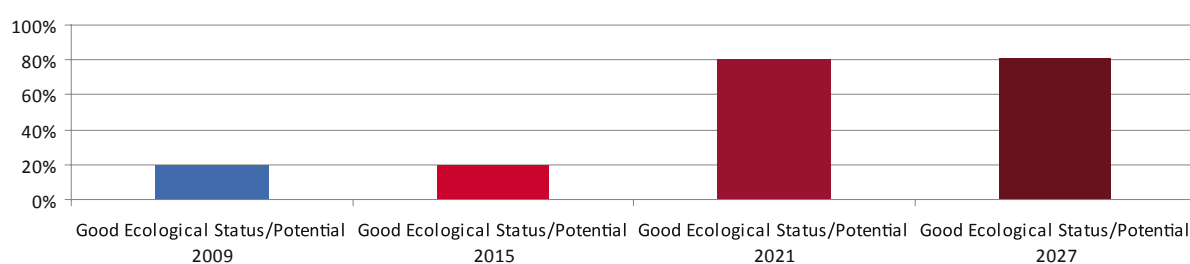
**Graph 4.2 – Status trends over three planning cycles lakes and reservoirs (number)**



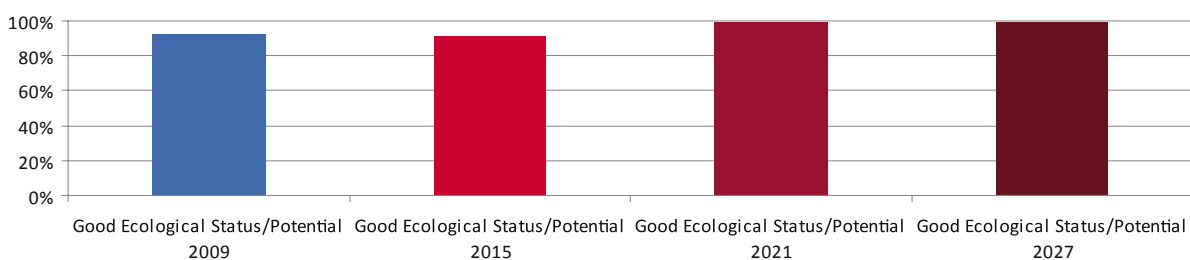
**Graph 4.3 – Status trends over three planning cycles estuaries (number)**

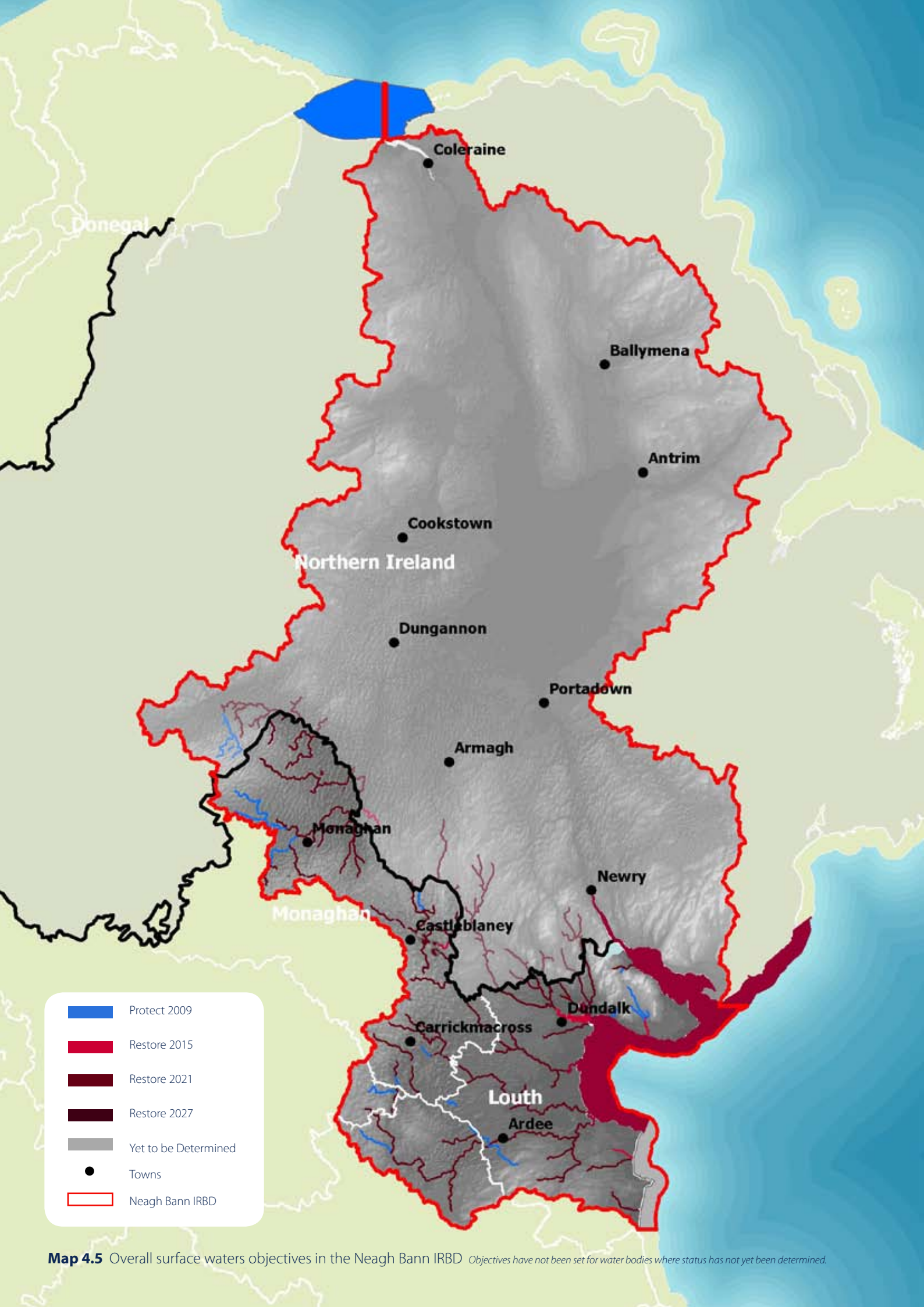


**Graph 4.4 – Status trends over three planning cycles coastal waters (number)**



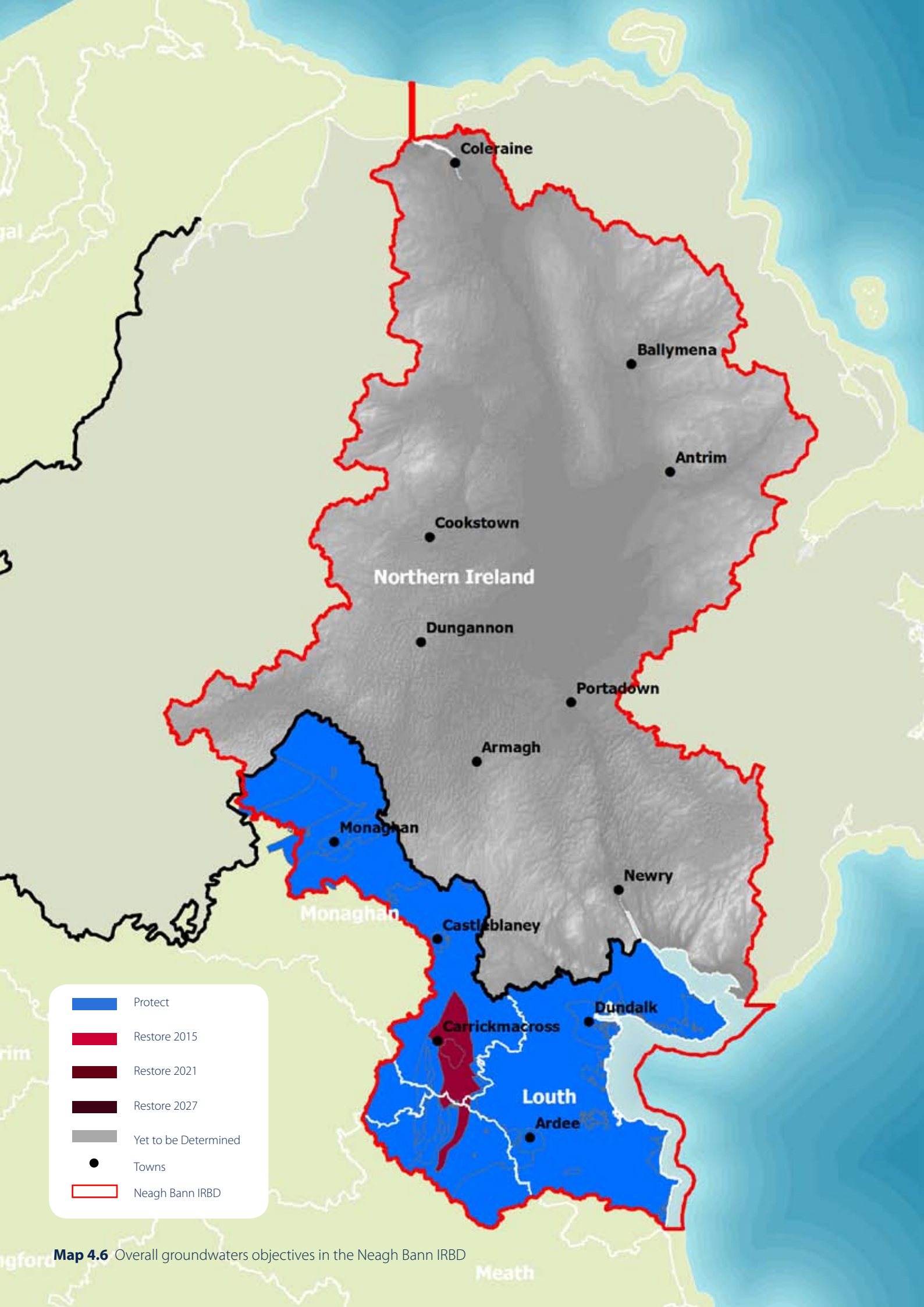
**Graph 4.5 – Status trends over three planning cycles groundwaters (number)**





**Map 4.5** Overall surface waters objectives in the Neagh Bann IRBD *Objectives have not been set for water bodies where status has not yet been determined.*





**Map 4.6** Overall groundwaters objectives in the Neagh Bann IRBD

## 5 The programme of measures for the Neagh Bann IRBD

Chapter 4 set out the objectives for the Neagh Bann IRBD. This chapter describes the measures to be taken to achieve those objectives. Many of the measures are already provided for in national legislation and are being implemented. These include, for example, the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 to 2010* and the *Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations* of 2009. Others measures have been recently introduced (for example new *Bathing Water Regulations*, 2008) or are under preparation (for example proposed authorisation regulations for abstractions and physical modifications). A full and detailed list of measures is provided in Appendices 4 and 5 and there is more information about the measures in the ***national programme of measures background document*** and also the suite of ***programme of measures — technical studies background documents*** where the specific measures for key water management issues are explained (available on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)).

The following sections describe:

- legislation recently introduced to give further legal effect to measures required to achieve the objectives established in all river basin plans in Ireland;
- the key measures to be implemented during the first planning cycle;
- range of other potential measures which are being considered but which require further development;
- the more detailed action plans established for the Water Management Units within the Neagh Bann IRBD; and
- the key measures to be implemented in the Water Management Units.

### 5.1 Recent legislation supporting the implementation of the programme of measures

Significant progress has been made in recent years in putting the necessary legislation in place to support the implementation of river basin plans and programmes of measures in Ireland. The core requirements of the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) were transposed under the *Water Policy Regulations (SI 722 of 2003 as amended)*. In addition, the *Surface Waters Environmental Objectives Regulations (SI 272 of 2009)* and the *Groundwater Environmental Objectives Regulations (SI 9 of 2010)* were made to give effect to the measures needed to achieve surface water and groundwater environmental objectives established in river basin management plans. The Regulations place a legal obligation on public authorities to aim to achieve those objectives in the context of their statutory functions. For example, both sets of Regulations require the relevant authorities to review all pollutant discharge authorisations to take account of the objectives established in river basin plans. These authorisations include, inter alia:

- licences issued under the *Water Pollution Acts*;
- IPPC licences;
- licences issued under the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007*;
- Certificates of Authorisation under the *Waste Management Regulations 2008*.

Other legislation introduced in recent years, gives effect to various measures required by the Water Framework Directive. These include:

- the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations (SI 684 of 2007)* which establish an authorisation system of local authority wastewater discharges operated by the Environmental Protection Agency.
- the *Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007)* which introduces strategic planning in relation to water services provision, strengthening the administrative arrangements for planning the delivery of water services at national and local level. Water Services Strategic Plans prepared by water services authorities in accordance with Section 36 of this Act must take full account of the proper planning and sustainable development of their functional areas including, amongst other things, the provisions of river basin management plans prepared for the relevant area.
- the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI 79 of 2008)* which transposed the new Bathing Waters Directive (2006/7/EC) establishes a new classification system for bathing water quality and require monitoring and management plans to preserve, protect and improve the quality of bathing waters.
- the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations (SI 296 of 2009)* which set legally binding objectives for water quality in rivers, or parts of rivers, inhabited by freshwater pearl mussels (*Margaritifera*) and designated as a Special Area of Conservation to protect those species. The Regulations also require authorities to take the steps necessary to attain those objectives. They also require the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government, subject to consultations,

to prepare a programme of measures for the attainment of the ecological objectives in rivers containing protected populations; and to publish a sub-basin management plan for each relevant river.

- the *Quality of Shellfish Waters Regulations 2006 (SI 268 of 2006)* which set water quality requirements, provide for the designation of shellfish growing areas and also for the establishment of pollution reduction programmes for the designated waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. The Regulations were amended in 2009 (SI 55 of 2009 and SI 464 of 2009) to designate an additional fifty shellfish waters. There are now a total of sixty-four shellfish waters nationally. Two are located in the Neagh Bann IRBD.
- the *Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters Regulations (SI 101 of 2009)*, which provide statutory support for good agricultural practice to protect waters against pollution from agricultural sources and include measures aimed at achieving that objective. These regulations revised and replaced previous regulations made in 2006 and 2007 and provided for strengthened enforcement provisions and for better farmyard management.
- amendments to the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 (SI 48 of 2010)* which designate an additional 10 sites as Sensitive Areas. This brings the total number of sites designated nationally to 43 (five in the Neagh Bann IRBD).
- the *European Communities (Control of Dangerous Substances from Offshore Installations) Regulations 2009 (SI 358 of 2009)* which provide for the permitting of discharges of certain dangerous substances from offshore installations into the Irish territorial sea by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. The Regulations also provide for the preparation of a pollution reduction programme by the Minister.

The Planning and Development Bill 2010, due to be enacted in the middle of 2010, includes important new provisions in support of the Water Framework Directive. Firstly, the Bill includes a new mandatory objective requiring local authorities to integrate water management with planning policies and objectives in the preparation of their development plan. It specifically requires local authorities to ensure that the development plan supports the promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established under both the Surface Waters and Groundwater Environmental Objectives Regulations. In order to ensure that both development planning and management are fully compliant with Water Framework Directive objectives, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government will issue Section 28 guidance to planning authorities on the new Planning Bill and its relationship with the implementation of the river basin management plans, after enactment and not later than 2011. This will be supported by regional seminars.

Secondly, significant new provisions are included in the Bill in relation to the regulation of quarries. The Bill requires each planning authority to identify quarries in its administrative area which, having regard to the dates of implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive and the Habitats Directive, respectively, would have required environmental impact assessment or appropriate assessment and which have not had either or both of these assessments, as appropriate. Where the quarries identified commenced operations before the establishment of the planning code in 1964, or since obtained permission and are registered, they will be required to apply for a new consent, known as a “substitute consent” with a remedial Environmental Impact Assessment. However where the quarry commenced after October 1964 and never obtained planning permission, or failed to register in 2004-2005 under Section 261 of the Act, if required to do so, it will be subject to enforcement action.

Thirdly, the Bill removes the exemption status for infill of wetlands carried out under the *Land Reclamation Act*. Other forms of planning exemption for wetland infill will be restricted or removed in forthcoming amendments to the *Planning Regulations*.

The legislative framework will be further enhanced to protect and improve water quality through the introduction of strengthened controls on abstractions of water and physical modifications of water bodies. A scoping study on the legislative requirements in this area is underway and work on the drafting of new WFD-compliant regulations to include a modernised system of registration and prior authorisation will commence later in 2010. These regulations will be in place, at the latest, by the end of 2012.

New legislation will be proposed to provide for prior consideration of the nature, location and cumulative effects of certain agri-development projects to ensure that the obligations under the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive are fully met. This is in response to the November 2008 European Court of Justice ruling that Ireland was over reliant on size thresholds to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in relation to certain agri-developments.

The categories of agri-development include:

- projects for the restructuring of rural land holdings;
- projects for the use of uncultivated land or semi-natural areas for intensive agricultural purposes; and
- water management projects for agriculture, including irrigation and land drainage projects.

The combined result of the above legislative changes will strengthen controls on physical development activities and bring greater coherence between the planning code and the objectives of the river basin management plans.



## 5.2 The programme of measures

The key provisions of the programme of measures are summarised in the following sections. The details of measures for the Neagh Bann IRBD are contained in the Water Management Unit action plans for the district.

### 5.2.1 Control of urban waste water discharges

According to assessments from the Environmental Protection Agency municipal wastewater discharge is one of the two most important sources of pollution in Irish rivers, accounting for 38% of the number of polluted river sites recorded (the other source being agricultural activities). The latest Agency report on water quality covering the period 2004-2006 underlines why the control of urban waste water discharges is so important in the Irish context. Of the 39 locations assessed as seriously polluted in this period, 21 were suspected to be so classified as a result of municipal, mostly sewage, discharges. With regard to cases of moderate pollution detected in the period, the bulk of these were suspected to be caused by municipal sources also.

The main effect of pollution from municipal sources is nutrient enrichment (that results in greatly enhanced plant and algal growth) caused by nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus). Another frequently encountered effect is siltation. The majority of instances of moderate pollution attributed to 'municipal' sources are locations downstream of sewage discharges from towns.

There has been, and continues to be, significant improvements in the management of municipal wastewater discharges. Over the period 2000 to 2006 €2.3 billion was invested in wastewater treatment, meeting 90% of Ireland's infrastructure needs. A further estimated €2.5 billion will be invested during the period 2007 to 2013. However, the focus to date has been on the provision of infrastructure whereas operational aspects also need significant improvement. In the 2006/2007 reporting period, non-compliance with the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations* for very large treatment plant discharges (>15,000 population equivalent) was high (48%), while the majority (81%) of smaller treatment plants (<2,000 population equivalent) did not comply with the required standards (EPA, 2009).

Ireland has enacted two major pieces of legislation in recent times that together constitute key elements in the legislative framework in the area of urban waste water. First, the *Waste Water Discharge Authorisation Regulations* made in 2007, providing for authorisation in accordance with emission limit values and secondly, the *Surface Waters Regulations 2009*, providing statutory quality standards for a range of substances in water.



### 5.2.1.1 Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2001-2010)

The main objective in relation to wastewater is to meet the requirements of the *EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2001-2010)* in full. The purpose of the Regulations is to protect the environment from the adverse effects of urban waste water discharges and discharges from certain industrial sectors. The Regulations require:

- scheduled provision of urban waste water collecting systems – depending on the size of the agglomeration and on the type of water body to which the waste water is discharged;
- scheduled provision of urban waste water treatment plants – depending on the size of the agglomeration and on the type of water body to which the waste water is discharged;
- provision for industrial waste water which enters collecting systems and urban waste water treatment plants to receive any pre-treatment that is required to protect the health of staff, the environment and the fabric and integrity of plant and;
- monitoring by local authorities of discharges from urban waste water treatment plants including the transmission of results to the EPA.

The *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations (2001-2010)* have also designated 43 water bodies as sensitive and in need of special protection due to the threat of eutrophication. This number includes an additional ten sensitive waters designated in recent amending Regulations (SI 48 of 2010).

The Environmental Protection Agency has responsibility for enforcing the Regulations in order to secure improvements in the quality of discharges from urban waste water treatment plants through a strategic, risk based enforcement programme. Based on audits and monitoring returns the Environmental Protection Agency has pointed out various improvements that are needed to comply fully with the Regulations, namely:

- Put in place appropriate treatment at those locations across the country where wastewater is being discharged with either no treatment or inappropriate treatment;
- Provide secondary treatment for those agglomerations that do not have the required level of treatment;
- Carry out monitoring and analysis in accordance with the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations*, for all treatment plants including those that are managed and operated by third parties on behalf of the local authority;
- Local authorities to review the operation of all urban waste water treatment plants in their functional areas including those below 500 population equivalent. Corrective action programmes must be developed as a priority where discharges cause environmental pollution in the waters to which the effluents discharge.

### 5.2.1.2 Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations (SI 684 of 2007)

The *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations of 2007 (SI 684 of 2007)* were introduced for the purpose of making local authority waste water discharges subject to an authorisation regime. The Regulations give effect to obligations under the Water Framework Directive requiring prior authorisation of point source discharges liable to cause pollution. This includes all discharges, losses and emission of pollutants from wastewater works. The regulations also address and implement measures required under a number of other Directives (that is Drinking Water, Ground Water, Habitats, Shellfish, Bathing Water and Birds). The main provisions of the Regulations are as follows:

- the Environmental Protection Agency is the competent authority for the purposes of authorising urban waste water discharges;
- the Environmental Protection Agency sets emission limits for pollutants likely to be in the waste water concerned, and the timeframe within which these limits are to be achieved;
- the Environmental Protection Agency has the power to review a discharge authorisation;
- water services authorities must apply to the Environmental Protection Agency for a licence/certificate authorising all waste water discharges from sewage works;
- discharges from agglomerations with population equivalents greater than 500 must be licensed;
- discharges from agglomerations with a population equivalent below 500 must be certified;
- failure by water services authorities to comply with conditions attaching to an authorisation granted by the Environmental Protection Agency is an offence;
- the provision of false or misleading information or failure to provide a response to a licence review initiated by the Environmental Protection Agency are also offences.



Authorisations have been introduced on a phased basis having commenced in December 2007. All discharges to the aquatic environment from waste water works owned, managed and operated by water service authorities require a waste water discharge licence or certificate of authorisation from the Environmental Protection Agency. The authorities are required to apply to the Agency for a licence or certificate of authorisation by specified dates depending on the population equivalent of the area served by the waste water works.

The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a draft enforcement plan to ensure the requirements of the licences/authorisations are complied with by water services authorities. The enforcement approach to these licences is to be risk based and focuses on the development and implementation of a strategic enforcement plan in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders.

The *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations* establish a clear linkage between decisions that planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála make on individual planning applications/appeals, and parallel obligations on local authorities, as water services authorities. The “Combined Approach”<sup>1</sup> in the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007* requires water services authorities to comply with emission limits for the discharge of wastewaters to water bodies arising from the stricter of either or both the *Urban Waste Water Regulations (SI 254 of 2001)* and emission limits based on achieving the environmental quality standards for the receiving waters. The Environmental Protection Agency is required under the *Waste Water Regulations* to apply the combined approach when issuing licences, ensuring that the licence issued and discharge limits set therein comply in full with the requirements of the *EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive*.



Where a planning authority or An Bord Pleanála forms an opinion that the discharge from a proposed development would result in non-compliance with, or a significant breach of, the combined approach then the planning authority or the Board must either:

- refuse permission or approval for the development;
- impose conditions on any grant of permission or approval to ensure that the discharge will not cause non-compliance with, or a significant breach of, relevant limits; or
- decide not to proceed with the development (as in the case of local authority's own development).

### **5.2.1.3 Water Services Investment Programme**

The Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) is the instrument through which all major public water and wastewater infrastructure schemes are delivered. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in collaboration with the water services authorities, is responsible for prioritising, approving, scheduling and financing individual schemes. The Programme is implemented through City and County Councils, which, as water services authorities, are responsible for design, procurement, contract supervision and post-completion operation and maintenance.

The availability of waste water services is an important pre-requisite for environmental sustainability and economic activity across all sectors. Continuing substantial investment is needed to sustain progress on eliminating the deficit in national water services capacity and to attract and support investment that will stimulate economic activity and recovery and increase the productive capacity of the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> “combined approach”, in relation to a waste water works, means the control of discharges and emissions to waters whereby the emission limits for the discharge are established on the basis of the stricter of either or both, the limits and controls required under the Urban Waste Water Regulations, and the limits determined under statute or Directive for the purpose of achieving the environmental objectives established for surface waters, groundwater or protected areas for the water body into which the discharge is made.



The main drivers for investment in waste water infrastructure under the Programme are works required to:

- ensure compliance with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directives;
- ensure compliance with bathing water requirements and elimination of pollution blackspots;
- ensure compliance with shellfish waters requirements;
- meet strategic priorities, for example schemes in cities and towns facing shortages in water services capacity;
- comply with Environmental Protection Agency licensing requirements for municipal waste water discharges;
- meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Obligations under the *Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive* have been a central focus of the Water Services Investment Programme. As a result, Ireland's compliance with the requirements of that Directive for the provision of secondary treatment rose to approximately 90% by the end of 2007, compared to 25% at the beginning of the last National Development Plan in 2000. All remaining schemes required for full compliance were included in the Water Services Investment Programme 2007 – 2009.

#### **5.2.1.4 Priorities for follow up actions**

Water services authorities, in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, have undertaken a review of priorities for a range of follow up actions in order to ensure that:

- investment under the Water Services Investment Programme is aligned with the high level goals outlined above;
- investment is appropriately targeted at key scheme; and
- other appropriate steps are taken.

These actions include; investment in infrastructure, further investigation, improvements in operational performance and the management of treatment capacity. This review has formed the basis for prioritising investment in the next phases of the Water Services Investment Programme (2010-2012) and other actions described below. The criteria used to prioritise included information on design capacity of treatment plants, actual capacity, projected growth in loadings to the plant, compliance of effluent with the standards specified in the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations* and observed impacts on receiving waters.

The review identified the following six categories of urban agglomerations where waste water treatment facilities are to be subject to a range of follow up actions:

**Category 1** - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring identifiable Capital Works. This includes plants deemed to be operating above original design capacity or where constraints on assimilative capacity or sensitivity of receiving waters impose requirements for more stringent discharge standards.

**Category 2** - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring further investigation prior to Capital Works. This category includes agglomerations where the available information suggests that the plant should not result in pressure on the water body, but water quality assessment does not support that. In these cases, the measure is to examine the agglomeration and determine the source of the pressure. At this time, it is not possible to determine the additional measures that will be required and consequently, any works identified as necessary will not be in place to before the end of the first planning cycle.

**Category 3** - Agglomerations requiring the implementation of actions identified in Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRPs) for Shellfish Waters designated under the European Communities (quality of shellfish waters) Regulations (2006-2009). PRPs for agglomerations discharging to shellfish waters impose additional microbiological discharge standards that must be complied with. This may require additional capital works in some cases. Implementation of the PRPs commenced in early 2010. As part of implementation the need for additional works to achieve all water quality standards will be examined. Where works are identified as necessary they shall be prioritised for investment under the WSIP.

**Category 4** - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring improved operational performance through the implementation of Performance Management Systems ranging from improved monitoring of loadings, flows and discharge standards to documented operational management systems. Work is to commence immediately.

**Category 5** - Agglomerations requiring investigation of Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs). In these cases, the discharge standards for the waste water treatment plant were acceptable, but observed impacts on the receiving waters suggested that untreated waste water discharges were occurring. The measure is to investigate all suspect CSOs. In cases where the investigation identifies maintenance or management issues, they can be readily addressed and may result in early recovery of receiving waters. However as

the result of the investigation cannot be predicted at this time, and the time scale for any identified capital works is unknown, works are unlikely be in place before the end of the first planning cycle.

**Category 6** - Agglomerations where existing waste water treatment capacity is currently adequate but predicted loadings (based on assumed 3% growth in load per annum) would result in overloading. The measure is to manage development so that treatment capacity is in accordance with the requirements of the *Urban Waste Water Discharges (Authorisations) Regulations of 2007*.

## 5.2.2 Control of unsewered waste water discharges

The Environmental Protection Agency recently published a new binding Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems serving Single Houses (October 2009) following extensive public consultation. The new Code of Practice updates the earlier manual published in 2000 and sets standards for new developments. From a planning perspective, the publication of the new Code of Practice is a very significant step forward in ensuring environmentally sustainable rural development in line with the statutory Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing (2005) issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The purpose of the new Code of Practice is to provide guidance on the provision of wastewater treatment and disposal systems for new single houses. It is intended to assist planning authorities, developers, system manufacturers and designers, system installers and system operators to deal with the complexities of on-site systems.

The Environmental Protection Agency Code of Practice provides guidance on:

- Methods for assessing site suitability for on-site wastewater treatment systems and for identifying minimum environmental protection requirements;
- Selection of suitable wastewater treatment systems for sites in un-sewered rural areas;
- The design and installation of septic tank systems, filter systems, packaged treatment systems and tertiary treatment systems;
- Maintenance requirements for on-site wastewater treatment systems.

The Department issued a circular letter (Reference PSSP 1/10) to all planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála in January 2010 on foot of the new Environmental Protection Agency Code of Practice. The circular advises authorities of the new arrangements to apply for the assessment of on-site waste water disposal systems for single houses in the light of the new Code of Practice. The circular emphasises that the Code is a key element in ensuring that the planning system fully addresses the protection of water quality when assessing development proposals for new housing in rural areas and in line with the Planning Guidelines for Sustainable Rural Housing issued by the Department in 2005. Planning authorities must ensure that developments in un-sewered areas undergo a site suitability assessment and that both the site itself and the on-site waste water treatment system to be installed are appropriate and meet the required standards.

It is also the Department's intention to amend the Technical Guidance Document supporting the 1997 *Building Regulations (SI 497 of 1997)* relating to standards for "drainage and waste water disposal" (TGD-H of 2005). This will involve incorporating new and additional guidance based on the new Environmental Protection Agency Code of Practice. The Department will also issue a Circular Letter to all Local Building Control Authorities drawing their attention to the amended guidance document.

In relation to existing unsewered properties, improvements are required regarding the operational performance, maintenance and monitoring arrangements of septic tanks and other on-site waste water treatment systems serving such properties. In response, the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government intends to bring forward and consult on proposals for legislation during 2010. It is intended that this legislation will be in place by quarter 3 of 2010. The proposed legislation will provide standards for the performance, operation and maintenance of septic tanks and similar on-site wastewater treatment systems to ensure compliance with the environmental quality standards established in the groundwater and surface water regulations transposing the Water Framework Directive. It will also provide for the monitoring and inspection of the performance of such treatment systems and will set out the responsibilities of households served by those systems, including requirements to carry out remedial actions where necessary.



### 5.2.3 Control of agricultural sources of pollution

The control of pollution from agriculture remains a significant challenge to achieving water quality standards in Ireland. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that agricultural sources accounts for 31% of pollution incidences. The main measure for addressing pollution from agricultural sources is the *Good Agricultural Practices Regulations (SI 101 of 2009)*, commonly known as the “Nitrates Regulations”. These Regulations also give effect to several other EU Directives including those relating to; dangerous substances in water, waste management, protection of groundwater, public participation in policy development and water policy (the Water Framework Directive). The *Nitrates Regulations* are the main instrument for controlling pollution from agriculture, providing statutory support for good agricultural practice to protect waters against pollution. There have been significant improvements in terms of agricultural pollution control since the introduction of the original *Good Agricultural Practice Regulations* in 2006. The Regulations require a “National Action Programme” of measures aimed at protecting waters from pollution, and they introduced a binding code of good agricultural practice, which is applicable to all farmers. The regulations have been supported by significant investment in farm waste management (€2 billion since 2006).

A key requirement of the *Good Agricultural Practice Regulations* is the monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Programme. This consists of;

- collection of accurate baseline data;
- implementation of the Action Programme measures;
- collection of data over the monitoring period; and
- evaluation of effectiveness by comparison of data collected after implementation with baseline data, targets levels and limits..

Water quality monitoring for the purposes of the National Action Programme has been integrated into the previously outlined National water monitoring programme established in 2007 under the Water Framework Directive and is carried out by local authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Despite the improvements in agricultural pollution control in recent years, further work is needed to ensure full compliance. While the Regulations are in the early stage of implementation, it is clear that an effective inspection and enforcement regime is needed to ensure full compliance.

Enforcement of the *Nitrates Regulations* is primarily the responsibility of the local authorities acting under the direct supervision of the Environmental Protection Agency. Local authorities have a duty under the Regulations to initiate the necessary farm inspection programmes to assess the level of compliance with the Regulations. These inspections are to be co-ordinated with inspections carried out by other public authorities such as the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

Following discussions between the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the local authorities it has been agreed that, starting in 2010, inspectors from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will, on behalf





of the local authorities, carry out a programme of systematic inspections for the purposes of checking compliance with the *Nitrates Regulations*. Local authorities will continue to retain responsibility for undertaking pollution investigations based on local priorities in accordance with their duties under the full scope of water quality legislation and in line with their respective environmental inspection plans prepared in accordance with the European Union's Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI). The aim of this approach is to ensure that the combined resources of Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the local authorities are used to best effect and that duplication of on-farm inspections is avoided.

The selection of farms for inspection by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food will be based on risk-assessment criteria taking into account the level of agricultural pressures, sensitivity of catchments and water quality targets established in River Basin Management Plans. This arrangement, together with inspections undertaken by Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for the purpose of cross compliance, will result in a total of approximately 3,000 farms being inspected nationally per annum. If a farm is found to be non-compliant it may be subject to penalty under the single farm payment scheme and follow up inspections and enforcement action will be the remit of local authorities. As noted above, local authorities will continue to carry out inspections, based on local priorities, as required under the full scope of water quality legislation.

The Agricultural Catchments Programme (ACP) is an important component of the National Action Programme. Its main purpose is to provide a scientific evaluation of the effectiveness of the National Action Programme measures and where necessary to underpin the basis for any modifications of the measures that might be required to achieve Water Framework Directive water quality objectives. The ACP is an agri-environmental and socio-economic research programme at the catchment scale supported by a team of scientists, advisors and technicians and managed by Teagasc. It will initially run for a four-year period (2008 –2011). Six agricultural catchments are being intensively managed and monitored nationally. One of these is located in the Neagh Bann IRBD. The catchments were selected to represent various typical agricultural enterprise types and typical environmental risks to groundwater and surface water. Two of these catchments contain a high proportion of tillage. One of these is located on free-draining soils where the greatest risk is of nitrogen loss through leaching and the other is located on heavier soils where phosphorus loss through surface run-off is more likely. There are four grassland-dominated catchments. One of these involves high risk of nitrogen loss, while the other three relate predominantly to risk of phosphorus loss (with varying levels of risk of nitrogen loss).

The ACP is intended to identify challenges in implementation of the National Action Programme and will provide a basis for modifications to the programme and/or recommendations for new agricultural measures for the protection of water, where necessary. (Further information is available at: <http://www.teagasc.ie/agcatchments/>).

The Nitrates Regulations represent a major step forward in protecting waters from agricultural sources of pollution and are expected to deliver significant improvement in water quality when fully effective. Evidence suggests, however, that they will not be sufficient to fully deliver the requirements of the Water Framework Directive in some areas of the country, for example:

- The National monitoring programme has indicated a number of patterns of concern. Elevated nitrate concentrations have been consistently observed in the east and southeast of the country in both groundwater and surface waters (EPA, 2008 and 2009). The presence of intensive agricultural practices on free draining soils in the southeast suggests that diffuse agricultural sources are the cause of the elevated nitrate concentrations. Also, the estuaries of the south-east and south of the country, such as the Slaney, Blackwater and Bandon were found to be the most seriously eutrophic. It is suspected that the nitrogen loads from upstream catchments is a significant contributing factor as nitrogen is the main growth-limiting nutrient in seawater.
- The vulnerable nature of the karst limestone aquifers in the west (Galway, Mayo and Roscommon) may explain the elevated phosphate concentrations in groundwater. The groundwater may be contributing to eutrophication in rivers and lakes in these areas. Phosphorus deposited as organic or chemical fertiliser on shallow soils over fissured karst limestone may enter groundwater readily and may then discharge to rivers through springs. Approximately 20% of the area of Ireland consists of karstified limestone.
- Elevated phosphorus levels have also been observed in areas covered by heavy gley soils with high phosphorus content (Index 4) including parts of counties Cavan and Monaghan in the Neagh Bann IRBD.
- In some of the high-status sites referred to in Section 2.2.1 above.

The four scenarios described above pose particular difficulties for water quality management and the agricultural sector in the areas mentioned. Even with the full implementation of the Nitrates Regulations and the National Action Programme it is unlikely that the objective of good status for groundwater and/or surface waters will be met by the 2015 deadline in those areas and the need for supplementary measures will arise. The nature and extent of such measures will be considered when the findings of the ACP start to become available in 2012. Challenges include slow natural rates of water quality recovery, which may extend up to 20 years, and certain ground conditions (hydrogeological and soil characteristics), which cause groundwater bodies to be vulnerable to pollution from nutrient inputs from agricultural activities. Time extensions for achieving water quality objectives have been applied to waters in such areas in order to provide adequate time to investigate the extent of impacts, to identify and implement appropriate management measures and to allow time for water quality to recover.

## 5.2.4 Water pricing policy



The Water Framework Directive intends that water pricing policy should act as an incentive towards efficient water usage so as to “contribute to the environmental objectives of the Directive” and to recover “an adequate contribution” of the costs of water services from the main user groups, including industry, agriculture and households.

Since 1998 Government’s National Water Pricing Policy has been to charge non-domestic customers for water and waste water services to recover the full costs of providing such services to these customers. Metering of all non-domestic uses is largely complete. The installation of meters on the supply of non-domestic customers facilitates the equitable, transparent and efficient implementation of water pricing policy.

In relation to the domestic sector the cost of capital, operational and maintenance costs for water services have been met in full from the Exchequer since 1997. Following a recent Government decision, legislation is to be introduced by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government to enable local authorities to charge domestic users for water services in a manner which provides incentives for efficient water use and which recovers an adequate contribution of the costs of water services. Proposals will also be brought forward for a metering programme for domestic users.

## 5.2.5 Sub-basin management plans and programmes of measures for the purpose of achieving environmental water quality objectives for Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection of Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations

Under the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations, 2009 (SI 296 of 2009)* the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government is required to have sub-basin management plans with programmes of measures prepared to achieve environmental water quality objectives established for objectives for Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection of Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations.

There are twenty-seven designated populations listed in the Regulations, none of these are located in the Neagh Bann IRBD. Twenty six of the twenty-seven designated populations are failing good ecological status due to inadequate water conditions. A sub-basin management plan is required for each catchment containing a designated freshwater pearl mussel population. Plans are being prepared in consultation with the relevant public authorities and are expected to be completed by mid 2010. Each sub-basin management plan is required to:

- specify environmental objectives and targets;
- provide for the investigation of sources of pressures leading to the unfavourable conservation status of the freshwater pearl mussel;
- establish a programme of measures, including a timeframe, for the reduction of pressures giving rise to unfavourable conservation status;
- lay down a detailed programme of monitoring to be implemented in order to evaluate the effectiveness of measures and progress made towards restoring favourable conservation status.

A duty is placed on each public authority to take such steps as are necessary, in the context of their functions, to implement the measures identified in the sub-basin management plans. The measures included in sub-basin management plans are complementary and additional to measures contained in a river basin management plan prepared by local authorities. Sub-basin management plans are to be reviewed every 6 years and revised where necessary.

## 5.2.6 Pollution reduction programmes for the purpose of achieving water quality standards for designated shellfish waters

Under the *European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations (2006-2009)* the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government is required to have Pollution Reduction Programmes (PRP) prepared for each designated shellfish water. The purpose of each programme is to take reasonably practicable steps to protect and, where necessary, improve water quality in the designated shellfish growing areas with the aim of achieving the environmental water quality standards established for them. Nationally there are sixty-four designated shellfish waters, two are located in the Neagh Bann IRBD. Following consultations with the relevant public authorities all shellfish PRPs and Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) of each, were completed by January 2010. Implementation has now commenced.

The PRP for each shellfish growing area consists of a characterisation of the surrounding catchment area and pressures that may influence water quality (for example known waste water discharges and the nature of agricultural activities), an assessment of water quality in the area and a schedule of detailed catchment level actions planned to control known sources of pollution.

All relevant public authorities are required to perform their statutory functions in a manner that, as far as practicable, will promote compliance with the water quality standards established for designated shellfish waters. The Marine Institute is carrying out a monitoring programme to assess the condition of waters in the shellfish growing area and to verify compliance, or otherwise with the water quality standards. The Marine Institute will submit a report on water quality in each designated area to the Minister each year, including any non-compliances with water quality standards to enable investigation to be undertaken. The PRPs will be reviewed by the Minister at intervals not exceeding three years, and will be updated and amended as needed from time to time.

The PRP schedule of actions identifies the measures required, timescales and the public authority responsible for undertaking the action. The measures are complementary and additional to measures contained in a river basin management plan focussing on the pressures acting on each designated shellfish water.

## 5.2.7 Control of environmental impacts from forestry

The National Forestry Inventory shows that forest now occupies 10% of the total land area of Ireland; 57% of forest is in public ownership and 43% in private. Conifers comprise 74% of the total stock. An estimated 43% of the total stocked forest estate is on peat type soils. These plantations are currently being harvested for the Irish timber sector. There are over 7,000 hectares of public and private forestry in the Neagh Bann IRBD. A typical forest lifecycle for conifer plantations is 40 years; that for broadleaves is longer.

Research into the interaction between forestry and water has continued since the 1980s and the findings have been integrated into Forest Service guidance and codes of practice. While there are many positive benefits of forests, such as biodiversity enhancement through broadleaf plantation, some potential negative pressures have been identified through recent research. These pressures include:

- artificial acidification of waters arising from the presence of coniferous afforestation on acid-sensitive soils. Afforestation on well buffered acid mineral soils does not exert an acidifying effect. Some 5% of national stocked areas are located in areas with acid-sensitive soils that can exert an acidifying effect on water;
- nutrient enrichment and sedimentation impacts arising from forestry operations (mainly fertilisation and high levels of felling activity) in catchments with forest cover of over 50% on peat soils. Observed impacts from forest stands on mineral soils were significantly less than those on peats. Some 1% of forest stands are located in such settings.

Research has shown that these problems were generally associated with forest stands planted before 1990, the year in which the Forest Service Guidelines controlling forestry began to be introduced. This is significant as these older forest stands may have drainage networks directly connected to the river networks and were generally planted right down to the stream edge. Research has





highlighted the complex nature of the interaction between forest, forestry activities and water. A number of forestry research projects are currently investigating<sup>2</sup> practical mitigation measures to address the pressures that water bodies may experience from forests and forestry operations. The Environmental Protection Agency is also considering additional future research needs to investigate the effectiveness of pollution control measures to address problems of acidification, siltation and nutrient enrichment from fertilisation. The Forest Service will review the Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines (published, July 2000) during the first cycle of the river basin management plans to ensure that they reflect the new water quality objectives and standards.

To date forestry in Ireland has been controlled under the *Forestry Act 1946* and through a grant support system administered by the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food through its guidance documents and codes of practice. To strengthen sustainable forestry management, a new *Forestry Bill*, replacing the *1946 Forestry Act*, has been drafted. A number of provisions are of particular importance to water protection, namely;

- all forestry operations, whether licensed, approved or exempt must be carried out in accordance with any guidelines and regulations issued by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Non-adherence to relevant guidelines, code of practice, standards, conditions or regulations issued by the Minister will be an offence;
- it is intended to introduce more flexibility and clarity to the issue of the compulsory replanting after felling. It is proposed to allow for change of land use from forestry to other sustainable uses. It is proposed to give the Minister the power to waive the replanting obligation in certain limited circumstances (for example “public good” infrastructure projects, woodland development, including eco-clusters, limited housing and recreation, areas that are environmentally sensitive to commercial forestry etc.).

In addition, *Aerial Fertilisation Regulations (2006-2007)* were introduced to control nutrient pollution from the aerial application of fertilisers to forests. To undertake aerial fertilisation of a forest an Aerial Fertilisation Licence must first be obtained from the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food. The Regulations lay down a number of conditions, which must be met before the Minister may grant a licence. They also specify certain exclusion zones.

In March 2008 the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government published guidelines for the protection of Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations from forestry activities. The guidelines are intended to ensure that forest operations such as afforestation, forest road construction, harvesting and forest planning are compatible with the protection of this particularly sensitive species. The guidelines describe a range of measures intended to reduce any potential negative impacts on the species arising from forest operations. They complement all other Forest Service Guidelines, the Code of Best Forest Practice and other regulations. The implementation of the guidelines is mandatory.

To address the problem of acidification of waters in acid sensitive catchments from afforestation a protocol was agreed between the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Forest Service, the Environmental Protection Agency and COFORD in 2001 for dealing with grant-aid applications in acid sensitive areas. All applications received by the Forest Service for grant-aid for afforestation in areas identified as being acid-sensitive are checked for acid buffering capacity as determined by alkalinity levels in run-off water. Soils with moderate acid buffering capacity are referred to the Environmental Protection Agency for recommendation with regard to grant-aid. Depending on the alkalinity levels:

- afforestation may be grant aided in areas where the minimum alkalinity of the run-off water is greater than 15mg CaCO<sub>3</sub> l<sup>-1</sup> (calcium carbonate);
- where the minimum alkalinity of the run-off water is in the range 8-15mg CaCO<sub>3</sub> l<sup>-1</sup>, full, partial or no afforestation may be allowed following discussion and agreement between the Environmental Protection Agency and the Forest Service;
- afforestation is not grant aided in areas where the minimum alkalinity of the run-off water is less than 8mg CaCO<sub>3</sub> l<sup>-1</sup>.

New regulations, to update the *European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001 (SI 538 of 2001)* will be finalised this year. The new regulations will provide for statutory Environmental Impact Assessment screening for all sub-threshold afforestation and forest road development (but excluding access to public roads which will require planning permission and Environmental Impact Assessment, if necessary). It will also transpose the Public Participation Directive insofar as it concerns forestry and will introduce penalties for unauthorised development.

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<sup>2</sup> EPA-COFORD funded project HYDROFOR (due for completion in 2013) is investigating the impacts of forests and forestry operations on Ireland's aquatic ecology.

EPA-funded EFFECT project (due for completion in 2011) is assessing the impacts of POMs on stream water quality, focusing on areas of coniferous forest, looking in particular at how do management measures affect stream biology;

COFORD-funded SANIFAC project (due for completion in 2010) which is looking into the effects of clearfelling on the hydrology, chemistry and biology of the receiving waters will be monitored pre and post clearfelling;

COFORD-funded FORFLUX project (due for completion in 2010) looking into understanding the long-term implications of the interaction of the forest with the atmosphere, the soil and surface waters.

## 5.2.8 National Action Plan for sustainable use of pesticides

The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is currently developing a National Action Plan for the sustainable use of pesticides in consultation with other stakeholders. The National Action Plan is a requirement of Directive 2009/128/EC (establishing a framework for Community action to achieve the sustainable use of pesticides) and must be communicated to the Commission and to other Member States by 14 December 2012. The Directive is aimed at ensuring more sustainable use of pesticides, thereby reducing the impact of pesticides on human health and on the environment (including the aquatic environment).

The National Action Plan will include quantitative targets for reducing risks and impacts of pesticide use on the environment. The plan will address areas such as training and certification of pesticide users, distributors and advisors, calibration and certification of pesticide application equipment, and integrated pest management techniques. The plan will have a particular focus on the protection of the aquatic environment and drinking water supplies from potential impacts of pesticide use, and will specifically address the issue of safeguard zones around water abstraction points.

The list of Water Framework Directive Priority Substances is due to be reviewed by 13 January 2011. It has been proposed that sixteen substances including the pesticide cypermethrin will be taken forward for environmental quality standard derivation.

## 5.2.9 Landfills and contaminated lands

The *Waste Management (Certification of Historic Unlicensed Waste Disposal and Recovery Activity) Regulations 2008 (SI 524 of 2008)* introduced a statutory requirement for local authorities to register all closed landfills, as defined under the regulations, by the 30th June 2009; 321 sites have been registered throughout the State.

Almost all initial Tier 1 risk assessments (desk study and site walk over) have been completed for each site. More in-depth Tier 2 risk assessments (on-site monitoring) were applied to 18 sites under a pilot project initiated in October 2009, funded by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. A second pilot project to support the application of Tier 3 risk assessments (more detailed site investigations) was announced in March 2010.



All sites must be authorised by the EPA. The authorisation, called a Certificate of Authorisation (COA), will specify the appropriate management measures to be applied at each site on a case-by-case basis. The EPA will be required to have regard to the environmental quality standards established by the 2009 Surface Waters Regulations and the 2010 Groundwater Regulations when undertaking its investigations and specifying the appropriate management measures for the purposes of these regulations.

With regard to historic mines, an inventory and risk assessment was completed in March 2010 in response to the Extractive Industries Waste Directive (2006/21/EC). The Historic Mine Sites - Inventory and Risk Classification (HMS-IRC) Project was a joint project of the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources.

The objectives of the project were:

- to identify any significant risks to the environment, including human and animal health risks, at these historic mine sites so that these risks ultimately can be managed and the sites made safe;
- to plan for EU Directive 2006/21/EC on the Management of Wastes from the Extractive Industries.

This Directive requires the preparation of an inventory of closed waste facilities in the State by 1st May 2012. The inventory does not include closed stone, sand and gravel quarries, which also require management under the Directive.

A total of 32 mine sites and districts were investigated. Of these 27 mine sites/districts (encompassing 82 individual sites) were scored relative to each other for the purpose of future actions.

The project has resulted in the most comprehensive inventory of historic mines in Ireland that includes a detailed geochemical analysis. It gathers together all the existing information on historic mine sites in Ireland along with significant new information derived from site investigations that will point the way towards future rehabilitation work on mines in Ireland. Rehabilitation works will have regard to the environmental quality standards established by the 2009 Surface Waters Regulations and the 2010 Groundwater Regulations.

### 5.2.10 Aquaculture

Finfish aquaculture is licensed by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food under the *Fisheries (Amendment) Act, 1997*. Licences issued under the Act set limits on the amount of fish that may be grown as well the use of chemicals and medicines at the facility. Licences lay down requirements for monitoring, which include benthic monitoring, water quality monitoring and sea lice monitoring. Benthic monitoring is undertaken each year and includes visual examination of the seabed beneath the cages, as well as analysis for organic carbon and redox.

The *European Communities (Control of Dangerous Substances in Aquaculture) Regulations 2008 (SI 466 of 2008)* give effect to Directive 2006/11/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on pollution caused by certain dangerous substances into the aquatic environment in so far as the Directive relates to the protection of waters in the marine environment from aquaculture activities.

The Regulations inter alia require that the level of discharge of an emission set by a licensing authority must be based on the relevant environmental quality standards or objectives set by the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government in accordance with the Water Framework Directive.



All licences will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the WFD objectives (as laid down in the *2009 Surface Water Regulations*) for the receiving waterbody, taking into account the assimilative capacity of receiving waters.

### 5.2.11 Measures to address the pressures on coastal waters

There are many pressures on the coastal zone ranging from certain fishing practices through to recreational pressures, coastal development, dredging activities and dumping at sea, the extraction of marine aggregates and marine waste and litter. The impact of nutrient enrichment and the process of eutrophication is a major concern in the marine environment; assessment is mainly based on data collected by Environmental Protection Agency. National Regulations to implement the EU directives on urban waste water treatment and nitrates from agricultural sources are among the most important measures in place to combat eutrophication. Ireland has applied the EU Nitrates Directive across its whole territory and has designated the relevant estuarine waters as 'sensitive' where required to do so under the Urban Waste Water Directive. Nutrient reduction is required at the larger urban agglomerations discharging into sensitive waters.

Work undertaken for the purpose of the WFD Article 5 risk assessments concluded that 35% of transitional water bodies and 18% of coastal water bodies were 'at risk' or 'probably at risk' of failing to meet the WFD objective of good status due to physical alteration. Morphological pressures on the marine environment include coastal defence, built structures (urbanisation and ports and harbours) and dredging.

The proposed amendment to the legislative framework, to regulate physical modifications having an adverse impact on the water environment (Section 5.1), will, inter alia, provide a formal legal mechanism to address these pressures in the marine environment, including providing for the exemption provisions of Article 4(7) of the WFD where this is justified within the rules of the Directive. The proposed regulations will be subject to prior public consultation and will be in place at the latest by end 2012.

Additional measures will be developed to address other pressures in the context of integrated coastal zone management.



### 5.2.12 Invasive Alien Species

Regulations will be introduced in 2010 to restrict the trade in invasive alien species, including the banning of certain proscribed species. The proposed regulations are intended to ban the possession of listed species for 'the purpose of sale or dispersal or to transfer the species from one place to another within the country'. Where a problem already exists in relation to an invasive alien species, the regulations will provide for Ministerial powers to make a threat response plan and for the power to compel the relevant public authorities to address the threat. The regulations will be put out for public consultation shortly.

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency have funded a series of invasive species projects and are implementing the recommendations of the original report. Risk assessments have been undertaken of high risk invasive species and rapid mechanisms, increased stakeholder involvement and best practice guidelines are being developed.



### 5.2.13 Peat extraction

Peat excavation can impact on water quality through release of nutrients (particularly phosphorus) contributing to eutrophication and through peat silt entering river systems and impacting on aquatic life. Peat harvesting is one of the pressures contributing to the loss of high quality and protected areas.



All excavation of peat in areas above 50 hectares must be licensed under the IPPC regime and private peat producers falling into this category, that are not already licensed, will be brought into the IPPC system by the EPA.

Below this threshold, planning legislation applies and the *Local Government (Planning and Development) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001* reduced the planning threshold for peat extraction from 50 to 10 hectares. The 2001 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations reduced the threshold for mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment from 50 to 30 hectares and this provision will be enforced.

It is proposed to amend the *Planning and Development Act* to ensure effective enforcement against ongoing unauthorised peat extraction irrespective of when the extraction may have commenced. The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government has funded research into the use of remote sensing to identify and gather evidence in relation to unauthorised peat extraction.

It should be noted that, in respect of discharges from smaller private enterprises, local authorities have the option to licence activity under the *Water Pollution Acts* and this option should be exercised on a risk-assessment basis, in pursuit of WFD water quality objectives

## 5.3 Targeted research to support the plan

The development of the plan has identified a number of priority areas where research is needed to improve knowledge and to help identify appropriate measures to further protect and improve water quality. In relation to agriculture, a major research project has been outlined at 5.2.3 above.

As regards other sectors and issues identified, the following projects are either underway or will be commissioned in 2010:

- The 2009 Indicators Report from the Environmental Protection Agency noted the serious decline in the number of high quality sites over the past 20 years (see Section 2.2.1 above). A research project to identify the reasons behind this loss and to propose management strategies to address the matter will commence in 2010 with a timeline for delivery early in 2011.
- SIMBIOSYS, a major 4 year project aimed at assessing the impacts of aquaculture on marine biodiversity, commenced in April 2008 and is due for completion in 2012. The project includes the development of innovative approaches to reduce impacts.
- A scoping desk study aimed at assessing and managing exceedances of specific pollutants, priority & hazardous substances in surface waters and preventing and limiting inputs of hazardous and non-hazardous substances into groundwaters, will be included in a call for proposals in 2010.
- A study to assess disposal options for treated wastewater from single houses in low permeability soil/subsoil settings will be included in a call for proposals in 2010.

## 5.4 Other measures being considered

A range of other potential measures which are being considered but which require further development are outlined below. Agreed measures in relation to these issues can be introduced through update of Water Management Unit Action Plans during the implementation process:

- Protection of high quality waters: Additional measures may be required in order to protect and restore these sensitive areas and in particular to reduce the impacts of development, forestry and farming.
- Mines and Contaminated Sites: Additional measures may be required in order to address issues caused by mines and contaminated sites. Further research may be required in order to address knowledge gaps.
- Physical impact of channelisation on river status: Further monitoring is required in order to identify where ecological status has been impacted by arterial drainage. Remediation measures may be required.
- Sustainable flood management: Section 6.1.2 notes that implementation of the Floods Directive and the Water Framework Directive is to be coordinated. Sustainable flood management measures such as floodplain reclamation and restoration, have ancillary benefits for climate change adaptation, biodiversity and nutrient attenuation and have an important role to play in flood risk management planning.

## 5.5 Water Management Unit action plans

Information on status, objectives and measures in the Neagh Bann IRBD has been compiled for smaller, more manageable geographical areas than river basin districts, termed water management unit action plans. There are seven water management units (WMUs) in the Neagh Bann IRBD (Map 5.1). These units represent smaller river and lake basins where management of the pressures, investigations and measures will be focussed and refined during implementation of this plan. In addition, action plans focusing on groundwater and transitional and coastal waters have been prepared for the Neagh Bann IRBD. The full set of detailed water management unit action plans are available in **action plan background documents** that accompany this final plan (and are also available on line at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)).

WMU action plans are a key background document to the plan. They:

- map the local geographical area showing key point sources of pollutants;
- describe, map and tabulate water status;
- estimate phosphorus loadings from various sources<sup>3</sup>;
- summarise the risks in relation to key water management issues;
- identify the key measures to address these issues (drawn from the programme of measures);
- tabulate objectives, identifying protected area locations and cases where alternative objectives were chosen.

<sup>3</sup> Phosphorus loadings were estimated using methods from the OSPAR Guidelines for Harmonised Quantification and Reporting Procedures for Nutrients. It must be noted that these represent nutrient source estimates and do not imply water quality impact.

The WMU action plans are the basis for detailed implementation programmes, which will guide and monitor the progress of implementation between 2009 and 2015. The principal measures identified in WMU action plans to address the key issues in the Neagh Bann IRBD include:

- wastewater treatment plant discharge licensing and prioritised upgrade and operational improvement of some plants;
- licence review and enforcement regarding industrial activities and trade discharges;
- farm inspections and enforcement under the *Good Agricultural Practice Regulations*;
- monitoring, inspection and enforcement of standards relating to the operation of unsewered property wastewater treatment systems;
- compliance with codes of practice and Forest Service Protocol in the forestry sector;
- implementing Shellfish Waters Pollution Reduction Programmes (available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie)) for the following two sites: Carlingford Lough and Dundalk Bay
- appropriate regulation of future activities such as abstraction schemes or physical modification schemes;
- coordination of public authority actions and education and awareness activities where appropriate to engage stakeholders and implement actions in a collaborative and proactive manner;
- an environmental research programme and investigations to include: verification of impacts on some waters and the identification and piloting of a number of new management measures.

In drawing up the implementation plan, the WMU action plans will be revised so that for each waterbody where extended deadlines apply, the waterbody shall be identified by name and the reason or reasons for the time extension will be set out clearly.

Economic assessment may be required in certain instances when selecting between alternative measures and when determining whether any particular measure should be applied. Guidance on economic assessment and a baseline report on the economic analysis of water use in Ireland are available as *economic background documents* on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie). The Environmental Protection Agency has begun some additional work with regard to quantifying the benefits of the water environment. The costs of wastewater discharge and on-site systems measures in the Neagh Bann IRBD have been estimated. Economic analysis has not been used to justify deferral of measures or extension of objectives in the district.



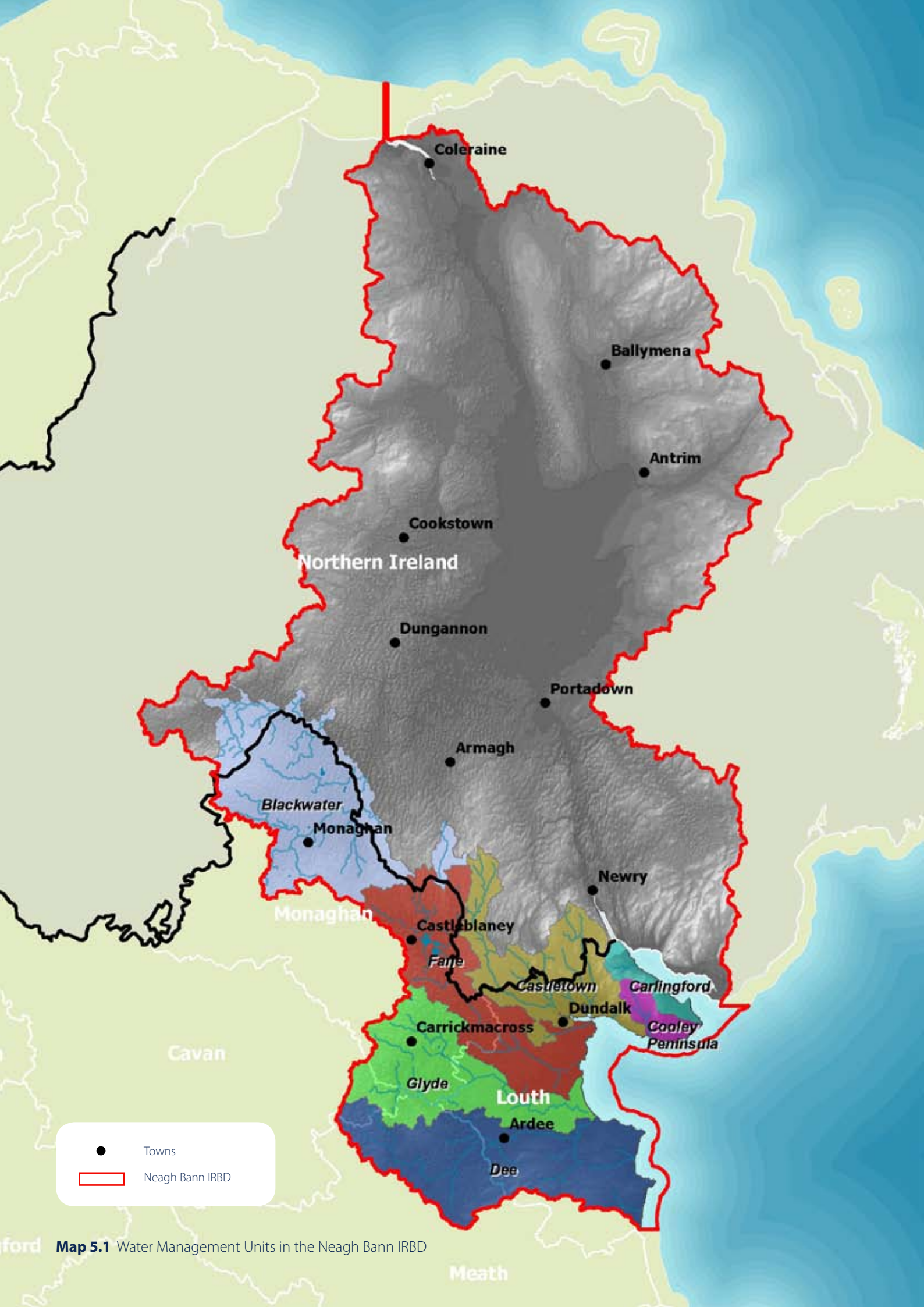


## 5.6 Summary programme of measures for the Neagh Bann IRBD

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the key measures to be implemented in the Water Management Units in the Neagh Bann IRBD.

**Table 5.1 Summary programme of measures for the Neagh Bann IRBD**

Water Management Units							
	Blackwater	Carlingford	Castletown	Cooley Peninsula	Dee	Fane	Glyde
<b>Control of urban waste water discharges</b>							
Treatment plants requiring capital works	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Treatment plants requiring further investigation	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
Treatment plants requiring attention to meet Shellfish water PRPs	0	3	0	0	1	2	0
Treatment plants requiring improvements in operational performance	6	0	0	0	3	3	2
Urban agglomerations requiring investigation of CSOs	1	0	0	0	2	1	1
Agglomerations that require management of development	2	1	0	0	3	1	1
Properties that will be subject to performance, operational and maintenance standards for on-site waste water treatment systems	Total: 5682 At risk: 199	Total: 1004 At risk: 0	Total: 3457 At risk: 0	Total: 860 At risk: 0	Total: 6828 At risk: 640	Total: 4927 At risk: 1610	Total: 5322 At risk: 223
Sub-basin plans for Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection of Freshwater pearl mussel populations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pollution Reduction Programmes for designated shellfish waters	0	1	1	0	1	1	1
IPPC licences with discharges to waters that require review	5	0	1	1	2	3	1
Licences for discharges to waters under the Water Pollution Acts that require review	12	1	0	1	4	6	8
Planned agricultural inspections under the Good agricultural practice Regulations	It is not possible at this stage to provide a breakdown of inspections to be carried out in each of the WMUs for the Neagh Bann IRBD. It has been agreed that farms will be inspected by inspectors from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for the purposes of checking compliance with the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulation 2009 (SI 101 of 2009). In addition, local authorities will continue to retain responsibility for undertaking pollution investigations based on local priorities in accordance with their duties under a range of environmental legislation and in line their respective environmental inspection plans prepared in accordance with the European Union's Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).						



**Map 5.1** Water Management Units in the Neagh Bann IRBD

## 6 Integrating plans and programmes

### 6.1 Introduction

In order to effectively protect our water it is important that the River Basin Management Plans are integrated with other plans such as:

- land use and spatial plans;
- conservation plans: habitat and species protection plans (including freshwater pearl mussel sub-basin plans);
- water services strategic plans;
- pollution reduction plans and programmes (including surface water pollution reduction plans, groundwater controls, groundwater protection schemes, the National Action Programme, discharge authorisation programmes under the Water Pollution Acts and Environmental Protection Agency Act, shellfish water and bathing water plans);
- waste management plans;
- sludge management plans;
- major accident emergency plans;
- forest management plans;
- flood risk management plans.

#### 6.1.1 Land use planning

Any potential impacts from future development on waters can be mitigated by properly incorporating the objectives established in this plan into development plans to ensure sustainable development. At strategic level Ireland's National Spatial Strategy and elements of the National Development Plan are the key mechanisms to ensure a balance between social, economic and development needs. At regional and local levels, the potential risks to water objectives from future developments will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment when preparing statutory planning guidelines and development plans, such as:

- regional planning guidelines;
- county and city development plans and local area plans;
- planning schemes for strategic development zones.

In addition, planning authorities must consider potential risks to waters during the detailed development proposal stages using the Environmental Impact Assessment procedure.

Regional planning guidelines require that development plans incorporate water objectives established in river basin management plans. The *Planning and Development Bill 2010* aims to strengthen the legal basis of planning guidelines by requiring development plans to set out a core strategy that demonstrates that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Spatial Strategy and regional planning guidelines. A planning authority is required to ensure, when making a development plan, that the plan is consistent with any regional planning guidelines in force for its area.

River Basin Management Plans will be revised in 2015 and 2021. All regional planning guidelines are currently under review and will be reviewed every six years thereafter. All development plans and local plans are required to take account of these regional guidelines and must be reviewed every six years. Guidance on integrating development planning and river basin planning will be issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government in due course.

#### 6.1.2 Flood risk management plans

The Report of Ireland's Flood Policy Review Group 2004 set out a new policy on the management of flood risks which is consistent with the new Floods Directive (2007/60/EC). This includes the preparation of catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plans that will set out the long-term strategy and a prioritised set of measures for managing flood risks, both structural and non-structural. Regulations transposing the Floods Directive have been made (SI 122 of 2010). Implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive is to be coordinated. The principal requirements of the Floods Directive are:



- undertaking a preliminary flood risk assessment (by 2011);
- preparing flood hazard and risk maps (by 2013);
- preparing flood risk management plans (by 2015);
- coordination with the Water Framework Directive;
- cooperation between member states in relation to transboundary river basins;
- public participation, consultation and dissemination of information and results.



### 6.1.3 Planning for climate change

River basin management provides an effective mechanism to prepare for and adapt to climate change by incorporating adaptation into the programme of measures. However, due to the high level of uncertainty in present climate predictions, a flexible approach is required. This river basin plan is adaptable to climate change in that the actions are

'no regrets'; that is, they are worthwhile whatever the extent of future climate change. The Water Framework Directive monitoring programme will collect information that improves understanding of climate change. In accordance with EU guidance, information is provided in this section of the plan on climate trends and impacts, paving the way for further action in later river basin management cycles. *Climate change background documents*, referred to in this section, are available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

Projected climate impacts have been summarised in a number of recent publications including "A Summary of the State of Knowledge on Climate Change Impacts for Ireland" (EPA), and "Climate Change: Meeting the Challenge of Adaptation" (Irish Academy of Engineering). These provide expert reviews of impacts and recommendations that are relevant to the management of the river basin district. They predict a wide range of significant changes, notably temperature rise, increased precipitation, sea level rise, increased storm surge, wetter winters and drier summers; other changes are expected in ground and surface water runoff and surface fresh water temperatures. This will lead to enhanced evapotranspiration from soils and evaporation from waters.

Many of these changes will impact on aquatic ecosystems and on water management. For example, they could potentially change the movement of diffuse pollutants, and the seasonal response to temperature, for example, more extreme rainfall events will accelerate the movement of diffuse pollutant plumes through soils and aquifers into water bodies, with less time for natural biological treatment within the soil, or seasonal timing of agricultural spreading may need to be modified as rainfall and temperatures change. A northward shift in the spatial distribution of species has been observed across Europe. Continued increases in occurrence of invasive species may affect indigenous vulnerable species in the river basin district, thereby altering natural biodiversity and requiring special protection measures.

Flood and drought management both of which will assume greater importance under climate change scenarios, will need to take a sustainable, catchment-based approach. Measures to reconnect wetlands and riparian ecosystems to the river channels may have an important role to play, e.g. in terms of water storage, nutrient attenuation and can also contribute towards providing habitat for native species.

Studies such as those referred to above have highlighted the likely impacts of climate change.

As part of the process of developing a national response to the impacts of climate change the EPA will shortly be commencing a project which will bring together all the available information on vulnerabilities on a sector by sector basis. It is anticipated that this material will be available by the end of 2010; this will assist in assessing the risk of climate change and in prioritising adaptive actions.

On foot of a commitment contained in the National Climate Change Strategy, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government is currently in the process of developing a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework. This work is proceeding in parallel with development of the Climate Change Bill which will contain specific provisions in relation to adaptation at national, sectoral and local levels.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide a statutory basis for key national policies and measures on climate change, including national emission reduction targets for 2020 and 2050 and a Climate Change Committee to advise Government. The Bill will provide the statutory framework within which national policy on transition to a low-carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable society can be pursued as a national priority.

The Heads of Bill and the Adaptation Framework will be published as soon as possible.

With due regard to the uncertainties of climate prediction modelling, actions in this plan have been “climate checked”, that is their resilience to predicted trends has been considered. The report ‘Adapting the Plan to Climate Change’, available at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie) concludes that climate issues may be relatively significant for measures and actions related to:

- biodiversity and protected areas;
- abstractions;
- river and marine morphology.

Measures contained within this plan, and the monitoring programme, will need to take account of changes to temperature, to ground and surface water flows, and to sediment movement, and to allow for their link with changes to habitats and species, particularly habitat fragmentation and alien species.

In order to ensure sustainable water use, abstraction controls will need to take account of future changes in rainfall patterns and consequent impacts on availability of water resources. Water conservation programmes and increased storage capacity will improve climate resilience. Buffer zones around water bodies are a win-win measure, ensuring that habitats are better able to cope and migrate with changing climatic conditions, while improving soil and subsoil water retention.

The climate check also highlighted more general climate considerations. For example, design standards for critical infrastructure (such as combined sewer overflows) may need to be adapted to cope with more frequent storm flow surges.

In summary, the programme of measures will need to be resilient to climate change impacts. This is especially important for expensive and long-term investments such as large infrastructure projects. Planning for protected areas, droughts, water scarcity and flood prevention will also become increasingly crucial. During the period of this plan, preparations will be made for more detailed climate-proofing of actions in the next plan.

#### **6.1.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment for Natura 2000 Sites**

To ensure that the plan does not have adverse consequences for the wider environment (beyond its focus on waters), an Environmental Report was prepared as part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the river basin management plan and programme of measures for the Neagh Bann IRBD in accordance with national and EU legislation. Similarly an Appropriate Assessment (AA) for Natura 2000 Sites was carried out to ascertain any impacts to Protected Areas and a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) was prepared. Statutory consultation about these assessments was undertaken with the relevant bodies in both Ireland and Northern Ireland (Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources). Views on the Environmental Report, the Habitats Directive Assessment Report and the draft plan were also sought during a consultation period from December 2008 to June 2009. The comments made in the submissions received on the three documents were used to refine and amend the contents of the final plan; their influence is discussed in detail in the SEA Statement. All SEA and AA reports, including the SEA Statement are available with the *environmental assessment background documents* at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

The SEA considered three alternative scenarios:

- Business as Usual: implementation of the Basic Measures;
- Business as Usual Plus: as above but with added Other Basic Measures;
- Individual Additional or Supplementary Measures.



The alternatives were tested against defined SEA Environmental Objectives, and cover each of a series of SEA environmental topic issues from the legislation. The objectives took account of the current state of the environment, feedback received and relevant national and EU plans, programmes and legislation.

Topic issue	Objective
Biodiversity, flora & fauna	Prevent damage to terrestrial, aquatic and soil biodiversity, particularly EU designated sites and protected species.
Population	Contribute to sustainable development.
Human health	Protect and reduce risk to human health in undertaking water management activities.
Soil	Avoid damage to the function and quality of the soil resource in the district.
Water	Prevent deterioration of the status of waters with regard to quality, quantity and improve status for rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters and groundwaters to at least good status, as appropriate to the Water Framework Directive.
Air quality	Minimise emissions to air as a result of plan activities.
Climatic factors	Minimise contribution to climate change by emission of greenhouse gasses associated with plan implementation.
Material assets 1	Maintain level of protection provided by existing morphological infrastructure, e.g. flood defences, coastal barriers, groynes.
Material assets 2	Provide new and upgrade existing water management infrastructure to protect human health and ecological status of water bodies.
Material assets 3	Support economic activities within the district without conflicting with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive.
Material assets 4	Protect water as an economic resource.
Cultural heritage	Avoid damage to cultural heritage resources in the district.
Landscape	Avoid damage to designated landscapes in the district.





The SEA Statement documents how the recommendations of both the Environmental Report and Natura Impact Statement, as well as the views of the statutory consultees and other submissions received during consultation, have influenced the preparation of the final Neagh Bann IRBD plan and programme of measures. It also provides information on the arrangements put in place to monitor and mitigate any significant environmental effects of implementing the plan.

The SEA has allowed integration of sustainability objectives in the decision-making process. The SEA has included valuable mitigation which recognises the multiple stakeholders in the district and has a focussed agenda to help achieve a balance between land uses that are not always compatible.

An extensive list of mitigation measures was included as part of the Neagh Bann IRBD plan. There is a **summary of SEA mitigation measures** on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie). A total of 84 mitigation measures have been recommended, including a number of measures identified during the Appropriate Assessment for Natura 2000 Sites. These are broadly categorised as:

- requirement for Environmental Assessment at the project level where measures were anticipated to impact on EU Designated sites and on built heritage in particular;
- recommendations for changes to land-use planning;
- recommendation for education and awareness campaigns to inform stakeholders of how they are impacting on our waters and what they can do to mitigate their impacts;
- guidance to assist sector specific changes;
- requirement to take account of cumulative impacts in nutrient planning and loading;
- measures to contribute to climate change abatement including use of renewable energy;
- recognition that pollution pathways other than water should be considered; and
- further studies to inform information gaps and assist in monitoring.

Linked with the SEA Environmental Objectives are targets and indicators, which will be used to monitor the impact of the plan on the wider environment. The **targets and indicators document** is on [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).



## 7 Implementation of the plan

The River Basin District is the basic unit of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting under the Water Framework Directive. The work to date on implementing the Directive has been organised and delivered on this basis, with the coordinating local authorities interacting with other local authorities, EPA and other public authorities and stakeholders. This interaction has posed a challenge and while progress has been made, full coordination has not been achieved. The process of developing the plans has been complex and a significant amount of work has been carried out in monitoring, assessment, classification and setting objectives for water bodies.

Delivery of the River Basin Plans will be challenging with responsibility for implementation of the plans currently assigned across a range of organizations with no single body having ultimate responsibility. The current administrative systems are fragmented along administrative lines and do not facilitate analysis, identification and implementation of the most cost-effective solutions to manage water quality at river basin level. An RBD can cover the areas of responsibility of a large number of bodies e.g. 18 local authorities in the case of the Shannon RBD. Furthermore, the implementation of many of the measures necessary to achieve the objectives of the plans is the responsibility of national rather than local authorities. Furthermore, it is recognized that improved enforcement of existing legislation is key to successful implementation of the river basin management plans.

As we move to the implementation stage, there is a need to strengthen and adjust the existing administrative structures to ensure effective delivery of the plans including enforcement of relevant legislation, across local, regional and national levels. Recommendations in relation to revised structures for water management have been put forward over the past two years by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Forfas and in the report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure.

In tandem with the finalisation of the River Basin Management Plans, proposals to introduce water charging are being advanced and a major report on the efficiency of local government is being finalised. It is likely that recommendations for structural change will emerge from both processes.

### 7.1 Review of arrangements

In the short-term, funding will continue to be provided to support the RBD Offices so that these can coordinate the efforts of the various authorities to oversee, manage, enforce and report on the implementation of the plans. The National Advisory Committee will continue to exercise an oversight role. In addition, the annual review provided for under the Water Services Investment Programme will continue to be guided by the information coming through from the river basin management planning process.

There are clear advantages in strengthening the delivery approach at RBD level for both infrastructure delivery and implementation of the river basin management plans. It is considered that this approach has potential to improve efficiencies and co-operation, build and retain appropriate expertise in identified areas and strengthen the capacity to plan and deliver strategically important projects, and give a broader strategic context for locally delivered programmes. It would also facilitate the collation of key data at a regional level, and support more coordinated and synchronised planning and decision making.

Against this background, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government will review by the end of 2010 the governance and structures for implementation of the river basin management plans. This review will include, inter alia, consideration of the following priority areas: data management; sampling and monitoring; legislative requirements; inspection and enforcement; reporting; public participation. Since one of the key challenges will be the implementation and enforcement of WFD requirements over a wide range of public bodies, it is important that structures resulting from the review must have a clear RBD remit and be provided with the resources and statutory power to oversee and enforce implementation over all relevant public bodies.

### 7.2 Implementation process

The implementation of the river basin management plan at waterbody / WMU level will be an extremely complex exercise involving the reviewing and coordination of all water management practices and land-use practices that impact on water, to ensure they are in line with the plan, the relevant regulations (e.g. for surface waters and groundwater) and the Directive. To ensure consistent implementation across all RBDs and WMUs, the following principles must be adhered to when implementation plans are being developed and delivered:

- All relevant information held by all public bodies shall be made fully available.
- All information gaps shall be clearly identified with a timeline for completing necessary work to fill gaps in time for the review of the Article 5 characterisation analysis.

- An appropriate standardised management system shall be developed by 2012 to assess all of the activities that impact water status in the catchment.
- There shall be a whole-system management approach to implementation that takes account of cumulative impacts, to prevent deterioration in the status of any waterbody unless an Article 4-compliant exemption has been set out.
- In the selection of supplementary measures and where appropriate and required by the Directive, a better environmental alternative check must be carried out before an Article 4- compliant exemption is applied.
- Water Framework Directive and Natura 2000 objectives and requirements shall be addressed in an integrated manner with implementation measures ensuring compliance with any standards and objectives for Natura 2000 sites by 2015.
- Where the management system indicates that implementation of basic measures will not avoid deterioration of status or will not restore waterbodies to good status by 2015, a transparent cost effectiveness analysis, incorporating environmental and resources costs and benefits shall be conducted to select the most appropriate supplementary measures to achieve this, unless an Article 4 exemption is set out.
- Public participation must be integrated into the Plan.

Critical to managing the implementation process will be effective data management and interpretation, the streamlining of the regulatory systems that control activities that may impact on waters and ensuring that the regulation of activities is consistent across public authorities.

These issues will be considered during the review of water governance and structures mentioned above. However, there are several initiatives already underway which will facilitate improvements in implementation.

The Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities with support from the Local Government Computer Services Board are developing the Environmental Data Exchange Network (EDEN). The aim of EDEN is to eliminate the difficulties encountered in the sharing and reporting of environmental data sourced from a wide range of environmental datasets, applications, and IT systems in place within the many organisations involved in work related to the Water Framework Directive. In time it is intended that EDEN will be a fully distributed data-sharing network allowing all stakeholders to easily share environmental data. The Environmental Protection Agency and local authorities are also currently investigating web-based catchment management systems that will best facilitate the management, visualisation and interpretation of environmental datasets at catchment level.

For the purpose of promoting consistency in environmental regulation and enforcement, local authorities, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government are also jointly involved in the preparation of guidance and training for local authority personnel through the Environmental Services Training Group (ESTG). Guidance and training currently being developed includes; (a) the authorisation of discharges to water and sewer under the Water Pollution Acts and (b) protocols for agricultural inspections and enforcement. Other guidance and training will be prepared as appropriate.

## **7.3 Public participation**

Public participation is a central principle of the Water Framework Directive and a programme for encouraging active involvement and participation of the public in the implementation of the plan will be developed by 2011 and delivered as an integral part of the implementation process for the RBD. One of the mechanisms for ensuring participation from stakeholders has been through the operation of statutory Advisory Councils comprising of representatives of the local authorities (elected members), representative bodies, Non-Governmental Organisations and the social partners.

As part of the review referred to above, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, following consultation with relevant stakeholders, will bring forward any necessary proposals for reform of existing structures in order to maximise the effective active involvement of stakeholder bodies in implementation of the plans.

In tandem with this and to support public participation, public awareness initiatives will also be implemented, commencing with a programme of information and awareness-raising to be delivered through The Library Council. The disposal of dangerous household and gardening chemicals will be one of the issues addressed in the awareness campaign. This will include the development of 'ENFOpoints' building on the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government's plans to enhance the role of libraries in the provision of environmental information services. Access to information relevant to the implementation process will also be made publicly available in readily accessible formats to facilitate fully informed participation of the public.



# Appendix 1 Background documents

Background documents published both nationally and by the Neagh Bann IRBD to facilitate understanding of the Water Framework Directive, can be found at [www.wfdireland.ie](http://www.wfdireland.ie).

## Contacts

Neagh Bann International River Basin District competent authorities

Neagh Bann International River Basin District Advisory Council Membership

Neagh Bann International River Basin District Public Authorities Forum Membership

## Characterisation Report

Submission in accordance with Article 5 of Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy, and in accordance with EC-DG Environment D.2 document "Reporting Sheets for 2005 Reporting" dated 19 November 2004.

The Characterisation and Analysis of Ireland's River Basin Districts National Summary Report

Neagh Bann International River Basin District National Summary Report for the Republic of Ireland Portion of the River Basin District

Neagh Bann International River Basin District Article 5 Characterisation Technical Summary Report

Compendium of public submissions and responses

Characterisation Report background documents

- Approach to Delineation of Groundwater Bodies
- Technical Requirements for Groundwater and Related Aspects
- The Calcareous/ Non-Calcareous ("Siliceous") Classification of Bedrock Aquifers in the Republic of Ireland
- Reference Conditions for Irish Rivers – Description of River Types and Communities
- Summary Note of Irish Lake Typology to be applied in Ireland's River Basin Districts
- Heavily Modified & Artificial Water Bodies Preliminary Identification Methodology Guidance on Thresholds and Methodology to be Applied in Ireland's River Basin Districts
- Economic Analysis of Water Use in Ireland Final Report
- Guidance on the Assessment of the Impact of Groundwater Abstractions
- Methodology for Risk Characterisation of Ireland's Groundwater
- Advice on the Implementation of Guidance on Monitoring Groundwater
- Point Source Pressure Risk Assessment for Groundwaters
- Guidance on the Assessment of Pressures and Impacts on Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Verifying the Predictive Risk Assessment Methodology for Mobile Diffuse Inorganic Pollutants
- Guidance on the Application of Groundwater Risk Assessment to Areas Designated for the Protection of Habitats and Species

- Guidance on Pressures and Impacts Methodology
- Guidance for Practitioners on the Methodology to be Applied In Ireland's River Basin Districts - Alien Species Risk Assessment Methodology
- Linking catchment characteristics and water chemistry to the ecological status of Irish rivers
- Guidance on Thresholds and Methodology to be Applied in Ireland's River Basin Districts:
  - Bathing Waters Impact Data Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Fishing & Aquaculture Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Surface Water Hydrology Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Surface Water Lakes Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Fresh Water Pearl Mussel (Margaritifera) Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Marine Direct Impact Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Surface Water Morphological Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Surface Water Point Source Discharges Risk Assessment Methodology
  - Rivers Diffuse Pollution Risk Assessment Methodology

## Monitoring Programme

Water Framework Directive Monitoring Programme. Prepared to meet the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and National Regulations implementing the Water Framework Directive (SI 722 of 2003) and National Regulations implementing the Nitrates Directive (SI 788 of 2005)

## Significant Water Management Issues Report

Water Matters "Have your say" Neagh Bann International River Basin District Summary Leaflet

Water Matters "Have your say" Neagh Bann International River Basin District Booklet

Digest of submissions and responses to Significant Water Management Issues Reports, Neagh Bann International River Basin District

Significant Water Management Issues background documents

- Dangerous Substances Usage 'Bottom-up study' – Background Report
- Freshwater Morphology POMS Study - Progress Update in support of SWMI Report
- Abstraction Pressure Assessment - Background document to the Water matters Report
- Groundwater risk from Urban Pressures - Background document to the Water matters Report
- Urban Pressures – Background document to the Water matters Report
- Groundwater risk from Diffuse Mobile Organics (Pesticides) - Background document to the Water matters Report
- Forest and Water - Support Document to Water Matters Report
- Onsite Waste Water Treatment Systems – Background document to the Water matters Reports
- Municipal & Industrial Regulation (discharges) - Progress Update in support of the SWMI Report

- Marine Morphology Progress Update in support of the SWMI Report
- Heavily Modified Water Bodies & Artificial Water Bodies - Progress Update in support of the SWMI Report.

## **Draft River Basin Management Plan**

Working Together *Managing Our Shared Waters* The Neagh Bann International River Basin District

Water Matters *"Help Us Plan!"* Summary Leaflet

Water Matters *"Help Us Plan!"* Draft River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District (Ireland portion)

## **Register of Protected Areas and High Status Sites**

Register of Protected Areas document and lists

Water Framework Directive Annex IV Protected Areas: Water Dependant Habitats and Species and High Status Sites

## **Programmes of Measures – technical studies**

National Summary Programme of Measures Report

Water Framework Directive Risk Assessment Update

## **Municipal and Industrial Regulation**

Recommendations For Programmes of Measures for Point Source Discharges to Surface Waters Resulting from Municipal and Industrial Regulated Activities

Programme Of Measures Discharges From Urban Waste Water Treatment Plants Background Document

## **Forest and Water**

Forests and Surface Water Eutrophication and Sedimentation For Water Final Draft Report

Forests and Surface water Eutrophication - Sedimentation Literature Review

Programme of Measures and Standards For Forest and Water

Forestry and Surface Water Acidification (For Water)

Forests and Surface water Acidification Literature Review

Priority action, relevant pollutant and general component candidate substances for surface waters in Ireland

## **On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems**

Unsewered Wastewater Treatment Systems National Study Final Report

National Identification and Mapping of Sewered and Unsewered Areas

An assessment into the potential impact of on-site wastewater treatment systems on surface water quality. Summary Report

## **Dangerous Substances**

Dangerous Substances Usage Programme of Measures Study Literature Review and Final Report

Summary Document - Dangerous Substances Screening Summary Report and appendices

Veterinary treatments and other substances used in finfish aquaculture in Ireland.



<b>Freshwater Morphology</b>
A Freshwater Morphology Programme of Measures and Standards Study Aerial Survey, Feature extraction, typology generation and development of a GIS tool to assist in Irish river and lake morphological assessment
Freshwater Morphological Assessment in Rivers Risk Assessment Refinement, Classification and Management Outcome Report
Assessment of the Risk of Barriers to Fish Migration in the Nore Catchment
Review of Best Practice Measures
Channelisation Recovery Assessment
Cost Effectiveness and Feasibility of River Enhancement Schemes
Comparative Studies of Morphological Fieldwork Techniques Outcome Report
Analysis of Irish Recovery Datasets
Legislation Review
Literature Review
Recommendations for Programmes of Measures
Final Report
<b>Marine Morphology</b>
Marine Morphology National Methodology Report
<b>Abstractions</b>
Assessment Methodology for Surface Water Abstractions from Lakes
Groundwater Abstractions Pressure Assessment
A review of the environmental flow methods focusing on their use with various biotic groups to assess the effects of abstraction pressures in Ireland
The Assessment of Abstraction Pressures in Rivers in Ireland
Revised River Risk Assessment for Abstractions Pressures
<b>Urban Pressures</b>
The Assessment of Urban Pressures in River and Transitional Water Bodies in Ireland
Urban Groundwater Pressures Assessment
<b>Surface Water Groundwater Interactions</b>
Further Characterisation Study. An integrated approach to quantifying groundwater and surface water contributions to streamflow
<b>Diffuse Mobile Organics</b>
Risk to Groundwater from Diffuse Mobile Organics

## Status

Report on the Interim Classification of Ecological Potential and Identification of Measures for Ireland's Artificial Water Bodies (AWBs)

Report on the Interim Classification of Ecological Potential

And identification of measures for Ireland's Heavily Modified Water Bodies (HMWBs)

Interim Classification of Irish Coastal and Transitional Waters for the purposes of the EU Water Framework Directive. November 2008.

Interim Lake Status Report

Interim Classification of Rivers for the purposes of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Interim Classification of Groundwater for the purposes of the EU Water Framework Directive

## Economic

Review of Water Resource Benefit Values

Economic Analysis of Water Use in Ireland Final Report

## WMU Action Plans

- Blackwater Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Carlingford Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Castletown Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Cooley Peninsula Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Dee Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Fane Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Glyde Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Neagh Bann IRBD Groundwater Water Management Unit Action Plan
- Neagh Bann IRBD Transitional and Coastal Water Management Unit Action Plan

## OSPAR Guidance

OSPAR Guidelines for Harmonised Quantification and Reporting Procedures for Nutrients (HARP-NUT)

## Climate Change

A Summary of the State of Knowledge on Climate Change Impacts for Ireland. Climate Change Research Programme (CCRP) 2007-2013 Report Series No. 1

2009 SNIFFER Workshop Report, June 2009

Ireland at Risk, Critical Infrastructure, Adaptation for Climate Change", The Irish Academy for Engineers, 2009 (Carroll, E., Sparks T., Donnelly, A. and Cooney, T. 2009

Biology and Environment Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy 109B, 115–126)

Adapting the Plans to Climate Change Final Report

## **Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Scoping Document

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures - Neagh Bann International River Basin District

Environmental Report

Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures - Neagh Bann International River Basin District

## **Habitats Directive Assessment**

Habitats Directive Article 6 Assessment

Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures - Neagh Bann International River Basin District

## **Artificial and heavily modified water bodies**

Programmes of Measures and Standards Overall Summary Report - Heavily Modified Water Bodies and Artificial Water Bodies

## **Objectives**

Objectives Setting Background Document

Lag Time: A Methodology For The Estimation Of Vertical, Horizontal Travel & Flushing Timescales To Nitrate Threshold Concentrations In Irish Aquifers Fenton et al in press

A review of nitrate lag times in Europe and their implications for the Water Framework Directive Fenton et al in press

Modelling soil phosphorus decline: Expectations of the Water Framework Directive policies Schulte et al in press

## **Links to Plans and Programmes**

Register of Plans and Programmes

## **Guidance**

River Basin Management Planning – A Practical Guide for Public Authorities

## **Public participation**

Consultation Paper on Public Participation in River Basin Management

Public Consultation Events flyers and newspaper notices

Timetable and Work Programme for making a River Basin Management Plan for the Neagh Bann International River Basin District

Managing Our Shared Waters - A Joint North/South Consultation Paper on International River Basin Districts and Administrative Arrangements for Implementation of the EC Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)

Neagh Bann International River Basin Districts Draft River Basin Management Plan Submissions Digest Report



## **Compliance statement**

Neagh Bann IRBD Compliance Report

## **More Detailed Plans and Programmes**

### **Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes**

- Dundalk Bay Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programme
- Dundalk Bay Shellfish Characterisation Report
- Carlingford Lough Pollution Reduction Programme
- Carlingford Lough Characterisation Report

National Toolkit of Measures

Strategic Environmental Assessment documents

Habitats Directive Assessment documents

## **Miscellaneous**

DIRECTIVE 2000/60/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

European Community (Water Policy) Regulations, 2003 (SI 722 of 2003)

European Communities (Water Policy) (Amendment) Regulations 2005, (SI 413 of 2005)

## Appendix 2 Contact Details for Local Authorities

Local Authority	Title	Telephone	General Email
Monaghan County Council	Director of Services	047 30522	info@monaghancoco.ie
	Senior Engineer	047 30553	
	Neagh Bann IRBD Coordinator	047 30518	ehickey@monaghancoco.ie
Cavan County Council	Director of Services Senior Engineer	049 4378300 049 4378486	info@cavancoco.ie
Louth County Council	Director of Services Senior Engineer	042 9353130 042 9353130	info@louthcoco.ie
Meath County Council	Director of Services Senior Engineer	046 9097000 046 9097200	info@meathcoco.ie

## Appendix 3 Protected Areas in the Neagh Bann IRBD

### Drinking Waters - Rivers

Rivers	Protected Area Code	Length (km)
Glyde River	PA1_06_1097	6.2
Dee River	PA1_06_1099	1.5
NB_06_908 (Carlingford)	PA1_06_908	0.7

### Drinking Waters - lakes

Lakes	Protected Area Code	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Ervey Lough	PA1_06_54	0.12
Spring Lough	-	-
Monalty Lough	PA1_06_234	0.15
Muckno Mill Lough	PA1_06_244	0.14
Greagh Lough	-	-
Corcaghan Lough	PA1_03_71	0.05
Emy Lough	PA1_03_102	0.52

### Drinking Waters – Groundwaters

NAME	Protected Area Code	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Aughnacloy	PA1_NB_G_007	88.59
Keady	PA1_NB_G_011	6.56
Monaghan Town	PA1_NB_G_012	5.79
Knockatallon	PA1_NB_G_014	9.47
Louth	PA1_NB_G_019	31.67
Tydavnet	PA1_NB_G_013	10.09
Dundalk	PA1_NB_G_015	9.97
Carrickmacross	PA1_NB_G_016	8.89
Kingscourt	PA1_NB_G_017	8.73
Ardee	PA1_NB_G_018	8.69
Williamstown Gravels	PA1_NB_G_021	7.87
Dromiskin Gravels	PA1_NB_G_022	7.37
Clogher Head Gravels	PA1_NB_G_023	7.00
Dundalk Gravels	PA1_NB_G_024	6.93
Emyvale	PA1_NB_G_025	6.17
Clarderry	PA1_NB_G_026	5.12
Whiteriver	PA1_NB_G_027	4.90
Newtown	PA1_NB_G_028	4.43
Kingscourt Gypsum	PA1_NB_G_029	3.65
Dundalk Town 1	PA1_NB_G_030	2.77
Dundalk Town 2	PA1_NB_G_031	3.26
Blackrock 1	PA1_NB_G_032	2.73
Blackrock 2	PA1_NB_G_033	2.34
Monaghan Tn 1	PA1_NB_G_034	2.09
Monaghan Tn 2	PA1_NB_G_035	1.22
Castleblayney 1	PA1_NB_G_036	1.08



NAME	Protected Area Code	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Carrickmacross 1	PA1_NB_G_037	0.69
Ardee Town 1	PA1_NB_G_038	0.67

### Shellfish Waters

NAME	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Carlingford Lough	12.24
Dundalk Bay	249.20

### Bathing Waters/Recreational Waters

NAME	Protected Area Code	Length (km)
Shelling Hill/Templetown	PA3_0090	1.10
Port, Lurganboy	PA3_0091	1.28
Clogherhead	PA3_0089	1.63
Seapoint	PA3_0088	1.77

### Special Areas of Conservation

NAME	Protected Area Code	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Carlingford Mountain SAC	000453	31.01
Carlingford Shore SAC	002306	5.23
Dundalk Bay SAC	000455	52.36
Clogher Head SAC	001459	0.24
Boyne Coast and Estuary SAC	001957	3.67

### Special Protection Areas

NAME	Protected Area Code	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
Carlingford Lough SPA	004078	1.72
Dundalk Bay SPA	004026	109.30
Stabannan – Braganstown SPA	004091	4.91
Slieve Beagh SPA	004167	34.57

## Appendix 4: National legislation transposing eleven key EU Directives relevant to water protection

The 11 key EU Directives	National legislation
Bathing Waters Directive (2006/7/EC)	Bathing Water Quality Regulations SI 79 of 2008
Birds Directive (79/409/EEC)	European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94 of 1997 as amended in 1998 and 2005
Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)	European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, SI 94 of 1997 as amended by in 1998 and 2005 Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations, SI 296 of 2009
Drinking Waters Directive (98/83/EC)	European Communities (Drinking Water) (No.2) Regulations, SI 278 of 2007 Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007)
Major Accidents and Emergencies Directive (96/82/EC)	European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations, SI 74 of 2006 Planning and Development Act, No 30 of 2000 as amended 2002
Environmental Impact Assessment (85/337/EEC) as amended by Directive 2003/35/EC	Planning and Development Act, No 30 of 2000 as amended 2002 Planning and Development Regulations, SI 600 of 2001 as amended 2006 to 2007 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations, SI 349 of 1989 as amended 1994 to 2006
Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC)	Waste Management (Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture) Regulations, SI 148 of 1998 as amended 2001 Waste Management Act (No 10 of 1996) as amended 2001
Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC)	Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations, SI 254 of 2001 as amended in 2004 and 2010. Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007)
Plant Protection Products Directive EU Regulation: (EC) No 1107/2009	Authorisation, Placing on the Market, Use & Control of Plant Protection Products Regulations, SI 83 of 2003 as amended from 2003 to 2009
Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC)	European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations, SI 101 of 2009
Integrated Pollution Prevention Control Directive (2008/1/EC)	Environmental Protection Agency Acts, No 7 of 1992 and No 27 of 2003 and Environmental Protection Agency (Licensing) Regulations, SI 85 of 1994 as amended in 1995, 1996, 2004 and 2008:

## Appendix 5: Neagh Bann IRBD Action Programme

What	Who leads	When & where
<b>CO-ORDINATING ACTIONS</b>		
<b>Water Policy Regulations (SI 722 of 2003) as amended in 2005:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> provide statutory basis for the provisions of the Water Framework Directive		
<b>Relevant Actions:</b> Each public authority must exercise its functions in a manner which is consistent with, and contributes to, achieving the objectives of the plan.	Public authorities in Regulations	2009–2015 National
Coordinate activities for the purposes of Articles 4, 5, 7, 10, 11 and 13 of the Directive and report to the European Commission. Maintain a register of protected areas	EPA	2009–2015 National
Coordinate plan implementation at district level	Local authorities	2009–2015 Whole RBD
Support ongoing public participation and RBD Advisory Councils	Local & public authorities	2009–2015 Whole RBD
Coordinate with Northern Ireland authorities and participation groups on shared waters	DEHLG, EPA, local authorities	2009–2015 Shared waters
Conduct public awareness and targeted education campaigns, including disseminating information using tools such as Water Maps	DEHLG, local authorities	2009–2015 National
<b>Surface Water Objectives Regulations (SI 272 of 2009) and Groundwater Objectives Regulations (SI 9 of 2010):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to give effect to the measures needed to achieve the environmental objectives under Water Framework Directive and the Dangerous Substances Directive		
<b>Relevant Actions:</b> Where necessary align the following plans and programmes with river basin management plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>land use and spatial plans</li> </ul>	Local authorities, DEHLG-NPWS, DEHLG, EPA, Coillte, OPW	2009–2015 National



What	Who leads	When & where
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>conservation and heritage plans</li> <li>water services strategic plans</li> <li>pollution reduction plans including national action plan, IPPC programme, local authority discharge authorisation programmes, groundwater and surface water pollution reduction programmes, shellfish waters pollution reduction programmes, bathing waters management plans, waste management plans, freshwater pearl mussel sub-basin plans, groundwater protection schemes, eel and salmon fishery conservation plans</li> <li>waste and sludge management plans</li> <li>major accident emergency plans</li> <li>forest management plans</li> <li>flood risk management plans (forthcoming)</li> </ul> <p>Other potential measures which are being considered but which require further development as outlined in Section 5.4. Agreed measures in relation to these issues can be introduced through update of Water Management Unit Action Plans during the implementation process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection of high quality waters</li> <li>Mines and Contaminated Sites:</li> <li>Physical impact of channelisation on river status:</li> <li>Sustainable flood management</li> </ul> <p>Develop guidance and training for local authorities as required</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p> <p>Environmental Services National Training Group</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>
<b>BATHING WATERS DIRECTIVE (2006/7/EC)</b>		
<p><b>Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI 79 of 2008):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to ensure that the quality of bathing water is maintained or improved to comply with bathing water standards in order to protect public health and the environment.</p>		<p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Identify bathing waters. Monitor and classify bathing water quality status. Develop Bathing Waters Management Plans, including any necessary measures, to achieve bathing water quality standards. Disseminate bathing water quality information to the public.</p> <p>Cooperate on cross border bathing waters including exchange of information and joint action.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Local authorities, DEHLG, EPA</p>	
<b>BIRDS AND HABITATS DIRECTIVES (79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations (SI 94 of 1997) as amended in 1998 and 2005:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to ensure the protection of habitats and species of European importance.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Designate sites hosting habitats and species of European importance for inclusion in the Natura 2000 network as needed. Establish appropriate conservation measures, and management plans where necessary, to ensure achievement of favourable conservation status.</p> <p>Ensure that appropriate assessment is carried out and a Natura Impact Statement prepared in relation to activities which are likely to impact on designated sites and, where necessary, regulate activities. Introduce compensatory measures to ensure the coherence of the Natura 2000 network if damaging activities are allowed to go ahead.</p> <p>Promote education on the need to protect species and habitats, encourage research necessary to achieve the aims of the regulations.</p>	<p>DEHLG-NPWS, DEHLG</p> <p>Relevant parties DEHLG-NPWS, DEHLG,</p> <p>DEHLG</p>	<p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>
<p><b>Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations (SI 296 of 2009):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> To set legally binding objectives for water quality in rivers, or parts of rivers, inhabited by freshwater pearl mussels Margaritifera and designated as Special Area of Conservation (SAC) so as to protect this species. The regulations also require steps to be taken to attain those objectives.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Establish environmental quality objectives. Undertake monitoring, assess conservation status and investigate pollution. Develop management plans (sub-basin plans of River Basin Management Plans), including any necessary measures, to ensure achievement of environmental quality objectives.</p>	<p>DEHLG-NPWS</p>	

What	Who leads	When & where
Examine discharge authorisations to designated areas and establish if they require review.	Public authorities	
Monitor the implementation of the sub-basin management plans and ensure their implementation.	DEHLG	
<b>DRINKING WATER DIRECTIVE (98/83/EC)</b>		
<p><b>European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations (SI 278 of 2007):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to ensure that drinking water intended for human consumption is wholesome and clean.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Monitor for compliance with drinking water quality standards. Maintain a register of water supplies. Immediately investigate non-compliances and inform consumers. Prepare Action Programmes where the drinking water quality standards are not met.</p> <p>Prohibit water supplies considered to pose a potential danger to human health.</p> <p>Ensure compliance with the regulations and supervise group water schemes.</p> <p><b>Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to facilitate the provision of safe and efficient water services and water service infrastructure for domestic and non-domestic requirements.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Monitor public water supplies and monitor and supervise private drinking water supplies. Develop Water Services Strategic Plans, including measures, to meet the Act's requirements including achievement of drinking water standards. Prohibit or restrict water supplies that pose a potential threat to human health or the environment. Inform consumers of non-compliances and ensure that remedial actions are taken where necessary. Prohibit or restrict certain water uses if there is a deficiency of supply. Implement a Rural Water Programme and a licensing system for the Group Water Scheme sector.</p> <p>Supervise and monitor water services authorities and issue compliance notices in relation to non-compliances. Plan and supervise investment under the Water Services Investment Programme.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Local authorities, HSE</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>DEHLG</p>	<p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
Supervise public water supplies	EPA	
<b>MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCY DIRECTIVE (96/82/EC)</b>		
<p><b>European Communities (Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations (SI 74 of 2006):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to ensure that operators of establishments where dangerous substances are present take all necessary measures to prevent the occurrence of major accidents and to limit the consequences of accidents for people and the environment.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Prepare on-site emergency plans identifying major hazards and specifying prevention and mitigation measures.</p> <p>Prepare off-site emergency plans for action outside the establishment in the event of a major accident.</p> <p>Require written notification of activities involving specified dangerous substances. Require operators to demonstrate safe operation and storage and to investigate their operations in the event of a major accident. Organise inspections and measures where necessary. Supply information on major accidents to public authorities.</p> <p><b>Planning and Development Act (No. 30 of 2000) as amended in 2002:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the proper planning and development of urban and rural areas.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Ensure that adequate controls are in place for relevant new developments.</p>	<p>Operators</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>DETE</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 Qualifying sites</p> <p>2009–2015 Qualifying sites</p>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT DIRECTIVE (85/337/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (SI 349 of 1989) as amended from 1994 to 2006:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> require that certain developments be assessed for likely environmental effects before planning permission is granted.</p>		2009–2015 National

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Require certain developments, by either the private or the public sector, to prepare Environmental Impact Assessments for consideration before planning permission is granted (taking account of objectives established in river basin management plans) and make them available to the public. Notify authorities in Northern Ireland of any planning application which is likely to have significant effects on the environment in Northern Ireland.</p>	Planning authorities	
<b>SEWAGE SLUDGE DIRECTIVE (86/278/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>Use of Sewage Sludge in Agriculture Regulations (SI 148 of 1998) as amended in 2001:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> require that sewage sludge is used in accordance with a nutrient management plan.</p>		2009–2015 National
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Supervise the supply and use of sewage sludge in agriculture and ensure that it is used in accordance with nutrient management plans. Maintain a register of sludge biosolids movements and use and make it available to the public. Ensure adherence to the code of practice in relation to the use of biosolids in agriculture.</p>	Local authorities	
<p><b>Waste Management Act (No. 10 of 1996):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to regulate waste management in order to protect human health and the environment.</p>		2009–2015 National
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Prepare sludge management plans for the management of wastewater sludge (taking account of WFD objectives). Require measures to be taken in relation to the holding, recovery or disposal of waste in order to prevent or limit environmental pollution, where necessary. Require land owners to prepare nutrient management plans where necessary.</p>	Local authorities	
<b>URBAN WASTEWATER TREATMENT DIRECTIVE (91/271/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations (SI 254 of 2001) as amended in 2004 and 2010:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to ensure that the environment is not adversely affected by the disposal of inadequately treated urban waste water through the provision of urban wastewater collection systems and treatment plants.</p>		2009–2015 National
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Design, construct, operate, maintain and monitor treatment plants to achieve requirements in relation to treatment standards, nutrient sensitive areas and WFD objectives. Choose discharge points so as to minimise impact on the environment. Ensure that sewage sludge can be disposed of safely. Financial investments can be made under the Water Services Investment Programme.</p>	Local authorities, DEHLG	

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to facilitate the provision of safe and efficient water services and water service infrastructure for domestic and non-domestic requirements.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Plan and supervise provision of wastewater services under the Water Services Investment Programme. Prepare and implement Water Services Strategic Plans to support sustainable provision of wastewater services.</p>	Local authorities	2009–2015 National
<b>PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS DIRECTIVE (91/414/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>Authorisation, Placing on the Market, Use &amp; Control of Plant Protection Products Regulations (SI 83 of 2003) as amended from 2003 to 2009:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to authorise plant protection product for use or placing on the market to ensure that no harmful effects arise for human and animal health and that there is no unacceptable impact on the environment</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Notify the DEHLG of all new information on potentially dangerous effects of authorised plant protection products on the environment or groundwater.</p> <p>The conditions of authorisation are selected to minimise risks for consumers, workers and the environment. The use of a plant protection product in a manner other than specified on its approved label is illegal.</p>	Relevant persons	2009–2015 National
<b>NITRATES DIRECTIVE (91/676/EEC)</b>		
<p><b>Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (SI 101 of 2009):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> provide statutory support for good agricultural practice to protect waters against pollution from agricultural sources and give further effect to several EU Directives including the Nitrates Directive, dangerous substances in water, waste management, protection of groundwater, public participation in policy development and water policy (the Water Framework Directive).</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Review the nitrates National Action Programme to determine its effectiveness, including Agricultural Catchment Programme studies, in consultation with all interested parties. Ensure implementation of the National Action Programme.</p>	DEHLG, DAFF	2009–2015 National



What	Who leads	When & where
<p>Monitor as necessary for the purposes of the Regulations. Provide recommendations and direction to local authorities with respect to monitoring, inspections and measures.</p> <p>Carry out monitoring to establish the extent of pollution in surface and groundwaters attributable to agriculture and determine trends in the occurrence and extent of such pollution. Carry out farm inspections (to coordinate with other farm inspection programmes).</p> <p><b>Additional actions: Agriculture:</b> Consider increasing farm inspections in karst areas with turloughs and piloting of environmentally friendly farming scheme Map turloughs' zones of contribution.</p>	<p>EPA</p> <p>Local authorities, DAFF</p> <p>DAFF, DEHLG-NPWS</p>	
<b>INTEGRATED POLLUTION PREVENTION CONTROL DIRECTIVE (2008/1/EC)</b>		
<p>Environmental Protection Agency Acts (No 7 of 1992; No 27 of 2003) and Environmental Protection Agency (Licensing) Regulations (SI 85 of 1994) as amended in 1995, 1996, 2004 and 2008:</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to prevent or reduce emissions to water, land and air; to reduce waste and to use energy and resources efficiently.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Ensure that operators of certain industrial and agricultural installations obtain IPPC licences with conditions and ELVs based on BAT and relevant national and European legislation. Enforce licence conditions including monitoring. Maintain a register of licences and make available to the Commission and to the public. Undertake reviews of existing licences as required (taking account of WFD and Environmental Quality Objectives). Ensure cross border consultation where necessary.</p> <p>Obtain the consent of sanitary authorities for discharges to sewers</p>	<p>EPA</p> <p>Operator</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p>
<b>COST RECOVERY FOR WATER SERVICES</b>		
<p><b>Water Pricing Policy:</b> Purpose: to promote the conservation and efficient use of water resources in accordance with the Water Framework Directive</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Develop and implement strategy to achieve water metering of domestic users connected to public water supplies.</p>	<p>DEHLG</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
Introduce legislation to allow local authorities to charge domestic users for water services.	DEHLG	
Develop charging methodology for water services and introduce water charges for domestic users.	Local Authorities	
<b>PROMOTION OF EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE WATER USE</b>		
<p><b>Water Services Act (No. 30 of 2007):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to facilitate the provision of safe and efficient water services and water service infrastructure for domestic and non-domestic requirements.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Develop and implement strategy to achieve water metering of domestic users connected to public water supplies.  Facilitate the provision of efficient water services.</p> <p>Rehabilitate and repair water works.</p> <p>Ensure that water distribution systems are in a fit state and free from leaks.</p> <p><b>National Water Conservation (Leakage Reduction) Programme:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to establish water conservation and leakage control strategies.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Establish and maintain GIS-based water management systems. Establish an ongoing leakage control programme. Rehabilitate and replace defective water supply networks. Develop water conservation public awareness campaigns. Provide project-specific funding designed to meet specific leakage reduction targets.</p>	DEHLG  Local Authorities  Premises owner/ occupier  Local authorities, DEHLG	2009–2015 National       2009–2015 National
<b>PROTECTION OF DRINKING WATER SOURCES</b>		
<p><b>Groundwater Protection Schemes:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to protect groundwater sources by enabling regulatory authorities to take account of the potential risks to groundwater when considering the control and location of potentially polluting activities.</p>		2009–2015 National

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Control the location and nature of developments and activities in accordance with groundwater protection schemes.</p> <p><b>Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters Regulations (SI 101 of 2009):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Exclude chemical and organic fertilisers and farm manures from within specified distances of wells, boreholes, springs or abstractions points.</p> <p><b>Planning and Development Act (No. 30 of 2000):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the proper planning and development of urban and rural areas.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Control of developments and activities in order to protect water resources.</p> <p><b>Water Policy Regulations (SI 722 of 2003) as amended in 2005:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide a statutory basis for the provisions of the Water Framework Directive including the establishment and maintenance of a Register of Protected Areas.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Keep Register of Protected Areas, which includes protected drinking waters, updated.</p> <p>Also, identify and protect all surface and groundwater bodies that are used, or may be used in the future, as sources of drinking water for more than 50 people or where the rate of abstraction is &gt; 10m<sup>3</sup> per day. Establish monitoring programmes for bodies of water providing &gt;100 cubic metres as an average. Ensure that there is no deterioration of quality in identified bodies of water so as to reduce the level of purification treatment required.</p> <p>Consideration is also being given to the designation of safeguard zones around current and future abstractions under the Drinking Water Regulations.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Farmers</p> <p>Local authorities, An Bord Pleanála DEHLG</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>To be assigned</p> <p>To be assigned</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations (SI 9 of 2010):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> The establishment of legally binding quality objectives for all bodies of groundwater and environmental quality standards for pollutants. Public authorities are required to examine and where appropriate, review existing discharge authorisations to ensure that the emission limits laid down in authorisations support compliance with the new water quality objectives/standards.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Perform functions in a manner that does not knowingly cause or allow deterioration in the quantitative status of a body of groundwater.</p> <p>All direct discharges of pollutants into groundwater are prohibited subject to certain exemptions.</p> <p>Point source discharges and diffuse sources liable to cause groundwater pollution must be controlled so as to prevent or limit the input of pollutants into groundwater.</p> <p>Identify hazardous and non-hazardous substances for the purpose of preventing and limiting pollutant inputs</p> <p>Where necessary or appropriate, issue advice and/or give directions to a public authority or authorities concerned on the measures to be taken to prevent and limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater.</p> <p>Where necessary or appropriate:  (a) review, or cause to have reviewed, existing codes of practice including other such mechanisms and controls already in place for the purpose of preventing or limiting the input of pollutants into groundwater;  (b) identify such other areas and/or activities requiring the introduction of similar type controls so as to prevent or limit the input of pollutants into groundwater;  (c) direct a public authority to undertake a review and, where necessary, update a code of practice, or in the case of an activity requiring the introduction of new controls, prepare a new code of practice or system of control for the activity in question. A public authority must comply with the direction given by the Agency within the timeframe prescribed;</p> <p>Examine and if necessary review all existing discharge authorisations to groundwater to take into account the new quality standards and to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants to groundwater.</p> <p><b>Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations (SI 272 of 2009):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> The establishment of legally binding objectives for all surface waters.</p>	<p>Public authorities</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>Relevant authorities</p>	

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Achieve compliance with drinking water protected area objectives.</p> <p><b>Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to facilitate the provision of safe and efficient water services and water service infrastructure for domestic and non-domestic requirements.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Monitor public water supplies and monitor and supervise private drinking water supplies. Develop Water Services Strategic Plans, including measures, to meet the Act's requirements including achievement of drinking water standards. Prohibit or restrict certain water uses if there is a deficiency of supply. Implement a Rural Water Programme and a licensing system for the Group Water Scheme sector.</p> <p>Supervise and monitor water services authorities and issue compliance notices in relation to non-compliances. Plan and supervise investment under the Water Services Investment Programme.</p>	<p>Public authorities</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>DEHLG</p>	
<b>ABSTRACTION AND IMPOUNDMENTS</b>		
<p><b>Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (SI 349 of 1989) as amended from 1994 to 2006:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> require that certain developments be assessed for likely environmental effects before planning permission can be granted.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Undertake environmental impact assessment for drilling for water supplies above specified thresholds, groundwater abstraction and artificial groundwater recharge schemes above specified thresholds and works for the transfer of water resources between river basins above specified thresholds.</p> <p><b>Water Pollution Act (No 1 of 1977) as amended in 1990:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the control of water pollution thereby protecting possible drinking water sources</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Maintain registers of abstractions and make available to the public.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	<p>2012–2015 National</p> <p>2012–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Water Supplies Act (SI 1 of 1942):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> require that provisional orders be obtained by local authorities abstracting drinking water supplies.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Local authorities must adhere to conditions set down in provisional orders when abstracting drinking water from a water source.</p> <p><b>Planning and Development Act (No. 30 of 2000) as amended in 2002:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the proper planning and development of urban and rural areas.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Local authorities must obtain planning permission for groundwater abstractions for public drinking water supplies.</p> <p><b>Additional actions: Abstractions:</b>  Good practice measures are available in the Programmes of Measures – technical studies – Abstractions and National Summary Programme of Measures background documents.</p>	<p>Local authorities, DEHLG</p> <p>Local authorities, An Bord Pleanála</p>	<p>2009–2015 Prioritised sites</p> <p>2009–2015 Prioritised sites</p>
<b>POINT SOURCE DISCHARGES</b>		
<p><b>Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations (SI 272 of 2009):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> The establishment of legally binding quality objectives for all surface waters and environmental quality standards for pollutants. Public authorities are required to examine and where appropriate, review existing discharge authorisations to ensure that the emission limits laid down in authorisations support compliance with the new water quality objectives/standards.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>  Establish measures to achieve the quality objectives and standards. Where necessary, consult with other public authorities and with relevant competent authorities in Northern Ireland.</p> <p>Set emission limits based on BAT when authorising new discharges to ensure achievement of the quality objectives. Review all existing discharge authorisations to take into account the new quality standards. Prepare programmes for the monitoring and inspection of farm installations to verify compliance.</p>	<p>Public authorities</p> <p>Local authorities, EPA, DEHLG</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
Classify waters and make the classification available in GIS. Establish an inventory of emissions discharges and losses of priority substances, priority hazardous substances and other pollutants.	EPA	2009–2015 National
Prepare a plan for the progressive reduction of pollution by priority substances and the ceasing or phasing out emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances.	Coordinating local authority	
<b>Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations (SI 9 of 2010):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> The establishment of legally binding quality objectives for all bodies of groundwater and environmental quality standards for pollutants. Public authorities are required to examine and where appropriate, review existing discharge authorisations to ensure that the emission limits laid down in authorisations support compliance with the new water quality objectives/standards.		
<b>Relevant actions:</b> All direct discharges of pollutants into groundwater are prohibited subject to certain exemptions.	Local authorities	
Point source discharges and diffuse sources liable to cause groundwater pollution must be controlled so as to prevent or limit the input of pollutants into groundwater.	EPA	
Identify hazardous and non-hazardous substances for the purpose of preventing and limiting pollutant inputs	EPA	
Where necessary or appropriate, issue advice and/or give directions to a public authority or authorities concerned on the measures to be taken to prevent and limit inputs of pollutants into groundwater.	EPA	
Where necessary or appropriate: (a) review, or cause to have reviewed, existing codes of practice including other such mechanisms and controls already in place for the purpose of preventing or limiting the input of pollutants into groundwater; (b) identify such other areas and/or activities requiring the introduction of similar type controls so as to prevent or limit the input of pollutants into groundwater; (c) direct a public authority to undertake a review and, where necessary, update a code of practice, or in the case of an activity requiring the introduction of new controls, prepare a new code of practice or system of control for the activity in question. A public authority must comply with the direction given by the Agency within the timeframe prescribed;	EPA	

What	Who leads	When & where
<p>Examine and if necessary review all existing discharge authorisations to groundwater to take into account the new quality standards and to prevent or limit inputs of pollutants to groundwater.</p> <p><b>Water Pollution Act (No 1 of 1977) as amended in 1990 and Water Pollution Regulations (SI 108 of 1978) as amended in 1992 and 1996:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the control of water pollution through prosecution for water pollution offences; use of pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges; issue of notices specifying measures to prevent water pollution.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>License discharges to surface waters and sewers from small scale industrial and commercial sources. Review licenses at intervals of not less than 3 years. Keep registers of discharge licenses and make them available to the public.</p> <p>Prosecute for water pollution offences; attach appropriate pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges from industry, etc., made to waters or to sewers; issue notices specifying measures to be taken within a prescribed period to prevent water pollution; Issue notices to stop pollution of waters and requiring the mitigation or remedying within a period specified; seek court orders, including High Court injunctions.</p> <p>Notify local authorities of accidental discharges and spillages of polluting materials which enter, or are likely to enter, waters.</p> <p><b>Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Regulations (SI 684 of 2007):</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the authorisation by the EPA of urban waste water discharges by local authorities.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>Authorise Local Authority WWTPs (taking account of WFD objectives). Review licenses at intervals not less than 6 years. Enforce compliance with WWTP licensing conditions. Maintain a register of WWTP licences and certificates and make available on request.</p> <p><b>Water Services Act (No 30 of 2007):</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to facilitate the provision of safe and efficient water services and water service infrastructure for domestic and non-domestic requirements.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>Prepare and implement Water Services Strategic Plans.</p>	<p>Relevant authorities</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>Local authorities, Inland Fisheries Ireland, DEHLG-NPWS</p> <p>Relevant persons</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>Local Authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p>Duty of care on owners of premises to ensure that treatment systems for wastewater are kept in good condition.</p> <p><b>Additional actions: Urban Wastewater Treatment Plants:</b></p> <p>Measures for improved management: keep register of plant capacity and update annually; install facilities to monitor influent loads and effluent discharges in accordance with EPA guidelines and best practice; put auditable procedures in place to monitor compliance of licensed discharges; implement training procedures for staff involved with licensing of discharges; monitor receiving water quality upstream and downstream of the point of discharge.</p> <p>Optimise treatment plant performance by the implementation of a performance management system supported by the use of decision making tools.</p> <p>Actions have been identified for certain categories of treatment plant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1 - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring identifiable Capital Works.</li> <li>• Category 2 - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring further investigation prior to Capital Works.</li> <li>• Category 3 - Agglomerations requiring the implementation of actions identified in Pollution Reduction Plans for Shellfish Waters designated under the Shellfish Water Regulations.</li> <li>• Category 4 - Agglomerations with treatment plants requiring improved operational performance through the implementation of Performance Management Systems.</li> <li>• Category 5 - Agglomerations requiring investigation of Combined Storm Overflows (CSOs).</li> <li>• Category 6 - Agglomerations where existing waste water treatment capacity is currently adequate but predicted loadings (based on assumed 3% growth in load per annum) would result in overloading requiring management of development.</li> </ul> <p>Good practice measures are available in the Programmes of Measures – technical studies – Municipal and Industrial Regulations, Urban Pressures and National Summary Programme of Measures background documents.</p> <p><b>Minerals Development Act (No 31 of 1940) as amended from 1960 to 1999:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the development and working of the mineral resources of the State whilst managing potential impact on the water environment.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>Grant Prospecting Licenses for exploration of specified minerals in specified areas subject to conditions. Grant Minerals or Mining Licenses with respect to State owned minerals. Grant Mining Permissions to work substances in small quantities. Grant Unworked Minerals Licenses with respect to unworked minerals.</p>	<p>Relevant Persons</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>DCENR</p>	<p>2009–2015 Prioritised Sites</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Energy Act (No. 40 of 2006):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to regulate the energy industry whilst managing potential impact on the water environment</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Prepare Mine Rehabilitations Plans for the long-term rehabilitation of mine sites where it is considered necessary for the purposes of public or animal health or the environment.</p> <p><b>Waste Management Act (No 10 of 1996) as amended in 2001:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to regulate waste management in order to protect human health and the environment.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Prepare an inventory of closed waste disposal or recovery sites.</p> <p><b>European Communities (Quality of Shellfish Waters) Regulations (SI 268 of 2006) as amended in 2009:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to protect or improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth by setting water quality requirements to be met.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Undertake monitoring and investigate pollution. Develop and implement Shellfish Pollution Reduction Programmes, including any necessary measures, to achieve shellfish water quality standards.</p> <p><b>European Communities (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations (SI 296 of 2009):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> For the purpose of achieving the water quality objectives established for designated sites for the protection of freshwater pearl mussel populations.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Public authorities that authorise discharge to any of the listed rivers to set down emission limit values that aim to achieve the prescribed ecological quality targets; and to examine existing authorisations within a set time and review them as appropriate.</p>	<p>DCENR Local authorities,</p> <p>EPA, GSI</p> <p>DEHLG, Local authorities</p> <p>Public authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 Prioritised Sites</p> <p>2009–2015 Prioritised Sites</p> <p>2009–2015 Prioritised Sites</p> <p>2009–2015 Prioritised Sites</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<b>DIFFUSE SOURCE DISCHARGES</b>		
<p><b>Water Pollution Act (No 1 of 1977) as amended in 1990 and Water Pollution Regulations (SI 108 of 1978) as amended in 1992 and 1996:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the control of water pollution through prosecution for water pollution offences; use of pollution control conditions in the licensing of effluent discharges made to waters or to sewers; issue of notices specifying measures to be taken to prevent water pollution.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>Serve notices or directions on persons requiring measures to be taken in order to prevent or control pollution of waters, where necessary.</p> <p>Notify local authorities of accidental discharges and spillages of polluting materials which enter, or are likely to enter, waters.</p> <p><b>Planning and Development Act (No 30 of 2000) as amended in 2002:</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the proper planning and development of urban and rural areas.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b></p> <p>Grant permission for on-site waste water treatment systems subject to site suitability assessment.</p> <p><b>EPA Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems serving Single Houses (2009)</b></p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> to provide guidance on the provision of wastewater treatment and disposal systems for new single houses.</p> <p>Relevant actions: the guidance addresses the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess site suitability for on-site wastewater treatment systems and identify minimum environmental protection requirements</li> <li>• Select suitable wastewater treatment systems for sites in un-sewered rural areas</li> <li>• Design and install septic tank systems, filter systems, packaged treatment systems and tertiary treatment systems,</li> <li>• Maintenance requirements for on-site wastewater treatment systems.</li> </ul> <p>The guidance is supported by DEHLG circular letter (Reference PSSP 1/10) and Planning Guidelines on Sustainable Rural Housing (2005)</p>	<p>Local authorities, Inland Fisheries Ireland, DEHLG-NPWS</p> <p>Relevant persons</p> <p>Local authorities</p> <p>Planning authorities, developers, manufacturers designers, installers and operators Planning authorities &amp; An Bord Pleanála</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p>Amend the Technical Guidance Document supporting the 1997 Building Regulations (SI 497 of 1997) relating to standards for “drainage and waste water disposal” (TGD-H of 2005) and issue a supporting Circular Letter to all Local Building Control Authorities.</p> <p>For existing unsewered properties, bring forward and consult on proposals for legislation to provide standards for the performance, operation and maintenance of septic tanks and similar on-site wastewater treatment systems and also for the monitoring and inspection of the performance of such treatment systems and set out the responsibilities of households served by those systems, including requirements to carry out remedial actions where necessary.</p> <p><b>Additional actions: On-site systems:</b> Good practice measures are available in the Programmes of Measures – technical studies – On-site wastewater treatment systems and National Summary Programme of Measures background documents.</p> <p><b>Forestry Act (No 13 of 1946) as amended in 1976 and 1988 and Aerial Fertilisation Regulations (SI 592 of 2006) as amended in 2007 and codes of practice, guidance documents administered through a grant support system:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the development and regulation of forestry.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Promote forestry with financial incentives. License forestry activity and where necessary, attach additional conditions in sensitive areas.</p> <p>Encourage sustainable, commercial afforestation. Ensure compliance with guidance and codes of practice.</p> <p>A new Forestry Bill, replacing the 1946 Forestry Act, has been drafted to strengthen sustainable forestry management. Provisions relating to water protection are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All forestry operations must be carried out in accordance with any guidelines and regulations issued by the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.</li> <li>• Allowing for change of land use from forestry to other sustainable uses.</li> </ul> <p>In acid sensitive catchments apply a protocol agreed between the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, the Forest Service, the EPA and COFORD for dealing with grant-aid applications in acid sensitive areas. All relevant applications received by the Forest Service are checked for alkalinity levels in run-off water. Borderline cases are referred to the Environmental Protection Agency for recommendations.</p>	<p>DEHLG</p> <p>Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government</p> <p>Forest Service</p> <p>Forest Service</p> <p>Minister for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food</p> <p>Forest Service, EPA</p>	<p>2010</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
<p>2008 guidelines for the protection of Natura 2000 sites designated for the protection Freshwater Pearl Mussel populations from forestry activities are intended to ensure that forest operations such as afforestation, forest road construction, harvesting and forest planning are compatible with the protection of this particularly sensitive species. The guidelines describe a range of measures intended to reduce any potential negative impacts on the species arising from forest operations.</p> <p><b>Strategic Plan for the Development of Forestry:</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the development and regulation of forestry.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Adhere to forest management plans and the principles of sustainable forest management.</p> <p>Ensure implementation of the National Forestry Standard and adherence to the code of best forest practice.</p> <p><b>Additional actions: Forestry:</b>            Good practice measures are available in the Programmes of Measures – technical studies – Forest and Water and National Summary Programme of Measures background documents.</p> <p><b>Environmental Objectives (Freshwater Pearl Mussel) Regulations (SI 296 of 2009)</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> For the purpose of achieving the water quality objectives established for designated sites for the protection of freshwater pearl mussel populations.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b>            Develop management plans (sub-basin plans of River Basin Management Plans), including any necessary measures, to ensure achievement of environmental quality objectives.</p>	<p>Forest Service</p> <p>All stakeholders</p> <p>Forest Service</p> <p>DEHLG-NPWS, relevant public authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>
<b>AUTHORISATION OF DISCHARGES TO GROUNDWATERS</b>		
<p><b>Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations (SI 9 of 2010):</b>  <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for specifying the criteria for classifying groundwater status and identifying significant increasing pollution trends; provide for a proportionate risk-based response to groundwater protection.</p>		<p>2009–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Review all existing discharge authorisations to take into account the new quality standards.</p> <p><b>Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Regulations (SI 684 of 2007):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> Where a local authority proposes to discharge urban waste water effluent to groundwater an authorisation by the Environmental Protection Agency is required.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Authorisation of Local Authority WWTPs effluent discharges discharging to groundwater.</p> <p><b>Water Pollution Act (No 1 of 1977) as amended in 1990:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the control of water pollution.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> License discharges to groundwaters from small scale industrial and commercial sources. Review licenses at intervals of not less than 3 years. Keep registers of discharge licenses and make them available to the public.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>EPA</p> <p>Local authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>
<b>PRIORITY SUBSTANCES</b>		
<p><b>Environmental Objectives (Surface Water) Regulations (SI 272 of 2009):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for quality objectives for surface waters, EQSs for pollutants, review of discharge authorisations, classification of surface waters, inventories of priority substances.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Prepare a plan for the progressive reduction of pollution by priority substances and the ceasing or phasing out of emissions, discharges and losses of priority hazardous substances. Establish an inventory of emissions discharges and losses of priority substances, priority hazardous substances and other pollutants and publish a summary of the inventory.</p> <p><b>Chemicals Act (No. 13 of 2008):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the regulation of certain dangerous chemicals.</p>	<p>EPA, coordinating local authority</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 National</p>

What	Who leads	When & where
<p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Administration and enforcement of the European Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals regulations (REACH).</p> <p>Identify and manage risks linked to the chemicals manufactured or imported and registration of chemicals produced or imported in quantities greater than 1 tonne.</p> <p><b>European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Regulations (SI 123 of 2007):</b> <b>Purpose:</b> the prevention and reduction of pollution by the establishment of a publicly accessible pollutant release and transfer register.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Submit required data in relation to releases of pollutants and off-site transfers of pollutants and waste.</p> <p>Provide for electronic collection, assessment of data and report data to the EU Commission in relation to releases of pollutants and off-site transfers of pollutants and waste. Enforce regulations.</p>	<p>Health and Safety Authority</p> <p>Manufacturers or importers of chemicals</p> <p>Operators</p> <p>EPA</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p>
<b>PHYSICAL MODIFICATIONS</b>		
<p><b>Planning and Development Act (No 30 of 2000) as amended in 2002; Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (SI 349 of 1989) as amended from 1994 to 2006:</b> <b>Purpose:</b> to provide for the proper planning and development of urban and rural areas. Require that certain developments be assessed for likely environmental effects before planning permission is granted.</p> <p><b>Relevant actions:</b> Consider the environmental impacts of developments as part of the planning process.</p> <p><b>Additional actions: Physical modifications:</b> Good practice measures are available in the Programmes of Measures – technical studies – Freshwater Morphology, Marine Morphology and National Summary Programme of Measures background documents.</p> <p>Investigate the ecological potential of heavily modified waters and implement identified mitigation measures.</p>	<p>Local authorities</p> <p>Relevant public authorities</p>	<p>2009–2015 National</p> <p>2009–2015 Prioritised sites</p>



What	Who leads	When & where
<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES IMPACTING ON WATER STATUS</b>		
<b>Alien species:</b> Introduce new regulations under the Wildlife Act to control introduction or possession of any species of flora or fauna which may be detrimental to native species.	DEHLG	2009–2015 National
<b>PREVENTION OR REDUCTION OF THE IMPACT OF ACCIDENTAL POLLUTION INCIDENTS</b>		
<b>Framework of Major Emergency Management</b> <b>Purpose:</b> framework for emergency preparedness and response capability identifying hazards and risk to society, the economy, but also the environment including our natural water resource.  <b>Relevant actions:</b> Prepare Major Emergency Plans with supporting plans, procedures and arrangements. Initiate a major emergency development programme for the implementation of the Major Emergency Plans. Co-ordinate the inter-agency aspects of major emergency preparedness and management in assigned regions.  Ensure and promote implementation of the Framework.	Local authorities, An Garda Síochána, HSE  Dept of Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Dept of Health & Children, DEHLG	2009–2015 National
<b>OTHER ISSUES</b>		
Climate change: all measures have been assessed to ensure that the plan adequately considers the potential impacts of climatic change (see Chapter 6) – this will be reviewed as climate change information improves.	DEHLG, EPA	2009–2015 National
Invasive alien species: support measures being developed by the national alien species study (conducted by QUERCUS) and local investigations at district level	DEHLG-NPWS, local authorities	2009–2015 National
Cruising and boating/enforce pump-out control and speed restrictions at district level.	Waterways Ireland, local authorities	2009-2015 Prioritised sites

What	Who leads	When & where
<p>Aquaculture: strengthen regulation (applying appropriate assessment and developing biodiversity approaches at EU level). Propose national standards and implement shellfish pollution reduction plans. A multi-department Marine Coordination Group has been established.</p>	<p>DAFF, local authorities, DEHLG</p>	<p>2009–2015 Designated sites</p>







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