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# **Strategic environmental impact assessment for river basin management plans in Latvia: lessons learned**

9<sup>th</sup> Seminar on Cooperation on the Espoo (EIA) Convention in the  
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# Latvian nature and waters

Forests cover 56%, mires 9.9% (70% of them have no human impact), **inland waters 3,9%** of the state territory. Agricultural land occupies ~ 29%. Average precipitation 600 - 700 mm/year.

Only 16 of **more than 3000** lakes are larger than 10 km<sup>2</sup>, only 17 of **more than 12 000 rivers** are longer than 100 km. **56% of river discharge originates outside Latvian territory.**

Latvia has 498 km of sandy and sandy-stony coastline, but Latvian territorial sea comprises just **7.7% of the total area of the Baltic Sea.**

Total available groundwater resources ~ **1.4 million m<sup>3</sup> /day.**

In 2012, Latvia had the lowest water exploitation index in the EU.





# Latvian river basin districts

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# Latvian River basin management plans

**River basin management plans** are the main planning documents in the field of water management, aimed at **improvement of** surface and groundwater **status**. They are updated every 6 years.

There are 4 **river basin management plans** for Daugava, Gauja, Lielupe and Venta basins, **adopted in November and December 2015** by the minister of environmental protection and regional development.

**21%** of surface water bodies are assessed as having a **good** status; around **60%** of water bodies as having a **moderate** status.

**Groundwater** chemical quality and groundwater quantitative status are **good**, but there are 4 **groundwater zones at risk** of not achieving good status due to historic pollution and other impacts .

**Main pressures** are diffuse and point-source pollution, morphological alterations.



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# The measures in Latvian river basin management plans

**Basic measures** (minimum requirements laid down by the legislation) are mainly regulatory, administrative & economic.

**Supplementary measures** (needed in addition to the basic ones to ensure achievement of good water status) are planned on national and water body level.

**National level supplementary measures:** mainly educational & informative, legislative, administrative, studies, policy development, improvements of methodologies and information systems.

**Supplementary measures on water body level:** further development of sewerage systems, control & enforcement, proposals for remediation of polluted sites, winter green areas and buffer strips in agricultural lands, research, additional monitoring, green infrastructure for land drainage systems etc.

There are **no large-scale new infrastructure projects** related to water management and no measures with trans-boundary impact.



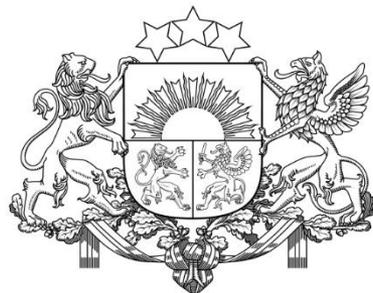
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# SEIA process for river basin management plans

For the 1st cycle RBMPs (2010-2015) the process was organised simultaneously with the public consultation on the plans, for the 2nd cycle plans (2016-2021) – after the finalisation of the public consultations. Consultative boards, which are established in each river basin district, were actively involved.

## Main lessons learned

- During the simultaneous consultations the public felt a bit unclear on which document (RBMP or environmental report) to provide comments.
- During both consultation procedures comments mainly related to river basin management plans, not to the environmental reports.
- No substantial problems requiring changes in the river basin management plans were identified.
- Consultative boards, which included representatives from public and municipal institutions and non-governmental organisations provided significant assistance during the consultation, spreading information and participating in the commenting.



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**Thank you for your attention!**

