

1. HYDROLOGICAL PLANNING

Hydrological Planning in Spain

Spain has a long tradition in water resources planning, going back to hydraulic works planning in the early XX century, and more recently to planning in the Water Act of 1985. Since its approval, planning in Spain has been carried out through the National Hydrological Plan and the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). The development of the latter was entrusted to the River Basin Authorities and were finally approved by the Government by means of Royal Decrees in 1998 and 1999. After entering into force, the National Hydrological Plan solved the discrepancies between the different plans, coordinating water resources to satisfy the different planning objectives in a balanced way.

The Water Framework Directive

In recent years, there has been a convergence process of water policies in Member States of the European Union, defined by the Water Framework Directive (WFD, 2000/60/EC).

The objectives of the WFD are to prevent deterioration, to improve the status of aquatic ecosystems and to promote the sustainable use of water. This Directive establishes a series of tasks with a strict compliance schedule, which affects all aspects of water management. To comply with the WFD requirements, the Spanish legislation has modified and adapted hydrological planning objectives, seeking to combine the achievement of the good status of surface water and groundwater with meeting water demands, through a rational and sustainable management.

In short, the WFD has meant a substantial change in European legislation, leading to the beginning of the so-called first hydrological planning cycle (2009-2015) which, in the case of the Júcar River Basin District, culminated with the approval of the River Basin Management Plan through Royal Decree 595/2014, of July 11.

Hydrological Planning Objectives

Hydrological planning, as established in Article 40 of the Revised Text of the Water Act, aims to achieve good status and adequate protection of water bodies in the District, to meet water demands and to balance and harmonise regional and sectoral development.

The planning process

The drafting procedure of the hydrological plans follows a series of regulatory steps established in the Hydrological Planning Regulation. The first step involves the preparation of the initial Documents, which include a working program, a timetable on the foreseen stages, a general study on the District and the consultation formulas.

The second stage is built upon the preparation of a Provisional Overview of Significant Water Management Issues in the River Basin District and the third phase involves the drafting of the River Basin Management Plan itself. This process must be repeated every 6 years. This informative document presents, in summary, the Hydrological Planning of the Júcar River Basin District, corresponding to the planning cycle 2016-2021.

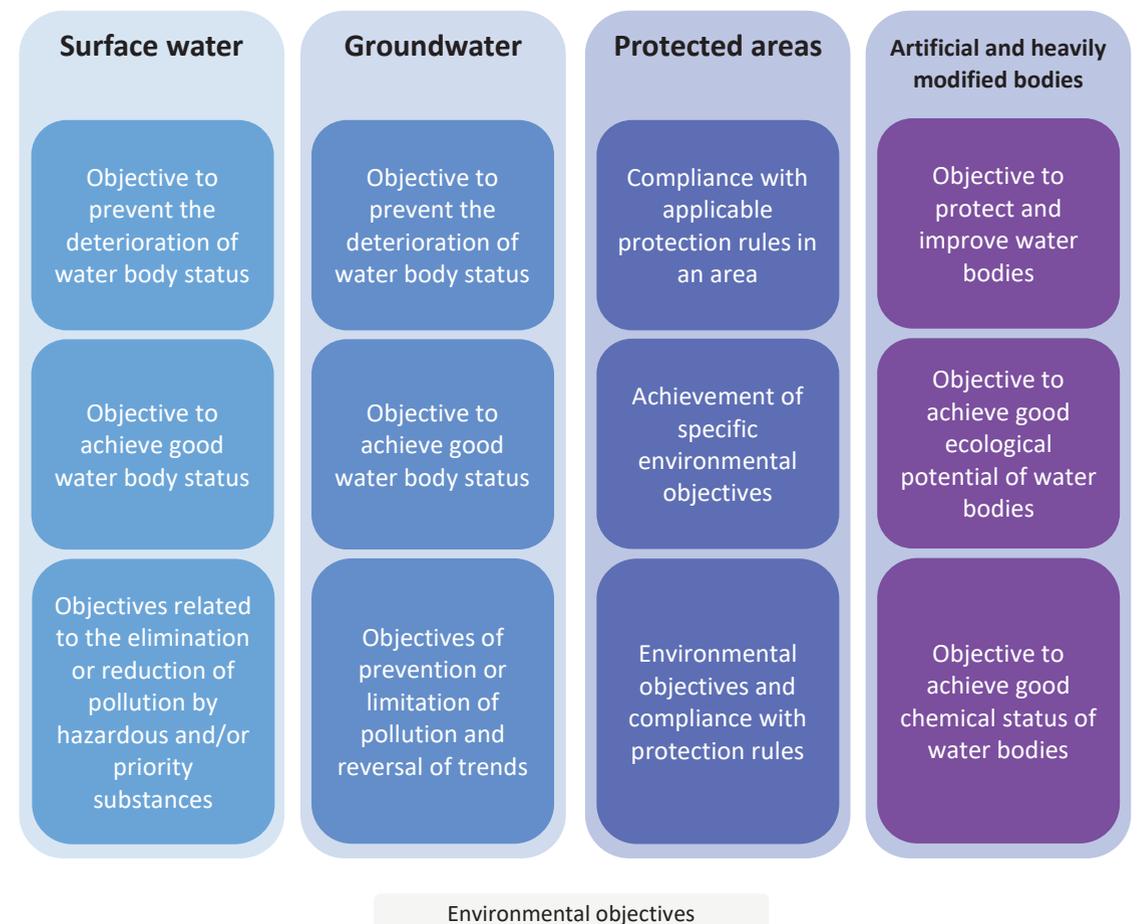




Image: Mijares river in Cedrillas

The basic management unit of a hydrological plan is the water body. In the case of rivers, the water body corresponds to a differentiated and significant part of surface water that maintains certain homogeneous characteristics.

Among the over 5,400 km water bodies of river category of the Júcar River Basin District, bodies from almost 100 km long to smaller bodies, with only a few km of course, may be found, although the deterioration prevention objectives for achieving good status and reducing pollution are the same for all bodies.