



## Creating a Blue Dialogue Webinar Series

### Summary of Webinar #1

#### Shared Water, One Framework: What Canada Can Learn from EU Water Governance

**Date:** September 28, 2011

**Attendance:** Approximately 165

### Introduction

Using the example of the European Union's ambitious Water Framework Directive, this webinar focused on the benefits of collaborative water governance and the challenges of jurisdictional fragmentation, unclear responsibilities, and disconnected governance as they relate to water management in Canada.

### Guest Speakers

#### Émilie Lagacé

2009 Gordon Water Fellow

#### Inger Weibust

Assistant Professor,  
Norman Paterson School of International Affairs,  
Carleton University

#### Ralph Pentland

Co-Chair Canadian Water Issues Council (CWIC)  
Member of Forum for Leadership on Water (FLOW)

### Key Points

- The collaborative experience of water governance under the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) has been the most significant initiative for water management in Europe in many years. The policy is an attempt to integrate all aspects of water management and shift governance towards a river basin scale.
- Water management and governance in Canada have become fragmented and lack trust. The Canadian system can learn from the Common Implementation Strategy (CIS), one of the implementation mechanisms of the WFD, which has facilitated increased interaction between member states and helped build relationships and partnerships between decision makers. The CIS is currently being repeated for other EU directives, such as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
- In the expanding global environment industry marketplace, Canada is competitively hindered by its poor domestic environmental performance. Environmental regulation begets innovation, albeit with a time lag.

### Recommended Actions

- Support trust-building and partnership development between water governance actors across different jurisdictions in Canada.
- Develop a national water strategy on drinking water quality, river basin management, or agricultural runoff, with proper enforcement mechanisms for non-compliance.

### About the Series

The *Creating a Blue Dialogue* webinar series brings together government officials, regulators, First Nations, scientists, lawyers, policy-makers, NGOs, researchers, and students to engage with emerging and innovative ideas in water policy and governance in Canada. Hosted by the POLIS Water Sustainability Project at the University of Victoria, the webinars strengthen the national water community by bringing together expert practitioners and thinkers from across the country to create an online community without jurisdictional division. At each webinar, participants and guest speakers share perspectives and expertise on the latest water issues, best practices, and policies while improving understanding about the links between research and on-the-ground implementation.

## Key Concepts and Questions

The WFD guideline development process, implementation mechanisms, and benefits could be a source of best practices for the creation of a Canadian national water strategy. It is important to ensure that regulations are not prescriptive, and allow for flexibility in the implementation. However, the existence of enforcement mechanisms is equally important to ensure that regulations are realized.

## Additional Resources

European Commission. (2010). *Water is for life: How the Water Framework Directive helps safeguard Europe's resources*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/pdf/WFD\\_brochure\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/pdf/WFD_brochure_en.pdf)

Institute for European Environmental Policy. (June 2011). *European Commission – General Directorate Environment Support to Fitness Check Water Policy*. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/pdf/safeguard\\_fitness\\_freshwater.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/blueprint/pdf/safeguard_fitness_freshwater.pdf)

Lagacé, E. (February 2011). *Shared Water, One Framework: What Canada Can Learn from EU Water Governance*. Retrieved from <http://www.flowcanada.org/document/301>

## Archived Webinars

To view an archived recording of this webinar and other webinars in the Creating a Blue Dialogue series visit <http://poliswaterproject.org/outreach/webinars>.

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