

UK-ADAPT Position Statement

March 2006

UK-ADAPT (Agricultural Diffuse Aquatic Pollution Toolkit) is an initiative co-ordinated by ADAS, UKWIR, Defra and the Environment Agency. Launched in 2003 as a website directory of UK catchment projects in response to forthcoming implementation of the Water Framework Directive, UK-ADAPT has developed into a recognised forum for stakeholder discussion (workshops), supported by an evolving web-based resource.

The UK-ADAPT website www.uk-adapt.org.uk was designed as a tool primarily for researchers and funders in order to make everyone aware of projects that contribute to our understanding of managing catchments to decrease diffuse pollution from agriculture. Since UK-ADAPT began, the trend in UK catchment projects has shifted from a largely academic, research based focus to one that is much more practical and encompasses a much wider range of stakeholders. This practical approach is key to demonstrating lessons learned from our existing knowledge base, and will go a long way towards supporting implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

The most recent UK-ADAPT workshop, held in January 2006, involved experts from the natural and social sciences, devolved government decision makers, implementing environmental agencies, catchment officers and supporting NGO bodies. The UK-ADAPT website will provide a platform for dissemination of all workshop discussions to a wider range of stakeholders. Additional workshops are planned for the future, but in the meantime there is considerable opportunity for further networking between key organisations and individuals to support policy implementation.

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are all currently working towards compliance with the Water Framework Directive. This challenging piece of legislation requires unprecedented cross-disciplinary co-operation between the implementing authorities, devolved governments and a wide range of stakeholders at the catchment scale. Of particular importance is the need for appointed catchment officers to understand all relevant activities being undertaken in their local area.

Whilst many project-based websites exist, the UK-ADAPT website has the potential to be the leading independent 'one-stop-shop' for all activities relating to diffuse water pollution from agriculture and catchment management in the UK. The more people use the website and participate in the initiative, the more useful it will become. It is envisaged that whilst retaining and encouraging existing traditional research projects within the database, the UK-ADAPT website will evolve to incorporate more practical demonstration projects and initiatives. This will include the need for documenting activities at national and River Basin District scale, as well as defining priority catchments and sub-catchments. There is potential to highlight flagship case studies at regional level and facilitate knowledge transfer from relevant projects elsewhere within Europe.

At a more strategic level, the stakeholder engagement enabled through UK-ADAPT should result in better communication between devolved UK nations and help ensure that practical lessons learned are harnessed and shared for mutual benefit.

The UK-ADAPT objectives are as follows:

1. To produce a resource for Funders, Policy Makers, Researchers and Practitioners, detailing information on Catchment Studies about Diffuse Water Pollution from Agriculture in the UK
2. To improve networking and knowledge sharing between all Stakeholders.
3. To review the resource to identify gaps and provide recommendations for:
 - Further work
 - Better Co-ordination

We are continually reviewing our objectives and adapting to policy requirements. We will continue to promote and encourage pro-active use of the UK-ADAPT website, incorporating user feedback and stakeholder needs for successful development of the resource. We will also continue to facilitate independent, strategic level stakeholder discussion at UK-wide level.

For further information please visit the website or contact a member of the UK-ADAPT team via Rebecca.Humphrey@adas.co.uk