

Stakeholderdialogue on the national strategy for micropollutants

Germany

Level: national

Summary

The strategy intends to prevent and reduce inputs of micropollutants to the aquatic environment. Guided by the precautionary principle and the “polluter pays” principle, the stakeholders have developed, in a process of dialogue, practicable and viable solutions. The outcomes of the dialogue process shall contribute to a shared understanding of the technical issues, and the proposal of a package of strategies and measures suited to addressing micropollutants at nationwide level.

Situation

1,200 different human pharmaceuticals are assumed to have an environmental impact, of which approx. 9,000 t/a are used in Germany. For 2011-2013 diclofenac EQS has been exceeded at approx. 65 % of the sampling sites. In addition approx. 55,000 t/a of biocides and 49,000 t/a of pesticides are used in Germany. Most of these substances are not removed by conventional WWTPs and diffuse runoffs from agricultural areas are stressing the waterbodies. Some of the mentioned substances have adverse effects on aquatic ecosystems and/or on drinking water extraction from raw water. But there are still huge knowledge gaps concerning the effects.

Strategy

As a part of preparations for a federal-government strategy to protect the aquatic environment against micropollutants, a multi-stakeholder dialogue on a micropollutant Strategy of the Federal Government was launched on 7 November 2016. The group of stakeholders consisted of the pharmaceutical, chemical, textile and print industry, user side representatives, environmental protection and consumerism organizations, watermanagement companies and local authority representatives. In a first phase up to June 2017, recommendations to policy-makers were elaborated with the stakeholders; the issues addressed in that phase will be further concretised in a follow-up phase. The multi-stakeholder dialogue focuses on options for action to reduce inputs to waters from biocides, pesticides, detergents and cosmetics, household and industrial chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

Results and impact

- A policy paper with 14 recommendations has been handed over to the Minister of Environment on 27. Juni 2017
- The second phase with further concretization will start on 21.2.2018

Challenges and lessons learned

Biggest challenge was to choose the right stakeholders as well to generate consensus among them on the different topics.

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