

# **Environmental Quality Standards for [organic] priority substances in sediments: the Water Framework Directive challenging science, and vice versa**

Paul WHITEHOUSE<sup>1</sup>, Marc BABUT<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Environment Agency (UK); <sup>2</sup>Cemagref (France)

In 2005, the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) published a thorough review on Sediment Quality Guidelines (SQGs) and their uses. One of its main conclusions was that these indicators were more appropriate as benchmarks in tiered approaches to environmental quality or risk assessment than as standards in the restrictive sense of values triggering management decisions. Nevertheless, the Water Framework Directive requires environmental quality standards (EQS) also for sediments; the proposed “Priority Substances” directive, which currently left the issue unsolved, cannot accordingly be adopted as such.

A working group (EG-EQS) has been set up by the European Commission to find a sustainable way of fulfilling the WFD requirements whilst using sound (and shared) scientific concepts. This presentation will summarise the challenges faced by the group, with focussing on organic substances. Our aim is to stimulate debate about the options being considered for setting sediment standards.