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<http://ma-riviere.mobi/iowater/water-organization/in-france/a/the-catchment-area-a-cornerstone>

# The catchment area : a cornerstone of water policy

- IOWater - Water organization - In France -

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France has 7 catchment areas in mainland France and 5 in its overseas regions and territories. For these seven basins in metropolitan France, the basin committees each adopt a SDAGE (Blueprint for Water Development and Management), which fixes the general guidelines, objectives and measures to be implemented. Administrative water-related measures and town and country planning documents cannot go against the measures contained in the blueprint.

A water agency, the catchment area committee's executory body, works in each mainland France\* catchment area to reconcile water management with economical development and protection of the environment.

The water agency, a public state institution, is drawing up a programme of work approved by the government following an opinion from the basin committee. This programme sets out the environmental taxes levied on water abstraction and pollutant discharge. Collected by the agency, these taxes enable it to fund water resource and aquatic environment restoration work as decided upon by the local decisionmakers and contracting authorities, as well as water quality monitoring networks. In this way, the work programme helps to implement the measures contained in the blueprint.

In terms of subterranean basins and aquifers, which are more restricted water catchment units, a water improvement and management plan (schéma d'aménagement et de gestion des eaux or SAGE) may set specific objectives relative to quality, use, improvement and quantitative protection of water resources. The SAGE, which is a local initiative, is drawn up by a local water committee made up of representatives of the various water sector players.

\* in overseas regions, this role is fulfilled by water offices, local public bodies

**Water agencies have provided 11,6 M€ of funding per year in the context of their 8th action programme during the period 2007-2012.**