

The Adour-Garonne
water agency
Questions/answers



AGENCE DE L'EAU
ADOUR-GARONNE

ETABLISSEMENT PUBLIC DU MINISTÈRE
DU DÉVELOPPEMENT DURABLE

WHO ?

The Adour-Garonne water agency, decentralised promoter of public policy

Public Government bodies, responsible to the Ministry of Sustainable Development, the water agencies were created by the 1964 water act to initiate the decentralised management of water policy. They carry out their mission under the authority of the river basin committee which sets the general orientation, the objectives and the provisions for implementing this decentralised water management.

They enjoy financial autonomy thanks to resources they received directly: their fees.

The Adour-Garonne water agency represents 252 people working either at the establishment's head office in Toulouse or in one of its five regional offices: Bordeaux, Brive, Pau, Rodez and Toulouse.

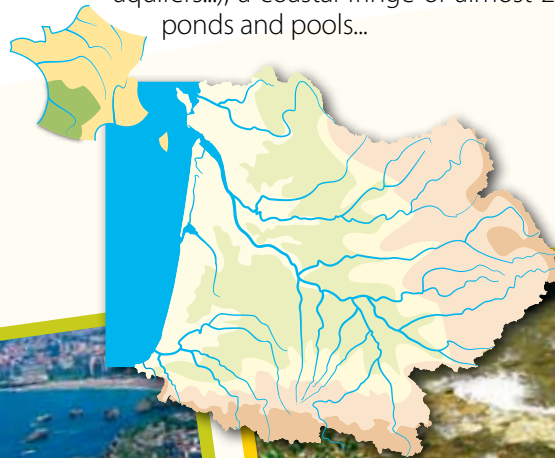
WHERE ?

A natural area of operation, the river basin

The Adour-Garonne agency covers two regions (Aquitaine and Midi-Pyrénées), a large part of the Poitou-Charentes region and spills over into the Auvergne, Languedoc-Roussillon and Limousin regions. This represents a total of 18 departments, 6400 communes and 7 millions inhabitants.

This river basin is fed by two natural catchment areas (the Pyrenees and the Massif central) whose waters all flow towards the Atlantic Ocean.

It includes 120,000 km of rivers and streams, including one major river, the Garonne, as well as other large rivers: the Adour, the Dordogne, the Lot, the Aveyron, the Tarn and underground resources (Eocene aquifers...), a coastal fringe of almost 200 km, lakes, ponds and pools...



WHAT ?

The implementation of European and national water policies

The Agency's mission aims to:

- contribute to achieving a good water status.
- find a balance between resources and the rational use of water.

Among its major areas of action to:

- improve water quality in order to ensure activities, practices and the well-being of the environment, and in particular in order to preserve the drinking water supply by combating various types of pollution (nitrates, pesticides...).
- place water at the heart of regional development.
- reduce the impact of human activities on the aquatic environment.
- manage underground water sustainably.
- control the quantitative management of water, and in particular maintain sufficient quantities of water in streams and rivers during low water periods.
- preserve and restore the natural functions of the aquatic and wetland environments.



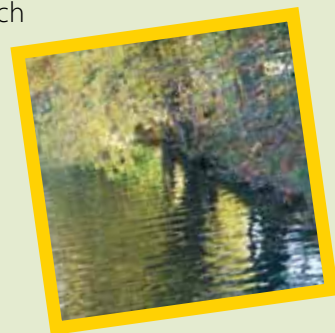
WHEN ?

A medium and long term timescale

Its objectives are based on the requirements set for it by the European water framework directive (adopted in 2000) for obtaining a good water status: 2015, 2021 and 2027.

It has its own planning tools for its river basin:

- a management plan for the development and use of water (SDAGE), which sets the overall guidelines for a period of six years, along with the objectives and provisions to be implemented.
- a programme of measures (PDM) associated with this structure plan.
- a multi-annual intervention plan : 2007-2012 for the current 9th programme.



It supports other tools compatible with the SDAGE such as local water management plans (SAGE) which, over more restricted hydro-graphic areas, may set specific quality, use, development and quantitative protection targets for water resources.

HOW ?

Support, understand, raise awareness...

- The Agency intervenes financially by providing support to project owners and actors in the water field (local authorities, companies, farmers, individuals ...).
- It produces and manages water data in order to ensure that the understanding necessary for managing and evaluating its policy is available.
- It informs and raises the public's awareness in order to support the implementation of water policies and develop "water democracy".
- It launches forward studies and emphasises constructive partnerships.

The heart of its mission : to receive fees and allocate financial support ensuring the solidarity of practices and territories at river basin level.

Effective and combined fees

The water agency receives fees based on either water pollution or levies, according to the "polluter-payer" and "extractor-payer" principles.

These fees take account of the impact of the use of water on the aquatic environment and contribute to changing the behaviour of users.

The agency seeks equal treatment and effective management of these fees in consideration of their cost of implementation and their financial efficacy.

Efficient support

When allocating its financial support, the Agency evaluates its effect on the environment and measures the cost/effectiveness ratio.



WHY ?

A regulatory framework for national and European action

- The Agency implements the European framework directive which sets, for all the major river basins belonging to the Member States of the Union and according to a timetable extending until 2027, the target that their waters of all types should have a good ecological status. The Adour-Garonne river basin SDAGE seeks to reflect this target.
- It applies the Environmental Constitutional Charter which stipulates that *"public policies must promote sustainable development, and in doing so, must reconcile the protection and use of the environment, economic development and social progress"*.
- It complies with the 2006 law on water and aquatic environments which states that *"water is part of a nation's common heritage and its protection, its enhancement and the development of the usable resource in accordance with natural balance, are in the public interest"*.
- It expresses the Environment Grenelle which defines action areas for placing the environment at the centre of public policies: support for local authorities in normalising their treatment plants, the identification of 500 drinking water catchment areas, supplies of which will require protection by 2012, and 138 commitments on behalf of the sea and the coast...





Adour-Garonne water agency

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