

# SEPA Position statement

## WAT-PS-22-01: TRANSFER OF RAW WATER ACROSS CATCHMENT BOUNDARIES

### Purpose

This document gives SEPA's position on new transfers of raw water between catchments. Such transfers can be significant pathways for the transfer of invasive non-native species (INNS), some of which can have serious adverse environmental, economic, and social impacts. The Scottish Government recognises this threat and launched the GB INNS Strategy<sup>1</sup> in partnership with Defra and the Welsh Assembly Government in 2015. Prevention, including action on pathways that allow the introduction and spread of INNS, is a key principle of the strategy. It is important to note that it is the pathway that is important, not the existing presence or absence of INNS.

### Position on water transfers to reduce the risk of spreading INNS

#### Unconnected catchments

Any new raw water transfer that connects otherwise hydrologically isolated catchments will be required to have mitigation in place to prevent the spread of INNS through the transfer. The mitigation will need to be fail safe and completely effective in the prevention of spread of all life stages of INNS (including eggs, larval stages, small fragments and microscopic organisms). Developers will need to present evidence that proposed mitigation meets these requirements.

#### Already connected catchments

For a new raw water transfer that creates a new connection between catchments/sub-catchments that are already hydrologically linked, the developer will need to undertake an assessment of the increase in risk of INNS transfer above that posed by existing pathways. We will then decide mitigation requirements on a case-by-case basis depending on the degree of risk increase. In low-

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<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/455526/gb-non-native-species-strategy-pb14324.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/455526/gb-non-native-species-strategy-pb14324.pdf)

risk cases, mitigation may not be required. We will provide guidance to assist in this risk assessment.

### **Existing transfers**

We will develop an approach for assessing the risks from existing cross-catchment transfers and then work with operators to identify the need for mitigation measures where appropriate.

### **Exceptions**

The only exception to this position is for temporary emergency water transfers for the purpose of maintaining public water supply during times of drought. We will work with Scottish Water to assess mitigation requirements for these on a case-by-case basis.

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