



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Freshwater Quality Priorities

Defra Chemicals, Pesticides & Hazardous Waste

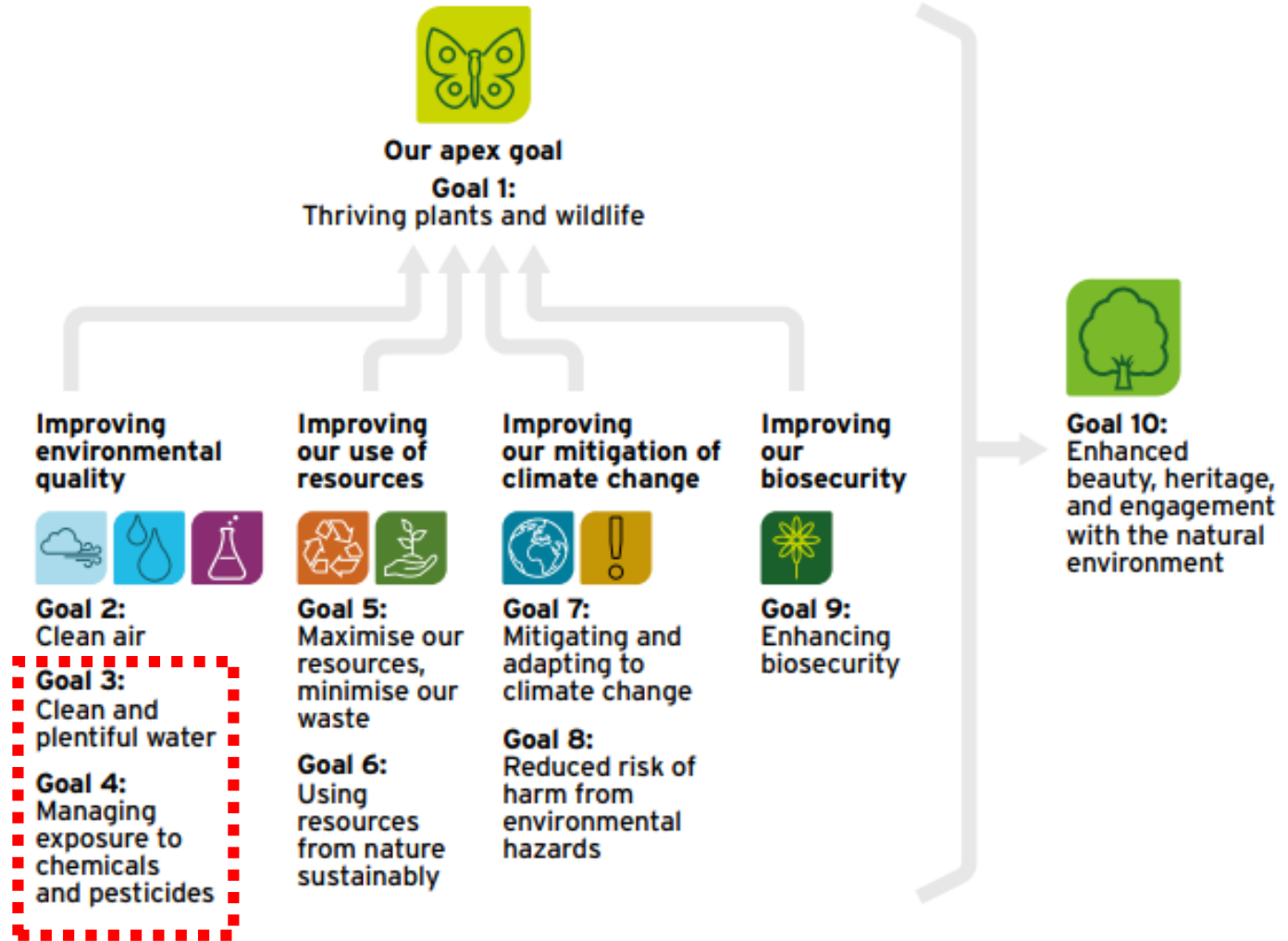
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Reference: LIT 17662
Version: 2.0
Published: June 2022
Classification: OFFICIAL

Defra's vision and priorities



Key policies to achieve our water targets

Incentivise sustainable land use and increase compliance with regulations to reduce agricultural pollution

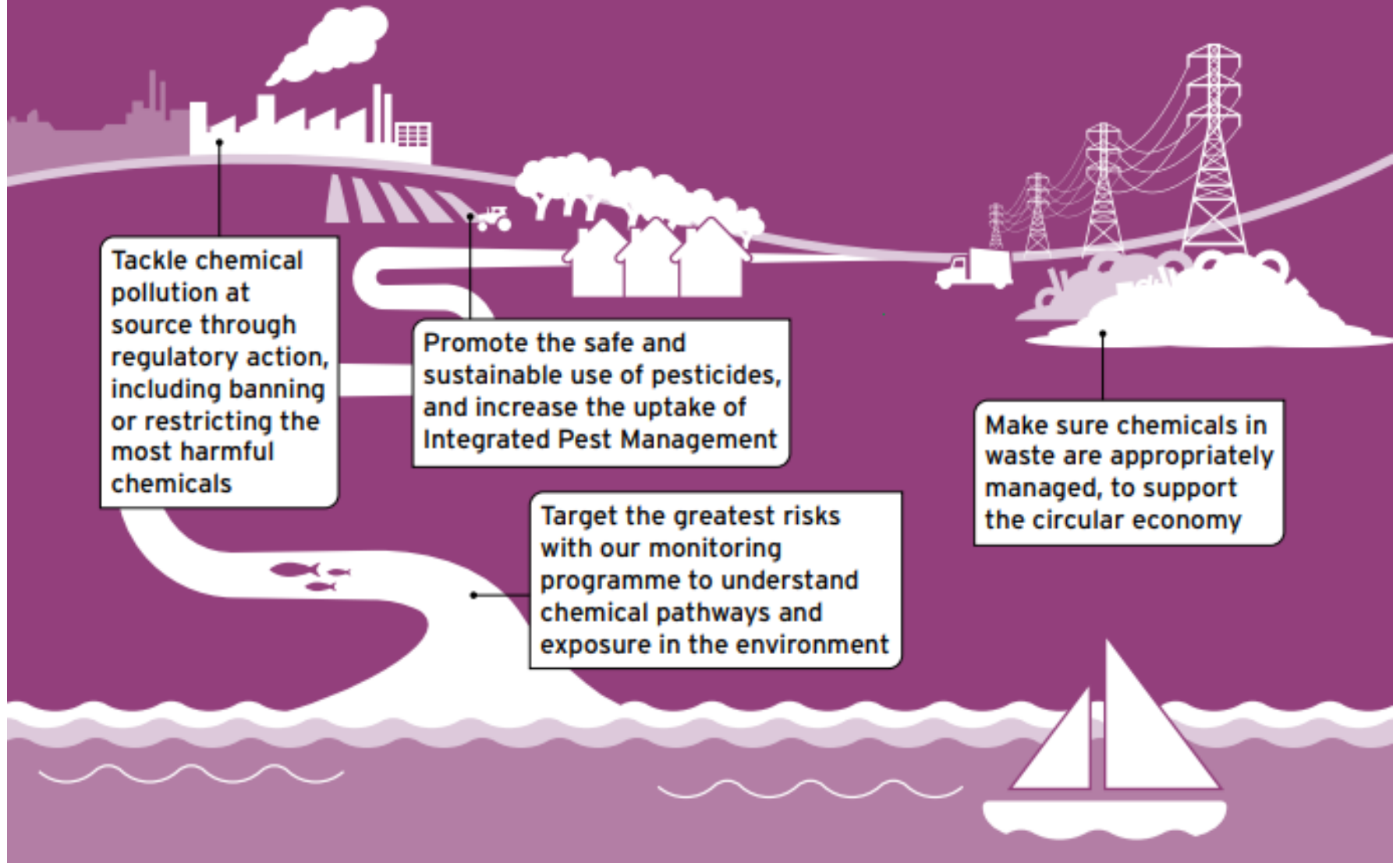
Construct new minewater treatment schemes

Modernise wastewater treatment by reducing the use of storm overflows and upgrading wastewater treatment works

Facilitate infrastructure projects, reduce leakage, and increase efficiency in new developments and retrofits to promote a sustainable and resilient water supply

Use nature-based solutions to reduce pollutants entering the water environment through sustainable drainage, wetlands, and more

Tackling sources of pollution in our everyday environments



Chemicals commitments in Environmental Improvement Plan

- **Publish a Chemicals Strategy in 2023 to tackle chemicals of concern**
- Substantially increase the amount of POPs material being destroyed or irreversibly transformed by 2030
- Seek to eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) by 2025, to make sure there are negligible emissions to the environment
- Reduce land-based emissions of mercury to air and water by 50% by 2030
- Reduce by half both excess nutrients and the overall risk posed by pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals (CBD global target)

Other priority areas of policy work

- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)
- Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs)
- Unintentional Mixtures/ Combination effects
- Pesticides

Supported by

- Environment Agency monitoring, including its Prioritisation & Early Warning System (PEWS)
- Internal evidence programmes, such as the H4 Programme
- External evidence programmes, such as this programme
- International collaborations, such as the EU's PARC Programme and the UK-Japan Partnership on EDCs

Our priorities for this programme

To prioritise current action

- To further understand which chemical substances pose the biggest risk to freshwater ecosystems and why
- To understand what that risk actually entails – to the individual; to the species; to a community; to the wider ecosystem; to human health
- To understand the potential impacts of mixtures/combinations

To shape potential responses

- To understand how a changing climate may impact chemical risk
- To gather evidence for the likely efficacy of different policy responses
- To understand the tools potentially available to incorporate climate change variables into chemical risk assessment