

First piloting results & lessons learnt

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interreg-baltic.eu/project/APRIORA



Outline of the presentation

1 Background

2 Sampling

3 Results

4 Risk maps

5 Future steps

6 Conclusions

Background – UWWT

European Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive (UWWTD) 2025

Requirements

- quaternary treatment to remove micropollutants
- risk-based prioritising

⇒ APRIORA approach

Background – Piloting areas

One river catchment per country

Selection criteria included

- Area between 1000 and 5000 km²
- Mainly smaller to medium sized WWTPs, at least one above 10.000 PE
- Special points of interest, such as drinking water, hospitals etc.
- At least one hydrological monitoring station (gauging station)
- Local/regional/national interests of stakeholders

Main goals in piloting

- monitoring of pharmaceutical residues (APIs), compare with thresholds
- to identify key trends

Background – Selected catchment areas

Five river catchments

Finland - Kyrönjoki

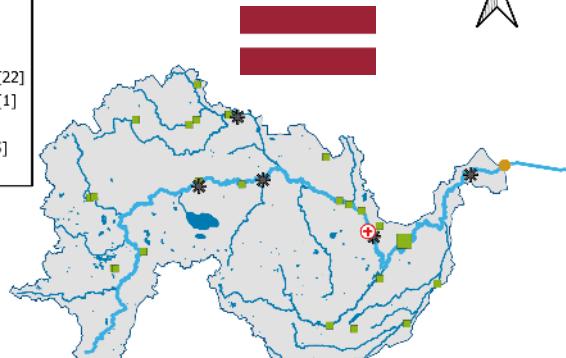
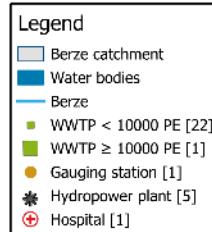
Sweden - Kävlingeån

Latvia - Berze

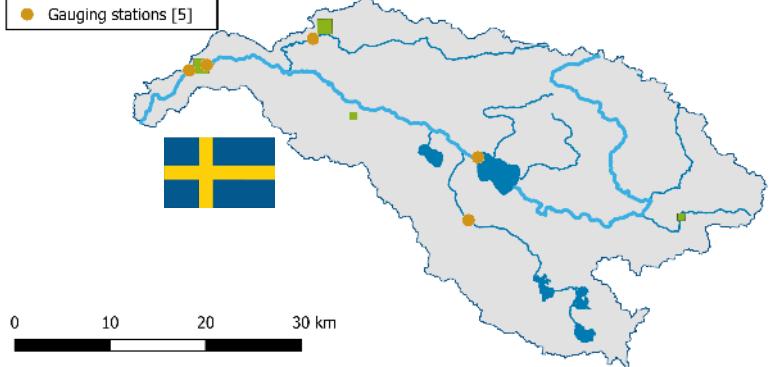
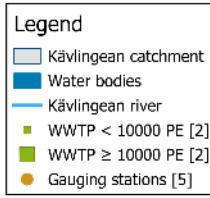
Poland - Leba

Germany - Warnow

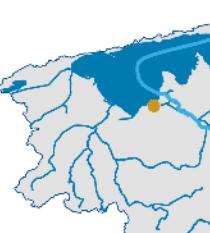
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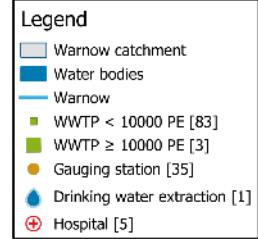
0 10 20 30 km



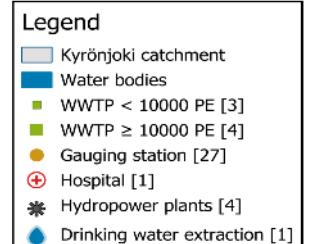
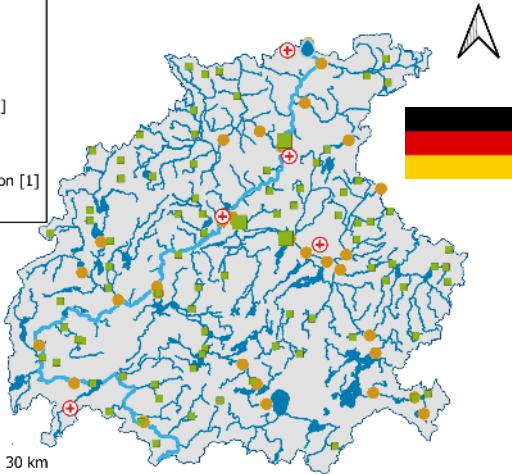
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0 10 20 30 km



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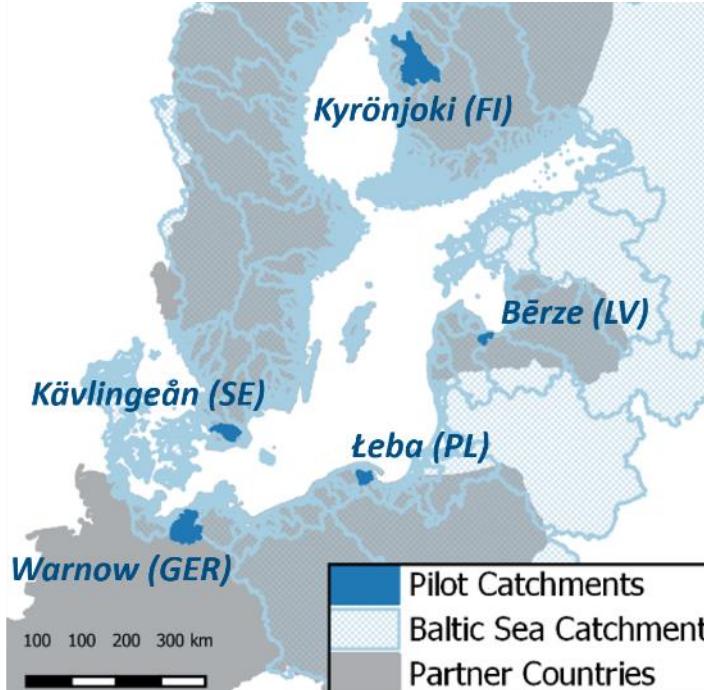


0 10 20 30 km



Background – Catchment area comparison

Catchment area and sampling information

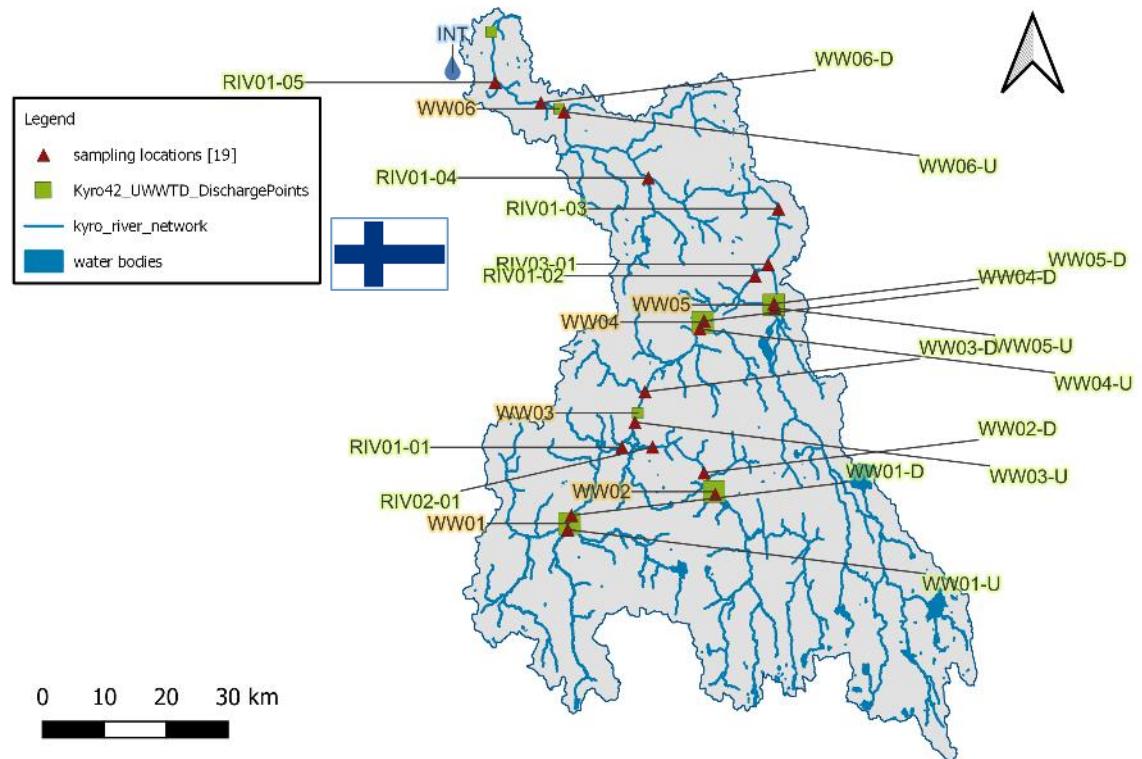


Country	River name	Catchment area (km ²)	Max length (km)	# of WWTPs (>10000PE)	# of sampling sites Surfacewater/Wastewater	Average flow (m ³ /s)
Finland	 Kyrönjoki	4923	169	7 (7)	19/14	42
Sweden	 Kävlingeån	1204	50	17(2)	10/8	11
Latvia	 Bērze	883	118	23 (1)	11/6	5.4
Poland	 Leba	1801	117	4 (3)	11/8	12
Germany	 Warnow	3324	155	86 (4)	12/8	17.8

Sampling - Images

Sampling - Images

Surface water grab samples



24-hour flow-proportional composite samples



Sampling – Images

Latvia



Sampling & analysis – Images

Sampling and chemical analysis



Sampling – Selected substances

Monitoring

Selection criteria for APIs

- current/upcoming legislation
- Relevant risks acknowledged
- High consumption
- Analytical methods available

Sampling points

- influent/effluent WWTPs
- surface waters up/down WWTP + junctions

Sampling intervals & meta data

- 4x per year, each season
- always combined with flow data

Sampling techniques

- Surface water: grab samples
- WWTP: 24h-composite samples

Pharmaceutical	potential EQS or PNEC (ng/L)	Main use
Carbamazepine	2500	Epilepsy
Clarithromycin	130	
Diclofenac	40	Anti-inflammatory drug
Estrone	0.36	
Fluconazole	1040	
Metoprolol	8600	Heart medicine
Primidone	2500	
Sulfamethoxazole	100	
Trimethoprim	500	
Venlafaxine	880	Depression medicine

Sampling – Chemical analysis

- Frozen samples
- Quality controls, blanks
- Preparations
- Internal standards
- Extraction
- Analysis by LC-MS/MS



Sampling – The flow information

Monitored vs. modelled

River discharge in the river Kyrönjoki

Lines - Modelled discharge (VEMALA)

Bars - Measured discharge

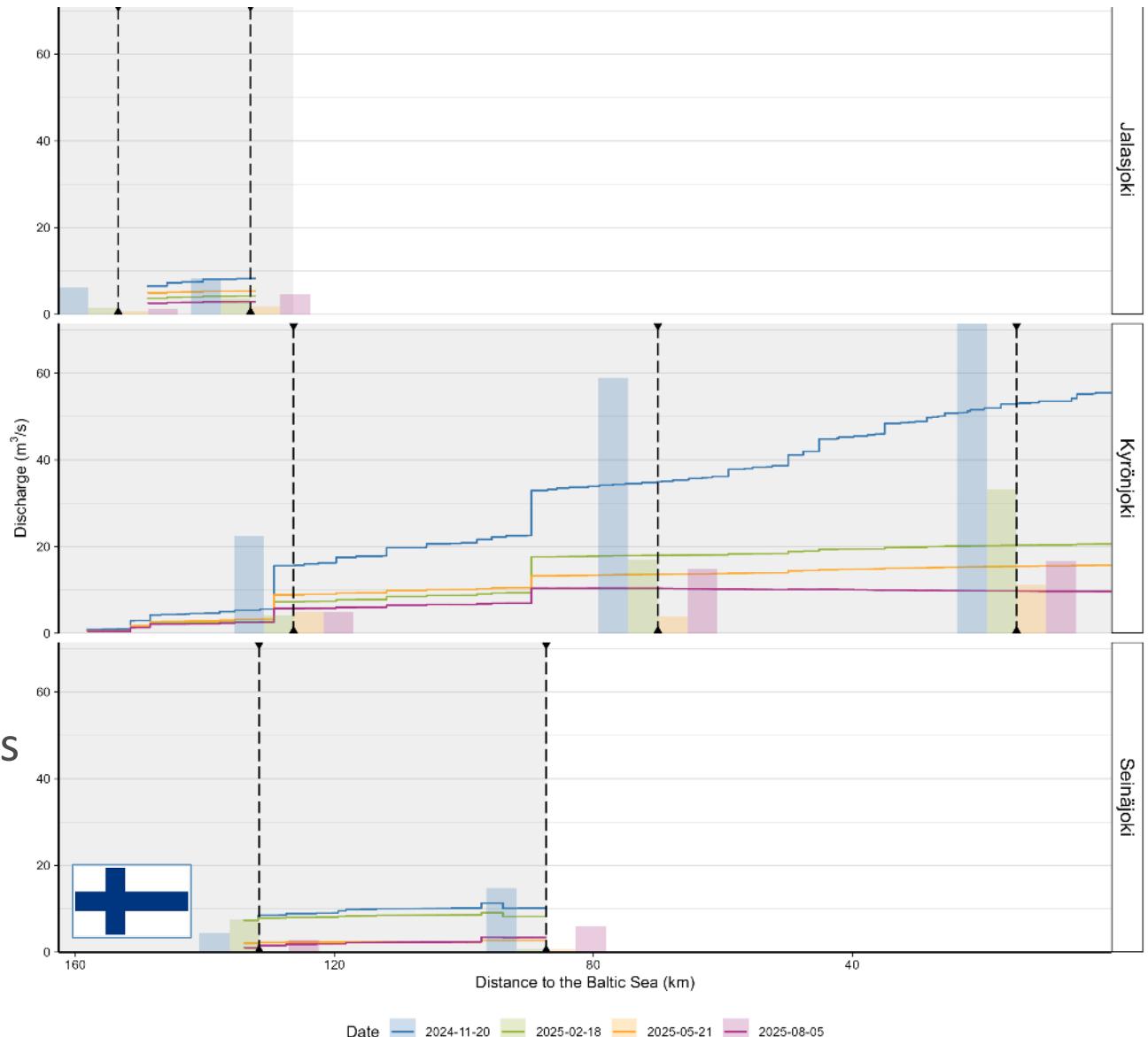
Dashed vertical lines - Locations of gauging stations

Modelled data on flow information

- Can cover entire river section
- Less need for flow monitoring
- Serve as an estimation

Flow data from gauging stations

- Only in limited number of locations
- Accurate flow monitoring
- Validation/calibration in QGIS tool



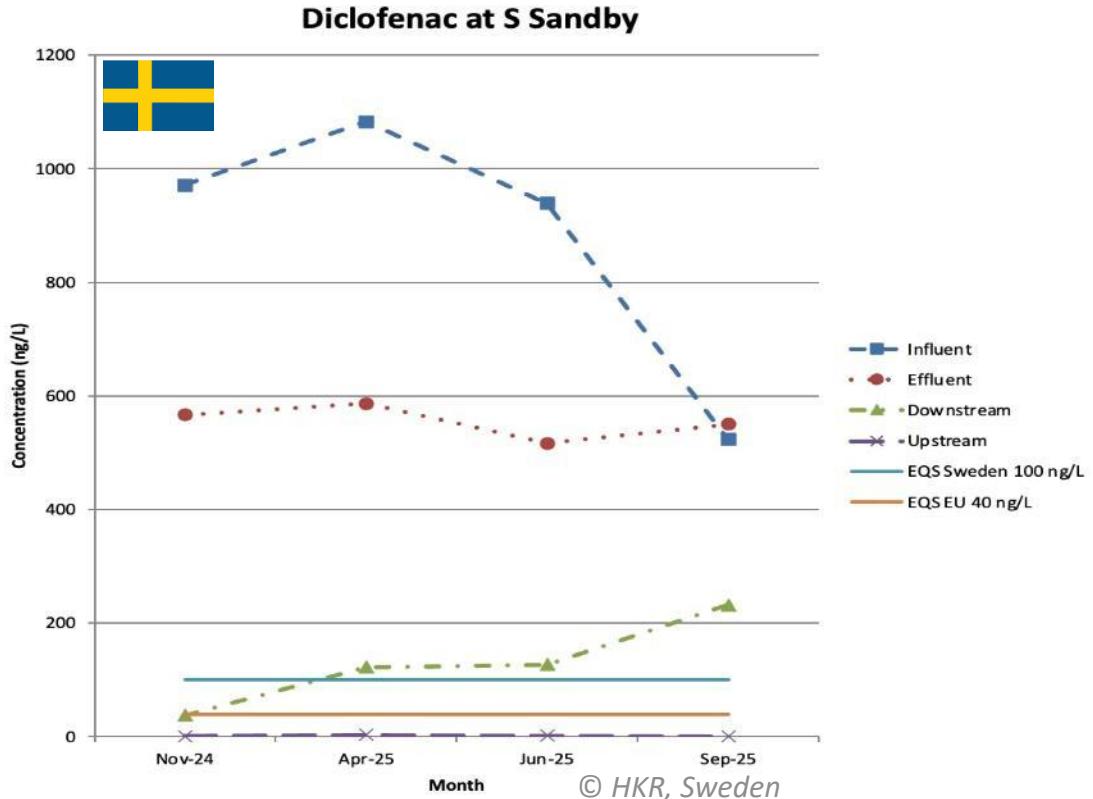
Results

Results – Observed trends

Sweden

Highest downstream concentration in September

- low removal efficiency & low flow

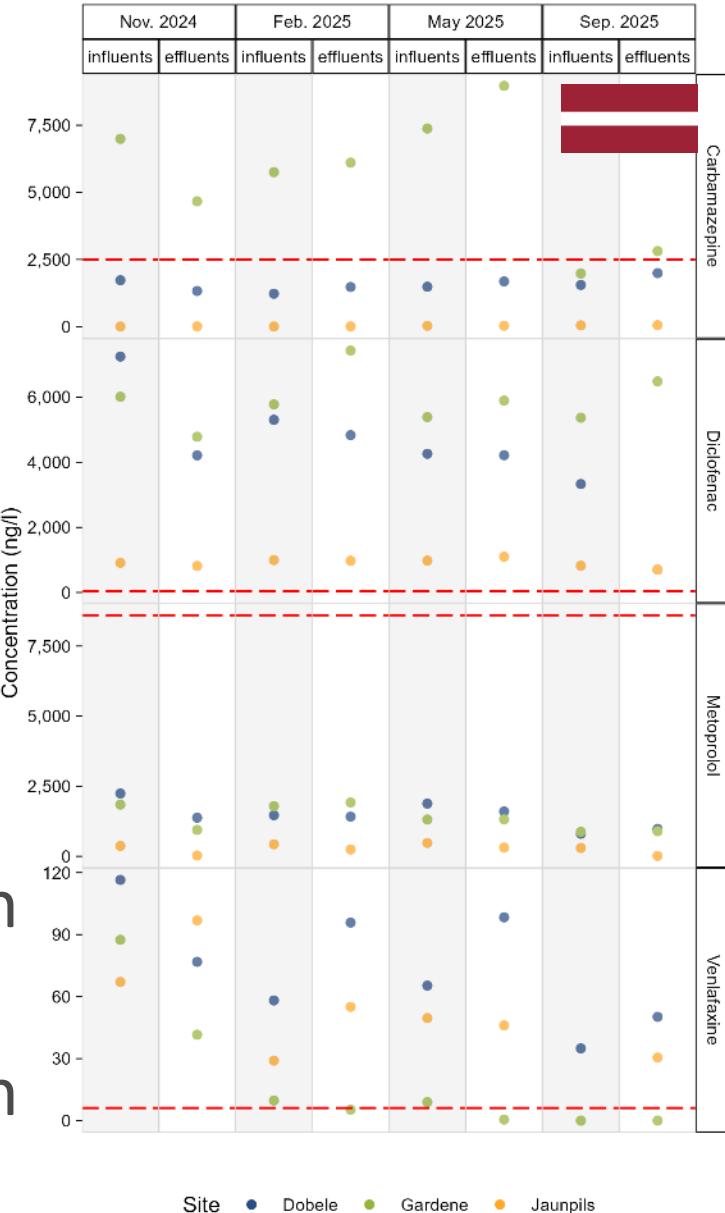


Latvia

Seasonal variation?

Variation between WWTPs

Variation between the substances



Results – Surface water

Finland - diclofenac

Three main tributaries with different colors

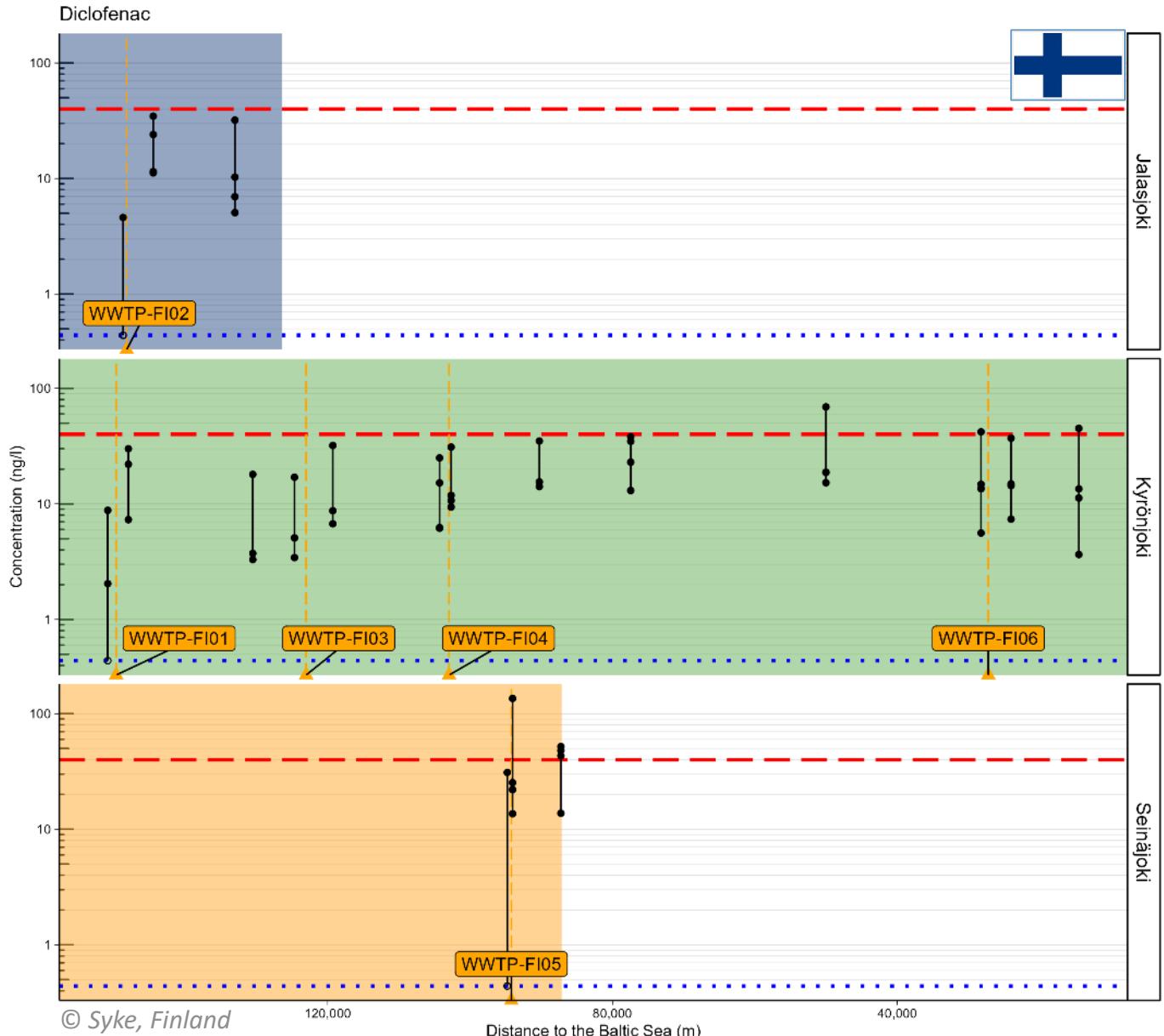
Distance to sea in x-axis

Orange vertical lines WWTPs

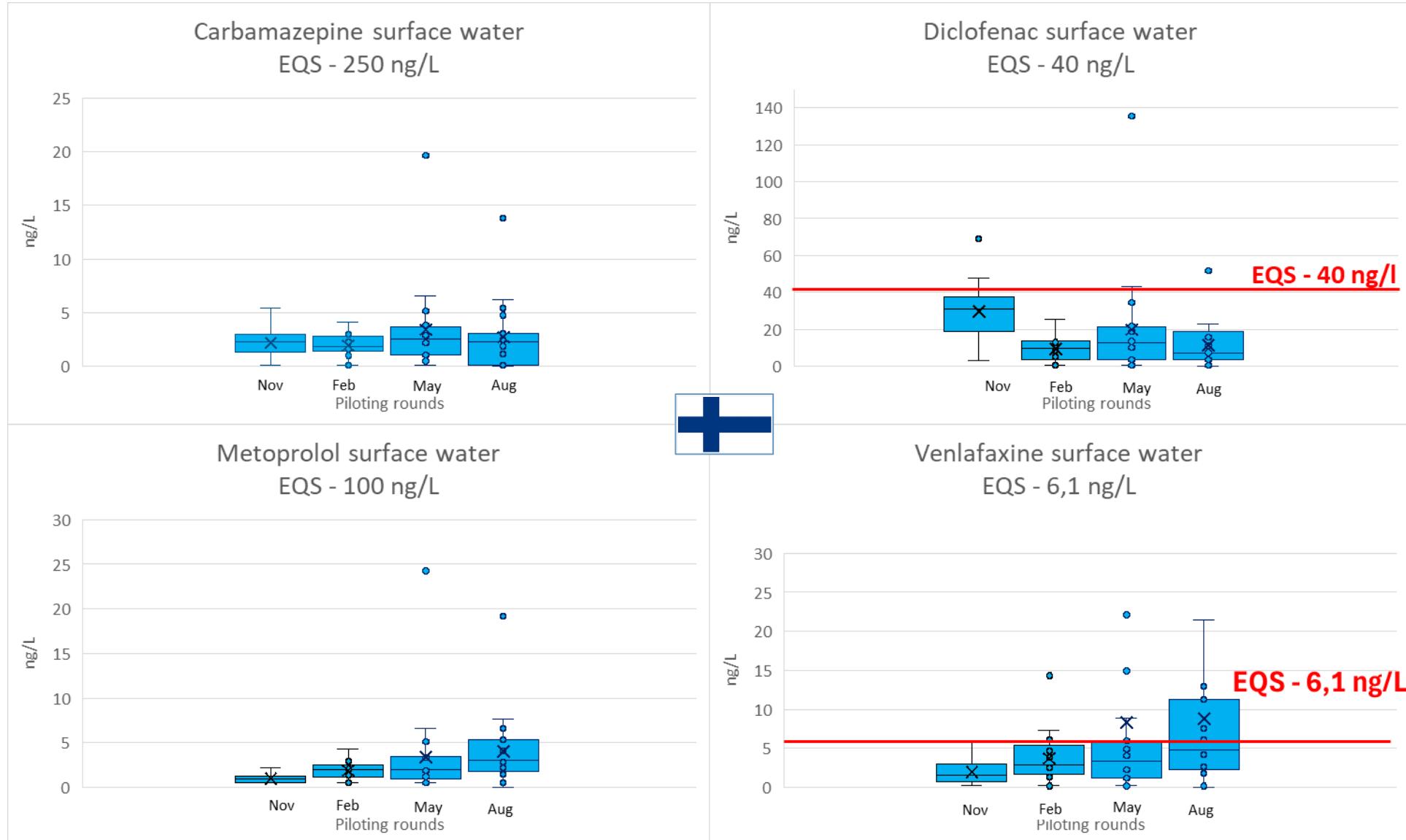
Red dashed line EQS

Concentrations higher after WWTPs

Accumulation towards the river mouth?



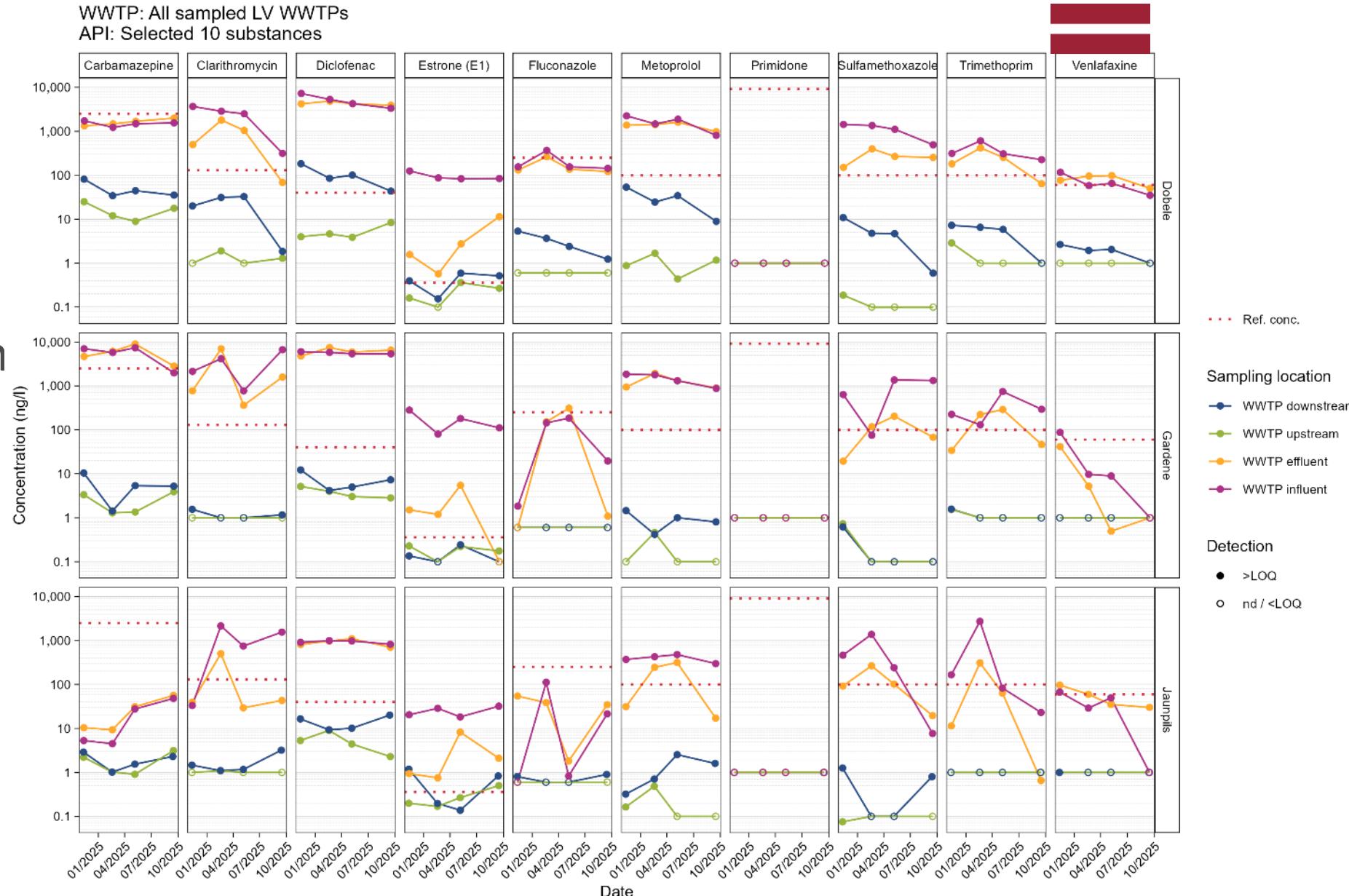
Results – Surface water



Results – Wastewater Latvia

Varying timetrends

- Mostly down in WWTP influent/effluent and downstream
- Differences in API behavior
- Differences in WWTPs



Results – Removal rates

Finland

Piloting round	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	Spring	Summer
WWTP	Jalasjärvi				Kauhajoki				Kurikka				Ilmajoki				Seinäjoki			
Carbamazepine	36	38	63	7	21	-15	-40	-90	-24	-15	-47	-167	3	0	38	-14	10	-50	-6	-63
Diclofenac	-5	27	49	28	20	70	46	46	-8	76	29	-9	5	9	63	-36	38	35	41	34

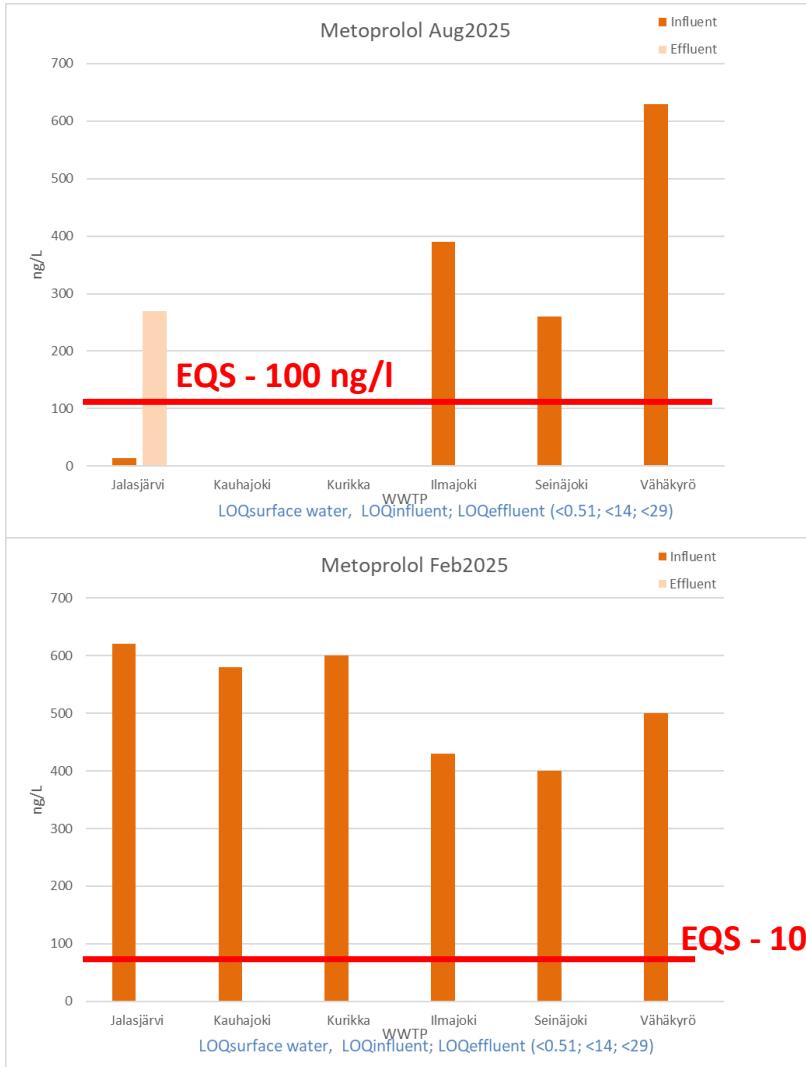
Poland

Piloting round	Autumn	winter	Autumn	Winter	Autumn	Winter	Autumn	Winter	Removal rate >80
WWTP 	WWTP Kożyczkowo		WWTP Lębork		WWTP Linia		WWTP Łeba		Removal rate <0
Carbamazepine	17,9	-63,8	3,1	-20,6	-1,7	-10,5	1,5	-146,9	
Diclofenac	42,0	-1,1	49,0	10,5	42,4	8,6	36,0	-41,7	
Metoprolol	29,5	40,1	59,4	34,1	60,9	43,4	64,8	-20,7	
Venlafaxine	-33,0	-59,5	20,4	-9,4	21,4	-153,3	-4,7	-84,7	

Latvia

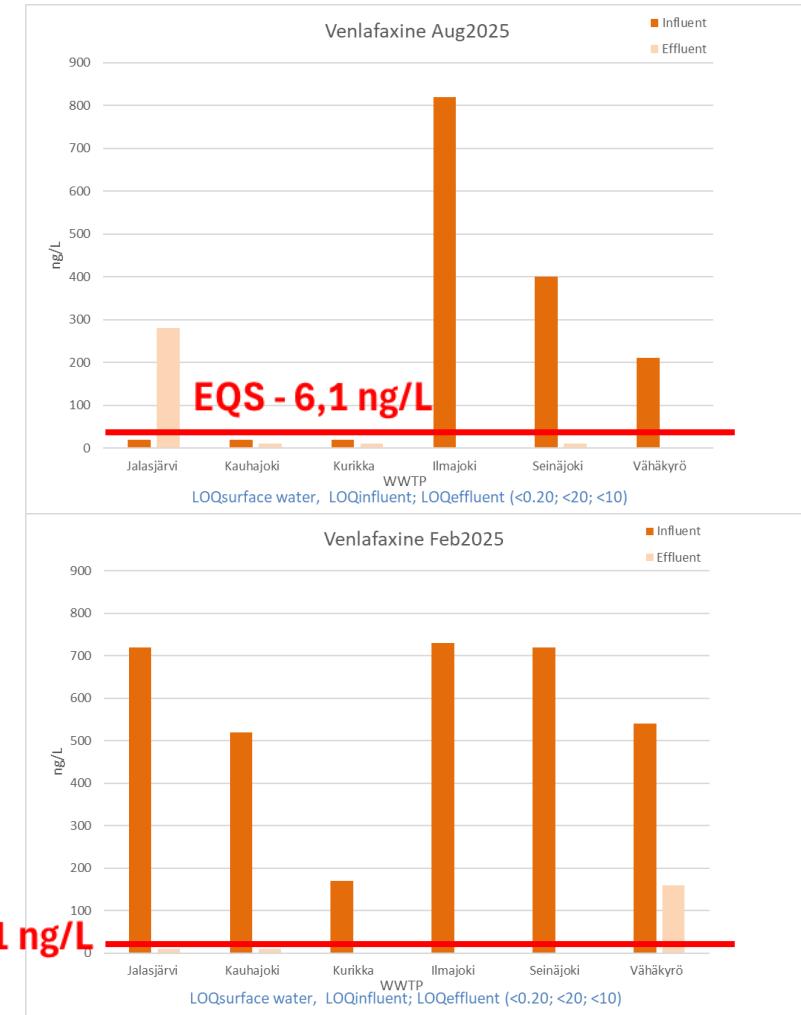
season	autumn	winter	spring	autumn	winter	spring	autumn	winter	spring
WWTP	Dobele	Dobele	Dobele	Jaunpils	Jaunpils	Jaunpils	Gardene	Gardene	Gardene
carbamazepine	23	-20	-13	-96	-107	-13	33	-6	-22
diclofenac	42	9	1	10	2	-12	20	-29	-9
metoprolol	39	4	15	92	43	34	49	-7	19
venlafaxine	34	-65	-51	-44	-90	7	52	46	94

Results – Challenges in the chemical analysis



NA results

Results < LOQ



Results – Challenges/sources of variation

Four sampling period

Five countries with varying API consumption patterns

WWTPs with varying processes

Removal efficiencies calculated from influent/effluent samples

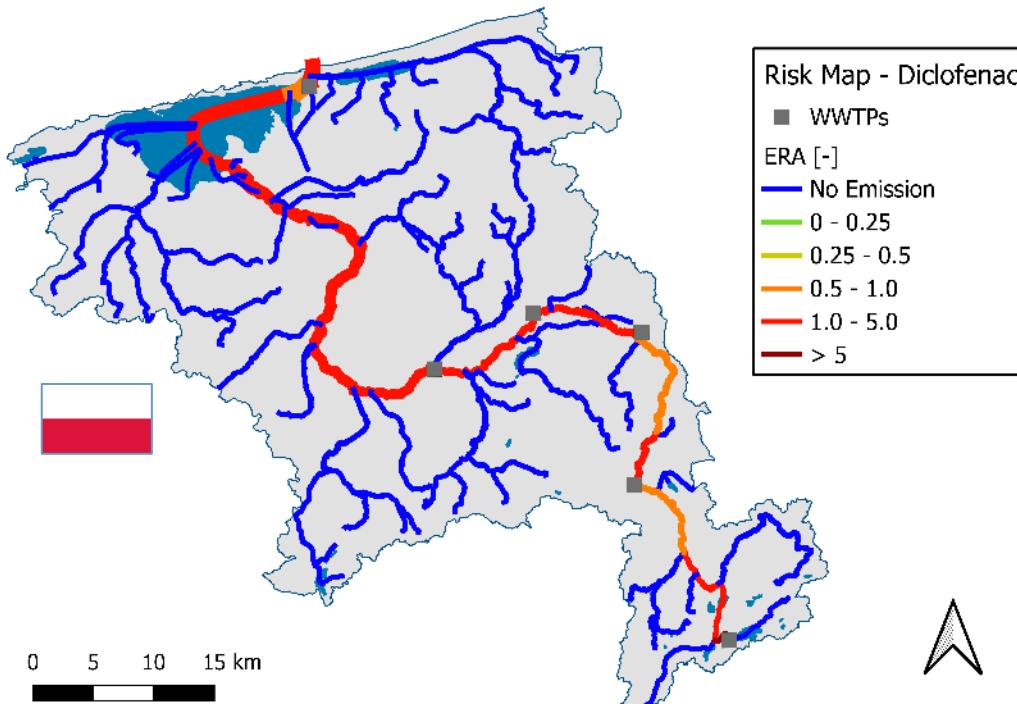
Chemical analysis

More monitoring is needed to better cover the sources of uncertainty!

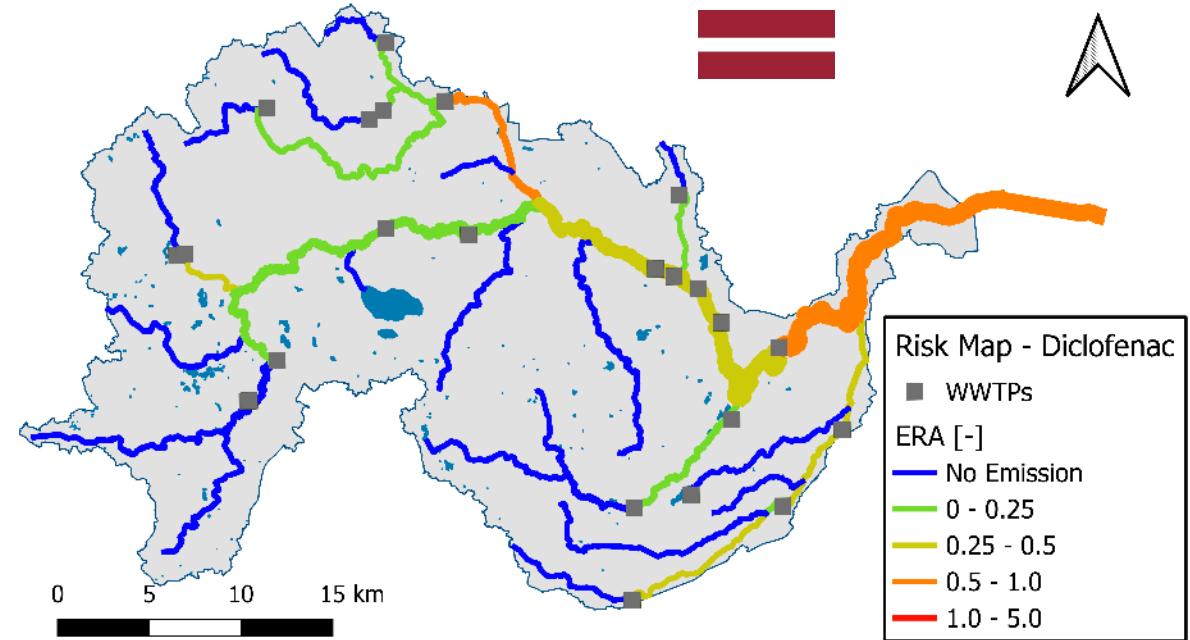
Risk maps – QGIS plugin for risk maps

Risk maps – Preliminary results

Diclofenac risk maps from Poland and Latvia



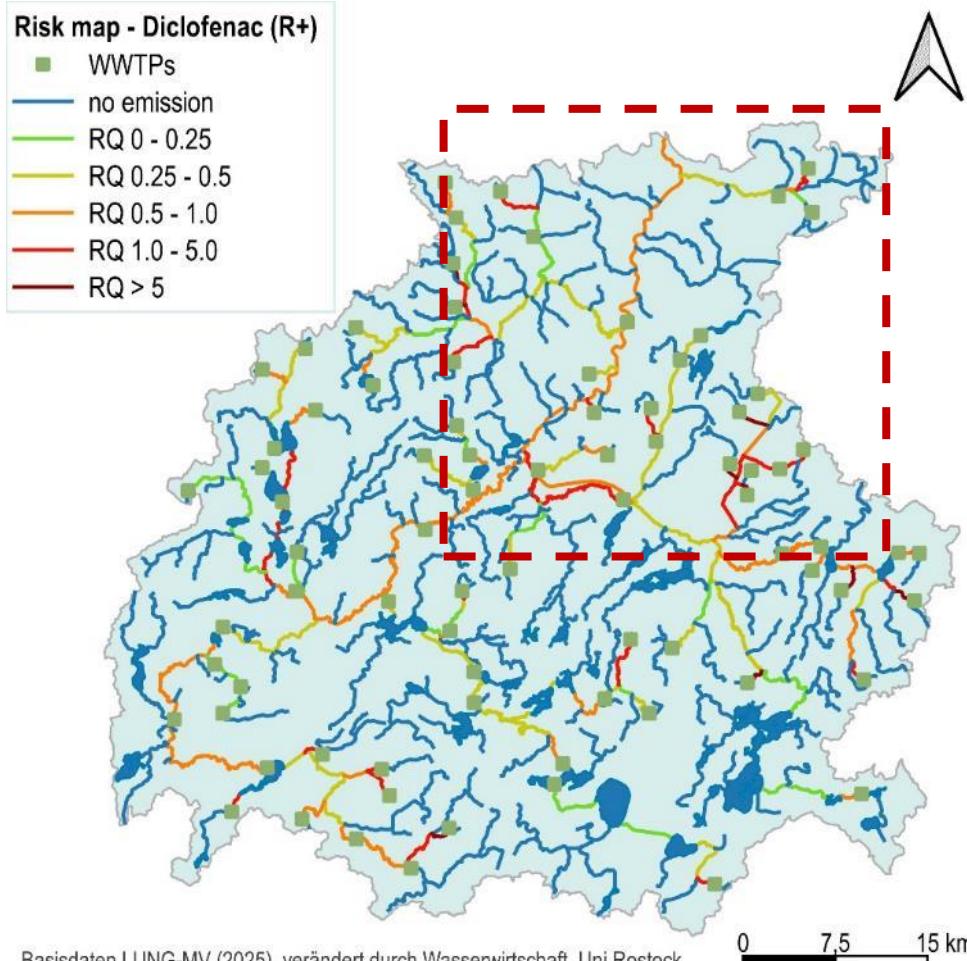
Mapa Podziału Hydrograficznego Polski w skali 1:10 000 (MPHP10k) & The urban waste water treatment map by EEA



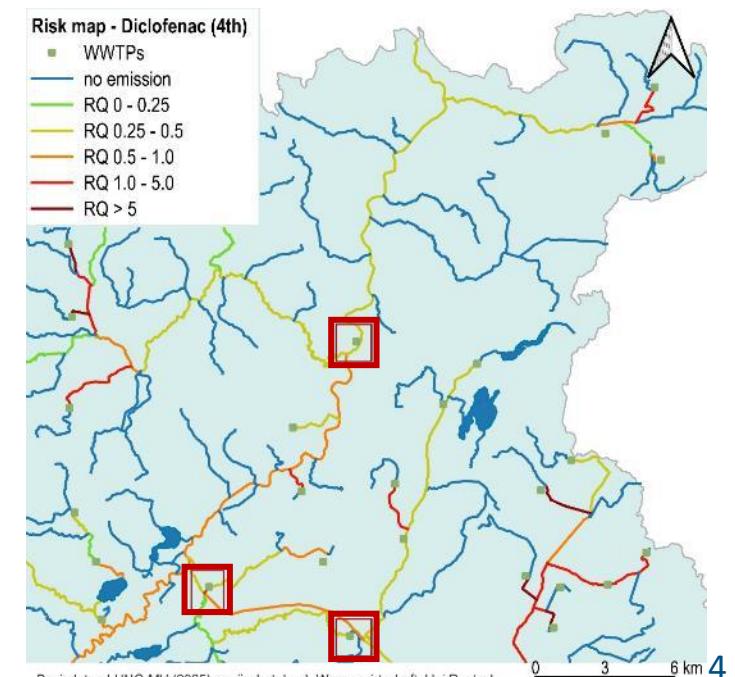
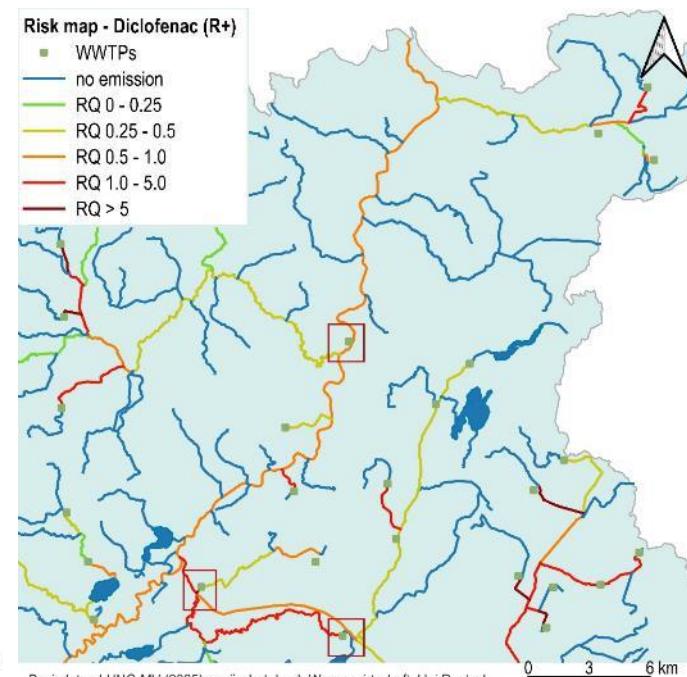
Latvian Environment, Geology and Meteorology Center, 2025. WWTP data: State Statistical Report "2-Water"

Risk maps – Preliminary results

Assessment of mitigation measures – Germany



Mitigation scenario:
Quaternary treatment for all 3 WWTP > 10.000 PE



Lessons learned - Piloting

Common lessons

- Collaboration with local/regional authorities and operators in sampling
- Keep record of the metadata to ensure good interpretation of data
- A strong team can push boundaries and achieve great result

Specific details

- Further clarification of the wastewater directive from the EU is needed
- One year of piloting data might be unreliable
- Correct sample management is critical, chemical analysis challenging
- Seasonal variations especially in smaller wastewater treatment plants

Future steps

- Chemical analyses finished (including the re-analyzed German samples)
- First risk maps using QGIS plugin produced
- QGIS plugin started to be taught to local operators at the piloting areas
- New piloting areas under survey



Future steps

- Validation/calibration of the model with monitoring data
- QGIS final development phase, publicly available in 2026.

APRIORA takes steps towards the better control of micropollutant emissions,
this work needs to be continued!

Conclusions - Trends

Trends seen

- Surfacewater concentrations higher after WWTPs
- Concentrations higher in low flow seasons

Trends not seen/unclear trends

- Influent/effluent concentrations at WWTPs

Conclusions - Piloting

- Monitoring is challenging and expensive => modelling is a potential way to assess the risks
- Many sources of variation in the monitoring data
- Removal rates are well below the required 80% and variation between the treatment plants and substances is great
- Better information on threshold concentrations (especially for AMR and health risks) is needed
- More data and better understanding on the micropollutants is needed



Co-funded by
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Thank you!

Olli Leino

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