Mapping key pollutants in the English Channel region: the Channel Catchments Cluster (3C) cross-border project.

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The EU Water Framework Directive was a response to concerns about the previous disparate ways in which water quality was managed under Member State law and early European Directives. Within this context, the Interreg IVA France (Channel) England Region established the ‘sustainable environmental development of this common space’ as one of its priorities to integrate areas that face common problems. The wide variety of cooperative cross-border projects have brought together UK and French scientists and environmental managers to develop practical environmental management tools for the region (3Cs cluster). Using the Solent in the UK as a case study, maps of key pollutants (*e.g.* metals such as Zn and Cu) will be produced to assess their spatial diversity within the sediment. The incorporation of historical datasets will also provide a temporal component. The inclusion of bioavailable fractions (using sequential extraction methods) will enable the pollutants to be linked to the tissue concentrations of key benthic species such as the polychaete *Nereis virens* and possible impacts. Not only will this information provide a detailed account of the water quality of key areas of the English Channel, but it will also highlight the gaps in the data and sampling regimes that are necessary to achieve good environmental status for the future, thus ensuring more effective European environmental policy regarding the long-term protection and conservation of aquatic ecosystems.