
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations make provision for the purpose of implementing Directive [2000/60/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23rd October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (O.J. No. L327, 22.12.2000, p. 1), known as the Water Framework Directive (“the Directive”). The Directive can be accessed at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en>.

The Regulations require a new, strategic planning process to be established for the purposes of managing, protecting and improving the quality of water resources. That process applies to the river basin district and the part of each international river basin district falling within Northern Ireland. A general duty is placed on the Department of the Environment (“the Department”) and other specified Northern Ireland departments to exercise relevant functions in a manner which secures compliance with the Directive; a further general duty is placed on the Department to ensure that the requirements of the Directive for the achievement of its environmental objectives are co-ordinated (regulation 3). The river basin district and the international river basin districts which are shared between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are identified under regulation 4 by reference to a map deposited at the offices of the Department at Calvert House, 23 Castle Place, Belfast, BT1 1FY. A copy of the map can be accessed through the Department’s website: <http://www.doeni.gov.uk>.

General responsibility for ensuring that the Directive is given effect in the river basin district and the part of each international river basin district falling within Northern Ireland lies with the Department. It is required to carry out detailed analyses and monitoring in each district (regulations 5 and 9); it must ensure that an economic analysis is carried out (regulation 6); it must identify (in conjunction with the Department for Regional Development) certain waters used for the abstraction of drinking water (regulation 7); and a register must be established of those waters and certain other protected areas (regulation 8). In addition to its role under regulation 7, the Department for Regional Development must provide the Department with certain information which forms part of the economic analysis (regulation 6) and both the Department and the Department for Regional Development must ensure that water pricing policies provide incentives for efficient water use (regulation 10).

Having carried out the analytical and preparatory work required by regulations 5 to 9, the Department must prepare proposals for environmental objectives and a programme of measures for the river basin district and the part of each international river basin district falling within Northern Ireland (regulation 11). Those objectives will translate the generic environmental objectives of the Directive into specific objectives which take account of the particular situation in each district. The preparation of proposals for environmental objectives and a programme of measures must include public involvement.

The environmental objectives and programmes of measures, along with the results of the Department’s earlier technical work, must then be brought together in the preparation of a river basin management plan for each district (regulation 12). In the case of an international river basin district, the Department must ensure co-ordination with the relevant competent authority in the Republic of Ireland with the aim of producing a single plan. The Department must take various steps to ensure public involvement in the preparation of each plan and must take account of any representations received (regulation 13). On publishing a plan, the Department must ensure that it is brought to the attention of the public and those interested in or affected by it (regulation 14). The Department must review and update each plan (regulation 15) and may publish supplementary plans (regulation 16).

Status: *This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.*

Regulation 17 requires the Department and public bodies to have regard to river basin management plans and supplementary plans when exercising functions in relation to the river basin district or the part of an international river basin district falling within Northern Ireland. The Regulations also make supplementary provision in respect of the publication of information by the Department, the provision of information and assistance by public bodies, and the giving of guidance to public bodies on the implementation of the Directive (regulations 18 to 20).

A Regulatory Impact Assessment has been prepared in connection with these Regulations. A copy can be obtained from Environmental Policy Division, Department of the Environment, 20-24 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2GP or through the Department's website: <http://www.doeni.gov.uk>.