

Strategic Environmental Assessment for River Basin Management Plans and Programmes of Measures

On behalf of the competent authority for the portions of the 3 International River Basin Districts (IRBD) lying in Northern Ireland, RPS consultants are notifying relevant non-statutory consultees of the scoping of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) and Programme of Measures (POMs).

Due to the scale, context and potential environmental impacts of the RBMP and POMs, they come under European Communities Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment (SEA Directive). The SEA Directive has been incorporated into Northern Ireland law through Statutory Rule No. 280 of 2004.

At this early stage in the SEA process, it is not required to contact non-statutory consultees; however it would be beneficial to involve the NI Implementation Working Group and the NI Stakeholder Forum from the very beginning. RPS has asked me to circulate this notice to Forum members who may wish to comment on the SEA process for the RBMPs and POMs.

Following this scoping stage there will be further formal consultations; therefore if there are no comments at present, there will be more opportunities to add to the assessment.

In this stage of the scoping process, RPS are looking to establish the range of environmental issues and the level of detail to be included in the Environmental Report for the IRBDs and RBD. Attached is a short draft template of the Scoping Report, and RPS would like you to review the method/framework for assessment and come back with any comments.

Submissions or observations in relation to the scope and level of detail of information to be included in the Environmental Reports may be made to Eilish Clarke of EHS, Water Management Unit (eilish.clarke@doeni.gov.uk) by the 23rd November 2007.

Further information on Strategic Environmental Assessment in Northern Ireland can be found on the following Webpage:

<http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/biodiversity/>

The recently published scoping reports for the RBDs in England, Wales and Scotland can be found on the following Webpages for guidance:

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/yourenv/consultations/1395553/1405820/1862681/?version=1&lang=e>

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/wfd/rbmp/index.htm>

Brenda Cunning
Planning & Environmental Policy Group, DOE
Secretary to WFD Stakeholder Forum

1. November 2007