

**SCREENING FOR EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
WATER ABSTRACTION & IMPOUNDMENT (LICENSING)  
REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND)  
2006**

**NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 1998 (SECTION 75)  
STATUTORY EQUALITY OBLIGATIONS**

**1.0 General Details**

*1.1 Title of proposed Regulations:*

Water Abstraction and Impoundment (Licensing) Regulations  
(Northern Ireland) 2006.

*1.2 Brief summary of the scope and aims of the proposed Regulations:*

At present, there is no specific regulatory control or management of water resources in Northern Ireland. Groundwater and surface water, up to very significant volumes, can generally be abstracted with either no or only very limited assessment of the impact on the environment and on other water users. Some limited control can be exercised through planning powers where the engineered infrastructure of abstraction requires planning authorisation, where the intended water abstraction is so large as to fall under environmental impact assessment legislation or indirectly where an associated discharge results as a consequence of the abstraction. The EC Habitats Directive requires that projects such as water abstraction and impoundment which may have a significant adverse affect on sites protected under that Directive should be subject to assessment and consent controls. The absence of any comprehensive controls in Northern Ireland means that there is no mechanism for identifying the effects of these activities on protected sites.

The EC Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC requires that controls over water abstraction and impoundment be introduced to ensure achievement of the Directive's objectives for water bodies. As a result it will be necessary to establish a new legislative structure governing water abstraction and impoundments.

The new legislation will make provision for:

- (1) The authorisation of abstractions and impoundments in accordance with general conditions. These are a set of mandatory rules that can be applied to low risk activities and reduce the regulatory burden on operators.
- (2) The licensing of abstractions and impoundments subject to site specific conditions.

Provision has also been made for the modification, transfer, surrender and revocation of licences, enforcement notices where remedial work may be necessary, offences and appeals.

## **2.0 Screening Analysis**

All public authorities in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland are required under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 to identify those policies which are likely to have the greatest impact on equality of opportunity and community relations. This is assessed against the nine categories listed below.

- I. Persons of different religious beliefs
- II. Persons of different political opinions
- III. Persons of different racial groups
- IV. Persons of different ages
- V. Persons of different marital status
- VI. Persons of different sexual orientation

- VII. Men and women generally
- VIII. Persons with a disability and persons without
- IX. Persons with dependants and persons without

2.1 Is there any evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups within any of the nine categories.

NO

2.2 Is there any evidence that particular groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the proposals?

NO

The draft Regulations relate to the licensing of abstraction and impoundment of water. There is no evidence that particular groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the proposals.

2.3 Is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the proposals or by otherwise working with others in Government or the community at large?

NO

2.4 Have consultations in the past with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that these proposals could create problems which are specific to them?

NO

### **3.0 Impact Assessment Decision**

3.1 Full impact assessment procedure is confined to those policies considered likely to have significant implications for equality of opportunity and community relations.

3.2 Taking account of the Screening Analysis in Section 2.0, do these proposals need to be submitted to a full equality impact assessment?

NO

**4.0 Reason for Decision**

4.1 As a result of the Screening Analysis in Section 2.0, it is considered that there will be no significant implications for equality of opportunity or community relations as a result of the introduction of these Regulations.