

WFD INTER-DEPARTMENTAL IMPLEMENTATION BOARD (WFD-IIB)

**Draft Minutes of 3rd meeting, held on Wednesday 16th November 2005
in Conference Room 601c, Clarence Court, Belfast**

Present:

Jo Aston (JA)	<i>Water Service</i>
John Clarke (JC)	<i>Rivers Agency</i>
Mick Cory (MC)	<i>DCAL Fisheries</i>
Dave Foster (DF)	<i>DOE EHS</i>
Judena Goldring (JG)	<i>DOE EPG</i>
Ronnie Jordan (RJ)	<i>DARD Policy</i>
Stephen Peover (SP)	<i>DOE</i>
Mark Pinkerton (MP)	<i>DETI</i>
Roy Ramsay (RR)	<i>DOE EHS</i>
David Sterling (DS)	<i>DRD</i>
Jim Thompson (JT)	<i>Planning Service</i>
Claire Vincent (CV)	<i>DOE EPG</i>

Apologies:

Malcolm Beatty	<i>Forest Service</i>
Katherine Bryan	<i>Water Service</i>
Noel Cornick	<i>DARD Fisheries</i>
Dr Harry Gracey	<i>DARD Countryside Mgt</i>
Roy McClenaghan	<i>DARD Delivery</i>
Dr George McIlroy	<i>DARD Science</i>
Mary McIvor	<i>DFP</i>
Paul Sweeney	<i>OFMDFM</i>

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Stephen Peover opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending, especially representatives who were attending for the first time. A brief outline of the agenda followed.

2. Minutes of 2nd meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 27 April 2005, were agreed.

3. Terms of Reference

Stephen Peover highlighted that the proposed amendment to the Board's Terms of Reference had been carried out, and circulated with the minutes of the previous meeting. He pointed out that the TOR were still open to amendment, if and when required. The TOR were taken as agreed.

4. Administrative Arrangements for Delivery of WFD in Northern Ireland

As requested at the Board's previous meeting, a draft policy discussion paper was introduced, outlining the administrative arrangements for the delivery of WFD in Northern Ireland. The paper highlights the legal requirements of the WFD Regulations, and outlines DOE suggestions for co-ordinating structures and activities. It also contains a draft overview of the functions of DRD, DCAL, DARD and DOE as related to the water environment.

SP stressed that input was required from the other Departments, and it was suggested that the paper be circulated to the Interdepartmental Working Group. DS pointed out that DRD would need to

update their Annex, with details of their future roles. MP asked for more details to be added for other relevant Departments or Agencies, e.g. DETI, GSNI etc. He suggested that this could be addressed through bi-lateral meetings. CV agreed, commenting that DOE know their own role but need input from others on their functions.

MC agreed that the paper should go to the Working Group, saying it was necessary to explore the practicalities and how work programmes could be skewed in different ways. SP agreed that this was a 'live' document and would evolve over time. He commented on the connection with the Review of Environmental Governance which was announced in the summer, as highlighting the complexity of this type of issue would be useful to the enquiry team.

Action: EPG to arrange bi-lateral with DETI.

Action: EPG to circulate paper to the Interdepartmental Working Group, requesting comments by mid-January, to enable discussions at the Group's next meeting in February.

Action: ALL to consider paper and provide additional comments or input as appropriate.

5. Update on implementation

WFD Implementation Strategy:

CV gave an update on the WFD Implementation Strategy, which she introduced by presentation at the previous meeting. She advised that drafts had been circulated between EHS and EPG, and that a meeting was being held on Friday 18th November between these 2 groups, with a primary agenda item being the draft strategy. CV said that the strategy would need to be linked to other documents, such as guidance, memoranda of understanding, timelines etc., and that the input of other Departments would be required.

Action: CV to circulate latest draft of Implementation Strategy to the Board before Christmas.

Bi-lateral Meetings:

EPG and EHS have held a number of bi-lateral meetings since the previous Board meeting. The meeting with OFMDFM was held to discuss the Review of Public Administration, highlighting the importance of attempting to achieve coterminosity between new council structures and the River Basin Districts. It was recognised that within the wider scheme of the Review, water management was not seen as a high priority.

The meeting with DARD was used to discuss proposed measures of the new agri-environment programme. It was highlighted that DFP have some reservations about the scheme, related to the entry level. RJ explained that DARD wish to keep options open and are looking at running a pilot scheme, to test cross-compliance, core countryside management and value for money.

CV put forward that DOE and DARD could meet with DFP to explain the water quality management benefit of some of the measures (e.g. buffer strips, hedging).

Action: CV and **RJ** to arrange DOE-DARD dialogue to work out parameters of pilot scheme.

Action: CV and **RJ** to arrange DOE-DARD meeting with DFP.

CV explained that she and Clifford Henry of EHS had attended a meeting of the board of the Water Service, to outline the background and implications of WFD. She mentioned the proposed technical review of the UKTAG's Environmental Standards Report, which is due in early 2006.

DF stated that new standards would play into the 1st periodic review of the GoCo, in 2009, and that any WFD environmental standards would be part of any licence (Water Service or other) by 2009-2012. CV advised that Scotland are planning to start using new standards by the end of 2006, while England and Wales would be later. Northern Ireland needs to assess appropriate timing (2009-2012 to establish and implement programmes of measures).

DS confirmed that DRD are working on a paper on water charging connected to Article 9 of the WFD, as requested by the Stakeholder Forum.

CV explained that EPG are in contact with DRD about the Regional Development Strategy, with the aim of inputting a revision of the environmental aspects of the document.

Economic Aspects:

CV referred to Clifford Henry's summary of the Collaborative Research Programme at the previous meeting and explained that the DRD economist working with EPG has produced a pilot study proposal. There are some concerns about the complexity of the CRP methodology, and it is recognised that NI need to test this via a pilot study, in an area which is data rich or well understood.

It has been proposed that the study will look at phosphorus controls in a catchment. The Working Group had queried whether this would retrace work already done. However, it was agreed that the exercise would build on existing work to test the methodology.

CV stressed the importance of getting other Departments and Agencies involved. In order to set Less Stringent Objectives within the River Basin Management Plan, it is necessary to prove Disproportionate Cost (or technical infeasibility). Such proof can only be achieved through the application of economics.

RR asked if the study would be carried out in a freshwater context, and whether this mattered. DF replied that it did not really – Phosphorus a good topic for the CRP, allowing simple, quick studies, and as it comes from different sources (e.g. washing powder, fertiliser), the pilot could look at the cost-effectiveness of a range of measures. Other agencies are doing their own studies, and the economics pilot could be carried out in the same area.

SP asked how long it would take to carry out the pilot. DF replied that it could be completed by the end of January, if the data is readily available.

The discussion moved on to the need for economists within each department. DS described this as a problem for Water Service and OFREG, who are finding it difficult to recruit. He suggested speaking to Mike Brennan of DFP to discuss this issue in general.

CV agreed that a presentation on the pilot study would be given at the next meeting, outlining problems, conclusions etc.

Action: EPG/EHS to give presentation on economics pilot study at next meeting.

Update on Interdepartmental Working Group:

DF advised the Board that there have been 2 meetings of the Interdepartmental Working Group, which has around 20 organisations involved with it. The level of engagement is increasing, with participants expressing views on key issues and updating on their activities.

He explained that a presentation on the forthcoming Environmental Standards report had been made to the group, and proposed that a 'cut-version' could be made at the next Board meeting. This version could involve some discussion of the implications of the new standards.

Action: EHS to give presentation on the new environmental standards report at next meeting.

DF also informed the Board that the Working Group had discussed the proposed economics pilot study, and had been asked to consider the need for sub-groups. The areas for these sub-groups could be the economics pilot study, an assessment of plans and programmes from across government, and Marine issues (e.g. Coastal Zone Management, Ports/Harbours etc.). The Secretariat will be issuing Terms of Reference for these sub-groups.

DF advised that the pilot study group would be formed quickly, and that the plans/programmes group would be in place by the next Working Group meeting in February.

SP raised the issue of economic versus environmental regulation of water services and the new periodic review process for the fixing of water charges. DS offered to table a paper on this subject for discussion at the next meeting.

Action: DS to circulate paper on economic-environmental regulation to Board.

6. Update on Stakeholder engagement

CV advised the Board that the WFD Stakeholder Forum has had 2 meetings. The first meeting set the strategic context for the implementation of WFD (e.g. Regional Development Strategy) and involved good question and answer sessions, with issues such as sustainable housing and septic tanks being raised.

The second meeting included some items suggested by the stakeholders, for example a presentation on the Water Reform process and compliance. From this came a request for DRD to produce a paper on Article 9 compliance (water pricing). DS confirmed that this paper should be ready for the next stakeholder meeting.

CV described the stakeholders' discussions on septic tanks and the issue of free emptying (in terms of impact on water quality, enforcement etc.). The Forum were also given a presentation on the environmental standards report, and then were asked to take part in an exercise to gather views on significant water management issues (SWMI). This is the first stage in active discussions with stakeholders to inform the report required under Article 14 of the WFD by December 2007.

A presentation on abstraction was given, describing the basic measures and what the licensing system might involve. CV noted that a further presentation on abstraction had been given to members of the Aquaculture sector the previous day.

The next meeting of the Forum will look at the Timetable and Workplan for the production of the River Basin Management Plans, which is required by December 2006.

The Board offered their condolences on the recent passing of Newell McCreight, who has been a member of the Stakeholder Forum.

6. AOB

The next meeting of the Board will be held in March/April 2006.