



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY HYDROPOWER WORKING GROUP

The Environment Agency Hydropower Working Group (EAHWG) was conceived under the auspices of the Cabinet Office Better Regulations Unit based on a need to streamline the process of water abstraction licence applications. The Catchment Abstraction Management Scheme (CAMS) process was ongoing and now had to incorporate the requirements of the European Water Framework Directive (WFD). This was putting an extra burden on the existing processes.

The original purpose of the group was to understand the licensing process and identify any issues in that process.

A proposal was submitted to the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI – now BERR) to develop Good Practice Guides (GPGs) for the environmental assessment of proposed hydro developments. The DTI, the Environment Agency (EA) and industry have provided funds to cover this work. The British Hydropower Association (BHA) has been contracted to organise the process with close monitoring by the EA.

The scope of the GPGs was specified and two consultants appointed to cover work in four areas:

- The Environmental Audit
- Flow Measurement
- Residual Flow
- Fish Screening and Protection

The Guides will be launched at the BHA Conference at Birnam, Scotland on 11 October 2007.

It is expected that the guides will help officers of the EA (and eventually Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) in Scotland and the Environment and Heritage Service in Northern Ireland) to simplify the licensing process and provide a more consistent approach nationally.

EAHWG will continue its work by monitoring the effect of the GPGs and addressing issues which will affect the UK's environment agencies and stakeholders in new and existing hydropower projects.

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