



DET KONGELEGE
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT

Royal Ministry of the Environment

Environment Directorate-General
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
BELGIUM

Att.: Joachim D'Eugenio

Your ref

Our ref
200500130

Date

12 JAN 2007

Implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in Norway

Dear Sir/Madam,

We refer to conversation between Joachim D'Eugenio, European Commission, and Runar Mathisen, Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, at the meeting of the Water Directors, which took place in Finland on 30 November-1 December 2006. It was then agreed that Norway would submit some general information on our national efforts to implement the Water Framework Directive. Such information was subsequently to be included in a report currently prepared by the Commission on the implementation of the Directive across Europe.

Although the formal incorporation into the EEA Agreement has been delayed, we have for several years actively prepared our national implementation of the Directive. In this context, we would like to highlight that Norway, since its adoption in 2001, has greatly benefited from taking part in the Common Implementation Strategy for the EU Water Framework Directive.

Attached is an informal note prepared by the Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, describing in some further detail work already carried out in Norway in implementing this Directive. Importantly, a preliminary characterisation of Norwegian waters has been finalised, and results will be made publicly available shortly.

Furthermore, on 15 December 2006 a Regulation on a Framework for Water Management (the Water Management Regulation), was adopted by the Norwegian government. The Regulation, which entered into force on 1 January 2007, will implement the Directive into Norwegian law. The Regulation establishes nine river basin districts – or “water regions” - and identifies one County Governor as the competent authority for each river basin district. These County Governors will co-ordinate further implementation within their respective districts, in close co-operation with other relevant authorities, which in the future are all to combine their efforts in a “water region council”. Public involvement is encouraged, *i.a.* by

Postal address
PO Box 8013 Dep

0030 Oslo

Office address
Myntgt. 2

postmottak@md.dep.no
www.miljo.no

Telephone
+47 22 24 90 90

Vat no.
972 417 882

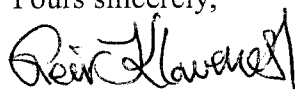
Department for Environmental
Data, Pollution Control and Eco-
efficiency
Telefax
+47 22 24 95 60


Our officer
Marit Solheim
+47 22 24 60 10

means of the establishment of “reference groups” with NGO participation in each river basin district.

We hope the information provided is in accordance with your needs at this stage. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of any further assistance or you have questions regarding the information provided. We look forward to the continued good co-operation with the European Commission in this matter.

Yours sincerely,


for Knut F. Kroepelien
Deputy Director General


Marit Solheim
Adviser

Copy:

Norwegian Pollution Control Authority, P.O. Box 8100 Dep, N-0032 Oslo, NORWAY
Mission of Norway to the EU, Rue Archimède 17, B-1000 Brussels, BELGIUM

Enclosure 1

Implementing the Water Framework Directive in Norway

Norway is a country with abundant water and Europe's longest coast line. Although the Water Framework Directive (WFD) is not yet part of the EEA agreement, Norway has given high priority to its follow-up, both nationally, and by taking part in the European Common Implementation Strategy.

In 2001, we started to prepare for implementation by focusing especially on characterisation, which we consider a major task due to Norway's high number of water bodies. In addition we looked at what could be done at the national level to help regional authorities (future Competent Authorities) to prepare for their tasks.

Here is a short summary of preparatory activities undertaken in Norway.

1. A new national regulation implementing the WFD in Norway

The regulation which transposes the WFD into Norwegian legislation was adopted on 15 December 2006 and entered into force on 1 January 2007. The Ministry of the Environment is the central Competent Authority. Nine County Governors act as competent authorities at the River Basin District level.

Norway's plan is:

- to report Article 3 to WISE by 1 January 2007 (this has been done).
- to report Article 5 to WISE by 22 March 2007 (preparations are under way)
- to apply the same deadlines as the Member States for a selected number of river basins including coastal waters and groundwaters.

2. Preparatory work on characterisation

- The river basins of Morsa and Suldal were selected as national demonstration projects with emphasis on the characterisation in 2001-2002.
- Thereafter Morsa was continued as a national pilot river basin whereas Suldal was continued as an international pilot river basin 2002-2006.
- A first preliminary characterisation of eight selected river basins took place in 2003.
- All river-stretches (numbering about 1.6 million!), lakes (about 255,000), as well as all coastal areas and aquifers were digitalised during 2003-2004.
- Description of reference conditions and the development of national water types and a new classification system (BIOCLASS) have been in progress since 2003.
- A set of guidelines for the characterisation process, including criteria for selection of candidates for HMBW, were made in 2003.
- A preliminary economic characterisation was made in 2003 and included baseline scenarios and estimated developments in different sectors as requested by the Directive.
- An advanced GIS-based characterisation tool was developed and used by consultants for the first round of preliminary characterisation in 2004, and by the County Governors for the second round performed in 2005/2006.

- A pilot project on the environmental ambitions and the planning of environmental measures was performed with regional authorities, municipalities and NGOs in the river Numedalslaagen in 2006.
- A project to develop a methodology for estimating the environmental potential for HMWB's took place in Numedalslaagen in 2006.

The whole country has now been preliminarily characterised and the results will be uploaded to WISE in early 2007. The total number of designated water bodies is more than 14,000. Roughly half of these are "not at risk" whereas a quarter are "possibly at risk" of not meeting the environmental objectives in the directive by 2015. The remaining quarter are "at risk" due to hydromorphological modifications, long range transported pollution (both airborne and ocean currents), alien species and local pollution sources.

3. Other preparatory work

- Stakeholders were involved in a project on Public Participation in 2004
- A national reference group was established in 2005
- The proposed new national regulation (see above) was sent to a large number of national, regional and local stakeholders and authorities in late 2005
- Four regional conferences were held in early 2006 (near 1000 participants) as part of the public hearing process
- We have established the web-site "Vannportalen" (alas in Norwegian only) in 2006, see http://www.vannportalen.no/fmt_hoved.asp?gid=31139&aid=&tid=31134&amid=&g31139=x&g31134=x

The initial Article 5 Characterisation will be put on "Vannportalen" in early 2007.

4. Cooperation between different governmental offices and sectors

A number of Ministries and Directorates and their regional offices are responsible for different parts of the water management in Norway. Different sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, hydropower, transport, roads, drinking water, health and environment are now working together at the national level to carry out the preparatory activities. We consider this cooperation / new way of working together to be of great advantage when the real implementation starts. In addition to the national and regional level, the local level (municipalities), will have an important role especially regarding planning of measures.