



**DET KONGELIGE  
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT**

*Royal Ministry of the Environment*

EFTA Surveillance Authority  
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1040 Brussels  
Belgium

Your ref

Our ref

Date

**6 SEPT 2010**

## **Voluntary river basin management plans adopted in Norway**

Madam/Sir,

We are pleased to inform you that the Norwegian Government on 11. June this year approved voluntary river basin management plans for Norway.

The transposition into Norwegian law of the Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (the Water Framework Directive) came into effect in January 2007. However, according to decision no 125/2007 of the EEA Joint Committee, the EEA/EFTA countries have extended deadlines for the implementation of many of the articles of the directive. Such extended deadlines apply inter alia to the production of river basin management plans and the establishment of programmes of measures.

However, to gain experience with river basin management planning, the Norwegian authorities decided to draft such plans on a voluntary basis for a limited number of water bodies already in the period between 2007 and 2010. Since this coincided with the deadlines for the first planning period for the EU-countries, our trial-period has also

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enabled us to take fully part in the mutual learning experience of the Common Implementation Strategy.

The planning process during this voluntary trial-and-learning period has aimed to be in accordance with the requirements of the Directive, as far as this has been possible at this for us very early stage of implementation of the Directive. Since our regulations came into effect as late as in 2007, we have had a more limited amount of time to produce these first plans. Therefore they only cover a limited number of water bodies. For the same reason our plans have certain shortcomings in level of detail. For instance, a number of the proposed measures need further deliberation and review before a final decision on their application can be made by the relevant sector authorities.

During the first planning cycle, Norway has been divided into 9 river basin districts, and approx. 16.000 water bodies. For management purposes, the water bodies are grouped into operational sub-districts ("vannområder"), of which there are approx. 120. In some instances a sub-district represents one river basin, in other instances it represents a collection of several small and similar river basins. The first plans cover about 20 % of the surface water in Norway.

Each plan has been elaborated by a river basin district board ("Vannregionutvalg") where sector authorities and local authorities are represented. The plans were adopted by the County Councils ("Fylkeskommuner") in November 2009, and approved by the national Government on 11. June 2010.

There are 9 river basin management plans, and each plan consists of three documents:

- The river basin district management plan elaborated by the river basin district board
- The formal adoption of the plans by the County Council (or County Councils in cases where the plan covers more than one county)
- The formal approval by the national Government for each of the district plans, including comments to be included in the plans

You will find these documents at the Norwegian Water Framework Directive site:

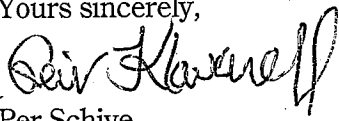
<http://www.vannportalen.no/enkel.aspx?m=56932>. The documents are also accessible on <http://cdr.eionet.europa.eu/no/eu/colp0r2w/wfdart13>.

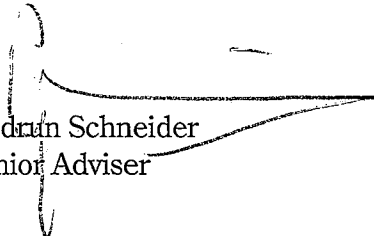
In addition you will receive paper copies of the documents by separate mail. Since these first plans represent only a trial-phase and cover a limited number of water bodies, we will not upload more detailed or technical information.

We are now starting the process of establishing river basin district management plans and programmes of measures covering all water bodies in Norway. We are looking

forward to continued active Norwegian participation in the Common Implementation Strategy.

Yours sincerely,

  
Per Schive  
Deputy Director General

  
Gudrun Schneider  
Senior Adviser