

Reforming Environmental Regulation in the UK



- Aims are to remove unnecessary regulatory burdens and to make it easier for businesses to comply with environmental obligations.
- Simplification of the landscape of environmental regulation - legislation, guidance, information requirements, inspections.
- Reducing burdens on SMEs is a priority.
- Ambition for significant progress in next two years - reforms to guidance, data reporting, “vertical” legislation.

Reform of environmental guidance

- Current situation: >6,000 environmental guidance documents, >100,000 pages spread over multiple websites. No common format or style.
Duplication.
- Reform aims to provide:
 - User-centred approach;
 - simple, clear and quick access to information in one place (www.gov.uk);
 - a single version of the truth - “Safe Harbour”.
- Expected time savings for business of >80%. Equivalent to c. £1bn saved over 10 years. Savings for government too.
- Plan to extend reform to all Defra guidance, including food and farming.

For example, batteries waste...

Before

- 31 government guidance documents/329 pages on batteries.
- Written around law and government processes.
- Significant overlap.
- Time-consuming, difficult to work out what it means and unclear.

After

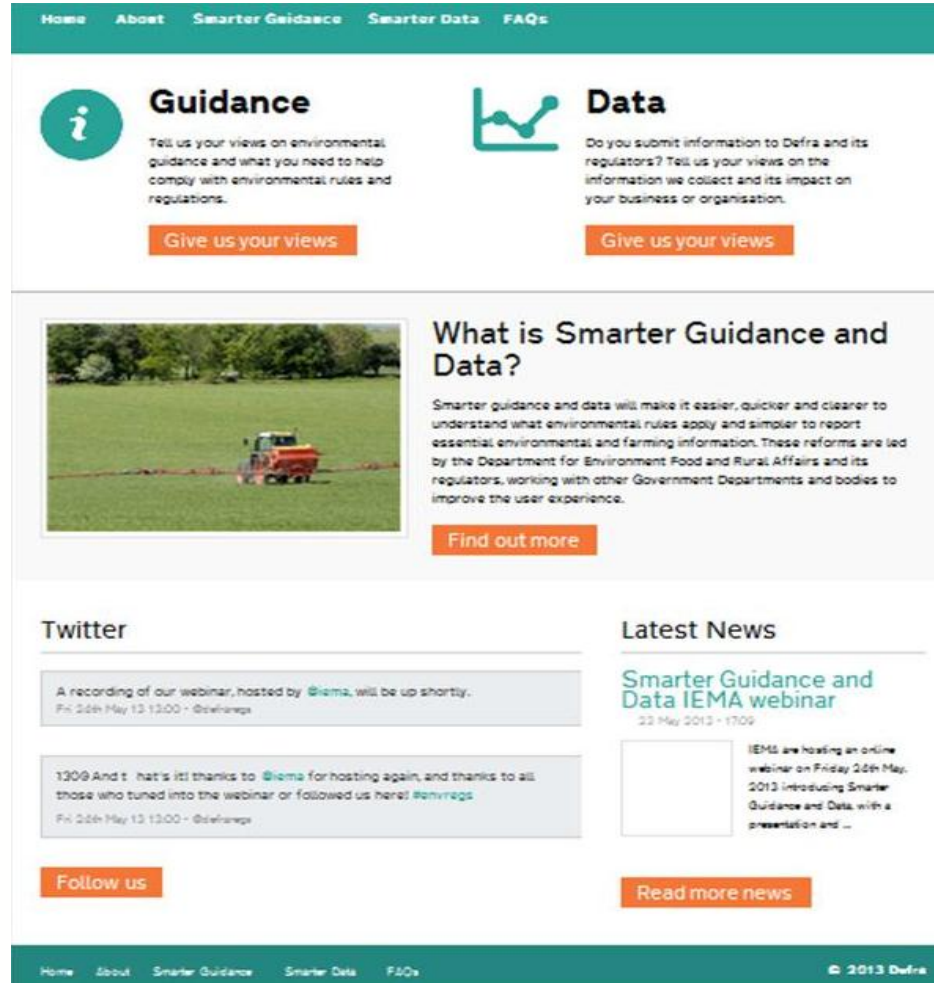
- 6 blocks of content designed around user needs:
 - Consumers disposing of batteries
 - Businesses disposing of batteries
 - Producers placing batteries on market
 - Producers providing take back facilities
 - Waste companies collecting/treating batteries
 - Waste companies exporting batteries
- Expect 80-90% less volume in total.
- Simple, quick, clear and relevant guidance.

Consulting users of guidance

Interactive public consultation
at: guidanceanddata.defra.gov.uk

As at 11 September:

- 5658 visits
- 500 responses
- 387 Twitter followers @defraregs



The screenshot shows the 'Smarter Guidance and Data' consultation page on the defra.gov.uk website. The page has a teal header with navigation links: Home, About, Smarter Guidance, Smarter Data, and FAQs. Below the header, there are two main sections: 'Guidance' and 'Data'. The 'Guidance' section features an information icon and text asking for views on environmental guidance, with a 'Give us your views' button. The 'Data' section features a line graph icon and text asking for views on data collection, also with a 'Give us your views' button. Below these is a large section titled 'What is Smarter Guidance and Data?' with an image of a tractor in a field and text explaining the reforms, accompanied by a 'Find out more' button. At the bottom, there are two columns: 'Twitter' with two tweets and a 'Follow us' button, and 'Latest News' with a news item about a webinar and a 'Read more news' button. The footer contains the same navigation links and a copyright notice for 2013 Defra.

News

Plans for wildlife guidance now published

🕒 6 August 2013 - 16:57



Proposals for simplified guidance on wildlife protection are now available for [comment](#). This guidance explains how to comply with the law protecting wild animals and plants living in the wild in England and the law protecting important wildlife sites.

We are particularly keen to hear your views on:

- whether the plans cover the information that users need from government
- whether the example documents are easy to understand and provide the right information

These proposals will be available for comment until 27 September

Twitter

Had a good Summer? The team have been working away on new guidance- why not comment on it at <http://t.co/LpRQHqTDwH> ? [#backfromholiday](#)

Mon 2nd Sep 13 12:48 - @defraregs

Now that we have our IE 7 issues fixed, nothing should stop you from commenting on new wildlife guidance at <http://t.co/LpRQHqTDwH> [#envregs](#)

Wed 14th Aug 13 10:11 - @defraregs

Follow us

Great Crested Newt



Protected species: how to comply (draft for consultation)

Contents

Introduction

[Step 1: Does species law apply to what I want to do?](#)

[Step 2: Does a general or class licence apply?](#)

[Step 3: Can I adjust my plans to avoid/reduce impact?](#)

[Step 4: Should I and can I apply for an individual licence?](#)

[Step 5: Licence application and decision](#)

[Licensing bodies](#)

Introduction

All wild animals and plants living in England and its seas are protected by law. This covers all animals and plants living in a wild state. In some cases it also covers animals and plants (alive or dead) that have been taken from the wild.

Levels of protection vary depending on the species.

Is this relevant to me?

This guide is relevant to you if you are planning to do something that could:

- harm or disturb wild species or their breeding sites, eggs or nests
- engage in activities such as buying or selling them or products made from them

If in doubt you should check you are complying with the law.

What do I need to do to comply?

Do you like this page?

- Yes
- No

Any other comments?

Send

Reform of environmental information obligations

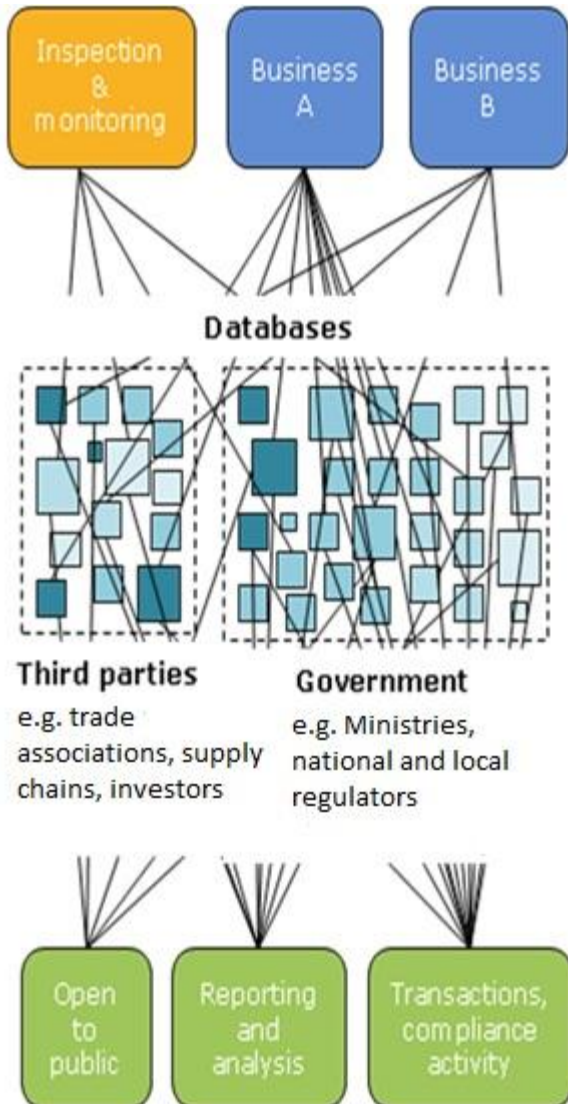
- 243 individual obligations on business to report environmental information to government. Cost to business of c. £180m per year.
- Overlapping information is reported to multiple locations and in multiple formats with little co-ordination. A number of the government databases cannot “speak” to each other.
- By March 2014 the aim is to:
 - Carry out a “zero-based” review to collect only the information that is essential and used;
 - Streamline how that information is collected, starting with a pilot on waste.
- The review is revealing burdens arising from some EU requirements.

Environmental information reform principles

- Stop collecting information.
- Reduce the number of transactions.
- Businesses only notify important changes.
- Exclude reporting of low risk activities especially those which do not require any active decision.
- Offer standard rules licences for more activities.
- Allow reporting via accredited third parties instead of government.
- Simplify government collection of information.
- Challenge ad hoc requests for information.

Long term ambition - Report once. Use many times.

Current situation



Future scenario





Company Dossier

The easy and efficient sharing of data by working together differently

Many business people regard it as an obstacle to their entrepreneurship: the amount of time and money they devote to compliance with the rules. Providing the same information over and over to different government bodies, and rules that are difficult to understand also lead to irritation. Both entrepreneurs and public authorities believe that things can be improved. They are therefore working together to introduce the Company Dossier (Ondernemingsdossier) in order to reduce the regulatory burden.

What is the Company Dossier?

The Company Dossier is a new way of collaborating and sharing information between businesses and governments with the aim of reducing the regulatory burden. The Company Dossier enables a company to record certain information about its operations just once and provide that same information to government bodies such as regulators and licensing authorities as often as necessary. The company itself determines which authorities have access to the Company Dossier. Proper arrangements should therefore be made in advance about how the company and government bodies can exchange the right information. These arrangements are established for each sector in a collaboration agreement, so that

More information

[Factsheet Company Dossier \(PDF, 101kb\)](#)

[Factsheet Company Dossier Government \(PDF, 65kb\)](#)

Reform of environmental legislation

- UK and EU environmental legislation has evolved in a piecemeal way that appears fragmented, overlapping, inconsistent and complex to business and can act as a barrier to both economic growth and effective compliance with environmental obligations.

“We’d be desperate if we had to read legislation up-front.”

(A business)

- > 25,000 pages of environmental laws in England.
- EU legislation is a significant component, c. 600 environmental measures which account for c. 80% of regulatory costs to UK businesses.

Reform of environmental legislation

- Red Tape Challenge - UK government programme to review stock of regulations.
- 626 environmental regulations reviewed area by area, e.g. water quality, biodiversity, land, etc.
- Plans to improve 45%, scrap 22% and keep unchanged 33%.
- Currently forecasting savings to business of >£1bn over 5 years.
- Red Tape Challenge also identified reforms of EU legislation.
- Prime Minister's business-led Task Force on EU Regulation has made other suggestions.
- Also considering options for longer term “horizontal” reform of environmental legislation.

Smarter Guidance and Data

<http://guidanceanddata.defra.gov.uk/>

Red Tape Challenge

<http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index/>

Prime Minister's Taskforce on EU Regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cut-eu-red-tape-report-from-the-business-taskforce>