



Are you ready for hydropower ?

What you need to know about
environmental legislation

What do we think about hydropower?

The Environment Agency strongly supports the UK and Welsh Assembly Governments' targets for the use of renewable energy. We recognise that hydropower schemes can help meet renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction targets.

We are encouraging sustainable hydropower by making it quicker and easier to get approval for a scheme and by identifying and mapping hydropower opportunities. We are also looking to install renewable energy, including hydropower, on our own infrastructure and are urging other public sector organisations to do the same.

Our role

It's our job to help hydropower developers whilst protecting the natural environment. We want developers to prepare successful applications which comply with environmental and other legislation.

Hydropower schemes require the following permits and consents from us:

- an abstraction licence
- an impoundment licence
- land drainage consent

We have to ensure that hydropower schemes do not increase flood risk, damage ecology, damage the fish population or obstruct fish migration. Proposals must also comply with environmental regulations such as the Water Framework Directive and the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (1975), which stress the importance of fish migration.



Osbaston hydropower scheme

Good Practice Guidelines

We expect schemes to build environmental protection into their design and operation. To support this, we have developed Good Practice Guidelines, which are available on our website. The guidelines advise developers how they can address environmental concerns and meet legislative requirements in their proposals. This is critical because, ultimately, we cannot permit schemes that fail to comply with environmental or other legislation.

A sustainable hydropower scheme will build environmental protection into the siting and design of the scheme.

Key environmental features include a fish-friendly turbine, such as the Archimedes screw, and/or adequate screening of the turbine.

Important factors to consider are maintaining safe passage for fish, sufficient water flow to maintain the ecology, the fishery and its amenity. The design must also take account of flood management structures and land drainage, making sure the scheme does not increase flood risk.

What do you need when you first contact us?

You should contact us as early as possible, and make sure that you have:

- A good map of the proposed site (to scale of at least 1:10,000)
- The type of scheme you are considering, particularly the turbine type and site layout options
- How much water you plan to use (please note you may not be able to have all the water you would like in order to protect the river ecology)

This information will really help our initial discussions with you. Keep an open mind as each site is unique and may have requirements that differ from your initial plans.

After our first meeting we will explain any issues we may have with your proposals. We'll also arrange a site visit if we need to. Then we will guide you through the processes you will need to follow to get permission for your scheme.

Please be prepared for the fact that this may take time as hydropower schemes are complex and can affect a range of interests. As with any application, there is no guarantee that you will receive permission and problems may arise, but we promise to keep you well informed along the way.

If you would like to find out more about us or how to develop your hydropower scheme then:

call us on 08708 506506 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)

email enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

or visit our website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk