

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Factsheet



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Land Management Agreements and Experimental Schemes



Introduction

The Act provides Natural Resources Wales with powers to enter into land management agreements and to trial new techniques and methods in order to help manage our natural resources in a more sustainable way.

Land Management Agreements

New powers in the Act allow Natural Resources Wales to enter into voluntary agreements with land owners or other persons about how their land will be managed.

For example, under these agreements a land manager may agree to:

- Protect and conserve the flora and fauna of an area i.e. by maintaining hedgerows;
- Manage land in a way that may contribute to flood alleviation by planting, maintaining or not felling the trees in a certain area;
- Allowing NRW to manage activities (i.e. harvesting woodland) on the land.

To ensure that the land is sustainably managed over the long-term, Natural Resources Wales can bind future owners of the land to the terms of an agreement by registering it with the Land Registry. This means that the terms of the agreement will continue even when the land changes hands. For example, this could provide a level of certainty that the natural flood defence asset, in an area of land and its associated watercourses, will continue to be maintained to a specific standard even if the land is sold or is taken over by a new tenant.

Experimental Schemes

An experimental scheme provides the means for Natural Resources Wales to trial new approaches to how they carry out or deliver any of their functions and manage natural resources more sustainably.

For example, the Act allows Natural Resources Wales to trial new approaches that can help to:

- Develop new management techniques to improve ecosystem resilience;
- Assess nature based solutions as a means of addressing specific issues for example the application of peat bogs as a means of flood alleviation;
- Develop best practice for general application for a carrying out a specific activity.

The Welsh Ministers will be able to suspend specific provisions in environmental legislation for a limited period, where the purpose will enable an experimental scheme to contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources.

An example would be where Natural Resources Wales identified a scheme to trial a new approach to develop general standards in place of a statutory requirement. The requirement could be suspended under limited circumstances to allow Natural Resources Wales to trial the new standard.

Timeline

The regulations to suspend provision(s) in legislation, for the purpose of undertaking an experimental scheme, may only be made when an application has been submitted by Natural Resources Wales. The Welsh Ministers must then be satisfied that the suspension will contribute to the sustainable management of natural resources. As such the power will be used as and when an application is submitted.

The Act became law in March 2016, with the powers for Natural Resources Wales to enter into land management agreements and carry out experimental schemes taking effect two months later.

More information

You can find out more about the Act on the Welsh Government's website at:

<http://gov.wales/environmentact>

You can also subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin by emailing us at:

NRBulletin@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.