

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Factsheet



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Sustainable Management of Natural Resources



Why?

Natural resources are essential for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. They enhance the quality of the places where we live, work and visit and provide the landscapes and biodiversity that make these areas special. Natural resources that are healthy and thriving are also healthier for people, their communities and for the economy, but demands on our natural resources are increasing. If we don't act now to manage our natural resources sustainably, there will be serious consequences that affect us all. We need to change the way we do things so that we continue to benefit from our natural resources now and in the future.

What?

The Environment Act helps us meet this challenge by introducing the **sustainable management of natural resources** as a new approach which ensures that the way in which the use of and the impacts on our natural resources do not result in their long term decline. We have learnt from the experiences of our international partners and are using international best practice by for example, implementing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity ecosystem approach, to help Wales lead the way on Sustainable Development.

Our aim is to sustainably manage our natural resources in a way and at a rate that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations and which contribute to the seven well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

How?

The Environment Act introduces nine simple principles of sustainable management of natural resources to underpin the way we all work. These are:

Adaptable – we need to plan, monitor, review and change our work as we gain a better understanding through our improved evidence and experiences.

Scale – decisions and actions will need to be taken at the right level, be it national, regional or local. We will all need to work together to identify the most appropriate scale for delivering the environmental and wider, cultural, social and economic priorities and opportunities that our evidence highlights.

Working together – everyone has a stake in our natural resources and to ensure that these resources are sustainably managed everybody has a role to play, through engaging in projects, providing evidence, or cooperating and collaborating at the local, regional and national level.

Engaging with the public – ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their say on how our natural resources should be managed at all stages of decision-making.

Evidence – a wider and improved evidence base is needed in order to increase our understanding of our natural resources, how they function and of the benefits that they provide. Improved evidence will help us all to better understand the steps that we can take to manage our natural resources more sustainably. A full range of evidence will be needed, not only environmental, but also, cultural, social and economic evidence will be needed from experts, stakeholders and local communities.

Understanding all of the benefits we receive from our natural resources – we all need to increase our understanding of the value of our natural resources and the ways in which they support each other so that we and future generations can continue to have economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits whilst reducing the impact we have on the environment around us.

Long term – the impacts of our decisions and actions need to be considered not only for their effect in the short term but also over the long-term.

Prevention – to take steps to prevent significant damage of our ecosystems.

Resilience – to be able to deal with increased demands and pressures our ecosystems need to be healthy. This includes ensuring that our decisions consider the resilience of our ecosystems and their ability to provide their benefits in the long term. This will also help to ensure they are capable of adapting to the impacts they face from climate change and future demands.

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.