



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Room 629, 9 Millbank  
17 Smith Square  
London  
SW1- 3JR

T: 03459 335577  
guidanceanddata@defra.g  
si.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

17/12/2015

Dear Consultee,

## **Defra Guidance & Data Reforms: Costs, Benefits and Early Feedback Smarter Environmental Regulation Review**

I am writing to invite views on the Defra Guidance and Data Reforms: Consultation Impact Assessment. This document may be found on the [gov.uk](http://gov.uk) website.

As part of the Red Tape Challenge, Defra committed itself to a fundamental overhaul of its guidance and information requests to make them simpler, quicker and clearer to use. A [survey](#) asking for views about what could be improved across different environmental topics was run from May to July 2013. A series of planned reforms was developed and published as part of the [Smarter Environmental Regulation Review: Phase 1](#) report on Defra guidance and information obligations.

This impact assessment covers reform of all guidance produced by Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Forestry Commission.

The scope of the smarter data reforms encompasses all information requests on businesses and others to provide information to Defra and its agencies. Information requests include:

- Permitting and registering activities;
- Monitoring or reporting on compliance or performance; and
- Making other applications for any other government schemes.

Information that businesses are required to hold but not submit are not included. The organisations covered by the reforms include Defra, the Environment Agency, Natural England, APHA, MMO, RPA, VMD, the Forestry Commission and local authorities (on Defra's behalf). It also includes information requests on carbon emissions to the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC).

The majority of Defra guidance and data reforms described in the consultation impact assessment have now been implemented. As this is the second consultation on this topic and the reforms have already taken place, a consultation period of 8 weeks was considered appropriate. The primary purpose of this consultation is to gain further evidence and test the assumptions made on the consultation Impact Assessment. Defra also welcomes suggestions from stakeholder for additional sources of evidence. Questions regarding the assumptions used in developing the estimates of costs and benefits resulting from these reforms can be found in Part B of the consultation survey.

Defra would also like to invite feedback from stakeholders on their recent experience of using Defra guidance and reporting information to Defra and its agencies. These questions can be found in Part C and Part D of the consultation survey.

We welcome your views and comments on the impact assessment. If you wish to obtain a copy of this consultation. Please contact [guidanceanddata@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:guidanceanddata@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Responses**

To submit your consultation response please complete the [consultation questionnaire](#) provided through Citizen Space (Citizen Space is an on-line consultation tool).

Responses should be received by **10<sup>th</sup> February**.

## **Consultation Criteria**

This consultation is in line with the Consultations Principles. This can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/consultation-principles-guidance>

## **Summary of responses and confidentiality**

Any responses you send us will be seen in full by Defra staff dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other Defra staff to help them plan future consultations.

When this consultation ends, we will summarise all responses and place this summary online available through our website at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk). This summary will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details. If you require a hard copy of the summary, or have any other enquiries, please contact us by email at: [dataandguidance@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:dataandguidance@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

We will store a copy of the responses received for at least six months from the date the consultation responses document has been published. This is so that the public can see them and copies of responses will be made available to the public on request. Also, members of the public may ask for a copy of responses under freedom of information legislation.

If you do not want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation.

Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, that won't count as a confidentiality request.

Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for this information under freedom of information legislation. But, because of the law, we cannot promise that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to: Defra Consultation Co-ordinator, Room 629, 9 Millbank, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR; or email [consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk).

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider and respond to this consultation. We welcome your views and comments. If you have any queries please contact us as above.

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Thank you for your help in this matter. If you have any queries please contact us as above.

Yours Faithfully

Antonia Custance Baker

**Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**