

S&E Regional OP 2007 – 2013 Draft Implementation Plan 2.1.1

Operational Programme	S&E Regional Operational Programme 2007 - 2013
Priority	Environment & Accessibility
Theme	Risk Prevention and Water Protection
Sub-Theme	Rural Water Source Protection
ERDF Certifying Body	Department of Finance
Managing Authority	S&E Regional Assembly
Intermediate Body	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government
Level 1 Public Body	Local Authorities.
Grant Rate	Grant aid will be provided as part of the existing grant structure for upgrading of group water schemes, i.e. up to 85% of the approved cost subject to a maximum of €6,475 per house served.
EU Co-financing Rate	Not Co-Financed

Description of the Intervention

Funding will be provided towards source protection initiatives for the protection and enhancement of water sources in high-risk vulnerable locations, which are used by group water schemes for the abstraction of drinking water.

Objectives

The protection of rural drinking water sources and the enhancement of the rural environment by protecting surface and groundwater from pollution.

Responsibilities of Intermediate Body

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government will provide funding via Block Grant Allocations to Local Authorities on an annual basis under the Rural Water Programme. It will be responsible for the collection of data, the preparation of monitoring reports, verification/certification of expenditure and submission of claims to the Managing Authority in the format required by the Certifying Authority.

Responsibilities of Level 1 Public Body

Projects being put forward for funding under the Rural Water Programme will be identified and approved by Local Authorities on the basis of protecting water sources used for the abstraction of drinking water by group water schemes.

The beneficiaries will be responsible for ensuring that only actual eligible expenditure incurred, and expenditure which comes under the terms of the project as approved by the Intermediate Body is included.

Contribution to Horizontal Themes

Environmental Sustainability

Surface and ground waters within the region are vulnerable to organic pollution from agriculture and domestic waste water systems. Many of these are used as sources of drinking water. Source protection measures are an integral part of programmes for

the upgrading of water supplies. The implementation of the source protection programmes will have a positive impact on the quality of surface and ground waters used for drinking water purposes and improve the aquatic and general rural environment.

The provision of water treatment infrastructure and the promotion of the environment are closely linked. It is unsustainable to rely on end-of-pipe solutions alone for ensuring the quality of piped water supplies. Complementary measures to protect the source from organic pollution must be implemented side by side with water abstraction and treatment infrastructure. Water treatment plants which have been provided under the Southern and Eastern Regional Operational Programme 2000 - 2006 under Design, Build and Operate procurement included a 20-year operational and maintenance phase. Any deterioration in the raw water quality during this time will result in increased treatment costs directly to the consumers. Also, any improvement in the quality of the source will result in savings for the consumer.

Source protection involves a holistic approach to protecting vulnerable sources from pollution. All landowners and other users of surface water sources must engage fully in the development and implementation of source protection strategies.

Implementation of the provisions of the Nitrates Directive requires, inter alia, that landowners with drinking water sources on their properties do not engage in certain farming practices, which may have a negative impact on the quality of water in the source. In the case of a borehole for example, there is a 200 metre exclusion zone, within which the land spreading of animal slurry is not permitted. There is increasing resistance by landowners to the location of ground water abstraction sites on their properties. In many cases, permission to drill a borehole is contingent on the payment of substantial compensation. This is having a negative impact on the cost-effectiveness of new sources of supply for group water schemes.

Project Selection

Selection Process

Source Protection Projects will be identified and approved by Local Authorities on the basis of affording protection of sources used for the abstraction of drinking for group water schemes. The group water schemes should be within the remit of the Drinking Water Regulations (i.e. serving >50 persons or 10 cubic meters per day or < 50 persons or 10 cubic meters per day with commercial or public activity). In considering the projects for approval local authorities should also take into account sources in high risk locations and the raw water monitoring results data.

Selection Criteria

The project must be in relation to a Group Water Scheme drinking water source of supply which has been categorised as high risk from diffuse and/or point sources of pollution. In order to identify the risks the source should be the subject of a full hydro geological survey, which identifies possible pollution sources within the defined catchment area.

Performance Indicators

Class	Indicator	Baseline	Mid-term Dec '09	Final
Output	1. Number of Group Water Schemes	0	6	12
Result	1. Biochemical Oxygen Demand			75% BOD reduction

Financial Management

Under the Rural Water Programme funding is provided by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government (Intermediate Body) to local authorities (Level 1 Public Body) by way of annual block grants that reflect the level of activity locally and are based on submissions by local authorities. Responsibility for the selection and approval of schemes, as well as the payment of grants, rests with the local authorities.

Monitoring and Reporting arrangements

The Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government will provide reports and data in the required formats as required by the Managing Authority.

North/South Co-operation

The measure will make a positive contribution to the development of rural areas in border counties. Rural tourism, based on angling, the inland waterways and water based leisure activity generally requires improved water supply and waste water infrastructure in order to grow and develop in a sustainable way. The waterways and the catchments within which they are located are shared between North and South. The protection and enhancement of these invaluable resources is dependent on responsible attitudes to catchment management and the control of discharges to surface and groundwaters. The measure will provide for the implementation of source protection measures aimed at controlling pollution due to run off and percolation and by developing waste water collection and treatment systems at selected villages and isolated rural settlements.