

Enviro-Watch



Department of the Environment
Government of Gibraltar

2011 - A Year of Action

The past year has seen the publication of numerous action and management plans by the Ministry for the Environment, designed to improve Gibraltar's environment by implementing policies and programmes to manage it.

The first of these was the Environmental Action & Management Plan (EAMP) in January of this year. This document forms the backbone of the Government of Gibraltar's environmental policy and tackles all areas of concern, from development and planning through to energy, waste and habitats. The plan contains a comprehensive set of actions and measures to be delivered by set target dates. The Government intends to lead by example in relation to this and all Government Departments, Agencies and Authorities have already begun to implement their own environmental management policies in-house.

Shortly afterwards in March 2011, the Southern Waters of Gibraltar Management Scheme was published. This document sets out a scheme for the effective management of our Special Area of Conservation following its designation earlier on in the year. The Scheme is again a detailed document setting out the ways in which Government intends to safeguard the integrity of the SAC and protect its diverse natural assets.

Finally, in October 2011, the Ministry released the Gibraltar Waste Management Plan. Waste

management is a key part of environmental management and the plan sets out Government policy in this respect for the next 6 years. It outlines the history of waste management in Gibraltar and provides useful facts and figures on the types and amounts of waste produced locally.

This newsletter aims to give the reader an overview of each of the plans, highlighting their main goals and implications. All plans are available to download from the Department of the Environment website:

www.gibraltar.gov.gi/environment/environment

Minister's Column



This will be my last column for Enviro-watch and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole team, dealing with financial, administrative and environmental issues, at the Department of the Environment for all their sterling work over the last 4 years. The Department has grown considerably during my time in office and Gibraltar is fortunate to now have a team of fully qualified and dedicated professional Environment Officers that deal with our EU and local environmental responsibilities, providing expert advice to the Government on all matters relating to the living environment and its management. Environmental issues will continue to be at the forefront of the public agenda and the Department of the Environment can undoubtedly be depended on to play a pivotal role in Gibraltar's future development.

The Hon. Minister for the Environment, Ernest Britto

Environmental Action & Management Plan (EAMP)

The EAMP arose as a direct result of the signing of the Environment Charter in 2006. It contains a series of action points and measures, which Government is committed to carrying out within specified time frames. This will allow interested bodies and the public at large to hold the Government truly accountable to its environmental commitments.

The plan is set out in 7 chapters, each one outlines the overall Government goal in relation to that topic and then breaks it down further into specific goals and the associated actions and measures to be carried out in order to achieve those goals. The action points are to be met within different time frames 1-2 years and 3-5 years. This document is not intended to be a static document and therefore the goals will evolve as things change and new challenges arise.

Chapter 1: Environment/Development Interface

This chapter deals with the aim of creating a more holistic planning process which prioritises environmental concerns and looks to promote truly sustainable development. Some of the action points included within this are: include a minimum of 5% total land area of new developments as green areas and continuation of the urban environment regeneration programme.

Chapter 2: Habitats

The aim here is to improve and extend local habitats to help develop a thriving wildlife population and to create widespread recognition of the importance of biodiversity. Efforts will be focused on monitoring and managing our Natura 2000 sites, the Upper Rock Nature Reserve and the Southern Waters of Gibraltar.

Chapter 3: Pollution

The chapter on pollution is the longest and contains a set of wide ranging actions and measures to improve and maintain the quality of our water, air and soil. These include the transfer and decommissioning of the old power stations, the building of a new state of the

art power station, the development of the Gibraltar River Basin District Management Plan and the creation of a dedicated Environment Park.

Chapter 4: Energy

The objective is to reduce energy consumption by promoting energy efficiency and conservation and to promote and develop local sources of renewable energy. The

Energy Efficiency Action Plan (www.gibraltar.gov.gi/environment) contains a comprehensive set of measures to improve energy efficiency. Government remains committed to developing local sources of renewable energy with a target of 15% by 2020.

Chapter 5: Climate Change

The Government remains committed to reducing Gibraltar's greenhouse gas emissions and thus helping to reduce the global carbon footprint. To that end, the policies originally set out in the Climate Change Forum have been absorbed into the EAMP.

Chapter 6: Environmental Heritage

Environmental heritage refers to the natural landmarks that define Gibraltar's natural evolutionary history. Government intends to develop an environmental heritage register to protect these sites and also develop an ecological and environmental impact assessment programme to determine which activities can take place on these sites.

Chapter 7: Environmental Management

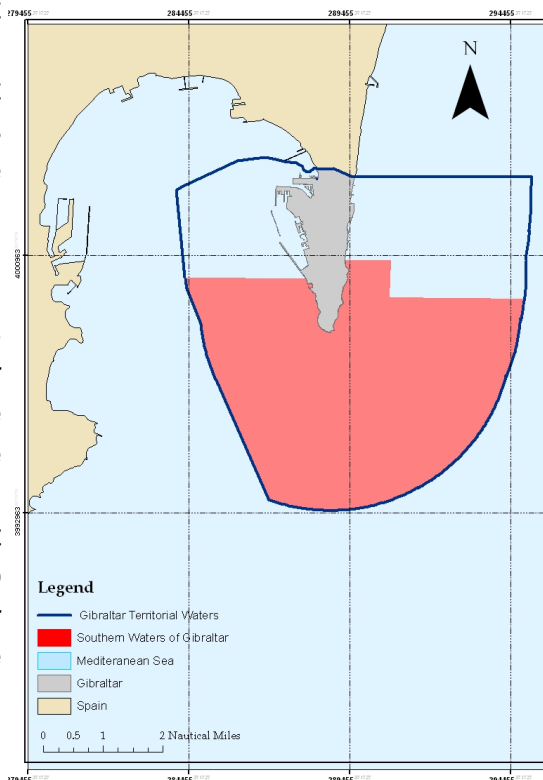
This chapter describes the measures used locally to manage the environmental impacts of new plans and projects. Environmental management systems employed locally are Strategic Environmental Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments and Appropriate Assessments. The Department of the Environment works closely with other government bodies and NGOs to ensure the effective use of these management tools.



Southern Waters of Gibraltar Management Scheme

In July 2006, the Southern Waters of Gibraltar were listed as a Site of Community Importance (SCI). In March 2011, the marine SCI was upgraded and designated as a dual Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protected Area (SPA).

In order to meet the requirements of these designations, the Government created the Southern Waters Management Scheme. The Scheme looks to promote sustainable use of what is a living, working environment. It does not aim to prevent the public from using the Southern Waters nor to prevent leisure or commercial activities in the area. Instead it provides the mechanisms by which such activities can be carried out in such a way that they do not damage the habitats or species for which the site has been designated.



The issues affecting the Southern Waters of Gibraltar have been broken down into 6 broad categories:

- (i) Water quality
- (ii) Land-based recreation
- (iii) Recreational fishing activities
- (iv) Water-based recreation
- (v) Ports & shipping activities
- (vi) Military activity

These reflect the current knowledge of the issues affecting the Southern Waters. The list will change to take account of any new activities should they arise. Some of the actions arising as result of the Management Scheme include:

1. The design and build of a **sewage treatment plant** to deal with sewage discharges.
2. **Integration of oil spill contingency plans with the Management Scheme.**
3. The Department of the Environment will keep a watching brief with respect to any **changes in the use of anti-fouling paints.**
4. Continued monitoring of Gibraltar's coastal waters.
5. **Regular cleaning of the foreshore** for flotsam, plastics etc.
6. Introduction of a **licensing regime** for shore based angling, spear fishing and sub-aqua diving.
7. **Guidance for recreational boat users.**
8. **Enforcement of the dolphin protocol.**

The implementation and monitoring of the Scheme will be carried out by the SAC Management Committee which has already been set up and is composed of

senior representatives from each of the relevant authorities.

The marine SAC is being monitored regularly and its condition reviewed periodically to ensure that the conservation objectives are being met. If it is deemed that they are not, the Management Scheme will be reviewed with a view to adjusting it as necessary so as to meet the required objectives.



Waste Management Plan

The Waste Management Plan provides:

- A framework within which to take decisions for efficient and sustainable waste management of all waste arising in Gibraltar; and
- Information on the different waste streams and treatment options including forecasts of waste streams in the future.

The plan is divided into two main parts: the first deals with the existing situation with regards to local waste management and the second deals with the measures intended to be implemented during the next 5 years.

The ultimate goal of Gibraltar's waste management strategy is compliance with both the 'self sufficiency' and 'proximity' principles, in other words, to become as self-sufficient as possible (in terms of waste collection, treatment and disposal) within the smallest geographical area possible.

In order to achieve this, a strategy has been developed that encourages the key principles of waste management within the bounds of economic feasibility and viability.

These principles are listed as follows:

Treatment to reduce volume of wastes (e.g. energy from waste plant)

Recycling and reuse of wastes

Encouragement of reduction of waste at source

Streamlining waste management system

Careful consideration for final disposal of residues

The main features of the Waste Management Plan are:

Continued use of Waste Disposal Facilities in Spain

Gibraltar will continue to send different wastes to authorised and licensed facilities in Spain. These include facilities for landfill, glass and can recycling, waste oil and other hazardous materials.



Energy from Waste Plant

The Government intends to refurbish the existing energy from waste plant to deal with municipal waste. This will greatly reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill in Spain.

Expansion of Recycling Scheme

More recycling points for glass and cans will be provided in the Upper Town using smaller containers and specialised vehicles compatible with the area's steep and narrow streets. Government will also assess the viability of placing small recycling bins for Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) in strategic locations throughout Gibraltar.

Waste Prevention Programme

Gibraltar has no manufacturing or production industry therefore efforts will focus on reducing consumption and use of products and thus minimising waste. The long-term aim is to ensure that environmental efficiency becomes the norm in both the public and private sectors.



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