

Brexit and Beyond

IEMA Core Principles
for the Environment



IEMA Core Principles for the Environment – Brexit and Beyond

The process of leaving the EU and transposing EU law into UK law offers significant challenge and opportunity for the environment and economy.

The immediate challenge is to fully transpose the European Union “environmental acquis” into UK law to ensure continued environmental protection and provide certainty to business. Once the UK has left the EU there will be an unprecedented opportunity to reshape the policy landscape and significantly improve the

environment on which we and future generations will depend, and to do so in ways that work radically better for business competitiveness and the economy.

IEMA has developed the following core principles as a touchstone to guide the UK’s transposition of the European Union “environmental acquis” through the Withdrawal Bill. They will also aid the subsequent development and implementation of environmental policy and legislation once the UK has left the EU.

OVERARCHING

- 1) Aim for **high levels of environmental protection** and improvement and in particular:
 - a. Ensure no diminution of environmental quality standards
 - b. Secure long-term enhancement of natural capital
 - c. Ensure that the value of natural capital is integrated into all relevant decision-making
- 2) Ensure **full implementation of international environmental agreements** that the UK and EU have signed up to and:
 - a. Continue to show leadership in the development and implementation of future global environmental treaties and conventions
 - b. Actively consider the impact of the UK on the environment in other countries, particularly through cross-border trade and investment
- 3) Ensure that **sound science underpins the evidence base** upon which decisions affecting the environment are made

A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO IMPROVEMENT

- 1) There must be **full transposition of the EU environmental acquis** into UK law
- 2) Once transposed and in effect, there should be a **systematic process of improvement** with the aim of achieving better environmental outcomes in a way that minimises bureaucracy and administration
- 3) An **integrated approach to policy delivery** should utilise a range of tools including regulation, permits, taxes, subsidies and market instruments to effect positive change
- 4) Regulation needs to clearly identify the **environmental outcomes to be achieved** and the measures of success, with **fully resourced enforcement** to ensure a level playing field
- 5) **Long-term policy consistency and certainty** is needed to unlock business investment and support the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy

GOVERNANCE

Government confirmed its intention to transpose the full body of EU environmental law (the “environmental acquis”) into UK law where appropriate and applicable.¹ We fully support this, but in determining what is “appropriate and applicable” we believe the Government should apply the following principles:

Transparency: the process of transposing the “environmental acquis” must be open and clear, including a publicly available timetable on what decisions are being taken, when and by whom

Scrutiny: proposals to repeal or amend material aspects of the “environmental acquis” must allow sufficient time for them to be subject to appropriate public and Parliamentary scrutiny

Accountability: where decisions are being taken to amend or repeal material aspects of the “environmental acquis”, Government must be accountable to the public by securing positive support for changes from Parliament

CORE PRINCIPLES TO UNDERPIN THE UK’S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY APPROACH

Polluter Pays Principle: the environmental costs of pollution should be borne by those who cause the pollution

Precautionary Principle: where there is the potential for significant or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific evidence should not be used as the basis for not taking appropriate measures to prevent or mitigate environmental harm

Innovation Principle: policy or regulatory decisions and controls should consider the role of innovation as a driver for jobs, growth, social and environmental improvement

Proximity Principle: environmental damage should be rectified, compensated or treated at or as near to source as practicable and waste should be dealt with as close as possible to where it is produced

Pollution Prevention: reducing or eliminating pollution at source based on taking an integrated approach to environmental protection

Integrated approach: systems thinking should underpin an integrated approach to environmental management, helping to prevent shifting environmental burdens and optimise outcomes

Transparency & Inclusivity: multi-level and multi-sector stakeholder engagement, accountability and empowerment should underpin environmental policy development. Local level buy-in and participation should guide the design of local solutions

Sustainable Development: meeting the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

1. Department for Exiting the EU (2017) “Legislating for the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union

About IEMA

We are the worldwide alliance of environment and sustainability professionals, working to make our businesses and organisations future-proof.

Belonging gives us the knowledge, connections and authority to lead collective change, with IEMA's global sustainability standards as our benchmark.

By mobilising our expertise we will continue to challenge norms, drive new kinds of enterprise and make measurable progress towards our bold vision: transforming the world to sustainability.

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