

Environment Agency convenes National Drought Group

People across the country have been urged to use water wisely to protect water supplies and the environment during the current period of prolonged dry weather.

Today (Tuesday 26 July) the Environment Agency convened the [National Drought Group](#), made up of senior decision makers from Environment Agency, government, water companies, Water UK, the NFU and environmental protection groups including the Angling Trust and Rivers Trust. The group discussed the current situation and agreed actions to protect water resources and the environment in the UK in the weeks ahead.

Following Tuesday's meeting, the National Drought Group's members agreed to continue to work closely together to monitor and manage the current situation, including convening the National Drought Group's water supply and communications sub-groups.

Harvey Bradshaw, Environment Agency executive director for the environment and chair of the NDG, said:

While last week's extreme high temperatures are now behind us and there are currently no plans for restrictions on essential water use, we can all do our bit by reducing unnecessary water consumption and following advice from our water company to ensure this remains the case whilst our rivers are exceptionally low.

We are working very closely with water companies, farmers and other water users to manage the current situation. Today's meeting was an important step in agreeing joint actions to protect our water resources with further dry weather forecasted for August, including ever-closer working to monitor and manage water supplies and the environment.

Environment Agency teams are doing brilliant work across the country monitoring river levels and responding to environmental incidents, as well as enacting the early stages of our drought plans in many parts of England to protect people's access to water and preserve the environment.

Stuart Colville, Water UK Director of Policy, said

Ongoing warm weather in much of the country follows the driest winter and spring since the 1970s.

Water companies have detailed plans in place to manage water

resources for customers and the environment, and are doing everything they can, including working closely with government and regulators, to minimise the need for any restrictions and ensure rivers continue to flow.

As we continue to see extremely high demand, we are urging everyone to carefully consider the amount they are using given the unprecedented conditions. The water industry is running a national water saving campaign called Water's Worth Saving that provides the public with helpful hints and tips on how to do their bit with water use in the home and garden.

Current situation

Regulators and water companies are working together closely to manage water levels and take action where needed, including activating different levels of well-established dry weather plans in the most affected areas.

Most of England has moved into 'Prolonged Dry Weather' status – meaning the EA is now taking precautionary actions to mitigate impacts as hydrological conditions deteriorate and enhancing its monitoring and protection of water resources, along with the water companies.

Nowhere in England is currently considered to be 'in drought' and most water companies are maintaining good reservoir storage for summer demand. If further measures are required, temporary use bans (more commonly known as hosepipe bans) will be determined by individual water companies and drought permits and drought orders by the Environment Agency and Defra respectively.

However, recent abnormally high temperatures have exacerbated conditions resulting from lower-than-normal rainfall so far this year in many parts of England. With the Met Office forecasting potentially several more dry weeks ahead, particularly in the South and East of the country, the EA and water companies are now enacting the early stages of their well-rehearsed and publicly available drought plans and calling on everyone to do their bit in managing water use.

This will become even more vital in the future as we continue to adapt to a changing climate. Projections show that, by 2050, some rivers could have between 50 and 80 percent less water during the summer and summer temperatures are set to be up to 7.4 degrees hotter.

The EA takes a broad range of measures to manage drought risk, with many already in action. These include:

- Managing abstraction licences to balance the needs of users and our natural environment;
- Helping those areas which are the worst affected by prolonged dry weather by operating water transfer schemes that allow rivers to be artificially maintained;
- Applying for Drought orders in order to protect the natural environment,

including applying to Defra last week for an order for the [Holme Styes reservoir in Yorkshire](#) to support environmental needs;

- Planning with water companies and ensuring they have and are implementing their drought plans. Every water company in England has a published drought plan available on their website;
- Working with the farming sector to provide greater assistance to farmers in prolonged dry weather areas;
- Reoxygenating water and rescuing fish in distress where river flows are especially low;
- Supporting the Fire and Rescue Service to tackle waste fires and wildfires.

The National Drought Group will continue to work together very closely over the coming weeks and will next meet in August.

Background

- The following organisations attended the National Drought Group today: Environment Agency; Defra; Natural Resources Wales; Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Ofwat; UKHSA; Natural England; Welsh Government; Met Office; AHDB; Yorkshire Water; Southern Water; Anglian Water; Affinity Water; Severn Trent Water; Thames Water; South West Water; South East Water; South Staffs Water; Northumbria Water; Water UK; National Farmers Union; Angling Trust; Energy UK; Canal and River Trust; Rivers Trust; RSPB; MOSL; Waterwise; SES; Consumer Council for Water; Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- The National Drought Group meets twice yearly (spring and autumn) to assess the water resource situation ahead and any risks to water supply and the environment. It met in March ahead of the spring/summer season and is planned to meet in October this year ahead of the winter season. The group convenes at the early stages of drought (known as prolonged dry weather), and it met regularly through 2018-2020 to manage the last drought.
- The Environment Agency has rescued fish from the River Teme in Shropshire, the Tarrant in Dorset and Derbyshire Lathkill and relocated them down stream. Elsewhere, we have deployed aeration equipment at a number of still water fisheries where dissolved oxygen levels have fallen to critically low levels.
- More information on the [National Drought Group](#)
- More information on the [Water's Worth Saving campaign](#)
- For more information, please contact the Defra group Newsdesk: 0330 041 6560 / newsdesk@defra.gov.uk

Excavation company let sediment into water

Press release

A Warwickshire excavation company allowed sediment from a quarry to enter freshwaters in Buckinghamshire.



Sediment in the water of a tributary of Padbury Brook.

AT Contracting and Plant Hire Limited allowed water contaminated with sediment to enter a tributary of Padbury Brook near Barton Hartshorn in May 2018.

As a result, the company has paid £15,000 to the [Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust](#).

The sanction is known as an Enforcement Undertaking. It can be used as an alternative to a prosecution where the offending was unintentional and where the harm to the environment is limited. In this case the [Environment Agency](#) accepted the company's negligence wasn't down to dangerous or foolhardy behaviour.

The Environment Agency was satisfied that AT Contracting had worked quickly to solve the issue and taken full responsibility for the incident.

Enforcement undertakings allow companies and individuals to make good some of the environmental damage they cause, including through a financial contribution to an environmental project. In addition to the £15,000 payment, the company completed a number of other actions. This included stopping the discharge, removing the pollutant from the watercourse and improving water management.

While agreeing to enforcement undertakings, the Environment Agency continues to prosecute organisations and individuals where evidence shows high levels

of culpability and serious environment harm.

Andrew Raine, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency is an outcome-focussed regulator, seeking to make sure all businesses work within environmental laws.

Human error on the part of AT Contracting led to the sediment being allowed to enter the river.

Following the Environment Agency's intervention, AT Contracting worked quickly to contain the incident. It has since worked to improve its water management systems to prevent this from happening again in the future.

Members of the public with concerns about pollution should contact the Environment Agency's 24-hour incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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[NDA group event highlights important role of supply chain](#)

"A vibrant supply chain is critical" if the NDA group is going to successfully deliver its decommissioning mission, according to Group Chief Executive Officer David Peattie.

David Peattie was speaking as he opened the NDA group's first supply chain conference since 2018.

More than 1,700 people and 300 exhibitors registered for the event last week, held at Telford's International Centre for the first time.

Emma Ferguson-Gould, Group Chief Commercial and Business Development Officer, said:

"The NDA group has a nationally important mission to decommission the UK's earliest nuclear sites in a safe, secure and sustainable way. The involvement, support and innovation that comes from our supply chain is hugely important to us. Last year we spent £1.9 billion with partner companies, representing almost 55% of our £3.5 billion budget."

"That results in more than 5,000 companies supporting our group's mission,

with more than a third of external spend last year with small and medium sized enterprises – exceeding our own challenging target. It was particularly pleasing to see all sizes of organisation come along and be part of this fantastic and productive day.”

The event is thought to be Europe’s largest decommissioning-focused networking event. As well as demonstrating potential innovative solutions to representatives of the group’s operating companies, companies have previously gone on to develop relationships and collaborative opportunities which have helped to deliver increased value for taxpayers.

There was also an opportunity to recognise the winners of the 2022 NDA group supply chain awards. Normally announced at the event itself, the decision was taken to [reveal winners online earlier this year](#) due to the delays in hosting the event. Originally due to be held in 2020, it has been delayed by more than 2 years as a result of the pandemic.

Steve Glasson, Head of Group Commercial Standards, said:

“These awards not only demonstrate how important the supply chain is to our mission, but they also showcase the variety of innovative work being delivered by businesses throughout the UK and beyond on our behalf. We didn’t want to wait to recognise some of the excellent work that has been going on and so made the decision to announce winners online, but it was nice to finally get them on stage and say thank you for the work they’ve done.”

The event is part of NDA’s continued commitment to encourage, support and develop the supply chain for today and for the future.

[Call for proposals: British Office Hargeisa International Programme Fund 2022-23](#)

World news story

The British Office Hargeisa invites proposals linked to women and girls and media freedom themes.



UK Government

The British Office Hargeisa (BOH) welcomes project proposals for its International Programme Fund (IPF) for the Financial Year 2022/23. The IPF supports programme activity under the framework of the UK government's foreign policy objectives in Somaliland.

Scope for Proposals

Applications for funding should be linked to the following themes:

- Women and girls – Partnerships to support women and girls, unlocking their potential, agency and freedoms through education, and particularly targeting those affected by the ongoing drought.
- Media Freedom – Partnerships to support the foundations of media freedom such as by building the capacity of journalists, building understanding between journalists and security institutions, support for the safety and security of journalists.

Requirements for Proposals and Applicants

- The proposals requested under this call must be for a maximum of £95,000 in value, and must be able to be completed in this financial year (before the 31 March 2023).
- Project proposals must outline how budgets will be spent, with a clear consideration of providing value for money. Proposals must also include

a communications strategy on how the project will be visible in Somaliland.

- Project activities should be completed February 2023 in order to allow time for evaluation. All project expenses for 2022-23 must be incurred by 31 March 2023.
- Applications must be submitted in English.

Proposal Evaluation Process:

Project proposals will be shortlisted and approved by the BOH. Successful organisations will need to sign a legally binding contract with the BOH. They will also need to prepare quarterly monitoring reports as well as a completion report at the end of the project.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria

- Alignment with the above-mentioned UK themes
- Project design includes a realistic timeline, clear monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Project outcomes have a concrete deliverable with clear links to the project's objectives
- Sustainability, demonstrating that project benefits continue after the funding ends.
- Risk and financial accountability procedures
- The organisation's safeguarding policies and the protection of those involved in the project against abuse and harassment
- Overall value for money

Submitting a Proposal

To submit your proposal, see the attachments below;

All proposals to be sent to the BOH by email to BritishOffice.HargeisaCS@fcdo.gov.uk.

Who may bid

The BOH will consider funding applications from civil society organizations, academic institutions, non-profit organisations and multilateral organisations. In order to be eligible, you:

- must be a legal entity, commercial company, a registered non-governmental (NGO) or governmental organisation, and provide proof of legal registration in Somaliland
- demonstrate previous experience in delivering and managing projects and the ability to manage the project sum, and preferably have experience working with an international agency/organisation
- demonstrate the capacity to deliver at least 75% of the proposed project activity by mid-December 2022

The BOH may request reports by auditors during its review of proposals.

The deadline for submissions is 17:00 EAT on 8 August 2022.

If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss your proposal, please email BritishOffice.HargeisaCS@fcdo.gov.uk.

Date	Activity
26 July	Call for Proposals launched
8 August	Deadline for submission of project proposal and activity-based budget
15 August	Follow up with shortlisted projects
1 September	Expected start date for projects

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[First North Wales Growth Deal project launched at university](#)

Press release

The Digital Signal Processing Centre is one of many projects receiving funding from the Deal.



The £1bn North Wales Growth Deal has reached a milestone with the launch of new cutting-edge equipment at Bangor University's Digital Signal Processing (DSP) Centre.

Technology at the DSP Centre manages the way digital signals are transmitted, providing a solution for the signals to be better processed and received and to be both more secure and more cost effective.

The £3million Growth Deal funding has enabled the DSP Centre to acquire new equipment to undertake cutting-edge research for digital communications. The funding will develop solutions to support the future's digital requirements,

benefitting businesses and residents with better communication capabilities such as 5G and 6G.

The state-of-the art equipment can also be used to advance the development of new prototypes; examples include applications such as enhanced security (an encryption/de-encryption connection to improve digital safety) and environmental sensing (identifying a change in external environment through video transmission). This will provide businesses and communities who use the DSP technology with a more cost effective, more secure and more efficient use of their applications.

The launch event was attended by First Minister, Mark Drakeford MS and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, David TC Davies MP.

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Wales, David TC Davies MP, said:

I'm delighted to see the North Wales Growth Deal making fantastic progress. It will bring significant investment and jobs and will help transform the economy of North Wales. Alongside the £120m committed to the North Wales Growth Deal, the UK Government has backed growth deals covering every part of Wales with hundreds of millions more in funding. Working hand in hand with our partners, the deals will unleash the full potential of our communities.

As the North Wales Growth Deal reaches this landmark, I look forward to seeing many more projects reach fruition across the region and throughout Wales in the coming months and years.

Councillor Dyfrig Siencyn, Chair of North Wales Economic Ambition Board said:

We are delighted to have reached a point where we are seeing our first project become reality. It's fitting that it is in one of the fastest growing sectors, as we look to promote research and innovation in this field as well as improve digital connectivity across the region.

With the development of globally important technologies here, the DSP Centre is putting North Wales on the map and at the forefront of this exciting sector. The team already works with large international businesses and big names in the industry, including Ciena and Vodafone. They also work with business partners from local SMEs, providing access to state-of-the-art equipment to develop local skills and accelerate their product development.

Ends

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