



Wastewater Discharge Licencing: “Out Of The Frying Pan And Into The Fire” Establish The Facts To Ensure You Get The Correct Licence

Time and time again we come across businesses which have ended up with unsustainable discharge licences primarily because they have not provided the licencing authority with the required information.

The applicant needs to be able to demonstrate to the licencing authority that a proposed or existing discharge can comply with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the objective of "Good" status receiving water.

- Comprehensive guidance documents have been developed to assist with the discharge licence application process and, in our experience, the licencing authorities are more than willing to engage in dialogue before and during the application to ensure that the most appropriate discharge licence can be granted.

A recent example which we have come across was where a licence holder requested a review of their discharge licence.

- Instead of working through the application process and providing technical argument to support their objectives, the business provided the licencing authority with unverified third party information which in turn left the licencing authority with no alternative, based on current published assessment criteria, but to impose much more onerous licence conditions which the licence holder cannot meet without significant capital investment.
- It should also be noted that the cause of concern on the original licence was no longer an issue on the revised licence.
- Furthermore, if the correct information had been provided and presented to the licencing authority in the correct format, there is little doubt but that the revised licence would have been issued with conditions which addressed the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the objective of "Good" status receiving water and which the licence holder could comply with.
- As an appeal against the revised licence was not made within the correct (and very short) time frame allowed, the licence holder now has no option other than to seek a review of the discharge licence all over

[Roselawn House, National Technology Park, Limerick](#) | T: +353 61 633644 | E: info@ecos.ie | W: www.ecos.ie



again, this time providing the technical information required both as part of the licence review process and to support any argument for revised licence conditions.

In summary the lesson to be learned to avoid jumping "out of the frying pan and into the fire" is to

- ✓ Understand the licencing process before you enter it
- ✓ Obtain or generate the technical information required for submission with the application
- ✓ Stress test all technical information - see what happens when the wrong information is taken at face vale
- ✓ Present a technical argument in support of any desired outcome - Assimilative capacity, Mass Balance, Headroom etc.
- ✓ Engage with the licencing authority before and during the licence application process
- ✓ Complete the application process, taking into consideration all issues which the licencing authority may have to consider for the specific discharge in question and with reference to published guidance notes and assessment criteria.

For more information please contact us at 061 633644 or info@ecos.ie.

ECOS Environmental Consultants Limited