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Mansergh Announces Transposition Into Law of the EU "Floods" Directive

Friday 19th March 2010

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF FLOOD RISKS) REGULATIONS 2010

Minister of State at the Dept. of Finance with special responsibility for the Office of Public Works, Dr. Martin Mansergh T.D. today announced that the Statutory Instrument transposing the EU 'Floods' Directive into Irish law has been signed by the Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan T.D.

The Statutory Instrument (SI) transposing the Directive appoints the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland as the Competent Authority under the Directive, reinforcing the Lead Agency role the OPW was given in 2004. The SI also identifies roles for other organisations, such as the Local Authorities, Waterways Ireland and ESB, to undertake certain duties with respect to flood risk within their existing areas of responsibility.

Speaking this afternoon Dr. Mansergh said "I am pleased to announce that the Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan has signed the Statutory Instrument which transposes the EU Floods Directive into Irish law. The Directive sets out a best-practice framework for the assessment and management of flood risk in Europe, requiring member States to prepare flood maps by 2013 and flood risk management plans by 2015, aimed at managing flood risk in areas where the risk is potentially significant. Such areas will be identified through a preliminary flood risk assessment by 2011.

"The Directive also provides for integrated river basin management through coordination with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and across borders for international river basins, and promotes a democratic input into the preparation of the flood risk management plans".

"The Directive and its requirements are well aligned with existing policy and strategy in Ireland, as set out following the National Flood Policy Review of 2004. We are indeed in a very good position to meet fully the requirements of the 'Floods' Directive, as we began on the process of developing flood maps and plans through the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Studies back in 2006".

The Minister continued "I launched for public consultation the draft Flood Risk Management Plan for the Lee Catchment, as the key output of our pilot CFRAM Study, on 1 February earlier this year. This Plan was the fruit of over three years of hard work by my officials and our consultants, working in close partnership with Cork City and County Councils and with regular engagement and consultation with stakeholders and the public. The Plan sets out a range of measures to manage effectively and efficiently the flood risk in the Lee Catchment, which should significantly reduce the likelihood of the severe flooding witnessed in Cork City and elsewhere in the catchment in November last year.

"Our other pilot CFRAM Studies are progressing in the Dodder and Suir Catchments, and in the Fingal – East Meath Area, and we have already begun the procurement process for the national roll out of the CFRAM Studies for catchments all around the country, enabling us to meet the demanding requirements of the 'Floods' Directive on time".

The Minister continued "To meet these new statutory requirements, I will continue to drive the delivery of flood risk management through a collaborative approach, involving all other responsible bodies, as well as meaningful consultation with stakeholders and the public. This approach, that has proved so successful in delivering the pilot CFRAM Studies, the Guidelines on the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, guidance on flood event response planning and numerous flood relief schemes around the country, will ensure the essential inter-Departmental and inter-Agency communication and understanding that will deliver coordinated and effective flood risk management into the future".

The Minister concluded by referring to the fact that, on a visit to the Netherlands, around St. Patrick's Day functions, earlier this week, accompanied by Mr. Tony Smyth, Director of Engineering in the OPW, he held three separate discussions with leading officials in the Department of Transport, Public Works and Water Management; the Waterschoppen (regional water authorities), and leading representatives of the Water Management Committee of the Estates-General (Dutch Parliament) to discuss flood risk management and defences, a subject on which the Dutch are the world's leading experts. On a private visit next month, the Minister will be in Cumbria in North-West England meeting the local authority in Cockermouth, where there was a severe flood with some fatalities last November, despite defences. It is important, where possible, to draw on other countries' experiences and expertise, as we proceed to implement our own flood risk management works and plans.

Ends

- For further information contact Kevin Kennedy, OPW Press Office (01) 647 6159.

Notes for Editors:-

THE EU 'FLOODS' DIRECTIVE

[EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES \(ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF FLOOD RISKS\) REGULATIONS 2010](#)

The EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks [2007/60/EC] came into force in November 2007, and sets out a best-practice framework for flood risk management. The requirements of the 'Floods' Directive include:

- a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), to be completed by the end of 2011, that shall identify areas of potentially significant flood risk based on available or readily-derivable information;
- the production of flood hazard and risk maps for the areas identified under the PFRA;
- the preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) at a catchment or river basin scale, setting out measures aimed at achieving objectives for the management of flood risks within the areas identified under the PFRA.

The 'Floods' Directive requires that the above is undertaken in a coordinated manner with the implementation of the Water Framework Directive [2000/60/EC] to promote integrated river basin management, and with other Member States for river basins that cross international borders. The directive further requires that the active involvement of the public and stakeholders be encouraged, and that the above requirements are made available to the public.

Overview of the 'CFRAM' Programme

The OPW has developed a Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme, which lies at the core of the assessment of flood risk and the long-term planning of the flood risk management measures throughout the country, including capital structural and non-structural measures.

The CFRAM Programme is being delivered through the CFRAM Studies. The CFRAM Studies are comprehensive catchment-based studies focused on Areas of Potentially Significant Risk (APSRs – see below), for which detailed flood maps are produced and flood risk management measures are assessed and taken to outline design. These measures will be prioritised and set out in a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP).

The CFRAM Programme will, as well as delivering on national policy, meet the requirements of the EU 'Floods' Directive that came into force in November 2007. This Directive requires the production of flood maps for the APSRs by the end of 2013, and the development of FRMPs to manage risk within the APSRs by the end of 2015.

To identify the APSRs throughout the State, the OPW is undertaking a national Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), which is a screening exercise assess the risk arising from possible flooding based on available and readily-derivable information. This exercise involves the assessment of a range of

different sources of flooding (including riverine, estuarine, coastal, pluvial [i.e., intense rainfall events], groundwater and other possible sources). The draft outputs of this assessment will be available in the Spring of 2010, and will then be refined up to the deadline for completion of the end of 2011 as set out under the Directive.

Pilot CFRAM Studies were commissioned for the Lee and Dodder Catchments that are now nearing completion. For the Lee, draft flood maps and a draft flood risk management plan have been published for public consultation (see www.leecframs.ie). CFRAM Studies are also underway for the Suir Catchment and the Fingal – East Meath Area.

The procurement process for the national programme of CFRAM Studies, including that for the Shannon, has been initiated and the Studies will commence in 2010. The flood maps will be produced over the period 2011 to 2013, with the production of maps prioritised for areas where development plans are scheduled for review and could benefit from the early production of the maps. The draft FRMPs will then be produced for consultation at the end of 2014 before finalisation at the end of 2015.

The Studies will be managed by the OPW, directed through Steering Groups, and implemented in close consultation with all of the principal responsible authorities involved. This collaborative process has proven successful in the pilot Studies to achieve an integrated approach, with full involvement and coordination of all of the principle authorities, to the management of flood risk.

Other organisational stakeholders will also be involved in the Studies through a Stakeholder Group from the beginning and on an ongoing basis throughout the Studies to ensure the opportunity is given to influence the process and decision-making. The public will equally be consulted at regular intervals during the Studies, as well as having a formal opportunity to make submissions on the key outcomes (namely the maps and FRMPs).

Strategic Environmental and Habitats Directive Assessments (subject to screening) are an integral part of the CFRAM Study process, as is coordination with implementation of the Water Framework Directive.

Both the flood maps and the identification and outline design of flood risk management measures will consider a range of potential future scenarios, including the potential impacts of climate change, ensuring that capacity for adaptation is built into the flood risk management strategy and measures.

Upon completion of the FRMPs in 2015, flood risk management measures will have been identified for areas of significant risk around the country. These measures will be prioritised to determine, subject to 6-yearly reviews and, of course, response to the need for emergency works, the long-term investment programme for flood risk management in Ireland.