INTERIM ADVICE NOTE 125 /09(W)

Supplementary guidance for users of DMRB Volume 11 ‘Environmental Assessment’

WALES ONLY

Summary
Provides supplementary advice to users of DMRB Volume 11, SECTIONS 1, 2 and 3. This document clarifies the assessment approach to be used in environmental impact assessment where up-to-date topic-specific guidance has not yet been updated and explains the use of significance criteria. It also provides further guidance for the reporting of cumulative assessment.

Instructions for Use
This guidance is supplementary to existing guidance given in DMRB Volume 11. It will be withdrawn when the publication of guidance for all Section 3 topics, as listed in Volume 11, Section 1, is complete.
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1. **Introduction**

1.1. **Background**

This Interim Advice Note (IAN) provides supplementary advice for users of Volume 11 'Environmental Assessment' of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) in carrying out environmental impact assessment for projects.

This IAN will be withdrawn once guidance for all Volume 11, Section 3 topic chapters has been updated and published in accordance with guidance given in Volume 11, Sections 1 and 2. Once this happens it is the intention to include any residual guidance on cumulative assessment in an updated DMRB Volume 11 Section 3 Part 5.

1.2. **Scope**

The guidance contained within this Interim Advice Note (IAN) is applicable to those reporting the environmental impact assessments of a trunk road projects in Wales.

The IAN is split into three parts. The first part outline the scope and purpose of the guidance the second part provides guidance to clarify the assessment approach to be used where updated topic assessment guidance (DMRB Volume 11, Section 3) has not yet been updated and published in conformity to DMRB Volume 11, Sections 1 and 2).

The third part provides further guidance on the reporting of cumulative assessment.

This IAN provides information that supplements the guidance given in DMRB Volume 11, Sections 1, 2 and 3. It should therefore be read in conjunction with those documents.

1.3. **Purpose**

This IAN is intended to provide further clarification on the following issues:

1. DMRB Volume 11, Sections 1 and 2 were republished in August 2008. These set out the overall approach to be followed in undertaking environmental impact assessments. In addition it has been recognised it is necessary to review the guidance given in the Section 3 topic chapters to ensure the topic guidance is in accordance with the overall approach set out in Volume 11, Sections 1 & 2. This process, led by the Highways Agency will be happening over the next year. Meanwhile project teams have asked for clarification on how to deal with reporting issues in the interim until the Section 3 topic guidance has been fully updated and this is dealt with in Chapter 2 of this IAN.

2. Project teams have also asked if there is any further guidance on cumulative impact assessment. The guidance contained in Section 3 builds on the advice already issued in DMRB Volume 11, Section 2, Parts 5 & 6.

1.4. **Equality Impact Assessment**

This IAN promotes consistency within the Welsh Assembly Government internal procedures. Any adverse or beneficial impacts that result from the introduction and adoption of this guidance are not expected to discriminate against any defined group in society. No equality impact assessment has been carried out in the development of this Standard as it is not considered relevant.
1.5. **Risk Assessment**
This IAN promotes consistency of Welsh Assembly Government internal procedures and provides guidance to ensure legislation is complied with. Any adverse or beneficial impacts that result from the introduction and adoption of this guidance are not expected to result in implications for health and safety. No risk assessment has been carried out in the development of this Advice as it is not considered relevant.

1.6. **Implementation**
The guidance contained within this IAN should be used forthwith on all projects for the assessment of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads in Wales except where the procurement of works has reached a stage at which, in the opinion of the Welsh Assembly Government, its use would result in significant additional expense or delay progress (in which case the decision must be recorded).

For projects which are cross border confirmation on the application of this advice will be required from the relevant Overseeing Organisations.

It should be read in conjunction with DMRB Volume 11, Sections 1, 2 and 3. It will be withdrawn once all Section 3 topic assessment guidance is up-to-date and in conformity with Volume 11, Sections 1 and 2.

1.7. **Feedback**
Feedback should be provided to the contact at the end of this document, to help improve the performance of standards.
2. **Interim arrangements for reporting of environmental impact assessments**

2.1. **Topic areas**

Volume 11, Sections 1 and 2 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) were revised and published in August 2008. These reduced the number of environmental assessment topics from 12 (as given in the DMRB guidance published in June 1993) to ten subjects.

Figure 1 below shows how the old DMRB Section 3 topic chapters have been restructured into the new topics list.

The reporting of topic assessments should follow the ten subject structure.

![Diagram showing changes in environmental assessment topic headings in DMRB Volume 11.](image)

**Figure 1 – Summary of the changes to the environmental assessment topic headings in DMRB Volume 11.**
2.2. Methodologies

In the interim, until either updates of DMRB Advice Notes or IANs for all of the new Section 3 topics have been published, Designers should use the existing published guidance, which will either take the form of DMRB Volume 11 Section 3 Advice Notes or IANs. This will mean that for example the assessment of the effects on All Travellers will be assessed using a mixture of the existing guidance on Vehicle Travellers together with the existing published guidance on Pedestrians, Cyclists and Equestrians. Similarly the assessment of Community and Private Assets will use the existing published guidance on Community Effects together with guidance on Land Use.

It is recognised that some subject assessment guidance is dated and may no longer be considered best practice. This is why all the Section 3 guidance will be updated shortly. If project teams decide they need to use more up-to-date industry best practice guidance in the interim they should discuss and agree this with the Overseeing Organisation. However, the principle to be adopted is that a methodology that is considered industry best practice is always likely to be more defendable than one made up specifically for a project. This last option should be avoided where at all possible and only used as a last resort. Project teams are reminded that the methodology that they intend to use should be set out in any scoping exercise and be subject to consultation as appropriate.

When reporting the assessment within relevant documents (eg; Scoping Reports, Environmental Statements or Non-statutory Environmental Reports) it should be stated which guidance is being followed.

Guidance on the assessment and reporting requirements of materials (part 6) has not yet been issued in Section 3. Pending the publication of the new advice, direction can be sought from Welsh Assembly Government.

Volume 11, Section 2, Part 5 ‘Assessment and Management of Environmental Effects’ advises use of significance criteria based on a formulaic approach. However, it is recognised that existing topic guidance, published prior to August 2008, may not always include the use of significance criteria and so would not fit with the overall desire of Section 2, Part 5. Until the guidance for these topics is updated this approach is entirely acceptable. It is also recognised that the approach to applying significance criteria given in Section 2, Part 5 may not be applicable to the assessment of particular SECTION 3 topics (e.g. ‘Air Quality’ and ‘Noise and Vibration’) for which recent guidance has been published (paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 in Volume 11, Section 3, Part 7 - Noise and Vibration (HA213/08) should no longer be followed).
3. Reporting of cumulative assessment

The consideration of cumulative impacts is an emerging but increasingly critical element of the assessment process. Advice for the reporting of cumulative assessment of trunk road projects is given in DMRB Volume 11, Section 2, Parts 5 and 6 with supplementary advice given below.

Whilst the consideration of cumulative impacts and effects is not an easy concept to frame, assessments do need to include this aspect where relevant. The Highways Act 1980 (as amended) requires project assessments to include “consideration” of cumulative effects, but as yet there is no industry standardised approach.

Project teams should concentrate on the main likely significant cumulative effects, rather than trying to report every interaction. The assessment should differentiate between permanent, temporary, direct, indirect and secondary effects, positive or negative.

Project teams are reminded that the scoping exercise for the environmental impact assessment should also set out the methodology for any cumulative assessment, setting out temporal, spatial and functional boundaries of that assessment.

The reporting of any assessment should be simple and transparent. Whilst Table 3.2 in Volume 11, Section 2, Part 6 provides one example of how cumulative assessment may be reported. It is recognised there may be other ways. Another example is to use a simple tabular form with the receptor down one axis and impacts along the other.

DMRB Volume 11, Section 2, Part 6 suggests that the reporting of cumulative assessments should be included towards the end of the assessment report as it is easier to sum up the cumulative effects after the consideration of the effects on the respective subject areas.

A statement should be included in the reporting that the emphasis of the assessment has been on the main likely significant cumulative effects

4. Contacts

For queries regarding this IAN please contact:

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