



Environment
Agency

healthier fisheries



A guide to moving fish

We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place – for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

Published by:

Environment Agency
Rio House
Waterside Drive, Aztec West
Almondsbury, Bristol BS32 4UD
Tel: 08708 506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

© Environment Agency

All rights reserved. This document may be reproduced with prior permission of the Environment Agency.

GEH00310BSEU-E-P

Summary



Stocking fish is a vital management tool. It can bring many benefits to a fishery, including adding new species and increasing anglers' catches. However, there are risks associated with stocking. For this reason, we have rules that protect both your fishery and the wider aquatic environment.

You need our **written consent** to stock any fish, fry or ova into any river or stillwater fishery in England and Wales. You also need our written consent to remove fish and use fishing instruments other than rod and line.

You can apply for consent on-line, by post, fax or email. We recommend that you discuss your proposed fish movement with your local fisheries officer before you apply. They can give you additional advice and guidance.

We aim to process applications in 10 working days, although we ask you to allow 20 working days. It may take even longer than this if a fish health check is required or the water has conservation status.

Fish health checks help prevent the spread of parasites and disease. Checks are mandatory for sites that are in the floodplain or where water can flow to another site.

Normally a health check is not compulsory for fully enclosed waters. However, we always advise you to have one done – it can help protect your fishery.

Understand the importance of using a reputable supplier. Know the risks and how to reduce them. There are other ways to improve anglers' catches. Read up on diseases, habitats and stocking densities (see section 8).

To stock **non-native species** you will also require an ILFA licence. The licence is free, but can take two months to process. You must have it in place before applying to stock these fish.

If you act without consent, you face **prosecution** and a criminal record, with a fine of up to £2,500.



You will find most of the information you need in this pack:

1. Applying to introduce fish.
2. Applying to remove fish or use a fishing instrument.
3. Sending in applications.
4. Register your fishery.
5. The risks of stocking.
6. Health checks for fish.
7. Where to buy fish.
8. Further guidance and information.
9. Disinfect your equipment.
10. Non-native fish need a special licence.
11. Protecting wild brown trout.
12. Who to contact.

Also included with this pack are application forms to introduce and remove fish. Sections 1 to 3 explain how to complete and return these forms. You can download additional forms at www.efishbusiness.co.uk/formsandguides. You can also ask for forms by calling our **Customer Services team on 08708 506 506**.

For further general information, call the **Fish Movements Team on 01480 483968**.

For local information, phone **Environment Agency Customer Services on 08708 506 506** and ask to speak to your local fisheries officer.



1 Applying to introduce fish

You need our written consent to introduce any fish, fry or ova into any river or stillwater fishery in England and Wales. It is commonly referred to as a 'section 30 consent' and is a legal requirement.

We issue consents for a specific date or dates, a specific fishery and a specific consignment of fish.

Talk to us first

Ask us for advice **before** you send in the application. We are happy to help and you're more likely to send through all the information we need. Phone our **Customer Services team on 08708 506 506** and ask to speak to your local fisheries officer.

What information must you send in?

The application form (FR1) asks for information about:

- yourself – the applicant;
- the supplier – if not you;
- the water where you will be introducing the fish;
- the date you plan to introduce the fish;
- the species of fish to be introduced;
- the source of the fish;
- any temporary holding facility – if the fish have been kept, or will be kept, elsewhere before introduction;
- health checks.

Make sure you sign and date the form.

About the water

Make sure you give all the details asked for.

If you can, please give us the national grid reference. You can get this from the Ordnance Survey at www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite – once on their site, simply enter the postcode or place name into the search bar under 'view maps online'. A map will appear of the area you want. Underneath the map you will find the grid reference in the following format: TL 123 456.

If you can't find the national grid reference, you can attach a map. This should be clearly annotated to show the location of the water where you want to introduce fish.



Species of fish

Give sizes and weight if you know them. If the fish are trout, make sure you tell us whether they are triploid (non-fertile female) or diploid (ordinary fertile brown trout).

Health checks

The need for a health check depends on the location and type of site you are stocking. Having a health check done may slow down the application process. We will tell you if a health check is required. See section 6 for details.

Another successful stocking



2 Applying to remove fish or use a fishing instrument

You need our written consent to remove fish from inland waters or to use fishing instruments other than a rod and line.

We usually issue these consents for a specific date or dates, a specific site and a particular species. We have to be satisfied that the fish removal or task is appropriate and that it will not damage the environment.

Talk to us first

Ask us for advice **before** you send in the application. We are happy to help and you're more likely to send through all the information we need. Phone our **Customer Services team on 08708 506 506** and ask to speak to your local fisheries officer.

What we need to know

The application form (FR2) asks for details about:

- the applicant;
- the contractor (if different to the applicant);
- the water from which you will be removing the fish;
- the date you plan to remove the fish;

- what fishing equipment you plan to use;
- the species of fish to be removed.

Make sure you sign and date the form.

About the water

Make sure you give all the details asked for.

If you can, please give us the national grid reference. You can get this from the Ordnance Survey at **www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite** – once on their site, simply enter the postcode or place name into the search bar under 'view maps online'. A map will appear of the area you want. Underneath the map you will find the grid reference in the following format: TL 123 456.

If you can't find the national grid reference, you can attach a map. This should be clearly annotated to show the location of the water where you want to introduce fish.

Species of fish

Give the sizes and numbers if you know them. Otherwise write 'as caught'.



3 Sending in applications

You can apply for consent in several ways – online, by fax or post, or by emailing us a scanned copy of your completed application. We will acknowledge receipt of your application by post or email. Please do not send in your application more than 10 weeks in advance.

Your local fisheries officer will decide whether or not to approve your application. Allow at least 20 working days for us to process your application. However, we aim to process applications within 10 working days.

If you plan to move fish into or from a site with conservation status allow a further 28 working days. These sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and County Wildlife sites. We may have to consult with the relevant authorities.

For applications to stock fish (FR1), we may ask you to carry out a fish health check. This will need to be done before we can issue consent.

Online

Go to www.efishbusiness.co.uk and register for 'Econsenting'. You can then:

- apply for and receive consents online;
- track the status of an application;
- view old applications;
- change the dates you want to stock or remove fish.





By post, fax or email

Send completed forms to the Fish Movements Team:

By post: Fish Movements Team
Environment Agency
Bromholme Lane
Brampton
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE28 4NE

By fax: 01480 483955
or 01480 483026

By email: fmapplications@environment-agency.gov.uk
Your email must include a scan of your completed application that includes your signature.

What you will receive

If your application is approved, you will receive written consent from the Environment Agency.

To change the date of an application

You only need to give one day's notice. You can do this online, by email or by fax – using the contact details above. Or you can phone the **Fish Movements Team on 01480 483968.**

If you act without consent, you face **prosecution** and a criminal record, with a fine of up to £2,500.

4 Register your fishery

Since August 2009, fishery owners must register their fisheries with the Centre for the environment, fisheries and aquaculture science (Cefas) under the Aquatic Animal Health Regulations.

The regulations were introduced to maintain the high standards of fish health within the UK. Registration is a one-off procedure and there is no fee.

We will not be able to proceed with your fish movement application, be it for an introduction or removal, if your fishery has not been registered.

You will find further information and an application form (RW1) at **www.efishbusiness.co.uk/registration/fishery-registration.asp**

Registration helps Cefas in controlling the spread of serious fish disease.



5 The risks of stocking

Stocking can bring many benefits to a fishery, including adding new species and increasing anglers' catches. However, it's not without risk. Bad stocking can cause long-term harm.

It's much easier to prevent problems than it is to put them right. Understand the risks and do all you can to reduce them.

The main risks are that:

- you introduce new diseases and parasites;
- the new fish fail to thrive;
- the sudden increase damages the ecology of the water.

Inappropriate fish movements can damage fishery performance or cause mortalities. Both can have serious financial implications for your fishery.

Protect your fishery

Stocking is not the only way to increase anglers' catches. For example, if you improve the spawning habitat, this will improve catches in the long term. Ask us for advice – we're experts and our advice is FREE.

Make sure that there is enough room for your new fish. Are your original fish growing? Remember – if your water is overstocked, anglers' catches could actually fall as the fish become less healthy.

It's worthwhile keeping good records as this will help you make informed fishery management decisions in the future.

If you want to add a new species, make sure it won't harm the fish already there. Is the water suitable? Why isn't that species there already? Has it been tried before and not been successful?

Find a fish supplier that you are happy with and trust. Good quality fish can greatly reduce the risk of stocking. See section 7 for more advice.

A good supplier will also advise you on the best time to introduce fish. We recommend only stocking coarse fish between October and March.



Does water from your fishery flow to another site? Is your fishery in the flood plain? If the answer is yes, your new fish will need a valid health check before we agree to stocking (see section 6 for more information).

It's always a good idea to ask for a health check anyway. No health check can completely guarantee that stocked fish are free of diseases or parasites, but it is the best protection you can have when stocking.

Ornamental fish can add novelty value. However the risks of disease are higher and some species are prone to health problems. You should never stock ornamental fish or unwanted fish from garden ponds.

Add fish gradually. Adding large numbers in one go can upset the ecology of the water, causing problems with water quality and habitat.

Poor fishery management can result in a fish mortality



Keeping good records will help you make good decisions.

6 Health checks for fish

Not all fish movements require a health check, but it may be in your best interests to have one done anyway. If you buy diseased fish, then you are putting your whole fishery at risk.

Mandatory checks

Does water from your site flow into another site? Is it in a floodplain? If so, you have to check the health of the fish you wish to introduce. Disease can spread easily from such sites. We will not approve stocking until the fish have been found to be healthy.

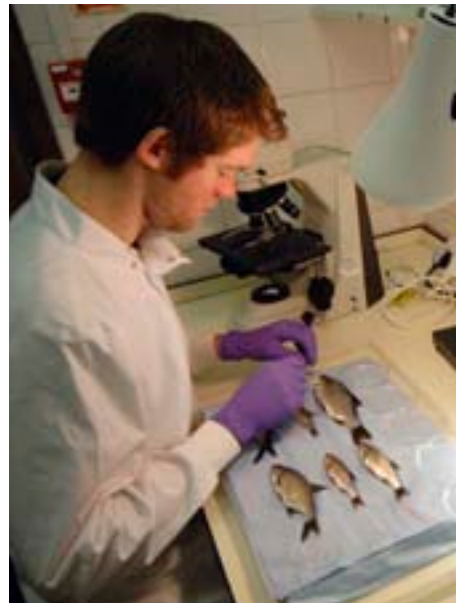
These mandatory checks are commonly referred to as ‘Section 30 health checks’.

Who can carry out a health check?

The checks can only be carried out by one of the approved fish health consultants listed with this pack. These consultants have been accredited by the Institute of Fisheries Management.

If you know that you require a health check, it’s advisable to contact a consultant well in advance – they can get very busy at certain times of year.

A fish health check being undertaken





What is involved?

A sample of fish is submitted for dissection, in order to establish whether the fish carry certain diseases or high-risk parasites (sometimes known as ‘category 2’ parasites).

The sample has to be representative of the fish you wish to introduce. Some parasites only infect particular species of fish or prefer certain sizes of those species. The rules are therefore very strict as to the number, size and species of fish in a sample. This is to ensure that there is an acceptable chance of detecting a problem.

Your fish health consultant will explain exactly what is required. The Fish Movements Team can also provide more detailed information on health check samples. Call them on **01480 483968**.

How long is a health check valid for?

A health check for coarse fish is valid for 6 months. A health check for farmed trout and salmon is valid for 12 months.

A carp with lesions



7 Where to buy fish

Ask around. We cannot recommend a supplier, but local fisheries will be able to tell you who they have bought fish from and if they were happy with the service and the quality of the fish. If you choose a supplier listed in the angling press or in other adverts, ask them to supply references – and check them.

Buying fish from only one source is good practice and can reduce the risk of introducing disease. If a problem occurs, it will also be clearer who to speak to.

Also, fish grown on fish farms are less likely to have a disease than those taken from other fisheries. Buying farmed fish will help protect your fishery.

Be a smart fish buyer

The vast majority of fish suppliers will provide you with healthy fish, good advice and good service. But there will always be some rogue traders. Remember:

- Never buy fish from people who approach you first. Beware of cheap deals and suppliers who want to avoid paperwork.

- If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Only buy fish that you need for your long-term plans. Don't be tempted by offers or deals.
- Always be there when the fish are stocked.
- Don't accept poor quality fish. They are the supplier's problem, not yours.
- Never accept fish that were not in the original order. They may not be covered by your consent.

Lists of fish and trout suppliers are included with this pack. This is for information only. We do not recommend suppliers or guarantee their work. You can ask for an up-to-date copy of this list by calling our **Customer Services team on 08708 506 506.**

8 Further guidance and information

It is sensible to know how to keep your fish healthy – and to be aware of what would happen if your fish became ill or started dying.

You can download a number of helpful publications at www.efishbusiness.co.uk/formsandguides/ or contact the **Fish Movements Team on 01480 483968**. These leaflets include:

Looking out for fish disease

Explains how to spot the first signs of fish disease – so you can take quick action and help prevent fish deaths. Why it's important to regularly check the health of your fish.

How to manage your fishery habitat

Explains how to use habitat to protect the health of your fish.

A guide to water quality

Fish can't survive without good water quality. Explains what you need to look out for and how to avoid problems.

How to manage fish stock density

Every fishery is different and can hold varying numbers of fish. However, the more fish you have, the greater the risk of disease. Explains how to reduce the risk of disease when you have high stock density.

Guidance on stocking your fishery

Covers the risks of stocking, sets out the permissions you require, and gives advice on how to stock successfully.

A guide to fishery biosecurity

Disease can spread easily. This fact sheet provides tips on the best ways to keep disease out of your fishery and keep your fish healthy.

What to do if your fish are dying

A step-by-step guide on what to do if fish start dying in your fishery.

Life after a fish mortality

What to do after the fish have stopped dying. How to stop it happening again.

9 Disinfect your equipment

You must clean and disinfect your fishing equipment properly. It is very easy to spread disease if you don't.

There are several ways of disinfecting equipment. The first step is always to remove **all** mud and plant matter.

Methods of disinfection

Sun drying

Dry your equipment thoroughly in sunlight for at least 48 hours – preferably in direct sunlight. This is the safest and most effective method. Make sure that you air all surfaces until the equipment is completely dry.

If sun drying is not practical, use chemical disinfectants.

Chemical disinfectants

1. Immerse or spray the equipment with the chosen disinfectant. Leave for at least 10 to 15 minutes, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Rinse the disinfectant off with plenty of water.
3. Remember to dispose of the waste water sensibly. Don't let it harm the environment. **Never tip it into water containing fish or other aquatic life.**

4. Disinfectants may contain hazardous chemicals. You must follow the product labels and manufacturer's advice. Wear protective clothing when diluting the disinfectants.

What types of disinfectant can be used?

Iodophors – these iodine-based products include Iosan CCT, Deosan Iodophor Udderwash and FAM® 30.

Iodophors go off rapidly in sunlight: store them in a dark place. Iodophors should be a dark brown. Once they lose this colour, they no longer work properly and you need to replace them.

Dilution varies between products: follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

Virkon® Aquatic – available in powder and tablet form. Make up with water to a one per cent, pink solution. The solution will remain active for about five days. Keep out of direct sunlight.

For further advice and information, call Fisheries Technical Services (Fish Health, Ageing and Species) on **01480 483802** or email on **fish.health@environment-agency.gov.uk**



10 Non-native fish need a special licence

You need an ILFA (Import of Live Fish Act) licence to hold, keep or release most non-native species of fish. Check which fish are listed at www.efishbusiness.co.uk

ILFA licences are free but you must have the licence **before** you buy or introduce the fish.

Why a special licence?

The presence and spread of non-native fish can have devastating and far-reaching effects on the fish, animals and plants in our rivers and lakes. Non-native fish can compete with native species for habitat and food. They can also introduce and spread new diseases or parasites to which our native species have no resistance.

The problems can be impossible to put right – so it is extremely important to avoid them in the first place.

Application for an ILFA licence

You can download an application form at www.efishbusiness.co.uk/formsandguides/ILFA1.PDF or phone the **Fish Movements Team on 01480 483 968**.

It can take up to two months for Cefas (Centre for the environment, fisheries and aquaculture science) to process an application. Cefas consults with other statutory bodies that include the Environment Agency, the Fish Health Inspectorate and either Natural England or the Countryside Council for Wales.

Cefas may refuse to grant a licence if they decide that keeping or releasing the fish is inappropriate or a potential threat to native wildlife. Their website – www.efishbusiness.co.uk – has more information on the criteria they use.



A licence may have conditions that you will need to comply with, such as site security, records of movements, and the fitting and maintenance of screens on outlets.

If you do not comply with the terms of your licence, you may lose the licence and face prosecution. The maximum penalty is £2,500. Illegally stocked fish may be removed and destroyed.

To find out more about stocking non-native fish, please call our **Customer Services team on 07808 506 506** and ask for your local fisheries officer.

Wels catfish



Bighead carp



11 Protecting wild brown trout

New rules protect wild brown trout. From 2015 you will only be able to stock:

- non-fertile, all female brown trout (triploids) – this is the likely option for supporting angling;
- brown trout from breeding programmes that use locally sourced brood stock.

The only exception is if you are stocking into waters that are all but totally enclosed – **and** there is no significant natural brown trout breeding.

We are phasing in the new rules to give anglers, fisheries and fish farms time to adapt. We would like to halve the stocking of fertile farm trout by 2013.

Why the change?

Anglers need fish. Every year more than 700,000 farmed fertile brown trout are stocked into English and Welsh rivers.

Farmed trout are domesticated and genetically very similar. As a result they are less likely to survive and breed in the wild.

In contrast, the different strains of native brown trout are genetically diverse. Fine-tuned to flourish in our rivers, they are more likely to cope with environmental challenges such as climate change.

Scientific studies across Europe have shown that wild brown trout are at risk if they interbreed with farmed trout. Any offspring may find it harder to survive, breed and adapt.

Triploids

Although triploids cost 10 to 15 per cent more than fertile farmed trout, there is some evidence that you may need to stock less of them. Triploids find it easier to survive the winter and seem less likely to move from place to place.



You can find further information in our *National Trout & Grayling Strategy: New rules to protect wild brown trout*. This is available to download. Go to **www.environment-agency.gov.uk** and type 'national trout and grayling strategy' into the search bar. Or call our **Customer Services team on 08708 506 506**.

Wild brown trout



12 Who to contact

For further general advice, call our Fish Movements Team:

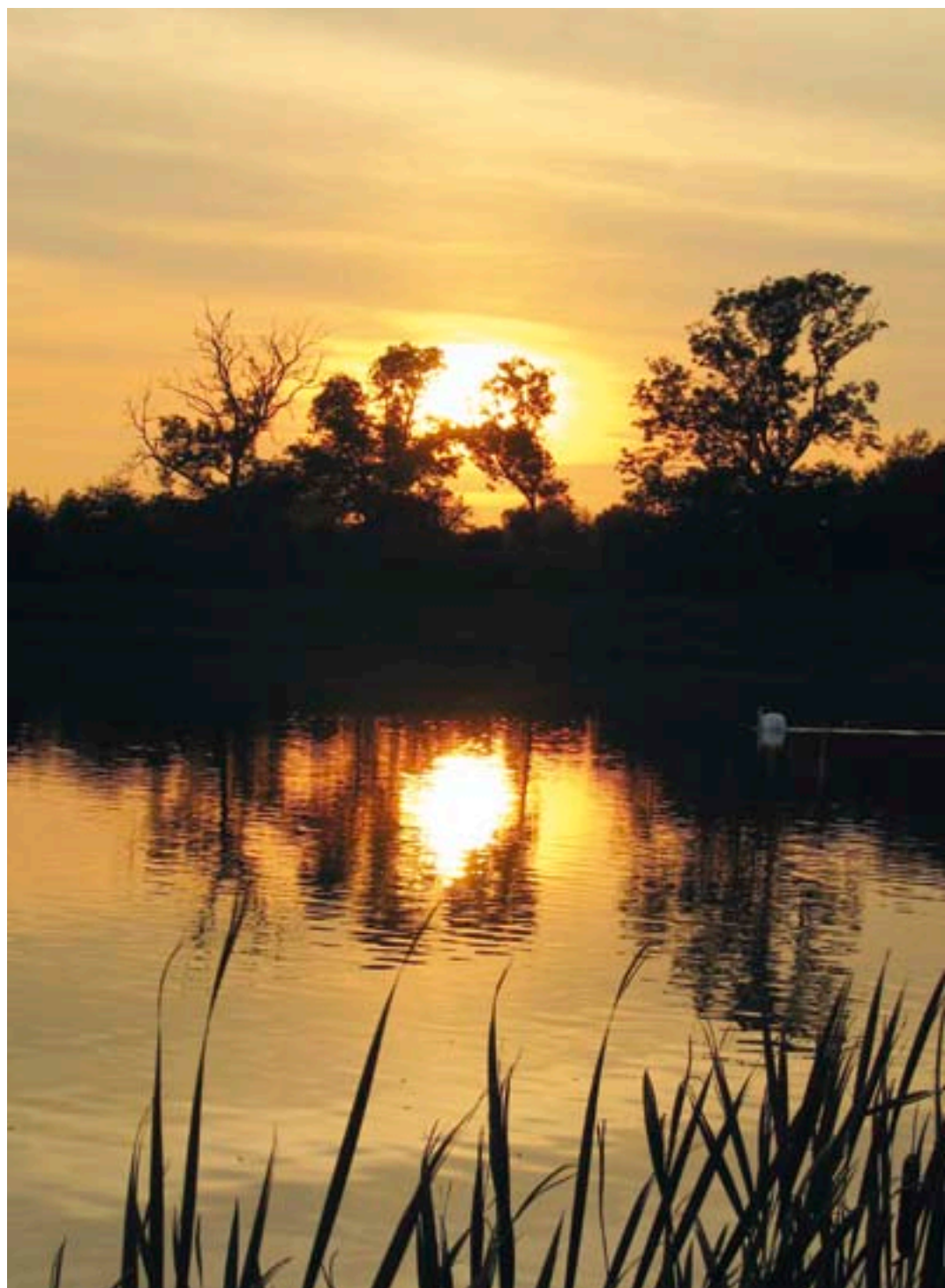
Post: Environment Agency
Bromholme Lane
Brampton
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE28 4NE

Phone: 01480 483968

Fax: 01480 483955
or 01480 483026

Email: fmapplications@environment-agency.gov.uk

For specific advice about a planned fish movement please phone **Environment Agency Customer Services on 08708 506 506** and ask to speak to your local fisheries officer.



**Would you like to find out more about us,
or about your environment?**

Then call us on

08708 506 506* (Mon–Fri 8–6)

email

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

or visit our website

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)

floodline 0845 988 1188

*Approximate call costs: 8p plus 6p per minute (standard landline).
Please note charges will vary across telephone providers.



Environment first: This publication is printed on paper made from 100 per cent previously used waste. By-products from making the pulp and paper are used for composting and fertiliser, for making cement and for generating energy.