

The Environmental Governance (Targets) Regulations 2025 (the 'Regulations') made under sections 4 and 5 of the Environmental Governance Act 2023 came into force in Gibraltar on the 24th July 2025. The Regulations mark a significant step forward in Gibraltar's environmental policy framework, setting statutory long-term targets across four priority areas, including, air quality, water, biodiversity and waste reduction. The targets' compliance dates range from 2032 up until 2052, are designed to not only increase accountability, but to also bring Gibraltar in line with international standards.

In respect of air quality, the Regulations seek to impose strict limits on key pollutants which need to be met by the 31st December 2050. In the aim to reduce such harmful air substances such as nitrogen dioxide, monitoring stations need to operate for at least 85% of the year to ensure the data collection is consistent and reliable, with the corresponding reporting date being the 15th July 2051. This is a particularly longer-term target under the Regulations, with an extended timeframe for compliance, extending to the 2050s to match World Health Organisation guidelines on particulate matter.

As for the target surrounding water quality, the Regulations require that the marine waters within Gibraltar's marine strategy area must achieve (and maintain) "good environmental status", as defined under the Marine Strategy Regulations 2011. Good environmental status is defined as providing ecologically diverse and dynamic oceans and seas, which are clean, healthy and productive - with a sustainable use of the marine environment. This target needs to be met by the 31st March 2040; a significantly extended timeline compared to the unsuccessfully 2020 attempt by the EU and UK.

The Regulations have formally introduced several targets in respect of biodiversity. This includes, but is not limited to, the fact that natural land habitats must account for at least 43% of Gibraltar's total land area whilst natural marine habitats must cover at least 58 square kilometres of British Gibraltar territorial waters by the 31st December 2050. An additional target aims to reduce the coverage of invasive species by the 31st December 2030, which is notable as one of the more imminent target dates. Furthermore, to address a species decline in Gibraltar, a species abundance index must demonstrate that the aforesaid ongoing decline has been halted, measuring changes in the population of specified terrestrial and marine species. The relevant reporting on this target is due by the 15th April 2032, representing another shorter compliance timeline.

Finally, the Regulations have established a long-term target by the Government in respect of resource and waste management to reduce residual waste to no more than 136 kilograms per capita per year by the 31st December 2050, another differentiating target to the UK's 2042 significantly lower target of 287 kilos per person. Residual waste includes any waste originating in Gibraltar that is sent to landfill, incinerated, or used in energy recovery (excluding certain categories) with compliance of this target needing to be reported by the 31st January 2052, a much longer deadline of compliance alike air quality.

The Regulations follow Gibraltar's commitments to align with UK standards through the Gibraltar Authorisation Regime and represent a significant step forward in embedding environmental resilience into Gibraltar's legal and policy frameworks over the next 30 years. We expect His Majesty's Government of Gibraltar will introduce new ESG compliance requirements in the near future, therefore, entities should remain vigilant in monitoring legislative developments and begin integrating these targets into their operations to ensure compliance in the years ahead.

Should you wish to obtain any legal advice in respect of your ESG obligations in accordance with Gibraltar legislation, or should you require any assistance with any ESG related matters, please do not hesitate to contact us at **info@isolas.gi**.

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