

Newsletter



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The Evolving Framework for Water Services in Greece

Greece's framework for the regulation of water services has been progressively developed to enhance strategic planning, transparency, and sustainability in the sector, while also aligning national practices with the standards set out in the EU Water Framework and Drinking Water Directives. The framework is anchored primarily in the amended Laws 3199/2003, 4001/2011 and more recent Law 5037/2023, as well as a series of ministerial decisions detailing and operationalising the legislative provisions.



Key Directions of the Framework

Long-Term Planning

- Providers of water services are required to adopt structured annual programming reports, which must include detailed budgeting, infrastructure development plans and necessary investments.
- The General Water Services Plans include forecasting of future demand, programs to reduce water leaks and the carbon footprint of the providers, plans on financing of necessary investments. These plans cover a five-year period and can be modified as necessary, ensuring continuity of planning.
- The National Water Strategy sets long-term policy priorities for sustainable use and protection of water resources.

Sustainable Pricing

Tariffs must reflect the full cost of water services, including environmental costs, so as to ensure the long-term financial viability of service providers and the sustainable use of water resources. Incorporating environmental costs helps internalize the impact of water extraction and distribution on ecosystems. All cost estimations used in pricing water services must be transparent and verifiable, and tariff decisions are subject to regulatory review to promote consistency in applying best practices.



Administrative Competence

Regulation of the water services providers has been strengthened, as access to funding and financial instruments now depends on formal certification of administrative competence. Multiple aspects of the providers' operations are evaluated, including organisational capacity, resource management, financial sustainability, overall viability, compliance with the applicable legal framework and obligations.

Joint Supervision

At the heart of recent changes is the allocation of notable regulatory powers to the Regulatory Authority for Energy, Water and Waste ("RAEWW"), which has been entrusted with an enhanced role, ensuring consistency, specialization and accountability across the sector. At the same time, all competent authorities on the water sector remain decentralized, with responsibilities shared between regional authorities and the Ministry of Environment and Energy. This governance structure requires ongoing cooperation among the responsible bodies to ensure that they operate in an aligned and uniform manner.

Next Steps

The next steps regarding water legislation are critical. Environmental developments and the growing challenge of water scarcity call for the utmost legal clarity that will make broad compliance achievable and equip providers as well as potential interested parties with the legal tools to participate in current water programs and public tenders with full capacity to comply with and assimilate recent changes. Actions are already being taken by the competent authorities to support providers in this transition. RAEWW, in particular, has prepared practical manuals on the drafting of General Water Service Plans and annual programming reports, as well as on the administrative competence documentation required for certification. Each guide was subject to public consultation, allowing interested parties to provide feedback before their final adoption.

This legal architecture marks a decisive shift in how Greece approaches water management. By combining long-term planning, sustainable financing and independent oversight, it reflects EU standards that recognise water as a vital resource best safeguarded through robust and comprehensive regulation.



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