

IMPEL's Multiannual Strategic Programme 2022-2027

Agreed at the 23rd IMPEL GA, France, June 2022.

Thematic sections agreed at 24th IMPEL GA in Prague, November 2022.

Our mission

IMPEL's mission is to ***ensure effective, efficient implementation and enforcement of European environmental law by promoting professional collaboration and sharing of information and best-practice between national, regional or local environmental competent authorities.***

Context

The MASP's legitimation is derived from discussions throughout our whole network. Its direction shall be underpinned by insights on **our members' key implementation challenges**, gained through the implementation challenge survey. The MASP shall then help guide decisions on how IMPEL's resources will be invested in specific projects and activities.

The IMPEL network, through its 56 members in 36 countries, has access to world leading expertise and a deep reservoir of experience in ensuring good implementation, enforcement and use of administrative measures such as compliance assurance, in tackling environmental impacts. The key challenge is ensuring that methods and approaches to tackle the most common causes of non-compliance and poor implementation are shared and disseminated, including how to put them in practice in an efficient and effective way. Today's environmental problems also require new tools and innovative thinking in addition to the more 'traditional' tools and approaches. Developing, testing, promoting, sharing, and applying of new technologies and approaches are therefore essential.

IMPEL's **new multiannual strategic programme (MASP)** is drafted with consideration of a number of global issues and the resulting practical and resource challenges for our members. It is possible further unexpected developments might have an impact on the implementation of the programme. It is shaped by European Union's (EU) "**Green Deal**" with an ambitious "zero pollution" aim and the **Climate and Biodiversity emergencies**. It takes into consideration the results of IMPEL 2020 Governance Assessment and suggestions for reform. It builds on the IMPEL Position Paper on Environmental Compliance Assurance submitted to the European Commission (EC) and will also reflect further developments in the work areas of the **EU Environmental Compliance Action Plan**, to which IMPEL is contributing, together with other European environmental networks of professionals.

Current feedback from our members already shows that in these times, **swift, reliable, trustful, informal, and confidential networking and information exchange** has the highest priority for most of our members.

With a new Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) signed with the EC and increased security of funding, IMPEL is motivated to provide more opportunities for vocational training and capacity building in and between national and regional authorities. IMPEL aims to achieve more efficiency in its **networking and training activities**. We will undertake additional efforts and invest in supplementary resources to deliver useful and accessible practical guidance and tools, promote peer to peer initiatives and generally **strengthen collaboration and networking within and amongst IMPEL members**. IMPEL should collect, discuss and exchange as well as communicate **the perspective, insights, and experiences of our practitioners**.

The MASP is in full compliance with IMPEL Rules and Statutes. It is a **reference document** for key groups within the IMPEL Network, namely:

- the **General Assembly**, for agreeing the strategic direction and priorities for IMPEL's MASP;
- the **Administrative Board**, drafting the main strategic lines and for managing IMPEL's resources to reflect the priorities set out;
- the **Project Board**, for bringing together and proposing an integrated annual work programme that reflects these priorities;
- the **Audit and Evaluation Committee**, for ensuring new project and action proposals have IMPEL core aims at their heart;
- the **Recruitment Committee**, in supporting more active membership.
- the **Expert Teams**, for developing and proposing projects in line with our strategic priorities.

IMPEL's activities shall be organised in a way that ensures professional and efficient financial administration, enables well-founded, transparent cost-benefit evaluation and reduces negative impacts on climate emissions. For this, the necessary professional knowledge will be provided by the Secretariat and from members of the network and if necessary, as a last resort, through external support/contracting. Reformed internal procedures will ensure the necessary monitoring of IMPEL activities.

Negative impacts on climate should be reduced by:

- more widespread use of new technologies, ensuring in person events like meetings/conferences/workshops can also have assistance online (e.g. hybrid events, with virtual meetings and participation)
- preference of back-to-back meetings
- less air travel and more use of train travel
- selection of easy to reach, environmentally friendly meeting locations and facilities

Our priorities

The IMPEL network has access to world leading expertise and a deep reservoir of experience in ensuring good implementation and enforcement of environmental law. The key challenge is to ensure that best practice is disseminated and shared in an efficient and effective way to those that need it most and that they have political and administrative support to implement

the required changes. Today's environmental problems however also require new tools and innovative thinking in addition to the more 'traditional' tools and approaches. With this in mind, IMPEL has 5 key priorities for the next six years:

Priority 1. Build strategic relationships in Europe, Internationally and within countries between agencies and authorities at national, regional and local level, across thematic areas and across the compliance chain

We are a network of practitioners. It is vitally important that we work well together, listen and respond to our members' needs. It is equally important to inform and support our members proactively, **making sure that the results of IMPEL's projects and activities are practically relevant, easy to use, and freely accessible** to be taken up in all environmental authorities, in different countries and across different thematic areas to help improve efficiency and effectiveness of implementation of environmental law. Many stakeholders engage in different areas of environmental protection activities and can profit from and contribute significantly to the effectiveness of IMPEL's work.

We will:

- In close cooperation with the European Commission, follow the Developments in the Implementation of the Green Deal, the Zero Pollution Strategy and the relevant REFIT and Review initiatives within the EU, to be able to contribute practical insights and to address – possibly in advance - future challenges for our members,
- Distribute and debate insights on the state of the European implementation of environmental legislation and on emerging trends,
- Ensure a broad member participation in all decision-making structures of IMPEL,
- Bring the experience, knowledge and perspective of our regulating experts in European environmental policy initiatives,
- Seek to improve communication and coordination between the different actors in the compliance chain, namely by using key opportunities to engage with other Networks between the European implementation and enforcement Networks, the European Network of Police Officers (EnviCrimeNet), for Prosecutors on the Environment (ENPE) and the European Forum for Judges on the Environment (EUFJE), bringing together relevant communities of practitioners,
- Encourage and foster relationships between authorities' agencies and authorities within member countries,
- Take opportunities to engage with potential new members and encourage membership by regional authorities as well as national organisations, responsible for the practical implementation of environmental law across IMPEL's 5 thematic areas.

Priority 2. Understanding the implementation challenges and facilitate actions to close the gaps.

Through our experts' professional insights, members' feedback, and project research, IMPEL has special knowledge and understanding of the practical implementation challenges faced by regulatory authorities in our member countries. We will offer technical advice on implementation challenges and approaches to the European Commission, the Secretariat of the Basel-, Rotterdam- and Stockholm Conventions and other relevant institutions. IMPEL will provide feedback to policy makers, planners and others who have responsibilities in implementation at EU level.

We will:

- Use this knowledge to shape and prioritise activities and projects to **specifically address significant implementation problems**, either in sectoral area regulation or cross-cutting,
- Continue to update our knowledge and understanding of implementation challenges through periodic reviews and questionnaire surveys involving our members, partners, and other stakeholders,
- Organise regular dialogues with the European Commission, partner compliance networks, the Secretariats of Environmental Conventions and other partners, to discuss ongoing and new implementation challenges.

Priority 3. Develop and build capacity and supporting implementation in agencies, authorities and other public bodies.

The IMPEL Network has grown significantly over the last 22 years and now has 55 member organisations in 36 countries. We aim at attracting further European environmental authorities working on the implementation of environmental legislation and to enlarge our expert communities.

The restrictions brought by the pandemic have shown that a trustful exchange is even more important in times of limited physical activities. However, the overload and burden of remote electronic communication together with a changing communication culture requires the **development, continuous evaluation, and adaptation of IMPEL's communication and dissemination strategies**.

Implementation of environmental regulation across Europe can differ significantly between countries. Sharing of know-how amongst practitioners can help to develop practical solutions more quickly and more efficiently. IMPEL aims at identifying and sharing good practice, practical experience and expertise. It offers peer review tools - IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) and guidance for national peer to peer instruments for example National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI), technical workshops and seminars, staff exchanges and stages at the IMPEL Secretariat, joint activities such as inspections, development of practical tools, methodology

and guidance and targeted training. The overall aim is to create a level playing field across Europe.

We will:

- Provide additional structure, resource and tools for communication and dissemination,
- Develop a '**knowledge and innovation programme**' for practitioners working on environmental regulation. Continue to develop guidance, manuals, tools and toolkits, skills and experiences of all involved and to make them available through a wide and solid programme on capacity building and training,
- Use the **IRI programme** flexibly and on demand to ensure the coverage of IMPEL's thematic areas and to ensure other key actors within the compliance and enforcement chain are connected and involved where appropriate,
- Disseminate the **NPRI** as an effective instrument to support improvement and homogenization inside countries and their competent authorities;
- Improve availability and awareness of the benefits and products of IMPEL's work, including the setting up and use of enhanced website, communication and dissemination structures,
- Support the development of **innovative approaches** and methods for environmental regulation that will help members carry out their roles more efficiently and effectively. We will facilitate the sharing of new developments in the application of cutting-edge technologies, for example in remote environmental monitoring and surveillance.

Priority 4. Coordinating and carrying out Inspection & enforcement actions with transboundary relevance.

IMPEL is one of several implementation networks operating at national, European, and international levels in the field of environmental regulation and compliance. It is vitally important that we reach out and engage with our partner networks to encourage sharing and learning on best practices and to improve collaboration in tackling trans-frontier and global problems relating to poor implementation, enforcement and compliance.

Our members are facing many transboundary implementation challenges. The tackling of issues such as waste and wildlife crime requires coordinated management by authorities in different countries, both within and outside Europe. For instance, the achievement of good ecological status in Europe's rivers often requires a coordinated river basin management approach involving coordination between several countries. IMPEL will continue to initiate and facilitate cross-border cooperation, intelligence and information sharing between authorities and campaigns on monitoring and surveillance, to improve overall compliance and enforcement.

We will:

- Coordinate and carry out Inspection & enforcement actions with transboundary relevance by coordinating and facilitating EU-wide actions performed inspectors/experts of IMPEL's members.

- As a follow up to these activities, collect, where appropriate, transboundary inspection data and share nationally published data, as well as offering a system for inspection reporting and analysis in order to identify, understand and elaborate on trends, target work, set priorities and organise cross border interventions.

Priority 5. Improving outcomes, participation and dissemination

It is very important that we have good information on how IMPEL's activities and outputs are benefitting our members and helping improve the environment. We need to improve the knowledge on how guidance and tools created in IMPEL's projects are being taken up in member organisations and applied in improving the implementation of environmental law. Therefore, the network aims at creating short annual reports which summarise the extent of participation in Expert Teams and projects and provide feedback on how IMPEL outputs have been used and the benefits that have been realised. Project proposals should specify plans for dissemination and communication of results. Tools that are developed as a result of IMPEL activities should fit seamlessly with the new IMPEL website so they are clearly available for all to use and benefit from.

Our aim is to improve the overall level of participation in the networks Governance Structures, Expert Teams and project groups, moving towards a position where every member country is actively engaged. To that end, a recruitment committee has been set up, and fallback procedure established that should provide for a sufficient number of candidates for IMPEL's main Governance structures. This mechanism should be tested, overall participation reported and evaluated, and eventually necessary adaption discussed in the next years.

We will:

- attract further experts and member authorities, who can help IMPEL to develop and contribute to our work programme. The General Assemblies should therefore also receive information on new members, their roles and responsibilities, and how they contribute to the Expert Teams,
- introduce **strategic portfolio management to select, prioritise and control IMPEL's projects**, in line with its strategic objectives and capacity to deliver. the GA and Board can create transparency about strategic focus and equitable treatment and effectively delegate the making of trade-offs to the level at which the expert team leaders are best placed to make them. The Audit and Evaluation Committee will help ensure new project proposals have IMPELs core aims at their heart and all projects follow the IMPEL rules. They will also have a role in evaluating completed projects.
- to further improve and add more value to IMPEL products/ outputs by making more "user-friendly" guidance materials and tools, integrating cross cutting aspects, streamlining and updating them and when necessary, transforming them into training materials and promoting webinars and e-learning to increase their uptake,
- take into account Multi-annual project periods in the development of new projects, considering concrete interests for participation, and regularly collect feedback from project participants,
- encourage **broad participation in projects and activities through use of hybrid and virtual participation to allow as wide participation by as possible**. National

Coordinators will be supported in promoting country and organisation participation in IMPEL's programme. Aggregation and dissemination of project results will be better supported,

- Establish efficient and transparent **assessment and evaluation mechanisms for our activities**, their costs and benefits.
- The 'knowledge and innovation programme' will develop guidance, manuals, tools and toolkits, skills and experiences of all involved and to make them available through a wide programme of dissemination.
- **encourage broad participation in projects and activities, also through simple participation by electronic means,**
- Support National Coordinators in promoting country and organisation participation in IMPEL's programme.

Appendix 1

Strategic Plans for the Five Thematic Programmes: 2022 to 2027

Context

The regulation of emissions from industry has a long history in Europe and has been the subject of a series of EU Directives and Regulations over the last forty years. Despite this, assessments of the impact of industrial emissions show that they are still causing significant damage to human health, ecosystems and the economy.

Aims

The main directions of Industry and Air Expert Team (I&A ET) activities over the next six years are:

The fundamental goal of the project is to improve compliance with the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) across Europe and to reduce harmful emissions of pollutants to air, land and water, improve efficiency in the use of resources and reduce amounts of waste.

This will be achieved by regulatory practitioners coming together, physical and/or online, to learn from each other, identifying good practices, developing guidance to promote those practices and disseminating technical knowhow through training and professional development initiatives.

Supporting regulatory authorities in this way should result in stronger compliance assurance, a more level regulatory playing-field and better state of the environment for people and wildlife.

Outcomes

The objectives of these activities are to overcome the actual challenges and achieve a level playing field on industry and air regulation across Europe. This will be done by:

- Setting up an enhanced network of experts on industry and air regulation;
- Fostering cooperation and coordination between different regulatory bodies (permitting, inspection and surveillance bodies) with a view to streamlining and optimising the use of inspection and surveillance resources;
- Developing of guidance and tools (e.g. electronic records of inspection and surveillance work) for achieving a more effective and efficient implementation of industry and air regulation;
- Optimising the communication and active dissemination to the public of the results of expert team work.

Delivery (how)

The desired outcomes will be achieved through:

- Projects - for example Supporting IED Implementation (multi annual project) and Lessons Learnt from Accidents;
- Joint inspections/site visits, ranging from visits to real inspections;
- Conferences – for example yearly overview and results conference on IED Implementation project, Specific webinars and/or conferences on specific subjects like Learning from incidents, monitoring, other networks conferences;
- Networking and Q&A sessions via teams, basecamp, phone and during physical meetings
- Project reports and joint inspections/site visits reports will be delivered yearly;
- Guidance and tools will be published when finalised;
- Project abstracts, items for IMPEL website and e-newsletter and press releases will be regularly delivered (yearly and possibly more often).

Partnerships

Contributing and cooperating with other ETs if specific knowledge of I&A members is required (for instance experts joining an IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) at ET Cross-Cutting).

In order to perform the planned activities and deliver the proposed outcomes a large engagement from IMPEL member organisations is needed. All member organisations should try to appoint at least one member for I&A ET. IMPEL Board members visits to member countries shall address this issue too.

The European Commission (EC) is the key partner and stakeholder for I&A ET. The proposals coming from EC will be integrated where possible in ET annual work programme. Other important partners are IPPC Bureau, OECD, European Environmental Agency, European Chemical Agency, ECENA and branch industry associations.

Context

In the European Union, waste management is an essential part of the transition to a circular economy and is based on the "waste hierarchy". The European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Package, which includes revised legislative proposals on waste to stimulate Europe's transition towards a circular economy which will boost global competitiveness, foster sustainable economic growth and generate new jobs. The new legislation strengthens the "waste hierarchy", i.e. it requires Member States to take specific measures to prioritize prevention, re-use and recycling above landfilling and incineration, thus making the circular economy a reality.

To ensure effective implementation, the waste reduction targets in the new proposal are accompanied by concrete measures to address obstacles on the ground and the different situations across EU Member States.

The European Green Deal is pushing to new challenges as new business models, envisaging a new circular economy action plan which will guide the transition of all sectors, with a particular focus on resource-intensive sectors such as textiles, construction, electronics and plastics.

Furthermore, two new BREF's on waste treatment and waste incineration have been issued that will raise difficulties in a uniform implementation across Member States. Improved waste management also helps to reduce health and environmental problems, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and avoid negative impacts at local level such as landscape deterioration due to landfilling, local water and air pollution, micro plastic pollution as well as littering. Proper waste management is a key element in ensuring resource efficiency and the sustainable growth of European economies.

The European policy of waste has developed over some 40 years but there are still challenges in ensuring that the waste laws it adopts are transposed into national law and then properly implemented by all the Member States.

The Transfrontier shipment of Waste (TFS) Cluster was originally set up as an informal network in order to harmonise the enforcement of European regulations on trans-frontier shipments of waste and has broadened now to waste management and circular economy.

There are several important things that the Waste and TFS Expert Team can do to overcome the barriers to effective implementation. Working as a network of practitioners, IMPEL will shape its strategic priorities, networking and future work plans to address the project findings. There are several important things that the Waste and TFS Expert Team can do to overcome the barriers to effective implementation. Sharing of knowledge and good practice between countries and developing new approaches and techniques can help to apply scarce

resources more efficiently promote circular economy, the proper application of the waste hierarchy principle and effectively and combat waste crime.

Aims

It is clear that further effort needs to be put into improving communication and cooperation between organisations on all levels across various networks to combat waste crime and to make the circular economy work. There is a need to share best practice on stopping organised crime and coordinating action against waste criminals.

The Expert Team will continue to play an important role in sharing best practice on waste regulation and enforcement and transfer of know how between countries that are making good progress and countries that are facing implementation challenges to help improve overall level of compliance and achievement of required actions and targets thus leading to a level playing field in the waste industry.

There is a need to continue to develop an active international community of practitioners both within and outside the EU to deal with trans-frontier shipment of waste and further developing the intelligence-led systems and procedures for inspection and enforcement using new digital technologies

There is a need for regulators and industry to develop improved systems for the tracking of waste from its point of generation through its movement to final treatment or disposal.

Outcomes

- All Member States are represented in the Expert Team and contribute to the projects
- The Steering Group of the Expert Team aims to consist of members from different parts of Europe and meets (virtually) 2-3 times a year
- Capacity building of IMPEL members assisting them to implement new legislation and improve existing implementation.
- Unique interpretation and enforcement of environmental law in all European countries
- Waste management best practices are promoted through the provision of technical Guidances and joint site visits
- Set up of database for secondary raw materials
- Stronger collaboration and networking on all levels including Police, Customs, prosecutors and judges, Asian and African networks
- Fight against waste crime is improved and the contribution to the fight against waste crime at a national, European and international level is enhanced
- The use of new technologies for recording, mapping and reporting is established
- The tracking of waste nationally and internationally is improved
- Mechanisms and platforms in place to enable the exchange of information and best practice between inspectors

- High standard of compliance of the IMPEL network. The development of waste legislation is improved through the provision of technical advice and information
- Thematic projects and programmes according to recent (political) developments
- Coordination of the SWEAP project which aims to support the circular economy by disrupting the illegal waste trade at the EU level by:
 - a. Increasing skill set amongst inspectors and law enforcement agencies
 - b. Intensifying collaboration nationally and internationally
 - c. Developing innovative tools and techniques
 - d. Creating EU-wide inspection data set
 - e. Providing intelligence products

Delivery (how)

- Build up the Expert Team by organising workshops, joint inspections and exchange of inspectors,
- A successful annual conference is delivered
- Enhance collaboration with other networks by organising joint meetings, training sessions, share good practises
- Meetings and conferences with Expert Team members and other partner network members
- Develop guidance and tools for inspectors
- Carry out studies/surveys/reviews of present practices
- Carry out projects on enforcement
- Carry out Joint inspections on waste management installations
- Improve standard of enforcement by better collaboration

Partnerships

The Expert Team's Steering Group will review project proposals to ensure they meet the aims of the Expert Team and steer the direction of the Expert Team. Individuals within the Expert Team will be required to act as Project leads to manage projects through their various phases ensuring outcomes are progressed. It is aimed that IMPEL members from across the Member States will participate in the various projects. The outcomes will not be obtained without the input of the wide range of stakeholders and networks. These include experts in regulating waste legislation, Police, Customs, Interpol, Europol, European Commission, Basel-, Stockholm- and Rotterdam Secretariat, European Network of Prosecutors (ENPE), Asian Network, African Network, European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE).

Context

The EU biodiversity strategy aims to put Europe's biodiversity on the path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of people, climate and the planet. It calls for binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters.

According to the latest EEA report on the 'State of nature in the EU' (2021), more effective implementation of environmental legislation (including the [EU Habitats and Birds Directives](#)) and a transition to sustainable practices in socio-economic sectors are needed to lessen the severe impact on Europe's nature.

The main legislative instruments for ensuring conservation and sustainable use of nature are the Birds¹ and Habitat Directive². But also the EU Timber regulation is important. The State of Nature³ provides insight and knowledge to underpin further actions needed to achieve the objectives of both Directives contributing to the EU strategy. Much stronger conservation efforts are needed. In the period 2007-2012 the overall status of species and habitats in the EU has not changed significantly, with many habitats and species showing an unfavourable status and a significant proportion of them deteriorating still further. On the other hand some species and habitats, covered by the legislation showing signs of recovery. This is illustrated by success stories in different parts of Europe. Also the Natura 2000 network is playing a major role in stabilising habitats and species with an unfavourable status.

The Nature Expert Team will strive to help filling the implementation gap in these areas by focusing its activities on mayor pressures and threats to terrestrial and marine ecosystems.

Aims

Effective implementation of the Directives according to nature conservation contributes to public confidence, legal predictability and a level playing field. Effective implementation includes an enhanced system of inspections and surveillance, good access to justice and public access to information. The Expert Team on nature conservation (ET) wants to contribute to the priorities in the 8th Environmental Action Programme to 2030 in order to maximise the benefits of the Union's environment and nature legislation by improving implementation.

The Expert Team will focus on quality and quantity of inspections, effectiveness in the chain of inspection – prosecution – verdict, sharing of intelligence and information, promoting cooperation with networks of practitioners, collaboration with NGOs and public participation.

¹ Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds.

² Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

³ COM (2015) 219 Report on the status of and trends for habitat types and species covered by the Birds and Habitats Directives for the 2007-2012 period as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive and Article 12 of the Birds Directive

The ET will facilitate knowledge sharing by the exchange of good experiences and good practises and by executing peer reviews. (also known as a 'green' IRI). These peer reviews equip authorities and enforcement bodies with the knowledge, tools and capacity to improve the delivery of benefits from that legislation, and to improve the governance of the enforcement process. The ET also will organise joint inspections to share best practises and for the transboundary collaboration in investigating crime cases. But this is also very beneficial to build up and extend a European network of experts in the nature conservation area.

Especially the liaisons with the two control mechanisms in the agriculture sector namely cross compliance and inspections, should improve in the effort to better coordinate control over the pressures from agriculture. Exchange or even harmonisation of the risk assessment approaches of prioritisation of controls in these control mechanisms would be beneficial. Exchange best practices on different aspect of control in this sector (which were not jet tackled in previous work of IMPEL on nitrates). ET should also work closely together with the Water and Land ET in the area of controlling changes in hydrological conditions, which present one of the mayor threats to freshwater ecosystems.

Outcomes

- all Member States are represented in the ET,
- NGOs can participate in ET activities,
- Strong collaboration with network of prosecutors (ENPE) and network of judges (EUFJE),
- Guidelines-best practises to improve the chain of inspection – prosecution – verdict/ availability on the IMPEL website,
- Collaboration with the cross-compliance mechanisms and agricultural inspections established,
- Guidelines-tools to improve governance of the enforcement process based in the findings of the 'green' IRIs,
- Sequence of yearly execution of 'green' IRI and follow-up workshop in the next year,
- Transboundary collaboration in crime cases,
- Digital platform to exchange (intelligence and) information on crime cases/modus operandi between authorities and NGOs
- 3 yearly conference

Delivery (how)

- Build up the green expert team by organising workshops and joint inspections,
- Enhance collaboration with network of prosecutors and network of judges by organising joint meetings, training sessions, share good practises,
- Enhance collaboration with two control mechanisms in agriculture sector namely cross compliance and inspections.
- Execution of 'green' IRI;

- Build a digital platform for the exchange of exchange (intelligence and) information on crime cases/modus operandi between authorities and NGOs.

Partnerships

For the ET it is important identify how IMPEL's involvement can be the most useful to combat illegal activities according to nature conservation. What could IMPEL do and how it could be done in addition to other important activities from important networks?

ET should improve cooperation with the two control mechanisms in agriculture sector namely cross compliance and inspections in the effort of controlling the pressures from agriculture.

Therefore it is important to know the networks and to tune/adapt activities. These networks are authorities and NGO's, for example DG environment, Bern convention, Birdlife Europe, FACE, CABS, WWF, EU TWIX, Interpol.

Context

Water and Land are closely connected and their good quality is strictly connected. Apart from the European Green Deal, the key legislation for water includes the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, UWWTD 91/271/EEC, Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks, Directive 2006/118/EC on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration, the Nitrate Directive 91/676/EEC and Marine Strategy 2008/56/EC.

The Water and Land Expert Team strives to help to fill the implementation gap in EU water legislation by focusing its activities primarily on the restoration of the water environment and reducing water abstraction tackling illegal drilling and reusing water in industrial plants for an integrated approach. The land's main framework will focus on Soil Health Law which is still under discussion and the Circular Economy Action Plan.

The new EU soil strategy for 2030 was recently released and sets out a framework and concrete measures to protect and restore soils, and ensure that they are used sustainably. It sets a vision and objectives to achieve healthy soils by 2050, with concrete actions by 2030. Other relevant legislation includes the Zero Pollution Action Plan (ZPAP), From Farm to Fork, Sewage Sludge Directive (86/278/EEC) and the Mining Waste Directive (2006/21/EC).

The ET will follow the recent development of EU soil legislation, and its actions and will focus its activities on remediation of contamination, the ecosystem services, the management/recovery of mining wastes, the land take, unsustainable agricultural practices, and other soil threats as well as new developments that would come around with new and updated EU legislation.

Aims

- Supporting IMPEL Members, when they are asked by National Authorities, in transposal of EU rules into national laws, on questions of enforceability and rules on proof.
- Supplying instruments for an improved dialogue with planners and managers that have responsibilities in the implementation of Framework Directives, as WFD, and Thematic Strategies as Marine and Soil Strategy. Among many topics in this area, priority themes are related to **information gathering through monitoring and following reporting**. The main areas that are felt as needing improved monitoring and reporting, in support to planners, are:
 - a. diffuse-source pollution from agriculture, households, failing wastewater treatment and sewerage systems
 - b. estimates of over-allocation of water resources – over abstraction of waters
 - c. monitoring and assessment of priority chemicals in water bodies
 - d. monitoring of physical modification of water bodies (affecting hydro-geomorphology/ good ecological status);

- e. support restoration of water and wetland habitats.
- f. support in risk analysis for planning steering
- g. land management support, soil consumption evaluation
- h. flood protection issues and related possible environmental consequences of measure to tackle flood risks.
- increasing IMPEL membership, mapping and seeking for adhesion to IMPEL of Planning Authorities and Managers and of Public Bodies who have monitoring tasks in support to Framework Directives and Thematic Strategies
- Helping Impel members in fighting pressures, tackling infringements and supporting compliance assurance activities about:
 - a. contaminated sites
 - b. installations and human activities potentially polluting soil and waters
 - c. urban wastewaters
 - d. land take
 - e. soil threats
 - f. mining areas
 - g. agriculture
 - h. illegal abstractions of water - over abstraction of waters
 - i. bathing waters
 - j. drinking waters
 - k. reuse of treated wastewaters

We would also welcome work on the permitting and enforcement of IED installations in relation to water status (e.g. implementation of mixing zones, pollutant assimilation capacity of the receiving water). Exchange of knowledge and experiences on the environmental assessment of water and land management activities, permitting and inspections in relation water and soil status, would be beneficial.

Outcomes

- 1) Capacity Building:
 - Some of the above activities require IMPEL Members to improve capacity to carry out specific task, in particular when new technologies give advantages.
 - The deployment of Copernicus program and in general Satellite Earth Observation and Geo-Spatial Instruments are ideal areas for IMPEL Members capacity building.
 - Capacity building on specific topics may be achieved through annual – multiannual projects on topics selected in IMPEL community
- 2) Experience and best practice sharing:
 - Development of pan-European manuals offering, on a systematic base, an overview and guidance on implementation of relevant legislation in Water and Land areas.
 - Execution of surveys about activities carried out by IMPEL Members and about related problems and best practices

- Study-visits to organizations responsible for environmental regulation and enforcement Comparison and exchange of tools and methods of risk assessment (analysis according to article 5 WFD)
 - Designing of stable networks to share common problems solutions
 - Gathering information (e. g. from controls, inspections, monitoring) on type and underlying reasons of significant pressures from activities under Water and Land Expert Team competence.
 - Comparison and exchange of design of risk based monitoring programs
- 3) Peer reviews (IRI) and National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI):
- Accomplishment of IRI and NPRI in Water and Land Area,
 - Extension to planning activities of IRI
- 4) Identification of IMPEL potential partners and members:
- Desk survey of Organizations acting in area of interest for implementation gap closing
 - Visits and meetings, partaking to initiatives on Water and Land organized by other Organizations and Administrations
 - Identification of issues for cooperation with working groups for common implementation strategies WFD (CIS WGs)
- 5) Dialogue with Stakeholders:
- Continuous dialogue with the European Commission and Organizations relevant from the point of view of policies and legislation implementation to steer in a continuous way action priorities and programs; support in environmental legislation development

Delivery (how)

The ET will deliver the outcome of the activities and projects through development of documents and manuals as output of projects, meetings and conferences, within IMPEL and with Stakeholders, workshops and exchange visits, study visits, stages.

Partnerships

Environment networks such as INECE, Heads of EPA Network (NEPA), WaterCore, Common Forum, voluntary Organisations and NGOs operating in W&L Field. At present, there are active contacts with the Common Forum, Network for Industrially Coordinated Sustainable Land Management in Europe (NICOLE), European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET), European Federation of Geologists (EFG) stemming from “WLR” project, several European Geological Surveys (BRGM, IGME, IGR) with Mining projects, International Association of Hydrogeologists with “TIGDA” project.

The main stakeholders are the European Parliament and DG Environment of the European Commission, especially the units; C1: Sustainable Freshwater Management, C2: Marine Environment & Clean Water Services, D1: Land Use and Management, E2: Environmental Compliance – Implementation, E3: Environmental Compliance – Enforcement, E4: Environmental Rule of Law & Governance

Context

IMPEL's member organisations range in focus from Ministries with a national focus to regional agencies and associations of regional associations. These organisations may have a thematic basis (e.g. Water) a cross thematic basis or be functionally set-up to deal with only part of the regulatory cycle (e.g. Inspectorates) or all of the regulatory cycle. These organisations may not even all be required to implement the EU environmental acquis yet they all face similar challenges namely how to effectively implement legislation to protect the environment whilst being efficient with tax payers money.

The Cross-Cutting Expert Team (X-C ET) is primarily designed to support members to implement legislation in an effective and efficient manner by sharing learning; capacity building and exploring new developments. It is envisaged that the X-C ET activities in the next three years will be centered around:

Aims

- Building capacity through peer review & post review support (e.g. IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) and projects designed to support 'opportunities for development' identified during IRI's);
- To grow the capabilities of the National Networks and Complex organisation to identify their own opportunities of development and homogenization needs and the specific resolute instruments through NPRI;
- Conducting a Proof of Concept for Capacity Building and Training to demonstrate the value of the Knowledge and Information Programme with the aim of up-scaling the activities and capacity in the future.
- Provide support and guidance related to a refresh of the EU Recommendation for Minimum Criteria of Environmental Inspections (RMCEI), the revision of the Environmental Crime Directive and implementation of any potential new Commission instruments on Compliance Assurance;
- Development of tools, systems and processes to implement aspects of the regulatory cycle e.g. permitting, risk assessment, inspection, compliance assurance techniques, enforcement, reporting (etc) that could be used horizontally across the four thematic Expert Teams;

- Development of new technologies and new ways of working to support the implementation of the regulatory cycle, for example from drones, monitoring equipment, handheld and mobile technology to back office systems.
- Support of better regulation, refit and fitness checks e.g. streamlining monitoring & reporting; and
- Better implementation & development of cross-cutting legislation such as the Environmental Liability Directive, EIA Directive, EMAS etc.

Outcomes

- Better implementation of the EU environmental acquis;
- Optimised spend of the public purse through capacity building, shared learning and development (not having to re-invent the wheel for everything);
- Enhanced levels of compliance through the adoption of complimentary techniques alongside traditional regulatory methods; and
- Better more fit for purpose legislation designed to yield better environmental outcomes.

Delivery (how)

The outcomes will be delivered through traditional IMPEL methods such as projects, peer reviews and conferences. These will be enhanced with the development of 'scientific' papers for journals, e-learning, webinars and the use of communication methodologies such as Twitter etc where required. The 'knowledge and innovation programme' will develop guidance, manuals, tools and toolkits, skills and experiences of all involved and to make them available through a wide programme of dissemination and an enhanced IMPEL website.

Partnerships

The X-C ET will work with key partners to achieve its outcomes including the relevant Units within DG Environment, the other four thematic Expert Teams; other international enforcement & environmental networks and organisations.

The X-C ET will also work with other organisations exploring new compliance assurance techniques and centers of academic expertise.