



# European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law



[www.impel.eu](http://www.impel.eu)



“The mission of IMPEL is to contribute to protecting the environment by promoting the effective implementation and enforcement of EU environmental law.”



## Who we are

IMPEL is a network of environmental authorities of the EU Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the European Union, EEA and EFTA countries and is registered as an international non-profit association. It has over 50 members from more than 35 countries in Europe. Participants range from inspectors, law enforcement officers, permit writers, policy makers to managers. The core of the IMPEL activities concern awareness raising, capacity building, peer review, exchange of information and experiences on implementation, international enforcement collaboration as well as promoting and supporting the practicability and enforceability of European environmental legislation. It undertakes its activities primarily within a project structure.

*“The IMPEL network builds on more than 20 years’ experience in supporting its members in the implementation of EU environmental law. By combining the practical expertise, our members can access a powerful pool of knowledge to benefit their work. Working together, we aim to inform policy with practical experience and expertise and to help our members build the technical know-how to comply with the complex requirements of the environmental acquis. Through our network we facilitate international cooperation to address trans-border environmental problems. Our overall aim in carrying out this important work is to maintain and improve the state of the environment for the benefit people and wildlife across Europe and beyond.”*

**Kristina Rabe,**  
Chair of the IMPEL Board

## What we want to do

IMPEL aims to improve the implementation of EU environmental legislation, by:

- supporting the development of good practices with guidance and tools;
- promoting the exchange of information and experience;
- supporting and facilitating capacity building and training of regulators;
- carrying out joint actions including inspections;
- providing feedback and advice on new and existing EU environmental law.

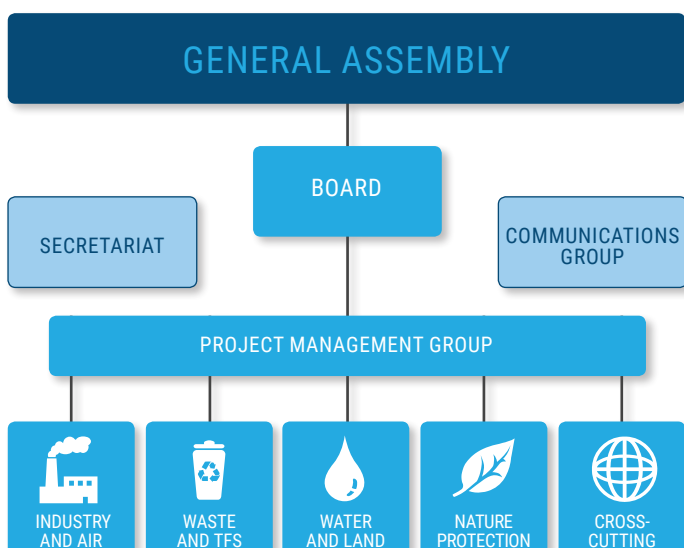
IMPEL's objectives are in line with those of the European Union. These include the 7th Environment Action Programme (EAP) and the Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI).

In order to identify the specific areas which require improvement of implementation of European environmental legislation, IMPEL embarked on a project "Implementation Challenges". This project identified remaining challenges in implementation of EU environmental law, as well as barriers to its enforcement. The project confirmed that significant challenges remain and highlighted the following priority areas:

- Waste Framework Directive - achievement of waste targets and hazardous waste enforcement;
- An integrated regulatory approach for the agriculture sector;
- Permitting of installations to reflect Industrial Emissions Directive requirements and air quality standards;
- Inspection and enforcement related to the Birds and Habitats Directives
- Water Framework Directive – achievement of 'good ecological status'.

These problems are often a consequence of factors related to political decision-making on resource allocation, the effectiveness of environmental governance systems in countries, and lack of awareness of the importance of environmental law in the judiciary.

Working as a network of practitioners, IMPEL shapes its strategic priorities, networking and future work plans to address the project findings. IMPEL will also continue to identify challenges and raise awareness of the importance of effective implementation in Europe.



## How we do it

The core of IMPEL's activities take place within a project structure on the basis of five thematic areas.



### Some of the key projects and activities are:



#### INDUSTRY AND AIR

The Expert Team 'Industry and Air' focuses on the practical implementation and enforcement of industry and air related pieces of legislation. In this area the key Directives are the Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU (IED) and the Air Quality Directive, because of its close connection to air emissions. Another piece of legislation concerns the SEVESO Directive on the control of major industrial accidents.

#### Example project: Supporting Industrial Emissions Directive (IED) Implementation

The Expert Team "Industry and Air" launched a long running project to support the implementation of the Industrial Emissions Directive. It has particular regard to permitting, participation of the public, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental inspections and surveillance through:

- fostering cooperation and coordination between different inspection bodies with a view to streamlining and optimising the use of inspection and surveillance resources;
- developing good practice examples in the application of BAT (Best Available Techniques) conclusions, inspection work and the compilation of baseline report on soil and ground water contamination;
- assessing, evaluating and mitigating the most serious types of non-compliance with the IED;
- optimising the communication with the public and the active dissemination of the results of inspection and surveillance work;
- developing reaction methods after serious environmental complaints, incidents and accidents;

A guidance book is also produced which will give practical guidelines on different aspects of the IED.



## WASTE AND TFS

The Waste and TFS Expert Team focuses on the practical implementation and enforcement of international and European waste management and shipment rules. The aim of the team is to promote compliance through enforcement by carrying out joint enforcement projects, promoting exchange of knowledge, best practices and experience with the enforcement, developing tools and methodologies and stimulating a uniform enforcement regime. This is done by awareness raising and capacity building activities, such as inspector exchange programmes, and facilitating inter-agency and cross-border collaboration.

### Example project: Landfill Project

*“The Landfill project is underway since 2011 and its success is determined by the practical results that can be used by participants in the administrations of origin. The project allows to share and enhance technical skills in the field of environmental inspections of landfills.*

*This result was obtained by sharing and comparing experiences of environmental inspectors from different member countries, during joint inspections at several landfills of member countries, containing critical environmental issues and examples of good practice.*

*More than ten urban and industrial landfills have been visited across Europe where the focus was mainly on biogas facilities, leachate treatment and waste acceptance criteria. The experience gained in the project led to the drafting of guidelines and a checklist to facilitate landfill inspections; these documents are practical tools of immediate use in the daily work of an environmental inspectorate.*

*The project also identified the different transpositions and interpretations of the Landfill Directive in the national laws of member organizations participating in the project”.*

**Romano Ruggeri (Italy),**  
project leader



## WATER AND LAND

The Water and Land Expert Team focuses on work related to directives such as the Water Framework Directive, the Nitrates Directive and Marine Strategy directives. In addition, it also tackles Water and soil protection, as well as agricultural issues with a special focus on the impact of this human activity on the water environment and on soil.



### Example project: Soil Conference

In October 2015, the Water and Land Expert Team organised a Soil Conference in Milan with the scope of supporting the implementation of soil protection measures and sharing of experiences among practitioners at EU level. The Conference focused on the role and activities of Environmental Authorities and Regulators, in particular with reference to IMPEL Members. The Conference aimed at bringing together experiences, regulatory approach, problems and solutions in order to cope with the numerous challenges in this field.

The Conference aimed at bringing together experiences, regulatory approaches, problems and solutions in order to cope with the numerous challenges in the fields of soil protection and industry; agriculture; land management; forestry; biodiversity and ecosystems; and soil data. Conclusions emerging from the Conference included the following suggestions:

- To develop an inventory on the theme of ‘water and land’ where awareness raising will be the main focus;
- To draft a good practice document including a variety of good practices which were shared during the conference;
- To map the key organisations involved in soil issues and encourage them to join the Water and Land Expert Group;
- To maintain and further develop close links with the EU Commission in relation to the Water Framework Directive Common Implementation Strategy.



## NATURE PROTECTION

The overall objective of this Expert Team is to contribute to strengthening the implementation of EU Nature legislation through raising awareness, extend the network of green experts, exchange best practices, strengthen collaboration with EU networks from prosecutors and network form judges, strengthen collaboration and share knowledge with NGO’s, improve co-operation between (enforcement) experts and to organise joint inspections.

### Example project: Contributing to the elimination of the illegal killing of birds

In 2013 IMPEL started a project on the illegal killing and catching of birds. The overall objective of the project is to bring about improvements in compliance with EU legislation and to work towards the elimination illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds protected by the EU Birds Directive. Awareness raising, exchange of practices and improvement of co-operation between enforcement experts are important tools in this project. Especially cooperation with NGOs and relevant



associations has proven to be crucial in reaching the project goals. The project is still ongoing and now also includes the execution of the peer reviews of environmental authorities working on nature regulations.



#### CROSS-CUTTING

The Cross-cutting Expert Team is set-up to support regulatory practitioners who are responsible for the development of systems, processes, procedures and new ways of working. The team is primarily concerned with x-cutting regulatory systems rather than sector specific ones.

#### Example project: iDepend tool

iDepend is a web based software application that uses a technique called dependency modelling to support decision making. The tool:

- allows users to assemble dependent factors for achieving a defined goal,
- is intuitive to use and does not need any technical expertise in dependency modelling,
- indicates the likelihood of achieving a goal and its critical dependencies,
- provides an audit trail to support decision making,
- helps to improve use of expertise in the subject area being modelled,
- can be used at any level of activity from strategic policy making to local site based management.

For example, the iDepend tool has been used during the construction phase of the proposed Hinkley Point C new nuclear power station in the United Kingdom. The tool has guided the Compliance Assessment Plans for work on site, and their application. It provided the logic behind the Agency's approach and demonstrated the benefits and potential savings for the company, who changed their contracts as a result. The tool will also be used during an upcoming IMPEL project entitled 'Working together public and public supervisors'.

*"For the Environment Agency officers providing regulatory advice and guidance for the construction phase of the proposed Hinkley Point C new nuclear power station the question to emerge from a day using iDepend was "how" we should use this approach, and not "if".*

*The approach of dependency modelling and using a tool like iDepend has guided the Compliance Assessment Plans for our work on site, and their application. Because the company was engaged in the workshop they've understood our rationale when discussing the content of their contracts and also contractor performance. These issues represent the key dependencies identified through the workshop and represent some validation of the process".*

**Brian Payne**, UK Environment Agency's Manager for the Nuclear New Build Hinkley Point C Project.

## What we have achieved

During the past years IMPEL has achieved various benefits and these achievements can be grouped into the following main points:

- Peer reviews;
- Development of tools and guidance to support a better and more uniform implementation and enforcement;
- Sharing of best practices including through dialogues with enforcements authorities and third parties;
- Cross-border cooperation including facilitating contact with enforcement agencies outside of the EU;
- Creation of National Networks such as the establishment of the Environment Enforcement Network (EEN) in Ireland and the Environmental Inspection network (REDIA) in Spain.

#### "IMPEL, a reference to the Spanish Environmental Inspection Network (REDIA)"

*The implementation of the European environmental acquis has a particularity in Spain. Most inspection tasks are assigned to the regions while the Spanish Ministry competent in environment can approve basic legislation. In this situation, level playing field is a strong issue throughout the regions of Spain and, on the other side, inspection capacity of regions is constrained due to limited resources. This was the context in which some of the regions of Spain started to meet to exchange information and learn from each other in order to build capacity. Most of the participants at those meeting had already taken part in IMPEL projects. So it was clear from the beginning the benefits of networking and the advantages of taking IMPEL as a reference. Politicians of some of the regions understood the advantages of working together and supported it. Taking as a model the statutes and internal rules from IMPEL, it simplified developing these documents for REDIA. However the biggest contribution from IMPEL are the way of working on projects that are directly related to the daily work and the possibility for REDIA inspectors to participate in the IMPEL projects."*

**Jesús Angel Ocio Armentia (Spain)**

