



European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law

IMPEL Review Initiative update 2019



Introduction

The IRI scheme is a voluntary scheme providing for informal reviews of environmental authorities in IMPEL Member countries. It was set up to implement the European Parliament and Council Recommendation (2001/331/EC) providing for minimum criteria for environmental inspections (RMCEI). Member states that host an IRI will benefit from an expert review of its systems and procedures with particular focus on conformity with the RMCEI. The participants in the review team will broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding of environmental inspection procedures. Other Member States will benefit through the dissemination of the findings of the review through the IMPEL network.

Recently Cyprus, the Azores, Slovenia and the Slovak Republic have been reviewed.

Based on the IMPEL methodology for inspection planning: Doing the Right Things, the IRI is an informal review and not an audit process. It is intended to enable the host environmental authority and the Review Team to explore how the authority carries out its tasks. It identifies areas of good practice for dissemination together with opportunities to develop existing practice within the authority and authorities in other IMPEL member countries. The Review Team consists of approximately 8 persons and is a broad cross section of the IMPEL network covering permitting, inspection, enforcement, policy and legal expertise.

TARGET GROUP

- Inspection and enforcement authorities
- Permitting authorities
- Ministries
- Managers
- Inspectors

EU LEGISLATION

- RMCEI – Minimum criteria for environmental inspectors
- All environmental acquis

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The IRI provides advice for the purpose of benchmarking (vis a vis other inspectorates) and continuous improvement of an organisation. It also encourages capacity building in environmental authorities in IMPEL member countries, the exchange of experience and collaboration between authorities on common issues and problems.

Content

The following is a sample of issues that the review team examines as part of an IRI:

- Permitting activities – Find out the process for issuing, reviewing and revoking permits, sanctions, involvement of the public, charges for permits;
- Criteria and procedures for planning of inspections;
- Execution framework – Find out what provisions, instructions, equipment are in place to enable inspectors and other staff to carry out inspection activities;
- Execution and reporting – Find out how routine and non-routine inspection activities are carried out and reported upon;
- Performance and monitoring – Find out how the environmental authority assesses its performance.

Key points

The main output of an IRI is a list of good practices (areas where the review team feel the host organisation is doing well) and opportunities for development (areas where the review team feel the host could and should consider making improvements).

Yearly a number of IMPEL member countries volunteer for an IRI programme. In 2014 IRIs were performed in The Netherlands, Malta and Romania; and in 2015 in Kosovo* and Czech Republic. In 2016 IRIs were performed in Turkey, Italy and Austria; and in 2017 in Cyprus. In 2018 IRIs were performed in the Azores and Slovenia; and in 2019 in Estonia and the Slovak Republic.

Good practices and opportunities for improvement for each reviewed country can be found [here](#).

*(*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.)*

LINKS

- [IMPEL](#)
- [Doing The Right Things methodology](#)
- [IRI programme](#)

KEY WORDS

- IRI – IMPEL Review Initiative
- CEMS – Continuous Environmental Monitoring System
- EEA – European Environment Agency
- EFTA – European Free Trade Association