

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- An overview of IMPEL's work in 2013 and 2014 -



Welcome

“At IMPEL’s General Assembly meeting in Rome, we took the opportunity to look back at some of the great work that IMPEL has been doing over the last two years. Much progress has clearly been made and there are many achievements that are worthy of celebration. IMPEL’s role in strengthening the implementation of environmental law in Europe is increasingly recognised and valued. Building on our successful Implementation Conference in Malta in 2013 we have taken a series of steps to better understand the nature of implementation challenges and to re-orient IMPEL’s structure and ways of working to ensure that it can make the best

possible contribution in helping environmental institutions across Europe to overcome these challenges. We have already come a long way on this journey over the last two years and we thought it would be of interest to our members and stakeholders to look back on some of the key steps and achievements. We would like to thank all those within IMPEL’s community, our sponsors and our partners whose enthusiastic contribution has made this possible.”

John Seager (IMPEL chair) and Chris Dijkens (IMPEL vice-chair)

Evaluation Study of IMPEL's effectiveness

Following the recognition of IMPEL's important role in delivering the objectives of the 7th EU Environment Action Programme, we felt that it was timely to examine IMPEL's value and role in assisting European countries to implement and enforce environmental law. Accordingly, we commissioned an [Evaluation Study](#) carried out by the independent, Bio Intelligence Services consultancy, to examine the effectiveness of IMPEL itself and the work it carries out.

"For its members, IMPEL is more than just about the project outputs. The process of creating and carrying out the project allows participants to exchange knowledge, ideas and best practice, which is also highly valued." (pp.49, BIO)

It identified IMPEL's, "powerful network of contacts and the informal nature of the organisation," as key strengths. However the report highlighted the need to ensure that all members are participating and that the network diversifies and uses its core strengths to work in the nature and water protection arenas which it has traditionally not been accustomed to working in.



A new IMPEL Strategy (2014-2016)

Building on this Evaluation Study, IMPEL has undertaken extensive dialogue both internally and externally to develop a new strategy that will ensure that it is a good position to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to face the challenges ahead.



The [new Strategy](#) builds on IMPEL's core strengths of informal networking and ways of working, and extends its focus to include other key areas including nature protection, water and land. It also changes IMPEL's governance structure so that IMPEL's work programme is managed through five thematic Expert Teams and the composition of the Board reflects these areas of expertise. [A new Communications Group](#) has also been introduced, dedicated to improving and extending IMPEL's ability to share best practice with all members and other partners.

The Strategy also launched a key component of work; to better understand the problems in Europe on implementation of environmental law and to identify what we can do as a network to support member organisations in helping them to overcome the challenges they face.

An expanded Secretariat

Recognising that the Secretariat is a key part of IMPEL's strength in organising, coordinating and managing its affairs on a day to day basis, the network decided to strengthen and reinforce it by an additional 0.5 full time equivalent. This role also supports the development of IMPEL's communications activities, a critical part of IMPEL's new Strategy. [Nancy Isarin](#) now complements [Michael Nicholson](#) in the Secretariat on a part time basis and both work remotely from their offices in the UK and in Portugal.

Engagement with IMPEL's key partners

The IMPEL Board has met with representatives of the European Commission (EC) several times over the last two years, involving senior decision-makers, including Directors and Heads of Units, and also desk officers, to discuss what they see as priorities in implementation of EU environmental law. The Board has also held 'lunch and learn' sessions to raise awareness of IMPEL's contribution amongst EC staff members. A key achievement has been the 25% increase in European LIFE+ funding that IMPEL will receive in 2015.



The Board has also launched a programme of engagement with IMPEL members to find out what they need from IMPEL and how the network can better respond to the needs of members. Country visits have already taken place in Slovenia, Germany and Kosovo.

Some success stories

Integrated Risk Assessment Method

Under the name 'easyTools' this IMPEL project collected information on the risk assessments methods that are used across Europe. The aim was to evaluate existing inspection tools and risk criteria, develop a risk assessment tool for environmental inspections that could easily be used by Member States and that was adapted to the obligations of the RMCEI.



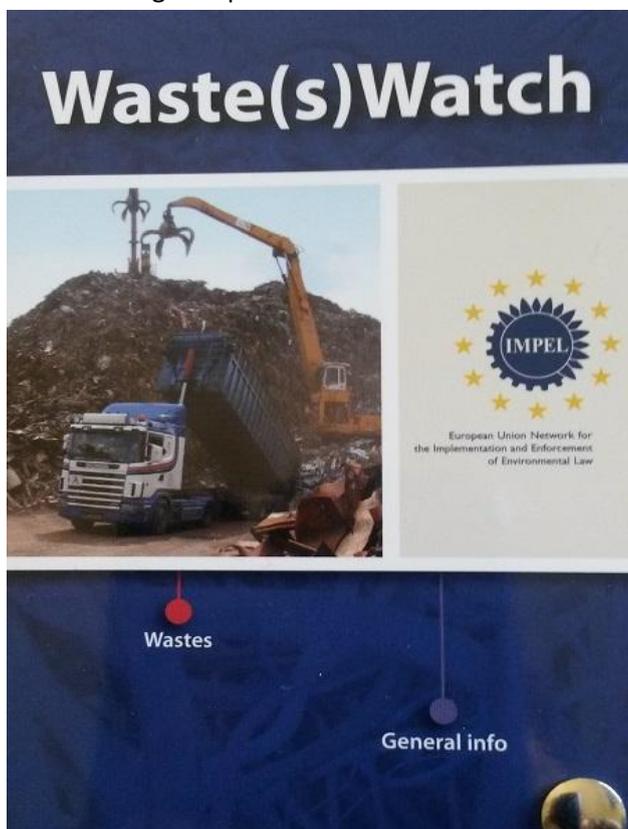
The outcome was the development of a new and integrated method called Integrated Risk Assessment Method (IRAM). Besides the methodology, also a [web based assessment tool](#) was developed which can be used for inspections planning under for example the IED Directive, the Seveso Directive and the Waste Framework Directive.

Various training sessions have been carried out and will continue in the coming years. Feedback from the IMPEL members shows that the IRAM application is highly valued and being used more and more in the daily practice of the inspecting authorities.

[Project information](#)

Waste Shipment Enforcement Actions

Bringing together waste shipment inspection officers is one of the main successes of the Enforcement Actions project. This hands-on cross border initiative coordinate actions aiming to prevent, deter and enforce illegal shipments of waste. More than 30 IMPEL member countries take part in this project and participate in the inspection and inspectors exchange programmes. The project also generated inspection tools, such as the widely used 'Waste Watch' and an updated manual for the return of illegal shipments of waste.



Experiences are also being shared during frequent webinars and via project newsletter. The final report is due in 2016.

[Project information](#)

Halting Illegal Killing of Birds

The loss of biodiversity by 2020 is a major concern within the European Union. The implementation of EU Nature legislation (the Birds and Habitat Directives) is essential to achieve the EU 2020 biodiversity target. Since 2013 IMPEL is working together with various stakeholders, the European Commission and NGOs to contribute to the elimination of illegal killing, trapping and trading of birds.



This is done through awareness raising, exchanging best practices and to improve cooperation between enforcement experts. The extended enforcement network that has been created as a result, fosters the exchange of best practices and experiences in this area. Future activities of the project will focus on the fines and penalties imposed for illegal and non-selective bird trapping and killing. It will continue to increase the operational capacity and effectiveness of the responsible law enforcement agencies and coordination among the relevant stakeholders. Lastly it will actively include the judiciary.

[Project information](#)

First green 'IRI'

The first IMPEL Review Initiative (IRI) in the field of nature preservation, biodiversity and protected areas was carried out in September 2014 at the Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reservation Commissariat within the National Environmental Guard (NEG). The aim of this so [called 'Green IRI'](#) was to identify areas of good practice in terms of implementation and enforcement, and to identify 'opportunities for development,' of areas that could be improved going forward. The outcomes of this IRI were presented at the first meeting of the Nature Conservation Team later in 2014. This team meeting further facilitated in-depth discussions on the strengthening the enforcement chain and best practices on collaboration between organisations to improve better implementation and monitoring of the habitats and birds directives. Lastly the meeting participants developed a list of project ideas for the short and midterm future.

Key challenges going forward

So what next? Ensuring continuity and implementing the IMPEL strategy are key strands for the next two years as is expanding membership of IMPEL. We will look at growing our membership to countries in southern Europe that are not yet a part of IMPEL like Serbia and Bosnia & Herzegovina but we also need to look within countries that have members in IMPEL already to see if regional and local authorities might join and strengthen our network.

We will continue to develop our strategic partnerships, including networks connected to water and nature protection, but also with prosecutors and judges with whom we must work to better implement and enforce legislation.

We will explore co-funding opportunities through other potential funding sources to see if we can expand our most successful programmes of projects on waste and industry activities for example.



Finally, we will also continue our 'country engagement programme' to ensure that members get value for money in IMPEL and that our network remains the most successful member-led network in the environment sector!