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European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law



IMPEL NPRI phase IV Project Report

Period 2022 – March 2023

Release 01

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The Project Leaders:

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Identification of the Project and the Report

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| <p>Title report: IMPEL NPRI phase IV Project Report Period 2022 – March 2023 Release 01</p> | <p>Number report: 2022(VI) WG9</p> |
| <p>Project Managers: Pieter-Jan Van Zanten (NL), Fabio Carella (IT), Giuseppe Sgorbati (IT)</p> | <p>Report adopted at IMPEL General Assembly: 7-9/06/2023 Stockholm</p> |
| <p>Authors: Pieter-Jan Van Zanten (NL), Fabio Carella (IT), Giuseppe Sgorbati (IT)</p> | <p>Number of pages: 15 Report: 15 Annexes:</p> |

Disclaimer:

This report is the result of a project within the IMPEL network. The content does not necessarily represent the view of the national administrations.

This is a first release of the Project report that will be further developed and completed, and will be consigned with the group of deliverables developed.

Introduction to IMPEL

The European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) is an international non-profit association of the environmental authorities of the EU Member States, acceding and candidate countries of the European Union and EEA countries. The association is registered in Belgium and its legal seat is in Bruxelles, Belgium.

IMPEL was set up in 1992 as an informal Network of European regulators and authorities concerned with the implementation and enforcement of environmental law. The Network's objective is to create the necessary impetus in the European Community to make progress on ensuring a more effective application of environmental legislation. The core of the IMPEL activities concerns awareness raising, capacity building and exchange of information and experiences on implementation, enforcement and international enforcement collaboration as well as promoting and supporting the practicability and enforceability of European environmental legislation.

During the previous years IMPEL has developed into a considerable, widely known organisation, being mentioned in a number of EU legislative and policy documents, e.g. the 6th Environment Action Programme and the Recommendation on Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections.

The expertise and experience of the participants within IMPEL make the network uniquely qualified to work on both technical and regulatory aspects of EU environmental legislation.

Information on the IMPEL Network is also available through its website at:

www.impel.eu



Project Participants (as for MoI)

| Country | Authority | Officier |
|-----------------|---|--------------------------|
| Albania | Albania/Ministry of Tourism and Environment | Enis Tela |
| Belgium | Belgium/Department of Environment & Spatial Development of the Flemish Government | Martine Blondeel |
| Croatia | Croatia/State Inspectorate of Republic of Croatia | Maja Pelajic |
| Croatia | Croatia/State Inspectorate of Republic of Croatia | Natalia Solina Medimurec |
| Finland | Finland/Finnish Ministry of the Environment | Anu Lillunen |
| Greece | Greece/The Greek Ombudsman | Angeliki Bosdogianni |
| Greece | Greece/The Greek Ombudsman | Daphne Filippaki |
| Greece | Greece/Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy | Eleni Glipti |
| Greece | Greece/Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy | Pelagia Manara |
| Greece | Greece/Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy | Sonia Eleftheriadou |
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| Italy | Italy/Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) | Alfredo Pini |
| Italy | Italy/Regional Environmental Protection Agency - Lombardy (ARPA) | Fabio Carella |
| Italy | Italy/Regional Environmental Protection Agency - Lombardy (ARPA) | Giuseppe Sgorbati |
| Italy | Italy/Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) | Marco Falconi |
| Italy | Italy/Association of Regional and Provincial Agencies for Environmental Protection (AssoArpa) | Raffaella Marigo |
| Italy | Italy/Regional Environmental Protection Agency - Lombardy (ARPA) | Raffaella Melzani |
| Kosovo | Kosovo/Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure | Elbasan Shala |
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| Netherlands | Netherlands/Association of Regional Environment Inspection Agencies | Pieter-Jan Van Zanten |
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| Portugal | General Inspectorate for the Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (IGAMAOT) | Ana Lima |
| Portugal | General Inspectorate for the Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (IGAMAOT) | Ana Maló |



| Country | Authority | Officier |
|-----------------|---|-------------------------|
| Portugal | General Inspectorate for the Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (IGAMAOT) | Anabela Rebelo |
| Portugal | General Inspectorate for the Agriculture, Sea, Environment and Spatial Planning (IGAMAOT) | Isabel Marrana |
| Romania | National Environmental Guard | Mihaela - Monica Crisan |
| Serbia | Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia | Svetlana Parežanin |
| Slovak Republic | Slovak Inspectorate of the Environment | Dasa Sulekova |
| Slovak Republic | Slovak Inspectorate of the Environment | Enikő Oroszlányová |
| Slovak Republic | Slovak Inspectorate of the Environment | Zuzana Bienská |
| United Kingdom | Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) | Darrell Crothers |
| United Kingdom | Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) | Stephen Field |



Introduction

The project was born because of the positive experiences in the implementation of Peer Reviews, at national and international level, as instrument to improve the performances of Organizations and/or Authorities that has roles in the implementation of laws and rules aimed at Environmental protection in the framework of EU acquis.

The aim was to implement the same technique, also at national level and autonomously, so expanding the historical field of application of peer review peculiar to IMPEL: the IRI.

The perspective was to create the basis to increase the use of the technique also in the perspective set by the EU Commission through the ECA initiative¹.

The roadmap envisaged in proposing the National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) project to the IMPEL General Assembly had foreseen for two main steps: (I) the development of a suitable NPRI manual and (II) the support of the Project Team to Countries willing to implement the technique.

The work done in the first phase of the NPRI project brought to the preparation of a National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Manual, as general reference document, built up on the basis of the best practices adopted by relevant Organization at world, European and national level. The document is accessible at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/3771424088>

In the second phase of the Project the team supported Countries that decided to implement the initiative “from scratch” or already having had a IRI experience, through continuous assistance in implementing, in practice and in a Country-specific mood, the NPRI Manual concepts. Also Countries, such as Italy and the Netherlands, already implementing their NPRI activities, used the NPRI project acquisitions to improve their own schemes.

The roadmap for the implementation of the NPRI saw, in general, a first Peer Review activity regarding a theme and a scope of relevant interest for a Country: this approach allows the growth of a National Network for Peer Reviews and the institution of a NPRI governance body, setting the basis for the development, in the future, of fully autonomously managed peer review activity on further topic of interest.

This Report mainly describes the activity made in this phase of the Project with regard to the Countries asked for support for the development or improvement of the NPRI.

As note regarding the chronology of the project, has to be mentioned that the NPRI project activities, phase 4 (2022), has been developed, in practice in the time frame June 2022 – March 2023, due to the date of the actual availability of the budget 2023.

This situation, and the contingent conditions in Countries partaking the project, gave as result the need to postpone some of the foreseen dates of the milestones of the project and to partially modify the project contents.

On March 2023, anyway, all the goals envisaged for the 2022 year has been achieved and, in the last part of the 4th edition of the project the basis were set for the activities to be performed in the 5th (2023) phase of the project.

¹ See: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT: *Environmental Compliance Assurance — scope, concept and need for EU actions*, accompanying the document *EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance* {COM(2018) 10 final} and the *Endorsed work programme 2020-2022 to improve environmental compliance and governance* issued by the Environmental Compliance and Governance Forum

This report is drafted with a short but comprehensive description of the activities performed, with regard to the Countries willing to implement NPRI, and describing the deliverables built up in the reference period June 2020 – March 2023

Country activities

Romania

In late 2021 – beginning of 2022, RNEG manifested its will to acquire competences in NPRI performing, choosing as first topic the improvement of the procedures of check on wastes and other goods at risk to be smuggled wastes at Country borders.

After an evaluation phase, it has been deemed necessary to involve in the activities the other main Stakeholders acting in the complex import procedure: the Border Police, the Custom Authority, the Prosecutor's Office and, later, the Consumer Protection Authority.

The activity has been characterized by different phases:

- an NPRI activation phase that took place, after preparatory activities, in July 2022, with a meeting in Bucharest (see meeting report annex 1).
- an intermediate phase, with analysis of the available data and further contacts with stakeholders,
- A general review event, partaken by RNEG and the above mentioned Stakeholders, in Oradea, in February 2023, in which the team also witnessed the import checks at the Bors Border crossing point (see the meeting report in annex 2).
- An analysis of the outcomes of the review, that constitutes the basis for the general report of the Romanian activities, with a clear framework of the issues to be faced, the challenges to be won, and of the opportunity for development to be concretized. The work method chosen for this phase is the constitution of work groups including the relevant Stakeholders to achieve the desired improvement of the procedures. The report on Romanian NPRI activity, containing also the outlook for the future activity is presented in annex 3.

All the above activities has been performed with the support of the NPRI project teams.

Also other Countries taking part to the NPRI project were invited in the above mentioned meetings to have a direct insight of the activities to develop NPRI, useful for a further implementation of the tool in their realities (see the attendance lists in the meeting reports, annex 1 and 2)

Portugal

Portugal has been one of the first countries willing to implement NPRI as tool to improve its performances, and the first topic chosen for a peer review activity, to be performed by APA with the support of the NPRI project team, was the water discharge permitting process. Many issues, including the pandemic situation, prevented the full development, in 2021 and in the first part of 2022, of the activity that should have brought to the performing of the NPRI activities.

The re-start of the activity has been represented by the country visit, performed by the project team on October 2023, with a meeting with APA stakeholders that should take part to the NPRI activities (10 officers representative of the territorial organizational structures of APA) (see the meeting report in annex 4).

Due of the priority current workload, also with regard of the delayed workload and issue related to the previous pandemic situation, after the October Country visits, no other specific technical activities has been performed by APA on the NPRI side.

The activities will be resumed after a new assessment of the available resources to develop the organizational scheme and the practical activities that characterize the performing of a National Peer Review Activity

Considering the general improvement of the situation, it was deemed appropriate a Country visit in Portugal to re-introduce the NPRI project and to discuss with the relevant Stakeholders the methodology and its development.

The meeting with the APA stakeholders was attended by 10 Officers plus the two ones already partaking the NPRI project.

The presentations (one more general on NPRI methodology and a specific one aimed at the explanation of the specific Portuguese activities) were welcomed with interest by the participants.

APA Portugal will develop further steps to deploy their own NPRI scheme, based on further internal contacts and agreements, with the full support of NPRI Project team.

The report on NPRI Portugal activity is presented in annex 5.

Slovak Republic

In the second half of 2022, the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate manifested the willingness to develop an NPRI, using as first topic the development of its Department of Technological Innovations, serving, as reference center, its territorial and thematic departments, with the use of techniques such as Earth Observation (satellite and drones) and advanced monitoring devices

The Department of Technological Innovations of the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate was set up in June 2022 aimed at developing innovative tools to support the implementation of tasks by the Inspectorate and potentially also other organizations. The challenge for the organization is to use scoping to align the development of a range of technical and innovative resources with the organizations support needs. Part of the challenge is also encouraging and creating a need, as there may be a tendency to stick to the more traditional approach. The department is developing, including by recruiting staff. Staff are distributed between the head office and regional inspections (Bratislava, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Košice). A strategic and a multidisciplinary technical committee to guide the department has been established.

Main areas to use new technologies and current state of development

Topics for which new technologies are expected to be developed and deployed are:

- inspection of landfills and large farms,
- deforestation,
- damage to the habitats,
- surface water pollution,
- illegal waste water discharge,
- etc.

Currently, the operationalization of drones, photo traps and equipment for simple water analyses is underway. For the near future, work is underway to make resources such as XRF spectrophotometers, photoflex analysers, drones and working with satellite images available.

Next steps

The following steps can be implemented to further structure the development process. Given the status of the project, the steps may be implemented in a slightly different order than currently proposed:

- Preparation of a reference document describing the organization goals and visions and a description of the current and planned state of technical equipment. It will also describe the organizational model aimed at achieving the strategic goals.
- The development of an assessment framework that provides a framework against which to assess the ambitions, legal, financial and practical possibilities and constraints of technical resources to be developed, procured and deployed;



- To determine the stakeholders through a stakeholder analysis, including parties as Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic, the Slovak Environment, the Agency Czech Environmental Inspectorate, as well as the Public;
- Conducting a SWOT analysis with regard to technical resources to be developed and deployed by organizations, against the roles and responsibilities of the organizations concerned;
- Development and testing of a questionnaire to gain insights regarding the need and desired use of innovative resources by involved organizations, as well as analysis of the outcomes;
- Organizing an internal stakeholder meeting with the aim of discussing needs for innovative resources and support.

Officers of the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate took actively part to Country visits and Project team meetings, with the aims of witnessing the development of NPRI activities in Countries already following an implementation roadmap, and to gather firsts suggestions and advices about the implementation of their own NPRI activity.

The meeting partaken by Slovak Environmental Inspectorate Officers are:

- Portugal Lisbon meeting, October 2022
- Romania Oradea Meeting, February 2023
- NPRI Seminar, Rome, March 2023

In each one that meeting the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate delivered presentations to share with attendants the specific Slovak situation and the challenges to face toward the implementation of the new structure (see the relevant presentations in the annexes regarding the three above mentioned meetings).

It was decided a specific NPRI project team visit in Slovakia, in May 2023, to deliver further methodological and experiential support to the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate to pursue the NPRI implementation.

The report of the activities carried out by the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate is available in attach 6.

Serbia and North Macedonia

The two countries manifested their interest in developing NPRI programs with the aim to improve their procedures and organization in the perspective to achieve the goal of the alignment of their activities to the EU needs in the roadmap of EU accession.

The two countries faces similar challenges and share many common issues from the point of view of environmental protection. For this reason, after getting separately close to the NPRI project, recently decided to go forward together toward the implementation of an NPRI program aimed at the general improvement of the performances objective.

At the end of March 2023, a meeting of the NPRI team in North Macedonia has been scheduled, to meet the N. Macedonian and Serbian Stakeholders to set the basis for a steady cooperation on this theme between the two Countries and the NPRI project team.

The presentation delivered by the two Countries in the meetings which they took part (Lisbon, Oradea, Rome) are accessible in the relevant meeting reports.

Italy

The members of the Italian National System for Environmental protection decided to follow-up the previous experience on NPRI with two new initiative:

- An NPRI on Circular Economy, End of Waste of Biomasses, which preparatory procedures that has been started in last month 2023



- The study for the implementation of an NPRI regarding Environmental Damage Italian law, transposing the «Directive 2004/35/CE on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage»

Both the activities are performed under the guidance indications contained in the NPRI documents drafted in the first period of the NPRI project and the support of the IMPEL NPRI is supplied.

An illustration of the Italian situation and of the perspectives pursued can be found in the relevant presentations of the NPRI meeting in Lisbon (annex 4) and in the NPRI seminar in Rome, March 2023 (see annex 6).

The Netherlands

Netherlands is the Country with the highest seniority in the regular use of NPRI for the improvement of the performances of his Regional Environmental Protection Agencies.

At present, it is foreseen an evolution of the previously used scheme, as well as a change in the institutional meaning of the use of the tool. The situation and the perspectives were exposed in the meetings partaken by the Netherlands Organizations partaking NPRI project. See the relevant presentations held in NPRI meeting in Lisbon (annex 4) and in the NPRI seminar in Rome, March 2023 (see annex 6).

Albania

Albania representatives taking part to the NPRI Rome seminar, March 2023, manifested their interest in starting with a NPRI program in their Country. A dedicated meeting in that Country, to be held in Autumn 2023 has been envisaged and will be soon scheduled.

The Rome Seminar

As conclusion of the work period of the phase 4 of the project, a seminar in Rome was held, in the period 21-22 March 2023, followed by a Project team meeting on 23 March. The report of the seminar is accessible in annex 7.

In addition to a full review of the NPRI methodology and of innovations and of experiences in place, the meeting was a useful opportunity for the planning of the follow-up of the activities and for the inclusion of new Countries, such as Serbia, North Macedonia and Albania in the NPRI activities.

Updating of the NPRI Manual

The activities carried out in the first phases of the NPRI Project resulted in the preparation of a National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Methodology and Guidance Manual.

This Manual is available at the following link:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/3771424088>

The experience acquired in the implementation of the general guidelines set in the first phases of the project brought to the conclusion that the scopes for the implementation of NPRI could be expanded: the following paragraph will discuss these experiences and the general perspectives stemming by them.

New point of views and opportunities for the implementation of NPRI.

The history: the “Classical” Peer Review

The historical perspectives for the implementation of Peer Reviews, in IMPEL experiences sees, mainly, the implementation of the technique in view of improving the performance of one Organization in the execution of a specific task through a confrontation with members of the same Network.

In this scheme, an Organization belonging to a Network asks to be visited done by experts working in other Organizations of the same Network (the Peer Review mission), to be analyzed against the Assessment Framework regarding topic and scope chosen by the host Organization; the issues and the challenges identified are discussed in the perspective to figure out *Opportunities for Development* (OfD), on the basis of the experience of the visiting experts.

The scheme for this type of peer review is shown in the following picture (Fig. 1):

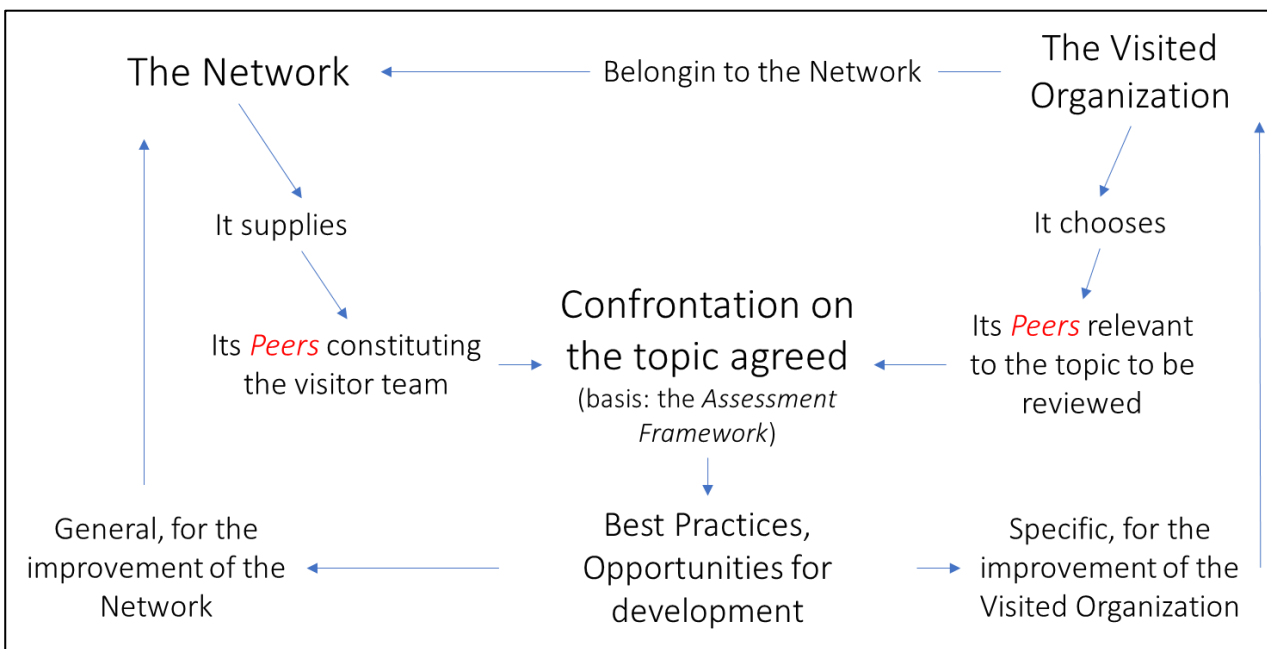


Figure 1: “Classical” Peer Review Scheme

This scheme is that one mainly implemented in IRI (i.e.: IED); also Italy and the Netherlands mainly use this formula, till now. The relevant factor is the difference of role and of benefits between the visited Organization and the visitors coming from other Organization: the peer review put the visited organization in the perspective to have a thorough and specific analysis, while the benefits for the rest of the Network the visited organizations belongs to are more limited.

Process Peer Review

The subject of the Peer Review, in this case, is not the behavior of a single Organization, but it is a *process* used by the members of a Network for the delivery of a function in the range of their institutional duties. In fact, it is know that, even when there are specific guidelines or rules describing the execution of a task, the actual behavior of Organizations may be significantly different. This situation can create non-negligible inhomogeneities in the delivery of services by the members of the same Network; consequences of this situation are the inhomogeneity of the protection of Citizens and Environment and the endangering *level playing field principle*, even at intra-National level.

The discussion among peers can identify the actual differences in the implementation of the same rule, and the reasons why; the results of this type of peer review is the development of a common understanding of

the rules to be implemented and the identification of where and how to strengthen the shared protocols to assure that the desired homogenization of the behavior is achieved.

Also indication to improve rules and laws, if tasked in this direction by the relevant Stakeholder, may be obtained with this type of peer review.

The process peer review can be usefully applied also when new protocols are to be defined or are to be checked, e.g. in case of the implementation of new duties imposed by the legislation.

The scheme for this type of peer review is shown in the following picture (Fig. 2):

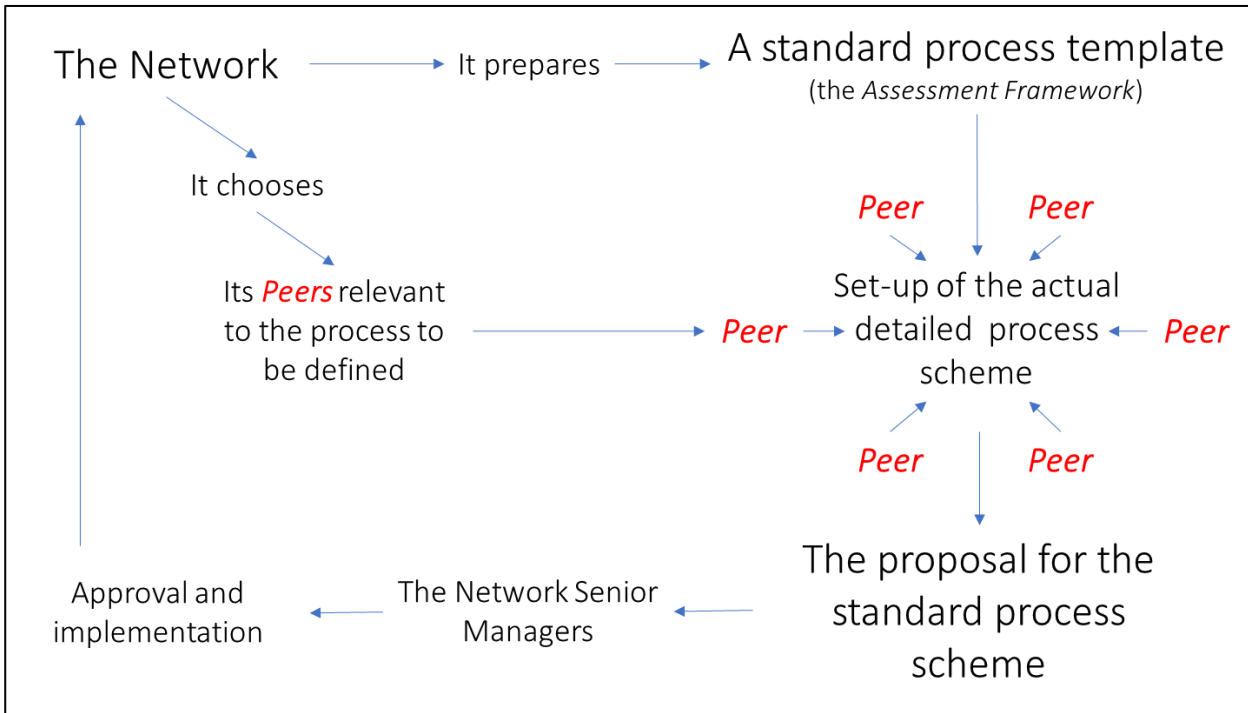


Figure 2: Process Peer Review Scheme

Italian National System for Environment Protection (SNPA) is applying systematically this type of peer review to define common standards, from the qualitative and costs point of view, in the perspective of strengthening the homogeneity of behavior of a very diversified network and to define reference standards for the funding of the institutional activities based on the same principles all over the Nation.

Procedure Peer Review

For the purposes of the present report, a procedure can be described as the sum of linked actions, each one of these in the range of the competences of different Administrations/Offices, to deliver an outcome. The efficiency and effectiveness of a Procedure, as a whole, depends on the quality of the action of each one of the Administrations/Offices partaking the procedure, but it is also crucial the quality of the links of the different parts of the of the procedure, in terms, e.g., of the speed of transfer of the information through the chain of competences, the usability of the outcomes of the actions throughout the chain, the congruence of the roles and many other issues and challenges.

It is noticeable that in the relationships among different Administrations/Offices cooperating in the same procedure there are not many occasion to share the issues they faces in the perspective to streamline their activities, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the procedure, and that specific preventive discussion moments are infrequent.

Romanian National Environmental Guard asked for the execution of this kind of Peer Review on the procedure for the admission of wastes and used goods in the Romanian territory, after agreement with the main actors of this procedure (RNEG itself, Border Police, Custom Authority, Prosecutors, et cetera).

The scheme for this type of peer review is shown in the following picture (Fig. 3):

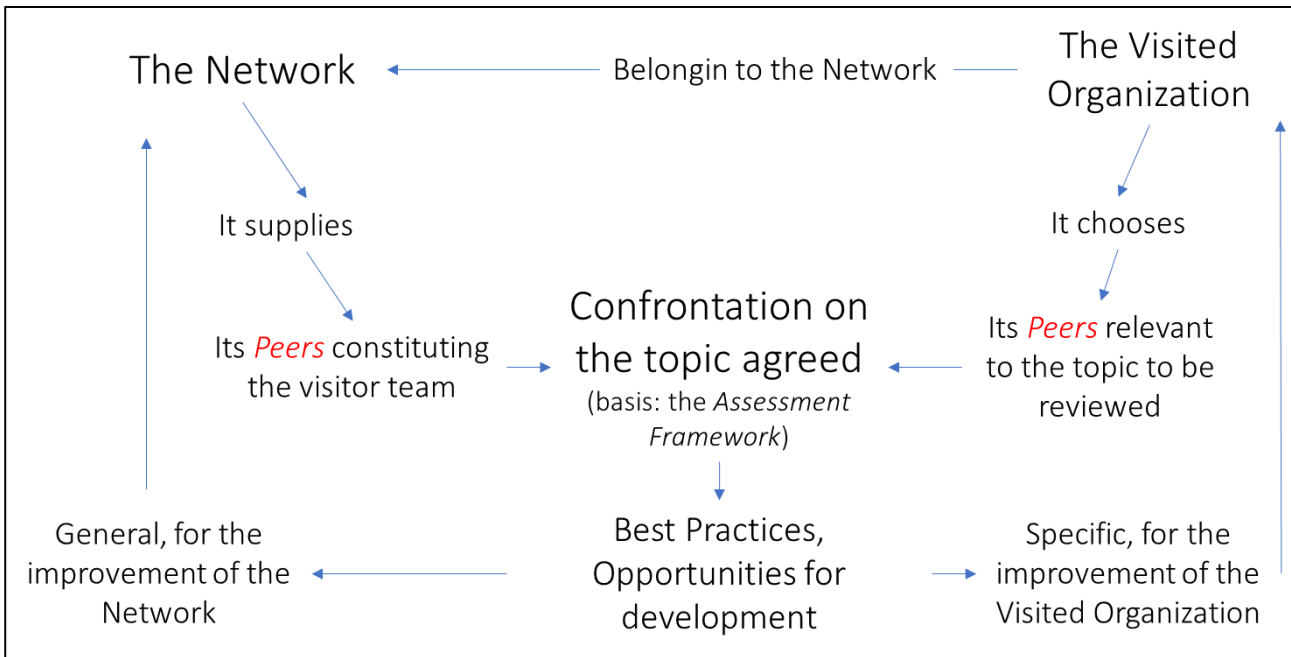


Figure 3: Procedure Peer Review Scheme

This scheme do not exclude that each one of the Authorities/Organization taking part to a procedure performs a specific Process Peer Review to improve their own activity/output, but it is very important that this activity is performed with the consciousness of the effects of its work on the whole chain of the procedure and with the aim to improve the delivery of the entire product of the procedure.

Organization Peer Review

The delivery of a product depends not only on the quality of the single actions and on the process for its building, but also on the quality, efficiency, effectiveness of the organization tasked with the delivery of that product.

Its issue is particularly noticeable when an new part of the Organization has to be set up or renewed, e.g. in view of the implementation of new laws and tasks and/or to make possible the use of new technical resources.

In these cases, the management of an Administration may find useful to gather evaluation elements through discussion held among the different levels or subjects called to take part to the new organization or that may use the new organization's outputs. A review among these levels, called to discuss the topic as peers, can be very effective to prevent unexpected effects of the new organization, to create conditions of transparency, to check all the borders conditions regarding the new organization that has to be set up.

The scheme for this type of peer review is shown in the following picture (Fig. 4):



Annexes

NPRI Country Reports that has to be considered as part and parcel of this report, can be found the following links:

- I. Romania Bucharest meeting report 27-28_07_22 (Page 16)
- II. Romania Oradea meeting report 06-09_02_2023 (Page 21)
- III. Portugal meeting report 18-19_10_2022(Page 39)
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- VI. NPRI Slovakia report 2022-2023 GA <https://www.impel.eu/en/projects/national-peer-review-initiative-npri>
- VII. NPRI Seminar report Rome 21 - 23_03_2023 <https://www.impel.eu/en/projects/national-peer-review-initiative-npri>

ANNEX-I

Romania Bucharest Meeting Report
27-28/07/22



Funded by the
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European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law



Country Visit Report

Romania – Oradea
06 – 09 February 2023

Venue:
Hotel International Bucarest
Strada Căuzași 27, București 030801, Romania

Participants: Romania Delegation

| Name | Organisation |
|------------------|--|
| Octavian Popescu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Cristian Coaje | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Matilda Cucu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Liviu Matei | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Aurelian Mihăilă | Prosecutor's Office - High Court of Cassation and Justice. |
| Teodor Niță | Prosecutor's Office |
| Rovana Ion | I.G.P.F. |

Participants: NPRI Project Delegation

| First Name | Organisation |
|-------------------|---|
| Monica Crișan | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Giuseppe Sgorbati | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia |
| Fabio Carella | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia |
| Raffaella Marigo | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia |
| Ana Maló | APA – Portuguese Environment Agency |



| First Name | Organisation |
|---------------|--|
| MARC DU MAINE | Directorate General Rijkswaterstaat Water, Traffic and Environment |

Aims of the Meeting and Outcomes

In the Framework of the development of the Romanian NPRI activity (first scope: to improve the border check activities on goods and wastes) it has been foreseen that the Project Team would attend an inspection session at Oradea Border to have a direct insight on the adopted procedures, to help in defining the assessment framework of the peer review.

As background of the meeting, it was held into consideration that:

- A previous phase of collection of issues and challenges in border check has been already made, with results summarized in the report presented by NEG in the July's Bucharest meeting,
- Also Stakeholders, such as the Prosecutor Office and Custom Police, shared their point of view during the above mentioned meeting, and these information are relevant to the following phases of the NPRI preparation
- About six month of experience gathered since the implementation of new check rules and organization until today offers now a more robust base to develop the assessment framework for the NPRI, actualizing as well its aims and the following perspectives.

For these reasons, It was not deemed necessary to develop further surveys o to focalize the NPRI, because these activities present an unbalance between the efforts and the man-hours committed vs the improvement of the knowledge on the issues in place.

1) The implementation of a National Peer Review (NPR) in Romania on checks at borders connected to waste issues – illustration and discussion

RNEG decided to implement a NPRI scheme with the aim, as first activity, to improve the checks at borders on declared or smuggled wastes.

Previous teleconference contacts allowed the workgroup to define a first framework for the conduction a National Peer Review in Romania on this topic, as initiative that, in addition to the specific results of the review activity, will be also accompanied by the drafting of a specific Romanian NPRI Manual, in a “learning by doing” logic. This action will be based on the methodology developed in the IMPEL project, and will be fostered by the NPRI Team. The Romanian NPRI Manual will be the basis on which, in future, the RNEG and other Organizations constituting the Romanian NPRI Network will develop further NPRI activities.

The main features of the Peer Review to be developed are summarized here below:

- Scope: border checks on wastes and on goods at risk to be used to smuggle wastes
- Aims:
 - improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the procedure through its streamlining, the definition of an improved chain of communication and decision, with the involvement in the NPR of the Authorities (mainly) involved in the check and import activities and called to manage non conformities (i.e.: RNEG, Border Police, Customs, Prosecutors Office);
 - the homogenization of the inspection activities of NEG at various check points.



In the meeting were presented:

- A general description of the project advancements aimed at informing IMPEL NPRI project members of the state of the art of the project (see presentation #1¹)
- The general aspects and content of the NPRI methodology (see presentation # 6) the firsts step done by RNEG to build the information base necessary to define the assessment framework of the peer review (see presentations #7 and #8):
 - a first collection of the relevant legislation and rules
 - the description of the RNEG workload
 - the description of the methods used by criminals
 - the challenges to face: risks and vulnerability, organization, relationships with other Authorities acting in the same process.
- A general description of the role of the Prosecutors in the environmental crimes combat, their challenges, their relationships with other organization, the compliance with EU rules (see presentation # 9).

The presentations delivered during the meeting can be found at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/vaults/5487655595>

From the point of view of the strategy, it was further underlined the importance of the governance system for peer reviews, not only in this specific case, but also to stabilize, through long term plans and yearly programs the improvement programs.

The general discussion brought to the drafting of a comprehensive document that has been later posted on Basecamp, as “NPRI Activity Draft Program After Project Meeting in Romania, 27th – 28th July 2022” (<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5487662897>)

2) **Discussion in the NPRI Team the further activities of the project**

2.1) Activities in Countries already implementing NPRI.

The Project meeting was also the occasion to take stock of the advancement in other countries that are implementing or improving their NPRI Scheme

a) The Netherlands

The NPRI grown in the interest of the REPAs Stakeholders and some innovation are in progress. It is under evaluation the possibility that NPRI become a more stringent instrument and that its performing become something more than a voluntary action. Also the NPRI scheme is under evaluation for the introduction of improvement. Further more detailed information will be delivered after that the amendment of the previous scheme will be approved by the competent body.

b) Italy

In Italy, the Council of the National System for Environment Protection approved the performing of a NPRI on Circular Economy; the activities will take place in the period October – November 2022. In the meantime a new NPRI Manual, based on the IMPEL guidelines and on the content of the Law Project issued in 2020 will be drafted.

2.2) New Countries willing to implement NPRI

The situation of Countries willing, from scratch, to implement NPRI was discussed.

In facts, In the previous months North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovakia showed interest in the implementation of NPRI.

¹ The references are the number of the presentation in the relevant IMPEL BaseCamp folder (<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/vaults/5487655606>)



- **North Macedonia** is going through a reform period and the possibility of an organized confrontation among stakeholders, at different levels, on the implementation of reforms with the use of NPRI is considered useful. The activity should take place beginning since the end of 2022. Further contacts with Nord Macedonia will be necessary to determine a specific plan
- **Serbia** is interested in the potential of NPRI as instrument to solve many issues, giving a concrete help in streamlining and optimizing processes and organization. Next contacts will make emerge priorities and, consequently, the basis for the organization of a NPR specific scheme
- **Slovakia** is willing to implement new technologies in various environmental protection fields, such as inspections, monitoring, nature protection and more. The need is to define the best organization based on the available resources and devices, and on the current organizational situation. Specific contacts will be drawn

All these Countries will be contacted to define specific work programs and will be invited to take part to the meeting that will be organized

2.3) Future programs

The workgroup approve to hold a meeting in Portugal, Lisbon in the month of October, not only to foster NPRI implementation in that Country, but also to get in touch directly with some of the new Countries willing to develop their own NPRI scheme.

The possibility to have further meetings, as foreseen by the ToR, before the end of the year is considered a challenge, because the late kick-off of the project and the dense series of commitments, IMPEL or not, in the last part of the year. In future weeks a new implementation plan will be issued

3) AOB

One of the issues raised in the meeting is the situation of the procedures to hire the consultant provided by the ToR. In the following weeks the IMPEL Secretariat will issue the tender to hire this Consultant. All the procedures will be followed with the maximum of care and of speed

ANNEX-II

Romania Oradea Meeting Report

06-09/02/2023



Funded by the
European Union



European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law



Country Visit Report

Romania – Oradea
06 – 09 February 2023

Venue:

President Hotel
President Hotels & Resort - President Hotels & Resort (baile-felix.ro)
Address: Calea Beiuşului 68, Băile Felix 417500, Romania

Participants: Romania Delegation

| Name | Organisation |
|--------------------|--|
| Florin Bănică | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Octavian Popescu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Monica Crisan | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Cristian Coaje | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Costin Dumitrascu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Florian Moldoveanu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Alexander Radu | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Mihai Gruia | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Grigore Marius | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Neacsu Ileana | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Guriani Florin | National Environmental Guard Romania |
| Aurelian Mihăilă | Prosecutor's Office - High Court of Cassation and Justice (RO) |
| Teodor Niţă | Prosecutor's Office – Constantia Appeal Court (RO) |
| Alina Tişe | Romanian Custom |
| Lozincă Sergiu | Bihor Police Departement (RO) |

Participants: NPRI Project Delegation

| First Name | Organisation |
|----------------------|---|
| Giuseppe Sgorbati | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia (IT) |
| Fabio Carella | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia (IT) |
| Raffaella Melzani | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia (IT) |
| Raffaella Marigo | AssoArpa (IT) |
| Marc Du Maine | Directorate General Rijkswaterstaat Water, Traffic and Environment (NL) |
| Enikő Oroszlányová | Slovak Environmental Inspectorate |
| Zuzana Bienská | Slovak Environmental Inspectorate |
| Marek Jánoš | Slovak Environmental Inspectorate |
| Michal Kortiš | Slovak Environmental Inspectorate |
| Darko Blinkov | State Environmental Inspectorate (North Macedonia) |
| Svetlana Parežanin | Serbia/Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia |
| Angeliki Bosdogianni | The Greek Ombudsman |
| Chris Dijkens | Consultant (NL) |

Oradea Mission 06 – 08 February 2023

Aims of the Meeting

In the framework of the development of the Romanian NPRI activity (first scope: improvement of the border check activities on goods and waste) it has been foreseen that the NPRI Team and the project team would take stock of the various initiatives carried out and would participate in an inspection session at the Oradea Border to gain a direct insight into the adopted procedures, to see “on-field” the issues of inspection at the border and thus help to define the assessment framework of the Peer Review.

The background to the meeting is as follows:

- A previous phase of collecting information on the challenges in border control, which results are summarized in the report presented by the NEG in the July’s meeting in Bucharest;



- Stakeholders, such as the Prosecutor Office and the Customs Police, also shared their point of view during the above-mentioned meeting, and this information was relevant for the following phases of the NPRI;
- A survey was conducted, and the respondents were: RNEG, Border Police, Prosecutor's Office, and the results were analysed;
- Approximately six months of experience gained since the implementation of the new control rules and organization until today now provide a more robust basis for developing the assessment framework for the NPRI, actualizing as well its objectives and the following perspectives.

For these reasons, it was not considered necessary to develop further surveys to focus the NPRI, because these activities present an imbalance between the effort and the man-hours committed vs the improvement of the knowledge on the issues in place.

The outcomes of agenda of the meeting, modelled on the needs of the Romanian NPRI team, can be found in Annex I

Topics discussed

The agenda of the meeting was structured in such a way as to take into account the issues considered important for the improvement of the border control system, as viewed from the different angles peculiar to the involved stakeholders.

The following is a synthetic report of the topics dealt with during the meeting:

- The reconstruction of the set of the actions and the responsibilities in place in the control procedure, summarised in clear flowcharts for an effective approach for the streamlining of the activity in its whole and in the perspective of defining the assessment framework of the NPRI
- The participation of the whole NPRI team in the border checks at the Oradea Customs, in order to share identified problems and experiences. The activity, although limited, highlighted very clearly one of the critical aspects of the problem: the importation of second-hand goods and of personal belongings that are at risk of being or concealing smuggled waste.
- The subsequent plenary discussion
- The presentation by the representatives of the Prosecutors Office:
 - o The specific investigation manual drafted by the Prosecutor's Office
 - o Relevant cases of criminal activities of waste management in Romania
- The overview of the activities carried out by NEG in this field in 2022
- The presentation by the NPRI project team of a first draft of a guide for cross-border inspections.

The presentations used in the meeting can be found at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/vaults/6051662652>

Conclusions

The meeting was extremely fruitful, due to the in-depth discussion among Romanian stakeholders, facilitated by the NPRI Project Team. A first clear framework of existing issues and challenges has been established, as well as the opportunities for development shared by the Stakeholders.



It was decided to prepare a report on the state of the Romanian NPRI, including all the relevant information as described in the NPRI Methodology documents.

This report should be the basis for the design of a roadmap for the implementation of the opportunities for development resulting from the work carried out in 2022 and 2023.

As a working method for this activity, it has been foreseen to set up working groups composed of relevant stakeholders with the aim of defining and supporting the implementation of rules and behaviours considered useful to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the border control activities.

In the development of this work, it has also to be considered that Romania is expected to join the Schengen area soon, and consequently, some aspects of the work to be carried out should take into account the implications of this situation, i.e. the elimination of border checks and the need to foresee the execution of checks within the Romanian territory.

NPRI Project team meeting – 08 February 2023

The aim of the Project team meeting was to define the next activities, in the perspective to close the 2022's program and starting to plan the 2023 activities.

Progress and prospects in the activities of Countries participating in the project

- The Netherlands
The NPRI program is moving forward in the Netherlands, with the introduction of innovations in the protocols and the institutional footprint of the initiative. Further information will be provided in the next seminar (see below);
- Italy: activities are going forward with:
 - o An already activated NPRI on circular economy
 - o The perspective of holding an NPRI on environmental damage
- Slovakia: the activities regarding NPRI on the new technology department are progressing and a NPRI team meeting in Slovakia is planned for April – May;
- Serbia and North Macedonia: the representatives of two countries propose to organize a “dual country NPRI”, as these countries have many common needs. An NPRI programme is considered useful to promote the actions to be carried out in the roadmap for the inclusion of these Countries in the EU. A meeting will be organized in Serbia or North Macedonia to discuss this option at institutional level;
- Greece: the meeting was attended by a representative of the Greek Ombudsman Office representative and it was discussed how to proceed with an NPRI programme including, as a main actor, the Greek Environment Ministry, the other Greek IMPEL member not present in Oradea Meeting.
The topic has to be discussed in the next occasion with both Greek IMPEL members at the same time.

2022's activities still to be completed

Among the activities planned in 2022, was a Seminar to disseminate the results of the 2022 activities and to attract other IMPEL members to the project. Upon decision of the Project Team, the seminar will be held in Rome (IT) in March. The Project team coordinators will provide a first draft programme and invitation as soon as possible.

ANNEX-Agenda II Romania Meeting Oradea, 06 – 09 February 2023

IMPEL Project VI WG 9 National Peer Review Initiative – NPRI

II Romania Meeting Oradea, 06 – 09 February 2023

Venue:

President Hotel

[President Hotels & Resort - President Hotels & Resort \(baile-felix.ro\)](https://www.baile-felix.ro)

Address: Calea Beiuşului 68, Băile Felix 417500, Romania

Agenda

Ver. 02_02_2023

Introduction - Scopes of the Mission

The general scopes of the mission are:

- development of the assessment framework of the first NPRI in Romania regarding the border check activities on goods and wastes (*the activity will be based also on the outcomes of the visit to a Romania Border check point to give the possibility to the NPRI project to get in contact with the reality of the activity carried out by RNEG and other stakeholders, with the aim of focalizing the discussion that will be developed in the PR*),
- discussion in the group of the project Members about the activity carried out/ to be carried out in their Country in the framework of the NPRI project and next steps.

Day One: Monday, 06 February 2023

Morning Day One

Arrival at the Venue, Oradea

Afternoon Day One

Preparatory meeting for the following day's attendance to the border checks at Oradea Custom

(for people arriving at the venue before h. 16:00)

- 1 **h. 16:00 – 16:15** Welcome from the Hosts, *tour de table* and opening of the meeting
- 2 **h. 16:15 – 17:30**
 - Illustration of the sequence of the actions in the goods and waste import procedure: roles and actions of the relevant Stakeholders in preparation to the following day's attendance at the border checks session, general discussion on the inspection process and highlights on the issues (NPRI Romania Project Team)
 - Presentation on the analysis of the answers to the questionnaires provided by the Stakeholders (NPRI Project Leaders)
- 3 **h. 17:30 – 18:00** Presentation of the principles to evaluate the inspection activities in the perspective of defining the NPR assessment framework (NPRI Project Leaders).
- 4 **h. 18:00** End of the works Day One
- 5 **h. 20:00** Dinner at the Hotel

Day Two: Tuesday 07 February 2023

Morning Day Two

Attendance to the border checks at Oradea Custom

- 6 **h. 09:00 – 09:30** Briefing on the attendance at the border checks of the morning, in favor of colleagues that had not taken part to the meeting on Day One afternoon, before leaving the Hotel (NPRI Romania Project Team).
- 7 **h. 09:00 – 13:00** Transfer to the Oradea border check point and attendance at import activities and inspections (NPRI Romania Project Team)
- 8 **h. 13:00 – 15:00** Return to the venue in Oradea and lunch break

Afternoon Day Two

Discussion on the morning activities and issues in border checks

- 9 h. 15:00 – 16: Discussion about the visit at the border check point with focalization upon the point of interest for NPR assessment framework development (NPRI Romania Project Team, NPRI Project Leaders)
- 10 h. 16:15 – 16:30 Break
- 11 h. 16:30 – 17:00 Presentation by Mr. Prosecutor Mihaila Aurelian on the outcomes of the Prosecutor's office regarding investigation manual
- 12 h. 17:00 – 17:20 Presentation of by Mr. Razvan Pop, Border Police, on the activities performed at the borders
- 13 h. 17:20 – 17:50 Overview by Monica Crisan, RNEG, of the 2022's activities
- 14 h. 17:50 – 18:00 Wrap-up and information about the next day's activity
- 15 h. 18:00 End of the works Day Two
- 16 h. 20:00 Festive dinner at the Hotel

Day Three: Wednesday 08 February 2023

Morning Day Three

Toward Romania NPRI Assessment Framework and NPRI performing

- 17 h. 09:00 – 10:45 Discussion on drafting the NPR Romania assessment framework (NPRI Project Leaders)
- 18 h. 10:45 – 11:00 Break
- 19 h. 11:00 – 11:45 Presentation of a discussion document: Guide to cross-border inspections (NPRI Project Leaders)
- 20 h. 11:45 – 13:00 Discussion about a roadmap with a time schedule for the next activities toward NPR performing and deliverables (NPRI Romania Project Team)
- 21 h. 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch break

Afternoon Day Three

NPRI Project team activities

- 22 h. 14:00 – 16:15 advancements in Countries activities and next steps
 - The Netherlands



- Italy
- Slovakia
- Serbia
- N. Macedonia
- Greece

(report by Project team members and leaders)

23 h. 16:15 – 16:30 Next initiative: Rome seminar in March 2023 (NPRI Project Leaders)

24 h. 16:30 End of the works Day Three – End of the meeting

25 h. 17:00 – 20:00 Guided tour to Oradea city centre

26 h. 20:00 Dinner in a traditional restaurant close to the Hotel

Day Four: Thursday 09 February 2023

Leaving Oradea, way back home

ANNEX-III

Portugal Meeting Report
18-19/10/2022



Funded by the
European Union



European Union Network for the
Implementation and Enforcement
of Environmental Law



Country Visit Report
IMPEL Project VI WG 9
National Peer Review Initiative – NPRI
Portugal Meeting
18th – 19th October 2022
Venue: Agência Portuguesa do Ambiente – APA



Rua da Murgueira, 9 - Zambujal – Alfragide | 2610-124 Amadora

Participants: Portugal Delegation

| Name | Organisation |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Sandra Szilard | APA/ARTHO |
| Carla Romeiro | APA/ARTHO |
| Rui Andiaele | APA/ARHC |
| Daniela Oliveira | APA/ARHC |
| Sora Costa | APA/ARHC |
| Ana Rado | APA/ARHC |
| Ana Sofia Rodriguez | APA/ARH Antelejo |
| Marilia Marquez | APA/ARH Antelejo |
| Felisina Quadrio | APA |
| Andreia Franco | APA |

Participants: NPRI Project Delegation



| Name | Organization - Country |
|----------------------|--|
| Ana Paula Malo | APA Portugal |
| Anabela Rebelo | APA - Portugal |
| Zuzana Bienska | Slovak Inspectorate of the Environment - Slovak Republic |
| Angeliki Bosdogianni | The Greek Ombudsman - Greece |
| Fabio Carella | ARPA – Regional Environment Protection Agency Lombardia - Italy |
| Monica Crisan | Romanian National Environment Guard - Romania |
| Marc Du Maine | Directorate General Rijkswaterstaat Water, Traffic and Environment - The Netherlands |
| Raffaella Marigo | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia - Italy |
| Raffaella Melzani | ARPA – Regional Environment Protection Agency Lombardia - Italy |
| Enikő Oroszlányová | Slovak Inspectorate of the Environment - Slovak Republic |
| Svetlana Parežanin | Ministry of Environmental Protection - Republic of Serbia |
| Giuseppe Sgorbati | ARPA – Regional Environment protection Agency Lombardia - Italy |
| Chris Dijkens | Consultant - The Netherlands |

Aims of the Meeting and Outcomes

The meeting was organized with four aims:

- 1) To illustrate to the participants to the project the general structure of NPR activities and the NPRI Guideline and the innovation introduced on the basis of the NPRI project experience
- 2) To illustrate and discuss the scope and aims of the implementation of the NPRI methodology in Portugal, in the specific case chosen by APA, with Managers and Officers that should take part to the NPRI Portuguese program.
- 3) To discuss with all the participants to the NPRI project the advancement of their activities,
- 4) To discuss with new Countries willing to implement NPRI the opportunities and the potentials base on their actual situation.
- 5) To discuss in the NPRI Team the further activities of the project

The agenda of the meeting is available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461211471>

1. Illustration to the participants to the project the general structure of NPR activities and the NPRI Guideline and the innovations introduced on the basis of the NPRI project experience

The first part of the meeting has been dedicated to the description of NPRI Methodology, with the aim of giving an overview of its contents on the basis of the manual drafted with the previous phases of the



project. Further than the illustration of the aims and benefits of the methodology, the explanation was based on the illustration of the different phases on the NPRI process and the importance of the activities of main importance for NPR success: Scoping, Stakeholders Analysis, definition of the Assessment Framework, Reporting initiatives.

Based on the experiences of the firsts year of the project, some clarification of the concept of NPR were discussed.

As innovation in the “classical” NPRI scheme, in which an Organization belonging to a network is visited by experts by other Organization from to the same Network to discuss the “opportunities for development” of the visited Organization, some other Peer Review schemes with different aims can be envisaged:

- A *Process Peer Review*, in which the process to perform a specific activity (e.g.: technical part of inspections, monitoring, analysis, ...) is discussed among Peers belonging to the Network with the aim of improving it or defining it from scratch if newly introduced.
- A *Procedure Peer Review*, in which an activity such as the release of a permit, or a compliance check procedure, also in the case that more Organization are involved, is discussed with the aim of optimization in term of effectiveness and efficiency
- An *Organization Peer Review*, when it is needed to check and, in case, improve an existing Organizational scheme or to set up a new one.

The above scheme are only examples for new aims of the use of the Peer Review logic, that can be use of other purposes as well, with flexibility.

The NPRI Project team is willing to support IMPEL members in the choice and implementation of the scheme more suitable so face their specific issues.

The presentation in this part of the meeting is available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210383>

2. Illustration and discussion scope and aims of the implementation of the NPRI methodology in Portugal, in the specific case chosen by APA, with Managers and Officers that should take part to the NPRI Portuguese program.

The report regarding APA NPRI activities was held by Anabela Rebelo and Ana Paula Malo

APA Portugal decided to implement its scheme for NPRI using, as first topic, the water discharge permitting process. Many issues, including the pandemic situation, prevented the full development of the activity that should have brought to the performing of the NPRI activities.

Considering the general improvement of the situation, it was deemed appropriate a Country visit in Portugal to re-introduce the NPRI project and to discuss with the relevant Stakeholders the methodology and its development.

The meeting with the APA stakeholders was attended by 10 Officers plus the two ones already partaking the NPRI project.

The presentations (one more general on NPRI methodology and a specific one aimed at the explanation of the specific Portuguese activities) were welcomed with interest by the participants.

APA Portugal will develop further steps to deploy their own NPRI scheme, based on further internal contacts and agreements, with the full support of NPRI Project team.

The presentation used during this part of the meeting are available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210364>

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210375>

3. Illustration and discussion with all the participants to the meeting about the advancement of their activities and the perspectives and background to develop NPRI.

Three further IMPEL Organizations at present are actively using or developing their own NPRI Scheme, and the evolution of their activities were shown also with the aim of sharing the decision made in each Country about the use of the Peer Review and, where applicable, the improvement of the scheme implemented



3.1. The Netherlands

The report regarding NPRI activities in the Netherlands was delivered by Marc Du Manie, that described the reasons, in past, for this initiative and the way to carry out NPR among the REPAs, from the origins to 2021 and further back.

Since 2021, an NPR improvement roadmap is under study: among the development hypothesis it is envisaged to add the following features:

- More formal (legally binding), more transparent (maximizing active publication to the public), more professional (more processed and skilled) and obliged for all REPA's
- Municipalities and provinces (the shareholders), besides the National Ministry, more committed in the approach
- Learn from other approaches in the Netherlands and abroad (e.g. NPRI/IRI of IMPEL) e.g. National Institute for Safety in the Netherlands
- Development of a new protocol for the our NPRI

In 2022, next steps will be carried out, to improve several aspects of the NPR performing:

- New protocol and questionnaire for the Peer reviews
- Cooperation with the safety boards, they will be asked to join in the NPRI team
- Independent chair of the NPRI team
- Start with 4 pilots (with 4 REPA's) in 2022
- 2023-2024 all 29 REPA's will be reviewed
- Same questionnaire will be used for a longer period (more NPRI cycles)
- All the reports will be made public
- In 2025 the Association of REPA's will send a report to the Minster with evaluations and advices how to move forward.

The National Peer Review in the Netherlands is, by consequence, assuming a role not only as obligatory improvement instrument in the REPAs' community, but is gaining strength also as instrument to expose the challenges and the issues faced, as well as the point of strength, to the Public and to the higher parts of the Administration. It is noticeable that, seeking for the demonstration of objectivity of the NPR results, considering the wider audience addressed by the activity outcome, an independent Chair for the NPRI team is envisaged.

The presentation used during this part of the meeting are available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210393>

3.2. Italy

The description of the NPRI situation in Italy was delivered by Fabio Carella

In Italy, national peer review has been chosen, since 2020, as an institutional tool to steer and promote the development of the Italian National System for the Environment Protection (SNPA), made up of the 21 ARPAs (regional EPAs) and the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA).

In this view, national peer review is regarded as a useful instrument to align the performances of the 21 Italian ARPAs, by discussing and sharing, among the ARPAs, all the processes underlying the delivery of SNPA "products".

The SNPA funding process too will be hopefully based soon on a peer review process, by which a standard cost will be associated to every single standard activity in ARPAs' portfolio, so allowing each Italian region to fund its own agency according to the region's specific needs, expressed as volume of activities required to the regional ARPA.



Another important step in Italy has been the effort to pursue a strong involvement of the Senior Management of the ARPAs, to assure a sound identification of priorities, plans and programs of the scheduled peer reviews and the transposition of their outcomes in actual actions.

The next practical national peer review in Italy will be focused on the ARPAs' tasks in the framework of the Directives 2008/98/CE and (UE) 2018/851, regarding especially the "end of waste" topic.

This specific peer review will be based on the new methodology developed in the NPRI project, in replacement of an old methodological scheme, used up to now in the Italian peer reviews, and strictly compliant with the IRI pattern.

The presentation shown is available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5490414918>

3.3. Romania

The advancement on NPRI project in Romania were shown by Monica Crisan

The main features of the Peer Review to be developed are summarized here below:

- Scope: border checks on wastes and on goods at risk to be used to smuggle wastes
- Aims:
 - improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of the procedure through its streamlining, the definition of an improved chain of communication and decision, with the participation in the NPR of the Authorities (mainly) involved in the check and import activities and called to manage non conformities (i.e.: RNEG, Border Police, Customs, Prosecutors Office);
 - the homogenization of the inspection activities of NEG at various check points.

In the meeting were presented, in general, the results of the analysis of the questionnaire.

The following activities to be carried out are:

- draw up the list of common rules and procedures
- draw up the list of rules to be applied
- Identify the tools that can be used
- Create a guidance document (a framework and guideline) for cross-border waste control consisting in a set of uniform and standard operating procedures

The activities will be carried out with the support of IMPEL NPRI Project Team, and it is foreseen a new Country Visit to Romania to attend to inspection activities at the borders to define at best the definition of the assessment framework for NPRI conduction.

The presentation used to discuss the NPRI project situation in Romania is available at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210321>

3.4. Slovakia

Slovakia declared the willingness to develop an NPRI program to use it, firstly, as instrument to develop their own organization to deploy new technologies in support to Environmental Protection.

The Lisbon meeting was used to display to the project team members a description of the Country, from the Administrative point of view, and of the regulation of the environment, in charge to the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate, professional control body belonging to the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. The organization of the Slovak Environmental Inspectorate was explained, as well as the main national environmental policies.

The identified scope of the NPRI. is the development of the organization of the structure that will manage the implementation of the new technologies, coupling specialization and needs and capabilities at Regional level.

The present organization and the availability of devices were shown.

The current stage of the project was summarized:

- definition of the NPRI governance body
- creation of the Assessment Framework, as reference document containing goals and vision, state of the available resources and evolution
- Hypothesis of organizational models to achieve strategical goals to be discussed.



As background for the definition of the organizational model the main goals and areas for the use of the new technologies were described.

During the discussion it was discussed the hypothesis to hold a seminar to give an overview of what is going forward in IMPEL about the use of the new technologies.

The above topics will be discussed in deep in future teleconferences to follow the advancements of the project and to offer, by the NPRI Team any needed support.

3.5. Greece

The Greek IMPEL Member taking part to the meeting was the Greek Ombudsman. The presentation represent by consequence, the point of view of this Organization.

Anyway, the discussion following Ombudsman presentation was wide, aimed at identifying the basis for a general Greek approach for the performing of NPRs, with the involvement as well of the others Greek Impel Member: the Environment Ministry.

The Greek Ombudsman is the mediation body between public Authorities and Citizens to protect their rights against case of maladministration and to recommend suitable solutions. The Ombudsman has investigative powers in administrative acts or omissions that covers the situations in which, among others, *“the main object of the case is related to the protection of the environment”*.

The activity of the Ombudsman in the environmental field is mainly handled by its *Quality of Life department*, and they represent about the 30% of the cases treated by this Department.

The Ombudsman has, by consequence a wide experience in environmental cases, in particular regarding *environmental compliance assurance*, involving administrative and inspective Authorities. In Greece, the competencies regarding inspections are spread between National and Regional entities (13 Regions); the nature of the Greek territory is very complex and it can be found issues from several point view: from industrial installations pollution to poor spatial and urban planning. Also an analysis of the weaknesses of the environmental protection system and of the related reasons has been shown.

The point of view of the Ombudsman is that the implementation of NPRI among inspection bodies can be helpful for the improvement of the situation and that they should begin the NPR process, were the Ombudsman would be an observer. The scope of the NPRI could be *“Fostering cooperation to improve the inspection procedure performance in terms of quality and quantity”*.

The activity to be implemented to achieve this results are:

- Bring together the competent authorities for inspection by forming a network
- Identification good practices criteria/harmonization of the inspection procedure
- Identify differences in work procedure, opportunities for development and way to overcome the obstacles
- Identify differences in work procedure, opportunities for development and way to overcome the obstacles
- Set the base for common understanding – fostering cooperation/coordination

The presentation used to show Greek Ombudsman point of view is available at this link:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5461210337>

The very comprehensive presentation made possible deep reflections in the NPRI Project Team.

The proposal of the NPRI Project team is to consider a proactive role for the Ombudsman in many terms:

- 1) To promote the NPRI at the Authorities competent in the inspection field, based on its experience in tackling lacks in *environmental compliance assurance*, one of the aspects that rises an high number of the cases tackled by the Ombudsman.

The promotion should not only addressed at keeping one NPR, but it should foster the development of a long term plan for NPRI to cover (at least) main issues and challenges identified.

- 2) To be an active part in the determination of the field (the scope) of the NPRI, considering the information available on the cases on which the Ombudsman exert its activity, through a



prioritization based on its experiences; a report on the cases followed by the Ombudsman is already available (2017?), but, even if it should be updated it represent a good trace for the scoping activity. Also Citizen complains can have a role in the prioritization of the areas in which to perform NPRI. It has to be remembered the high value that the EU Commission poses in the relationships with Citizens.

- 3) To take part to the NPRI not only as observer, but as member of the *steering committee* that should be created to manage the initiative; also an active participation to the review mission would be extremely positive.

It has to be remembered that Also Greek Environment Ministry partake NPRI project and that, consequently, a comprehensive discussion among Ministry and Ombudsman on NPRI can be organized. This meeting will be organized to come to the actual NPRI Greek Plan.

3.6. Serbia

The participation of Serbia in the meeting has been assured through Svetlana Parežanin, Head of Section for environmental protection - Sector for Environmental Control and Prevention (Environmental Inspectorate).

The organization of the Country, from the point of view of public action to protect the environment, was shown. The aim of the presentation was, finally, to identify the area in which to perform a first NPR activity.

The competences about inspective activity are spreader on different tiers:

- Republic - 57 (env)+6 (fishery) inspectors
- Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (15 inspectors)
- Local Level: Municipality, i.e. the town and the City of Belgrade (as a special territory unit) – 200 inspectors

The Environmental Inspectorate of the Republic of Serbia is tasked with (main tasks):

- air protection and protection of the ozone layer;
- protection of water from pollution;
- pollution protection of soil;
- noise and vibration protection;
- protection against non-ionizing radiation;
- protection and use of natural resources and fishery fund;
- protection against a major chemical accident;
- management of chemicals and biocidal products;
- waste management, except for radioactive waste;
- control and coordination of entrusted tasks of inspection supervision

The activity is made through 6 specific Departments.

The planning for inspection activity is “risk based”. The model adopted is IMPEL Easy Tools, specially customized for Serbia.

Out of a total of 220 IED installation, 57 are under the Environmental Inspectorate.

Inspection are carried out on the basis of a specific Law on Inspection Supervision (2015):

- An Annual Inspection Plan is set up on the basis of the state of the environment, and it is published, for transparency purposes, on Ministry website
- According to the provisions of the 2015’s law, guidance and tools are available for each type of environmental inspection, for homogenization purposes of every administrative level tasked with inspection (national, province and local).

The Environmental Inspectorate issued a Directive for State Inspectors and Instructions for Local Inspectors, based on the RMCEI (2001/331/EC). Also publications are available and training has been supplied, at different levels.

A first outlook to topics for NPR performing in Serbia is:

- our (RS) compliance with EU legislation



- conflict of competence between inspectorates on different level – state, AP, LSG, Belgrade (hazardous waste – permitting and inspection),
- Checking compliance of on following issues:
- inspection control in general,
- Inspectorate organization,
- planning and reporting,
- register of subject control,
- prioritization - risk assessment methodology and complexity coefficient
- number of inspectors...

The discussion after the presentation was aimed at identifying the area(s) in which to apply the NPRI Technique to one of the opportunities pointed out.

It was underlined that the aim of the NPRI Project is to develop the Countries capability to perform autonomously cycles of Peer Reviews. By consequence, it is deemed useful to choose a topic, among priorities singled out, that could be used as a “training by doing” initiative, with the support of the project team.

In the following weeks further contacts with Serbian Colleague will be held to identify the topic to develop the first NPR activity and to determine the possible roadmap to go forward in the project.

- A general description of the project advancements aimed at informing IMPEL NPRI project members of the state of the art of the project (see presentation #1¹)
- The general aspects and content of the NPRI methodology (see presentation # 6) the firsts step done by RNEG to build the information base necessary to define the assessment framework of the peer review (see presentations #7 and #8):
 - a first collection of the relevant legislation and rules
 - the description of the RNEG workload
 - the description of the methods used by criminals
 - the challenges to face: risks and vulnerability, organization, relationships with other Authorities acting in the same process.
- A general description of the role of the Prosecutors in the environmental crimes combat, their challenges, their relationships with other organization, the compliance with EU rules (see presentation # 9).

From the point of view of the strategy, it was further underlined the importance of the governance system for peer reviews, not only in this specific case, but also to stabilize, through long term plans and yearly programs the improvement programs.

The general discussion brought to the drafting of a comprehensive document that has been later posted on Basecamp, as “NPRI Activity Draft Program After Project Meeting in Romania, 27th – 28th July 2022” (<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/uploads/5487662897>)

1) **Discussion in the NPRI Team the further activities of the project**

2.1) **Activities in Countries already implementing NPRI.**

The Project meeting was also the occasion to take stock of the advancement in other countries that are implementing or improving their NPRI Scheme

a) The Netherlands

¹ The references are the number of the presentation in the relevant IMPEL BaseCamp folder (<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/vaults/5487655606>)



The NPRI grown in the interest of the REPA's Stakeholders and some innovation are in progress. It is under evaluation the possibility that NPRI become a more stringent instrument and that its performing become something more than a voluntary action. Also the NPRI scheme is under evaluation for the introduction of improvement. Further more detailed information will be delivered after that the amendment of the previous scheme will be approved by the competent body.

b) Italy

In Italy, the Council of the National System for Environment Protection approved the performing of a NPRI on Circular Economy; the activities will take place in the period October – November 2022. In the meantime a new NPRI Manual, based on the IMPEL guidelines and on the content of the Law Project issued in 2020 will be drafted.

1.2) New Countries willing to implement NPRI

The situation of Countries willing, from scratch, to implement NPRI was discussed.

In facts, In the previous months North Macedonia, Serbia and Slovakia showed interest in the implementation of NPRI.

- **North Macedonia** is going through a reform period and the possibility of an organized confrontation among stakeholders, at different levels, on the implementation of reforms with the use of NPRI is considered useful. The activity should take place beginning since the end of 2022. Further contacts with Nord Macedonia will be necessary to determine a specific plan
- **Serbia** is interested in the potential of NPRI as instrument to solve many issues, giving a concrete help in streamlining and optimizing processes and organization. Next contacts will make emerge priorities and, consequently, the basis for the organization of a NPR specific scheme
- **Slovakia** is willing to implement new technologies in various environmental protection fields, such as inspections, monitoring, nature protection and more. The need is to define the best organization based on the available resources and devices, and on the current organizational situation. Specific contacts will be drawn

All these Countries will be contacted to define specific work programs and will be invited to take part to the meeting that will be organized

2.3) Future programs

The workgroup approve to hold a meeting in Portugal, Lisbon in the month of October, not only to foster NPRI implementation in that Country, but also to get in touch directly with some of the new Countries willing to develop their own NPRI scheme.

The possibility to have further meetings, as foreseen by the ToR, before the end of the year is considered a challenge, because the late kick-off of the project and the dense series of commitments, IMPEL or not, in the last part of the year. In future weeks a new implementation plan will be issued

2) AOB

One of the issues raised in the meeting is the situation of the procedures to hire the consultant provided by the ToR. In the following weeks the IMPEL Secretariat will issue the tender to hire this Consultant. All the procedures will be followed with the maximum of care and of speed

3) Presentations

The complete set of presentations used in the meeting can be found at:

<https://3.basecamp.com/4481666/buckets/17164552/vaults/5461207560>