

# Focus on Local Authority Environmental Enforcement - Performance Report 2021



## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The EPA is responsible for protecting and improving the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. We are committed to protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution.

### The work of the EPA can be divided into three main areas:

**Regulation:** *Implementing regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good environmental outcomes and target those who don't comply.*

**Knowledge:** *Providing high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, information and assessment to inform decision making.*

**Advocacy:** *Working with others to advocate for a clean, productive and well protected environment and for sustainable environmental practices.*

### Our responsibilities include:

#### Licensing

- Large-scale industrial, waste and petrol storage activities;
- Urban waste water discharges;
- The contained use and controlled release of Genetically Modified Organisms;
- Sources of ionising radiation;
- Greenhouse gas emissions from industry and aviation through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

#### National Environmental Enforcement

- Audit and inspection of EPA licensed facilities;
- Drive the implementation of best practice in regulated activities and facilities;
- Oversee local authority responsibilities for environmental protection;
- Regulate the quality of public drinking water and enforce urban waste water discharge authorisations;
- Assess and report on public and private drinking water quality;
- Coordinate a network of public service organisations to support action against environmental crime;
- Prosecute those who flout environmental law and damage the environment.

#### Waste Management and Chemicals in the Environment

- Implement and enforce waste regulations including national enforcement issues;
- Prepare and publish national waste statistics and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan;
- Develop and implement the National Waste Prevention Programme;
- Implement and report on legislation on the control of chemicals in the environment.

#### Water Management

- Engage with national and regional governance and operational structures to implement the Water Framework Directive;
- Monitor, assess and report on the quality of rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, bathing waters and groundwaters, and measurement of water levels and river flows.

#### Climate Science & Climate Change

- Publish Ireland's greenhouse gas emission inventories and projections;
- Provide the Secretariat to the Climate Change Advisory Council and support to the National Dialogue on Climate Action;
- Support National, EU and UN Climate Science and Policy development activities.

#### Environmental Monitoring & Assessment

- Design and implement national environmental monitoring systems: technology, data management, analysis and forecasting;
- Produce the State of Ireland's Environment and Indicator Reports;
- Monitor air quality and implement the EU Clean Air for Europe Directive, the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive;
- Oversee the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive;
- Assess the impact of proposed plans and programmes on the Irish environment.

#### Environmental Research and Development

- Coordinate and fund national environmental research activity to identify pressures, inform policy and provide solutions;
- Collaborate with national and EU environmental research activity.

#### Radiological Protection

- Monitoring radiation levels and assess public exposure to ionising radiation and electromagnetic fields;
- Assist in developing national plans for emergencies arising from nuclear accidents;
- Monitor developments abroad relating to nuclear installations and radiological safety;
- Provide, or oversee the provision of, specialist radiation protection services.

#### Guidance, Awareness Raising, and Accessible Information

- Provide independent evidence-based reporting, advice and guidance to Government, industry and the public on environmental and radiological protection topics;
- Promote the link between health and wellbeing, the economy and a clean environment;
- Promote environmental awareness including supporting behaviours for resource efficiency and climate transition;
- Promote radon testing in homes and workplaces and encourage remediation where necessary.

#### Partnership and networking

- Work with international and national agencies, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, representative bodies and government departments to deliver environmental and radiological protection, research coordination and science-based decision making.

#### Management and structure of the EPA

The EPA is managed by a full time Board, consisting of a Director General and five Directors. The work is carried out across five Offices:

- Office of Environmental Sustainability
- Office of Environmental Enforcement
- Office of Evidence and Assessment
- Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring
- Office of Communications and Corporate Services

The EPA is assisted by advisory committees who meet regularly to discuss issues of concern and provide advice to the Board.



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## Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
1. Introduction .....	3
2. Overview of Local Authority Performance Scores for 2021.....	4
3. Governance Processes .....	8
4. Waste Enforcement .....	11
5. Water Enforcement .....	14
6. Air and Noise Enforcement.....	17
Appendix I - Local Authority Performance Framework Process .....	20
Appendix II – Performance Scores .....	22
Appendix III – Overview of Local Authority Activity Trends .....	26

## Executive Summary

This report sets out the results of the EPA’s assessment of local authority environmental performance for 2021. This is the first report under the revised Local Authority Performance Framework, which aims to better align performance scores to the delivery of environmental outcomes under National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs). These NEPs are categorised under four themes (governance processes, waste, water, and air & noise), as summarised below. The earlier framework by comparison focused primarily on measures of activity such as numbers of inspections or prosecutions.

<p><b>Governance Processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Planning for the NEPs</li> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Environmental Resource Planning</li> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Environmental Outcomes</li> <li>• RMCEI: Review and Reporting</li> <li>• Environmental Complaint Handling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Water:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Quality Monitoring</li> <li>• Agriculture/Farm Inspections</li> <li>• Septic Tanks (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems) Inspections</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Enforcement of Section 4 Licences</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Enforcement of Private Water Supplies</li> </ul>
<p><b>Waste:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Significant Illegal Waste Activity / Multi-Agency Sites of Interest</li> <li>• Construction and Demolition Waste</li> <li>• End-of-Life Vehicles &amp; Metal Waste</li> <li>• Waste Collection Household and Commercial Waste</li> <li>• Producer Responsibility Initiatives/Local Issues</li> </ul>	<p><b>Air &amp; Noise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Air Monitoring</li> <li>• Solid Fuel Inspections</li> <li>• Environmental Noise Directive (END) Activities/Noise Plans</li> <li>• Air &amp; Noise Controls in Planning Assessments</li> <li>• Local Enforcement Issues</li> </ul>

### *National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) 2021*

The report sets out the results for the assessment of 20 NEPs across the 31 local authorities. Each NEP is scored according to a four-point scale; Excellent, Strong, Moderate or Limited. The objective is that all local authorities should be performing at or above the Strong level across all the NEPs by the end of the three-year cycle running from 2022-

2024. Achieving a Strong or Excellent score demonstrates that the local authority has a comprehensive system in place for the detection and follow-up of environmental enforcement activities and that progress was made towards an environmental outcome under that priority.

The NEPs are proposed and discussed with the local authorities and the relevant government departments. Each enforcement priority has an agreed objective and a specified outcome to be achieved over the three-year cycle.

Local authorities adapted well to the revised process and made significant efforts to report the details of risk-based inspections, follow-up actions and environmental outcomes. The scale of the environmental enforcement work carried out by local authorities is significant. Nationally in 2021, over 500 local authority staff handled almost 81,000 complaints and carried out over 205,000 environmental inspections. These responsibilities are growing each year with more national and European environmental legislation and targets.

## Results

There is a significant variation in results across the NEPs and geographically across the 31 local authorities. Most local authorities performed well in some areas but no local authority performed well across all 20 NEPs. This variation is due to a number of factors including differences in management priorities at local authority level, variability in available resources, impacts of COVID-19 and the quality of information reported.

Almost half (46%) of the 620 assessments achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent. The five highest performing local authorities were Kildare, Dublin City, Leitrim, Monaghan and Fingal. The five lowest performing local authorities were Offaly, Mayo, Sligo, Wexford and Waterford.

The governance process NEPs generally scored well with 67% achieving the required standard. This is to be expected as these NEPs relate to the inspection planning process (i.e.: RMCEI Plans<sup>1</sup>), which are well established within local authorities. The lowest performing governance process NEP was Environmental Outcomes, which reflects the fact that local authorities did not sufficiently define environmental outcomes that are targeted and quantifiable.

The effectiveness of the environmental enforcement activities is assessed under the relevant waste, water, air and noise NEPs, where 40% of the assessments under each theme met the required standard. Therefore, although governance processes and inspection plans were generally in place, they were not always implemented effectively by the local authorities.

The scale of waste and litter enforcement activity carried out by local authorities is significant and accounted for 68% of enforcement staff, 90% of the environmental complaints and 70% of the environmental inspections. However, few local authorities fully actioned the broad range of waste enforcement activities specified under the NEPs.

Overall, there is good evidence of effective enforcement and collaboration to follow up illegal waste activities if detected. In contrast many local authorities did not adequately cover all the authorised elements of the waste area. This was particularly evident in the management of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, where a comprehensive cradle-to-grave waste inspection system is needed to improve proper segregation and management of the largest waste stream in Ireland.

Overall, water quality is in decline and agriculture continues to have a significant impact. Farm inspections remained low and were 43% below pre-COVID levels. There is a need to increase the level of agricultural inspection and enforcement activity, improve consistency of approach and better target resources. Although water monitoring programmes were generally completed, there is not enough evidence that this information was used effectively

by local authorities to focus local enforcement efforts.

Air and noise enforcement continue to have the lowest level of dedicated resources within local authorities and lacks co-ordination of resources to target and support inspection activities. This is reflected by only six local authorities carrying out multi-agency inspections under the Solid Fuel Regulations. The Solid Fuel and Air Monitoring NEPs require greater focus to tackle localised air quality issues that are impacting negatively on the air we breathe. Local authorities should make better use of air monitoring data to identify areas for action. In relation to noise, many local authorities failed to fully implement Noise Action Plans as required under the Environmental Noise Regulations.

### Actions Required by Local Authorities

The report highlights areas where further action is required by local authorities including:

- Better deployment and targeting of resources by senior management to deliver on the national enforcement priorities.
- Increased efforts and multi-agency co-ordination on water, air and noise enforcement.
- Increased enforcement efforts on waste segregation and the management of C&D waste streams.
- Increased inspections and follow-up actions to reduce the impact of agricultural activities on water quality.
- Better use of air monitoring data to identify pollution hotspots and prioritise areas for action under the Solid Fuel Regulations.
- Full implementation of Noise Action Plans and reporting on results to improve noise control.
- Better data management and reporting through development of ICT systems to support inspection and enforcement activities.

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2001/331/EC, on the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections in member states, known as "RMCEI". Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.

# 1. Introduction

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a supervisory role in relation to the performance by local authorities of their statutory environmental protection duties. Since 2014, the EPA has been measuring and reporting on local authority environmental enforcement performance using the EPA’s Local Authority Performance Framework. This framework has been substantially updated and 2021 is the first year of assessment against the revised framework.

Local authority performance is now evaluated against the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs), which are focused on achieving environmental outcomes. The NEPs fall under four themes: governance processes, waste, water, and air and noise. There are 20 NEPs in total with five in each of the four thematic areas as detailed in Figure 1.

<p><b>Governance Processes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Planning for the NEPs</li> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Environmental Resource Planning</li> <li>• RMCEI Plan: Environmental Outcomes</li> <li>• RMCEI: Review and Reporting</li> <li>• Environmental Complaint Handling</li> </ul>	<p><b>Water:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Quality Monitoring</li> <li>• Agriculture/Farm Inspections</li> <li>• Septic Tanks (Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems) Inspections</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Enforcement of Section 4 Licences</li> <li>• Monitoring &amp; Enforcement of Private Water Supplies</li> </ul>
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Figure 1: National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) 2021

The revised assessment framework is focussed on achieving environmental outcomes and no longer solely reports on the enforcement activity submitted through the RMCEI data<sup>2</sup>. Each NEP varies in nature and scope and in this report they are assessed individually.

The assessment now requires NEP Progress Reports to be submitted by each local authority for all relevant NEPs. These reports are designed to allow

local authorities demonstrate how their environmental enforcement activities deliver environmental outcomes for waste management, water and air quality.

While the level of enforcement activity remains high and has increased since 2020, the main focus of this report is on the outcomes achieved as a consequence of activities undertaken. Each NEP is assessed against a set of specified criteria including compliance rates, appropriate site selection, identification and follow through of non-compliance/unauthorised activities and the demonstration of a positive environmental outcome. Each NEP is scored according to a four-point scale; **Excellent, Strong, Moderate or Limited**. Local authorities are expected to meet the required standard of Strong or Excellent on each NEP.

This report outlines the results for 2021 and:

- documents the environmental enforcement performance of 31 local authorities;
- outlines trends in performance of national enforcement priorities;
- highlights key national enforcement priorities that require more focus; and
- highlights actions for improvement at a national level.

These results will act as a benchmark to measure future performance as the set of NEPs moves into a three-year cycle from 2022-2024. Learnings from the 2021 assessment will feed into improvements in guidance and supports for this cycle.

The objective is that all local authorities should be performing at or above the **Strong** level across all the NEPs by the end of the three-year cycle.

Further information on the assessment process is available in Appendix I.

<sup>2</sup> European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2001/331/EC, on the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections in member states, known as “RMCEI”. Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.



## 2. Overview of Local Authority Performance Scores for 2021

### General Findings

There was strong engagement by local authorities in the new assessment framework with 25 local authorities completing NEP Progress Reports within the requested timeframe. Significant efforts were made to report the details of inspections, follow-up actions and results in this first year. The scale of the local authority environmental inspection and enforcement work is significant and is growing each year with more legislation and targets coming from Europe.

While this report focuses primarily on environmental outcomes it is worth noting that the overall number of inspections has increased by 14% from 2020 to over 205,000 in 2021. The level of inspection and enforcement activities remain high in waste enforcement, with much lower levels in water and air & noise, (see Appendix III for activity details). A high portion of resources are applied to dealing with over 81,000 complaints, most of these relate to litter and waste.

In total, over 500 local authority staff were engaged in these activities nationally spread across waste (68%); water (24%) and air/noise/other (8%). The use of temporary contracts and a frequent turnover of staff was evident from the reports. Maintaining resources and training was a constant challenge, as well as the impacts associated with COVID-19.

There currently is no overarching local authority data gathering and reporting system for environmental enforcement. Therefore, the EPA used a variety of available data sources to supplement information submitted by local authorities. The lack of data systems was supplemented by the written report from each local authority for each NEP at the planning stage and again at the end of year. However, in some cases there was insufficient information submitted to make a full assessment.

A new National Environmental Management Information System (NEMIS) is being developed by the local authorities, which will improve the efficiency of complaint handling, along with the planning and implementation of environmental enforcement activities. Significant investment in ICT systems by local authorities is required to ensure a consistent approach is used across the country.

The results from the new assessment framework are outlined below. They are summarised by each National Enforcement Priority and secondly by the performance of each local authority.

### National Enforcement Priority Results

31 local authorities were assessed against each of the 20 NEPs for activities undertaken by them in 2021. The 20 NEPs vary in nature and scope, and some are not applicable to the city councils<sup>3</sup>. Each NEP was assessed for the 31 local authorities, resulting in a total of 620 individual assessments.

Just less than half (46%) of the assessments achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent, while 53% fell below the required standard (see Figure 2). 40% of the scores awarded were in the Moderate category, followed by 34% in the Strong category.

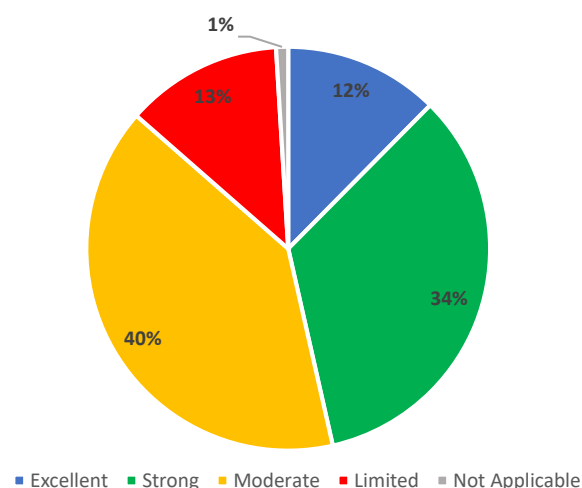


Figure 2: Performance Scores for Local Authorities 2021 (n=620)

<sup>3</sup> Some NEPs did not apply to certain local authorities, e.g. the water NEPs on agriculture, septic tanks and private water supplies were not applicable to Dublin or Galway City Councils

67% of the NEPs achieved the required standard under governance processes. The higher scores achieved in this area are likely to be because the processes to support governance have been in place since 2006 when the RMCEI planning, reviewing and reporting commenced.

Although the allocation of scores differed slightly between the three environmental enforcement areas (waste, water and air & noise), 40% of the NEPs in these three areas achieved the required standard, with the remaining 60% falling below (see Table 1).

Overall, no local authority achieved the required standard across all 20 NEPs. Six local authorities achieved the required standard in all five NEPs on governance processes. These were Cork County, Dublin City, Fingal, Galway City, Longford and Monaghan. Four local authorities achieved the required standard in all five waste NEPs. These

were Kildare, Fingal, Leitrim and Limerick City and County. No local authority achieved the required standard in all five water NEPs or all five air & noise NEPs. The 2021 NEP results from the assessment of the 31 local authorities are detailed in Figure 3.

Overall, the results highlight the challenges for local authorities in achieving positive outcomes across multiple areas and indicate that stronger enforcement is needed by local authorities to fully implement environmental law. This will require adequate resourcing, prioritisations and focus on the NEPs by senior management in local authorities.

There will be continuous refinement of the national priorities and further streamlining of the reporting system as learnings from the assessment process are gathered during the 2022-2024 cycle.

Grade		Governance Processes	Waste	Water	Air & Noise
Required Standard	Excellent (%)	32	4	8	6
Required Standard	Strong (%)	35	36	32	34
Below Required Standard	Moderate (%)	23	48	44	46
Below Required Standard	Limited (%)	10	12	16	14

Table 1: NEP performance scores achieved in the four areas

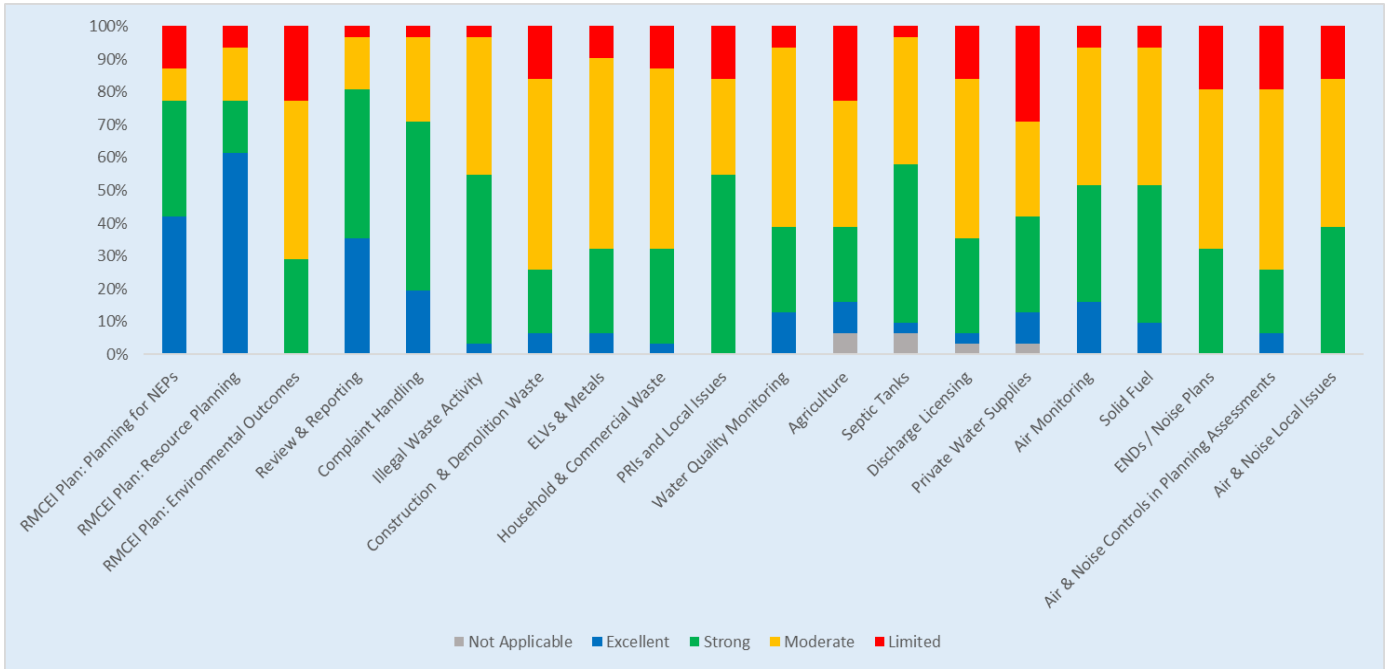


Figure 3: 2021 National Enforcement Priority Results

## Individual Local Authority Performance Scores

In 2021, 5 out of 31 local authorities achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent in at least 70% of their NEPs. Those that scored the highest included Kildare, Dublin City, Leitrim, Monaghan, and Fingal (see Figure 4).

Nine local authorities did not achieve the required standard in more than 30% of their NEPs. These were Offaly, Mayo, Sligo, Wexford, Waterford, Tipperary, Laois, Roscommon and South Dublin.

In general, the lower performing local authorities deployed the least resources. Leitrim and Monaghan were the exceptions who demonstrated good targeting and results from a small resource pool, especially in the waste enforcement area.

Further information on the performance of local authorities under each of the individual four areas are detailed in the following sections of this report. Details by individual local authority are also available on the EPA website<sup>4</sup>.

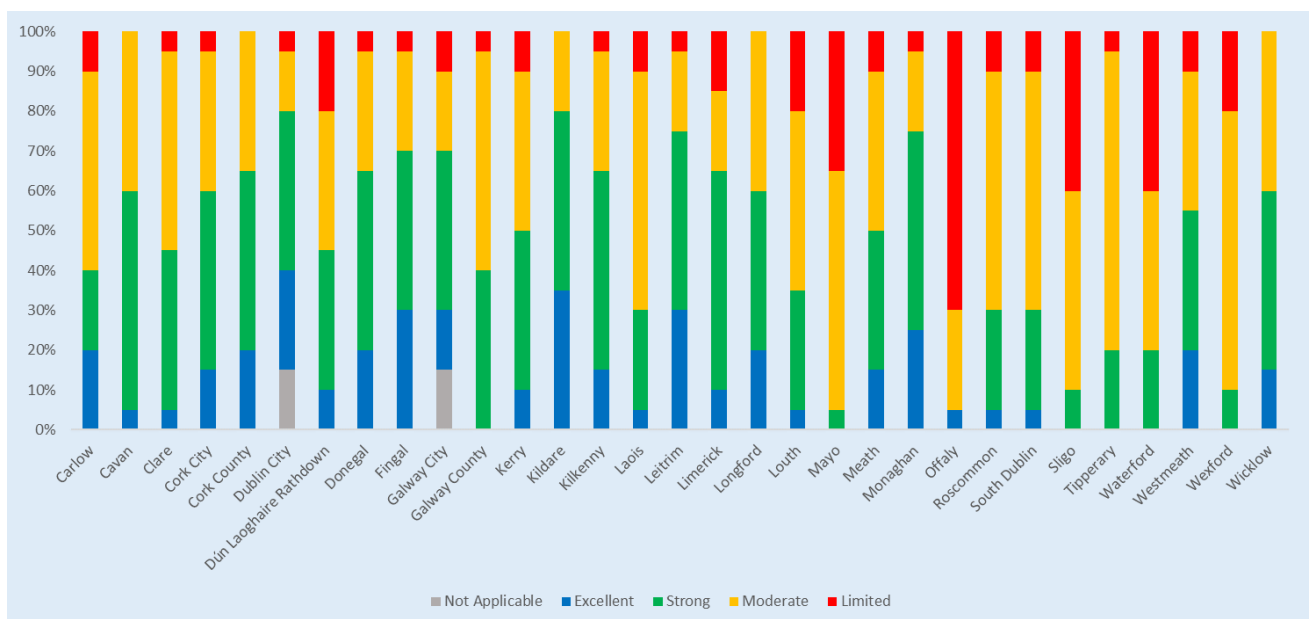


Figure 4: 2021 Performance Scores for each Local Authority

<sup>4</sup> Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Individual Local Authority Performance Results 2021 is available on the EPA website.

### 3. Governance Processes

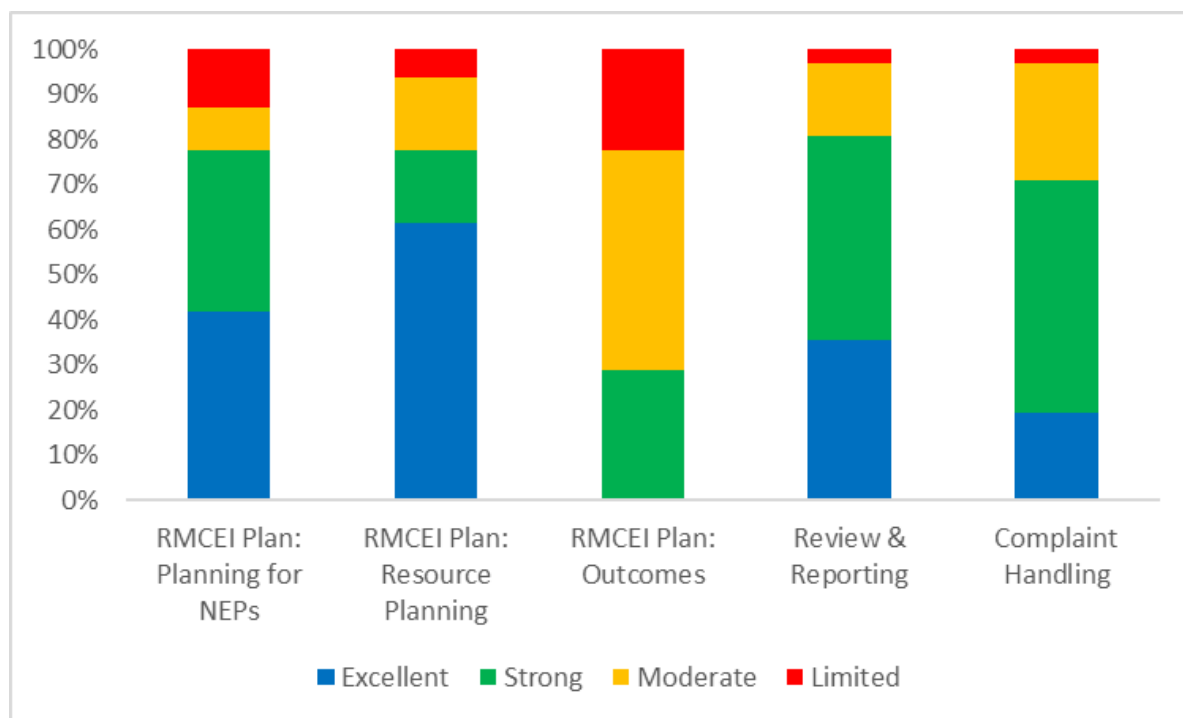


Figure 5: Governance Process NEP Results

Since 2006, local authorities have developed annual enforcement plans to improve the organisation and effectiveness of environmental inspections and enforcement. The governance process NEPs focus on the environmental enforcement processes and systems reported through the annual Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspection (RMCEI) plan. The governance process NEPs do not reflect the effectiveness of the environmental enforcement activities, which are assessed under the relevant waste, water, air & noise NEPs. According to the 2021 RMCEI data, over 500 environmental enforcement staff across the 31 local authorities carried out over 205,000 environmental inspections and received over 81,000 environmental complaints<sup>5</sup>.

#### Results

A breakdown of the governance process NEP results is presented in Figure 5 and Figure 6, and in Appendix II. The key findings are:

- Six local authorities achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent across all five governance process NEPs. These were Cork County, Dublin City, Fingal, Galway City, Longford and Monaghan.
- Two local authorities failed to meet the required standard in any of the five governance process NEPs. These were Mayo and Wexford.
- Governance processes achieved stronger scores than the NEPs for waste, water, air & noise, with 67% of the NEPs achieving the required standard. This is most likely due to the established reporting structures and templates in place for RMCEI planning, review and reporting by the local authorities.
- Waterford City & County achieved a Limited result across four of the governance process NEPs, which could not be assessed because

<sup>5</sup> Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.

they did not submit an RMCEI Plan for the 2021 reporting period.

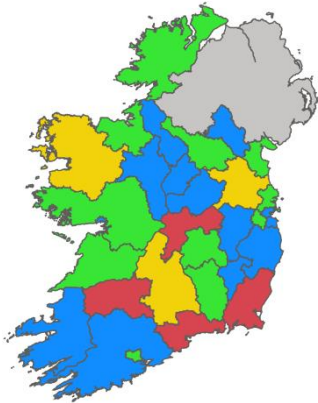
- **RMCEI Plan: Planning for NEPs.** This priority relates to planning for the delivery of NEPs through the RMCEI process. 77% of local authorities achieved the required standard, which indicates that the NEPs were widely integrated into enforcement planning in 2021.
- **RMCEI Plan: Environmental Resource Planning.** This priority relates to the resources set out against the planned activities. 77% of local authorities achieved the required standard. This demonstrates that planned resources at the start of the year were well structured to achieve targets and objectives. However, this NEP does not assess the implementation of the plans which are often negatively impacted by resource changes during the year. The availability of experienced staff often impacts the delivery of planned actions.
- **RMCEI Plan: Environmental Outcomes.** Local authorities are responsible for clearly outlining measurable environmental outcomes in the RMCEI Plan. This is the lowest scoring of the governance process NEPs with 29% of local authorities achieving the required standard. No local authorities achieved an

Excellent result, while the following seven local authorities achieved a Limited result; Limerick, Mayo, Meath, Offaly, Sligo, Waterford and Wexford. Overall local authorities' RMCEI Plans need to better define environmental outcomes that are targeted and quantifiable. Without clear outcomes, it is difficult to measure progress.

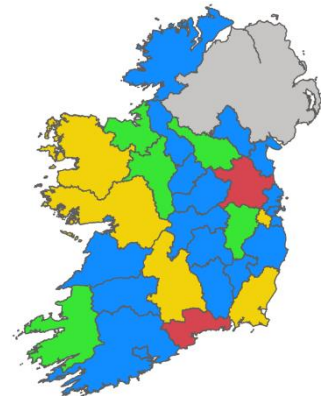
- **RMCEI Review & Reporting.** This priority relates to the periodic review mechanism to check the implementation of the RMCEI Plan during the reporting year. 81% of local authorities achieved the required standard, by demonstrating that RMCEI plan review processes are in place. Sufficient input is required by senior management into the review of RMCEI plans throughout the year. This is to cater for revisions to the work plan and to align available staff resources to planned activities.
- **Environmental Complaints Handling.** The processes and systems for handling and resolution of complaints are a key aspect of environmental governance, as complaints are the main source for detecting illegal activity. Significant resources are required to deal with complaints. 71% of local authorities achieved the required standard.

## Governance Process NEPs

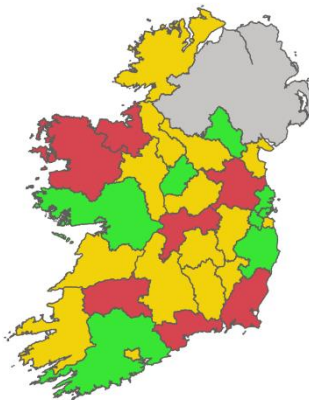
RMCEI Plan: Planning for NEPs



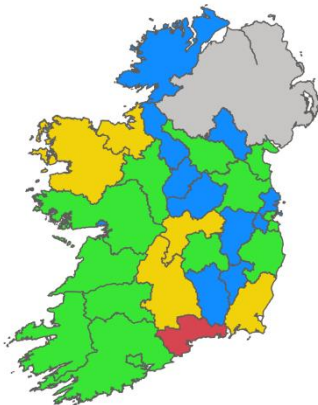
RMCEI Plan: Environmental Resource Planning



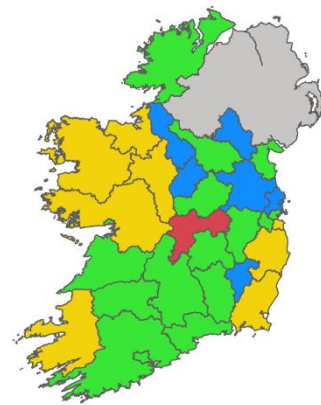
RMCEI Plan: Environmental Outcomes



RMCEI Review & Reporting



Environmental Complaint Handling



■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

Figure 6: Governance Process NEP Results by Local Authority

### Actions Required by Local Authorities:

- Ensure sufficient input from senior management into the RMCEI planning and review process, throughout the year.
- Ensure governance is effective by better definition and delivery of environmental outcomes.

## 4. Waste Enforcement

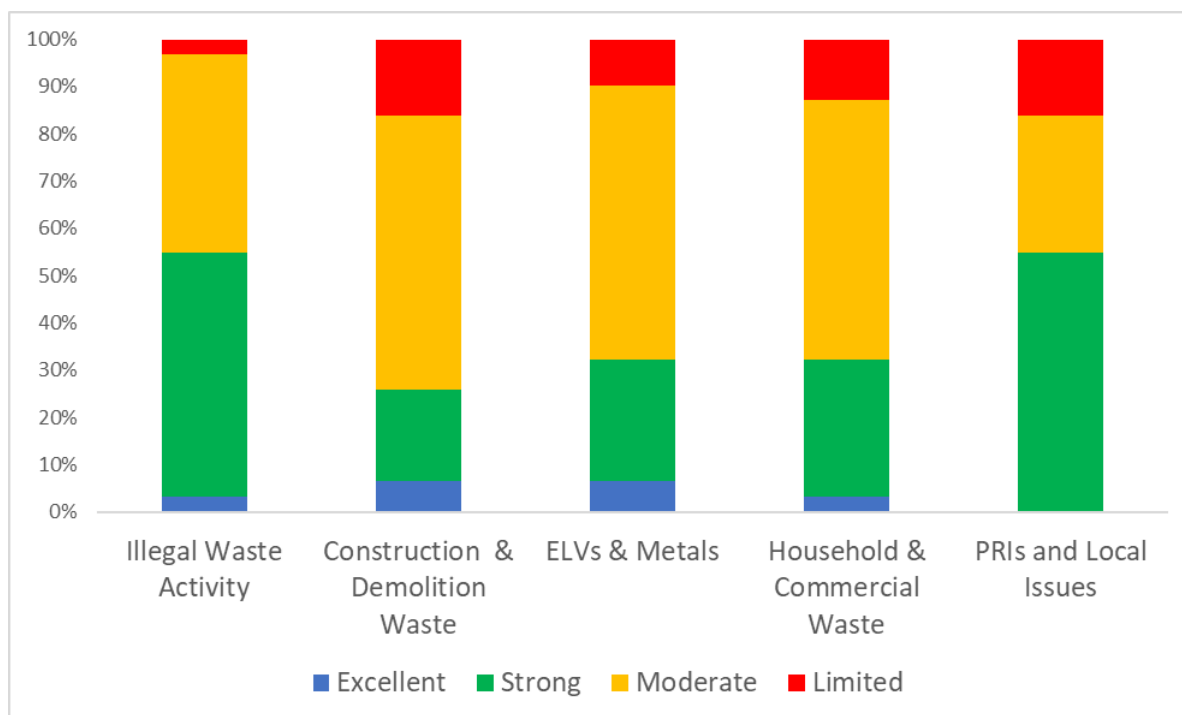


Figure 7: Waste NEP Results

Waste and litter enforcement continue to have the highest level of dedicated resources within local authorities with 68% of enforcement staff assigned to this area in 2021. This area also received 90% (approx. 73,000) of the environmental complaints. Almost 70% (over 140,000) of the reported 2021 environmental inspections were related to waste and litter enforcement. The inspections are divided across authorised and unauthorised activities. 92% (578) of the environmental prosecutions were initiated in the waste sector (excluding litter).<sup>6</sup>

### Results

A breakdown of the waste NEP results is presented in Figure 7 and Figure 8, and in Appendix II. The key findings are:

- Four local authorities achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent across all five waste NEPs. These were Fingal, Kildare, Leitrim and Limerick.
- Six local authorities failed to meet the required standard in any of the five waste

NEPs. These were Kerry, Laois, Mayo, Offaly, Sligo and Wexford.

- 48% of the overall waste NEP scores were Moderate. This indicates that a level of activity exists, but there was little identifiable progress in the NEP. Few local authorities fully actioned the broad range of waste activities outlined under the NEPs.
- While progress has been made in enforcement of high value waste streams (e.g. catalytic convertors) greater focus is needed by local authorities to identify unauthorised waste activities taking place at authorised sites, e.g. permitted facilities, certificates of registration.
- Waste segregation and the enforcement of waste acceptance criteria was a common issue spanning a number of waste NEPs. Effective segregation and the minimisation of contamination in waste streams are critical to driving materials reuse and to achieving the desired circular economy outcomes. This applies regardless of the waste stream, for

<sup>6</sup> Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.



example, the reuse of construction & demolition waste, the separation of mixed dry recyclables or the recycling of metals.

- **Tackling Significant Illegal Waste Activity / Multi-Agency Sites of Interest:** This priority relates to tackling significant illegal waste activity, including inspection/enforcement action at multi-agency sites of interest. The reactive work on unauthorised activities achieved the strongest performance score, with 55% of local authorities achieving the required standard. Multi-agency work was well demonstrated with collaboration between local authorities and An Garda Síochána, WERLAs and the NTFSO. Local authorities reported complaints as the main source of illegal waste activity detection. Some local authorities reported no large-scale illegal activity but failed to demonstrate proactive action to detect such activity or failed to elaborate on reported unauthorised RMCEI data.
- **Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste:** Local authorities inspect the authorised C&D sector, including construction sites (sources), soil recovery facilities (destinations), Article 27 By-product notifications and waste hauliers. 26% of local authorities achieved the required standard. Dublin City and Kildare achieved an Excellent result by demonstrating a high level of outcome focussed activity for this NEP. Carlow, Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown, Louth, Offaly and Waterford were rated Limited due to low reported levels of activity in the area. Over eight million tonnes of C&D waste is produced annually which offers a significant opportunity to boost the circular economy system.

However, construction and demolition is a very broad enforcement area and many local authorities only provided detail on some aspects of the activity. A common issue was the lack of detail provided on waste cradle-to-grave analysis.

- **End-of-Life Vehicles (ELV) & Metal Waste:** Local authorities inspect the authorised ELV & metal waste sector. 32% of local authorities achieved the required standard. Reporting on activity in the metal sector was often absent.
- **Waste Collection - Household & Commercial Waste:** Local authorities inspect waste segregation and collection in the household and commercial sector, in particular the roll-out of food waste bins. 32% of local authorities achieved the required standard. A focus on the roll out of the food waste bins was generally well reported. There was limited detail reported on activity in the Commercial Sector, which remained impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021.
- **Producer Responsibility Initiatives (PRI)/Local Issues:** This priority relates to the PRIs, with eight PRIs reported through the RMCEI<sup>7</sup> process and local priorities as detailed in the RMCEI plan. Many local authorities reported strong activity under at least one PRI, and 55% of local authorities achieved the required standard. Many of the local authorities failed to elaborate on the activity under all relevant PRIs as reported in the RMCEI. Local issues/priorities were often not reported in the NEP progress reports or detailed in RMCEI Plans. Local authorities reported that the PRI area was most impacted by staff resource issues.

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<sup>7</sup> The PRI inspections reported in the 2021 RMCEI Plans were WEEE, Battery, ELVES, Farm Plastics, Plastic Bag Levy, Packaging Regulations (Suspected Major Producers & Registered Self Compliers) and Tyre Regulations.

## Waste NEPs

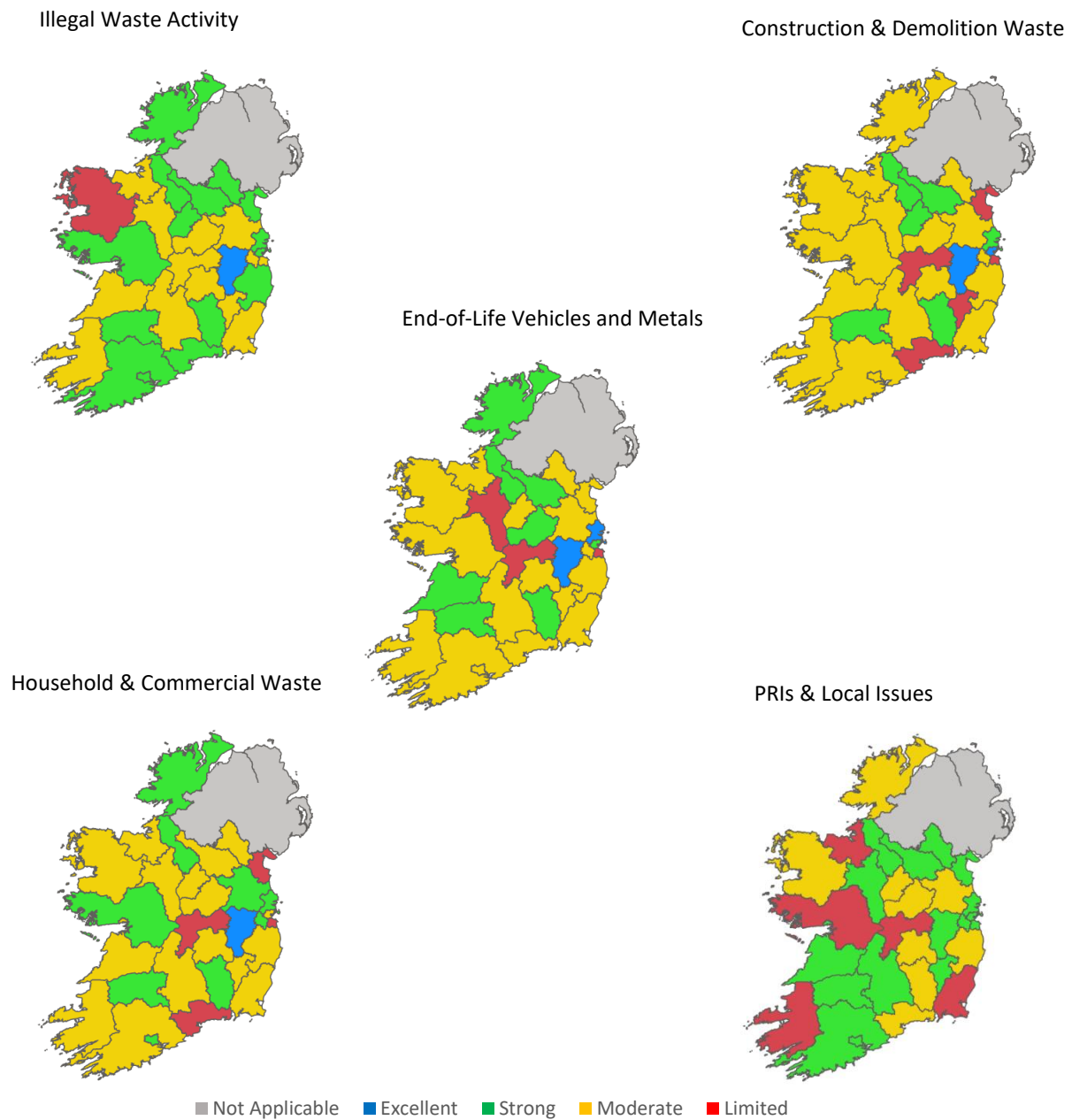


Figure 8: Waste NEP Results by Local Authority

### Actions Required by Local Authorities:

- Increase focus on C&D activities including: construction sites, soil recovery facilities, waste hauliers, by-product notifications and suspected unauthorised sites.
- Increase focus on authorised activities in the End-of-Life Vehicle, metal waste and commercial waste sectors.
- Improve sharing of waste data and intelligence and prioritise multi agency actions with, as appropriate, An Garda Síochána, WERLAs, the NTFSO and the EPA.
- Continue to build on the work done on the enforcement of producer responsibility initiatives noting that the Circular Economy Act provides for new initiatives in this area.
- Improve the detection of illegal waste activity by making greater use of local intelligence rather than solely investigating complaints.

## 5. Water Enforcement

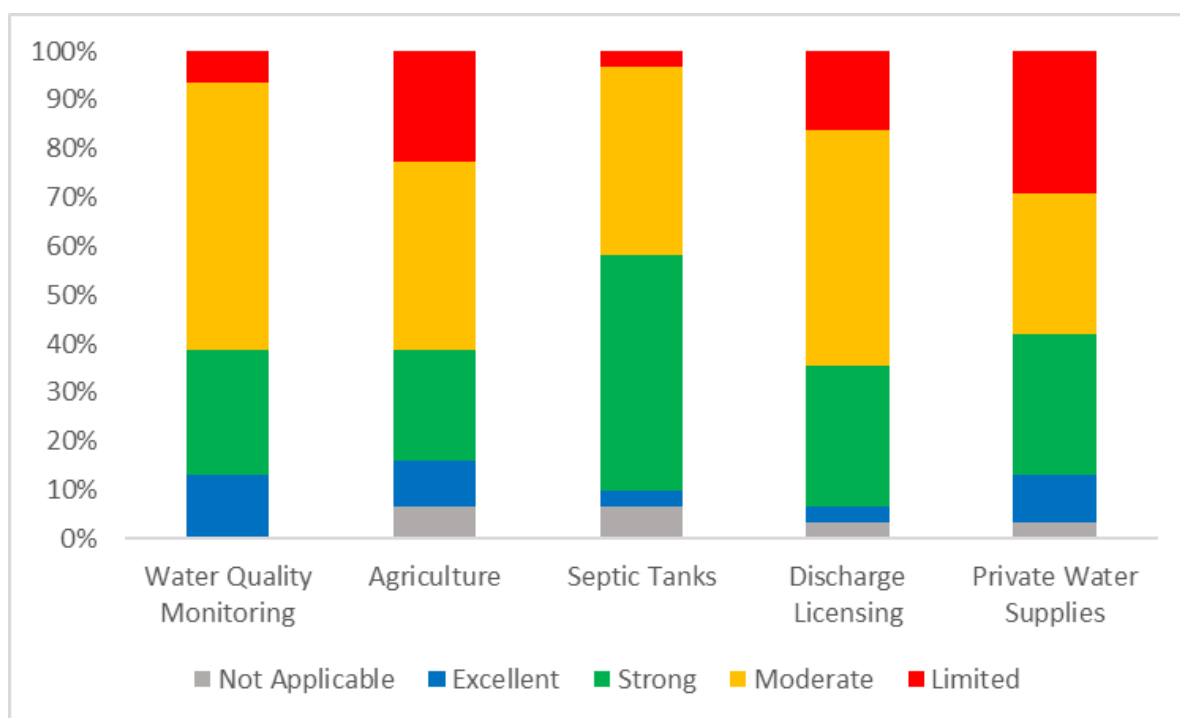


Figure 9: National Water NEP Results

Overall, water quality is in decline across Ireland and the level of enforcement activity is low, with 24% of local authority environmental staff assigned to water monitoring and enforcement in 2021. The water area represents 20% of the national environmental inspections, with over 42,000 water related inspections undertaken by local authorities in 2021. Over 1000 waterbodies are impacted negatively by agriculture. However, in 2021 farm inspections were 43% below pre-COVID levels with 2500 farm inspections carried out. The number of water complaints received by local authorities increased by 14% to 3600 in 2021<sup>8</sup>.

### Results

A breakdown of the water NEP results is presented in Figure 9 and Figure 10, and in Appendix II. The key findings are:

- No local authority achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent in all five

Water NEPs. Four local authorities achieved the required standard in four of the water NEPs. These were Leitrim, Meath, Monaghan and Wicklow.

- Six local authorities failed to meet the required standard in each of the five water NEPs. These were Laois, Mayo, Offaly, South Dublin, Sligo and Waterford City and County.
- For two of the urban local authorities, Dublin City and Galway City, some of the water NEPs were not considered applicable for the reporting year, e.g. agriculture, septic tanks and private water supplies.
- Overall, the level of inspection and enforcement activity is low. This needs to increase along with improved co-ordination of resources in this area.
- **Water Quality Monitoring:** The national water quality monitoring programme was

<sup>8</sup> Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.

substantially completed by local authorities in 2021, providing up to date information on water quality. However, there is not enough evidence that this information is being used effectively by local authorities to target local enforcement efforts. 39% of local authorities achieved the required standard, while the majority were rated Moderate.

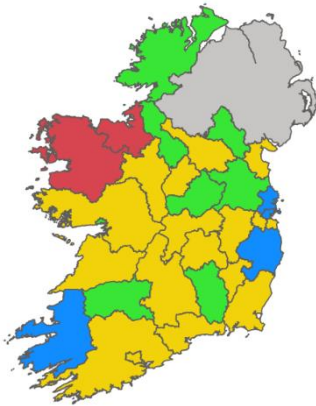
- **Agriculture:** Local Authorities inspect farms under the Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters (GAP) Regulations. Surface waters and groundwaters continue to be under pressure from nitrogen and phosphorus from agriculture. 34% of local authorities achieved the required standard for this NEP. Three local authorities achieved an Excellent result. These were Cork, Kilkenny and Meath. However, seven local authorities were rated Limited due to low reported levels of inspections and subsequent follow-up and enforcement actions. These were Clare, Cork City, Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Mayo, Offaly, South Dublin and Sligo.
- **Septic tanks:** Local authorities inspect Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWWTS) under the National Inspection Plan for DWWTS. 55% of local authorities achieved

the required standard in this NEP. Strong performance scores were achieved by local authorities through completion of the required number of inspections in the National Inspection Plan. The main issue relates to delays in closing out advisory notices which require householders to fix systems that fail inspection.

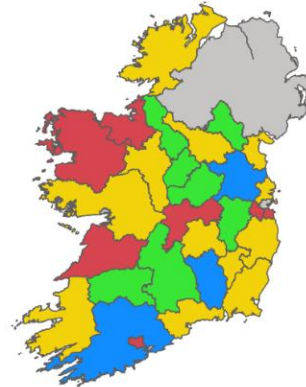
- **Discharge Licensing:** Local authorities inspect compliance with water pollution discharge licences. 33% of local authorities achieved the required standard in this NEP. Despite being planned routine work, there is an inconsistent level of enforcement activity at licenced sites, and many local authorities demonstrated little activity under this NEP.
- **Private Water Supplies:** Local authorities are responsible for ensuring private water supplies meet the requirements of the drinking water regulations through monitoring, investigation and enforcement activities. 40% of local authorities achieved the required standard in this NEP by demonstrating proactive work to ensure private supplies were safe to drink. However, many local authorities demonstrated little activity in this area.

## Water NEPs

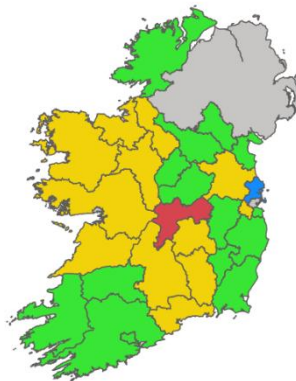
### Water Quality Monitoring



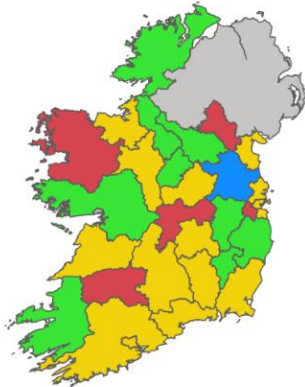
### Agriculture



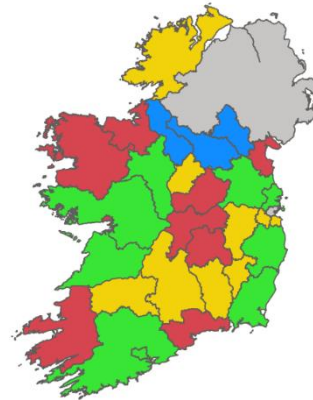
### Septic Tanks



### Discharge Licensing



### Private Water Supplies



■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

Figure 10: Water NEP Results by Local Authority

### Actions Required by Local Authorities:

- Prevent water pollution from agriculture by increasing the number of farm inspections in areas of greatest risk to water quality.
- Follow up on issues identified during farm inspections and report on the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.
- Monitor all private water supplies and enforce the drinking water standards where monitoring identifies non-compliances, in order to protect human health.
- Use Water Framework Directive and bathing water monitoring data to target actions to improve water quality.
- Follow up to resolve older septic tank advisory notices issued to householders to fix septic tank systems that fail inspection.

## 6. Air and Noise Enforcement

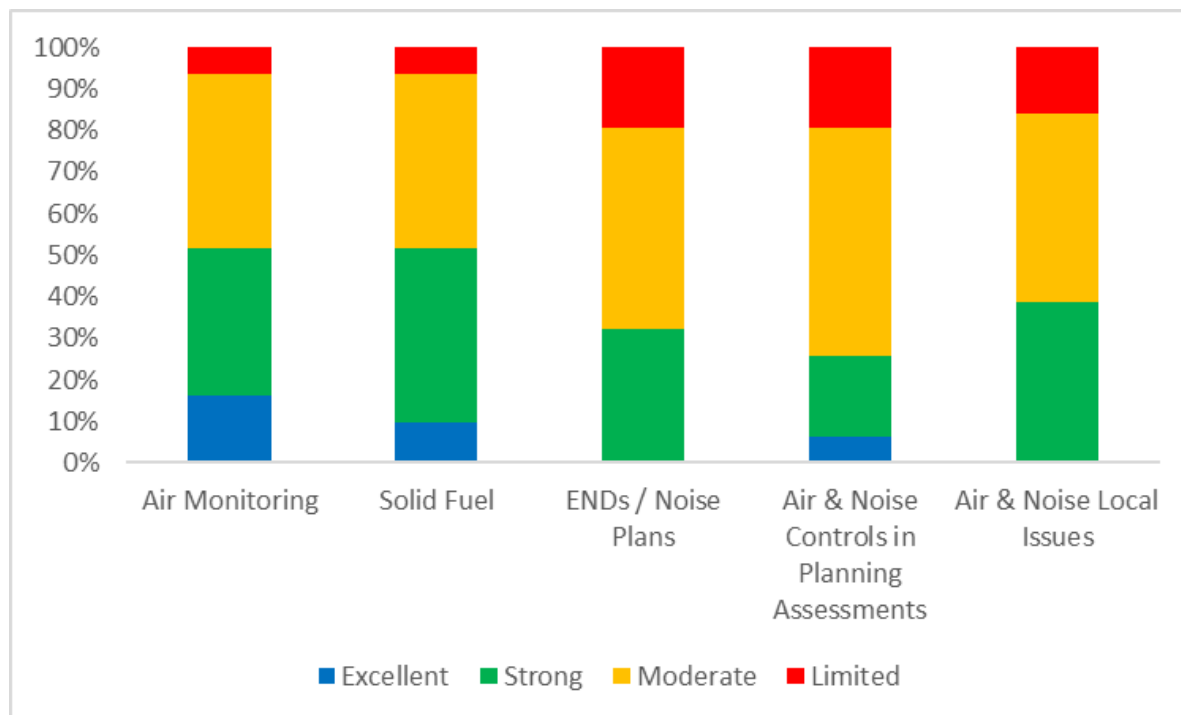


Figure 11: National Air & Noise NEP Results

Air & noise enforcement continues to have the lowest level of dedicated resources within local authorities with only 8% of staff assigned to this area in 2021. A local authority enforcement co-ordination group is needed for air and noise. Local authority enforcement work is a key element in controlling air and noise pollution, and also in promoting clean air. In 2021, local authorities carried out 1,890 environmental inspections under the Solid Fuels, Decorative Paints, Petroleum Vapour and Solvents Regulations, compared to 1,520 in 2020 (24% increase). Air and noise complaints increased moderately in 2021 with 350 additional complaints compared to 2020 (approx. 9% increase).<sup>9</sup> The nature of the complaints was often related to increased activity in the industrial, commercial and construction sectors, along with re-opening of the food sector following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

### Results

A breakdown of the air and noise NEP results is presented in Figure 11 and Figure 12, and in Appendix II. The key findings are:

- No local authority achieved the required standard of Strong or Excellent across all five air & noise NEPs. Four local authorities achieved the required standard in four NEPs. These were Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Kerry, Kildare and Monaghan.
- Five local authorities failed to meet the required standard in all five air & noise NEPs. These were Louth, Offaly, South Dublin, Sligo and Wexford.
- **Air monitoring:** The EPA Ambient Air Monitoring Programme (AAMP) expansion continued during 2021. Most local authorities assisted with site selection, maintenance and calibration of air monitoring stations to ensure delivery of accurate real-time information relating to air quality and forecasting. This NEP achieved the strongest performance score, with 52% of local authorities achieving the required standard. Most local authorities' websites provided readily available access to air quality data via link to the real time EPA Air Quality Index <sup>10</sup>. Local authorities should

<sup>9</sup> Appendix III provides an Overview of the Local Authority Environmental Enforcement Activity Trends as reported through the RMCEI data.

<sup>10</sup> <https://airquality.ie>

focus on better use of this data to identify areas for action.

- **Solid Fuels:** This priority aims to ensure that fuel products comply with the relevant standards. 52% of local authorities achieved the required standard in this NEP. Cork City, Donegal and Leitrim achieved an Excellent result, demonstrating proactive inspection and sulphur sampling activities, and ensuring the sale of compliant fuel products. Two local authorities, Louth and Offaly, achieved a Limited result. Compliance rates of fuel merchants and retailers inspected was very high, indicating a good national awareness of obligations under the Solid Fuel Regulations. Only six local authorities carried out multi-agency inspections due to operational impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Local authorities should consider an additional focus on such operations, particularly targeting online and mobile fuel sellers and the sale of non-compliant fuel products.
- **Environmental Noise Directive (END)/Noise Action Plans:** Local authorities have responsibilities under the Environmental Noise Regulations 2018<sup>11</sup>, relating to reducing the harmful effects from exposure to environmental noise. This includes preparing and collating data in relation to noise mapping. In addition, local authorities are required to submit a Noise Action Plan Progress Report to the EPA on an annual basis,

demonstrating progress on key areas for action. 33% of local authorities achieved the required standard in this NEP. 14 of the 31 local authorities submitted their Noise Action Plan Progress Reports. This demonstrates unsatisfactory progress in this area.

- **Air & Noise Controls in Planning Assessments:** Local authorities assess the potential environmental impacts from air and noise emissions, as part of the planning process. This function is carried out by both environment and planning sections in local authorities, which made it difficult to report and assess this NEP. Two local authorities achieved an Excellent performance score. However, 26% achieved the required standard. Greater clarity is needed on the division of roles and responsibilities within the local authorities when reporting progress on this NEP. Further guidance on this NEP is being developed.
- **Air & Noise Local Issues:** Local authorities inspect compliance under the Solvents, Decorative Paints, and Petroleum Vapours Regulations. 39% of local authorities achieved the required standard in this NEP. Lower performance scores were attributed to low inspection activity reported and lack of details on overall compliance levels and related enforcement actions and outcomes. There was insufficient activity relating to the identification of unauthorised operators.

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<sup>11</sup> Environmental Noise Regulations 2018; <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2018/si/549/made/en/print>

## Air & Noise NEPs

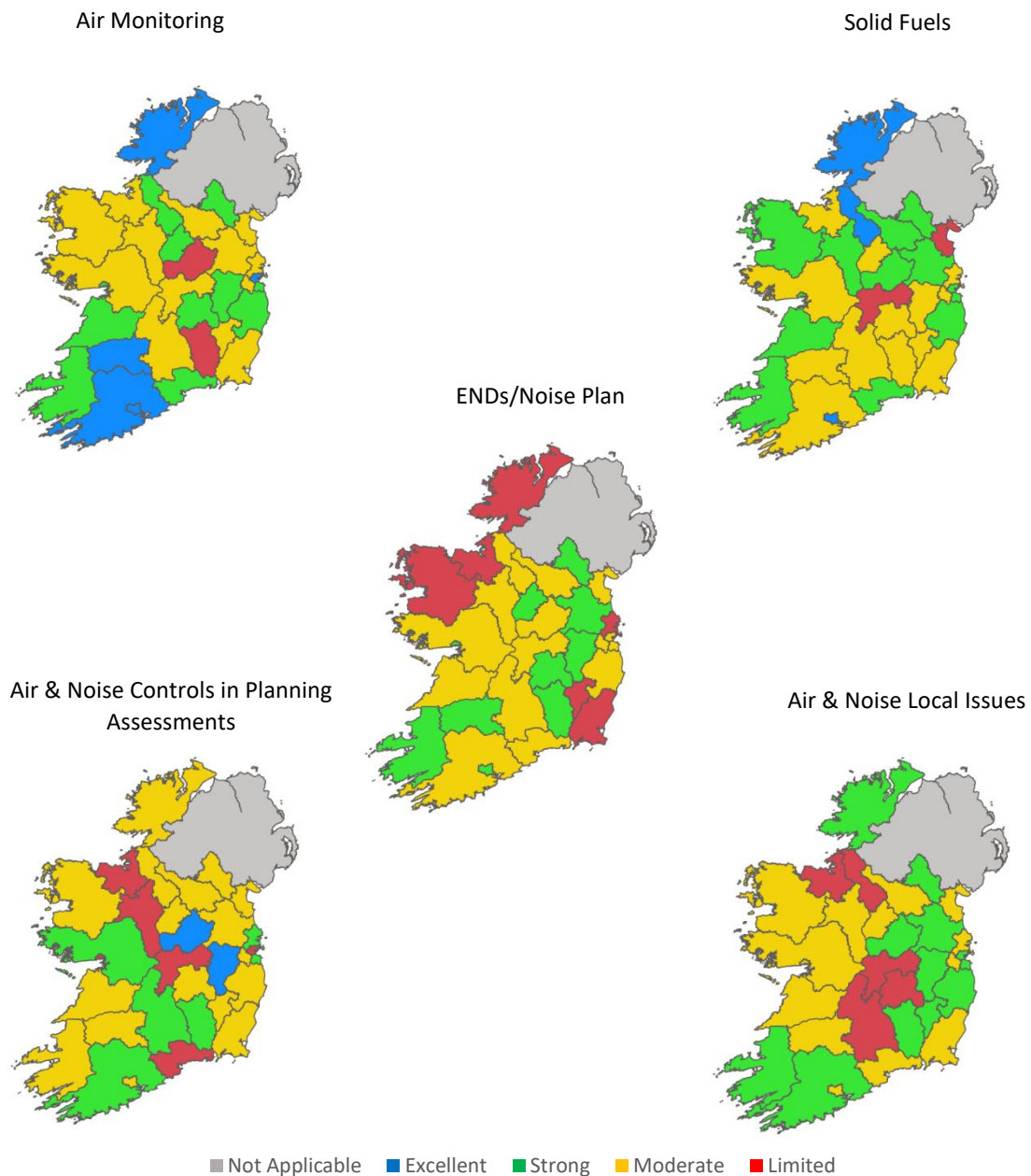


Figure 12: Air & Noise NEP Results by Local Authority

### Actions Required by Local Authorities:

- Target inspections of online and mobile fuel sellers and on non-compliant fuel products under the Solid Fuel Regulations.
- Use monitoring data to identify air pollution hotspots and prioritise areas for action.
- Implement Noise Action Plans and report on progress.
- Identify unauthorised operators under the Solvents, Decorative Paints and Petroleum Vapour Regulations and take corrective action.



## Appendix I - Local Authority Performance Framework Process

The Local Authority Performance Framework (LAPF) evaluates the performance of local authorities in progressing the National Enforcement Priorities (NEPs) designed to achieve national environmental outcomes. The NEPs for Local Authorities and the associated key activities are proposed and discussed with all relevant parties on an annual basis. For waste, approval is given by the National Waste Enforcement Steering Committee and for water and air/noise, approval is given by the NIECE<sup>12</sup> Steering Committee. Each priority has an agreed objective and a specified outcome to be achieved over a three-year cycle, with the first three year cycle of the revised framework running from 2022-2024. Although the priorities remain unchanged during each cycle, the focus of the activities associated with each priority can be revised on an annual basis.

There are 20 NEPs in total with five NEPs in each of the areas of governance processes, waste, water and air & noise. The EPA's assessment of local authority performance is based on the information and data contained in the Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections (RMCEI) Plans, RMCEI Data Returns and NEP Progress Reports which are submitted to the EPA annually. EPA and third-party intelligence may also be considered in the assessments.

The NEP assessment criteria are outlined in the Table 2 below.

NEP Assessment Criteria		
<b>A</b>	<b>For authorised sites, a compliance rate</b> documented and compared over the previous years, and analysed or explained;	<b>CORE</b>
<b>B</b>	Demonstrate appropriate <b>site selection</b> methodology and inspection implementation and/or early interventions;	
<b>C</b>	Demonstration <b>that non-compliances/unauthorised activities</b> are being detected and are being followed up – and some progress in the NEP is shown.	
<b>D</b>	Clear example of a positive <b>environmental outcome</b> – something was achieved to improve the environment (not simply reached a target of inspections);	
<b>E</b>	Clear <b>useful learning in a NEP area</b> (positive or negative e.g. what to do, or what not to do, or identification of illegal sites or unauthorised operators);	<b>Complementary</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Collaborative work</b> with WERLA, NTFSO, RWMPO, LAWPRO, EPA, Catchment Care Projects, inter-departmental within the local authority or with other local authorities; cross cutting NEP collaboration.	
<b>G</b>	Demonstration of a <b>proactive approach</b> , or <b>innovation</b> in dealing with a problem or demonstration of an <b>enforcement curiosity</b> .	
<b>H</b>	<b>Compliance promotion and awareness</b> raising activities;	
<b>I</b>	Activities on <b>data validation, data analysis, systems development, website development</b> ;	
<b>J</b>	<b>Significant enforcement actions/prosecutions</b> and the outcomes such as remediation, sharing of lessons learnt to aid national consistency of enforcement;	
<b>K</b>	<b>Case studies written up and shared</b> that encompass any of the above properties.	

Table 2: NEP Assessment Criteria

The results along with detailed recommendations for areas of improvement, if required, are sent to each local authority. Local authorities should review the recommendations and make any necessary changes to the planning and implementation of their environmental protection functions.

<sup>12</sup> The Network for Ireland's Environmental Compliance and Enforcement, NIECE, is a network of organisations and individuals involved in the enforcement of environmental legislation, environmental engagement and promotion.

An overview of the 2021 LAPF process is presented in Figure 13.

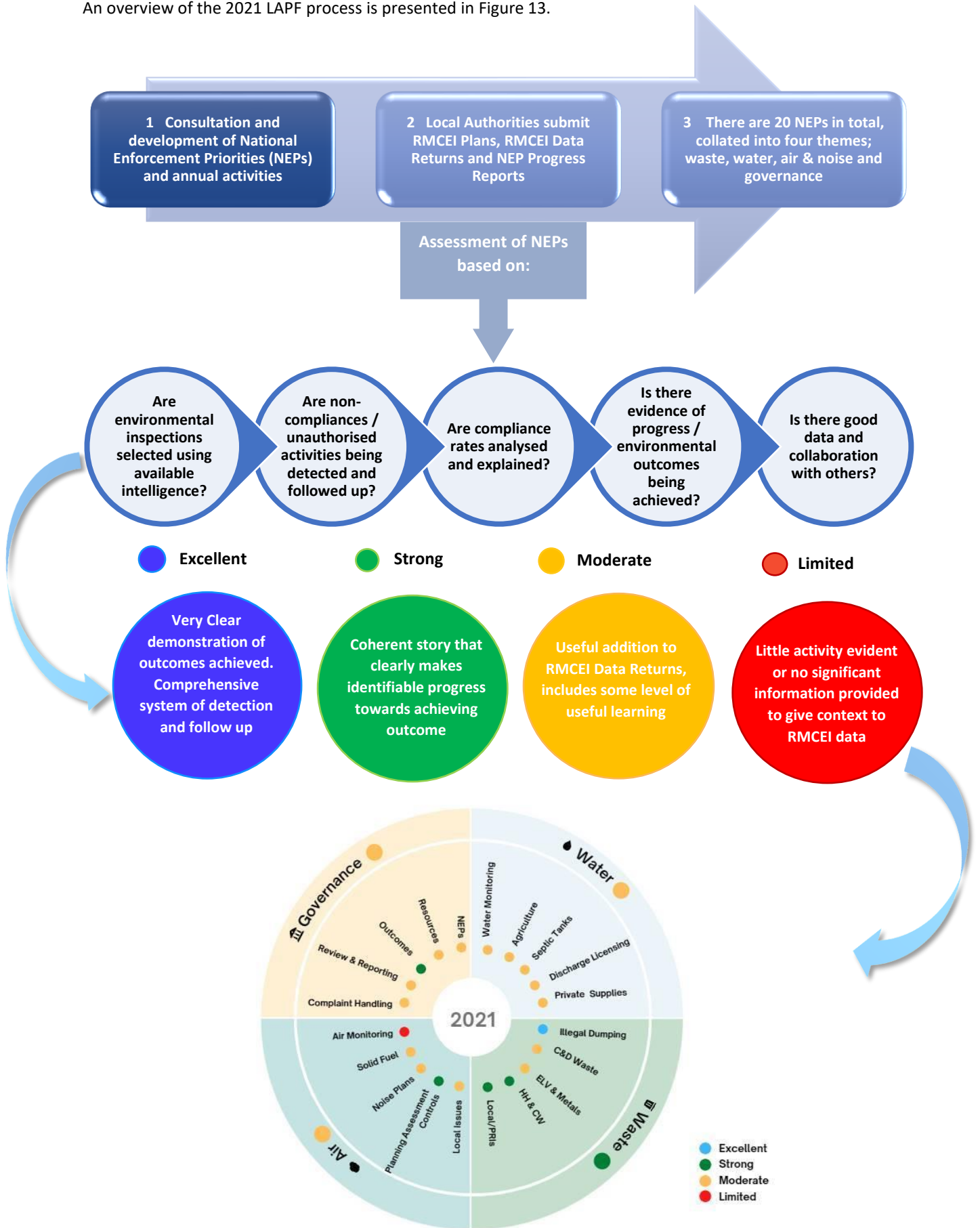


Figure 13: Overview of the Local Authority Performance Framework Assessment

## Appendix II – Performance Scores

### Governance Process NEP Performance Scores

Local Authorities	Governance Processes				
	RMCEI Plan: Planning for NEPS	RMCEI Plan: Resource Planning	RMCEI Plan: Environmental Outcomes	Review and Reporting	Complaint Handling
Carlow County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Excellent
Cavan County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Clare County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Cork City Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Cork County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Strong	Strong
Dublin City Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Strong	Strong
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Donegal County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Fingal County Council	Strong	Excellent	Strong	Excellent	Excellent
Galway City Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Excellent	Strong
Galway County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Kerry County Council	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Kildare County Council	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Kilkenny County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Laois County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Leitrim County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Excellent
Limerick City & County Council	Limited	Excellent	Limited	Strong	Strong
Longford County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Excellent	Excellent
Louth County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Mayo County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Meath County Council	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Strong	Excellent
Monaghan County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Excellent	Excellent
Offaly County Council	Limited	Excellent	Limited	Moderate	Limited
Roscommon County Council	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong
South Dublin County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Excellent	Strong
Sligo County Council	Strong	Strong	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Tipperary County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Waterford City & County Council	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited	Strong
Westmeath County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Wexford County Council	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Wicklow County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Strong	Moderate

■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

## Waste NEP Performance Scores

Local Authorities	National Waste Priorities				
	Illegal Waste Activity	C&D Waste	ELVs & Metals	Household & Commercial Waste	PRIs & Local Issues
Carlow County Council	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Cavan County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Clare County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Cork City Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Cork County Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Dublin City Council	Strong	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Strong
Donegal County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Fingal County Council	Strong	Strong	Excellent	Strong	Strong
Galway City Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Galway County Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Limited
Kerry County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Kildare County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Strong
Kilkenny County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Laois County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Leitrim County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Limerick City & County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong
Longford County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Louth County Council	Strong	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Strong
Mayo County Council	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Meath County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Monaghan County Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Offaly County Council	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Roscommon County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Strong
South Dublin County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Sligo County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Tipperary County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Waterford City & County Council	Strong	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate
Westmeath County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Wexford County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Wicklow County Council	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate

■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

## Water NEP Performance Scores

Local Authorities	National Water Priorities				
	Water Quality Monitoring	Agriculture	Septic Tanks	Discharge Licensing	Private Water Supplies
Carlow County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Cavan County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Excellent
Clare County Council	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
Cork City Council	Moderate	Limited	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Cork County Council	Moderate	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Dublin City Council	Excellent	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Moderate	Not Applicable
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council	Moderate	Limited	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Donegal County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Fingal County Council	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Moderate	Strong
Galway City Council	Strong	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Limited
Galway County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Kerry County Council	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Limited
Kildare County Council	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Kilkenny County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Laois County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Leitrim County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Excellent
Limerick City & County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Limited	Moderate
Longford County Council	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Louth County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Limited
Mayo County Council	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Limited
Meath County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Monaghan County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Limited	Excellent
Offaly County Council	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited	Limited
Roscommon County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong
South Dublin County Council	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate
Sligo County Council	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Tipperary County Council	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Waterford City & County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Westmeath County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Limited
Wexford County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Wicklow County Council	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong

■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

## Air & Noise NEP Performance Scores

Local Authorities	National Air & Noise Priorities				
	Air Monitoring	Solid Fuel	ENDs / Noise Plans	Air & Noise Controls in Planning Assessments	Local Issues
Carlow County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Strong
Cavan County Council	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Clare County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Cork City Council	Excellent	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Cork County Council	Excellent	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Dublin City Council	Excellent	Strong	Moderate	Limited	Strong
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Strong
Donegal County Council	Excellent	Excellent	Limited	Moderate	Strong
Fingal County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Strong	Moderate
Galway City Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Limited	Moderate
Galway County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Moderate
Kerry County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Kildare County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Excellent	Strong
Kilkenny County Council	Limited	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Strong
Laois County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Limited
Leitrim County Council	Strong	Excellent	Moderate	Moderate	Limited
Limerick City & County Council	Excellent	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Longford County Council	Strong	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Moderate
Louth County Council	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Mayo County Council	Moderate	Strong	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Meath County Council	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Monaghan County Council	Strong	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Offaly County Council	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Limited
Roscommon County Council	Moderate	Strong	Moderate	Limited	Moderate
South Dublin County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Sligo County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Limited
Tipperary County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Strong	Limited
Waterford City & County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Limited	Moderate
Westmeath County Council	Limited	Strong	Moderate	Excellent	Strong
Wexford County Council	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Wicklow County Council	Strong	Strong	Moderate	Moderate	Strong

■ Not Applicable ■ Excellent ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Limited

## Appendix III – Overview of Local Authority Activity Trends

**Table 3:** Summary of National Environmental Enforcement and Inspection Data from the RMCEI, 2019 - 2021.

<b>Total Number</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Licences/Permits/Certificates	14,800	15,000	16,400
Inspections Undertaken	188,000	180,600	205,100
Environmental Complaints Received	78,000	85,600	80,800
Enforcement Actions Taken	22,900	18,900	20,880
Prosecution Actions Initiated	520	445	630
<b>Waste</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Waste & Litter Complaints Received	72,400	78,400	72,800
Illegal Dumping Inspections	21,100	24,850	23,510
Multi-agency Inspections	270	170	240
Household Waste Surveys	8,490	8,780	6,340
Commercial Food Waste Inspections	1,480	730	890
C&D Handling Inspections	970	1,490	1,490
Litter Patrols	48,870	54,170	51,100
Waste Collection Permit Inspections	1,900	2,660	3,020
% Completion of Waste Collection Permit Data Verification	60%	81%	85%
Producer Responsibility Initiatives Inspections (WEEE, Batteries, Tyres, ELV, Packaging, Farm Plastic and Plastic Bags)	3,280	2,530	2,450
<b>Water</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Water/Wastewater Complaints Received	2,200	3,200	3,600
WFD Monitoring & Investigations <sup>1</sup>	14,910	13,500	15,190
Water Pollution Incidents/Complaints Investigations	4,150	3,300	4,220
Farm Inspections	4,450	2,730	2,520
Inspections required in Septic Tank National Inspection Plan	1,800	1,500	1,070
Discharge Licences (S4) Inspections	2,370	2,110	2,290
<b>Air</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Air/Odour & Noise Complaints Received	3,400	4,000	4,300
Solid Fuel Regulation Inspections	1,050	790	800
Decorative Paint Regulation Inspections	460	320	520
Petroleum Vapour Regulation Inspections	500	300	390
Solvent Regulation Inspections	130	110	180

<b>Enforcement Actions Initiated</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Waste Enforcement Actions	20,500	16,900	17,900
Water/Wastewater Enforcement Actions	1,500	1,100	1,500
Air Enforcement Actions	570	840	670
Noise Enforcement Actions	280	400	630
PRI Enforcement Actions	10	120	180
<b>Total Enforcement Actions Initiated</b>	<b>22,860</b>	<b>19,360</b>	<b>20,880</b>
<b>Prosecution Actions Initiated</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>
Waste Prosecution Actions <sup>2</sup>	483	383	578
Water/Wastewater Prosecution Actions	26	24	40
Air Prosecution Actions	6	2	8
Noise Prosecution Actions	2	0	2
<b>Total Prosecutions Initiated</b>	<b>517</b>	<b>409</b>	<b>628</b>

<sup>1</sup> This includes the WFD monitoring programme, sampling programme and WFD assessments undertaken by local authorities including investigative assessments such as small stream risk scores or surveys.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include litter prosecution.



## AN GHNÍOMHAIREACTH UM CHAOMHNÚ COMHSHAOIL

Tá an GCC freagrach as an gcomhshaol a chosaint agus a fheabhsú, mar shócmhainn luachmhar do mhuintir na hÉireann. Táimid tiomanta do dhaoine agus don chomhshaol a chosaint ar thionchar díobhálach na radaíochta agus an truaillithe.

### Is féidir obair na Gníomhaireachta a roinnt ina trí phríomhréimse:

**Rialáil:** *Rialáil agus córais chomhlíonta comhshaoil éifeachtacha a chur i bhfeidhm, chun dea-thorthaí comhshaoil a bhaint amach agus díriú orthu siúd nach mbíonn ag cloí leo.*

**Eolas:** *Sonraí, eolas agus measúnú ardchaighdeán, spriocdhírthe agus tráthúil a chur ar fáil i leith an chomhshaoil chun bonn eolais a chur faoin gcinnteoireacht.*

**Abhcóideacht:** *Ag obair le daoine eile ar son timpeallachta glaine, táirgiúla agus dea-chosanta agus ar son cleachtas inbhuanaithe i dtaobh an chomhshaoil.*

### I measc ár gcuid freagrachtaí tá:

#### Ceadúnú

- Gníomhaíochtaí tionscail, dramhaíola agus stórála peitрил ar scála mór;
- Sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbigh;
- Úsáid shrianta agus scaoileadh rialaithe Orgánach Géinmhodhnaithe;
- Foinsí radaíochta ianúcháin;
- Astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa ó thionscal agus ón eitlíocht trí Scéim an AE um Thrádáil Astaíochtaí.

#### Forfheidhmiú Náisiúnta i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil

- Iníúchadh agus cigireacht ar shaoráidí a bhfuil ceadúnas acu ón GCC;
- Cur i bhfeidhm an dea-chleachtais a stiúradh i ngníomhaíochtaí agus i saoráidí rialáilte;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar fhreagrachtaí an údaráis áitiúil as cosaint an chomhshaoil;
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí a rialáil agus údaruithe um sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbigh a fhorfheidhmiú
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí agus phríobháidigh a mheasúnú agus tuairisciú air;
- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar líonra d'eagraíochtaí seirbhíse poiblí chun tacú le gníomhú i gcoinne coireachta comhshaoil;
- An dlí a chur orthu siúd a bhriseann dlí an chomhshaoil agus a dhéanann dochar don chomhshaol.

#### Bainistíocht Dramhaíola agus Ceimiceáin sa Chomhshaol

- Rialacháin dramhaíola a chur i bhfeidhm agus a fhorfheidhmiú lena n-áirítear saincheisteanna forfheidhmithe náisiúnta;
- Staitisticí dramhaíola náisiúnta a ullmhú agus a fhoilsiú chomh maith leis an bPlean Náisiúnta um Bainistíocht Dramhaíola Guaisí;
- An Clár Náisiúnta um Chosc Dramhaíola a fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm;
- Reachtaíocht ar rialú ceimiceáin sa timpeallacht a chur i bhfeidhm agus tuairisciú ar an reachtaíocht sin.

#### Bainistíocht Uisce

- Plé le struchtúir náisiúnta agus réigiúnacha rialachais agus oibriúcháin chun an Chreat-treoir Uisce a chur i bhfeidhm;
- Monatóireacht, measúnú agus tuairisciú a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán aibhneacha, lochanna, uiscí idirchreasa agus cósta, uiscí snámha agus screamhuisce chomh maith le tomhas ar leibhéil uisce agus sreabhadh abhann.

#### Eolaíocht Aeráide & Athrú Aeráide

- Fardail agus réamh-mheastacháin a fhoilsiú um astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa na hÉireann;

- Rúnaíocht a chur ar fáil don Chomhairle Chomhairleach ar Athrú Aeráide agus tacaíocht a thabhairt don Idirphlé Náisiúnta ar Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide;
- Tacú le gníomhaíochtaí forbartha Náisiúnta, AE agus NA um Eolaíocht agus Beartas Aeráide.

#### Monatóireacht & Measúnú ar an gComhshaol

- Córais náisiúnta um monatóireacht an chomhshaoil a cheapadh agus a chur i bhfeidhm: teicneolaíocht, bainistíocht sonraí, anailís agus réamhaisnéisiú;
- Tuairiscí ar Staid Thimpeallacht na hÉireann agus ar Tháscairí a chur ar fáil;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán an aeir agus Treoir an AE i leith Aeir Ghlain don Eoraip a chur i bhfeidhm chomh maith leis an gCoinbhinsiún ar Aerthruaillí Fadraoin Trasteorann, agus an Treoir i leith na Teorann Náisiúnta Astaíochtaí;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na Treorach i leith Torainn Timpeallachta;
- Measúnú a dhéanamh ar thionchar pleananna agus clár beartaithe ar chomhshaol na hÉireann.

#### Taighde agus Forbairt Comhshaoil

- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar ghníomhaíochtaí taighde comhshaoil agus iad a mhaoiniú chun brú a aithint, bonn eolais a chur faoin mbeartas agus réitigh a chur ar fáil;
- Comhoibriú le gníomhaíocht náisiúnta agus AE um thaighde comhshaoil.

#### Cosaint Raideolaíoch

- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar leibhéil radaíochta agus nochtadh an phobail do radaíocht ianúcháin agus do réimsí leictreamaighnéadacha a mheas;
- Cabhrú le pleananna náisiúnta a fhorbairt le haghaidh éigeandálaí ag eascairt as tairmí núicléacha;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar fhorbairtí thar lear a bhaineann le saoráidí núicléacha agus leis an tsábháilteacht raideolaíochta;
- Sainseirbhísí um chosaint ar an radaíocht a sholáthar, nó maoirsiú a dhéanamh ar sholáthar na seirbhísí sin.

#### Treoir, Ardú Feasachta agus Faisnéis Inrochtana

- Tuairisciú, comhairle agus treoir neamhspleách, fianaise-bhunaithe a chur ar fáil don Rialtas, don tionscal agus don phobal ar ábhair maidir le cosaint comhshaoil agus raideolaíoch;
- An nasc idir sláinte agus folláine, an geilleagar agus timpeallacht ghlan a chur chun cinn;
- Feasacht comhshaoil a chur chun cinn lena n-áirítear tacú le hiompraíocht um éifeachtúlacht acmhainní agus aistriú aeráide;
- Tástáil radóin a chur chun cinn i dtithe agus in ionaid oibre agus feabhsúchán a mholadh áit is gá.

#### Comhpháirtíocht agus Líonrú

- Oibriú le gníomhaireachtaí idirnáisiúnta agus náisiúnta, údaráis réigiúnacha agus áitiúla, eagraíochtaí neamhrialtais, comhlachtaí ionadaíochta agus ranna rialtais chun cosaint comhshaoil agus raideolaíoch a chur ar fáil, chomh maith le taighde, comhordú agus cinnteoireacht bunaithe ar an eolaíocht.

#### Bainistíocht agus struchtúr na Gníomhaireachta um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Tá an GCC á bainistiú ag Bord lánaimseartha, ar a bhfuil Ard-Stiúirtheoir agus cúigear Stiúirtheoir. Déantar an obair ar fud cúig cinn d'Oifigí:

- An Oifig um Inbhuanaitheacht i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil
- An Oifig Forfheidhmithe i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaoil
- An Oifig um Fhianaise agus Measúnú
- An Oifig um Chosaint ar Radaíocht agus Monatóireacht Comhshaoil
- An Oifig Cúmarsáide agus Seirbhísí Corparáideacha

Tugann coistí comhairleacha cabhair don Gníomhaireacht agus tagann siad le chéile go rialta le plé a dhéanamh ar ábhair imní agus le comhairle a chur ar an mBord.

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