



# Annual Highlights 2004

Environmental Protection Agency  
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



## EPA Annual Highlights 2004

© Environmental Protection Agency 2005

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this publication, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the author(s) accepts any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned, or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full as a consequence of any person acting or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this publication. All or part of this publication may be reproduced without further permission, provided the source is acknowledged.

**Design** Carton LeVert

**Print** Wood Printcraft

Published by Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland

Environmental Protection Agency  
PO Box 3000  
Johnstown Castle Estate  
Co. Wexford, Ireland

01/05/4000

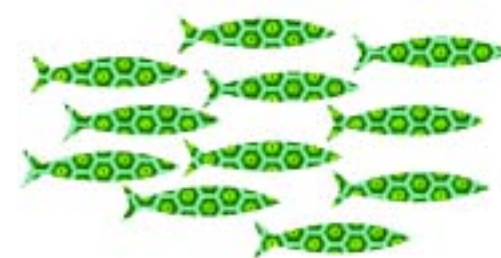


## **Contents**

<b>Director General's Statement</b>	2
<b>Licensing &amp; Guidance</b>	4
<b>Environmental Enforcement</b>	7
<b>Environmental Assessment</b>	9
<b>In 2005...</b>	12
<b>2004 Publications</b>	13

# Introduction

Welcome to the EPA Annual Highlights 2004. This review has been prepared to provide you with information on the key undertakings of the EPA during 2004. Additional information on the EPA's other functions and its financial statements will be available in the Annual Report and Accounts later in the year.





# Director General's Statement

When the Environmental Protection Agency was formed just 11 years ago it employed 60 people. We now have 250 highly skilled professionals, deployed across 10 offices in nine different locations around the country, dedicated to protecting our environment. The scope of EPA activity is far reaching.

2004 was an extremely active year for the EPA and strides were taken to achieve our stated objectives - notably in the enforcement arena. This document offers a snap-shot of the scale of activity engaged in and our key priorities for 2005.

Significant progress was made in environmental enforcement in 2004. In recent years the environment has been abused by those intent on making a quick profit from illegal waste activities. However, with the establishment of the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement, the environment is no longer a 'soft target'. During 2004 the Office made a real impact on illegal activities. I am confident that the Office will escalate enforcement in 2005 resulting in more prosecutions. National and cross-border co-operation between the Office of Environmental Enforcement, An Garda Síochána, the local authorities and the Police Service of Northern Ireland has already resulted in a nationwide crack-down on illegal waste movement and dumping with targeted raids of suspected criminal sites.

During 2004 a number of environmental reports were published - key reports included those on LOCAL AUTHORITY MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES; the AIR QUALITY MONITORING REPORT; the NATIONAL WASTE DATABASE INTERIM REPORT; and the flagship state of the environment report - IRELAND'S ENVIRONMENT 2004. The findings emphasised the considerable stress that our growing economy has placed on the environment.



Ireland's performance in relation to greenhouse gas emissions is far short of our Kyoto target. There is an onus on all sectors of our economy to minimise greenhouse gas emissions. Ireland's National Allocation Plan, managed by the EPA, sets out how carbon dioxide emissions will be allocated. It was one of the first plans to be approved by the European Commission. Emissions Trading commences in early 2005.

Under our €32 million Research & Development programme the EPA is conducting research into areas such as climate change, over-enrichment of waters and biodiversity. As part of this programme the EPA's 'Centre of Excellence' involves 10 research fellows working in collaboration with Ireland's third level academic institutions.

Looking ahead, water quality, air quality and managing waste are the primary environmental challenges facing Ireland. It is imperative that national, social and economic planning includes programmes for sustaining Ireland's key natural resources - namely clean air and water - and for adopting a sustainable approach to waste management.

I would like to thank the staff in the EPA, the Board and the EPA Advisory Committee for their commitment and dedication to the environment.

Mary Kelly

**Mary Kelly**

Director General, EPA, December 2004



# Licensing & Guidance

Under the Office of Licensing and Guidance the EPA licences large scale waste, industrial and other activities. The Office has a wide remit which has been added to in recent times with responsibility for implementing the Emissions Trading Directive, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive and the National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP).

In 2004	IPPC Licences	Waste Licences	Genetically Modified Organism Consents	Volatile Organic Compound Permits
Applications considered	88	86	30	13
Proposed Decisions	39	31	N/A	11
Objections received	32	54	N/A	0
Final Decisions	41	33	26	9

## Licensing

### Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC)

In July 2004 Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licensing was replaced by the new EU Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) regime. This placed an increased emphasis on 'prevention' with the aim of reducing emissions to air, water and land, to reduce waste and to use energy efficiently. New activities now requiring EPA licences include certain intensive agriculture activities, the treatment and processing of milk, the slaughter of cattle, food production, and the production of paper, pulp and board. Thirty seven IPPC licences were issued in 2004, of which nine were issued to the energy sector, eight to the intensive agriculture sector and six to the surface coating sector. Four applications were withdrawn by the applicant.

### Waste Licensing

Under the Waste Management Act 1996 the EPA is also responsible for the licensing of all significant waste recovery and disposal facilities operated by local authorities and private enterprises. During 2004 the EPA licensed 15 landfills, five transfer stations, six hazardous waste disposal facilities, five compost facilities and one soil remediation facility.



One licence for a materials recovery facility was refused. In October 2004, the EPA issued two Proposed Decisions in relation to licence applications for thermal treatment facilities in Ringaskiddy and Duleek. The licensing process places stringent conditions on the operation of facilities to ensure that the potential environmental impact is strictly controlled.

#### **GMO Consents**

The EPA is the Competent Authority in Ireland for the implementation of the GMO Regulations on the contained use, the deliberate release and the transboundary movement of GMOs into the environment. The number of GMO consents granted in 2004 was 26, bringing to 186 the total number of consents for GMO related activities.

#### **Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Permits**

These regulations control volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions resulting from petrol storage and distribution terminals. The EPA granted nine VOC permits in 2004, bringing the total number of VOC permits to 25.

#### **Emissions Trading**

Emissions trading is a financial mechanism designed to control Ireland's emission of greenhouse gases. It applies to over 100 of Ireland's industrial facilities, which account for approximately one third of national emissions.

The EPA is the competent authority for implementing the Emissions Trading Directive. In 2004 the EPA submitted Ireland's first National Allocation Plan to the EU Commission by the deadline of 31 March. The EPA also issued permits to all participating companies and established a trading registry to log all trades.

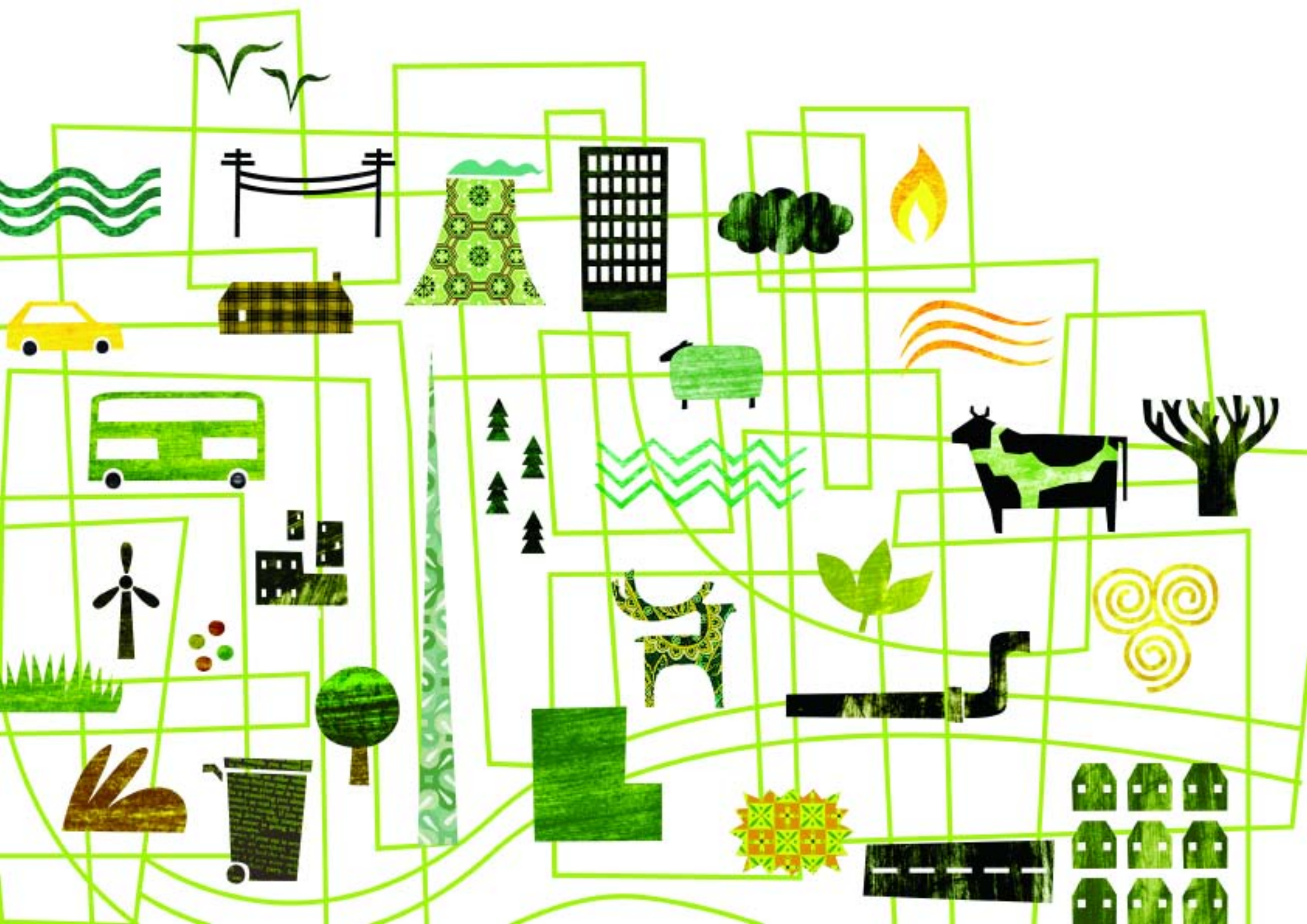
#### **National Waste Prevention Programme (NWPP)**

In March 2004, the National Waste Prevention Programme was established within the EPA. The aim of the Programme is to develop new approaches to waste, with the potential to prevent and minimise the amount of waste arising. Figures from the pharmaceutical industry, for example, show that waste minimisation programmes have reduced waste for disposal by seven per cent since 2001, and hazardous waste by 13 per cent. The National Waste Prevention Programme will promote similar programmes in all areas of society.

#### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

Environmental sustainability is central to the national and regional planning and development process. Under the SEA Directive the EPA will assess strategic development plans and programmes to check that environmental priorities are integrated into responsible planning and policy decisions. Under the new SEA regulations, the EPA is a designated Environmental Authority. Programme makers in a wide variety of sectors must consult the EPA to ensure that developments take full account of the environment.









# Environmental Enforcement

The Office of Environmental Enforcement is dedicated to the implementation and enforcement of environmental legislation in Ireland. It has powers to deliver enhanced enforcement in two ways. It is directly responsible for the enforcement of EPA licences issued to waste, industrial and other activities. It also exercises a supervisory role in relation to the environmental protection activities of local authorities, through auditing their performance, providing advice and guidance, and, in appropriate cases, giving legally binding Directions. The key priority of the Office in 2004, which will continue into 2005, is tackling illegal waste activities in Ireland. The Office of Environmental Enforcement is also a resource for members of the public and environmental complaints can now be made on-line at [www.epa.ie/HotTopics/Lodgingacomplaint/](http://www.epa.ie/HotTopics/Lodgingacomplaint/).

## **Enforcement Network & the illegal movement of waste**

Tackling illegal waste movement and unauthorised disposal of waste is a key priority of the Office of Environmental Enforcement. To drive this forward, the Office has established a National Enforcement Network. The Network harnesses the collective resources, expertise and investigative capacity of all the players that can contribute to the enforcement effort and the stamping out of illegal waste activity in Ireland.

Concerted enforcement actions commenced in late 2004. They involved the Office of Environmental Enforcement, local authorities, An Garda Síochána, The Northern Ireland Environment & Heritage Service and the Police Service of Northern Ireland. These actions targeted unauthorised movement of waste, particularly illegal movements to Northern Ireland.



## Environmental Enforcement contd.

### Licence Enforcement Activities for 2004

Activity	IPPC	Waste
Inspections	525	342
Audits	222	52
Monitoring visits	1027	109
Statutory notices issued	7	1
Notices issued	497	221
Prosecutions instigated	14	8

In 2004, complaints made to the EPA in relation to IPPC facilities and waste facilities numbered 711 and 366 respectively. 81 per cent of IPPC facilities and 68 per cent of waste facilities received no complaints in 2004. Audits of IPPC and waste facilities were up 51 per cent on 2003, inspections were up 1 per cent on 2003 and non-compliance notices served were up 10 per cent on 2003 figures.

### Public Authority Enforcement Activities for 2004

Audits	50
Investigations Conducted	281
Advice and Recommendations Notices	26
Directions Served	2

In 2004, 50 audits of local authorities were carried out on waste water and drinking water treatment plants. 281 investigations were carried out on foot of 461 complaints made to the EPA in relation to activities that were the responsibility of local authorities. 42 per cent of these complaints related to waste issues with the remainder relating mainly to water quality, waste water treatment, drinking water, odour, noise and planning. As a result of these investigations, 26 advice and recommendation notices were issued and two binding Directions were served. Both Directions were in relation to waste management.

### Legal Matters

In 2004 the EPA brought 17 cases before the District Courts. Convictions were handed down in 16 of these cases. The majority of the charges related to persistent breaches of emission limit values, failure to install infrastructure and failure to submit information.

Legal action led to significant investment (ranging between €250,000 and €900,000) in on-site infrastructure and abatement measures such as improved wastewater treatment plants and the installation of bioscrubbers. Commitments were also given for improved site management practices including waste management.

A further 22 cases were instigated by the Office of Environmental Enforcement in 2004. Eleven cases have court hearing dates scheduled in the first quarter of 2005.



# Environmental Assessment

**The Office of Environmental Assessment monitors water and air quality as well as emissions to the environment. Its five laboratories – in Dublin, Cork, Kilkenny, Castlebar and Monaghan – provide a sampling and analysis service to the EPA and to several local authorities. The Office co-ordinates an extensive environmental research programme, produces regular reports on environmental quality, and is Ireland's National Focal Point for the European Environment Agency.**

## **Laboratory Services**

In 2004, approximately 23,500 samples – taken from rivers, lakes, groundwaters, tidal waters, leachates, effluents and air emissions – were analysed for a range of chemical and, where appropriate, microbiological parameters. This involved in total over 250,000 analytical measurements. The work was undertaken as part of regional and national monitoring programmes and to inform environmental enforcement.

## **Air monitoring**

The Air Quality Monitoring Report 2002 was published and showed that air quality was fully compliant with existing air quality standards. Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and nitrogen oxides, which come mainly from traffic fumes, will be the only potentially problematic parameters with regard to meeting the stringent new Directives. The EPA will give high priority to these pollutants in its ongoing monitoring programmes as part of environmental enforcement activities.

A significant advance in the provision of environmental data to the public was initiated in 2004 with the provision of direct real-time access to air quality monitoring data from 13 monitoring stations across Ireland (see [www.epa.ie/OurEnvironment/Air/AccessMaps](http://www.epa.ie/OurEnvironment/Air/AccessMaps)).

## **Hydrometric Programme**

The hydrometric programme collects information on the levels, volumes and flows from a network of 1500 stations on rivers, lakes and groundwaters. Summary statistics were published on the EPA web site and more detailed information was provided as essential input to flood management, pollution prevention, roads design and water resources management in various parts of the country.

## **Water Framework Directive**

In June the EPA advised the European Commission on the competent authorities and the River Basin Districts (RBDs) identified for Ireland. A report on the characteristics of the RBDs is currently being assessed by the EPA and will be submitted to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the European Commission in March 2005.



# Environmental Assessment contd.

## Bathing Water Quality

The annual report on the quality of bathing waters for 2003 showed that in general bathing water quality in Ireland remained very good. The minimum, mandatory standards were met in 97 per cent - and the stricter, guideline values in 85 per cent - of the 131 bathing sites in Ireland. The national bathing water quality map for 2003 can be viewed at [www.epa.ie/OurEnvironment/Water/BathingWater](http://www.epa.ie/OurEnvironment/Water/BathingWater).

## Biological Quality Monitoring of Rivers

The EPA continued its river biological monitoring programme, which on a three-year cycle covers 3,200 sampling stations along 13,200 km of river channel. A report was published giving the results for 2003 and work was progressed on a major three-year review to be published in 2005.

## Environmental Research

The EPA continued to fund new research projects ranging from desk studies to large scale multi-annual projects. Research funding of €5.25 million was committed in 2004 in the areas of air quality, biodiversity, cleaner production, climate change, transport, socio-economics, water quality and waste and resource management. A major series of projects on sustainable development was also initiated.

Under the second phase of the Cleaner Greener Production Programme the EPA committed €1.88 million of funding in 2004 to assist companies to develop innovative solutions to environmental problems.

## Ireland's Environment 2004

Ireland's environment is in a relatively healthy condition, though serious problems and threats remain. This was the overall finding of the EPA's third state of the environment report IRELAND'S ENVIRONMENT 2004. The primary environmental challenges facing Ireland are:

- \* over-enrichment of waters,
- \* meeting our international commitments on limiting air emissions, and
- \* waste management.

The report recognised that while progress had been achieved on environmental protection in recent years, increased economic activity had placed additional strains on the environment.







## In 2005...

Environmental enforcement will continue to be a priority for the EPA in 2005. In particular, the problem of illegal waste dumping – north and south of the border – will be a top-line target. To this end the EPA will continue to work closely with policing agencies on the island. The EPA will raise the level of detection and investigation to ensure that the perpetrators of illegal waste activity are prosecuted.

The EPA will continue to monitor the performance of local authorities in carrying out their environmental enforcement functions. This will be achieved through the completion of audits, investigation of complaints and the issuing of binding Directions.

The EPA will undertake a major programme of licence review in 2005 to comply with the IPPC Directive. The EPA will hold Oral Hearings on the proposed decisions to licence waste incinerators in Ringaskiddy, Co. Cork and Duleek, Co. Meath and, among other decisions, will deal with the application for the gas cleaning project in North Mayo.

During 2005 the EPA will oversee the implementation of the pilot phase of the Emissions Trading Directive (2005-2007). The final decision on national allocations will be ratified and the international trading registry will go live.

As part of the Water Framework Directive the EPA will prepare the summary characterisation report for the European Commission, on the types of water bodies in Ireland and how they may be affected by pollution and other changes. The EPA will also develop classification systems and monitoring programmes for water bodies.

The EPA will undertake a number of educational initiatives to encourage thought, debate and action on Ireland's environment in 2005.

- ★ At the ESAT BT Young Scientist Exhibition the EPA will again sponsor an award for the best environmental project. We will also display a new exhibition on climate change "Ireland After Tomorrow".
- ★ The third ECO EYE series will be aired on RTE 1 from January 2005. Each of the seven programmes is divided into four strands – lifestyle, habitats/heritage; community and environment & health.
- ★ The annual EPA School's Environmental Research Project will be concluded in Galway in late spring.
- ★ A new Leaving Certificate resource pack will be made available to teachers across the country.

# 2004 Publications

## Air

Air Quality Monitoring -  
Annual Report 2002 €20

## State of the Environment

Ireland's Environment 2004 €20

Ireland's Environment 2004 - Offprint:  
Chapter 19: Overview and Future Agenda  
Free

## Landfill

Landfill Manuals - Landfill Monitoring -  
2nd Edition €20

## Waste

National Waste Database -  
Interim Report, 2002 ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie))  
web only

National Waste Database -  
Interim Report, 2003 ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie))  
web only

Landspreading of Organic Waste -  
Guidance on Groundwater Vulnerability  
Assessment of Land €7

## To order

All reports are easily downloadable from the publications section of the EPA website at [www.epa.ie/NewsCentre/reportsPublications/](http://www.epa.ie/NewsCentre/reportsPublications/)

Please write to Publications' Sales, EPA Regional Inspectorate, McCumiskey House, Richview, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14, Ireland or phone 00353 1 2680100. State your name, address and the title of the publications you require. Publications can be paid for in euro by cheque/postal order. Credit cards accepted also.

## Water

The Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland -  
A Report for the year 2002 €26

The Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland -  
A Report for the year 2003 €26

The Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland -  
2002 - CD ROM (+Summary Statistics) €7

The Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland -  
2003 - CD ROM (+summary statistics) €7

The Quality of Bathing Water in Ireland  
2003 ([www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)) web only

European Communities (Drinking Water)  
Regulations, 2000 (SI 439 of 2000) -  
A Handbook on Implementation for  
Sanitary Authorities €10

Phosphorus Regulations National  
Implementation Report, 2003 €20

## Wastewater

Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland  
- A report for the Years 2000/2001 €20

Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland  
- A report for the Years 2002/2003 €20

## Incident & Special Reports

Final Report of Expert Group for  
Silvermines, Co. Tipperary:  
Lead and Other relevant Metals €10

## General

EPA Annual Report and Accounts 2003  
Free

Quality Customer Service - Action Plan  
2003-2006 Free

epaNews September 2004 Free

## Environmental Research Reports

Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment  
(WEEE) Collection Trials in Ireland -  
Synthesis Report Free

Carbon Taxes: Which Households gain or  
lose? - Final Report €7

The Macro-Economic Effects of using  
Fiscal Instruments to reduce Greenhouse  
Gas Emissions - Final Report €7

Assessment & Development of a Waste  
Prevention Framework for Ireland -  
Synthesis Report Free

PO Box 3000  
Johnstown Castle Estate  
County Wexford, Ireland  
T +353 53 60600  
F +353 53 60699  
E [info@epa.ie](mailto:info@epa.ie)

[www.epa.ie](http://www.epa.ie)

Regional Inspectorate  
McCumiskey House  
Richview, Clonskeagh Road  
Dublin 14  
T +353 1 268 0100  
F +353 1 268 0199

Regional Inspectorate  
Inniscarra, County Cork  
T +353 21 487 5540  
F +353 21 487 5545

Regional Inspectorate  
Butts Green, Kilkenny  
T +353 56 7722 329  
F +353 56 7765 085

Regional Inspectorate  
John Moore Road, Castlebar  
County Mayo  
T +353 94 902 1588  
F +353 94 902 1934

Regional Inspectorate  
The Glen, Monaghan  
T +353 47 77600  
F +353 47 84987

Printed on Munken Lynx, an Elementary  
Chlorine Free (ECF) paper carrying the  
Swan, the Nordic eco-label.

