

epaNews

The newsletter of the Environmental Protection Agency

Air quality in Ireland in 2008

In September the EPA published the report *Air Quality in Ireland 2008 – Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality*. This annual report shows levels of air pollutants in ambient air. Results in the report were based on monitoring data from 30 stations, producing hourly or daily data as required by the EU Directives on air quality. The pollutants measured were:

- Nitrogen dioxide and oxides of nitrogen
- Ozone
- Sulphur dioxide
- Particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})
- Lead, arsenic, cadmium, nickel and mercury
- Carbon monoxide
- Benzene

In 2008, air quality in Ireland was generally good throughout the country and complied with the air quality standards in force across Europe for all pollutants. Ireland is one of the only EU Member States not to have exceeded any air quality limit value. This is due to our prevailing westerly airflow and lack of large cities and heavy industry.

The pollutants of most concern in Ireland are nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM₁₀), both of which are harmful to health.

Levels of *nitrogen dioxide* have been stable for the past five years and are low outside urban areas. One of the principle sources of nitrogen dioxide is traffic exhaust emissions causing the highest levels to occur in Dublin and Cork city centres, where they remain close to the limit value.

The main sources of PM₁₀ are the combustion of solid fuels and road traffic. The highest levels of PM₁₀ in Ireland were measured in cities and smaller towns. This is most probably due to traffic density in cities and use of non-smokeless fuel in smaller towns. A decreasing trend in urban levels of PM₁₀ has emerged in the last five years which may be attributed

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to decreases in emissions from traffic in cities due to cleaner vehicles. Levels in non-urban areas have remained stable over the last five years.

Ozone levels were low in comparison to mainland Europe. Transboundary sources and meteorological conditions have a strong influence on ozone levels in Ireland. Levels are higher in the west of the country than in the east and higher in rural areas than in urban areas.

The 2008 report contains, for the first time, results from monitoring of arsenic, cadmium, nickel and mercury in ambient air. Levels of these four metals were below their target values. The other parameters measured, sulphur dioxide, lead, carbon monoxide and benzene, were all at levels well below their limit values in 2008.



Air Quality Monitoring Stations in 2008

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Director General's Statement



Welcome to the Winter edition of EPANews. This time two years ago the world was gearing up for a major conference on climate change in Bali. At Bali, there was an unprecedented level of agreement amongst scientists, policy makers and politicians that climate change was man made, and one of the greatest challenges facing humanity.

Most Europeans also share this sentiment. According to Eurobarometer surveys carried out in 2008 and 2009, two thirds of Europeans feel that climate change is a very serious problem that has not been exaggerated. Climate change is viewed by Europeans as one of the three biggest problems facing humanity; the other two being poverty and the global economic downturn.

The most recent global summit on climate change took place in Copenhagen from the 7th to the 18th of December. The main aim of the Copenhagen conference was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol, the first international agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The main issues for a Copenhagen deal were:

- ambitious emission reduction targets for developed countries;
- nationally appropriate mitigation actions of developing countries;
- scaling up financial and technological support for both adaptation and mitigation and
- an effective institutional framework with governance structures that address the needs of developing countries.

The deal was also expected to include actions to reduce emissions from deforestation in developing countries and international aviation and transport, neither of which are currently covered by the Kyoto Protocol.

Experts from the EPA's climate change unit formed part of the Irish delegation and provided technical support to the political delegations involved in negotiating a deal.

Climate change is a major challenge for Ireland as well. Ireland, along with the rest of Europe, has already signed up to a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, growing to a 30% cut if other developed nations such as the United States sign up at Copenhagen. So, Europe is leading the way in setting ambitious targets for climate change and Ireland is playing its part, but has major challenges ahead.

With this in mind, the EPA recently published a report called *A Summary of the State of Knowledge of Climate Change Impacts in Ireland*. This report is an assessment of the current knowledge on climate change and expected impacts for

Ireland. It provides a strategic assessment of possible impacts for key economic and social sectors in Ireland and identifies a number of adaptation options and gaps in knowledge. The report looks at the likely impacts of temperature rises, wetter winters and warmer seas on areas as diverse as agriculture, fishing, disease control and infrastructural networks like roads, electricity and telecommunications. It pulls together information from a number of studies funded by the EPA through its research programmes and is essential reading for all of you with an interest in the future of this country.



Even in these straightened economic times, we need to continue to invest in climate change research to provide the necessary scientific understanding required to make the right decisions for the future.

The EPA also continued its occasional lecture series on climate change with two talks held in the Mansion House in the run up to Copenhagen. Further lectures will be arranged following Copenhagen.

Air quality in Ireland in 2008 *continued from pg 1*

All of these lectures are available to view on our web-site at <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/videos/climate/> as we want to make them available to as wide a national and international audience as possible.

As 2009 draws to an end we are starting to plan for the environmental challenges facing us in 2010. We are planning against the backdrop of extraordinarily difficult economic and social times for Ireland. Against this backdrop we still have to face up to and deal with climate change; our waters and habitats still need to be restored where damaged, and protected where in good condition; all sectors of the economy still need to reduce their impact on the environment and we still have to comply with the ever-growing number of environmental laws and agreements. These are all challenges that we must continue to face and deal with despite the worsening economic situation we find ourselves in.

I am hopeful, though, that we can meet these challenges and that there are also significant economic opportunities for Ireland in becoming a low carbon and greener economy. As I have said before and will be saying again, Ireland's environment is a key strategic asset for the country and we must protect, manage and invest in it to secure a healthy society and a strong economy into the future.

The EPA has an important role to play in ensuring that the protection and improvement of Ireland's environment remains centre stage and we are planning to continue to play this role in 2010 and the difficult years ahead.

Mary Kelly

**Dr. Mary Kelly,
Director General,
Environmental Protection Agency**



Air quality monitoring stations are located throughout the country, with more located in bigger towns and cities than in less densely populated areas. Local authorities operate the monitoring networks in Dublin and Cork cities, while the EPA operates the monitors in the rest of the country (with exceptions) and mobile monitoring stations. New monitoring locations in 2008 included Blanchardstown, Clonskeagh, Dún Laoghaire, Knocklyon and Tallaght in Dublin and Letterkenny in County Donegal.



The *Air Quality in Ireland 2008 – Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality* report, available in both English and Irish, can be downloaded from the EPA website at <http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/air/quality/>.

Real-time air quality information is available on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.ie/whatwedo/monitoring/air/data>

The website provides direct access to current levels of pollutants from relevant air quality monitoring stations across Ireland.

On-Site Wastewater Treatment



The 2006 census indicated that around 40% of the population of Ireland lived outside of the main cities and towns. Unlike other more urbanised European countries, around a third of the population of Ireland lives in the open countryside in individual dwellings not connected to a public sewer. The wastewater from such dwellings is treated at, or near, the dwelling by treatment systems often called on-site systems.

The EPA recently published a *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)* in relation to on-site systems for protection of our environment and specifically drinking water.

It is important that homeowners have the correct on-site system for their home. If not, problems can arise in the future. For example, if wastewater is not absorbed by the soil it can form stagnant pools on the ground.

In such failures, humans can come in contact with the wastewater and be exposed to pathogens, which can lead to potential health hazard. Inadequately treated wastewater may lead to contamination of our groundwaters and surface waters, which in many areas are used as sources of drinking water. It is essential therefore that these on-site systems are properly designed, operated and maintained. It is in the best interest of the environment and the homeowner to install an appropriate system. All new on-site systems should comply with the *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)*.

Three important aspects relating to wastewater treatment for homeowners are:

- **Site Suitability Assessment**

A site suitability assessment is an assessment of site conditions in relation to the suitability for wastewater treatment and disposal. All sites for proposed single houses in un-sewered rural areas will require a site suitability assessment. This needs to be undertaken by a competent person in accordance with the EPA *Code of Practice* (Consult with the local authority for information on competent persons). A full site suitability assessment report is required to be submitted as part of an application for planning permission and in many cases where an extension is applied.

- **Selecting a Wastewater Treatment System**

Site conditions, as determined by the site suitability assessment, govern the selection of wastewater treatment systems and are site specific. Some sites may not be suitable for wastewater disposal, regardless of the type of system used. Unsuitable sites lead to pollution of surface and ground water and/or pose an unacceptable risk to public health. Any selected system should comply with the *EPA Code of Practice*.

- **Installation and Maintenance of Wastewater Treatment Systems**

The homeowner is legally responsible for the operation of their wastewater treatment system. Correct installation and maintenance are critical in ensuring correct operation of all wastewater treatment systems. The homeowner is advised to obtain relevant documentation from the installer/manufacture in relation to installation, maintenance and costs. Documentation should be retained for future reference as certification of installation may be required in planning conditions. It is also essential that maintenance contracts be renewed.

A copy of the *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)* may be downloaded from the EPA's website at www.epa.ie/downloads/advice/water/wastewater/ or hard copies are available from our Publications Office, McCumiskey House, Richview, Dublin 14 on 01-2680100.

Prioritising the environment in difficult economic times

The annual *Environment Ireland 2009* conference was held in September, in the Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin.

Focusing on the priorities and key issues for the environment, the three themes of the 2009 conference were:

- Towards a smart green economy;
- Adapting to a changing climate and
- Investing in Ireland's environmental infrastructure.

Discussions focused on continued investment in Ireland's environment, despite being in an economic downturn. Speakers advised that we must keep investing if we are to maintain and improve this resource for current and future generations.



Irish Times journalist Harry McGee speaks to Mr John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government at the Environment Ireland conference.

This will help Ireland to build a smart, green and resilient economy to create new jobs and technologies, overcome energy security constraints and be sustainable, both economically and environmentally. It was advised that fundamental changes will be required to ensure that economic recovery, when it comes, is low carbon and sustainable. Significant economic opportunities for Ireland in becoming a low-carbon and greener economy were also highlighted.



Mary Kelly addresses the delegates at the 2009 Environment Ireland conference.

The conference speakers included a mix of leading national and international speakers. Lars Westermark, Head of the Climate Policy Unit at the Swedish EPA gave delegates an update on what his organisation is doing to move towards a low-carbon Sweden. Michael Stahl, Director in the Office of International Affairs with the US Environmental Protection Agency briefed delegates on the US model for providing effective environmental protection and enforcement and Andre Jol from the European Environment Agency examined the impact of Europe's changing climate.

This was the fifth *Environment Ireland* conference, Ireland's largest conference on environmental policy and management. It is organised by bmf conferences in association with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The conference brings together, at the highest level, delegates representing all the major sectors with an interest in Ireland's environment, including many from Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Alongside the visiting experts, the programme also features many of the key players in the local environment sector.

IPPC Licences issued from August 2009 to October 2009

Intensive Agriculture

Bramblemore Limited
Shanbally, Crannagh, Ballyporeen,
County Tipperary
P0703-02

Mr John Moyna
Quiglough, Ballinode,
County Monaghan
P0857-01

Mr Gerard Clerkin
Agheracalkill, Scotstown,
County Monaghan
P0858-01

Mr Bernard Treanor
Doogary, Tydavnet, County Monaghan
P0861-01

Mr James McGuirk
Tetoppa, Dunraymond, County Monaghan
P0862-01

Mr Leslie Rowntree
Ballycartlan, Magheracloone,
County Monaghan
P0866-01

Mr Michael Connolly
Gortnawinney, Clones, County Monaghan
P0867-01

Glenbeg Poultry Ltd
Glenbeg, Carrickroe, County Monaghan
P0878-01

Mr Edmund Morrissey
Coolnacreena, Cappaquin, Co Waterford
P0885-01

Mr Kevin Ahern
Sheepwalk, Fermoy, County Cork
P0891-01

Food and Drink

Newmarket Co-Operative Creameries Ltd
Scarteen Lower, Newmarket, Co Cork
P0793-01

Martin Jennings Wholesale Limited
Knockfereen, Neale Road, Ballinrobe,
County Mayo
P0859-01

Energy

Quinn Energy (Ballakelly) Limited
Toomes, County Louth
P0863-01



STRIVE

Environmental Protection Agency Research
Programme 2007 - 2013



EPA STRIVE News

The Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) programme

EPA INVITED TO PRESENT KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO OECD GLOBAL INNOVATION FORUM IN PARIS

Dr. Micheál Lehane, Programme Manager, EPA Office of Environmental Assessment, was invited to address the OECD's Global Forum event that took place in Paris in November. He presented the report *Innovation for a Green Economy - Environment and Technology: A win-win story* which showcased the successful investment in environmental technologies in Ireland, through the EPA Science, Technology, Research and Innovation (EPA STRIVE) research programme. He explained how this investment in research contributes to wider economic benefits for the country, while laying the foundation for the green economy in Ireland. This was a unique opportunity to share the stage with global experts in the field and put Ireland on the map as a serious player in environmental research and innovation.

The report, one of the only such reports in the world at present, details some exciting projects including the development of biodegradable plastic, energy from sewage treatment and an ecological high-performance computer. It can be downloaded from the EPA website at www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/tech/.

EPA AND MARINE INSTITUTE (MI) STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The EPA and Marine Institute entered a strategic partnership agreement in July 2005 in the broad areas of Environmental Technologies and Water-Quality Monitoring in support of the Water Framework Directive implementation. The aim was to catalyse an innovative programme of environmental technology research to underpin the development of the Smart Green Economy.

An initial core suite of three-year research projects was funded with the objective of forming a consortium of national capabilities to address market opportunities associated with marine and environmental technology development. The three projects funded were:

- Development of a Novel Environmental Monitoring System - D Papkovsky (UCC);
- SmartCoast Project - Smart Water Quality Monitoring System - F Regan (DCU);
- Demonstration of a Miniaturised Multi-Channel Cytometry System and Its Suitability for Autonomous Deployment B Fogarty (UCC).

The reports have recently been published and present some exciting results in terms of the quality of the research, and the expertise and capability developed from the agencies' shared investment.

In addition, as the projects evolved, the ability to test and demonstrate prototype and pre-operational environmental sensors and communications technology in the field became apparent. A pilot project (SmartBay) emerged as a response to this and was developed jointly by the EPA and the MI under the initial collaborative agreement.

In the current economic climate, cooperation between research funders is more important than ever, to maximise the impact and benefits from investments in research. The partnership approach adopted by the EPA and the MI in relation to the research presented in this report is an excellent example of such cooperation and is a vital support in the development of Ireland's smart green economy. This cooperation has led not only to the development of critical national research capacities and capabilities, but will also help position Ireland as a leader in developing innovative technological solutions for the environmental and marine areas and to take advantage of one of the fastest growing markets in Europe.

STRIVE

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EPA STRIVE News

The Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) programme

URBAN COMPOSTING REPORT

From 2006 to 2008 an organic waste composting project was established within an urban apartment development in Ballymun, Dublin. In-vessel composting technology was employed to process household organic waste and the compost produced was analysed to confirm chemical, physical and nutrient composition. The compost produced was used in horticultural trials to quantify benefits and highlight potential applications at the Botanic Gardens in Dublin. An effective education programme to encourage participation was developed. Marketing opportunities for local compost use were also assessed and defined.

The study reviewed the potential contribution of community composting initiatives towards achieving landfill diversion targets required under the Landfill Directive. The study assessed all aspects of community composting projects from waste collection and processing to compost production, quality assurance, utilisation, marketing, education and awareness.

The report, released during European Week for Waste Reduction in November, is available from the EPA website at www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/waste/.

RECENT CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

Development of a national Cryptosporidium monitoring protocol

The EPA and Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have recently invited research proposals for work to initiate the development of a national Cryptosporidium monitoring protocol. It is expected that an award will be made before the end of 2009.

EPA STRIVE EVENTS

Annual Researchers Seminar

The 7th annual EPA Doctoral and Post-doc Seminar was held on 12th & 13th November in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin. With 150 people in attendance over the two days, representing 16 universities and colleges, the seminar has become a highlight in the research calendar.

The theme for 2009, *Today's Environmental research - Tomorrow's Environmental Protection* was introduced by Dr. Mary Kelly, who opened the two-day event by highlighting the vital role of research in developing novel techniques and tools for environmental management.

During the *Communicating Science* session, four diverse speakers shared their experiences on the challenges of successfully disseminating scientific data

and research to the most appropriate audience. Contributions from Padraig Murphy (DCU), Peter Mooney (NUI Maynooth), Annette Cahalane (EPA Communications Officer) and Sean Duke (Science Spin Magazine) made the discussion both fascinating and invaluable to new and experienced researchers alike.

With 32 researchers presenting their work, complimented by 40 poster presentations, the high standard set in previous years was maintained. The award for Best Speaker (Post-doc) was presented to Nessa O'Connor (UCD) for her talk on ecosystem dynamics in a marine nature reserve, while an impressive oration in the 'Technologies for Environmental Protection' parallel by Mary Garvey (AIT) earned her the prize for Best Speaker (PhD). Mark Jessop (UCC) was the winner in the Best Poster category.



Dr. Micheal Lehane presents the prize for Best Speaker (PhD) to Mary Garvey, Athlone Institute of Technology

STRIVE

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EPA STRIVE News

The Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) programme

FP7-ENVIRONMENT NATIONAL INFORMATION DAY

The EPA held a National Environment Information Day in Dublin on the 9th October 2009. With over 100 attendees, the event placed a strong emphasis on networking between national and European researchers from academia and industry. It showcased Irish research projects that have successfully leveraged EU FP7 funding to date. In addition, key experts from the European Commission, European Environment Agency and various industrial and academic institutions highlighted knowledge gaps and emerging issues across various environmental areas.

Transnational cooperation, such as that promoted by the EU FP7 programme brings together resources, disciplines and scientific excellence.

The synergy created unlocks new methods of protecting our environment and ensuring sustainable natural resources.

In the first two years of FP7, 18 research participants from Ireland have been successful in winning funding in excess of €4.25 million under the environmental thematic area in this major EU research funding programme. Enterprise Ireland has scaled up the national resources to support Irish researchers and companies to participate in FP7 with dedicated specialists from a number of agencies including the EPA.

More information on this event is available on the EPA website: <http://www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/research/europeanfunding/fp7/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

BioChange - Final meeting and workshop
Thursday, January 7th 2010. Jonathan Swift lecture theatre, Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin 2.

To register email Louise Scally:
lscally@biodiversityresearch.ie

BioChange is a large scale, integrative and multi-disciplinary research framework designed to support national and local biodiversity policy in Ireland. To mark the end of the project and disseminate the research recommendations a final meeting and workshop will be held. The workshops aim to examine how the information obtained through the *BioChange* project can be used to inform policy, guide legislation and examine the additional research needs in these areas.

ENVIRON 2010 CONFERENCE

Limerick Institute of Technology, in collaboration with the Environmental Science Association of Ireland (ESAI), will host the 20th Irish Environmental Researchers' Colloquium - **ENVIRON 2010** – from 17th to 19th February.

The ENVIRON colloquium is Ireland's largest annual environmental conference which aims to link environmental researchers with important environmental issues and concerns. Its principal objective is to nurture and promote environmental research and associated innovative technologies. Two workshops



FP7-Environment National Information Day, 09/10/09, Dublin: Alice Wemaere, Brian Donlon, Mary Kelly, Micheal Lehane (EPA) & Liam Brown (Enterprise Ireland) (Left to Right)

STRIVE

Environmental Protection Agency Research
Programme 2007 - 2013



EPA STRIVE News

The Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for the Environment (STRIVE) programme

(free to delegates) will be held during the colloquium, covering the topics of:

- Wastewater Treatment Plants (The Drivers, Practicalities and New Technologies) and
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in Environmental Management.

Download information on the conference at: www.esaiweb.org/documents/conferences/2010_environ/environ_2010_flyer.pdf.

To register: www.esaiweb.org/esai_conferences.php

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT



**Framework Programme 7:
Launch of the Online Catalogue of Irish
Expertise in Environmental Research**
The new version of the Online Catalogue of Irish Expertise in Environmental Research was launched in September and is available online at: <http://erc.epa.ie/fp7catalogue>.

The catalogue provides a fully interactive and searchable tool designed to help you find partners in your R&D activities and

disseminate your profile among your European colleagues. With over 130 researchers profiles, the catalogue has already registered over 4,000 hits since its launch. This online database is provided to support researchers and enterprises in establishing and strengthening international co-operations for research and technological development. Its main objective is to provide a useful tool for finding appropriate partners for your R&D activities.



FP7 Online Catalogue - Map of Europe illustrating Search on the Catalogue (16/11/09)

SKEP

SKEP is a partnership of 17 government ministries and agencies, from 13 European countries, responsible for funding environmental research. The initiative aims to improve the co-ordination of environmental research in Europe. Following the success of the SKEP ERA-NET, we have now developed into a self-funded network of Environmental Ministries and Agencies.

Under the recent SKEP call for proposals in the area of regulation for emerging technologies, two projects grants were awarded. One of the projects, nanoREACH, includes an Irish partner (Prof Kenneth Dawson, UCD). This study will examine the suitability of current REACH procedures for chemical safety assessment of industrial chemicals for the regulation of usage of manufactured nanomaterials.

RESEARCH RESOURCES

The following websites provide additional resources of interest for researchers:

- EPA Research Publications: www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/
- ERC Environmental Research Data Archive website: <http://erc.epa.ie/safer/>
- National Soil Database Archive website: <http://erc.epa.ie/nsdb/>
- Cleaner Greener Production Programme website: www.cleanerproduction.ie
- FP7 website: www.fp7Ireland.com
- Online Catalogue of Irish Expertise in Environmental Research: www.epa.ie/researchandeducation/research/funding/fp7/catalogueofirishexpertise/
- SKEP website: www.skep-era.net/
- ERA-ENVHealth website: www.era-envhealth.eu/



CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH PROGRAMME



THE EPA CLIMATE CHANGE PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

The concept of a public lecture series developed during the set-up of the *Climate Change Research Programme* in 2007. It was believed that, given the importance of reliable information and the need for buy-in for future political decision-making and action, and the need to bring about a change in attitudes and behaviour, it would be appropriate for the EPA to take the lead in ensuring delivery of high quality information on key aspects of climate change.

The EPA *Climate Change Research Programme* planned a series of public lectures in Autumn of 2007 and Spring 2008 on key aspects of Climate Change. These lectures covered the science, the predictions, the impacts, the economic and political consequences, the solutions and the opportunities. The lecture series was underpinned by recognised international experts of high standing, in order to attract a large public audience. Dr. John Bowman skilfully chaired each of these popular lectures.

The series began in the Alexander Hotel back in November 2007. However, as the interest and momentum increased, a larger venue was required and the lecture series moved to The Mansion House for the 2008 series.

Six lectures were held in 2008, with audiences of between 400 and 600. The largest attendance was for lecture seven of the series, presented by Mr. John Gormley



T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, on the topic of Ireland's response to Climate Change.

The *Climate Change Research Programme* Unit conducted an evaluation of the lecture series by way of questionnaire to the attendance database. Over 50% provided feedback. Some interesting findings:

- The majority of audience were aged 25-49, with an average attendance at 3 lectures.
- 85% of the audience were highly educated (degree level).
- The audience consider themselves to be well informed on environmental issues.
- 87% were attracted by the quality of the speakers.
- 94% agreed that the material was interesting.
- 81% agreed that they were stimulated to think about climate change following the lectures.

The lectures, now as an occasional event, continued in 2009 with lectures in October and November. These lectures,

along with the full lecture series, are available as a podcast on the EPA website at www.epa.ie/downloads/videos/.

CIRCLE2 ERA-NET

The EPA has been involved as an observer in the FP-6 ERA Net project entitled **CIRCLE** (Climate Impact Research for a Larger Europe). This project has run from 2005 to 2009.

Climate change is increasingly seen as one of the greatest issues facing the world in the 21st century, and Europe is taking a leading role in responding to its challenges. Whatever the success of mitigating climate change may be, certain impacts are unavoidable. European countries will need to adapt to those impacts, driven by certain vulnerabilities and exposures in the regions of Europe. Their adaptation response must be informed by a coherent body of research and it is CIRCLE's prime objective to contribute to such efforts by aligning national research programmes.

CIRCLE will finish at the end of 2009 and negotiations are ongoing to continue work under an FP-7 funded CIRCLE 2 ERA Net. The EPA will be more actively involved in this ERA Net as it will be a partner involved in specific work packages. The opening conference of CIRCLE 2 may be held in Dublin in early 2010.

The EPA contacts for CIRCLE are David Dodd d.dodd@epa.ie and Margaret Desmond m.desmond@epa.ie

Prosecutions from August 2009 to October 2009

The EPA brought three cases before District Courts during the period August to end of October 2009. A further case was heard in the Circuit Court during the period. This case was originally before the District Court in September 2008, but was refused jurisdiction.

From the four cases, two were taken under the Environmental Protection Agency Acts 1992 to 2007 and two were taken under the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2008.

The EPA initiated these legal actions having detected non-compliances through audits, EPA monitoring, complaints from residents and site investigations.

EPA Prosecutes Nurendale Limited trading as Panda Waste Services

On the 15th September 2009 at Navan District Court, Nurendale Limited, trading as Panda Waste Services, pleaded guilty to a charge brought by the EPA in relation to an offence under the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2008 for a breach of its Waste Licence (Reg. No. W0140-02).

The Company admitted breaching a condition of its licence by accepting a tonnage of waste that exceeded the maximum annual tonnage permitted.

On hearing details of the offences, Judge Fitzpatrick imposed a fine of €500 and awarded EPA costs of €5,897.

This prosecution was taken following an audit carried out by an inspector from the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement on 27th February 2008.

Finsa Forest Products Limited Prosecuted on Indictment

On the 7th April 2009 at Killaloe District Court, Finsa Forest Products Limited signed a plea of guilty to offences under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992, as amended, for breach of its Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) Licence (Reg. No. P0022-02). The case went forward to Clare Circuit Court for sentencing on a signed plea.

The company admitted breaching a condition of its licence by causing or permitting emissions to the atmosphere at Scariff, Co. Clare on six separate occasions between April 2007 and February 2008.

Judge Moran heard details of the offence and on 28th September 2009 imposed a fine of €18,000 and awarded EPA expenses of €4,248.

This prosecution was taken following an investigation undertaken by EPA inspectors. Due to the serious nature of the offences this case was referred to the Director of Public Prosecution for prosecution on indictment.

EPA Prosecutes Rilta Environmental Limited

On the 6th October 2009 Rilta Environmental Limited pleaded guilty to a charge brought by the EPA in relation to an offence under the Waste Management Acts 1996 to 2008 for a breach of its Waste Licence (Reg. No. W0192-02).

The company admitted breaching a condition of its licence by processing aqueous, hydrocarbon and sludge waste at the Hydrocarbon Waste Treatment Centre in a manner other than provided for in

the licence, without the prior agreement of the EPA.

On hearing details of the offences, Judge Coughlan imposed a fine of €1,000 and awarded EPA costs of €3,536 together with legal costs.

This prosecution was taken following site inspections carried out by Inspectors from the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement on 8th and 9th December 2008.

EPA Prosecutes Millipore Ireland B.V.

On the 7th October 2009 at Cork District Court, Millipore Ireland B.V., pleaded guilty to charges brought by the EPA in relation to offences under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, as amended, for a breach of its Integrated Pollution Prevention Control (IPPC) Licence (Reg. No. P0571-02).

The company admitted breaching conditions of its licence by:

- Causing or allowing emissions from the facility, which were of environmental significance and were not specified emissions.
- Altering and changing the site management infrastructure and control with adverse environmental significance without prior notice to or agreement of the EPA.

On hearing details of the offences, Judge Reardon imposed fines of €6,000 and awarded EPA costs of €5,000.

This prosecution was taken following site inspections carried out by Inspectors from the EPA's Office of Environmental Enforcement.

Greening Irish Communities

Last April, the EPA arranged a national conference in Farmleigh House, Phoenix Park, to bring together stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors to discuss Greening Irish Communities. Such was the enthusiasm for the concept that a Green Communities Network has now been established. It is a joint initiative of the EPA, the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and An Taisce.

The network's objective is to radically increase the numbers of people and communities living in a more environmentally sustainable manner. This will bring about real and measurable reductions in environmental impact such as reduced waste production, reduced energy consumption and a reduced carbon footprint for Ireland.

The inaugural meeting of the Greening Irish Communities Initiative was held on 15th October in the Custom House. The EPA is taking the lead in establishing this network, along the same lines as that of the very successful Environmental Enforcement Network.

The Steering Group has taken the first steps towards developing a national certification programme for green communities in Ireland. The programme will integrate initiatives such as:

- Green Schools
- Green Homes
- Green Hotels
- Green Business
- Blue Flag
- Clean Coast
- Tidy Towns and
- Transition Towns

Participants come from across the public, private, non-governmental and voluntary sector. They represent Tidy Towns Committees and organisations as diverse as the Football Association of Ireland, Chambers of Commerce, Eco UNESCO and Sustainable Energy Ireland.

Roscommon became the first de facto *Green Community* in Ireland in August, when several community groups were awarded by the EPA and An Taisce, for their participation in the extended *Green Home* programme. Mr Duncan Stewart, TV presenter and award-winning architect, presented the awards to each group.



The fundamental aim of the *Green Home* programme is to advise and support householders as they save money on their bills and reduce their impact on the



Strokestown Tidy Towns and Community Development Association celebrate their *Green Home* award with Duncan Stewart.

environment. The vision is to develop the *Green Home* programme into a network of organisations and individuals working together towards a common goal. When people work together to create a cleaner environment such activities enhance community spirit.

As part of the programme each of the community groups in Roscommon attended *Green Home* meetings, completed environmental surveys and undertook activity challenges on the themes of waste, water, energy and transport.

Each of the community groups also organised a community 'Action Day' in their local area.



Ballaghaderreen Tidy Towns and Active Retirement Association receive their *Green Home* award.



Ballintober Tidy Towns pictured receiving their *Green Home* award

- The Ballintober Tidy Towns group set up a community composter.
- Croghan Organic Garden and Croghan Tidy Towns hosted an 'Open Day' where people got lots of tips on how to 'grow your own' fruit and vegetables and creative ways to educate children from the local crèche about flora and fauna.
- Frenchpark Tidy Towns and Frenchpark ICA transformed a formerly wild and overgrown plot of land into a thriving community garden and also ran a battery recycling initiative. Following the success of the battery recycling in Frenchpark, this initiative is now set to be rolled out through all primary schools in Ireland in the coming months.
- Keadue Tidy Towns set up a community rainwater harvester.
- Lisacul Ladies Club carried out an energy saving light bulb demonstration and survey to identify where the best value is available. The group also distributed 'Hippo Bags' for toilet cisterns throughout the local community to reduce water usage.
- Strokestown Tidy Towns and Strokestown Community Development Association held a very successful collection day for waste electronic

and electric equipment (WEEE) that yielded 14 tonnes of waste appliances.

- Tarmonbarry Development and Tidy Towns recruited local boat owners to apply for the eco label 'Blue Flag for Boat owners'. This is a pledge made by boat owners to behave in an environmentally responsible manner in all their boating activities.
- Ballaghaderreen Active Retirement Association encouraged local businesses to consider a more 'Green' approach to business, via a Green Business initiative.

Interesting results have emerged from the data collected via the *Green Home* householder surveys in Roscommon. Respondents who completed a 'before and after' survey showed the following improvements:

- 35 per cent more respondents were avoiding buying over packaged goods;
- 12 per cent more were recycling plastic;
- 24 per cent more respondents were investing in insulation;
- the number of people who invested in 'A' rated energy efficient appliances rose by 35 per cent;
- there was a substantial increase in the number of people who buy energy efficient light bulbs, turn appliances off standby mode and only use dishwashers and tumble dryers on full loads.

Roscommon County Council staff, and in particular Suzanne Dempsey, dedicated their time, hard work, energy, and most of all 'local knowledge', and were instrumental to the success of the *Green Home* programme in Roscommon.

Waste Licences issued from August 2009 to October 2009

Compost Facility

Acorn Recycling Limited
Ballybeg Composting Facility,
Ballybeg, Littleton, County Tipperary
W0249-01

Waste Transfer Station

Advanced Environmental Solutions (Ireland) Ltd.
Cappincur Industrial Estate,
Cappincur, Tullamore, County Offaly
W0104-02

Wallace Recycling Ltd

Units 14-17 Mullingar Business Park,
Mullingar, County Westmeath
W0197-02

Soil Recovery Facility

BUCHPA Limited
Kilmartin, Coyne's Cross,
Newcastle, County Wicklow
W0252-01

GMO consents issued from August 2009 to October 2009

Dr Maureen O'Sullivan
The Children's Research Centre
Our Lady's Children's Hospital
Crumlin, Dublin 12
G0329-01

UCD School of Biology &
Environmental Science
Belfield, Dublin 4
G0330-01

Dr Sinead Miggins
Department of Biology
NUI Maynooth, Co Kildare
G0333-01

Department of Zoology,
School of Natural Sciences
Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2
G0334-01

REACH European regulation for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals

REACH is the European regulation for Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals and it entered into force on 01 June 2007 (Regulation EC No. 1907/2006). The REACH Regulation aims to streamline and improve the former chemicals legislative framework in the EU. It places greater responsibility on industry to manage risks that chemicals may pose to human health and the environment, and at the same time enhances the competitiveness of European industry by fostering innovation. It also aims to promote alternative methods for the assessment of hazards of substances and eliminate unnecessary testing, especially on animals.

In principle REACH applies to all chemicals, not just those used in industrial processes, but also household products such as paints and cleaning products and those used in articles such as clothes, furniture and electrical appliances (though some exemptions do apply). REACH has implications for manufacturers, importers, formulators, distributors and users of chemicals as well as those producing and/or importing articles.

Key elements of REACH include:

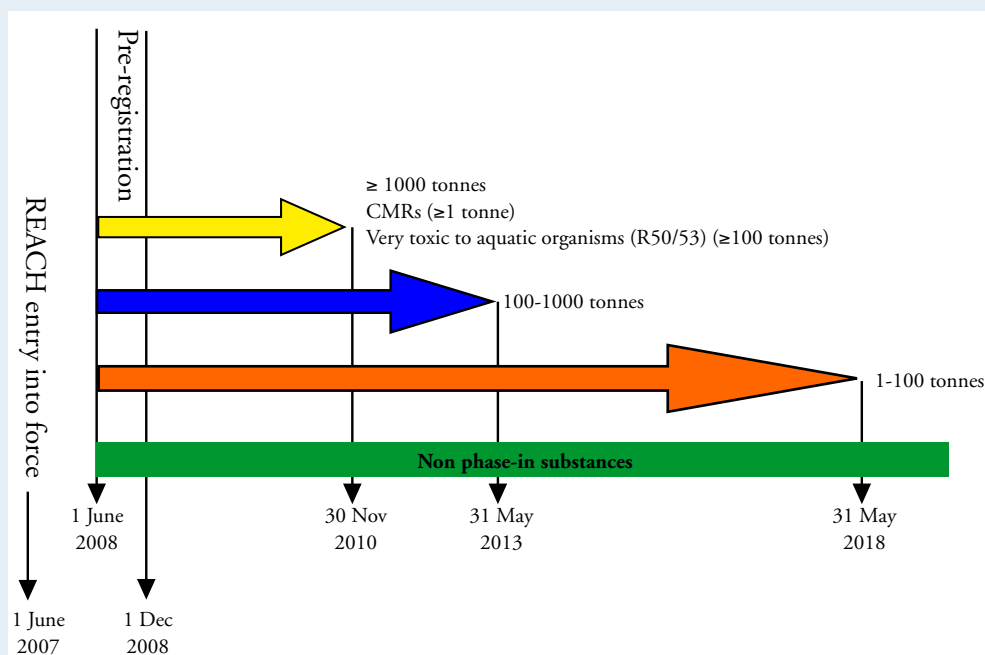
- registration of all substances manufactured in or imported into the EU in quantities of one tonne or more per year, with an initial focus on substances with high volumes and those of greatest concern;
- registration of existing substances on a phased basis and within certain quantity thresholds;

- evaluation of selected substances of concern;
- authorisation requirement for use of substances of very high concern and
- EU wide restrictions on substances posing an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

A new independent European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) has been established in Helsinki to manage the implementation of REACH. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the EPA and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food have been designated as competent authorities for REACH in Ireland under the Chemicals Act 2008 (No. 13 of 2008). This puts in place appropriate national arrangements for implementation of REACH and related legislation.

The EPA is a Competent Authority for the purposes of the REACH Regulation in respect of the prevention of environmental pollution (as defined under the EPA Act, 1992). The EPA may assist the Health and Safety Authority in assessing the adequacy of proposed risk management measures outlined in Chemical Safety Reports. Where the EPA is of the opinion that the risk management measures undertaken by EPA licensed operators are inappropriate, and may lead to environmental pollution, the EPA may take enforcement action.

The EPA may assist the Health and Safety Authority in relation to the evaluation of substances, in the identification of substances of high concern, and regarding the adequacy of controls proposed for substances subject to authorisation.



REACH Registration Deadlines (Source: ECHA, 2008)

Waste Water Discharge Licences issued from August 2009 to October 2009

It is important that authorities that issue environmental permits and licences are aware of substances that are subject to authorisation and restriction under REACH and thereby avoid potential conflicts with REACH obligations. Implementation of the REACH Regulation should result in a significant increase in the amount of information publicly available on chemicals and the ECHA have provided a web portal to facilitate dissemination of this information.

For further information contact the dedicated HSA REACH Helpdesk at 1890 289389 or visit:

- www.echa.europa.eu
- www.hsa.ie/eng/Sectors/Chemicals/REACH/
- www.epa.ie/whatwedo/monitoring/reach/

Fingal County Council

Portrane/Donabate
D0114-01

Kildare County Council

Athy
D0003-01

Balbriggan
D0023-01

Limerick County Council

Doon
D0309-01

Abbeyfeale
D0115-01

Kilfinnane
D0305-01

Limerick
D0013-01

Roscommon County Council

Castlereagh
D0118-01

Monksland
D0042-01

Mayo County Council

Ballindine
D0355-01

Ballycastle
D0356-01

Westmeath County Council

Killucan
D0100-01

Athlone
D0007-01

Wicklow County Council

Rathdrum
D0086-01

Wicklow
D0012-01

Laois County Council

Clonaslee
D0386-01

Carlow County Council

Carlow
D0028-01

Cork County Council Southern Division

North Cobh
D0140-01

Clare County Council

Ennis North
D0048-01

Wexford County Council

Clonroche
D0404-01

Donegal County Council

Ballyshannon
D0128-01

Donegal Town
D0135-01

Splash Website Award



Irish Water Safety presented an award to the EPA at their National Awards Ceremony in Dublin Castle in November. The award, under the category of Community & Social Responsibility, acknowledged the EPA's assistance in promoting water safety best practices through the launch of *Splash*,

the EPA's online bathing water quality website. The award was presented by Mr Michael Finneran, Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Annmarie Tuohy accepted the award on behalf of the EPA.

Meeting of Heads of European Environmental Protection Agencies

The EPA hosted a meeting of the heads of European Environmental Protection Agencies in Dublin in September. This was the 13th meeting of the Network of the Heads of European Environmental Protection Agencies.

This Network is an informal grouping, bringing together the directors of environmental protection agencies and similar bodies across Europe. The network allows for the exchange of views and experiences on issues of common interest to these organisations involved in the practical day-to-day implementation of environmental policy.

Climate change and its ramifications for European environments and economies were the main items on the agenda for the Dublin meeting.

The participants at this meeting are aware that our environment is influenced by massive global and national factors; but it is also affected by the daily actions of each and every European citizen. If we are to bring about real improvement, we need to keep informing and involving citizens and empower them in something that is critical to our shared future.

At the global level, sharing our understanding will benefit policy-makers and citizens. For this purpose, the European Environment Agency and European EPAs work to promote the free exchange of such information, via this Network.



Delegates pictured at the Dublin meeting of European Heads of Environmental Protection Agencies

The following contributed to this issue of the EPA Newsletter:

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