

# **Public Service Agreement 2010-2014 (Croke Park Agreement) Action Plan**

## **Environmental Protection Agency**

### **Summary of Main Progress Achieved in the Twelve Month Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

#### **Summary Status of Actions**

- 64 actions in total. 23 completed, 39 on track; 2 delayed
  - Better HR Management: 18 actions - with 3 completed; 14 on track and 1 delayed.
  - Better Business Processes: 30 actions - with 12 completed; 17 on track and 1 delayed.
  - Delivering for the Citizen: 16 actions - with 8 completed and 8 on track.

#### **Some highlights during the reporting period**

##### **1. Cost saving Initiatives**

- The EPA has achieved the targeted reduction of 10% in core operating costs for 2011. This includes savings of: €126,000 in printing and stationary costs, €75,000 in travel and subsistence costs, €32,000 in light and heat and €107,000 in staff development and training costs. Level of service provided has not been adversely impacted by these savings and we anticipate that these savings will continue into future years, representing a real reduction to the cost-base of the EPA through the introduction of a range of efficiencies including reduced use of printing and increased e-publishing, greater usage of video conferencing, energy efficiency measures and increasing self-sufficiency in staff training and development.
- Irish businesses are continuing to make significant cost savings through participation in and support from the EPA's National Waste Prevention Programme. The Green Hospitality Programme has resulted in savings of approx. €13 million to the hospitality sector over

three years of operation. Additionally, the EPA's Green Business programme has provided mechanisms and supports to Irish businesses to enable savings of up to €6.1 million to be achieved through the implementation of resource efficiency activities. The EPA's Green Healthcare programme has also identified potential for immediate savings of at least €1.6 million in the hospitals it has surveyed (including €1 million through reduction in food waste).

- A Research Programme Report published in June 2011, under the EPA's Environmental Research Programme, provided a basis for reporting a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from landfills of 0.7 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent annually. Estimated savings to the Exchequer are approximately €50 million over the Kyoto Protocol period of 2008-2012.
- Costs charged by the EPA to Local Authorities for waste water discharge certificates of authorisation were reduced significantly through a process of better regulation and more efficient work practices. The overall savings to LAs in 2011 was €377k.
- The work of the EPA in areas such as waste management and water management made a major contribution to Ireland meeting its obligations under various EU Directives thereby reducing the risk of daily fines from the European Court of Justice for cases brought against Ireland by the EU Commission.

## 2. Better HR Management and Inter-Agency Collaboration

- Excellent progress and on-going engagement with FAS graduate scheme and the new JobBridge scheme. 12 people have completed placements with the EPA to date with at least 8 of these moving on to employment outside of the EPA / returning to full-time education. 17 people are currently placed with the EPA with opportunities for a further 17 placements identified.
- The EPA is making good progress in working with other Agencies operating in a similar environment. Initiatives underway with:
  - **local authorities** and other agencies (environmental enforcement network, EDEN);
  - **Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland** (assessment of synergies and report to DECLG);
  - **Ordnance Survey** and other Agencies (developing a cross-agency approach to land-use and land-cover mapping);
  - **Office of Public Works** (to review and reform hydrometrics services in Ireland building on synergies between EPA and OPW);
  - **Forfas, Enterprise Ireland, IDA and SEAI** (a new green enterprise guide for business)
  - **Health Services Executive** (to establish better mechanisms for dealing with environment and health issues and the establishment of a new Environment and Health Advisory Committee).
- The EPA has Memoranda of Understanding signed with 15 other Agencies / Organisations, which provide a formal basis for collaboration in areas of common interest covered by the MoUs.

### **3. Better Business Processes and Delivering for the Citizen**

- The first release of the EPA's new end to end licensing, enforcement, monitoring and assessment system (LEMA) went live in January 2012. The system allows members of the public to make complaints on-line about EPA licensed facilities that are automatically routed to the appropriate business area for follow up. In addition members of the public can log submissions on waste water licence applications on-line. The system also provides for the management of environmental incidents at waste water treatment plants.
- The EPA, working with Local Authorities, has replaced a historical paper based waste data reporting system with an ePortal based system. This will result in significant efficiencies and cost savings for the Waste Industry and for Public Authorities. Waste management companies now have to report only once and not multiple times to different authorities as heretofore. The EPA now collects data for national and EU reporting purposes at one location through the e-portal making reporting easier and less onerous for both local authorities and waste operators.
- The EPA is continuing to expand the EDEN (Environmental Data Exchange Network) to facilitate and streamline environmental reporting by Local Authorities and plans to extend the EDEN system to the Marine Institute.
- The EPA continues to monitor and analyse its communications services to ensure value for money and that efficient customer service is provided. The EPA is continuing to improve access to environmental information through its web-site. The environment in focus section is being continually updated with the most recently published indicator data and a new facility is now available for people to search the map-based information using their address. A new section was added in October 2011 to the EPA web-site (called PRTR) publishing the emissions records of factories, farms, waste water treatment plants, power generators and other regulated industries. These developments are making environmental data more accessible to the public and encouraging public participation in environmental decision making. A review of the web-site was completed in Q1 2012 and plans are under preparation to re-vamp the web-site during 2012/2013.
- The 15 day payment rule required by the Government for the payment of suppliers to the public sector was implemented by the required due date. This resulted in administrative changes within the EPA that have delivered a more efficient payment system for our suppliers.
- The EPA is developing a risk-based approach to inspection and enforcement of on-site waste water systems (including septic tanks) which will lead to a more cost-effective and targeted system that will provide a high level of protection for the environment at least cost to both the State and the citizen. Risk-based enforcement is now applied to all EPA regulatory regimes including industry, waste management, drinking water and waste water treatment.