



National Peer Review Initiative (NPRI) Project - phase III

Online Seminar Preliminary Report

Held on December 20, 2021, 09.30h - 12.30h CET

NPRI: the actual implementation

New experiences and way forward

On Monday December 20, 2021, the online closing seminar of the third phase of the NPRI project was held. The seminar was attended by 23 participants from 11 Countries.

The first and the second phase of the NPRI Project delivered a [basic Methodology document](#), as a guideline to develop Peer Reviews in National Networks of Public Authorities working in the Environmental Protection Field.

The main objective of this seminar was to **illustrate experiences and advantages** in countries that have already implemented NPRI and **give practical information** on the implementation of the NPRI Scheme.

In specific, the illustration of the actual NPRI implementation in four countries was presented: the Netherlands and Italy, which adopted in the past the tool, and Portugal and Romania, newly introducing the methodology with the support of the IMPEL NPRI Project team. The scope of the Peer Review differs among the four countries. For example, Portugal's scope is the revision of permitting procedures in water resources uses, while Romania's is the development of a framework and guideline for cross border waste control.

The seminar made it possible to compare the different NPRI adoption models, that were developed to meet the specific needs of each National Environmental Protection Agency. The common denominator was the desire to converge towards homogenization and improvement through dialogue, comparison, as well exchange of good practices and solutions to solve the problems subject to peer review.

Some of the conclusions of the seminar are briefly reported, and they constitute a "lesson learnt" that will be useful in the further deployment of the NPRI in IMPEL Members.

Flexibility of the NPRI Methodology developed in the IMPEL project

The IMPEL NPRI Methodology should not be considered as a "closed scheme", but as a dynamical collection of the elements that play a role in the local implementation of the methodology. The NPRI schemes implemented by the four Countries, as described in the Seminar, contain common elements, most of which are also described in IMPEL's NPRI first manual. Sharing these prototypes in IMPEL allows broadening the panorama of operational opportunities available to those wishing to implement NPRI in their country. The NPRI project



can be considered also as an “observatory” of the local Peer Review activities with a view to sharing best practices and expertise in NPRI implementations, among IMPEL members.

Implementation of NPRI as voluntary or mandatory initiative

The experiences shared shows that NPRI may be implemented both as a voluntary initiative or as a ruled scheme within a National Network. It depends on the nature of the Network and on the desired level of ‘strength’ in the development of the initiative. In any case, attention must be paid to avoid that the tool could be considered, developed, or even perceived as an audit or control instrument.

Participants in a National/Network Peer Review

In addition, the differences in the participants' schemes in the ‘Peer Review (PR)’ activities were discussed.

When PR is used to improve the Network’s procedures or organization of the work, the main PR actors are the organizations belonging to the Network (“horizontal PR”). External Stakeholders may participate to provide advice when the outcomes of the Peer Reviews could somehow be of interest to these Stakeholders.

When PR aims to improve complex processes involving a multitude of organizations with different roles in the process, the review can advantageously host representatives of these organizations (“vertical PR”). The implementation of such a type of PR initiative results in better synchronization of the organizations involved and the improvement of the effectiveness of the entire line of action.

Obviously, the willingness of the various organizations to meet and discuss freely is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of such a PR initiative; this type requires more effort into preparing the PR and balancing the participants in the initiative.

The experiences shared were interesting examples of the usefulness, flexibility, and effectiveness of the NPRI, which is to be considered a fruitful investment for the IMPEL members.

The project team proposed to the IMPEL General Assembly the continuation of the implementation of the Project for the next three-year period so that more organizations willing to implement NPRI to be supported.

The full report of the meeting will be included in the NPRI Phase III report.

In attach:

- [Meeting Agenda](#)
- Presentations on Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, and Romanian initiatives
 - [1. Intro NPRI Seminar](#)
 - [2. Developments Netherlands NPRI Seminar](#)
 - [3. Developments Italy NPRI Seminar](#)
 - [4. Developments Portugal NPRI Seminar](#)
 - [5. Developments Romania NPRI Seminar](#)
 - [6. Next NPRI Projects ToRs](#)