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# Implementation of the European Union's Action Plan on Environmental Compliance Assurance and Governance

## Project

## Duration

Dec 2017 - Mar 2019

In January 2018 the European Commission adopted an Action Plan to improve compliance with EU environmental rules. Ecologic Institute and its partners support the European Commission in implementing the Action Plan. In particular, the project assists the European Commission in the development of good practice guidance documents on combating environmental crimes, on compliance assurance in rural areas and on handling environmental complaints of citizens as well as with the communication on the Action Plan.

## Background

The European Union has an extensive body of legislation to improve the environment across Member States. It covers all environmental sectors, including water, air, nature, waste, noise, and chemicals. One of the tasks of the [European Commission](#) is to ensure that environmental legislation is implemented correctly.

There are major challenges to implement environmental law and to ensure compliance with environmental rules on the ground. In 2017 the European Commission published its first [Environmental Implementation Review](#) that identified persistent environmental problems such as diffuse water pollution, poor urban air quality, unsatisfactory waste treatment and habitats decline. Weak mechanism for securing compliance and lack of effective governance at national, regional and local level are among the causes of implementation failure.

## Action Plan on Environmental Compliance and Governance

In January 2018, the European Commission adopted a 9-point [Action Plan](#) to enhance compliance with EU environmental law and national rules implementing it. The actions will be implemented in the period 2018-2019 with the help of EU Member States and European networks of environmental agencies, inspectors, auditors, police, prosecutors and judges. The actions for [environmental compliance assurance](#) aim to:

1. Help inspectors and law officers to combine forces
2. Encourage professional training
3. Spread knowledge
4. Help the fight against waste and wildlife crime

5. Better ensure compliance in rural areas
6. Provide technical guidelines for inspections of extractive waste facilities
7. Improve the handling of citizen complaints
8. Develop use of satellites
9. Provide Member States with better feedback on how they are doing

## Scope of the project

Ecologic Institute leads a consortium that supports the European Commission in the implementation of the 9-point Action Plan. It helps prepare good practice guidance documents on strategies for combating environmental crimes and other related breaches, on environmental compliance assurance in rural areas in particular in relation to water and nature legislation, and concerning the handling of environmental complaints and engagement of citizens. Ecologic Institute organises stakeholder workshops to get input and feedback throughout the process. It also supports the Commission with background research and communication on the Action Plan.

## Funding

European Commission, [Directorate-General Environment](#) (DG Environment), International

## Partner

[Ecologic Institute](#), Germany

[Institute for European Environmental Policy, London](#) (IEEP), United Kingdom

[University of Catania](#) (UniCT), Italy

Maastricht University, [Institute for Transnational Legal Research](#) (METRO), Netherlands

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