





TABLE OF CONTENTS

Forward	5
CEO's Report	7
The Environment & Resources Authority Board	9
ERA's first State of the Environment Report for Malta	12
1.0 Environment Permitting	15
1.1 Processing of permits	15
1.2 Legislation on Environmental Permitting	17
1.3 Guidelines on trees	17
1.4 Web applications	18
2.0 Environmental Assessment	19
2.1 Plan-level assessments & strategic follow-ups	19
2.2 Environmental assessment of development proposals	20
3.0 Compliance & Enforcement	22
3.1 Nature Compliance	23
3.2 Facilities Compliance	23
3.3 Waste Compliance	24
4.0 Biodiversity & Water	25
4.1 Biodiversity, Habitats & Ecosystems	25
4.2 Water & Marine Environment	25
4.3 Soil 26	
4.4 Biodiversity Policy Development & Reporting	27
4.5 Management of the Natura 2000 Network & Green Infrastructure	29
4.6 Studies, Research & Sponsorships	30
4.7 Data Management	31
4.8 Consultations	32
4.9 Stakeholders communication	33
4.10 Participation to international, European & national meetings & bodies	33
4.11 Projects	34
5.0 The Air Quality & Waste	35

6.0	National Affairs	36
7.0	International Affairs	38
8.0	Information Resources Office	40
8.1	ERA Viewer	40
8.2	Database Information Resources	41
8.3	Assistance to generate/update spatial data & external data requests	42
8.4	INSPIRE & Copernicus	42
9.0	Corporate Services	44
9.1	Administration	46
9.1.1	Project Implementation – National Funded Projects	46
9.1.2	Project Implementation – EU Funded projects	47
9.1.3	Procurement & Travel Arrangements	47
9.1.4	Support Services & Health & Safety	47
9.1.5	Registry	47
9.2	ICT	48
9.3	Human Resources	49
9.3.1	Recruitment Overview	49
9.3.2	Gender segregation	50
9.3.3	Age Demographics	50
9.3.4	Distribution of Officers within the Authority	51
9.3.5	Qualifications	52
9.4	Finance	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Permits Referred for ERA Board Decision in 2018	16
Table 2: Permits Processed within the Permitting Unit	16
Table 3: Statistics on the various biodiversity related policies & obligations	29
Table 4: Actions & measures carried out in targeted Natura 2000 sites	29
Table 5: Number of ToRs drafted for the procurement & outsourcing of research activities, sponsorships & other studies in 2018	31
Table 6: Number of consultations (internal & external) ERA contributed. With a breakdown of ERA's contributions to external consultations	32
Table 7: Number of awareness activities & events	33
Table 8: Breakdown of the number of meetings abroad	34
Table 9: Number of projects involving ERA	34
Table 10: Main achievements of AQW	35
Table 11: Qualifications by category	52
Table 12: Expenditure breakdown	54

LIST OF GRAPHS

Graph 1: Permits issued over 3 years	17
Graph 2: No of officers between 2016 & 2018	50
Graph 3: 2018 Gender Segregation	50
Graph 4: Age Demographics	51
Graph 5: Distribution of Officers within the Authority	51
Graph 6: ERA Officers qualifications by categories	52
Graph 7: Expenditure breakdown	54

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Some of the Geodatabases available at ERA	40
Figure 2: Common Database Designated Areas (CDDA) 2018 on the External Viewer	41
Figure 3: Current structure of the database	41
Figure 4: A transformation request, one of the most common requests	42
Figure 5: An open HALE Project, depicting the alignments between the source shapefile & target INSPIRE scheme	43



FORWARD

PROF. VICTOR AXIAK – Chairman

“This is the third such report since ERA’s inception. It is with great satisfaction that I personally witnessed the birth, infancy and growth into maturity of such an important institution.”

It was on a Thursday, way back in 2016 (4th February 2016) when I first came face to face with the birth of ERA. As reported by a local newspaper: “It was all smiles and handshakes for Victor Axiak as he walked into a hall packed with employees, all set to join the new environment authority. But the biology professor was under no illusion about the massive task awaiting him as chairman of the Environment and Resources Authority. “I am sure the honeymoon will end with the first yes or no we say,” he told employees .“ And so it was.

Again it is my privilege to be able to introduce you to the annual report and financial statements of the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA) for 2018. This is the third such report since ERA’s inception. It is with great satisfaction that I personally witnessed the birth, infancy and growth into maturity of such an important institution.

You will come across a number of strategic accomplishments of the Authority over the past year, but I would like to pick on some of them. The first one is the strengthening of the compliance and enforcement operations of our Authority. A new Directorate was established in 2018, with the onerous duty to ‘put teeth’ to the barking environmental watchdog. Stop and Compliance Orders, daily fines, administrative fines and Direct Actions soon became tools in our arsenal to protect the environment. But these were tools of a last resort, since we continued our outreach to the public and specific sectors of our community, in order to make everyone realize that environmental protection is a quality of life issue, and the duty of care for our environmental resources, is an obligation imposed on all our citizens. Such an obligation should arise from moral considerations rather than fear of fines.

Another major milestone, is the compilation and publication of the State of the Environment Report for Malta. The scope and objectives of such a report are to review available information, to identify any trends unfolding in the sectors being analysed and to elicit the state of the environment for each sector. It is a very important tool to increase awareness and understanding of key environmental trends, their causes and their associated consequences. It provides a sound evidence base for improved policy and decision-making at all levels, while it will facilitate the effective measurement of environmental performance and progress towards sustainability. The positive reactions to the quality and professional format of such a report both from local

and international sources is indeed heartening and a tribute to all those who contributed to this endeavour. Now we intend to focus our efforts on the development of a National Strategy for the Environment for the coming years.

In the meantime, our efforts to protect our biodiversity, our contributions towards improved air, water and soil quality, waste management, environmental assessments of development projects, and our collaborations in the international spheres, continued unabated, in spite of financial and other constraints. And all this has been made possible by the efforts and tireless support of all our employees. Thank you. Much is expected of us, and we owe it to our society in general to deliver to the best of our ability, and to go beyond this.





CEO'S REPORT

DR LOUISE SPITERI

“ Together we strived to continue to create an efficient and accessible organisation, proactive in tackling environmental issues, through enhanced customer relations, revised legislative and policy tools, as well as new and improved organizational and operational structures. ”

During these first months in office, work continued towards the comprehensive build up of the Authority, both through the increase in human resources as well as in the investment of adequate equipment for the better implementation of its monitoring and regulatory role. Together we strived to continue to create an efficient and accessible organisation, proactive in tackling environmental issues, through enhanced customer relations, revised legislative and policy tools, as well as new and improved organizational and operational structures.

During its second year from inception, the Authority with its dynamic pace, felt the need to invest in the setup of a new directorate, completely concentrated on compliance and enforcement. This new Directorate compliments the operational role of the Environment Directorate, which was the initial backbone of the Authority. The latter initially had a dual role; that of permitting operations and also of foreseeing and enforcing on illegalities. The Compliance and Enforcement Directorate has brought balance between the functions of the Authority. It has improved both its efficiency and regulatory role. Definitely, this marks the start of a very challenging period.

This past year saw development in various other areas including the development of laws and policies, programmes and initiatives, as well as the assessment of various planning and environmental applications. 2018 remains marked for the adoption of the first State of the Environmental Report of the Authority, which received positive feedback from various entities, stakeholders and the public in general. This report was launched during the first National Conference of the Authority entitled 'My Environment, My Turn'. This creates the first stepping stones and the paradigm shift which leads to the build-up of the National Strategy for the Environment. A strategy which will be built on by the Authority in consultation with stakeholders, scholars, professionals in the field, entities and the public in general.

Operational work focusing towards reaching set goals and vision do not function in a vacuum. They require the support of a proper administrative structure. The Corporate Services Directorate, during this year continued to work on the refurbishment of the Authority's offices and infrastructure, the recruitment of new personnel, the negotiations of a new collective agreement for ERA's

employees, and the management of its financial resources. More needs to be done. Together we are working on internal procedures to continue to ameliorate and integrate the various functions, responsibilities and roles of this key organisation. We are currently embarking on the build-up of a more comprehensive MIS system to outreach the public, the various entities, and significantly enhance the efficiency of the Authority. During its second year the Authority continued to grow, from strength to strength in its regulatory role.

Such achievements could not subsist if it was not for the hard work of all the staff of the Authority, who are dedicated, share ERA's vision, goals and achievements. We at ERA all strive to build up an efficient regulatory service towards protecting and enhancing our environment - our common future. This year saw the metamorphosis of the creation of a new way. We are more than convinced that it's - "My Environment, My Turn".



THE ENVIRONMENT & RESOURCES AUTHORITY BOARD

The ERA Board was set up through Act 1 of 2016 which came into force on the 31st January, 2016 by virtue of Legal Notice 50 of 2016, and comprises the following members:



Chairperson
PROF. VICTOR AXIAK



Vice-Chairperson
MRS CARMEN BUTTIGIEG



Independent Members
PROF. ALFRED VELLA



Independent Members
MRS ALEXIA PISANI



Independent Members
DR JASON BONNICI



Independent Members
PROF. ALAN DEIDUN



Independent Members
MRS PAULA GRECH BONNICI



Independent Members
DR HELGA BUTTIGIEG
(attended first meeting as
full member on the 23rd of
February 2018)



Public Officers
MR ALAN PULIS



Opposition Member
ENG. SIMON MIZZI
(attended first meeting as
full member on the 23rd of
February 2018)



Board Secretary
DR JOSEPH GATT

The ERA Board members are appointed by the Minister in terms of Article 6 of the Environment Protection Act (Chapter 549 of the Laws of Malta) and shall serve for a period of three years if not otherwise determined in the relative letter of appointment.

The ERA Board is composed of ten (10) persons: two (2) public officers representing the Government, one of whom has experience or qualifications in matters concerning the environment, and another who has experience or qualifications in matters concerning environmental health or social policy; six (6) independent members who are chosen from amongst persons of known integrity, one of whom with knowledge of and experience in the Environmental Voluntary Organisations sector and who shall be nominated by the said Voluntary Organisations; one (1) member nominated by the Leader of the Opposition.

Among other functions and responsibilities, the ERA Board oversees and ensures that the following functions are carried out in an efficient and professional manner;

- The formulation and implementation of policies relating to the protection and management of the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources;
- The carrying out and commissioning of surveys, studies, assessments, investigations, audits, monitoring and promoting of research on any matter related to the environment and the natural resources;
- Provision of information and issuing of guidelines to the public and to commercial and other entities on matters relating to the environment and the said natural resources;
- The establishment of measures for the protection of the environment and promotion of the efficient use of natural resources in, and through, the practices, operations, activities and functions regulated by the Environment Protection Act (*Chapter 549 of the Laws of Malta*);

- Ensures that national and international obligations relative to the matters regulated by or under the Environment Protection Act come into force and complied with;

- Permits, assesses, investigates, audits, monitors, and takes action on any activity, intervention, project, operation or land use that may have an effect on the environment;

- Advises the Minister responsible for the environment on international legislation and on the formulation of national policy in relation to matters regulated by the Environment Protection Act and on matters having a bearing on this;

- Advises the Minister on any matter connected with its functions under the Environment Protection Act;

- Carrying out, reviewing or requesting others to carry out environmental assessments, environmental audits and environmental monitoring of activities and works having an impact on the environment.

Main 2018 objectives including number of meetings and public consultations

During the period from January to December, 2018, the ERA Board held twenty-four (24) meetings. Two meetings were held in public as follows: the 27th of April 2018, wherein IP 003/06 regarding the renewal IPPC permit of Amino Chemicals Ltd, IP 005/07 regarding the full surrender of IPPC permit for Crystal Pharma Ltd and IP 001/12 regarding the application for IPPC permit for Greenskip Services Ltd were discussed and decided upon. On the 23rd of November, 2018, the Board wherein IP 04/12 regarding the renewal and variation of existing permit of Gasparell Bailing Plant Limited and IP IP001/14 regarding the variation of the existing permit of Sterling Chemicals (Malta) Limited were discussed and decided upon.



ERA'S FIRST STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT FOR MALTA

ERA published its first State of the Environment Report (SOER) for Malta at the end of 2018, just a short two and a half years since the Authority was set up. This was an important deliverable for the Authority. The report consists of a concise printed summary version, backed by more detailed chapters, datasheets and indicators that are published on a dedicated webpage on the ERA website. The *SOER* covers 9 different environmental themes, namely a section on the forces driving environmental change, sections on ambient air, climate change and fresh and marine waters, coupled with others on our land and coast, our natural capital, resources and waste, and a section each on environment and health and the policy responses applied during the period of review.

The first *SOER* for Malta was compiled 20 years ago. The idea was to set up a coherent and regular programme of reporting on the State of the Environment. Malta has come a long way since then. The Environment Protection Act of 2016 now legally requires that ERA publishes this report every 4 years. In view of the fact that the report prior to this one was not published, ERA undertook it up itself to include the data of these missing years in its upcoming report; making it the first *SOER* for Malta to cover 7 years' worth of data, showcasing trends from 2009-2015.

The *scope* of this report, which is to review available information, to identify any trends unfolding in the sectors being analysed and to elicit the state of the environment

for each sector. In so being, the report is a very important tool to increase awareness and understanding of key environmental trends, their causes and their associated consequences. Such a report thereby provides a sound evidence base for improved policy and decision-making at all levels, while it will facilitate the effective measurement of environmental performance and progress towards sustainability.

Because of documents such as the *SOER*, decision makers in the field of environmental management may also be guided in their identification of priorities for action. But this document is not solely for policy makers. In fact, there is a value for everyone in this report, be it whether one is a citizen, a member of an NGO or a decision maker. Thereby, this report contributes to an informed public, able to appreciate the difference between sensationalism and critical evaluation with the intention of improving our state of the environment.

One of the biggest challenges we face according to the 2018 *SOER*, is the increasing population and their use of natural resources and related impacts driving changes in our natural environment. Malta, according to the 2011 Census, has 1,325 persons per square kilometer – the average across the European Union (EU) is of 116. Inevitably, due to our growing population, we require more infrastructure, more living and recreational spaces, and more health services. We also produce more waste, create more traffic congestion, that exert an impact on our environment. The challenge is therefore to find low

impact solutions that sustain the requirements of a high population density.

The report confirmed waste (i.e. excluding construction waste) as a challenge which should respond to infrastructural action that is being currently implemented in this sector. This is partly because so much of our consumables and food is imported, consequently disposing of more packaging than if locally produced things had to be used.

To no surprise, the *SOER* revealed that better use of our resources is necessary, whether its our limited fresh-water sources – or land that is built on.

The report also showed that Malta was doing incredibly well in some areas. Marine Protected Areas now cover 11 times the size of Malta and 93% of all bathing waters are of excellent quality. 40% of species and 43% of habitats had a positive conservation value, and are better protected than they were when the 2008 report was conducted. Nature and industrial permitting have also been enhanced since then, with each activity being assessed by ERA to see what its implications on the environment would be and, if approved.

A very significant reduction in sulphur dioxide in the air continues to prevail now that sulphur-heavy fuels have been phased out. Indeed, overall, Malta's air quality mostly respects EU limit values, but ERA will sustain its efforts to continue addressing anthropogenic substances reaching our air, especially from transport.

One of the most welcome results of the report showed that there was a 98% increase in environmental expenditure by the government from the 2008 level. Something the report notes is the considerable advancement in relation to make Malta's economy greener.

ERA's ultimate goal for its first ever *SOER*, and subsequent reports, was to provide credible environmental information to support progress towards sustainable development – a feat which the Authority has managed to accomplish, as acknowledged by the Office of the Ombudsman in its first ever review of the *SOER*.

ERA will make use of this information, along with other information, to address areas requiring attention and further action. It will do this through the development of a National Strategy for the Environment, which will chart Malta's environmental progress for a better quality of life.



1.0 ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING

Throughout 2018, the Authority has continued to consolidate and streamline the different permitting streams and has endeavoured to continue the process of standardising conditions throughout the sectors. Great effort was also made to make the permitting process more accessible to interested stakeholders and the general public. Furthermore, the Authority drafted a framework legal instrument which aims to bring together all activities or operations that require a permit, together with the procedure that would enable efficient and transparent delivery of the process. This framework legislation is envisaged to be finalised in 2019.

1.1 Processing of permits

1. Permits Referred for ERA Board Decision in 2018

Compared to 2017, this year marks an increase of 52% in the number of permits presented to the ERA Board. *Table 1* below shows the full list of permits presented to the ERA Board for decision over a span of three years.

2. Permits Processed within the Permitting Unit

Following a delegation by the ERA Board, smaller scale permits are processed at Directorate level. *Table 2* below provides a full list of such permits:

Category of Permit	Sector	2016	2017	2018
IPPC (including both informal and formal public hearings)	Energy Sector	3	4	-
	Waste Management	2	4	11
	Pharmaceutical (API production)	-	2	7
	Chemical Sector	-	2	-
Environmental Permits	Waste Management Sites	20	27	27
	Quarries	3	10	29
	Aquacultures activities	-	5	9
	Sewage Treatment Plants	3	1	1
	Petrol Stations	-	1	3
	Fuel Terminals	1	2	-
	Hotels	4	-	1
	Chemical/ Pharma Industries	1	-	3
	Hospital	-	-	1
	VOC handling activities	2	1	2
	Other manufacturing activities	-	-	1
	Shipyards/ port facilities	1	2	2
	Others	2	1	5
General Binding Rule Permits	GBRs	6	1	-
Nature Permits	Tree permits	-	3	3
	Nature permits	-	8	8
TOTAL		48	74	113

Table 1: Permits Referred for ERA Board Decision in 2018

Category of Permit	New Permit	Renewal	Variation
Industrial GBRs	16	4	-
Hull cleaning notifications	44	-	-
Waste carriers	2,050	3,560	-
Waste brokers	13	43	-
Nature permits	235	22	-
Tree permits	167	4	-
CITES Trade Licences	649	-	-
CITES Clearances	3,670	-	-
CITES Article 10	219	-	-
CITES Import / Export / re-export permit	102	-	-
Consignment permits	423	-	-
Extended Producer Responsibility (Scheme permits)	-	5	-
Trans-frontier Shipment Permits	68	-	38
Trans-frontier Shipment Permits (Transite)	24	-	8
TOTAL	7,680	3,638	46
		11,364	

Table 2: Permits Processed within the Permitting Unit

The total number of permits processed by the Directorate in 2018 were 11,477. The graph below shows the number of permits processed in 2018 compared with those of the previous 2 years. The low level of permits processed in 2017 is the result of a large number of waste carriers that did not renew their permits for the transport of specific waste streams.



Graph 1: Permits issued over 3 years

1.2 Legislation on Environmental Permitting

During 2018, a framework permitting legislation was drafted to streamline and consolidate all the permitting functions of the Authority. The intended legislation is aimed as a major overhaul of the current practices, whereby a legal instrument has been devised to offer a transparent and visible procedure at set timeframes for applicants and the general public. Moreover, the proposed regulations aim at addressing current lacunae and establish mechanisms that allow for flexibility in the permitting process as well as a clear administrative procedure for the application, determination, reconsideration and appeal of decisions. It is planned that such legislation would be finalised in 2019.

1.3 Guidelines on trees

This year saw the approval of the Guidelines on Works Involving Trees, which provides comprehensive good practice guidelines on how to carry out pruning, transplanting and compensatory planting, and how to

carry out construction works without damaging trees. The new Trees and Woodlands Regulations 2018, introduced a system where persons carrying out works on certain trees are to be registered with ERA as a Licensed Tree Specialist and the Permitting Unit has been working on launching a training course that ultimately leads to registration with ERA.

1.4 Web applications

During this reporting year, the Authority continued to streamline its service through electronic applications aimed to assist the public in accessing permitting applications remotely. Apart from digitising all forms and making these available on the government portal *servizz.gov.mt*, the Authority has also launched three e-forms for specific sectors which are accessible on its website. Moreover, several training sessions were also organised for the different stakeholders in order to assist in this transition. ERA has also established a front desk service where applicants requiring assistance are aided by trained officials.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ERA's assessment of development proposals has the aim of avoiding or mitigating the adverse impacts on the environment at planning stage. The Authority's contribution during 2018 is summarised below:

2.1 Plan-level assessments & strategic follow-ups

■ ERA reviewed over 40 draft plans, policies and strategies prepared by internally or by other institutions, to address environmental considerations. It also continued to screen draft plans/policies for plan-level AA requirements in line with the Habitats Directive, and as statutory consultee in the SEA process.

■ ERA's SEA online database was set up <https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/ERA-SEA-Responses.aspx>. ERA's SEA responses are uploaded on this publicly available database.

■ ERA finalised the first internal auditing report, evaluating the effectiveness of consultation responses to development applications, and making recommendations for improvements. First drafts of other focused and detailed analysis were also completed: (i) the process coordinating the response on development applications; and (ii) environmental relevance of particular planning designations and site constraints

■ ERA also commenced work on the framework for implementation of the recommendations. Further consolidation is recommended for 2019, including setting up ancillary mechanisms.

■ Detailed analysis of development permit conditions in bespoke planning responses and the preparation of updated specimen conditions were undertaken, together with additional formulation of standard environmental 'safety net' conditions for permits in the development zone intended for direct application by the Planning Authority as part of its standard permit conditions.

■ Specimen terms of reference were completed to guide method statements for environmentally-relevant construction works, together with mandatory good-practice specifications to pre-empt environmental impact at source. Other specialised documents (e.g. environmental restoration works, physical works in valleys) were also prepared. These documents are available online https://eracms.gov.mt/en/Pages/EA_TORsOPs_Construction.aspx.

■ ERA was also a key contributor to the development of an information system (MIS) for PA consultations, which became critically important following the loss of the Artemis system.



2.2 Environmental assessment of development proposals

■ During Jan-Sept 2018, ERA vetted 6565 planning consultations (projected annual total: 8753 cases), of which 1925 (projected total: 2566) were assessed further due to environmental relevance - e.g. development in the countryside, infrastructural projects, industrial or potentially polluting development, and projects with waste or air quality implications. These included new applications as well as reassessment of revised submissions.

■ This figure represents a constant picture relative to the 2572 cases assessed in 2017 and a sustained increase compared to the 1897 cases in 2016). As an external consultee to the Planning Authority, ERA's operations continued to be affected by external challenges (e.g. the PA's workflow patterns and caseload peaks, processing deadlines, complex case histories, case-specific urgencies, and limitations in the information made available).

■ ERA also assessed 44 consultations on EU funded development.

■ During 2018, ERA continued to implement the EIA Regulations vis-a-vis large or complex projects, with active EIA cases at various stages: 73 PDSs, 61 detailed EIA screenings, 46 cases not qualifying for an EIA, 10 EIAs requested, TORs for 11 cases, 9 reviews of consultant reports, and 10 final assessments.

■ Preliminary screenings for potential EIA and AA relevance also continued systematically as part of the holistic assessment of incoming development applications.

■ EIA figures reflect a net increase in major projects submitted for ERA's assessment (e.g. roads). This was reflected in an overall increase in incoming Project Description Statements (PDS), mitigated by a streamlining of the ensuing EIA procedures after the issuing of new EIA regulations at the end of 2017. 2018 was the first year of implementation of the new Regulations, reaping the fruit of the previous years' strategic-level efforts.

3.0 COMPLIANCE & ENFORCEMENT

The Environment & Resources Authority consolidated all its compliance functions in January 2017. This restructuring exercise improved both the coordination of the multiple functions related to compliance and environmental law enforcement and utilization of resource. ERA's enforcement powers entered into force in April of that same year, an important milestone in the evolution of the Authority and the execution of the duties conferred to it by the Environment Protection Act. ERA's commitment to strengthening environmental compliance and enforcement increased in 2018 through the setting up of a Compliance & Enforcement Directorate in July 2018.

The new Directorate is composed of three specialized teams aided by an administration and operations office. Staff complement increased from 18 officers to 28 by the end of the year under review. The specialised teams are responsible for Nature Compliance, Industrial Facilities Compliance and Waste Compliance.

The consolidated system of registering investigative cases was improved. Throughout the year, the total number of registered cases doubled from 444 investigation files logged in 2017, to 889 cases logged and investigated in 2018.

A total of 28 Stop and Compliance Orders (*Ordnijiet ta' Waqfien u Konformità - OWK*) were issued for various offences. This signified a 200% increase over the previous year. Furthermore, following the enactment of LN45 of 2018 in mid-February, namely the Daily Penalties (Environment) Regulations, all the Orders that were subsequently issued (i.e. 27 of the 28), incorporated an Administrative Fine of €100, and fines that accrued on a daily basis until the illegalities were addressed.

Some of the Orders issued included, five issued to fish farms, six issued to two main waste schemes for not attaining



targets and other considerations and five issued to Extended Producer Responsibility WEEE 'free-riders' (operators placing Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE) on the local market without registering with Waste Schemes).

Half the 2018 Orders were issued by the Waste Compliance Team, 11 Orders were issued by the Facilities Compliance Team, and 3 Orders were issued by the Nature Compliance Team. A number of these were addressed by the responsible parties, whilst ERA took direct action itself at a number of sites in protected or industrial areas, e.g. by removing waste that had been deposited at a sensitive site at San Martin where specimens of a rare plant, *Scilla sicula*, thrive.

In 2018, ERA issued 11 administrative fines on individuals, commercial companies, and parastatal agencies, totalling €157,845. These covered various contraventions, including non-abidance with permit conditions, pollution of the sea, removal of trees, and others.

3.1 Nature Compliance

The trade of certain species and artefacts is a challenge for the Authority. Inspections are carried out to ensure compliance with all the Permits and Certificates. These inspections are done on a 24 hour basis to ensure such trade is corroborated by the necessary permits or certificates. To this effect, 259 transactions involved inspections that were carried out at local points of entry/departure, 70% of which concerned movements outside the EU. A number of items had to be seized in 2018 because they were illegally brought into Malta. These included shortfin mako shark jaws, bear and lynx skins, boa constrictor and a crocodile skull. Moreover, ERA conducted another 305 inspections in 2018 in Special Areas of Conservation and interventions affecting protected trees. The Authority had 303 investigative cases logged and investigated in 2018, up by 180% from the 168 of 2017.

3.2 Industrial Facilities Compliance

ERA is also responsible for environmental compliance of industrial sectors including oil/fuel terminals/port facilities; pharmaceuticals; power stations; hotels; fuel stations; fish-farms; quarries; waste management facilities, landfills; and general manufacturing. ERA's role is to inspect facilities and guide operators to abide by environmental legislation concerning the particular facilities, and according to permit requirements and conditions. Compliance work is based on a risk management system, which considers various factors, apart from ad hoc circumstances that have to be dealt with in specific situations. In 2018, ERA conducted 228 inspections on permitted facilities, and a further 255 inspections arising from reports or complaints. In 2018, 212 cases were logged and investigated, an increase from the 153 logged in 2017. ERA also evaluated more than 90 blast monitoring reports concerning hardstone quarries, and analysed 184 reports submitted as an

obligation emanating from permits issued by the Authority. ERA also conducted 115 inspections relating to investigations and monitoring of the Stop and Compliance Orders that it had issued. During the summer months and early autumn, inspections at sea on fish farms were being carried out nearly on a daily basis.

3.3 Waste Compliance

ERA addresses also a spectrum of issues relating to waste management. During 2018, pursuant to the requirements of the Waste Shipment Regulations, 2043 export documents for non-hazardous waste and 1081 documents for hazardous waste were processed. More than 30 movements related to disposal of dredged material at sea were carried out in 2018. Another priority for the Authority is securing compliance, inspections and other efforts related to the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for Batteries, Electrical and Electronic Equipment and Packaging. To this effect, more than 160 inspections have been carried out at various outlets across the Maltese Islands and at targeted producers in order to address WEEE, batteries and packaging producers. ERA has received and processed several reports about waste being dumped in the countryside, and in various instances has succeeded in securing compliance by the owners themselves removing their illegal deposition themselves without having to resort to formal actions contemplated by law. ERA continued to organize its efforts in 2018, and also logged 374 investigative cases, amounting to 42% of the total 889 cases, and constituting a threefold increase over the 123 cases logged in 2017. Of these 374 cases, 174 cases related to waste dumping, burning of waste and waste management. Another 76 related to Extended Producer Responsibility investigations, whilst 61 treated waste transport matters, both locally and with respect to shipments abroad.

4.0 BIODIVERSITY & WATER

ERA has the full or partial responsibility to implement the following international treaties and legislation related to the protection of:

4.1 Biodiversity, Habitats & Ecosystems

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD);

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CPB);

Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention);

Protocol concerning Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity in the Mediterranean (SPA/BD Protocol);

Convention on Migratory Species (CMS);

The Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (ACCOBAMS);

Convention on Wetlands of international Importance (Ramsar Convention);

Convention of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention);

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive);

Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive).

4.2 Water & Marine Environment

Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy

(Water Framework Directive - WFD) and daughter directive 2008/105/EC;

Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive - MSFD)

Council Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste-water treatment (UWWTD);

Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources (Nitrates Directive).

Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and all relevant protocols under the Convention.

4.3 Soil

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

The work related to the obligations arising from these treaties and legislation is shared between three teams, each with its own specific expertise.

Strategy Development & Reporting Team

The team mainly deals with the development of policy, based on international and regional requirements; the preparation of various reports and assessments on Malta's biodiversity; the review of various, national and international, documents of a strategic nature; the collation of data, and relevant mapping on biodiversity; awareness and communication matters. This implies various coordination efforts within the Unit, with other Units in the Authority and with other entities

and stakeholders and the compilation of various Terms of Reference for the procurement of relevant information. An additional theme falling within this team deals with aspects of desertification, geology, geomorphology, and landscape, amongst others.

Nature Team

The team deals with the implementation of policy, especially from the regulatory perspective. This is mostly related to the management of protected sites and species and linked with the threats that could potentially affect them; The team deals with aspects related to alien species, and provides feedback to consultations related to environmental permitting and environmental assessments. The team liaises with various stakeholders, including eNGOs with whom various management agreements are in place, for the management of a number of sites, as well as with Ambient Malta, in view of its remit to implement aspects related to the implementation of environmental and biodiversity related initiatives in the field.

Water Team

The team is responsible for the implementation of the Water & Marine related legislation listed above. The work mainly focus on the achievement of policy objectives and reporting obligations emanating from the WFD and MSFD. These two overarching Directives are intricately linked to other policies related to biodiversity and water quality; hence, the team supports the implementation of other EU and regional policies in close collaboration with both internal ERA units and external stakeholders. Such policies include the Nitrates Directive, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Barcelona Convention, as well as other sectoral policies linked to water resources.

4.4 Biodiversity Policy Development & Reporting

In 2018, ERA contributed to the drafting of around 100 documents covering a variety of different topics.

Various policy documents have been issued for public consultation and/or published, in relation to Green Infrastructure, Invasive Alien Species and Trees. A number of policy documents are undergoing internal and inter-ministerial consultations, namely dealing with the Honey Bee and Land Degradation.

ERA was also involved in updating various national legislation, such as in the case of the *Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.44)*, for which work on the plotting of maps have been carried out due to the designation of new protected sites and other changes in the boundaries. The *Trees and Woodlands Protection Regulations (S.L. 549.123)* were also amended following numerous comments received through the public consultation. ERA also contributed to the transposition of the obligations arising from Commission Directive (EU) 2017/845 into the *Marine Policy Framework (Amendment) Regulations*, as regards the indicative lists of elements to be taken into account for the preparation of marine strategies. An additional nine pieces of legislation on matters related to biosafety, land degradation and nature protection still need further discussions.

Further work linked with biodiversity policy included the drafting and/or revision of 52 Standard Data Forms (SDFs) for Natura 2000 sites concerning both new and present sites, which are publicly available through the ERA website. This task was carried out through the compilation and submission of a database and relevant spatial files for all terrestrial and marine Natura 2000 sites, through which the Authority carried out streamlining of information with other reporting processes and the incorporation of new data. This task highlighted the latest achievement by Malta linked with the designation of additional sites as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), which in total now cover more than 35% of the Maltese waters. The process for the development of Management Plans for all MPAs has commenced

with the drafting of conservation objectives, measures and actions and the carrying out of a number of consultations with relevant stakeholders in the process.

In connection with various international and European obligations listed above, Malta is obliged to report on regular or ad hoc basis. Amongst the major reports prepared and submitted in 2018 was the Article 17 report (National Implementation Programme) under the UWWTD, the reporting of updated Marine Reporting Units under MSFD processes, the reporting of spatial data in connection with monitoring sites for the Chemical Watch List monitoring under the WFD and the report

on areas designated under national legislation for the purpose of nature protection, also known as the Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA) report. Efforts have also been made towards ongoing work on other major reports, which are due to be submitted to the European Commission under the Habitats Directive, the MSFD, the WFD, and to the CBD. One of the major policy-related tasks included the preparation of an updated Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) under the Habitats & Birds Directives in connection with funds required for the implementation of measures related to Natura 2000 and beyond.

	Completed or under consultation	Being Drafted
Policy documents	5	-
National Legislation	5	9
Strategic Action Plans	3	-
Reports	31	2
Protected Sites	52 ¹	18 ²
GRAND TOTAL	96	52

Table 3: Statistics on the various biodiversity related policies & obligations

The Unit coordinated works within various Natura 2000 sites, through liaison with other entities/organisations, such as Ambjent Malta, relevant NGOs and other entities. The sites concerned include *Kemmuna, il-Maghluq ta' Marsaskala, il-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk, l-Ghadira s-Safra, Dahlet ix-Xmajjel, ir-Ramla tat-Torri*, and *il-Majjistral Park*.

4.5 Management of the Natura 2000 Network & Green Infrastructure

ERA oversees the implementation of the various (10) Management Agreements, 5 of which signed in 2018, and 3 Memoranda of Understanding with NGOs and/or other entity/ies, which deal with the implementation of various measures and actions within Natura 2000 sites, emanating from relevant management plans.

Action	Natura 2000 Sites
Removal of Invasive Alien Species	8
Afforestation & Restoration	2
Removal of Construction Material / Waste	3
Maintenance, Signage, Visitors Access	5
GRAND TOTAL	18

Table 4: Actions and measures carried out in targeted Natura 2000 sites

¹ Revision of the SDFs and spatial files for all the Natura 2000 sites in Malta, submitted through the updated database in June 2018

² The Conservation Objectives, relevant conservation measures and zoning plans have been drafted and consultation carried out



4.6 Studies, Research & Sponsorships

As indicated above, there are a number of reporting obligations. The compilation of such reporting obligations requires the gathering and assessment of relevant information. In this regard, a number of Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the outsourcing of research studies have been drafted. Such studies will focus on several Annex I habitat types under the Habitats Directive, including a number of garrigue, scrub and woodland habitats, various Annex II and IV species listed in the Habitats Directive, such as terrestrial reptiles and mammals, along with a number of invertebrate species.

A number of studies have been finalised or have been started in 2018 and to be concluded in 2019. Data gathered or being gathered through such studies focussed on various trees, lichens and fungi, in order to maintain and organise Malta's National Database of Biodiversity and suffice other Authority's obligations.

Outsourcing was also sought in relation to specialised tasks associated with the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The tender for the intercalibration of ecological status boundaries for coastal waters has been awarded in October 2018. Through this tender, intercalibrated boundaries for assessment of biological elements will be

The Authority regularly carries out field visits for various reasons, amongst others:

- to map and assess the status of habitats/species,
- to assess how measures can/should be implemented,
- to locate the presence of protected and alien species,
- to assess incoming reports, and
- to confirm or otherwise any findings reported in supporting documents relevant to planning applications.

The number of such site visits exceeded 70 in 2018.

presented by Malta to the EU Commission in 2019 as part of the requirements of the WFD. In 2018 BWU also issued a tender for the socio-economic assessment of the use of surface and marine waters in the Maltese Islands and the costs of degradation as part of the requirements of both WFD and MSFD. This will be taken forward in 2019.

Through the Collaborative Agreement between ERA and the University of Malta, the Authority commissioned various studies tackling various areas, including public attitude surveys, specific ecological surveys or studies, studies on algal blooms and selected incidents, and assistance through expert advice in permitting issues.

Further studies have been carried out internally in relation to the selection of sites for different purposes. These studies focussed, amongst others, on the assessment of site identification for the scuttling of wrecks for scuba diving, the installation of ecological moorings, and for potential large-scale land reclamation projects.

ERA supported the publication of two books in relation to species distribution and characteristics of Orchids and Trees and Shrubs in the Maltese Islands and research on marine litter.

Item	Issued	Drafted
Tenders	6	4
Direct Orders	8	2
Call for Quotations	2	4
Contract Agreement with UM	2	11
Service Contracts	-	2
Sponsorships	3	-
GRAND TOTAL	21	23

Table 5: Number of ToRs drafted for the procurement and outsourcing of research activities, sponsorships & other studies in 2018

4.7 Data Management

Data being collated from various sources for various reporting obligations and assessments as indicated above, for various ecosystems both terrestrial and marine, and for pressures/threats on such. Furthermore, as part of the EMFF 8.3.1 project on marine monitoring, an INSPIRE conformant database was developed to accommodate environmental data pertaining to the marine environment, as well as relevant data from stakeholders; this database will be facilitating centralisation of data for assessment purposes.

ERA conducts major mapping work on various issues and obligations such as:

- the updating of database on nationally designated sites,
- the updating of Malta's submission on the Natura 2000 database,
- the mapping of habitats, and
- the mapping of ecosystems.

Around 170 site maps (boundaries, habitats, etc.) have been prepared in connection with various tasks mentioned above; including the designation of new protected sites, the amending of existing ones or for reporting purposes.

The main findings of the surveys carried out as part of LIFE BaHAR for N2K project have been mapped and are available to the public through an online data viewer, which includes the species and habitats of conservation interest, species of commercial importance, as well as the marine litter.

4.8 Consultations

ERA's officials act as consultees on various fronts, both internally and externally. At the international, European and national level ERA provides its feedback on policies, reports and questionnaires and regularly address the relevant requests for information coming from the general public or other entities.

Consultations		External Consultations	
Internal Consultations	570	National Policy	45
External Consultations	321	Requests for information	180
GRAND TOTAL	891	Questionnaires	53
		Feedback on reports	43
		GRAND TOTAL	321

Table 6: Number of consultations (internal and external) ERA contributed
With a breakdown of ERA's contributions to external consultations

4.9 Stakeholders Communication

ERA is very much involved in Communication, Education and Public Awareness activities. In relation to focused awareness activities, ERA officials participated in television, radio programmes and interviews. Throughout 2018, ERA actively participated in conducting 11 guided biodiversity tours for the public. For the first time in 2018, a series of four “Bat Night” events, were organised, which replaced the biodiversity tour in the summer months. Other activities included the manning of stands during events, press conferences, preparation of BioSnippets, preparation/review of press releases and the preparation/review of articles for magazines.

Awareness Activities & Events	
Media Appearances	20
Biodiversity Tours	11
Webpages	52
Other CEPA activities	55
GRAND TOTAL	138

Table 7: Number of awareness activities and events

4.10 Participation to international, European & national meetings & bodies

ERA attended more than 100 meetings abroad to participate to European, regional and international discussions on various biodiversity and water topics. Overall, the number of days dedicated to meetings abroad amounted to around 290 meeting days plus around 150 additional travel days. These meetings included attendance to international and regional conferences, EU working Parties, technical workshops and training. Most meetings were attended by one official, but a number were attended by two officials, to serve for training/handover purposes or due to the size and number of topics discussed.

Meetings Abroad	
Biodiversity & Habitats	42
Biosafety	4
Data Management	6
Desertification & Land Degradation	4
Green Infrastructure	1
Invasive Alien Species	7
Marine	22
Water	10
GRAND TOTAL	96

Table 8: Breakdown of the number of meetings abroad

4.11 Projects

In 2018, ERA has been the Lead Beneficiary of 2 major projects, the LIFE BAĦAR for N2K (LIFE12 NAT/MT/000845) and the Marine environmental monitoring: towards effective management of Malta's marine waters (EMFF 8.3.1). Another five projects have been followed by ERA, as a Project Partner; these are the LIFE-IP RBMP-MALTA (LIFE16 IPE/MT/000008), HARMONY (Interreg V-A Italia-Malta), AMARe (Interreg MED), MedKeyHabitats II (MAVA Foundation) and LIFE Revive Comino. ERA reviewed 12 project proposals of other entities/stakeholders so as to assess their relevance in connection with the work of the Authority.

Through the LIFE 16 IPE MT 008, ERA will be implementing some measures put forward as part of Malta's second Water Catchment Management Plan and the MSFD Programme of Measures. In 2018, the Authority followed the implementation of two preparatory actions as part of this project: one seeking the development of baseline hydrographical conditions through a contract with the University of Malta and one seeking the development of a monitoring strategy for emerging contaminants in four water categories through the issue of a service tender of which evaluation started in December 2018.

Projects	
ERA in the role of Lead Beneficiary	2
ERA in the role of Projects Partner	5
GRAND TOTAL	7

Table 9: Number of projects involving ERA

5.0 THE AIR QUALITY & WASTE (AQW)

This function within the Authority is responsible for monitoring air quality, radiation, noise and waste management. The AQW produces various report and ad-hoc documents, including policy related material. It also liaises with other units within ERA and participates in meetings organised by third parties. The duties are mainly governed by National and EU Legislation and Directives and are shared between two teams, Ambient Quality and Waste Management. The main achievements for 2018 of AQW are summarised below in *Table 11*.

	Item	Number
Documents Drafted & Reports	Documents (Equivalence Study & Updated Cylinders Inventory)	9
	Documents (Drafted Guidelines)	2
	Strategies Drafted	2
	Laws (Drafted)	8
	Number of Questionnaires	10
	Reports prepared under EU Directives / EU Regulations / Conventions	24
Meetings & Courses	Meetings attended abroad	86
	Courses attended	11
RFIs & ToRs	RFIs & ToRs (not including those for NSO & MESDC)	123
	Number of TORs drafted for MESDC / NSO	48
Projects & Studies	Number of Studies carried out (including ongoing) & tenders	7
	Number of EU Project being followed	2
Consultations	Number of Consultation sessions carried out	13
Consultees	Number of Strategies/policies/plans/LNs reviewed as consultees	66
	Number of PA files reviewed	368
	Number of EPs / IPPCs applications/Schemes' Permits (renewals) reviewed	23
	Number implementing acts / delegated acts / CION proposals reviewed / proposals issued under international agreements	40
Other	Number of CNs processed / inputted into ERA's database	14,263

Table 10: Main achievements of AQW

6.0 NATIONAL AFFAIRS

The National Affairs is the strategic arm of the Authority. The two main pillars are coordination of ERA's communication and strategic policy making and assessment.

In collaboration with ERA's different sections, the National Affairs (NA) led the development of 19 policies and concluded 3 in 2018. NA also continued to integrate environmental policy in national policies of other entities, to ensure that these contribute to the achievement of national environmental targets. A total of 88 policies, strategies or specific plans prepared by other national agencies were reviewed and environmental feedback was provided to 40 of these, which were expected to have the most significant effect on the environment.

National Affairs published the 2018 State of the Environment Report (SoER) and launched the report during a National Conference entitled 'My Environment, My Turn', on the results of the comprehensive analysis of 7 years of data for 9 environmental topics. The 10 chapters of the report formed the foundation National Strategy for the Environment, which the Unit is already working on.

NA led a number of PR and communication initiatives to reach to ERA's public and its stakeholders. These included the production of over 200 outreach outputs. These outputs take the form of different materials including 13 videos, 51 printed matter items and 40 signs, amongst others. Approximately 16,000 posters, 200 booklets, 100 brochures and 60 pamphlets were distributed during events to communicate, educate and raise awareness of our stakeholders.

Following the successful completion of a poster competition on our role on air quality, ERA kick started a Citizen Science project entitled 'Fair with Air at Schools'; roping in school children to evaluate transport choices and related impacts on the quality of air in close proximity to their schools.

More than 1,400 queries were addressed through the *info@era.org.mt* set up from the public, together with around 90 Parliamentary Questions. ERA ensured that the Authority remained in touch with its stakeholders through 9 public consultations, 3 public information meetings and 30 targeted stakeholder consultation meetings.

ERA also led the preparation of officers for more than 40 media appearances, in TV, radio or printed media, with some of these involving multiple appearances such as in the weekly programme of *Malta u Lil Hinn Minnha*. Awareness raising was also carried out face to face through 7 monthly Guided Tours and 4 Bat nights, which the public were invited to attend to learn more about our natural environment.

Two key training opportunities were coordinated for key ERA officers working in the field of public consultation and policy assessment to expose trainees to a variety of consultation methods to suit the audience and to solidify existing knowledge in policy assessment techniques. These were led alongside the coordination of ERA's involvement in 24 events, of which 3 were major, including the Buonamico Award, Science in the City and the Valletta Green Festival.

7.0 INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The International Affairs (IA) is ERA's principal point of interface on EU and multilateral policy matters, ensuring that ERA fulfils its international obligations while maintaining its high profile internationally. Besides coordinating ERA's international efforts, IA is also responsible for developing internationally-funded projects.

During 2018, IA coordinated ERA's attendance at 156 international meetings: 75 instruction notes for EU policy negotiation meetings attended by ERA were vetted and approved, as well as instructions and follow-ups for 81 expert committee meetings focussing on implementation. IA also led the ratification procedure for two Protocols under the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution.

In 2018, through IA, ERA monitored and reviewed the submission of 25 implementation reports on various directives and multilateral instruments, including their reporting checklists highlighting problematic areas, as well as handling consultations with external entities.

In this period ERA also coordinated the transposition of 11 EU Directives, five of which were finalised and published in 2018, with two being published over a month in advance of the deadline. The Authority also coordinated the drafting of six legal notices relating to infringements and effective implementation of EU law.

On **implementation review**, ERA replied to 11 EU requests for information, as well as led the review of Malta's country reports under the EU Environment Implementation Review and the Governance Assessment Framework initiatives. IA also organised an international meeting on Malta's replies to a European Council GENVAL questionnaire on environmental crime, and supported management in addressing implementation of cross-cutting dossiers with other entities. The value added here was to focus on proactive tasks to avoid infringements, highlighting key issues of non-conformity and identifying corrective action.

As focal point for the Aarhus Convention on environmental governance, ERA's IA Officials attended 10 international Aarhus negotiation and expert meetings, coordinated responses to Aarhus-related surveys, advised other Units on Aarhus matters and began a legal review of the EU Commission Notice on access to justice in member states.

Under the Barcelona Convention, during 2018 ERA began work on Malta's national biannual report, the implementation of the Mediterranean regional Integrated Monitoring Assessment Programme and participated in the preparation of six new regional Action Plans for Mediterranean pollutants.

International Affairs also coordinated ERA's continued participation in various European bilateral networks during 2018, which provided learning experiences for all staff. ERA continued to participate actively in the Network of heads of Environment Protection Authorities (EPAN) and the EU Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL), though attendance at various horizontal and Interest Group/Expert Team project capacity-building meetings and submission of various questionnaires. The 83rd Meeting of the Management Board of the European Environment Agency was also attended.

On internationally-funded projects, the Authority screened 35 project proposals requesting ERA's participation or support, received under the INTERREG, ENI CBC MED and MAVA Foundation programmes, while continuing to assist with two INTERREG Europe waste projects: COCOON and WINPOL. In 2018 IA coordinated ERA's successful bid to secure assistance from the EU Structural Reform Support Services (SRSS) programme for reforms in permitting and enforcement, in line with national commitments. During 2018, this office also drafted common provisions and guidance documents for use when the Environment Fund is launched by ERA.

8.0 INFORMATION RESOURCES OFFICE

This office acts as a data hub for all spatial data within the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA). It is responsible for the provision and sharing of environmental data, both within the Authority and to the public. It ensures that all data is generated, stored and maintained in a standardised manner and in line with the INSPIRE Directive. The Office has created 23 geodatabases (5 of which were created with the intention of sharing data to external sources) where all spatial data is stored.

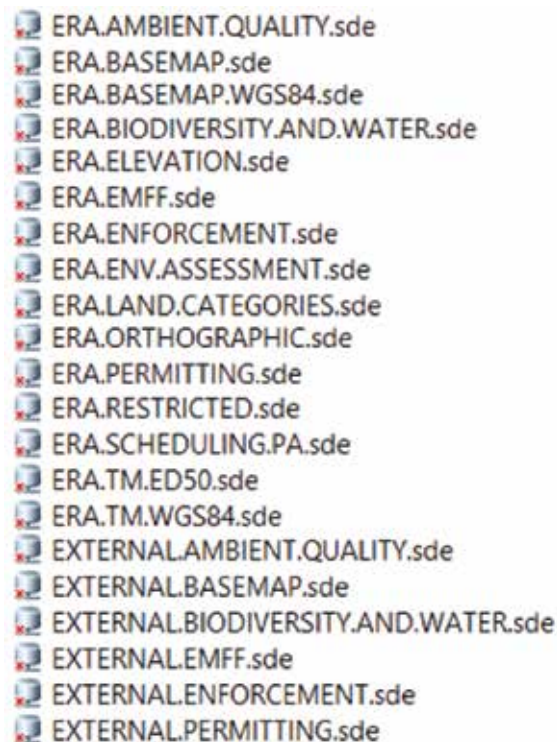


Figure 1: Some of the Geodatabases available at ERA

8.1 ERA Viewer

Throughout 2017 ERA has established its own viewer for internal use. This was of great benefit to all ERA employees, as all internal data and that of third parties was made available for viewing. In 2018, the viewer has been kept updated and additional sections and datasets have been included to make it more useful to ERA employees. The viewer currently allows for the selection and viewing of 188 layers, 122 of which are available to all employees. The Authority is working to finalise any pending items in relation to the external viewer. Once the external viewer is finalised, it will be made available to the public, providing easy access to environmental data hosted within the Authority. The viewer is a key tool for ERA, as data from the various Units can be made available at the click of a button, allowing for better decision-making and analysis across the Authority at various levels.



Figure 2: Common Database Designated Areas (CDDA) 2018 on the External Viewer

8.2 Database Information Resources

In 2018, ERA has embarked on a task to ensure that there is a proper register of all the available data. In this regard a structured database has been drafted, which links various aspects in relation to data. The database has, among others, dedicated tables on current available shapefiles, INSPIRE harmonisation, layers on the internal viewer (and their access rights), layers on the external viewer and available geodatabases. The image below depicts the current tables, and how they relate to each other. In 2019, ERA will keep working on improving the structure of the database, as well as populating it, so as to ensure that there is proper management and record of all the data available.

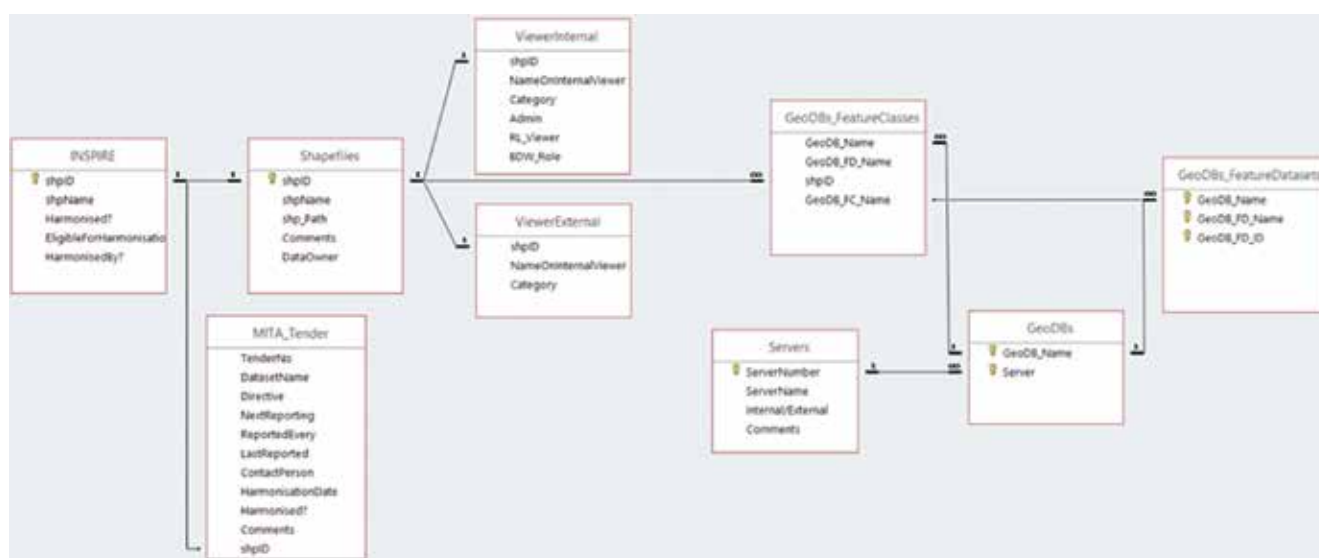


Figure 3: Current structure of the database

8.3 Assistance to generate/update spatial data & external data requests

The Office provides guidance and assistance to personnel, and processes various requests with regards to GIS (Geographic Information System) on a daily basis. These efforts help in improving GIS skills across the Authority and provide confidence to personnel to deal with spatial data easily. This also ensures that all the data is being created in a standardised manner, properly stored and kept updated. During 2018 the Office has serviced approximately 150 different requests from across the Authority. These requests include, amongst others, plotting, issues with projections, general queries and assistance, and work tied to specific projects ERA is part of. In order to ensure that data is created in a standardised manner, the Information Resources Office has created and disseminated a set of official guidelines. Moreover, it has co-ordinated training in relation to ESRI Arc GIS for the GIS focal points within ERA.

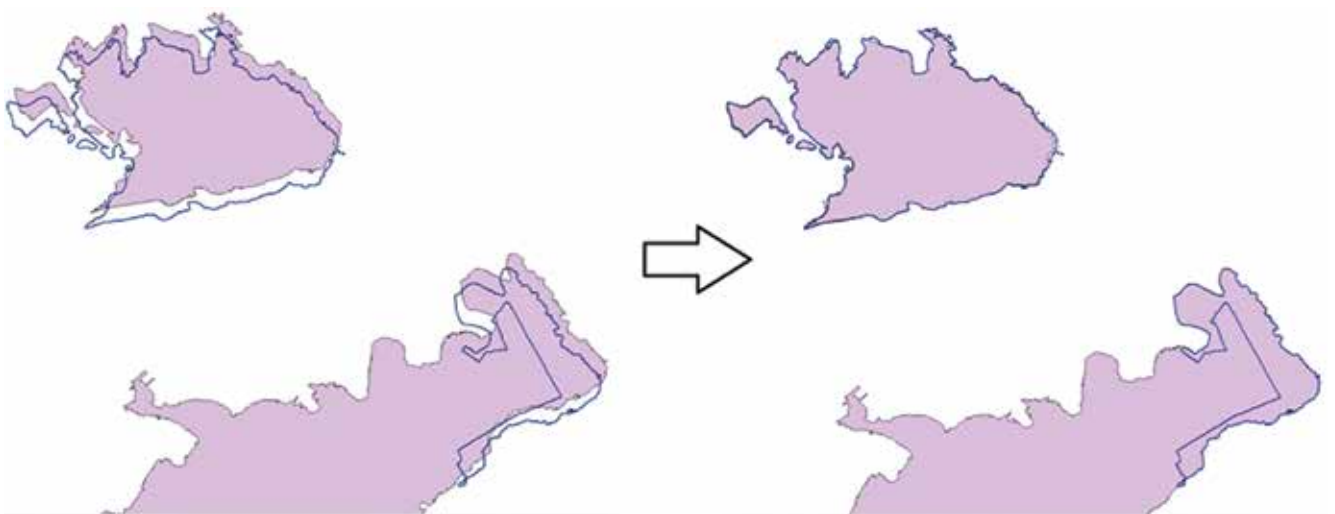


Figure 4: A transformation request, one of the most common requests

ERA also receives external requests for data. When spatial data is requested, these are channelled through the Office so as to ensure that the most recent data is being provided. In 2018 the IR Office dealt with more than 40 major data requests.

8.4 INSPIRE & Copernicus

The IR support Office is the Authority's contact point for the INSPIRE Directive, and represents ERA with regards to the Maltese Copernicus Relay. As for the INSPIRE Directive, ERA works to ensure that eligible datasets are compliant with the said Directive. The Authority has attended to conferences and workshops in relation to both the INSPIRE Directive and Copernicus, with the aim of increasing its knowledge on these matters. The Authority ensures that the knowledge acquired is channelled to all other Units, in particular to the GIS users so as to ensure maximum gain of such opportunities. During 2018 ERA has also co-ordinated a training course about the INSPIRE Directive and its harmonisation process.

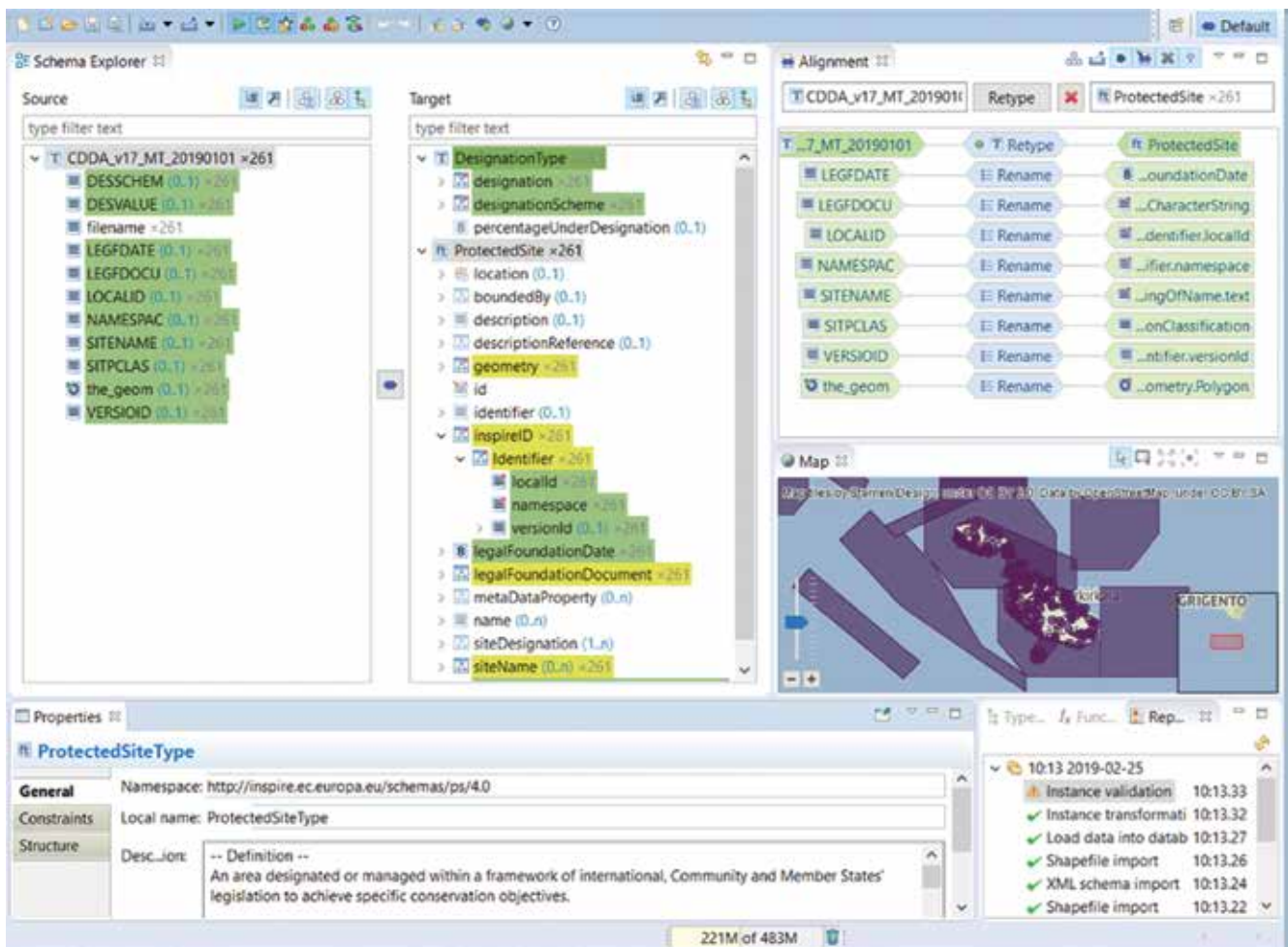


Figure 5: An open HALE Project, depicting the alignments between the source shapefile & target INSPIRE schema

9.0 CORPORATE SERVICES

The Corporate Services Directorate continued to focus its efforts in all areas falling under its responsibility in order for the Authority to achieve its strategic and regulatory objectives.

The Corporate Services Directorate is responsible with the provision of Human Resources, Administration, ICT and Financial operational support for the Authority. Throughout this period under review, the Directorate continued to determinedly fulfill its role throughout the recruitment processes, in order for the Authority to conclude its allocated HR plan. Here one must also bear in mind that some positions require potential applicants having degree educational levels along with working experience and given the highly competitive labor market it is not always easy to populate such positions. Notwithstanding, the Directorate has ensured that the tasked objectives are met through continuous efforts both within the Units of the Directorate and close collaboration with other units within the Authority.

A number of operational Policies and Procedures have been established and circulated whilst others are underway. All Corporate Services Units have worked in tandem and significant progress was also registered in both ICT projects, structural and refurbishing works in order to facilitate flexible and improved work practices and environment. Administrative work is expected to increase due to the nature and the progressively significant growth of the Authority's remits. All these efforts were carried out through robust and proper budgetary controls duly reinforced with periodical reporting to MFIN, ERA Board and Management.

The Corporate Service Directorate has also managed to provide ongoing support aimed at securing human resources needs by ensuring ongoing academic exposure

through participation in over 267 training courses both locally and abroad.

The Corporate Services Directorate also managed to initiate and setup a professional and fully compliant framework in the wake of more robust data protection regulations through GDPR. These efforts are also backed through the gradual formulation and launch of several operational procedures along with the introduction of a formal GDPR compliant Human Resources Operational Manual during early 2019. The latter document will be backed by a specific GDPR compliant IT manual drawn up to cater for ERAs needs.

Since its inception, the Authority has always promoted the participation and/or organisation of activities aimed at social interaction, team building, charity and the community. During 2018, ERA together with two internal support groups namely UNITE & Flimkien Fund organised seven (7) activities. These consisted of:

- Participation in the yearly 60-hour football marathon organised by Puttinu Cares;
- Offsite Team building activities for all ERA officers incorporating interactive, team-building games;
- Participation in the efforts to raise funds in order to help the Association for Abandoned Animals (AAA) in their ambitious project to build a new shelter for abandoned dogs;
- Evening Gathering – An offsite evening gathering was also organised after working hours to promote social interaction amongst officers in a different setting / environment;
- Pink October – A dress down activity with a touch of pink aimed at raising funds and awareness in support of Pink October;

■ Voluntary day with the participation of forty [40] officers aimed at performing voluntary work including painting, cooking, landscaping and cleaning at 'Dar Niki Cassar', one of the YMCA homes; and

■ A team building during the Christmas period; duly followed up by a get-together aimed at thanking all its officers for their efforts and dedication during the year.

Going forward, the main challenge of the Authority is to maintain the high work spirit and enthusiasm thereby ensuring continuity of current drive and efforts. As new employees join, further initiatives will be undertaken and progress will continue to be recorded.

Against this background, the Corporate Services Directorate managed to work with and achieve the following major objectives.

9.1 Administration

The Administration Unit within the Corporate Services Directorate is accountable for ensuring the smooth day-to-day operations within the Authority, which include Project Implementation, Procurement, Registry, Front Office and Health & Safety and Security.

9.1.1 Project Implementation – National Funded Projects

In 2018, the Authority continued on the extensive refurbishing project of Hexagon House aimed at ensuring comfort, efficiency and the uninterrupted operations of the Authority. Works included the continuation of the overhaul of office space on all the building's floors with changes being done both to the design and layout of the offices and the respective ancillary services such as data networks, electricity and the procurement of new office furniture. Towards the end of the year, the focus has shifted on the ground floor whereby a new boardroom / meeting rooms, a server room and other facilities are planned / designed and are targeted for completion by the second quarter of 2019. Furthermore, the building's foundation and structural testing have also been conducted in

order to ascertain the possibility of additional structural developments of Hexagon House complex to host additional employees for the year to come.

Preparatory works were also carried out for the setting up and equipping of a new air monitoring station in Xemxija, and to maintain / incorporate improvements in the other monitoring stations falling under the Authority's jurisdiction.

9.1.2 Project Implementation – EU Funded projects

The centralising of support services offered to technical officers through the Administration Unit on EU funded projects has left its desired impact. Throughout 2018, the Unit assisted in the implementation of five (5) projects benefitting from various EU funding sources. The Unit has ensued the required daily coordination with both principals and other stakeholders whilst also taking on the task to ensure the timely and adequate reporting.

9.1.3 Procurement and Travel Arrangements

As of the 23rd January 2018, through L.N.26 of 2018, the Environment and Resources Authority became officially part of the Ministerial Procurement Unit (MPU). Throughout 2018, the Administration Unit has embarked on a number of procurement procedures in order to acquire the necessary services, supplies and/or works in line with the Authority's exigencies. In addition, a total number of 323 travel arrangements have been administered by this Unit. These arrangements included the provision of per diem money and logistical services during conferences carried out both locally and abroad.

9.1.4 Support Services and Health & Safety

In 2018, the Administration unit with the assistance of third party consultants focused on implementing and monitoring a number of risk assessments conducted during the previous year in accordance with the national Occupational Health and Safety legislation. This includes the provision of adequate vaccination depending on type of duties, and the provision of protective equipment

including specialised equipment related to enforcement and laboratory related duties. In addition, a number of preventive maintenance agreements have been drawn-up and signed to ensure that equipment installed within Hexagon House and the monitoring stations around Malta are kept well, serviced and maintained.

9.1.5 Registry

Registry is a major function within the Authority, since it is responsible for the creation and monitoring of various procedures and policies linked to documentation workflows and management. During 2018, the Unit embarked on a project aimed at efficiently stocktaking, scanning and archiving existing documentation through standardized procedures and procurement of adequate mobile shelving. This function is also responsible for ERAs front desk reception services including the handling of incoming calls and mail. During its full year of operations, the Authority's IVR system handled over 4160 calls, 44% of which were directly serviced by the registry team whilst the other calls were routed to other specialized units within ERA.

On the other hand, the amount of mail recorded to have been received by ERA this year decreased to just under 7,000 items, most certainly due to the fact that a number of applications started being received through e-forms and no longer in hard copy format. The amount of outgoing mail increased from approximately 8,000 items to 11,085 items, an increase of 38.6% over 2017.

9.2 ICT

In 2018, the ICT unit focused on increasing the quality functions of the Authority. ERAs application forms have been successfully migrated onto new e-platforms. ERAs new IT network is now fully operational and significant progress has been registered where MIS related projects including GIS are involved.

Even though this unit is still undermanned, throughout the year significant results were recorded through:

- The launch of the Environmental Assessment Unit Information System (EAU IS). A fully fledged case management system which provides a reliable and optimized workflow system to handle the Planning Authority consultation process;
- A full conversion of all ERA application forms onto the digital ALOAHA platform. All forms are now available digitally via service.gov.mt;
- Launch of three Waste eforms which are accessible via EID as part of the maltaapps platform under the name ewasp; and
- The completion of the network infrastructure upgrade including CAT6A FTP, OM3 fibre and fully redundant core switches with dual fibre redundant links.

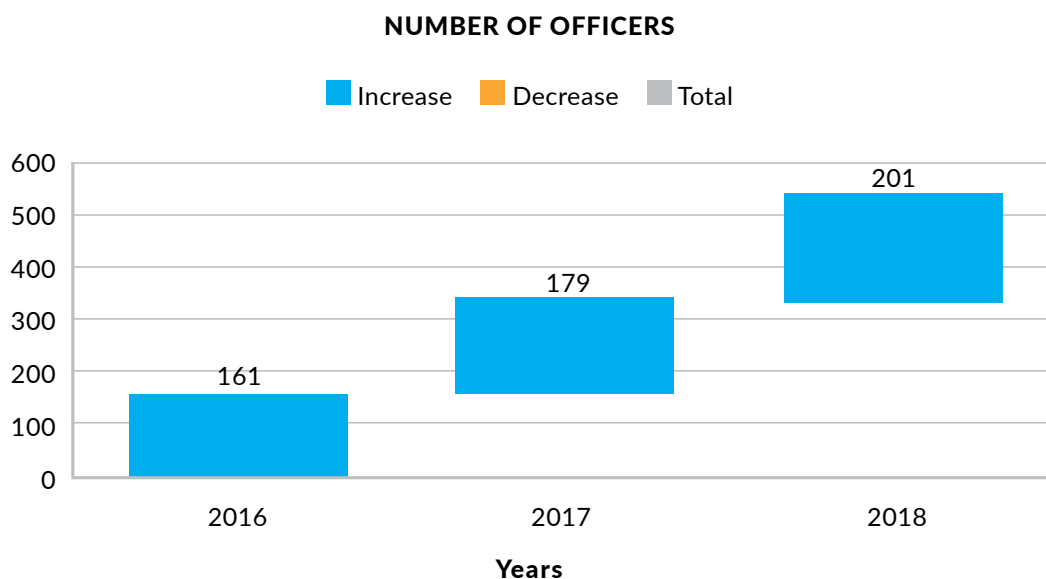
9.3 Human Resources

Recruitment was once again one of the major tasks for this year with several new calls being issued including eight fresh positions, with 36 new employees joining the Authority in 2018. High level meetings and ongoing efforts were carried out in order to transform the Compliance and Enforcement Unit into a fully-fledged Directorate. The Human Resources Unit has also launched a new online Time & Attendance reporting module as well as provided necessary training to all the employees of the Authority. A Performance Management Training Programme was also designed for the Authority and training was provided to 70 officers from Senior Officer Grade upwards on the best practices, psychological impacts and communication issues faced when conducting performance appraisals.

Now reaching a compliment level of 201 employees, it is becoming more evident that this Unit will be more critical towards ensuring best use of the Authority’s human resources and for the promotion of proper and responsible career advancements.

9.3.1 Recruitment Overview

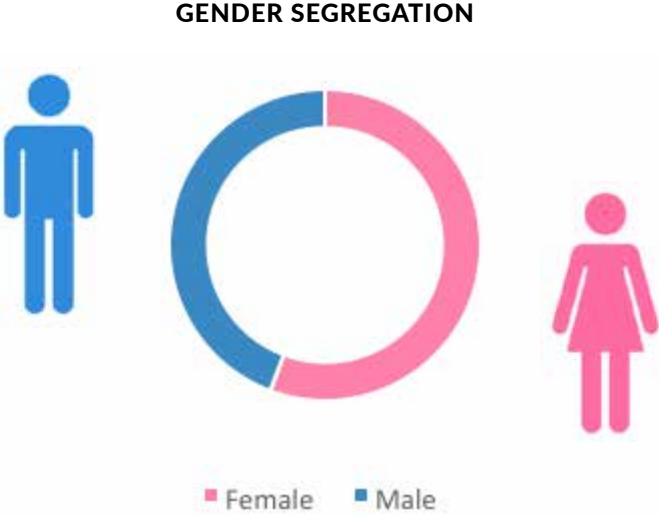
During 2018, the HR Unit conducted an aggressive recruitment drive aimed at securing optimum progress towards achieving the Authority’s full complement levels. In all, 36 new employees joined ERA: two (2) in the CEO’s office, 19 in the Environment & Resources Directorate, seven (7) in the Corporate Services Directorate and eight (8) in the Compliance & Enforcement Directorate. New recruits included a new Chief Executive Officer, a Director for Compliance & Enforcement and an Assistant Director in Business Development. Also catered for 10 new positions involving internal recruitment. The Authority ended the year with a total of 201 officers along with 1 apprentice from MCAST within our ICT Unit as well as gave the opportunity to 31 interns for a couple of weeks in order to acquire a better understanding of Environmental matters.



Graph 2: No of officers between 2016 & 2018

9.3.2 Gender Segregation

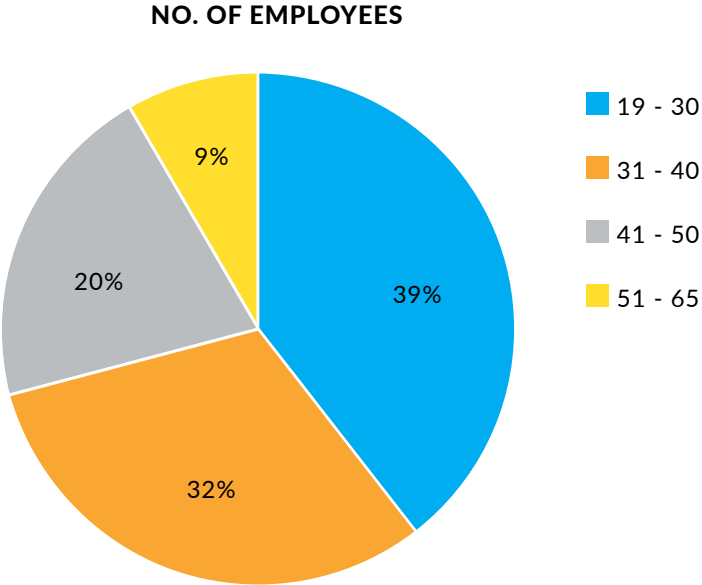
By the end of 2018, the Authority's overall complement consisted of 112 female officers (56%) and 89 male officers (44%).



Graph 3: 2018 Gender Segregation

9.3.3 Age Demographics

In the year 2018, the officer's average age amounted to 35 years.



Graph 4: Age Demographics

The Authority provides various employment opportunities including to newly qualified and experienced persons who are enthusiastic, versatile, willing to work within a team and able to generate new ideas. By securing diversity in age demographics, we have managed to combine experience and maturity with youthful energy & perspective.

9.3.4 Distribution of Officers within the Authority



Graph 5: Distribution of Officers within the Authority

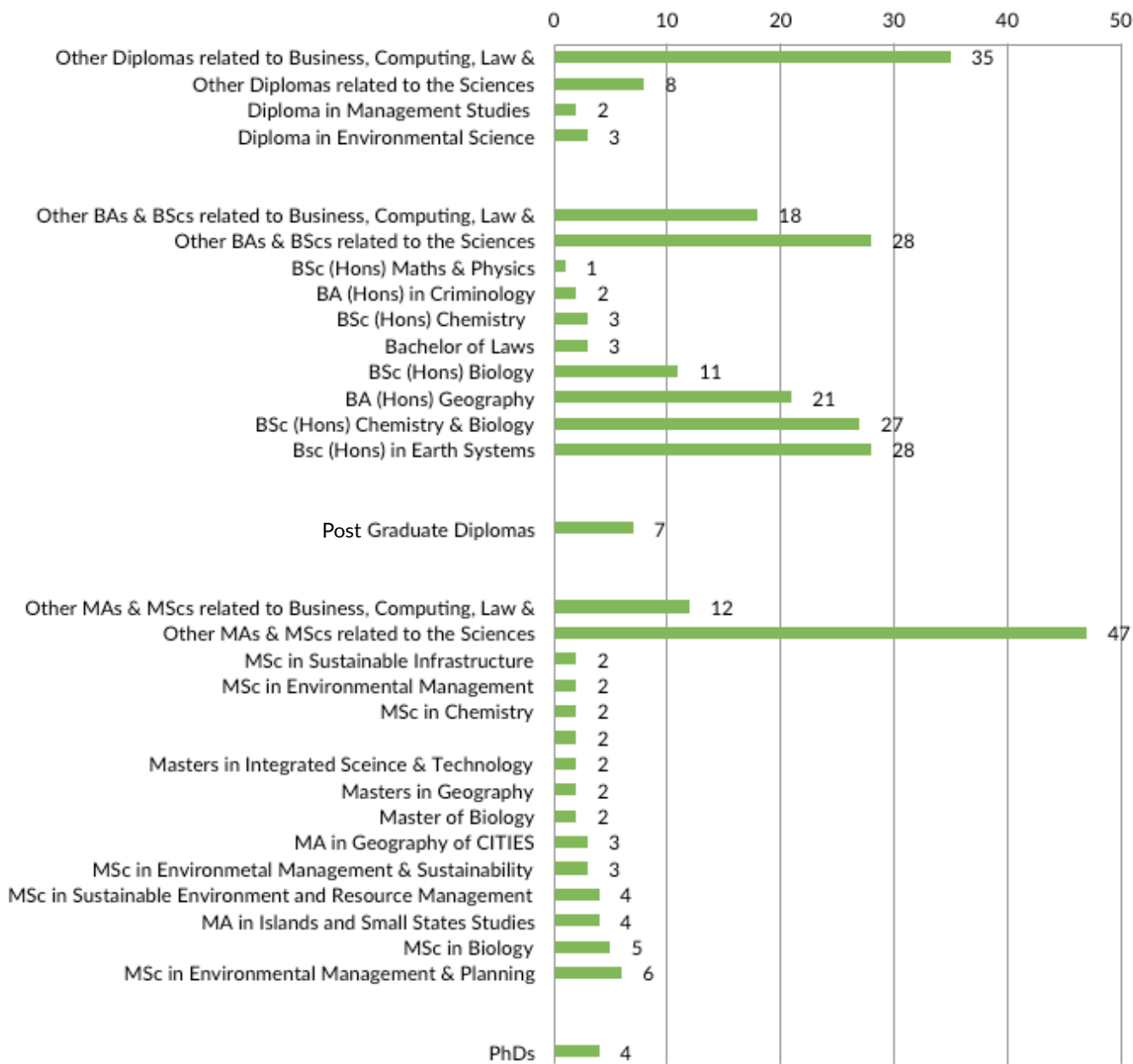
9.3.5 Qualifications

The Authority has a highly skilled workforce in possession of the following academic qualification levels with the highest number of Bachelor and Master Degrees in various Science subjects. The HR Unit objective is to engage the best talent in the field to ensure that the Authority has the human resources it needs to attain its business and strategic goals.

Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Post Graduate Diploma	Master's Degree	PhD
48	142	7	98	4

Table 11: Qualifications by category

ERA OFFICERS QUALIFICATIONS BY CATEGORIES



Graph 6: ERA Officers qualifications by categories

9.4 Finance

During the year ending 2018, the Finance Unit continued to monitor and present monthly Management Accounts and Financial Analysis Reports of the Authority to the Board along with relative trend analysis against previous year figures and budget parameters.

Efforts were made to optimize the handling of cash and initiate appropriate strategies to enhance overall cash position including enhancement of banking services.

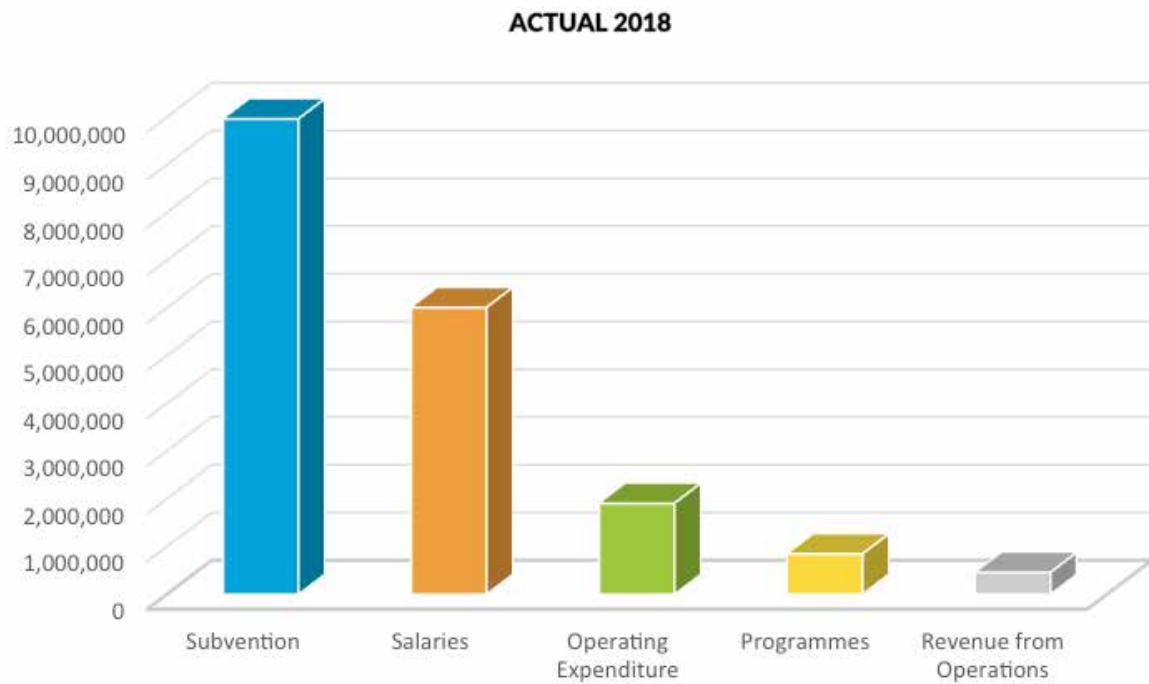
Finance Unit also acted as a point of reference for other Corporate Units namely with the Purchasing Department in order to review problems relating to payments, deliveries and credit notes.

A highly effective Budget Codes system aimed at controlling costs whilst promoting economy and efficiency in outgoings was also implemented during 2017 and proved to be highly effective during 2018. This system will be further enhanced during 2019 when a new automated digitized system will be introduced. This system is meant to reengineer the paper-based process by transforming it into a digital online system.

In the meantime, more measures aimed at increasing operational awareness and monitoring tools especially at individual Unit levels are scheduled to be gradually introduced.

The Finance Unit has also managed to properly apportion and manage the Government subvention which amounted to €9.9 million including the Authority revenues which mainly originated from shipments of Waste and IPPC Fees bringing in a total of €461,307.

Recurrent expenditure for the year was approximately €8.7m with the largest overhead being Payroll related costs, which reached €6m. The other major expenses were mainly service agreements at €220k, travel and conventions at €274k and Programs & Incentives at €848k.



Graph 7: Expenditure breakdown

Description	Actual YTD 2018 in Euro €
Subvention	9,963,226
Salaries	6,012,058
Operating Expenditure	1,908,887
Programmes	848,531
Revenue from Operations	461,307

Table 12: Expenditure breakdown

