

21 Best Environment Management Practice for the Public Administration and Other Priority Sectors

Type of support / service available

JRC develops the EMAS Sectoral Reference Documents (SRDs) on Best Environmental Management Practices (BEMPs) for eleven priority sectors¹. One of the priority sectors is Public Administration where the identified BEMPs focus on how to help public sector organisations, primarily local and regional government, improve their environmental performance, by adopting practical initiatives, measures, techniques and actions implemented by the best performing (frontrunner) organisations within the sector.

The BEMPs also include environmental performance indicators that allow the organisations to monitor the performance of their environmental management, plus benchmarks of excellence, which provide an indication of the levels achieved by the frontrunners and can be taken as inspiration (but are not set as targets to reach).

Public sector organisations that wish to improve their performance can refer to the Best Practice report for this sector, which compiles detailed information on how to implement the BEMPs. The Sectoral Reference Document (SRD) is a shorter legal text which summarises all the BEMPs and presents the environmental performance indicators as well as benchmarks of excellence.

For specific issues, public sector organisations will also usefully refer to the SRDs and best practice reports for other relevant sectors, e.g. waste management or tourism (cf. destination management).

JRC identifies the BEMPs based on a deep analysis of existing publications and through close collaboration with expert stakeholders from the sector, such as waste authorities, waste advisers, NGOs etc.

Relevance for regional authorities

Public Administrations and other organisations throughout the EU can deliver significant environmental benefits by improving their environmental performance, both through their direct environmental impacts and through leveraging improvements in the territory under their administration.

The BEMPs for the Public Administration sector is targeted primarily at local and regional authorities. It provides clear, practical guidance on how to improve their environmental performance, addressing a broad range of issues in the fields of: sustainable offices; sustainable energy and climate change; mobility; local ambient air quality; land use; noise pollution; water supply and waste water management; green urban areas; green public procurement; environmental education; and dissemination of information to citizen and businesses.

Policy context

The work on identifying BEMPs is part of the implementation of the EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme) Regulation, a voluntary framework for organisations to evaluate, report and improve their environmental performance. As such, the EMAS Sectoral Reference Document for the public administration sector is published as a Commission decision and needs to be taken into account by EMAS-registered organisations from the sector.

However, the Document (and the Best Practice report with a more in-depth description of BEMPs) is not only relevant for EMAS verified organisations, but is also intended to be a useful and inspirational reference document for any relevant organisation of the sector. It presents comprehensive best practices that can be broadly applied by companies and local / regional authorities dealing with waste management that wish to improve their environmental performance.

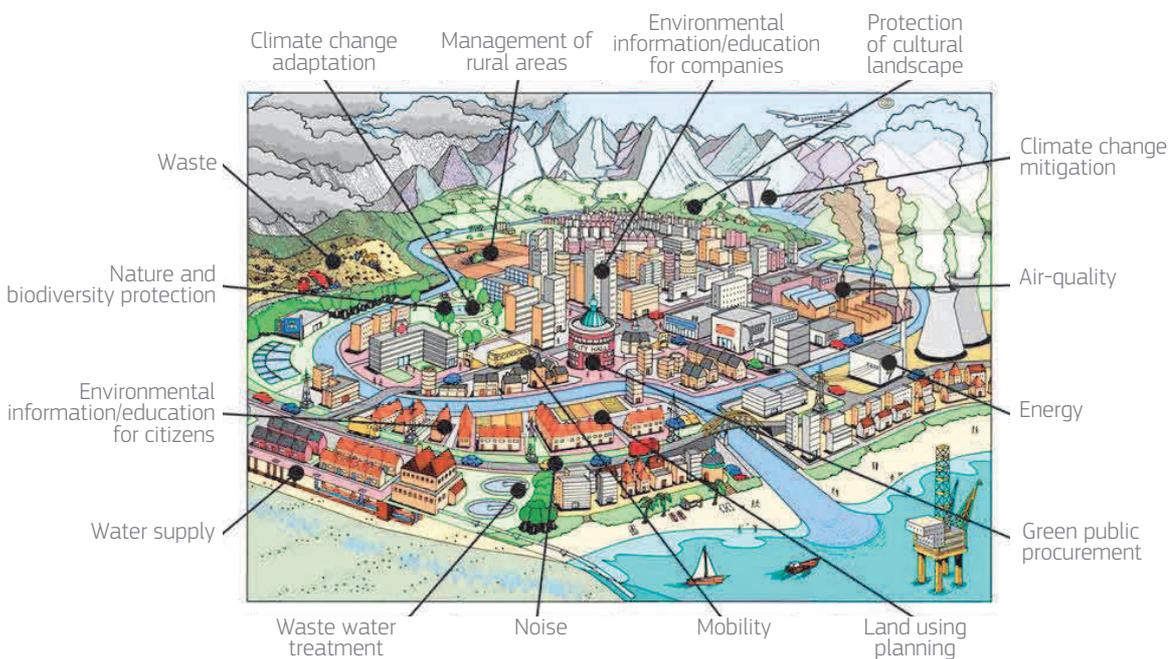
¹ The 11 priority sectors are: Retail, Tourism, Construction, Public Administration, Agriculture, Food and Beverage manufacturing, Electrical and Electronic Equipment manufacturing, Car manufacturing, Waste management, Telecommunication and ICT services and Fabricated Metal Products.

How to use

Public Administrations and other organisations that wish to improve their environmental performance or their environmental management system will find in the BEMPs a relevant updated source of information to achieve these goals. They can use the reference documents to identify the most relevant areas for action.

BEMPs for the sector include three key elements: detailed information on how to implement best practices and address key environmental aspects; environmental performance indicators to monitor their environmental performance through time, or even to compare performance between different sites or organisations; and benchmarks of excellence to provide aspirational references.

The diagram below illustrates the different areas where Public Administrations will find detailed Best Practices to help them reduce their environmental impact.



Areas covered in the Sectoral reference document for the Public Administration on Best Environmental Management Practices.

For instance, a broadly applicable chapter which will be applicable to many sites managed by Public administrations is the one on sustainable offices, addressing issues such as energy and water use, waste production, paper and consumables, commuting and business travel, canteens and coffee bars or the organisation of meetings and events. This chapter is in fact of broader relevance to all office buildings managed by any organisation.

The following website gives access to the best environmental management practices for the Public Administration sector, including the Best Practice report. It also provides contact details and how to get involved: http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/public_admin.html

Organisations interested in waste management can follow the development of the work for that sector at the following link: http://susproc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/activities/emas/waste_mgmt.html

Further information can be also asked via contacting JRC-EMAS-SRD@ec.europa.eu

Impact

The public administration sector is made up of over 90,000 organisations throughout Europe. The vast majority of these organisations are concentrated at local level and fall under the competence of municipalities. The average EU subnational public sector expenditure in 2010 was about 17% of the total GDP. Their engagement in driving society towards sustainability is of great importance. Municipalities and local authorities are responsible for activities ranging from land use planning to waste water treatment or local transport and mobility. They have direct or indirect influence over activities with significant environmental impact. Public administrations taking a leading role can demonstrate what is possible and stimulate others to follow, and implementing best practices can result in a substantial reduction of environmental impact.