

FACT SHEET: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT INSPECTORATE



Undertaking Environmental Compliance and Enforcement



1. WHAT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT INSPECTOR

You may have heard of the “Green Scorpions” in the news. These are, in fact, Environmental Management Inspectors (EMIs) - officials from various national, provincial and municipal government departments designated by the Minister or MEC to monitor compliance with and enforce national environmental legislation. This national network of EMIs will break through the traditional separation between the protection of different aspects of the environment, and will include park rangers and conservation officers, air quality officers, coastal enforcement officers, pollution and waste enforcement officials and officials monitoring urban developments.

2. HOW WILL I RECOGNISE AN EMI?



EMIs can be identified by the EMI logo, which has been designed to represent a shield of protection and enforcement, and the three key areas of enforcement - marine and coastal enforcement (the “blue” issues), biodiversity and conservation enforcement (the “green” issues), and urban development, pollution and waste enforcement (the “brown” issues). EMIs are also issued with standard EMI identity card.



3. WHAT POWERS DO EMIS HAVE?

The National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998 (NEMA) confers a wide range of powers on EMIs to address non-compliances with environmental legislation, including the questioning of witnesses, the copying of documents and the taking of photographs and audiovisual recordings. In certain circumstances, EMIs may even conduct search and seizure operations and arrest an environmental criminal. These EMIs will work hand in hand with members of the South African Police Service and the National Prosecuting Authority to ensure that environmental criminals are brought to book.

However, not all EMIs are criminal investigators; some are empowered to conduct routine inspections, while others undertake administrative enforcement i.e. the issuing of notices and directives.





4. HOW MANY EMIS ARE THERE AND WHERE ARE THEY LOCATED?

There are approximately 3000 designated EMIs across the country. They are employed across all spheres of government responsible for the management of the environment, including national Departments responsible for water and environment, national state entities, such as SANParks, SANBI and Isimangaliso Wetland Park Authorities, provincial parks agencies and environmental authorities; as well as local authorities across the country.

