

# Highlights of 2024/25



Protect Improve Adapt Avoid Warn

## About SEPA

SEPA is Scotland's **principal environmental regulator**. Our mission is to **protect and improve Scotland's environment**, supporting sustainable economic growth and climate resilience.

We are a non-departmental public body and independent advisor on the environment, with approximately 1,250 people working at locations across Scotland. We are accountable to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament.

We play a key role in **climate resilience, flood forecasting and warning, water management, and environmental monitoring and regulatory compliance**.

Our values are:

**Purposeful, Professional and Passionate.**



## Our work

SEPA's work is guided by five strategic pillars:

- **Protect:** Safeguard Scotland's natural resources.
- **Improve:** Enhance environmental quality and biodiversity.
- **Adapt:** Help communities and businesses respond to climate change.
- **Avoid:** Prevent environmental harm through proactive measures.
- **Warn:** Provide timely information and alerts, especially during extreme weather events.

Our approach is set out in our **Corporate Plan 2024-27**, and in our **Annual Operating Plan**. We report progress through our **quarterly corporate performance reports** and **annual reports and accounts**. More information can be found on our [website](#).

In 2024/25 we delivered services within a £105 million budget (£55.4 million through fees and charges, £48.4 million funded by the Scottish Government), demonstrating value for money and financial resilience. SEPA's financial strategy supports long-term sustainability and public sector reform.

# Our plan on a page

<b>Our purpose</b>	To protect and improve the environment in ways that, as far as possible, also create health and well-being benefits and sustainable economic growth.	<b>Our values</b>	<b>Purposeful Professional Passionate</b> 
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<b>Our priorities</b>	Net zero	Climate resilience	Water environment	Resource efficiency	Business environmental performance	Our organisation
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<b>Our 2024/25 Areas of Focus</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome based and collaborative approach to regulation</li> <li>• Industrial decarbonisation</li> <li>• Net zero route map</li> <li>• Flooding approach, systems and products</li> <li>• Integrated and simplified authorisation framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface water flood hazard maps</li> <li>• Drought information products</li> <li>• Drought adaptation</li> <li>• River restoration</li> <li>• Sea lice regulatory framework</li> <li>• E-DNA and chemical screening methodology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended producer responsibility reforms</li> <li>• Digital waste tracking</li> <li>• Environmental crime</li> <li>• Environmental performance assessment scheme</li> </ul>

<b>Our portfolios</b>	Governance, Performance & Engagement	Finance, Modernisation & Digital	People, Workspaces & Development	Data, Evidence & Innovation	Regulation, Business & Environment
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## A message from our Chair and Chief Executive



**Nicole Paterson**  
Chief Executive

Throughout 2024/25, protecting and improving Scotland's environment has been the focus of our activities while driving improved health and wellbeing, and sustainable economic growth. Every day, our colleagues across Scotland work to protect the environment, regulating those causing environmental harm, and warning and advising against flooding and flood risk.

Last year was significant for us at the Agency. With Government priorities in mind, we set out on a multi-year journey to reset, repositioning ourselves to meet future challenges and setting out our intentions in our new three-year Corporate Plan with five strategic priorities. Our Annual Operating Plan 2024/25 detailed where we would focus our activities to play our lead role in safeguarding Scotland's environment. Building on strong foundations, we set out to deliver meaningful change with ambition, confidence and collaboration.



**Lisa Tennant**  
Chair

This summary provides some highlights of our achievements across the year. The Agency's strong leadership and dedication of teams is shown in our performance as we achieved 11 of our 12 measures, as set out in our Annual Operating Plan 2024/25. We delivered this within budget, and while operating in a challenging fiscal context, demonstrated real value for money for the public purse.

We are immensely proud of what the Agency has delivered for Scotland. The depth of professionalism and passion our teams have for protecting Scotland's environment is delivering every day for Scotland's communities. We will continue to lead this significant delivery for Scotland into 2025/26.

For the future of the environment.

# Delivering for Scotland 2024/25 - a year of progress

Below is a high-level snapshot of our delivery and progress in 2024/25. Our [Annual Report and Accounts 2024-2025](#) provides full context and detail on our performance last year.

**Net Zero:** In April 2024, we launched our [Net Zero SEPA Routemap](#), setting our ambition to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2035 and outlining the actions we will take over the next two years.

13.5% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions in 2023 Scottish Pollutant Release Inventory (SPRI) data.

30% reduction in our private vehicle emissions

**Climate resilience:** We understand the devastating impacts flooding can have on people, communities, the environment and the economy. We used an innovative map-based platform to engage on spatial data and gathered evidence from the people of Scotland to review the Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVAs) and Local Plan Districts for the next cycle of flood risk management planning. We published the revised PVAs in December 2024. The Local Plan Districts were unchanged and can be viewed on our website.

Flooding advice given on 1,478 planning applications

25 water scarcity reports issued

Issued: 289 flood alerts, 370 flood warnings and 3 severe flood warnings

Launched the Satellite Emergency Mapping Service (SEMS)

**Water environment:** We worked on 44 river restoration projects to create better environments for wildlife and people and mitigate the impacts of flooding. On the River Leven in Fife, in partnership with Fife Council and Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, two barriers to fish migration were removed opening up 165km of the catchment to migratory fish. The work is contributing to the River Leven meeting its objectives under the River Basin Management Plan for Scotland.

86% of Scotland's water environment is good or better condition for water quality


Reopened 170km to migratory fish

**Resource efficiency:** In 2024/25, our teams worked to support the development and introduction of a Digital Waste Tracking Service. This service aims to make it easier for service users to comply with waste regulations, make it harder for criminals to move waste under the radar, and make it easier for us to target our regulatory efforts and our partners to identify circular economy opportunities.

14.8% reduction of household waste landfilled




7 fixed monetary penalties issued



**Business environmental performance:** The new statutory Code of Practice for Materials Facilities (recyclate bulking and sorting facilities) required the Agency to change the way we regulate this area. The new Code sets out more extensive sampling and reporting requirements for operators, that will align with the introduction of a packaging extended producer responsibility system. During 2024/25, we produced extra guidance to help operators comply. As part of the implementation, we reviewed and are consulting on a revised charging scheme, based on our revised regulatory approach.

92% increase in interventions used to tackle environmental crime




104 illegal sites closed, up from 73 in previous year



**Our organisation and transformation:** We published more public register records in relation to authorisations for waste, water and all industrial activities, delivering improved digital services and making high quality environmental data and insights available and accessible to everyone.

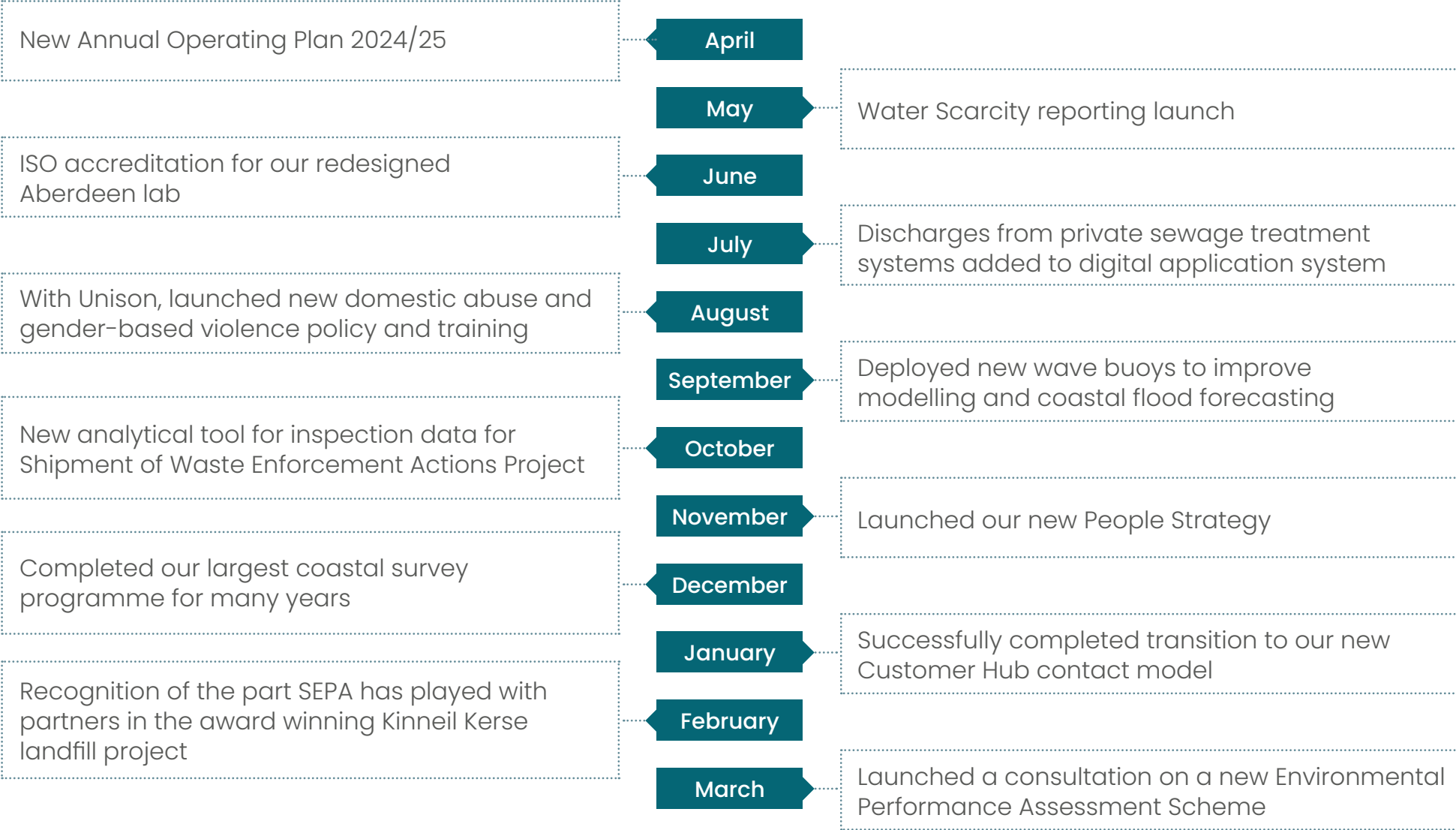
94.8% response rate for Freedom of Information and Environmental Information requests against 90% target



5.6% efficiency savings delivered against 3% target



# Launches and achievements in 2024/25



## Looking ahead

As SEPA moves into 2025/26, it remains focused on innovation, collaboration, and impact. With climate change accelerating and environmental pressures mounting, SEPA's role as Scotland's environmental regulator is more vital than ever.

From flood forecasting to waste enforcement, river restoration to digital transformation, SEPA is delivering for Scotland's environment, communities, and future.

To find out more about SEPA and what we do, please visit our [website](#).

You can also sign up to receive our regular [SEPA Update](#).





For the future of our environment

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