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**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

**Evaluation of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Environment  
Information and Observation Network (EIONET)**

{SWD(2018) 471 final}

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Regulation<sup>1</sup> setting up the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) came into force in 1990 with the aim of providing the European Union and its Member States "with objective, reliable and comparable information at European level" and the "necessary technical and scientific support" to enable them "to take the requisite measures to protect the environment, to assess the results of such measures and to ensure that the public is properly informed about the state of the environment", and so to "achieve the aims of environmental protection and improvement laid down by the Treaty and by successive Community action programmes on the environment, as well as of sustainable development."

During the 2005 Budget Discharge procedure for the EEA, the European Parliament requested<sup>2</sup> that "before 1 January 2010 and every five years thereafter, the Agency commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements on the basis of its founding Regulation and the work programmes decided by the Management Board". A first evaluation was conducted against that background and published March 2009, a second one covering the period 2008/9 to 2012 was published in Spring 2013<sup>3</sup>.

The Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies<sup>4</sup> agreed in July 2012 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, foresees that "each agency's founding act should provide for a periodic overall evaluation, to be commissioned by the Commission. [...] Evaluations should be conducted every five years and on the occasion of every second evaluation, a sunset/review clause should be applied"<sup>5</sup>. Although the EEA founding act does not reflect yet the Common Approach, the latter serves as a basis for the forthcoming evaluation. Finally, the Commission's Better Regulation package<sup>6</sup> foresees regular evaluation of EU interventions of over €5 million, which is therefore applicable to the EEA as EU subsidy is well above that threshold). The evaluation subsequently follows the Better Regulation guidelines.

### 1.1. Purpose of the evaluation and evaluation questions

Against that background, the process for the current evaluation started in 2016 with the publication of the Evaluation Roadmap<sup>7</sup> by the Commission, after consultation of the EEA's Management Board.

The evaluation follows the Better Regulation Guidelines and thus includes analysis of five main themes: Effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and European added

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<sup>1</sup> Founding Regulation EEC 1210/90 was revised twice in 1999 and 2003 with minor changes, and was further codified under Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the European Environment Agency and the European Environment Information and Observation Network, OJ L126 of 21.5.2009

<sup>2</sup> *European Parliament resolution of 24 April 2007 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on the discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2005* - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0117+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/governance/eea-evaluations>

<sup>4</sup> [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies/overhaul\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies/overhaul_en)

<sup>5</sup> see point 60 of the Common Approach

<sup>6</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/better-regulation-guidelines.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018\\_env\\_002\\_eea\\_evaluation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018_env_002_eea_evaluation_en.pdf)

value. Furthermore, the evaluation has been looking at weaknesses and strengths of EEA founding regulation and how it is implemented, in relation to the model envisaged in the above-mentioned Common Approach on decentralised agencies, in order to identify any particular needs against the background of tasks currently allocated to the Agency. This assessment is provided in section 5.6.

As part of the evaluation, the Commission has assessed the impact of new technological developments (like enhanced Earth observation capabilities provided by the GMES/Copernicus programmes) on the work of the Agency, in particular on how they have affected key deliverables of the Agency like the 2015 State of the Environment Report (SOER).

## **1.2. Scope of the evaluation**

The evaluation covers all the work of the EEA and EIONET in the period mid-2012 until end-2016 and takes into account previous evaluations and resulting recommendations by the Management Board.

Compared with above mentioned previous evaluations (published in 2009 and 2013), this evaluation has a much broader scope: while previous evaluations were focusing on the effectiveness and efficiency of the EEA, the present evaluation includes the relevance, coherence and EU value added criteria, analyses in-depth the functioning of the EIONET network and assesses whether the founding regulation is fit-for-purpose.

The geographical scope of the evaluation goes beyond the EU, as it includes also non-EU Countries which are either member countries of the EEA (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey) or co-operating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Kosovo<sup>8</sup>).

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<sup>8</sup> Under UNSCR 1244/99

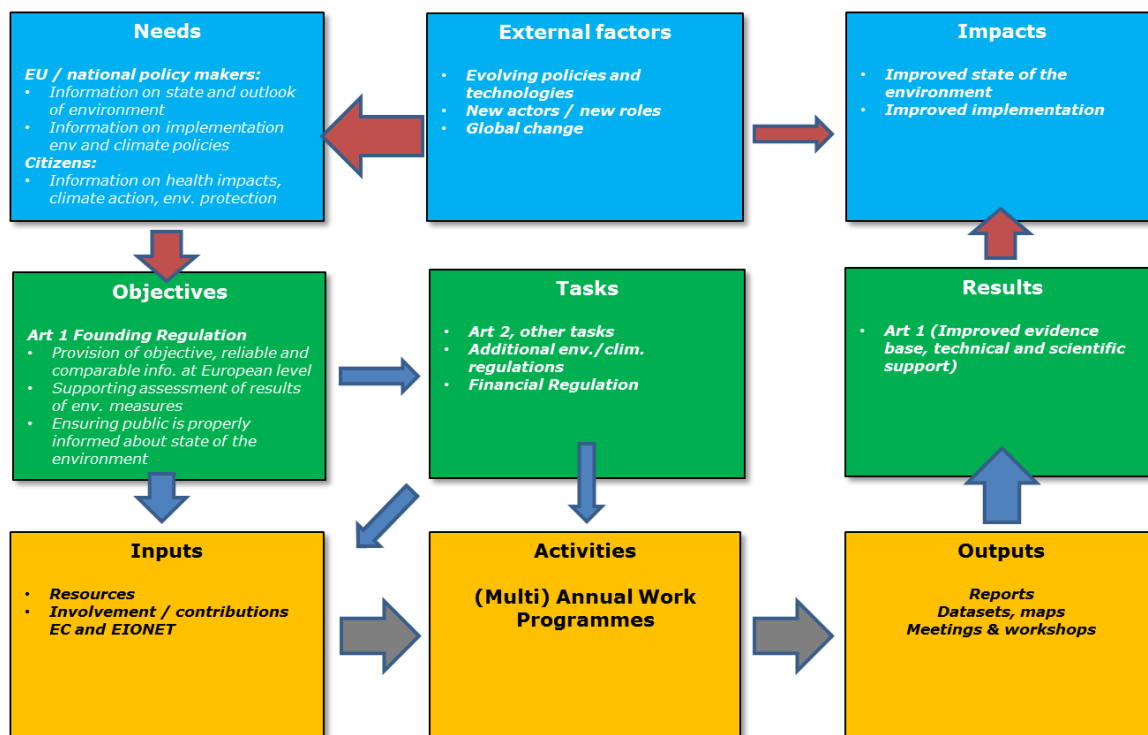
## 2. BACKGROUND TO THE INTERVENTION

### 2.1. Intervention logic of the evaluation

The figure below provides a simplified description of how the EEA and EIONET were expected to work. It highlights the dual level of analysis used in most of the evaluation questions, against a policy framework of **Needs** and **Impacts** (affected by **External factors**):

- The regulatory level, whether the Founding regulation is fit for purpose (**Objectives** → **Tasks** → **Results**)
- The operational level looking at the actual impact of the resources allocated in the period of the evaluation (**Inputs** → **Activities** → **Outputs**).

*Figure 1 – Intervention Logic*



- **Needs** are the EU and Member States need of information on the state of the environment and implementation of the environmental and climate change policies in order to further implement existing policies and legislation, and - more forward looking - to develop better policies and legislation. They are identified specifically in Treaty environmental provision<sup>9</sup>, in the EU Environmental Action Programme, EU and Commission policy priorities, and in international conventions in the fields of environment and climate. Needs are also the public's need for environmental information to protect human health, take climate action and to contribute to environmental protection.
- **External Factors** includes evolving policies influencing environmental and climate change policies, emerging technologies affecting notably the collection, treatment and accessibility of large amount of data, the new actors or changing

<sup>9</sup> Notably Title XX – Environment (Articles 191-193) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

roles of existing institutions or bodies and the global state of the environment and global climate change issues.

- **Impacts** can be related to the improvement of the state of the environment and on an effective implementation of environmental and climate measures and policies.
- **Objectives** The objective of the EEA, as set out in the Founding Regulation (article 1), is “to provide the Community and the Member States with objective, reliable and comparable information at European level enabling them to take the requisite measures to protect the environment, to assess the results of such measures and to ensure that the public is properly informed about the state of the environment, and to that end the necessary technical and scientific support.” As such, this evaluation assesses the EEA and EIONET using the following three sub-objectives for their work:
  1. Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level
  2. Supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures
  3. Ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment
- **Tasks** refers first and foremost to the 15 “core” tasks in Article 2 of the Regulation (see box below).

**Box 1 - 15 “core tasks” specified in Article 2 of EEA Founding regulation**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) To establish, in cooperation with the Member States, and coordinate the Network (EIONET);</li> <li>b) To provide the Community and the Member States with the objective information necessary for framing and implementing sound and effective environmental policies;</li> <li>c) To assist the monitoring of environmental measures through the appropriate support for reporting requirements, in accordance with the aim of the coordinating reporting;</li> <li>d) To advise individual Member States on the development, establishment and expansion of their systems for the monitoring of environmental measures;</li> <li>e) To record, collate and assess data on the state of the environment;</li> <li>f) To help ensure that environmental data at European level are comparable;</li> <li>g) To promote the incorporation of European environmental information into international environment monitoring programmes;</li> <li>h) To publish a report on the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment every five years, supplemented by indicator reports focusing upon specific issues;</li> <li>i) To stimulate the development and application of environmental forecasting techniques so that adequate preventive measures can be taken in good time;</li> <li>j) To stimulate the development of methods of assessing the cost of damage to the environment and the costs of environmental preventive, protection and restoration policies;</li> <li>k) To stimulate the exchange of information on the technologies available for preventing or reducing damage to the environment;</li> <li>l) To cooperate with Community bodies and programmes and other bodies;</li> <li>m) To ensure the broad dissemination of reliable and comparable environmental information to the general public and, to this end, to promote the use of new telematics technology for this purpose;</li> <li>n) To support the Commission in the process of exchange of information on the development of environmental assessment methodologies and best practice;</li> <li>o) To assist the Commission in the diffusion of information on the results of relevant environmental research and in a form which can best assist policy development</li> </ul>
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These tasks can be allocated to the 3 objectives mentioned above as follows:

Specific objectives	Tasks related to the specific objectives <sup>10</sup>
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<sup>10</sup> Note, some tasks are to an extent cross cutting but are to the extent possible allocated to the tasks they best relate to.

1. Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level	a, b, c, e, f, g, h, l, o
2. Supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures	d, i, j, k, n (+ c, h, l, o)
3. Ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment	m (+h, l)

EEA tasks also include those related to the programming and budgeting (governance system set out in Articles 8-13), which are also prescribed by the Framework Financial Regulation of decentralised agencies<sup>11</sup>.

Driven by evolving policies as "external factor", roles and tasks of the EEA also stem from other legislation, in particular the Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Monitoring Mechanism) and the Implementing Decision 2011/850/EU of Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC, which both provide a detailed description of EEA tasks. Other legislation includes a less prescriptive description of EEA tasks, mentioning the Agency should work "in co-operation" with the Commission. This is the case of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC, the E-PRTR Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive 2001/81/EC (repealed by Directive (EU) 2016/2284). The details of the tasks set in legislation are provided in Annex 5.

Finally, further roles and tasks are defined by separate agreements e.g. on Copernicus and capacity building for non-EU countries.

- **Results** refer to the quantity and quality of the information produced by the EEA and EIONET and of the provision of technical and scientific support to the intended beneficiaries. They are monitored via indicators.
- **Inputs** refers on the one hand to the annual financial resources granted to the EEA (from EU budget and contributions from non-EU member countries), and on the other hand, to other contributions from Member Countries, European Commission and stakeholders in terms of data submission, participation in meeting, review of draft reports, etc.
- **Activities:** The specific planned activities at the operational level and as expressed in (Multi) Annual Work Programmes. The present multiannual work programme (MAWP) is the fifth of its kind and covers the period 2014-2020. It was originally adopted in 2013 for the period 2014-2018. The period of validity was further extended to 2020 during the 77th MB meeting in December 2016. to fit to the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP) and the current MFF period.

***Box 2 Strategic actions of the Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2020***

The Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2020 is built on 4 key strategic areas, with areas 1 to 3 reflecting the sub-objectives 1 to 3, sub-divided in 22 Strategic Actions

**Strategic Area 1: Informing policy implementation**

<sup>11</sup> Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1271/2013), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32013R1271>



- SA1.1 Air pollution, transport and noise
- SA1.2 Industrial pollution
- SA1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy
- SA1.4 Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation
- SA1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems
- SA1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime activities
- SA1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests
- SA1.8 Urban, land use and soil
- SA1.9 Waste and material resources

**Strategic Area 2: Assessing systemic challenges**

- SA2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment
- SA2.2 Environment, human health and well-being
- SA2.3 Megatrends and transitions
- SA2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting

**Strategic Area 3: Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use**

- SA3.1 Networking and partnerships
- SA3.2 Technical systems development
- SA3.3 Monitoring, data and information management
- SA3.4 Communication, outreach and user analysis
- SA3.5 Quality management and operational services
- SA3.6 Copernicus operational services
- SA3.7 Capacity building in West Balkan and European Neighbourhood countries

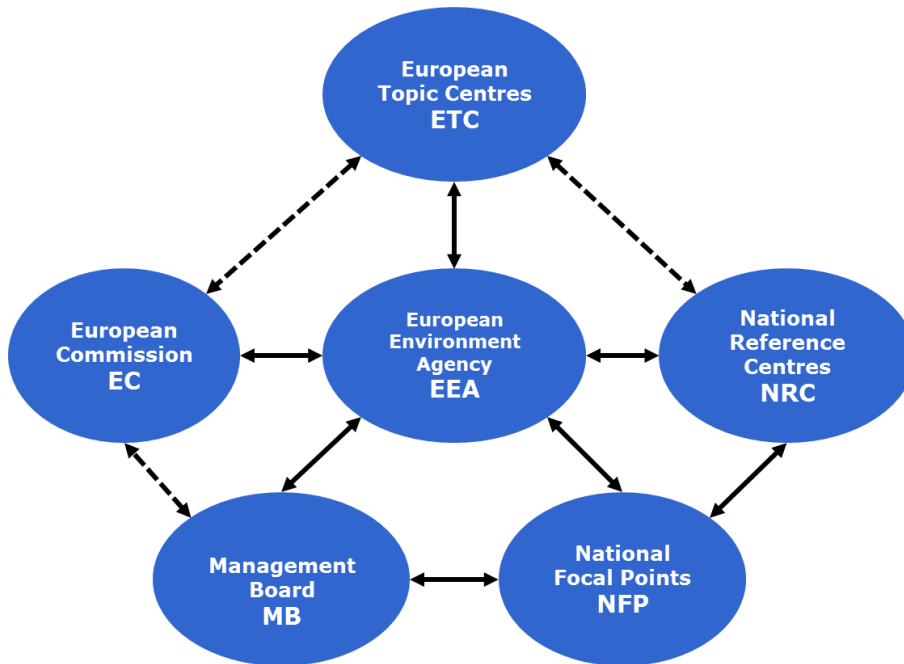
**Strategic Area 4: EEA management**

- SA4.1 Governance and management
- SA4.2 Administration

- **Outputs:** The immediate products of activities (most often tangible in the form of e.g. reports, briefings, indicators, information systems, maps, workshops, etc.).

**2.2. Key actors: EEA governance and EIONET structure**

*Figure 2 – EIONET structure*



**The Management Board (MB)** is the governing body of the Agency and is composed of one representative of each Member Country<sup>12</sup>, two representatives of the Commission and two representatives designated by the European Parliament (Article 8). The Management Board adopts the multi-annual programme, the annual work programme and annual reports of the Agency's activities. The Bureau of the MB is composed of the Chairperson, up to five vice-chairpersons, one Commission representative and a member designated by the European Parliament. The Management Board can delegate executive decisions to the Bureau. The EU Framework Financial Regulation (EU FFR)<sup>13</sup> also defines the mandate of the MB.

**The Executive Director** is the legal representative of the Agency, and is responsible to the Management Board for the proper implementation of the work programmes and for the day-to-day administration of the Agency (Article 9).

Following the Regulation, the EEA shall:

- Draft multi-annual work programmes and annual work programmes and submit them to the Management Board for approval after consulting with the Scientific Committee and the Commission
- Draft annual reports and submit them to the Management Board for approval
- Draft the budget (including establishment plan) of the agency for each financial year and submit it to the Management Board
- Prepare accounts and send them to the Commission

The Management Board of the EEA has the following responsibilities in respect to governance and priority setting<sup>14</sup>:

- Approving multi-annual and annual work programmes as well as annual reports
- Designating the topic centres in the Member States
- Taking decisions regarding the component elements of the EIONET
- Adopting the financial rules applicable to the agency
- Preparing an estimate of revenue and expenditure, including staffing levels, for the following financial year
- Adopting the budget
- Delivering opinion on the agency's final accounts

The Commission has the following roles:

- Using the information provided by the EEA in ensuring implementation of Community legislation (ref. Article 2(e))
- Coordinating with the EEA (JRC and ESTAT in particular, ref. art. 15)
- Designating two members for the Management Board. It decided in 2010 that the two representatives come from DG ENV (also member of the Bureau) and DG RTD, with alternates from Eurostat and JRC. In addition DG CLIMA acts as observer in the Board and the Bureau.

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<sup>12</sup> Representatives of non-EU member countries have no voting rights.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation 1271/2013/EU

<sup>14</sup> In addition, the MB should also adopt rules of procedure for the governance bodies, appoint the Executive Director, designate members of the Scientific Committee, approve Eurostat work programme in the field of the environment, adopt implementing rules to Staff Regulations and CEOS. The EU FFR includes additional tasks such as appoint accounting officer and internal audit capacity and specific tasks in relation to the budget and accounts

- Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, as mentioned in the allocation of portfolios<sup>15</sup> is responsible for relations with the EEA, and therefore DG ENV acts as the “partner DG”.
- Consulting with the EEA on the multi-annual and annual work programmes
- Consulting with the agency on the financial rules
- Assessing agency needs, in particular in the preparation of the Draft Budget and in the implementation of the annual budget in terms of both Union subsidy and staffing levels
- Consolidating the accounts and sending to Court of Auditors

The role of the Member States involves:

- Cooperating with the agency and contribute to the work of the EIONET in accordance with the work programmes by collecting, collating and analysing data nationwide
- Designating a member of the Management Board
- Keeping the agency informed about the component elements of the EIONET in their countries
- Designating a national focal point (NFP)
- Identifying institutions that can act as topic centres

The Founding Regulation establishes the EIONET (Article 4) as outlined above by requesting Member States to nominate NFPs and cooperate with the Agency by keeping the Agency informed about the main component elements of their national environment information networks and by collecting, collating and analysing data nationwide. The Member States may also identify institutions or organisations that can act as topic centres, with which the Agency can conclude agreements. The EEA is responsible for developing the network and coordinating its activities. The network consists<sup>16</sup> of the EEA, the National Focal Points (NFPs), the National Reference Centres (NRCs) and the European Topic Centres (ETCs):

- **The National Focal Point (NFP)** is an expert or group of experts nominated and funded by an EEA Member or cooperating country to be the primary link and contact between the country and EEA, other EIONET members, and other relevant actors. The NFPs coordinate the national contribution to the implementation of the EEA Strategy and its Work Program and support relevant activities in the country. Their organisation and working methods differ from country to country. This partly reflects the diverse nature of the national structures established for the environmental administration and the related national information systems and networks. The NFPs are based in environment Ministries, Agencies or other similar institutions.
- **National Reference Centres (NRCs)** are the main entities to work with the EEA and relevant ETCs in specific environmental areas related to the EEA work programme. These institutions are nominated by the member or cooperating countries for their expertise within the specific areas for the purpose of technical coordination and support to the Agency in terms of data and expertise. They work with the ETCs either directly or through the NFPs.

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<sup>15</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commissioners-college-structure-annex\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/commissioners-college-structure-annex_en.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.eionet.europa.eu/about>

- **European Topic Centres (ETCs)** are centres of thematic expertise contracted by the EEA to carry out specific tasks. The ETCs, working together with EIONET countries, facilitate the provision of data and information from the countries and deliver reports and other services to the EEA and EIONET. In the evaluation period there have been six ETCs: 1) Air pollution and climate change mitigation; 2) Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation; 3) Inland, coastal and marine waters; 4) Biological diversity; 5) Urban, land and soil systems; and 6) Waste and material in green economy.

Finally, the **Scientific Committee (SC)** consists of members specifically qualified in the field of the environment (Article 10). The task of the Committee is to assist the Management Board and the Executive Director by giving its opinion on the multi-annual and annual work programmes, and on the recruitment of the Agency's scientific staff, as well as advising on any scientific matter concerning the Agency's activities.

### **2.3. Baseline and other points of comparison**

Despite the absence of an ex-ante estimation of impacts at the time the Founding Regulation was drafted, on effectiveness and relevance the baseline of what is expected to happen is provided by the EEA Founding Regulation and the Multi-Annual Work Programmes. For efficiency, coherence and EU added value, the baseline taken by this evaluation is the no Agency or EIONET scenario. This is to some extent a difficult baseline to envisage because the Agency has existed for so many years, and is fully embedded in the environmental policy arena. Nevertheless, it is obvious that for the added value and efficiency criteria it has the advantage of being a clear point of comparison where all costs associated with the Agency are clearly included in the analysis. The same in principle applies for benefits, but these are much harder to assess or quantify. This approach is in line with the Better Regulation Guidelines, and within it judgement criteria have been applied where possible (see Annex 3).

### 3. IMPLEMENTATION - STATE OF PLAY

This section provide quantitative and qualitative information on the lower level of the intervention logic (Inputs → Activities → Outputs) which explain how the EEA Founding Regulation has been implemented in the period subject to the evaluation (mid-2012 – end-2016). This information is further cross-referred in one or several evaluation question assessment(s)

#### 3.1. Inputs

EEA and EIONET activities are financed by 3 streams of revenue:

- EU contribution
- Financial contributions of non-EU member countries
- Revenue from ad hoc grants and delegation agreements

**EU annual contribution** was stable at 36.3 M€ during the period. By 2014, programming of staffing and subsidy levels was defined by the 2013 Communication ‘Programming of human and financial resources for decentralised agencies 2014-2020’<sup>17</sup>, which reflected two overall constraints: on the one hand, the indicative envelopes for agency expenditure by heading embedded in the new MFF 2014-2020; on the other hand, the objective of reducing staffing levels in agencies by 5 % over 5 years. The proposed level of the EU contribution to and the staffing level of the EEA reflected its degree of maturity and expected evolution of tasks until 2020. EEA was therefore qualified as ‘cruising speed’ agency, like other well-established agencies with stable tasks<sup>18</sup>.

There are three different setups for the financial participation of **non-EU member countries** of the EEA, which summed at 5.4 M€ annually during the period:

*Table 1 – Financial participation non-EU member countries*

	Member since	Legal basis	Formula for financial participation
<b>EFTA Countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein)</b>	1994	<a href="http://www.efta.int/media/documents/legal-texts/eea/other-legal-documents/adopted-joint-committee-decisions/1994%20-%20English/011-1994.pdf">http://www.efta.int/media/documents/legal-texts/eea/other-legal-documents/adopted-joint-committee-decisions/1994%20-%20English/011-1994.pdf</a>	EU Subsidy * (GDP country / GDP EU)
<b>Turkey</b>	2001	<a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001D0594">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32001D0594</a> (similar decision were published for the other 12 countries preparing adhesion at that time, i.e. 2004 and 2007 adhesion processes)	Fixed: 3,127M€
<b>Switzerland</b>	2004	<a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22006A0328%2804%29:EN:HTML">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:22006A0328%2804%29:EN:HTML</a>	EU Subsidy / N° EU member States

EEA revenue from ad hoc grants and delegation agreements summed 6.9 M€ annually during the evaluation period, with important variations between years:

<sup>17</sup> COM(2013)519

<sup>18</sup> The classification as 'new tasks' agency required, as a general rule, a modification of the legal basis extending the scope of the agency's responsibilities.

- The Copernicus delegation agreement with DG GROW on the implementation of the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service and the In Situ component, 87 M€ over the period 2014–2020<sup>19</sup>.
- Grant Agreements under the EU-funded project ‘Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) in the European Neighbourhood’ (ENPI-SEIS1, budget of €5.7 million between 2009 and 2015) and its follow-up under the new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) through two separate grant agreements with DG NEAR, covering the East and South, running for four years (2015-2019).
- Grants from Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) focusing on maintaining and extending data deliveries in West-Balkans co-operating countries.
- At the very end of the evaluation period, EEA received a grant for activities under the European Human Biomonitoring Initiative (HBM4EU) project, funded under Horizon 2020.

**Table 2: EEA Budget 2012-2016 (M€, current prices).**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Revenue</b>					
<i>Core EU subsidy</i>	36.3	36.3	36.3	36.3	36.3
<i>Non-EU member countries</i>	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
<i>Non-core revenue</i>	0.1	7.5	10.8	7.4	8.8
<b>Expenditure</b>					
<i>Staff</i>	27.8	24.2	24.3	25.2	<b>24.2</b>
<i>Administrative</i>		4.2	4.4	4.4	<b>4.1</b>
<i>Operating expenses</i>	13.9	20.8	23.8	19.5	<b>22.2</b>
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>41.7</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>50.5</b>

Sources: EEA Annual reports

EEA staff decreased during the period, with establishment post following the guidelines of the above-mentioned 2013 Communication, and a small increase in contract agents at the end of the period, linked to the Copernicus Delegation Agreement.

**Table 3 Staff development 2012-2016.**

<sup>19</sup> According to the delegation agreement, as long as EEA Founding Regulation is not revised, 5.5% of the budget should cover staff costs, other administrative costs and internal operation costs for a maximum of 6 Contract Agents.

Posts filled	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Permanent and temporary	131	131	130	128	129
Contract agents	63	60	59	61	67
Seconded national experts	23	18	15	18	12
Total	217	209	204	207	208

There are also indirect contributions from Commission and member countries to the activities of the EEA in term of time spent in participation to meetings, contribution to data submission, QA/QC and review of draft deliverables and indirect financial support: Commission contracts, co-financing ETCs (see rough estimate in section 5.2.1)

### 3.2. Activities

(Multi) Annual work programmes described EEA and EIONET specific planned activities at the operational level of “strategic actions”, including estimates of the expenditures and staff allocation, for the years 2013 to 2016. For 2012, the Annual Management Plan approved by the Board did not provide such information.

For 2013, the table presented below aimed at giving the Management Board a view of the balance between the thematic and strategic areas.

**Table 4 – expenditures and staff allocation per strategic actions - 2013**

	2013	Total core budget	FTE, including allocation of support staff
1.0	Air quality and noise	1,990	8.7
1.1	Air pollutant emissions	520	3.4
1.2	Biodiversity	2,570	8.9
1.3	Climate change mitigation	1,590	7.4
1.4	Freshwater	1,540	7.3
1.5	Marine	1,490	5.4
2.0	Climate change impacts	590	3.2
2.1	Adaptation and vulnerability	1,190	5.6
2.2	Ecosystems	930	11
2.3	Environment and health	250	3.1
2.4	Atmosphere	290	1.5
2.5	Sustainable consumption and production (SCP), resource efficiency & waste	2,000	5
2.6	Land use	2,400	10.1
2.7	Agriculture and forestry	570	3.1
2.8	Energy	660	3.7
2.9	Transport	690	4.2
3.0	Strengthening Integrated environmental assessments	600	5.6
3.1	Regional and global assessments	1,030	1
3.2	Decision support	640	2.1
3.3	Economics	530	3.5

3.4	Strategic futures	740	3.5
4.0	Shared Environmental Information System	7,980	32.3*
4.1	GMES/GEO	1,550	8.5
4.2	Communications	4,810	29.8**
4.3	Evaluating our impact	300	1
5.0	Governance and country network support	2,710	11.9
5.1	European and international cooperation and networks	1,510	12.1
Total		41,670	202.8

MAWP2014-2018 introduced important changes in the definition of strategic actions, which do not allow a comprehensive overview of resources allocation over the evaluation period, even if the support study has performed a tentative interpolation. Moreover, under MAWP 2014-2018, support staff is no longer allocated to strategic actions.

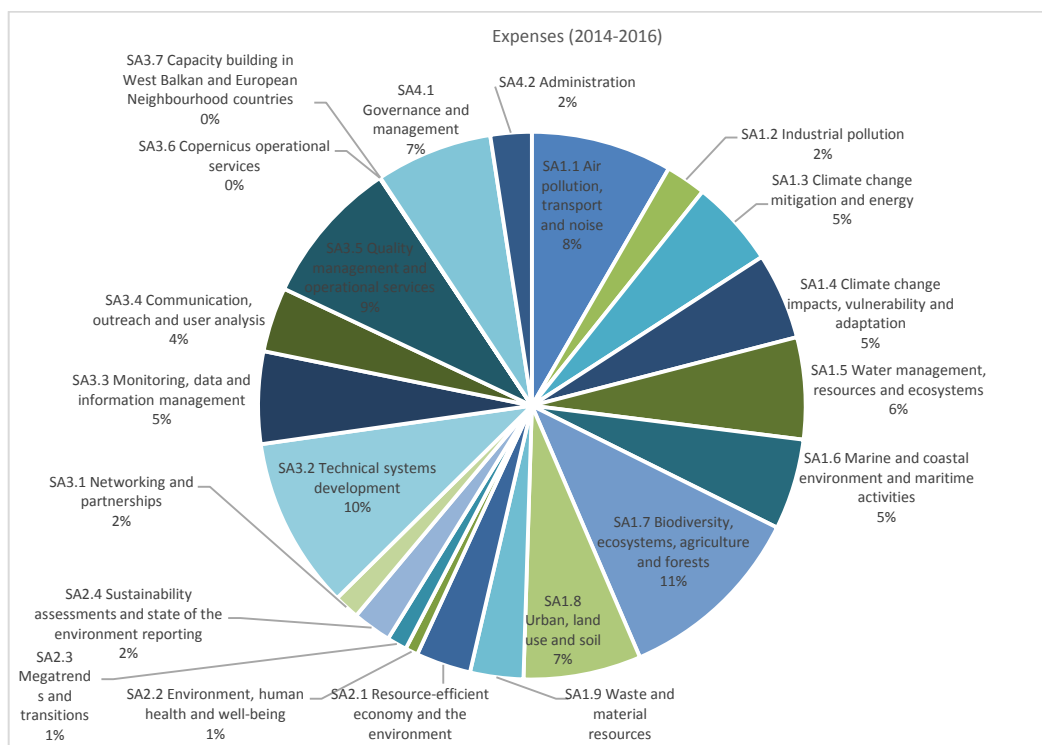
**Table 5 – expenditures and staff allocation per strategic actions – 2014-16**

	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
SA1.1 Air pollution, transport and noise	1180	1324	1297	9	10	11
SA1.2 Industrial pollution	365	364	357	4	4	4
SA1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy	758	791	799	7	9	9
SA1.4 Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	686	779	867	7	8	7
SA1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems	897	967	877	6	6	6
SA1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime activities	827	816	802	5	5	5
SA1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests	1747	1728	1634	6	7	6
SA1.8 Urban, land use and soil	1018	1011	1140	8	10	10
SA1.9 Waste and material resources	368	553	512	2	4	2
SA2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment	438	430	611	5	3	4
SA2.2 Environment, human health and well-being	152	85	104	1	1	2
SA2.3 Megatrends and transitions	119	171	248	2	4	3
SA2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting	324	553	167	11	9	5
SA3.1 Networking and partnerships	245	191	251	10	10	11
SA3.2 Technical systems development	1537	1222	1872	6	5	6
SA3.3 Monitoring, data and information management	934	1038	511	11	9	9
SA3.4 Communication, outreach and user analysis	755	527	462	16	15	15
SA3.5 Quality management and operational services	1157	1482	1286	14	15	14



SA3.6 Copernicus operational services	7	4	0	8	8	5
SA3.7 Capacity building in West Balkan and European Neighbourhood countries	5	1	2	7	5	6
SA4.1 Governance and management	1168	1019	961	42	38	38
SA4.2 Administration	288	354	469	23	24	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>14975</b>	<b>15410</b>	<b>15229</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>204</b>

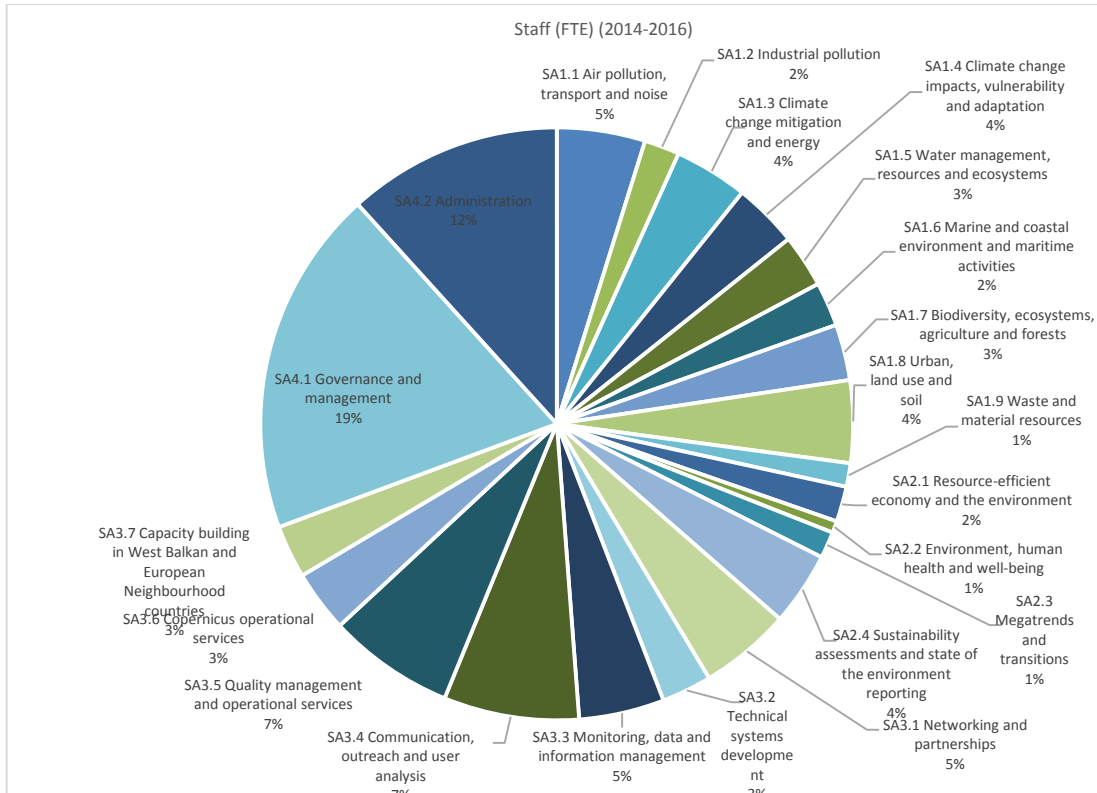
**Figure 3: Expenses booked for the detailed strategic areas, 2014-2016<sup>20</sup>**



**Figure 4: Time booked for the detailed strategic areas, 2014-2016<sup>21</sup>**

<sup>20</sup> The expenses are reported according to the budgetary accounts (EEA financial regulation). The actual expenses are core funds only and based on all transactions with posted with project codes (primarily Title 3 and including management board, scientific committee and missions. Title 2 costs posted with project codes in 2014-16 have been excluded). 2016 includes all payments made by end 201707 and unspent C8 commitments totalling EUR 0.8M The allocation of expenses to years is based on the activity year in the posting criteria (activity years were corrected for some transactions based on fund source C1/C8 and financial year).

<sup>21</sup> The actual FTEs include staff funded by non-core projects and are based on time registrations and 200 productive days per year. The staff time booked values are rounded, and % change is calculated on non-rounded values.

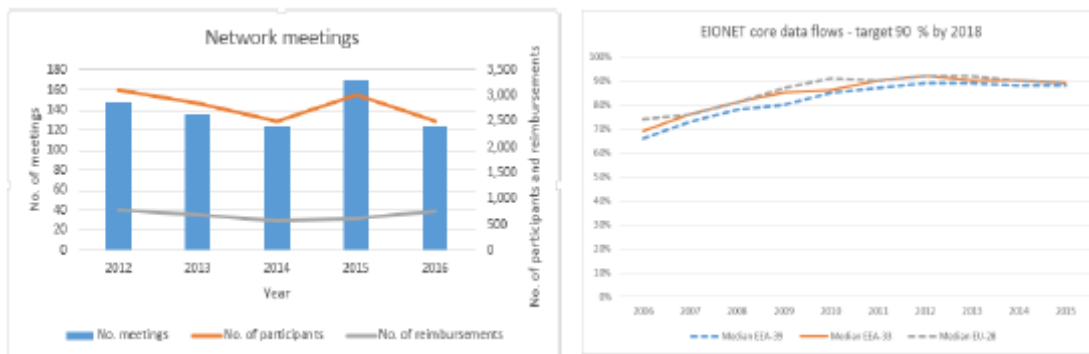


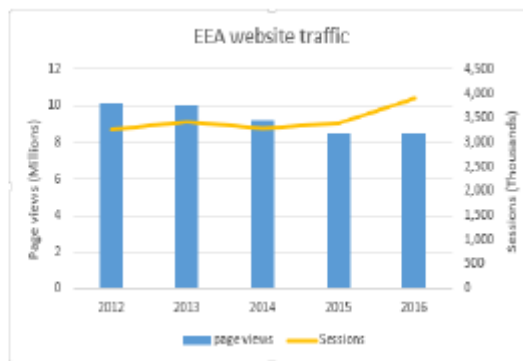
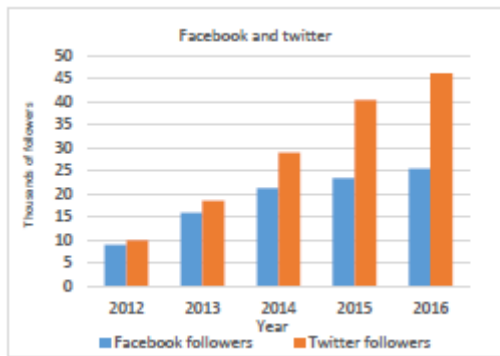
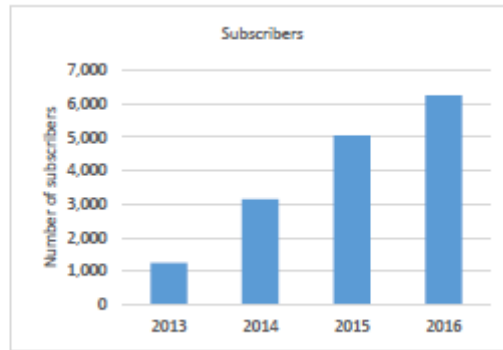
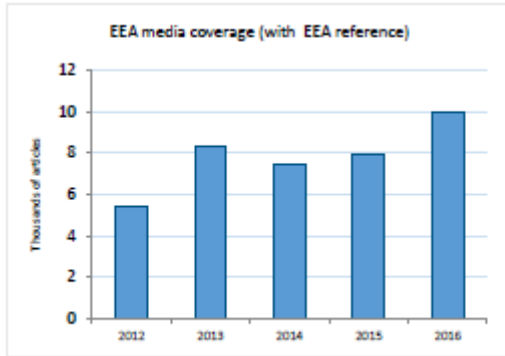
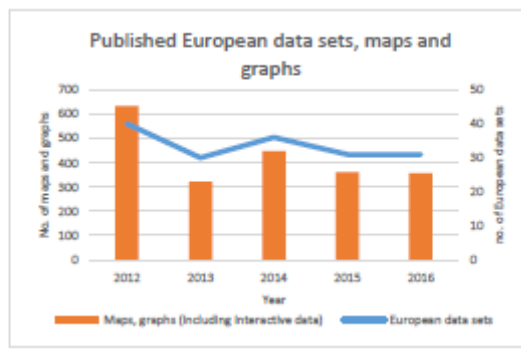
Source: EEA

### 3.3. Outputs

The products of EEA and EIONET activities include reports, briefings, indicators, information systems, maps, workshops, etc. Figures below, extracted from consolidated annual activity report 2016, provide an overview of key outputs during the evaluation period. While the decline or stagnation in the number of network meetings, published datasets, maps and graphs and publication reflect the above-mentioned tension on resources, output indicators from user perspective reflect the growing interest on EEA outputs (e.g. subscribers, website traffic, etc.).

**Figures 5-12 Selected output indicators 2012-2016**





Source EEA (Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2016)

## 4. METHOD

The evaluation started in 2016 with the publication of the Evaluation Roadmap<sup>22</sup> by the Commission, after consultation of EEA management Board. The detailed assessment of evaluation questions was carried out with the support of a consortium led by COWI (DK) which produced a final study report<sup>23</sup> in August 2018. A key milestone was a stakeholder workshop organised in December 2017, where preliminary findings were discussed. The evaluation covers the period mid 2012-2016.

### 4.1. Support study

The evaluation was carried out with the support of a consortium led by COWI (DK), under a **20-months contracts** signed in November 2016, which has performed data collection based on several methods outlined in more detail below, a large stakeholder consultation and produced a study report (hereafter “support study”).

The study elaborated an **Evaluation Matrix**, i.e. a framework of judgement criteria and indicators to form the basis against which the question would be assessed (see Annex 3).

A large number of **documents** have been reviewed by the study team as part of the work involved in answering the evaluation questions. These include documents available from web-sites (in particular the EEA web-site) as well as a range of documents supplied by the EEA and some supplied by the Commission. The review of documents followed the logic of the evaluation matrix and sought to shed light on the indicators identified for each judgement criterion (ref evaluation matrix as described above). Where possible, the study sought to apply quantitative approaches and indicators.

The **consultation strategy** was developed by the study team in the inception phase and some modification took place during the course of the study in the dialogue with the Commission. Overall, the stakeholders to be addressed and the tools to be applied were implemented as foreseen with some slight adjustments. Annex 2 provides the synopsis of the consultation work as required by the terms of reference and the Better Regulation Guidelines. During the first phase of the study (December 2016-April 2017), the inception report and consultation strategy were elaborated and some initial consultation activities took place, which included exploratory interviews with European Commission, EEA and EEA Bureau. The formal consultation activities according to the consultation strategy were initiated in May 2017 and included the tools and activities outlined below. The stakeholder workshop held in December 2017 marked the end of the main consultation period, however, a few follow-up interviews were held during the period January-February 2018 to close various information gaps.

The **public consultation** consisted of two questionnaires, one for 'general' stakeholders and another aimed at stakeholders with a technical insight in the activities and outputs of the EEA and EIONET. Both questionnaires were finalised and made available in English, German and French and uploaded to the EU Survey tool. The survey was launched on 18 July 2017 and closed on 6 November 2017 (a total of 17 weeks). The public consultation generated a total of 51 responses; 21 for the general questionnaire and 30 for the stakeholder questionnaire.

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<sup>22</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018\\_env\\_002\\_eea\\_evaluation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018_env_002_eea_evaluation_en.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> [http://publications.europa.eu/publication/manifestation\\_identifier/PUB\\_KH0518015ENN](http://publications.europa.eu/publication/manifestation_identifier/PUB_KH0518015ENN)

The consultation also included three **targeted surveys** addressing all relevant European Commission services, management Board members & alternates, and the components of the EIONET.

In total, 83 **interviews** have been carried out. The interviews cover different types of stake-holders as indicated in the table below. Some interviews addressed general topics related to the five evaluation criteria and the performance of the EEA and EIONET, whereas others focused more specifically on a topic covered by a case study. Some interviews covered both elements.

The consultation activities undertaken in the framework of the study included the conduct of two large **workshops**:

- Workshop for NFPs held in conjunction with the EEA NFP meeting 31 May – 1 June 2017. This workshop focused on soliciting views and inputs from the NFPs on the performance of the EEA in coordinating the EIONET and on costs and benefits of the EEA and EIONET. As a follow-up and on invitation of UK NFP, consultants of the support study participated to a workshop for the UK EIONET network, focusing on costs and resource use of EIONET participants, impact and benefit of EEA and EIONET, co-ordination of EIONET, data management and IT.
- Stakeholder workshop. This workshop was held in Copenhagen on 5 December 2017. In this workshop, the study team presented interim findings to a selection of invited stakeholders, representing the member countries (Management Board members, NFPs and ETCs), the Commission, an interest organisation (Copa-Cogeca), the Scientific Committee and EEA management. The workshop discussed and further elaborated on these findings

**Case Studies** were used to provide in-depth insights into the performance of the Agency in selected areas, to complement data collected at the general level to support (or not) and exemplify findings, as a detailed analysis of all areas of activity was not feasible within the limits of the support study. Six sector-based case studies were selected, as well as two horizontal case studies:

- **EU Emissions Trading System (ETS).** The aim of this case study is to assess whether and to what extent the EEA supported the Commission in the context of ETS Art. 21 reporting by Member States and whether issues of non-harmonisation and resulting risks have been identified.
- **Trends and Projections Report.** The data flows handled by the EEA under this activity are substantial, and constitute one of the largest outputs from the EEA in reporting on the EU's progress towards the energy and climate change targets, making this particularly interesting for an in-depth analysis.
- **Fluorinated gases reporting.** This case study allows assessing the ability of the EEA to respond to evolving needs and policy frameworks. F-gases is also one of the three areas where the EEA handles data reported by companies in relation to their commercial activities and for which special confidentiality arrangements are put in place.
- **Freshwater.** This case study focuses on the activities of the European Environment Agency (EEA) to support EU water legislation. The EU has an articulated set of legislation to protect Europe's common water resources and ecosystems. Thus the case study analyses the work of the EEA framed by the water sector policies, in particular the Water Framework Directive (WFD), the Bathing Water Directive, the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Floods Directive, the Nitrates Directive and the Drinking Water Directive.

- **Nature Protection.** This case study focuses on EEA’s work to support the Birds and Habitats Directives (Nature Directives). It reviews the role of EEA and highlights the successful coordination mechanisms in place between the European Commission and EEA.
- **Waste.** The case study seeks to assess the performance of EEA in terms of providing waste-related indicators and other information needed to support the Circular Economy package.
- **Copernicus Land Monitoring Service.** This case study focuses on EEA’s work under the Delegation Agreement (for the first 3 years of the period 2014-2020) for the management of the Pan-European and local components of the Land Monitoring Service, as well as for the cross-cutting in-situ component of all six Copernicus services.
- **SOER 2015.** This case study focuses on the State and Outlook of Environment Report (SOER) 2015 report, which falls within the period of the evaluation. This is a cross-cutting case study, as SOER covers a number of topics and areas.

The final report of the support study is the outcome of a far-reaching exercise of internal and external consultation. It provides a comprehensive, evidence-based analysis of all evaluation questions identified in the roadmap. Findings are based on solid evidence, and the report identifies the judgement criteria or the specific topics for which no proper information was available, as this feeds further recommendations on management and information systems.

The input collected through interviews have been confirmed and consolidated through further desk research and interviews to ensure triangulation. The draft final conclusions of the support study were sent for comments to Commission services, EEA Management Board members, Scientific Committee and National Focal Points.

#### 4.2. Complementary sources

The evaluation builds on complementary sources not covered by the support study and providing additional insights:

- The Fitness check evaluation on reporting and monitoring of EU environment policy<sup>24</sup> published by the Commission in June 2017, included a cross-cutting and comprehensive **analysis of reporting obligations** in all relevant pieces of environment legislation, with specific emphasis on EEA supporting role. This analysis was further refined and extended to climate legislation. The outcome of this work, performed together with the EEA, is presented in Annex 5.
- As part of the Commission evaluation of **EU Adaptation Strategy**<sup>25</sup>, also the action "Further develop Climate-ADAPT as the ‘one-stop shop’ for adaptation information in Europe" has been evaluated. Performance indicators used are the number of visitors to Climate-ADAPT, pages most visited, number of registered users, assessment of the content, databases and metadata and the number of conferences, workshops, adaptation events registered in Climate-ADAPT. A key

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<sup>24</sup> SWD(2017) 230.

<sup>25</sup> Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, COM/2018/738 final

information base is a process evaluation of Climate-ADAPT carried out by EEA<sup>26</sup> and covers a similar time period, starting mid-2012 when the platform was set up. For the latter a multi-method approach was used, combining EEA internal assessment and external feedback tools, including a user/provider survey, analysis of web statistics and collection of use cases.

- The mid-term evaluation<sup>27</sup> of the Copernicus programme (2014-2020) which refers to the Land Monitoring Service entrusted to EEA.

#### **4.3. Scope and limitations of the evaluation**

The evaluation encountered some methodological challenges and limitations, which are further detailed in Annex 3.

- As the evaluation period was long and the bulk of the consultation evaluation period took place one year after its end, stakeholders placed greater focus and weight on recent events (including those outside of the evaluation period).
- Responses to public consultation and targeted surveys were low and disappointing, despite efforts to promote the surveys to a wide audience, ensure they were short, and extend the deadlines.
- The support study was not able to generate a full overview of effectiveness, efficiency and coherence for all the different topic areas in which the EEA and EIONET were engaged. Rather, overall assessments could be made drawing on specific and detailed data collection from the case studies.
- The evaluation period (summer 2012 – 2016) was not consistent with the EEA planning cycle and thus cut across two cycles of EEA multi-annual planning (2009-2013 with 2014-2018) meaning that it was difficult to compare across both cycles
- Finally, the support study faced a lack of data on quantification of resources actually spent by EEA and EIONET at a more detailed level than the broad level of strategic areas of the multiannual programmes 2009-2013 and 2014-2018, which would have supported a more precise assessment of efficiency.

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<sup>26</sup> European Environment Agency: Sharing adaptation information across Europe. EEA Report No 3/2018.

<sup>27</sup> COM/2017/0617, see <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0617>

## 5. ANALYSIS AND ANSWERS TO THE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

### 5.1. Effectiveness

**Effectiveness** explores the extent to which the tasks of the agency, as defined in the Founding Regulation, or in complementary legislation, have been implemented in the work programme and are leading to the intended impacts – and thus focuses on the chain from objectives to intended impacts. This section is organised around three evaluation questions:

- Achievement of the specific and general objectives across topics (results and impacts).
- Extent to which planned activities and outputs in the multi-annual and annual work programmes have been achieved, and uses the results of this analysis complemented with additional data to analyse the extent of achievement of the tasks set out in the Regulation.
- How the EEA and EIONET have responded to key policy developments that happened during the evaluation period.

#### 5.1.1. Effectiveness against objectives, across topics and activities

##### **Assessment question:**

*How effective is the EEA's work against its core objectives, across all environmental topics and across all activities?*

##### **Overall response:**

The EEA worked effectively to deliver on its core objectives, providing objective, reliable and comparable information, which was used extensively in EU and national environment and climate policy work. In most areas, the work of the agency was crucial or of significant importance to policy work at the EU level – this includes in particular the activities and outputs related to reporting required under EU legislation such as Air quality Directives, Bathing Waters Directive or the Climate Monitoring Mechanism Regulation. EEA and EIONET information and outputs also contributed significantly to national policy work in the environment and climate areas. Concerning other sectoral policies, while the EEA additionally supported concrete initiatives on indicators and reporting on integration of environment concerns, cooperation and interaction with the relevant sectoral policymakers has been limited, having an effect in the content, the use and the interpretation of EEA information and outputs., Some progress was achieved towards the end of the evaluation period, e.g. on agriculture and energy.

##### **What is the issue?**

In answering this question, based on section 4.3 of the support study and on the case studies (Appendix D), the evaluation focused on the achievement of the objectives stated in article 1 of the Founding Regulation and thus looked at results and impacts achieved, for each of the 3 sub-objectives:

- Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level
- Supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures
- Ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment

##### **What are the findings?**

Regarding the first sub-objective of *provision of objective, reliable, comparable and accessible information at European level*, the analysis performed by the support study indicates a high level of achievement, although some differences between areas have



been identified. Based on case studies and on complementary sources, it appears that EEA outputs during the evaluation period were valued very positively e.g. in the areas of air quality, climate mitigation, climate change adaptation or nature:

- The Trends and Projections Report case study were found to have provided very good, comparable and consistent GHG emission related data and information across the EU, allowing for solid analyses and inputs to further work by the Commission on defining climate policies and measures. It highlights the importance of good and frequent contacts built over the years between the EEA and the Commission and also good contacts with Member States on the Quality Assurance and Quality Check (QA/QC) processes.
- The F-gases case study found that comparability and reliability is ensured through a comprehensive data QA/QC approach which encompasses both built-in automatic checks, manual checks, a number of manuals and guidance documents to support reporters, as well as close interaction with reporting entities including the availability of a common helpdesk. There has also been some contribution in relation to international policy development, where EEA annual reports on EU F-gases have been significant in providing a benchmark for the international negotiations leading to the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
- Another example for an effective performance of tasks is the Climate-ADAPT web platform. The evaluation of the adaptation strategy finds that the website succeeds in collecting and sharing relevant information in Europe by involving a wide range of information providers, citing the case studies presented in the platform as particularly relevant tools. Above-mentioned (section 4.2) EEA user survey and the public consultation indicate a high user satisfaction, higher than for the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) and the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), in particular with respect to ease of access and understandable language and formats. The platform is used across all governance levels in Europe from city/local level to sub-national, national, transnational to the European level. Climate-ADAPT has primarily been used to inform the development of adaptation plans and strategies, and decision making at all stages of the adaptation policy cycle, as well as the development of supporting documents. It is used to identify the “state of the art” of adaptation in Europe, to develop tailor-made products for various policy processes, and as a starting point to extend searches.
- The evidence reviewed in the Nature case study indicates that EEA has fulfilled the objectives set out in the multi-annual work programme in terms of support to the Nature Directives implementation, with the timely publication of the State of Nature Technical Report in 2015.

However, some shortcomings were also identified by the support study during the evaluation period, notably in the areas of freshwater or urban, land and soil:

- The freshwater case study show that EEA effectiveness in this area during the evaluation period has been hampered by delays in the implementation of WISE 2.0 and EEA decision to discontinue support to Drinking Water Directive, while EEA’s role was crucial in supporting Water Framework and Bathing Water Directives. The case study identifies several reasons including staff changes in both the EEA and the Commission, complexities and technical problems in reporting processes.
- In urban, land and soil, the Copernicus land monitoring service trusted to EEA was found as fully operational, however the delay in the provision of CORINE

2012 and Copernicus High Resolution Layers, in particular data on imperviousness hampered the provision of a clear case for action at EU level.

It is important to note that the above assessment is based on qualitative findings from interviews and surveys rather than on a comprehensive review of EEA reports and outputs.

Regarding the second sub-objective of *supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures*, a review of EEA reports during the evaluation period demonstrates activities on assessments which also cover results of measures, e.g. in parts of the SOER 2015 and the Trends and Projections reports. In this, the emphasis was often less on specific measures and more on combined results, with exceptions such as the annual reports on air quality and on waste prevention programme and the 2015 report on Marine Protected Areas. The EEA database on climate change mitigation policies and measures<sup>28</sup>, the analysis of adaptation measures under the Climate-ADAPT platform<sup>29</sup> and the 2016 report on Environment and climate policy evaluation are examples of effective support to assess the results of specific measures. Interviews suggest a widespread understanding at EEA and EIONET that analytical EEA work has a supportive character and should not be used directly for compliance purposes. In DGs beyond ENV and CLIMA (such as DG REGIO, MARE, ENER or AGRI) there is still a limited use of EEA products for assessing integration of environmental and climate considerations in these policy areas. There are good examples in the agriculture, energy and transport sectors of EEA's work focused on indicators and reporting on integration of environmental concerns.

Finally, regarding the third sub-objective *ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment*, the evaluation found that the awareness and reach of the EEA and its products varies depending on the product. For example, the products related to general societal debates have a wider reach<sup>30</sup>. However, it is noted that this does not provide a value judgement on other reports with own, albeit narrower, audience. Overall, the EEA engages a broad range of stakeholders, as seen by the analysis of the increasing number of subscribers to the EEA mailing list, and respondents to surveys aimed at a broader public. However, interviews by the support study notably of industry and NGO stakeholders, indicated their interest in a closer collaboration with the EEA.

### 5.1.2. Achievement of tasks and activities

**Assessment question:**

*To what extent has the Agency (and the EIONET network) implemented the tasks set out in its mandate and in its multi-annual programme? What are the key factors influencing/restricting progress and how do they link to the agency (if at all)? Does it consistently perform the same tasks to the same quality level?*

**Overall response:**

<sup>28</sup> <http://pam.apps.eea.europa.eu>, it includes information on the assessment of the measures.

<sup>29</sup> <https://climate-adapt.eea.europa.eu/knowledge/adaptation-information/adaptation-measures>

<sup>30</sup> Source: EEA outreach performance analysis for 2015 and 2016 outputs, quoted in support study section 4.3.1.1

The Agency and EIONET have to a large degree effectively implemented the tasks set out in EEA multi-annual and annual work programmes, notably providing support to policy implementation in many areas of environment and climate policies. The Founding Regulation has a wide scope and generic definition of the tasks for EEA, which requires prioritization by the Agency and its Management Board according to available resources. In the face of diminishing resources, during the evaluation period, through the Multi-Annual Work Programme agreed by the Management Board the EEA has prioritised 11 of the 15 tasks attributed to it in Article 2 of the Founding Regulation. Out of these, eight key tasks have been fully and the other three have been largely implemented in an effective way, as the EEA was faced with resource and other challenges in the tasks of EIONET co-ordination, support to e-Reporting and integration of the results of relevant environmental research.

### **What is the issue?**

In order to answer this question, based on section 4.2 of the support study and the detailed analysis provided in Appendix C - detailed tables with planned and actual activities, the evaluation adopted a double perspective:

- Achievement of the sub-objectives through actual implementation of the 15 tasks set out in the Founding Regulation.
- Implementation of the activities and outputs set out in the multi-annual and annual work programmes (focusing for practical reasons on implementation of the programmed activities is on the period of the current multi-annual programme, i.e. covering the years 2014-2016).

The evaluation looked at the extent to which planned activities have been implemented, assessed progress made and considered which key factors have contributed to or inhibited progress.

### **What are the findings?**

Collected evidence from the annual activity reports, contrasted with interviews with both EEA and Commission staff<sup>31</sup>, suggest that the effectiveness of the EEA during the evaluation period for the 15 **regulatory tasks** was higher for tasks related to the sub-objectives of “Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level” and “Ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment than for some tasks related to the sub-objective “Supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures”:

1. Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level (tasks a, b, c, e, f, g, h, l and o)

On six related key tasks attributed to EEA in Article 2 of its Founding Regulation, the EEA demonstrated a high level of achievement during the evaluation period:

- “b) *To provide the Community and the Member States with the objective information necessary for framing and implementing sound and effective environmental policies*”. A review of publications by the EEA during the evaluation period show that all the areas of work listed in the Founding Regulation Article 3 were covered, with the exception of *'chemical substances which are hazardous to the environment'*.

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<sup>31</sup> See section 4.2.2 of the support study.

- “c) *To assist the monitoring of environmental measures through the appropriate support for reporting requirements, in accordance with the aim of the coordinating reporting*”. The evidence from the comprehensive fitness check of environmental monitoring and reporting supports clearly that the EEA was effective in supporting environmental reporting. Further analysis reported in Annex 5 shows that for the majority of relevant environment and climate reporting obligations set at EU level the EEA involvement is significant and goes far beyond providing the platform for data submission, covering elements like contributing to the reporting template, providing a helpdesk function and publishing data. For example, the extensive EEA support for reporting under the Climate Monitoring Mechanism was highly valued by DG CLIMA.
- “f) *To help ensure that environmental data at European level are comparable*” A large majority of stakeholders agreed that EEA provides comparable information, with the SOER and maps, graphs and datasets scoring the highest. For the majority of relevant reporting obligations the EEA performs quality assurance and quality checks (see Annex 5 for details). Examples of EEA effectively ensuring comparability can be found in Trends and Projections case study.
- “g) *To promote the incorporation of European environmental information into international environment monitoring programmes*” The evidence shows that where international reporting requirements are involved, the assistance of the EEA helps to ensure that they are obliged with. An example for effective EEA support is the annual aggregation and timely submission of the EU's Greenhouse Gas Inventory to the secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as similar reporting of air emission pollutant inventories under the UN Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Pollution.
- “h) *To publish a report on the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment every five years, supplemented by indicator reports focusing upon specific issues*” The EEA delivered the SOER as planned in 2015, which according to the related case studies has been positively evaluated by stakeholders. EEA published its annual indicator report in all other years of the evaluation period, covering various themes.
- “l) *To cooperate with Community bodies and programmes and other bodies*” the Agency performed well, as analysed in more detail under coherence (section 5.4).

Also the following three tasks were largely implemented effectively, with some challenges identified during the evaluation period (mid 2012 – end 2016):

- “(a) *To establish, in cooperation with the Member States, and coordinate the Network (EIONET)*”; where delineation of roles was unclear and annual planning not sufficiently transparent. The network is well established, fulfils its functions and regular meetings were held with high levels of attendance. Nonetheless, there is scope for improvement in the planning of activities to take place and thus increasing further the national engagement in the activities of the EIONET and the EEA. There is no proper comprehensive and easily accessible recording of meetings attendance, background documents and minutes of the discussion. Data from surveys of NFPs and NRCs showed that meetings were also considered useful by participants. However, the scope of the roles of the NFPs and NRCs were not completely clear and also the planning of consultations and programming of activities was challenging and not sufficiently transparent.
- “(e) *To record, collate and assess data on the state of the environment*”; where the EEA's IT system for reporting Reportnet did process an increasing amount of

data flows with constant resources but was not always able to handle large amounts of data<sup>32</sup> as quickly as required and showed other weaknesses associated with an outdated, ageing IT infrastructure.

- “(o) To assist the Commission in the diffusion of information on the results of relevant environmental research and in a form which can best assist policy development” where there was limited activity despite of its inclusion in the multi-annual work programme 2014-18.

In respect to the two latter tasks, the situation was improving during the evaluation period and the challenges were also due to external factors (e.g. increasing complexity of reporting requirements, engagement from the Commission in addressing the research result diffusion task).

## 2. Supporting the assessment of results of environmental measures (tasks d, i, j, k and n (+c, l and o))

The EEA demonstrated a high level of achievement during the evaluation period on the above mentioned tasks c, l and o and on one further related task:

- “i) To stimulate the development and application of environmental forecasting techniques so that adequate preventive measures can be taken in good time” EEA has been active in outputs and activities supporting analysis of megatrends as well as stimulating of foresight discussions, in particular in the context of 2015 SOER. There is a specific NRC dedicated to the area, and is active in its tasks. Further action in terms of mainstreaming is required by some EIONET stakeholders as shown by responses to the NFP/NRC survey.

Insofar as the other four tasks mentioned in the Founding Regulation are concerned there were by far more limited activities during the evaluation period. These tasks have however been found less relevant (see results of the task relevance analysis in section 5.3.2):

- “(d) on advise to individual Member States on the development, establishment and expansion of their systems for the monitoring of environmental measures”. In some areas this happened as part of quality assurance and control mechanisms for reporting flows, e.g. on appropriate Member State reporting on climate related policies and measures under the Climate Monitoring Mechanism.
- “(j) on methods for assessing cost of damage”
- “(k) on exchange of information on best available technologies”
- “(n) to support the Commission in the process of exchange of information on the development of environmental assessment methodologies”. However, the EEA is the European contact point for the European Network of Environmental Evaluators and contributes to organizing its annual meetings.

## 3. Ensuring the public is properly informed about the state of the environment (task m (+ h and l))

The EEA demonstrated a high level of achievement during the evaluation period on the above-described tasks h and l and the further task related to the information of the public:

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<sup>32</sup> EEA 2016 draft plan for Reportnet 2.0, quoted in section 4.2.2.2 of the support study.

- “m) To ensure the broad dissemination of reliable and comparable environmental information to the general public and, to this end, to promote the use of new telematics technology for this purpose” The review of communication activities, both through stakeholder consultation and objective impact indicators, reveals a good level of achievement during the evaluation period. The EEA undertook a number of activities to improve the dissemination and outreach of its products, notably a country focus (e.g. in SOER 2015), aiming to increase the relevance and uptake in member countries of environment and climate reports. The effectiveness of the communication activities is solidly monitored and reported.

The most relevant findings of the above analysis are the high level of effectiveness on most of the tasks on which EEA worked and the absence of recognisable specifically targeted activity during the evaluation period on 4 tasks mentioned in the Founding Regulation, relating mostly to the sub-objective of *supporting the assessment of results of measures*. The views of most stakeholders converge in the perception that this reflects the wide scope and vague formulation of the tasks in the Founding Regulation, which requires further prioritisation by the Agency and its Management Board according to available resources.

According to the review of annual activity reports (see table 6), the EEA has effectively implemented during the period 2014-2016 85% of the **annual work programmes** (measured in proportion of annual work programme actually timely delivered). There were cases of some delay or cancellations, the most relevant being in the strategic area (SA) 1.8 (Urban, Land and Soil), which can be attributed either to delays in the availability of input data, or staff shortages. The reports that were postponed (or cancelled) were not related directly to reporting obligations. There was no major implementation issue in relation to delivering on outputs related to reporting requirements.

**Table 6 : Output delivery per strategic area 2014-2016**

Strategic Area	Proportion of AWP outputs reported in CAARs as complete
SA1.1 Air pollution, transport and noise	43/50 (86%)
SA1.2 Industrial pollution	33/34 (97%)
SA1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy	28/34 (82%)
SA1.4 Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	21/22 (95%)
SA1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems	25/29 (86%)
SA1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime activities	19/23 (83%)
SA1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests	25/32 (78%)
SA1.8 Urban, land use and soil	11/23 (48%)
SA1.9 Waste and material resources	16/19 (84%)
SA2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment	18/20 (90%)
SA2.2 Environment, human health and well-being	12/14 (86%)
SA2.3 Megatrends and transitions	16/17 (94%)

SA2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting	5/5 (100%)
SA3.1 Networking and partnerships	19/24 (79%)
SA3.2 Technical systems development	18/23 (78%)
SA3.3 Monitoring, data and information management	13/16 (81%)
SA3.4 Communication, outreach and user analysis	32/35 (91%)
SA3.5 Quality management and operational services	15/19 (79%)
SA3.6 Copernicus operational services	11/13 (85%)
SA3.7 Capacity building in West Balkan and European Neighbourhood countries	10/10 (100%)

*Source Appendix C support study (based on EEA programming documents and activity reports)*

This said, available information such as annual activity reports do not provide detailed information on the factors that have hampered a full implementation of annual work programmes, beyond the mention of a general tension on resources due to revenue freezing and staff decrease over the period. The review documented further in Appendix C of the support study report further led to the following findings related to planning and reporting practises.

- The reporting evolved over the years of the evaluation period, and the 2015 and 2016 CAARs provide a more straightforward link with the corresponding AWP, compared to previous annual reports. However, a number of activities or outputs that are reported in all annual reports (including the more structured 2015 and 2016 reports), do not have a clear counterpart in the AWP. This makes it challenging to infer the extent to which the activities planned were implemented, and how the specific outputs support the objectives outlined in the programming documents.
- The self-evaluation provided in the CAARs does not provide detail on the success or timeliness of each output. The outputs are mostly reported as "done" or "postponed" (with explanation, if postponed). Some outputs are broadly defined; for these the completion statement is even less informative. For example, "*Provision of policy support*" for SA 1.1 or 1.2 includes policy support in a number of areas and in relation to a number of Directives and Regulations. When this is reported simply as "Done", it does not allow assessing the level of support provided for more specific topics.

### 5.1.3. *Balance of activities and response to evolving policies*

**Assessment question:**

*How appropriate is the balance of activities in relation to different environmental topics considering the evolving environment and climate policy landscape and the needs of the main stakeholders? (How effective has the EEA been in anticipating and dealing with evolving policies?)*

**Overall response:**

The broad mandate in the Founding Regulation enabled flexibility which the Agency used to accommodate to specific policy developments and evolving EU and Commission priorities over the evaluation period, such as the 7th EAP, the 2030 climate and energy

framework as well as the Energy Union and the Circular Economy. Specific environment and climate legislation set out a role for the EEA (e.g. climate monitoring and reporting, Air Quality, CO<sub>2</sub>+Vehicles), usually combined with some increase in resources. The fact that the role of the EEA is better specified in some areas than in others had a certain impact on the setting of priorities for the Agency and its Management Board. Many policy users and stakeholders perceived that evolving needs were met, in the above-mentioned fields but also e.g. for climate adaptation or the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives, while some criticisms was raised by Commission services on the lack of support to Invasive Alien Species and Drinking Water Directives reporting during the evaluation period. The policy developments are somewhat reflected in changes in resource distribution between the strategic areas of the Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2018. The information needed for a more detailed assessment of changes in resources used at the level of certain specific tasks or outputs below the level of these areas was not available.

### What is the issue?

In addressing this question, based on section 4.4 of the support study, the evaluation has developed the following judgement criteria:

- To what extent were the EEA's multiannual and annual work programmes aligned with and took on board EU environment and climate policy developments that happened during the evaluation period?
- To what extent were stakeholders' needs addressed by the EEA?

### What are the findings?

The review of EEA (multi) annual work programmes shows that the **key EU environmental and climate policy developments during the evaluation period were generally well reflected in the EEA's programming documents.**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Programme published in 2013 shows that the EEA was very responsive and to a large extent reflected EU environment and climate policy developments in its MAWP and AWP. This concerns notably most of the Programme, albeit two of the nine priority objectives could have been better reflected. This is the case for Priority Objectives 1 (*To protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital*) and 8 (*To enhance the sustainability of EU cities*). The activity on ecosystem services/natural capital is not embedded under “integrated assessments” like the other two main 7EAP objectives (hence suffering from a lack of integration e.g. with activity under water or climate change adaptation), and the activity on urban sustainability is almost exclusively focused on soil/land/climate adaptation issues.

Subsequent AWP reflect also well the 2030 climate and energy framework and the Energy Union (including the GHG monitoring and reporting) and the Circular Economy Package. The increased number of staff dedicated towards working within climate change mitigation and energy during the evaluation period indicates that there was increasing efforts to support the integration of climate and energy policies in a context of decreasing overall resources.

Beyond revisions of existing legislation such as on industrial emissions, two new pieces of legislation were adopted during the evaluation period: the Climate Monitoring Mechanism Regulation<sup>33</sup> in 2013 and the Invasive Alien Species Regulation in 2015. The

<sup>33</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R0525>



former defines explicitly the role for the EEA (in its Article 24), and the EEA addressed the need for support in subsequent years in a very comprehensive way. The latter does not mention a role for the EEA, which did not make available resources to assist the Commission in reporting and data management for this Regulation. A request for additional resources was rejected by the budgetary authorities in connection with the 2015 budget process, as a role for the EEA was not specified in the Regulation.

Stakeholders' needs were not uniform in respect to how resources should be prioritised across the “MDIAK” (Monitoring, Data, Indicators, Assessments, Knowledge) chain<sup>34</sup>. While Commission services tend to focus on the MDI-part, stakeholders from the member countries tend to emphasise the AK-part. Review of (M)AWPs shows that stakeholders' views on areas to deprioritise as transmitted in the previous evaluation of the EEA were taken into account in subsequent planning of work (notably to reduce the engagement in Eye-on-Earth and international activities).

The Founding Regulation is set up in a way where the objectives, tasks and principle areas of activity set out a fairly broad mandate, whereas planning of specific activities and outputs is left for the Agency and its Management Board. This enabled flexibility and allowed the Agency to accommodate to policy developments and needs, but also triggered divergent views on what should be the « business as usual » tasks of the EEA and what should be considered as new tasks (hence requiring additional resources). Some specific pieces of environment (air quality) and climate legislation (see Annex 5) set out a role for the EEA bringing some degree of clarity in these areas but it also limited the flexibility for the EEA in allocating the resources.

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<sup>34</sup> Conceptual framework used by EEA to describing the transformation from data Monitoring and collection to Knowledge (see Annex 4)

## 5.2. Efficiency

The analysis of **Efficiency** explores the relationship between inputs (costs) and achieved effects (benefits) and seeks to establish whether the benefits exceed the costs (as would be the intended situation). It also analyses the relationship between inputs and outputs and seeks to establish whether the outputs could be achieved at reduced cost – identifying e.g. unnecessary burdens and options for streamlining.

The efficiency is analysed not only in respect to the objectives overall but also to the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring and evaluation of the agency and whether they are adequate for ensuring accountability and assessment of the agency's performance. This concerns 'organisational efficiency' – and is linked to the second element of the first question concerning cost-efficiency.

### 5.2.1. Efficiency in tasks implementation

#### **Assessment question:**

*To what extent have the EEA and EIONET been efficient in implementing the evolving tasks set out in their mandate and programming documents?*

#### **Overall response:**

Over the evaluation period, the EEA and EIONET have been efficient in implementing the evolving tasks set out in their mandate and programming documents. The costs of the EEA and EIONET amount to approximately EUR 65 million per year. A key benefit provided by the EEA and EIONET is the provision of quality data highly relevant for policy making. While it is difficult to make a robust quantification of the benefits generated by the EEA and EIONET, the evaluation shows that EEA/EIONET is very cost effective, and the work they do would otherwise have to be done in the Member States or by consultants, such as providing input to development and implementation of climate and environment legislation.

The EEA has optimized task efficiency where possible during the evaluation period, e.g. through improvements of the underpinning information management systems. One of the elements enabling the Agency to work efficiently was the reliance on the 6 European Topic Centres for conducting a large amount of the work of the Agency. The evaluation has found a few areas with a potential for exploiting efficiency gains, however, these are generally beyond the control of the Agency. The need to manage some activities under grants or delegation agreement (Copernicus Entrusted Entity, cooperation with neighbouring and pre-accession countries) led to duplication of administrative work as the EEA had to do accounting and finance for both the core budget and the specific budgets.

#### **What is the issue?**

In addressing this question, based on section 5.2 of the support study, the evaluation considered costs and benefits of the EEA and EIONET as well as the extent to which efficiency gain possibilities have been exploited during the period.

#### **What are the findings?**

In absence of any previous internal or external similar analysis, an estimate of the cost/benefits ratio was undertaken by the support study. While the costs of the EEA and the ETCs could be estimated to approximately EUR 50 million per year, the support study provides a mid-point estimate of the costs of the member countries contributing with own human or financial resources spent by Board members, NFPs and NRCs, at EUR 15 million per year, but with a large uncertainty as data on this is not readily

available. Moreover, the support study reached the conclusion that no robust quantification of the benefits generated by the EEA and EIONET, i.e. net contribution to development and implementation of climate and environment legislation, was possible with available information, although based on a qualitative assessment, it was very likely that benefits of the EEA and EIONET largely exceeded its costs.

In respect to efficiency gains (input vs output), for some tasks, it was possible to make an assessment of cost efficiency, albeit complicated by imprecise data on resources allocated to those tasks as well as lack of benchmarks against which efficiency in task management could be assessed. The assessment of the efficiency for the other tasks was not possible due to above-mentioned data limitation (see section 4.3).

- For task c) on reporting, linked to the objective of provision of objective, reliable and comparable information, the data from the Fitness Check of environmental reporting shows that the EEA is more efficient than other actors (e.g. external consultants under contracts with the Commission) when handling the reporting obligations as the main service provider. Comparing number of data deliveries against IT costs also supports that efficiency gains were achieved during the evaluation period in this area with the EEA handling increasing amounts of data at stable IT costs. The move to e-reporting under air quality legislation is also a clear example of efficiency gain during the evaluation period.
- For task h) on the State of the Environment Report (SOER) linked to all three sub-objectives, as explained in the case study (see Appendix D of the support study), the resource use exceeded the planned amount, and that there could potentially be some options for streamlining in terms of reducing the ambition levels for the report, however, this could compromise stakeholders' expectations with regard to contents of the report.
- On the objective of informing the public, for task m) on dissemination, the data comparing resource use and level of activity and outputs indicate that over the period more was accomplished within a stable budget, thus indicating that efficiency gains were achieved.

One of the elements enabling the Agency to work efficiently across all objectives was the reliance on the six European Topic Centres for conducting a large amount of the work of the Agency. The current grant model for ETC enabled the development of long term relationship at costs below market prices (taking also into account that ETC partners should co-finance 10% of the cost of the activities). However, concerns were raised (notably by the European Court of Auditors in a 2016 report<sup>35</sup>) that the current model could limit competition in general and on price in particular. Moreover, some institutions heavily involved in one or several ETCs are also either NFP or Board members/alternates.

The use of Delegation Agreement to provide the needed resources has imposed additional administrative costs for EEA, such as reporting separate time for support staff (IT, administration, management) for services for the work on Copernicus as entrusted entity, and for the core EEA activities. While the implementation of the Copernicus activities supports the core activities of the EEA and provides new data for its outputs, the Delegation Agreement creates some costs for the EEA in the form of duplications in the administrative parts of the work (ranging from planning and accounting to reporting). In order to respect the establishment plan ceiling laid down in the above mentioned 2013

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<sup>35</sup> [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16\\_12/SR\\_GRANTS\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_12/SR_GRANTS_EN.pdf)

Communication on the Programming of human and financial resources for decentralised agencies, under the terms of the Delegation Agreement, EEA recruited additional contract agents with contracts for fixed periods, renewable once. This created risks of losing in-house expertise and requiring time for new recruitments. Some of these considerations hold also for the grant agreements as tool to provide needed resources.

#### 5.2.2. Adequacy of internal mechanisms and follow-up previous evaluation

**Assessment question:**

*To what extent are the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the EEA adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the Agency while minimising the administrative burden of the Agency and its stakeholders? Have the recommendations from the previous evaluation been followed-up and what lessons have been learned since then?*

**Overall response:**

The internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the EEA have improved over the evaluation period following the recommendations of the previous evaluation. A system of Knowledge and Performance Indicators and an activity-based budgeting and accounting system were introduced and improved the overview of priorities. However, the system still provided information at a relatively aggregate level and does not provide information on resources allocated to producing key outputs or tasks as it was based on the broad level of strategic areas of the multiannual programme 2014-2018. Strategic decisions on introducing or cutting away certain activities have not been systematically discussed in the Management Board. Its large format however makes such broader discussions challenging and may require more preparatory work by the Bureau.

**What is the issue?**

In assessing this question, based on section 5.3 of the support study, the evaluation focused on the extent to which the EEA had followed up on recommendations on the following:

- Transparency of priorities and options expressed in draft (M)AWP
- Transparency of consultation procedures on (M)AWPs
- Balance of interests in the MB considering policy areas handled by the EEA
- Efficiency of decision-making systems and governance structures
- Efficiency of programming and reporting procedures and systems

**What are the findings?**

The internal mechanisms for programming and reporting have improved over the evaluation period following the recommendations of the previous evaluation. The MAWP 2014-2018 provided a consistent a systematic and recognisable framework (of strategic areas and sub-areas) which has been consistently applied by the EEA in programming and reporting in the subsequent years. During the evaluation period, the two annual reports (Annual Report and Annual Activity Report) were streamlined into one Consolidated Annual Activity Report.

On monitoring, the previous evaluation recommended that the EEA should give more focus to identifying measurable objectives, tangible outputs and performance indicators. The data from review of work programmes show that this recommendation has been

followed to some extent: The (Multi) Annual Work Programmes present a logical framework of objectives, outputs and KPIs. However, the support study finds that insufficient attention has been given to the practical aspects of how to monitor the achievement of the KPIs (the number of KPIs is too large and definitions of - and linkages between - objectives, outputs and KPIs are not sufficiently clear).

Consultation procedures on the (Multi) Annual Work Programmes with the Management Board members, the Parliament ENVI Committee as well as the Scientific Committee were found transparent and comprehensive.

The balance of interests represented in the Management Board (one representative per Member State, two from the Commission, two scientific personalities appointed by the Parliament as well as one representative of participating non-EU Member States) is in conformity with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies (see section 5.6). While the EEA handled activities in policy areas that were relevant to all five DGs represented at the MB meetings, the support study indicated that the current set-up with ENV and RTD as members, JRC and Eurostat as alternates and CLIMA as observer, is not completely coherent with the fact that the most prominent EEA policy areas are environmental and climate policies.

The previous evaluation of the EEA found that the EEA needed to improve on the level of information on allocation of budget and resources to various areas of activity in order to give the Management Board a better basis for making decisions on priorities. The support study found that during the evaluation period, this became even more pertinent given the austerity measures put in place during the evaluation period with the objective of reducing staffing levels in agencies by 5% over 5 years. Data from document reviews and interviews with EEA staff shows that the EEA has responded to this by elaborating an activity based budgeting system and this marks a considerable improvement. However, the system provides overview of priorities only at the MAWP SA-2 level, which is still a high level giving an impression of distribution of resources across main topics and not on specific tasks and activities. The AWP did not systematically refer the MAWP outputs and the recurrent activities (e.g. reports provided on an annual basis) and it is unclear exactly what the budgetary situation was for these recurrent activities and this practise contributed to making the priorities more obscure.

While the previous evaluation called attention to the need of prioritising between different tasks and/or areas of activity given the expected budget austerity measures, the review of activity reports and Management Board meeting records showed that while shrinking budget and the constraints faced were mentioned, minutes of meetings indicate that this did not result in major discussions on strategic prioritisation in the Management Board until one meeting at the very end of the period. The decision to discontinue support to the Drinking Water Directive has not been discussed in the Management Board. This review also suggests that strategic prioritisation of resources was only discussed to a limited extent and the MB showed limited ability to set negative priorities. The review of agendas and background material for Management Board meetings as well as interviews also indicate that meetings have not been prepared in a way which would facilitate such strategic decision making – e.g. by presenting options or alternatives.

### 5.3. Relevance

**Relevance** looks at the extent to which the EEA / EIONET is relevant considering the needs and challenges prevailing. The external factors are important here along with an assessment of changes in these factors since the Founding Regulation was enacted – and their significance in relation to relevance of the objectives and tasks specified in the Founding Regulation. It is assessed from a triple perspective:

- The first relates to the appropriateness of the objectives of the EEA as set out in the Founding Regulation Article 1 and whether these are still fit for purpose given current policy framework and needs. The question also addresses the priority areas of work in Article 3 and whether these are still fit-for-purpose in the context. The question then addresses whether the balance of the EEA work is sufficiently geared towards EU regulatory work. It also looks at whether some of the initially non-core activities of the Agency has become part of the core business, and what has been the rationale in such cases. Finally, the question looks into how well the EEA and EIONET are adapted to technological and scientific advances in the fields of e-government, earth observation and big data.
- The second looks at the tasks of the EEA and EIONET as set out in the Founding Regulation and whether these are appropriate to implement the objectives of the EEA/EIONET. The question also seeks to address which tasks are essential to deliver on current and evolving EU priorities, and whether any tasks have become redundant.
- The third addresses relevance seen from the perspective of EU citizens. This relates to needs for citizens to be informed about the environment and the task assigned to the EEA of disseminating environmental information.

#### 5.3.1. Relevance of Objectives

**Assessment question:**

*Are the objectives set out in the mandate of the EEA/EIONET Founding Regulation, including its priority areas in Article 3, still relevant and fit-for-purpose?*

**Overall response:**

The objectives set out in the mandate of the EEA/EIONET Founding Regulation, including its priority areas in Article 3, are still overall relevant and fit-for-purpose. While not explicitly mentioning climate policy, or encompassing systemic issues, they refer to successive Community action programmes on the environment, as well as of sustainable development, and therefore can be considered to cover e.g. climate action. The wording of the Founding Regulation clearly understates the real size of the EEA's work on support of EU regulatory activities. In particular, EEA provides full support across the entire reporting cycle to 40% of the relevant environment and climate reporting obligations (e.g. for a large majority in the areas of air and climate mitigation, supporting the implementation of the EU 2020 climate and energy framework), partial support for further 25%, and data storage for further 18%.

At the same time the EEA was successful in adapting to evolving EU policy priorities as described under 5.1.3 and the broader EU agenda during the evaluation period, e.g. the increased focus on governance aspects and compliance issues, better regulation and transparency as reinforced by the Juncker Commission priorities to reach tangible results on the ground, which have added to the policy agenda and imposed increased need for evidence-based policymaking.

The lack of reference to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and related tasks linked to INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe), Copernicus services and GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) despite these tasks being an integral part of the EEA's tasks and work programmes does not enhance the transparency and understanding of the EEA's work and efforts to expand data use.

### **What is the issue?**

In assessing this question, based on section 6.2 of the support study, the evaluation focused on judgement criteria on the appropriateness of objectives and priority areas of work seen in the light of EU policy during the evaluation period as well as whether the focus on regulatory work in the Founding Regulation matched the actual level of activity and policy framework during the evaluation period:

- EEA's objectives as specified in Article 1 of the Founding Regulation appropriate for the EU's environment and climate legislation and policy
- EEA's priority areas of work as specified in Article 3 of the Founding Regulation appropriate for the EU's environment and climate legislation and policy
- The Founding Regulation has an appropriate emphasis on regulatory work considering current policy framework and demands from stakeholders
- The Founding Regulation provides an appropriate framework for tasks and activities considering the development and use of new technologies during the evaluation period

### **What are the findings?**

The evaluation found the current mandate and overall objective of the EEA as stated in Article 1 of Founding Regulation are still valid and fit for purpose. It provides a broad mandate and a frame within which activities and outputs can be planned taking into account the changing policy framework and needs as expressed in the environmental action programmes to which the objective refers. The somewhat outdated language of the Article does however not fully reflect how environmental and climate issues are now analysed in a more integrated way and taking into account the mainstreaming of environmental and climate considerations in other policy areas. It also reflects partially the interdependency in the context of a global ecosystems and the need to take into consideration global climate change patterns and environmental degradation.

The broadness and flexibility in the Regulation makes it very important that the MAWP/AWPs reflects well the key policies of the given period, and that a clear strategic direction are made by the Commission and the Management Board and that clear agreements between involved collaboration partners are concluded and revisited as needed to continuously focus on the right objectives.

The areas of work listed in article 3.2 of the Founding Regulation do not encompass all relevant areas, with Climate Change or Copernicus being the most obvious examples. While for the former this was not an impediment for the EEA to provide comprehensive support to policy making, for the latter the lack of explicit mention in the regulation resulted in a barrier to increase the EEA core budget to cover this task.

Overall, the evidence for the relevance of the Regulation's objective and principal areas of activity can be considered solid as the desk review of confirmed sources has been validated by the stakeholders.

The evaluation also addressed the extent to which the Regulation reflects in an appropriate way, the extent to which the Agency does 'regulatory work', where this was

defined as work in support of implementation of the environment and climate acquis. It was found that regulatory work, in particular that related to reporting on the implementation of environment and climate legislation, has less emphasis in the Founding Regulation compared to the actual share of EEA activities during the evaluation period.

A more precise assessment of the EEA support to reporting obligations over the reporting cycle, conducted as follow-up to the Environmental Reporting Fitness Check, reveals that out of the relevant 136 environment and climate reporting obligations, EEA is providing full support to 40% across the entire reporting cycle (including guidance, data collection and acquisition, quality checks, data processing and dissemination and producing reports), partial support to some elements of the reporting cycle for further 25%, support to storage of reports in the Common Data Repository (CDR) for further 18%, and no support for 17%. This analysis does not distinguish the different scales and magnitudes of data flows per reporting obligation. It reflects covers a large variety of situations, from the Air or Climate Change areas where EEA is providing full support to a large majority of relevant reporting obligations, to Products or Waste areas, where support is mostly absent or limited to storage of reports in the Common Data Repository. The different extent of support often reflects longstanding agreements between Commission and EEA e.g. for waste, the split of responsibilities for hosting the European Data Centres<sup>36</sup>, or for water, the indirect support schemes under Commission service contracts (see Annex 5).

**Table 7 EEA support to environment and climate reporting obligations**

Policy areas	No support	CDR	Partial support	Full support	Total
<b>Air</b>	3	1	4	<b>24</b>	32
<b>Noise</b>		1	2	<b>3</b>	6
<b>Ind. emissions / accidents</b>	2		<b>5</b>	1	8
<b>Climate Change</b>	1		6	<b>12</b>	19
<b>Water</b>		2	<b>11</b>	10	23
<b>Nature</b>	2	2	4	<b>5</b>	13
<b>Products</b>	<b>10</b>	2	0		12
<b>Waste</b>	3	<b>15</b>	1		19
<b>Horizontal</b>	<b>2</b>	1	1		4
<b>Total (reporting obligations)</b>	23	24	34	55	136

Source: Annex 5

Despite a lack of a formal reference in the Founding Regulation to policies and related new technologies such as the Shared Environmental Information System, INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe), the above-mentioned Copernicus services and GEOSS, these have become an integral part of the EEA work during the evaluation period. The Copernicus land monitoring service was found particular important for the public sector and local authorities, with urban planners, city administrators and transport authorities among its user clients, with continuity, full accessibility and sustainability of services and observation data as critical elements. Data

<sup>36</sup> In 2005, DG ENV, JRC, Eurostat and the EEA agreed on distributing responsibilities for the hosting of the environmental “European Data Centres” (see <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/european-data-centres>). Against that background, Eurostat produces annual data on waste generation and management, based on reports from member States.



sources in the form of transboundary earth/satellite based observation became increasingly relevant, in addition to and as supplement to in situ data and statistical data provided mostly through EIONET.

### 5.3.2. Alignment tasks and resources with EU policies

**Assessment question:**

*How far are the Agency's tasks and resources aligned with key EU policies?*

**Overall response:**

The tasks mentioned in Article 2 of the Founding Regulation still provide a reasonable framework within which the activities and outputs of the EEA and EIONET could be framed, although they are somewhat outdated and do not represent the balance of activities of the Agency during the evaluation period. They cover most elements but do not fully mirror neither the “MDIAK” key conceptual framework forming the basis for the Agency's activities nor the activities undertaken by ETCs, NFPs and NRCs. New EU policy requirements in relation to mainstreaming of environment and climate change into sector policies (e.g. CAP) and for making integrated assessments are not reflected in the list of tasks. While data from consultation with stakeholders shows that they overall see EEA tasks as relevant, there are divergent views about the relevance of individual tasks and outputs. Objective indicators of relevance are lacking, that could support a further prioritization exercise.

**What is the issue?**

In assessing this question, based on section 6.2 of the support study, the evaluation focused on judgement criteria on the extent to which the tasks as expressed in the Founding Regulation correspond to the actual activities performed by the EEA and EIONET during the evaluation period and the extent to which the tasks in the Founding Regulation match the policy framework for environment and climate policy during the period together with stakeholders' views on relevance of the tasks:

The assessment was complicated as activities undertaken during the evaluation period (under the two different structures of MAWPs 2009-2013 and 2014-2018) are described according to a different logic than the tasks in the founding regulation and thus it was not possible to precisely establish the weight given to each task. In itself, the fact that the work programmes are set up with a different structure than the tasks, could be seen as an indicator that the tasks are not fully fit-for-purpose.

**What are the findings?**

The overall conclusion is that while the tasks still provided a reasonable framework within which the activities and outputs of the EEA and EIONET could be framed, some of them were somewhat outdated and did not represent the balance of activities of the Agency during the evaluation period and did not fully mirror the MDIAK framework, which was a key conceptual framework forming the basis for the Agency's activities as well as activities undertaken by ETCs, NFPs and NRCs. Data from consultation with stakeholders shows that different stakeholders have different views about the relevance of various tasks. Most notably, the member countries generally emphasised (in the stakeholder workshop) the importance of the task on forecasting, whereas representatives of the Commission were more sceptical (in interviews and targeted survey), mainly for the risk of overlap with Commission activities in this area.

The tasks can be categorised in three main categories:

- Tasks which are highly relevant and where no or limited need for adaptation was identified: (a) on coordination of EIONET, (f) on ensuring comparability and harmonisation of methods, (g) on promoting incorporation of European information into international monitoring programmes, (h) on the State of the Environment Report, (m) on dissemination and task (o) on diffusion of results of environmental research.
- Tasks which have a high policy relevance for stakeholders, but some adaptation would be needed to make them fit-for-purpose: (b) on provision of information, (c) on reporting, e) on recording, collating and assessing data, (i) on forecasting, (l) on cooperation with JRC, Eurostat, RTD and others,
- Tasks where the relevance is medium or low and where substantial revision or even complete abolishment of the task could be considered: (d) on advise to Member States on monitoring systems, (j) on assessing cost of damage, (k) on best available technologies, (n) on environmental assessment methodologies. These correspond to the four tasks for which the effectiveness analysis in section 5.1.2 has found that no or little work has been conducted by EEA.

In conclusion, all tasks relating to the third sub-objective and some tasks related to the first and second sub-objective are still highly relevant and fit for purpose, some tasks linked to the first and second objectives are still highly relevant, but may not be properly calibrated, whereas half of the tasks relating to supporting the assessment of results of environment measures seem less relevant as they currently stand.

### 5.3.3. *Relevance to European citizens*

**Assessment question:**

*How relevant is the EEA to EU citizens?*

**Overall response:**

The evaluation concludes that the EEA is relevant to citizens as it plays an important role in providing reliable and objective information on the state of environment as well as on climate issues. The EEA enables other actors, whether those are Member States, NGOs or other civil societies or the general public, to be properly informed about the state of environment. Citizens benefit from the support the EEA provides to an evidence-based policymaking, which has a positive impact on the state of environment, climate action and health of citizens.

**What is the issue?**

To address this question, based on section 6.4 of the support study, the evaluation considered relevance of environmental information to EU citizens, looking at:

- The level of interest in environmental information and awareness among the general public of the EEA and its flagship publications (e.g. SOER).
- The user-friendliness of EEA public web pages
- The level of download and report in the press of non-technical publications.
- EEA’s engagement in citizen science initiatives.

**What are the findings?**

Data from Eurobarometer surveys show that environmental protection and climate issues were important to EU citizens during the evaluation period and this also provides evidence that the citizens have a need for information on these issues. Thus, overall, the

EEA was relevant to citizens as it played an important role in providing reliable and objective information on the state of environment.

Sources, notably, data on outreach, press coverage as well as EEA's own user survey provide quite solid evidence that the EEA website and non-technical publications and data are used by a range of stakeholders who in one way or the other represent individual citizens, including NGOs, business organisations, researchers and students. The webpages were widely used by these stakeholders for finding information. For example in 2015 there were nearly 10000 downloads of the Air quality report and around 5000 downloads of the reports European bathing water quality in 2014 and SOER 2015. The data also documents that there was a considerable number of mentions of EEA products in the press, with the mentioned three reports being in 2015 the most quoted. However, it is difficult to assess the extent to which these numbers can be seen as high as there is no benchmark to compare against.

The EEA contributed indirectly to inform the general public about the state of environment through other actors such as Member States, NGOs or other civil society organisations. In addition, EEA implemented different activities to reach out to individual citizens more directly, most prominently through use of the social media, but also through e.g. competitions, being open for visitor groups, etc. There is however no available assessment of the effective outreach of such activities on EU population.

EEA was more engaged in citizen science related activities in the beginning of the evaluation period, due to the involvement in 'Eye-on-Earth'. This project was phased out under MAWP 2014-2018, as the previous evaluation had identified this as one of the less relevant areas for the EEA to be involved. EEA focus shifted to engaging with stakeholders beyond EIONET more broadly – and some specific activities were undertaken focusing on research communities related to transitions.

## 5.4. Coherence

The analysis of coherence involves looking at the relationships between the “EEA Intervention” and the wider context and focuses on the tasks of the EEA in relation to the tasks of other bodies, assessing whether there are overlaps/duplications or synergy effects. It explores two main dimensions:

- Coherence of EEA intervention with other bodies that, both at the EU and national level, deal with environment and climate issues (in particular DG ENV, CLIMA, JRC, RTD and Eurostat, who are EEA’s partners in the 'Environmental Knowledge Community' – EKC), in order to avoid overlaps and exploit synergies.
- Link between EEA intervention and sectoral policies and stakeholders (e.g. agricultural, regional, maritime policy) that increasingly integrate environmental and climate considerations.

### 5.4.1. Coherence with bodies dealing with comparable issues

#### **Assessment question:**

*To what extent is EEA acting in cooperation with the European Commission services, the member countries and other agencies and bodies that deal with comparable issues, to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts?*

#### **Overall response:**

Good cooperation and synergies between the Environment and Climate Action DGs of the European Commission and the EEA were established in most policy areas. Cooperation with other DGs that also contribute to the provision of environmental and climate knowledge (namely Eurostat, Joint Research Centre and DG Research and Innovation) improved during the evaluation period notably thanks to the creation of the Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC). In a few areas, some duplications of work, misalignment of timing or missed synergies revealed the need for further coordination, and there is room for further complementarity and efficiency gains across knowledge providers and for further consistency across different sectoral policies. Cooperation mechanisms varied across EEA’s tasks and themes, and worked well especially when a clear division of roles and strong mechanisms for ongoing coordination were in place, in particular within the Commission.

The overall framework for cooperation between the European Commission and the EEA during the evaluation period worked well but could have been more systematic. The EIONET coordination setup between the EEA and a large number of national bodies promotes synergies, but there is an increasing need for cooperation beyond EIONET as data sources broaden, mainly linked to implementation of EU policies. Cooperation with other EU Agencies works well and could be further developed.

#### **What is the issue?**

The assessment, based on section 7.2 of the support study, is structured along the following elements:

- Cooperation between the EEA and the European Commission services: as the focus of this evaluation question is on overlaps or duplication of efforts and synergies, the analysis covers those DGs having a prominent role in the definition of environment and climate policy and legislation and/or working on environment and climate data and knowledge. This includes the cooperation between EIONET bodies and European Commission Working Groups on environmental and climate legislation;

- Cooperation between the EEA and other EU bodies, i.e. other decentralised EU Agencies;
- Cooperation between the EEA and national bodies.

For each of these interactions, based on the detailed analysis provided in section 7.2 of the support study, this section discusses the scope of the cooperation, the mechanisms underlying it (e.g. formal agreements, EEA's role defined in legislative acts) and the extent to which overlaps are avoided and/or synergies are created.

### **What are the findings?**

Formal co-ordination between the European Commission and the EEA takes place in the context of the opinion on annual work programmes and successfully ensures broad coherence of the activities. However, due to the time lags between the steps (draft WP – opinion – final WP) and for some elements the coarse level of detail of the documents, this process alone does not always allow entering into the required level of detail that would ensure complementarity and avoid duplication of efforts.

Moreover the work programmes of some of the ETC, which form a substantial part of operating expenses under the budget, were not discussed in detail with Commission services. During the evaluation period, the Commission had no access to the files prepared for the meetings of National Focal Points / EIONET, which could have improved coordination. According to interviews, the position of EEA management was that the Commission as such is not part of EIONET.

Conversely, there are numerous initiatives and communication channels at operational level to successfully secure the necessary concrete coordination. These mechanisms cover almost all policy areas and reflect a large variety of status, parties involved and activities:

- In most areas (e.g. waste, nature, air and water (for the latter at the end of the evaluation period after some years of discontinuation) the coordination work is ensured through regular (annual) meetings, which often also involve also JRC and/or Eurostat.
- In some cases the co-operation is formalized through written inter-institutional agreements (e.g. for F-gases and ODS, or waste)
- In other areas the co-operation is mainly based on day to day contacts following on the establishment of the EEA role in legislation (e.g. air quality, industrial emissions, GHG emission and climate policy monitoring, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from cars and vans).
- There is a common practice of inviting the European Commission to NRC meetings, and conversely to involve EEA (and ETC) in meetings of implementation working groups (notably reporting working groups)
- In the case of Nature and Biodiversity, cooperation is based on annual joint rolling plans detailing the engagement of the EEA, DG ENV and the ETC/BD. This was extended at the end of the evaluation period to activities in urban, soil, agriculture and forestry.

The success factor behind the good cooperation is the clear division of roles, e.g. when EEA deals with reporting issues and the Commission deals with compliance issues (e.g. F-gases), or when a working plan detailing the contribution of each partner is agreed (e.g. 2013 MAES work plan).

There are numerous interactions between the EEA and the other 3 DGs contributing to the production of environmental and climate knowledge, namely Eurostat, JRC and RTD.

- There is important use of data from **Eurostat** by the EEA (e.g. for EEA waste indicators and reports) and vice versa (e.g. Eurostat re-publish EEA GHG emissions data and use them). During the evaluation period, the work programmes were coordinated and thus data production was complementary, with some exceptions e.g. water exploitation index. EEA Founding Regulation includes a provision in Annex I.B requiring EEA Management Board to ‘approve’ the Eurostat work programme on environment, for legal reasons, which according to interviews is perceived in both EEA and Commission sides as an anomaly as Eurostat work is subject to an Inter-Service Consultation and further formal Commission decision, and cannot therefore be further amended by the Management Board of a Decentralised Agency.
- The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** and the EEA have been cooperating closely on a number of specific issues, including the development of soil indicators (e.g. soil erosion and contaminated sites) and the provision of environmental information for specific sectors such as primary and secondary raw materials supply. As the European Commission's science and knowledge service, JRC has to create, to manage and to make sense of knowledge and to develop innovative tools for policy makers. As such the mission of JRC and of EEA are not much different and a clear definition of roles for the JRC and EEA would be beneficial to avoid potentially overlapping tasks
- Finally there were also increasing fields of co-operation with **DG Research & Innovation (RTD)** during the evaluation period, notably on Global Earth Observation system of systems (GEO/GEOSS) and Citizen Science as well as on the diffusion and use of the results of EU funded research projects.

However, there were, during the evaluation period, a few duplications of work or missed synergies (e.g. in the field of freshwater and land use) and other issues that point to the need for increased coordination on some tasks (e.g. the lack of a complete inventory of indicators relevant to the intersection of environmental, climate and agriculture policies; weak coordination with the Commission on review of some draft EEA reports (especially when they involve various units or DGs); limited integration or recognition of environment and climate research performed by the JRC and/or funded by DG RTD).

Beyond these issues, a shortcoming identified during the evaluation period was the limited connection between the overall framework for cooperation between the European Commission and the EEA with some of the issue-specific technical co-ordination mechanisms. This resulted in some divergent approaches across tasks and themes, and missed certain co-ordination opportunities especially in cross-cutting areas.

To address the above-mentioned issues, in January 2015, DGs ENV, CLIMA, JRC, RTD and Eurostat and the EEA established an informal group named **Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC)**, with the following objectives:

- To establish and regularly update a comprehensive overview of ongoing and planned work on environmental knowledge, to share it and to use it for integrated knowledge planning;
- To efficiently distribute the work on new knowledge requirements among the main knowledge providers;
- To better align knowledge support with relevant policy priorities and to facilitate better medium- to long-term definition and programming of knowledge support.

The EEA established **cooperation with other European Agencies** in several fields: air transport environmental impacts (EASA), food safety (EFSA), chemicals (ECHA), infectious diseases (ECDC and EMA) and earth observation technology (GSA and ESA).

No overlaps were identified (also because of the different remits of each Agency), but a need for a better understanding of the respective activities and opportunities for cooperation was found.

With regard to **coordination between the Agency and national bodies**, the obvious mechanism is the EIONET network as such, which ensures coordination between the Agency and a large number of national bodies and helps promote synergies and avoid overlaps.

However, the evolving nature of EEA activity and EU policy triggered the need for cooperation with national bodies that are (still) not part of EIONET.

One example is related to the **SOER 2015**, which include Country Fiches for each member country. In parallel, Member States draft their own State of the Environment Assessments, required by Articles 4 and 10 of the Aarhus Convention<sup>37</sup>. These are prepared by national environmental ministries or departments, which in some case are not part of EIONET. The SOER country briefings were developed by NFPs and NRCs and seek to draw upon the indicators and data of national state of the environment assessments, in order to avoid duplication of work and use information already prepared at a national level.

Another related example is the **Environmental Implementation Review (EIRs)**, a bi-annual review of the implementation of EU environmental policy and law, to identify the main gaps and successful practices. It was launched in 2016 and the first EIR package was approved early 2017<sup>38</sup>. The reports rely, among other sources, on the SOER 2015 and use, to a large extent, EEA reports and data. However, as the national authorities involved in the review of the reports are not systematically part of EIONET, this resulted in sometimes contradicting messages on the type of indicators to be used in the different chapters, leading to the conclusion that, given the close nature of the two publications (EIRs and SOER Country Fiches), for the next cycles, it would be important to ensure that both reports build on each other and synergies are developed.

EEA is also ensuring the secretariat of **European Network of the Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (EPA network)**, involving two yearly plenary meetings and activities under various Interest Groups (IGs) of the network. There are strong links between EEA, EIONET and the EPA Network. Around 60% of EPAs are part of the EEA MB and 85% of them are also NFPs. The EPA Network provides an additional forum for cooperation and exchange of information among EIONET Members (NFPs) and between them and the EEA. Moreover, EPAs are also part of several other networks acting in relevant fields, increasing the ability of EIONET to reach out to additional stakeholders at national level. Around half of the EPAs are part of IMPEL (a network of authorities for permitting, inspection and enforcement, includes ministries, EPAs and regional authorities) and around 20% are represented in ENCA (Nature Conservation Agencies and EPAs or ministries where no EPA exists). The review of meeting agenda revealed broad synergies with EEA Management Board, ad-hoc meetings of Environment DGs, or meetings of environmental legislation implementation working groups, when discussion focuses on update on developments in EU environmental policy and legislation, or on contributions of EPAs to policy implementation.

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<sup>37</sup> Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters, 1998.

<sup>38</sup> European Commission website on EIR: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/index_en.htm).

#### 5.4.2. Coherence with stakeholders – contribution to mainstreaming.

##### **Assessment question:**

*To what extent are the procedures and mechanisms put in place effective to ensure that EEA cooperation activities are coherent with the policies and activities of its stakeholders? Are EEA contributions contributing to the mainstreaming of environmental concerns in other policy areas?"*

##### **Overall response:**

The EEA has cooperated with other sectoral policy DGs during the evaluation period under a variety of forms and intensity. The formal consultation on EEA's programming documents, involving sectorial policy DGs of the Commission, is the mechanism for alignment between EEA's activities and priorities pursued in other policy areas. Nevertheless, it did not necessarily lead to optimal coordination with DGs acting in other policy areas than environment and climate. Although some of these DGs were mentioned in EEA work programmes as 'key partners', this did not systematically materialize in actual cooperation or engagement of these partners. The EEA is however increasingly providing analytical input on sustainability transitions and on its link to other policy areas such as regional development and cohesion, energy or agriculture.

##### **What is the issue?**

Based on the detailed analysis provided in section 7.3 of the support study, this section assesses the procedures and mechanisms that have been established to ensure coordination and effective cooperation between the EEA and other stakeholders, focusing on policy DGs in fields interrelated with environmental and climate themes, and the European Parliament.

##### **What are the findings?**

The EEA has cooperated with other policy DGs than the ones represented in the EEA Management Board during the evaluation period<sup>39</sup> under a variety of forms and intensity.

- Coordination between the EEA and **DG AGRI** has been rather limited between 2012 and 2016 and was mainly structured around a Memorandum of Understanding on the **Agri-Environmental Indicators (AEIs)**, signed already in 2008 and establishing the framework for coordination between these two entities and Eurostat, JRC and DG ENV. Beyond this, some interaction took place during the discussions about the CAP reform in 2014. DG AGRI took part in the inter-service **consultation on EEA's programming documents** only twice during the period, and expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of upstream coordination on EEA's reports that might result in misleading messages on the agricultural sector and the CAP. An **Internal Audit**<sup>40</sup> highlighted insufficient coordination and recommended that DG AGRI, DG CLIMA and DG ENV, together with the main

<sup>39</sup> The assessment presented in this section is restricted to the evaluation period: As mentioned in section 6.4.1, there has been a substantial strengthening in 2017-2018 of some bilateral relations, notably with DG AGRI, ENER or MARE.

<sup>40</sup> Internal Audit on the processes for managing and sharing data on agri-environmental-climate issues in DG AGRI, DG CLIMA and DG ENV, mentioned in Annual report to the Discharge Authority on internal audits carried out in 2016 (Article 99(5) of the Financial Regulation) COM/2017/0497, section 4.1.1.5



data providers (including the EEA), reinforce the coordination of agri-environmental-climate data and indicators, in order to avoid duplications, inconsistent quality and reputational risks. During half of the evaluation period, the vacancy of the policy officer in charge at EEA limited the activities of the NRC Agriculture and Environment.

- During the evaluation period, there have been high level meetings between the EEA and **DG REGIO** representatives to identify the areas of common interest and mutual support. A main area of cooperation between the EEA and DG REGIO is related to the Urban Atlas, which provides high-resolution land use maps for all major cities in Europe. While DG REGIO provides the budget for the production of the Urban Atlas, the EEA is responsible for project management, quality control and dissemination. This arrangement establishes a clear division of roles between the two institutions, and it is formalised through the Copernicus Annual Work Programmes. For instance, DG REGIO, as well as other DGs, is part of the Forum on **Integrated Urban Monitoring in Europe (IUME)** set up by EEA in 2009 to coordinate initiatives on urban monitoring and share information, methodologies and assessments.
- The EEA and DG GROW cooperate on Copernicus on the basis of the Delegation Agreement between the EU and the EEA signed in December 2014 establishing EEA's responsibilities as **entrusted entity for Copernicus Land and In-Situ services**. In other areas, the interaction between the EEA and DG GROW has intensified in 2015, in parallel with the preparation and adoption of the **Circular Economy Action Plan**, as DG GROW expressed the interest in broadening cooperation with the EEA and exploiting synergies, by asking to be included as partner not only in relation to the work on circular economy and Copernicus.
- There have been positive steps in the development of a constructive and cooperative approach between the EEA and DG MARE, supported by high-level meetings, notably in the context of the 2015 report 'State of Europe's seas' and the SOER. The development of WISE-Marine and the integration with EMODnet prevented the creation of overlaps, in terms of data and information systems management.
- Interaction with DG MOVE was limited to the context of the annual Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) report and related indicators, produced by the EEA, where MOVE is an active partner in the steering committee (together with CLIMA, ENV, and EUROSTAT).
- DG ENER is involved in consultations on the Trends and Projections (T&P) reports, regular annual reports on the progress towards climate mitigation and energy efficiency and renewable energy targets. As reported in interviews and analysed under the case study on T&P, although there is no written agreement, the coordination process has worked satisfactorily and has improved over time, also thanks to the proactiveness of the EEA's and DG ENER's officers involved. The Energy Union Governance and Climate Action Regulation proposed in 2016 and provisionally agreed politically provides clarity on how the EEA assists the Commission in its work on the decarbonisation and energy efficiency dimensions of the Energy Union.
- Informal cooperation has been initiated between EEA and DG ECHO in the context of the Climate-ADAPT information system.
- Cooperation with DG NEAR exists in the context of grant agreements focused on cooperation with neighbourhood and enlargement countries. Over the evaluation period, the EEA implemented the ENPI-SEIS project, aimed to cooperate with countries of the European Neighbourhood and 'improve national capacities for

managing and sharing environmental data and information’ and two follow-up projects under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Cooperation activities with Western Balkans were also supported through the Instrument on Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

- Finally, there have been interactions between the EEA, the European Political Strategy Centre and DG REGIO, contributing to the reflexion on future trends/challenges such as sustainability transitions, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), etc. This has already led to the EEA's active participation in inter-service and expert group meetings on the support of the post-2020 cohesion policy to sustainability transitions.

The following conclusions can be drawn on the functioning of the different coordination mechanisms between the EEA and these policy DGs:

- Although all relevant DGs were systematically invited to contribute to formal inter-service consultation on EEA programming document, their participation into this process could have been more systematic. However, there have been improvements over the evaluation period, promoting a better alignment between EEA’s activities and priorities pursued under sectorial policies and cross-cutting issues.
- Relevant sectoral DGs participated in most of the EIONET NRC meetings during the period (notably Agriculture, Energy, Transport, Marine and Land Use/Spatial Planning), but were neither involved in the work of the NRCs nor in the discussion of the work programme of related ETCs.
- Informal consultations on draft reports usually take place through established bilateral co-operation mechanisms or through DG ENV (e.g. for SOER). A comprehensive picture of upcoming reports was not available for other policy DGs during the evaluation period, notably due to the lack of formal participation of the Commission to EIONET and systematic access to its forum.
- Wider participation in the development of indicators or information systems (AEI, WISE, Climate-ADAPT, etc.) was challenging, but could be addressed (e.g. by the establishment of a Climate-ADAPT advisory group in 2016 engaging Commission services other than DG CLIMA).
- High-level meetings between EEA and other DGs enabled a better mutual understanding of priorities and opportunities, but were not always systematically involving DG Environment as “partner DG”, and therefore were not embedded into a single framework for the discussion of priorities for EEA support to EU environment and climate policy development and implementation.

The coordination established between the EEA and the European Parliament has continued and has been strengthened, compared to the previous evaluation period. The European Parliament takes part in the consultation on the EEA’s programming documents and there are regular contacts between the EEA and the ENVI Committee of the European Parliament. Positive examples of cooperation and alignment of the work of the two institutions have been found.

During the evaluation period, the EEA developed some activities and partnerships with stakeholders beyond EIONET, notably through the creation of the European Environment Academy (EEAcademy), organising events and summer schools focused on transitions, precaution/risk and policy evaluation. EEA also continued its support to the European Environmental Evaluators Network Forum.

## 5.5. EU added value

EU added value looks at the impacts and benefits generated and asks whether these could have been produced and in a similar or better way meeting the needs through other (potentially existing) interventions or mechanisms at the Member State and/or international level. It draws largely on the analysis done under the other evaluation criteria. Two main questions have guided the evaluation:

- What has been the EU added value of the EEA? What would be the most likely consequences at the EU level of stopping the EEA and EIONET?
- What has been the added-value of engaging with members beyond EU Member States?

### 5.5.1. EU added value

#### **Assessment question:**

*What has been the EU added value of the EEA? What would be the most likely consequences at the EU level of stopping the EEA and EIONET?*

#### **Overall response:**

EEA and EIONET have achieved significant levels of EU added value during the evaluation period and the evidence suggests that action has been justified at the EU level. The predominant view from institutions and organizations engaged with the EEA and EIONET is that they are trusted and well respected. They are seen by many of these institutions as impartial and having the right expertise. The provision of high quality data was identified as a key benefit being provided by the EEA and EIONET. This benefit is viewed as important, as it leads to the delivery of a number of other key benefits including, for example, the ability to benchmark the performance of countries, and for Member States with less resources dedicated to environmental and climate knowledge, the EEA and EIONET provide economies of scale and enable performing data integration and assessments that would not be possible with own national resources. Some functions are entirely unique to the EEA and EIONET and cannot be easily replicated. Stopping EEA and EIONET would result in the provision of poorer data quality and a likely divergence of reporting standards and lack of comparability of data.

#### **What is the issue?**

Based on the section 8 of the support study, the assessment of EU added value brings together the findings of the other criteria listed in previous sections, presenting the arguments on causality and drawing conclusions, based on the evidence gathered on the performance of the EEA.

#### **What are the findings?**

The EEA and EIONET have achieved significant levels of EU added value during the evaluation period and the evidence suggests that action has been justified at the EU level. Through the delivery of its tasks the EEA and EIONET has delivered to a wide range of benefits over the evaluation period that could not have been achieved by Member States acting alone.

The most relevant benefit is the collection of high quality data and information on environmental issues. This task/benefit is not exclusive to the EEA and EIONET, but cannot be undertaken by Member States acting alone in such a coherent, efficient and effective way. By undertaking this task at an EU level, there are opportunities to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and synergies associated with data collection. For example, the gathering of high quality data can directly and indirectly influence the achievement of

a number of other benefits that deliver EU added value. These include the ability to benchmark the performance of countries. This was considered a crucial benefit in a number of case studies (including Copernicus, ETS, Nature, SOER, Trends and Projections and Freshwater). Comparable information enables the efficient collection of data and avoids fragmented assessments; thereby improving the effectiveness of policy making.

Other related benefits include the gathering and dissemination of knowledge from EU-wide environmental assessments that is relevant for policy making, and the facilitation of reporting and reduced burden on EU environmental and climate legislation (e.g. through EEA contribution to templates for electronic reporting), thereby permitting collection of comparable data. These benefits were considered to be crucial in a large number of case studies and enabled efficient data collection and provided synergies that were unlikely to be achieved for a number of thematic areas if the Member States acted alone. The evaluation of Climate-ADAPT notes its added value in providing an EU reference point for the state-of-the-art of adaptation in Europe.

The case studies (see Appendix D of the support study) provide examples of which negative impacts could stem from stopping the EEA and EIONET:

- Inability to meet international commitments (F-gases)
- Increase in costs for Member States (Nature, Waste, F-gases, SOER, Trends and Projections, Freshwater)
- Lack of leadership on environmental data (ETS, F-gases, Freshwater)
- Poorer data quality (Nature, Copernicus, ETS, F-gases, SOER, Trends and Projections, Freshwater)
- Divergence of standards and lack of comparability of data (Copernicus, Waste, F-gases, SOER, Trends and Projections, Freshwater)
- Loss of expertise (Nature, Waste, ETS, F-gases, Freshwater)

Above examples suggest that without the EEA and EIONET, the costs for achieving the objectives of environmental and climate policy may increase, however, a fully quantifiable assessment has not been made due to the lack of a quantified counter-factual scenario (see section 2.3 above).

Some functions provided by the EEA and the EIONET itself are unlikely to be replicated in their current form by national environment agencies. An outstanding example is the SOER for which it is difficult to envisage a scenario whereby a comprehensive state of the environment report across all EU member countries could be provided to the same standard, as there is no other legislation requiring such report.

Conversely, in other areas such as the exchange of knowledge and best practice and coordination of activities among national experts in the member countries, in the absence of EEA/EIONET, national institutions could still collect high quality data and reporting at EU level could be performed by other institutions (e.g. the Commission), as it is already the case e.g. for waste and products legislations.

### *5.5.2. Added value of engaging beyond the EU*

**Assessment question:**

*What has been the added value of engaging with members beyond EU Member States? What would be the most likely consequences at the EU level of stopping non-EU membership?*

**Overall response:**

EEA membership beyond the EU Member States allows, in particular, non-EU member countries to draw on the EEA expertise and advice as part of the QA/QC processes, to consult on implementation of the legislation and to draw on EU Member State experiences and lessons learned when implementing EU environmental and climate legislation. The inclusion of non-EU countries is thus supporting harmonization of environment and climate legislation across the single market as well as cooperation on the provision of supranational public goods such as clean air or the mitigation of climate change. However, there is no homogeneous framework defining the obligations (financial participation, data flows, etc.) of non-EU member countries. The design of the EIONET was seen as key mechanism to ensure that the EU environmental and climate acquis was transposed effectively in national law, rather than just being copied, building capacity within candidate countries. However, this activity is not funded under the core subsidy.

**What is the issue?**

Based on section 8 of the support study, the evaluation gave consideration to the added-value of engaging with members beyond EU Member States, which is enshrined in founding regulation Art 19. Analysis of benefits requires distinguishing between 4 categories of member or co-operating countries:

- Countries members of EFTA (NO, IS, LI)
- Country under specific bilateral agreements (CH)
- EEA member country being enlargement candidate or potential candidate (TR)
- EEA co-operating countries being enlargement candidate or potential candidate (Western Balkan countries) and participating to NFP-EIONET meetings.

**What are the findings?**

The evaluation, through case studies, interviews and workshop, identified a range of specific benefits relating to engaging with members beyond EU Member States.

- 1) For countries implementing environment and climate legislation, e.g. EEA-EFTA countries, EEA membership allowed non-EU member countries to draw on the EEA expertise and advice as part of the QA/QC processes, to consult on implementation of the legislation and to draw on EU Member State experiences and lessons learned when implementing environment and climate legislation. For example, within the Case Study on reporting under the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), as of phase II of the EU ETS (2008-2012), EEA-EFTA members joined the EU ETS. The EEA reports on the application of the EU ETS in Member States thus also covered the performance of these countries and encompassed all of the single market. The inclusion of the EEA-EFTA countries was thus ensuring the robustness of the EU ETS beyond the EU-28 and supporting harmonization of climate legislation across the single market<sup>41</sup>.
- 2) Another benefit is capacity building for the preparation to EU membership. For example, the EEA has also supported non-EU member countries in the development of water body status assessments, to match the work of Member States under the WFD. The 2016 EIONET Freshwater Workshop included a

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<sup>41</sup> EEA discontinued this report in 2018 due to lack of resources.

session on the preparation of ecological and chemical status assessments in non-EU Member States, as well as their availability of spatial data.

- 3) There are relevant aspects of environment and climate policies that extend beyond the EU (e.g. transboundary air pollution, river basin management), therefore EEA's work e.g. in neighbouring countries provides a coherent knowledge base.
- 4) As highlighted by interviews with EEA Management Board members from outside the EU28, added value of participating in the EEA also included the ability to pool resources and provide cost effective solutions that could not have been achieved by countries acting alone, which can be particularly relevant in some co-operating countries with scarce resources for environmental knowledge management.

As mentioned above, the design of the EIONET includes not only the 5 non-EU EEA member countries, but also co-operating countries (as observers). This emerges from the evaluation as a successful mechanism to ensure that the EU environmental and climate acquis was transposed effectively in national law, contributing to build capacity within candidate countries. This task, despite of its relevance, is not funded through the core-EEA budget but through IPA grants.

## 5.6. Conformity with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies

### **Assessment question:**

*What are the weaknesses and strengths of regulating structural and operational aspects of EEA, in relation to the model envisaged in the above-mentioned Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, in order to identify any particular needs against the background of tasks currently allocated to the Agency?*

### **Overall response:**

The Founding Regulation is broadly in conformity with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies agreed in July 2012 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The few gaps or inconsistencies identified refer to the absence in the Founding Regulation of a requirement for regular evaluations and of a 'sunset clause', and the need to update/fill some gaps in provisions describing the role of governance bodies and the planning and budgetary procedures. From an operational perspective, the analysis shows that annual work programmes and reports were mostly in conformity with the template provided by the Commission. The exceptions found are limited specification of indicators and targets against specific activities and limited reporting against key performance indicators and objectives set out in the multi-annual work programme. Annual work programmes and reports were also not found to be very specific on how recommendations from evaluations were followed up, nor detailed on resource allocation to activities. However, the situation improved with the establishment of activity-based budgeting at the end of the evaluation period.

### **What is the issue?**

This assessment was carried out by considering each of the 66 points in the Joint Statement and assessing the formal conformity of the Founding Regulation with each point as well as the practical conformity through documents adopted by the Management Board, e.g. rules of procedure of the MB and SC, policies and work programmes.

### **What are the findings?**

Based on the detailed assessment presented in Appendix E of the support study, the following table identifies the main issues identified for each section of the Joint Statement:

**Table 8: summary conformity check - Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies**

Section of the Joint Statement (JS)	Main issues identified.
<b>I. Role and position of agencies in the EU's institutional landscape</b>	n/a
a. Definition and classification of agencies (1)	
b. Establishment and ending of agencies (2-5)	The founding regulation (FR) does not include a sunset clause.
c. Agencies' seat and role of the host countries (6-9)	n/a
<b>II. Structure and governance of agencies</b>	Formal voting rules as defined by Founding regulation (adoption a two-thirds majority of the members of the Board) are more stringent than JS prescriptions for current business decisions.
a. Management Board (10-13)	
b. Director (14-19)	Renewal procedure defined by the FR is ambiguous. The FR does not include a procedure for dismissing the ED.

c. Other internal bodies (20-22)	n/a
<b>III. Operation of agencies (23-26)</b>	The EEA is increasingly using shared services but the margin for efficiency gains is limited.
<b>IV. Programming of activities and resources</b> a. Annual and multiannual work programmes (27-32)	The AWP presented during the evaluation period were not fully compliant with Commission template. AWP and annual activity reports did not systematically provide a link with the MAWP
b. Human resources (33-35)	n/a
c. Funding, management of budgetary resources and budgetary procedure (36-45)	Requests from the Commission for new tasks were not systematically accompanied by legislative financial statements (e.g. above-mentioned example of Invasive Alien Species regulation).  The vague description of tasks in the Founding regulation does not allow a proper identification of new tasks.
<b>V. Accountability, controls and transparency and relations with stakeholders</b> a. Reporting requirements (46-49)	n/a
b. Internal audit (50-53)	n/a
c. External audit (54-55)	n/a
d. Discharge (56-58)	n/a
e. Alert/warning system (59)	n/a
f. Evaluation of the agencies (60-64)	The founding regulation (FR) does not provide for a periodic regular evaluation.
g. Transparency and relations with stakeholders (64-65)	EEA website and publications are not systematically translated into national languages.  Founding regulation allows for a high degree of coordination with stakeholders, translated into practice although with some caveats identified above in section 5.4
h. Prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, corruption, irregularities and other illegal activities (66)	n/a

The main issue identified in relation to non-conformity of the Founding Regulation concerns therefore the lack of provision for regular evaluation and of a 'sunset clause' (ref. points 4 and 60 of the Joint Statement).

In respect to the 'practical conformity', the EEA has adapted its practices during the evaluation period to conform to Common Approach requirements. The few points where conformity could be improved include:

- Annual work programmes and reports were not entirely in conformity with the template provided by the Commission and there was a lack of specification of indicators and targets against specific activities and limited reporting against key performance indicators and objectives set out in the MAWP (ref. point 27, 31, 32, 47)
- Annual work programmes and reports were not very specific on how recommendations from evaluations were followed up (ref. point 30)
- The MAWPs and AWP were not very detailed on resource allocation to activities although the situation improved with the establishment of activity-based budgeting (ref. points 28, 40)



In conclusion, there is a high degree of conformity with the Common Approach. Apart from the introduction of legal requirements for evaluation including a 'sunset clause', which would require a revision of the Founding Regulation, the EEA Management Board is competent to take any appropriate follow-up actions based on the identified areas for improvement.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

### 6.1. Main conclusions of the evaluation, by main evaluation criteria.

#### 6.1.1. Effectiveness

The EEA worked effectively to deliver on its core objectives, providing objective, reliable and comparable information, which was used extensively in EU and national environment and climate policy work. In most areas, the work of the agency was crucial or of significant importance to policy work at the EU level – this includes in particular the activities and outputs related to reporting required under EU legislation such as Air quality Directives, Bathing Waters Directive or the Climate Monitoring Mechanism Regulation. EEA and EIONET information and outputs also contributed significantly to national policy work in the environment and climate areas. Concerning other sectoral policies, while the EEA additionally supported concrete initiatives on indicators and reporting on integration of environment concerns, cooperation and interaction with the relevant sectoral policymakers has been limited, having an effect in the content, the use and the interpretation of EEA information and outputs., Some progress was achieved towards the end of the evaluation period, e.g. on agriculture and energy.

The Agency and EIONET have to a large degree effectively implemented the tasks set out in EEA multi-annual and annual work programmes, notably providing support to policy implementation in many areas of environment and climate policies. The Founding Regulation has a wide scope and generic definition of the tasks for EEA, which requires prioritization by the Agency and its Management Board according to available resources. In the face of diminishing resources, during the evaluation period, through the Multi-Annual Work Programme agreed by the Management Board the EEA has prioritised 11 of the 15 tasks attributed to it in Article 2 of the Founding Regulation. Out of these, eight key tasks have been fully and the other three have been largely implemented in an effective way, as the EEA was faced with resource and other challenges in the tasks of EIONET co-ordination, support to e-Reporting and integration of the results of relevant environmental research.

The broad mandate in the Founding Regulation enabled flexibility which the Agency used to accommodate to specific policy developments and evolving EU and Commission priorities over the evaluation period, such as the 7th EAP, the 2030 climate and energy framework as well as the Energy Union and the Circular Economy. Specific environment and climate legislation set out a role for the EEA (e.g. climate monitoring and reporting, Air Quality, CO<sub>2</sub>+Vehicles), usually combined with some increase in resources. The fact that the role of the EEA is better specified in some areas than in others had a certain impact on the setting of priorities for the Agency and its Management Board. Many policy users and stakeholders perceived that evolving needs were met, in the above-mentioned fields but also e.g. for climate adaptation or the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives, while some criticisms was raised by Commission services on the lack of support to Invasive Alien Species and Drinking Water Directives reporting during the evaluation period. The policy developments are somewhat reflected in changes in resource distribution between the strategic areas of the Multiannual Work Programme 2014-2018. The information needed for a more detailed assessment of changes in resources used at the level of certain specific tasks or outputs below the level of these areas was not available.

### *6.1.2. Efficiency*

Over the evaluation period, the EEA and EIONET have been efficient in implementing the evolving tasks set out in their mandate and programming documents. The costs of the EEA and EIONET amount to approximately EUR 65 million per year. A key benefit provided by the EEA and EIONET is the provision of quality data highly relevant for policy making. While it is difficult to make a robust quantification of the benefits generated by the EEA and EIONET, the evaluation shows that EEA/EIONET is very cost effective, and the work they do would otherwise have to be done in the Member States or by consultants, such as providing input to development and implementation of climate and environment legislation.

The EEA has optimized task efficiency where possible during the evaluation period, e.g. through improvements of the underpinning information management systems. One of the elements enabling the Agency to work efficiently was the reliance on the 6 European Topic Centres for conducting a large amount of the work of the Agency. The evaluation has found a few areas with a potential for exploiting efficiency gains, however, these are generally beyond the control of the Agency. The need to manage some activities under grants or delegation agreement (Copernicus Entrusted Entity, cooperation with neighbouring and pre-accession countries) led to duplication of administrative work as the EEA had to do accounting and finance for both the core budget and the specific budgets.

The internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the EEA have improved over the evaluation period following the recommendations of the previous evaluation. A system of Knowledge and Performance Indicators and an activity-based budgeting and accounting system were introduced and improved the overview of priorities. However, the system still provided information at a relatively aggregate level and does not provide information on resources allocated to producing key outputs or tasks as it was based on the broad level of strategic areas of the multiannual programme 2014-2018. Strategic decisions on introducing or cutting away certain activities have not been systematically discussed in the Management Board. Its large format however makes such broader discussions challenging and may require more preparatory work by the Bureau.

### *6.1.3. Relevance*

The objectives set out in the mandate of the EEA/EIONET Founding Regulation, including its priority areas in Article 3, are still overall relevant and fit-for-purpose. While not explicitly mentioning climate policy, or encompassing systemic issues, they refer to successive Community action programmes on the environment, as well as of sustainable development, and therefore can be considered to cover e.g. climate action. The wording of the Founding Regulation clearly understates the real size of the EEA's work on support of EU regulatory activities. In particular, EEA provides full support across the entire reporting cycle to 40% of the relevant environment and climate reporting obligations (e.g. for a large majority in the areas of air and climate mitigation, supporting the implementation of the EU 2020 climate and energy framework), partial support for further 25%, and data storage for further 18%.

At the same time the EEA was successful in adapting to evolving EU policy priorities as described under 5.1.3 and the broader EU agenda during the evaluation period, e.g. the increased focus on governance aspects and compliance issues, better regulation and transparency as reinforced by the Juncker Commission priorities to reach tangible results

on the ground, which have added to the policy agenda and imposed increased need for evidence-based policymaking.

The lack of reference to the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) and related tasks linked to INSPIRE (Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe), Copernicus services and GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) despite these tasks being an integral part of the EEA's tasks and work programmes does not enhance the transparency and understanding of the EEA's work and efforts to expand data use.

The tasks mentioned in Article 2 of the Founding Regulation still provide a reasonable framework within which the activities and outputs of the EEA and EIONET could be framed, although they are somewhat outdated and do not represent the balance of activities of the Agency during the evaluation period. They cover most elements but do not fully mirror neither the "MDIAK" key conceptual framework forming the basis for the Agency's activities nor the activities undertaken by ETCs, NFPs and NRCs. New EU policy requirements in relation to mainstreaming of environment and climate change into sector policies (e.g. CAP) and for making integrated assessments are not reflected in the list of tasks. While data from consultation with stakeholders shows that they overall see EEA tasks as relevant, there are divergent views about the relevance of individual tasks and outputs. Objective indicators of relevance are lacking, that could support a further prioritization exercise.

The evaluation concludes that the EEA is relevant to citizens as it plays an important role in providing reliable and objective information on the state of environment as well as on climate issues. The EEA enables other actors, whether those are Member States, NGOs or other civil societies or the general public, to be properly informed about the state of environment. Citizens benefit from the support the EEA provides to an evidence-based policymaking, which has a positive impact on the state of environment, climate action and health of citizens.

#### *6.1.4. Coherence*

Good cooperation and synergies between the Environment and Climate Action DGs of the European Commission and the EEA were established in most policy areas. Cooperation with other DGs that also contribute to the provision of environmental and climate knowledge (namely Eurostat, Joint Research Centre and DG Research and Innovation) improved during the evaluation period notably thanks to the creation of the Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC). In a few areas, some duplications of work, misalignment of timing or missed synergies revealed the need for further coordination, and there is room for further complementarity and efficiency gains across knowledge providers and for further consistency across different sectoral policies. Cooperation mechanisms varied across EEA's tasks and themes, and worked well especially when a clear division of roles and strong mechanisms for ongoing coordination were in place, in particular within the Commission.

The overall framework for cooperation between the European Commission and the EEA during the evaluation period worked well but could have been more systematic. The EIONET coordination setup between the EEA and a large number of national bodies promotes synergies, but there is an increasing need for cooperation beyond EIONET as data sources broaden, mainly linked to implementation of EU policies. Cooperation with other EU Agencies works well and could be further developed.

The EEA has cooperated with other sectoral policy DGs during the evaluation period under a variety of forms and intensity. The formal consultation on EEA's programming documents, involving sectorial policy DGs of the Commission, is the mechanism for alignment between EEA's activities and priorities pursued in other policy areas. Nevertheless, it did not necessarily lead to optimal coordination with DGs acting in other policy areas than environment and climate. Although some of these DGs were mentioned in EEA work programmes as 'key partners', this did not systematically materialize in actual cooperation or engagement of these partners. The EEA is however increasingly providing analytical input on sustainability transitions and on its link to other policy areas such as regional development and cohesion, energy or agriculture.

#### *6.1.5. EU Value added*

EEA and EIONET have achieved significant levels of EU added value during the evaluation period and the evidence suggests that action has been justified at the EU level. The predominant view from institutions and organizations engaged with the EEA and EIONET is that they are trusted and well respected. They are seen by many of these institutions as impartial and having the right expertise. The provision of high quality data was identified as a key benefit being provided by the EEA and EIONET. This benefit is viewed as important, as it leads to the delivery of a number of other key benefits including, for example, the ability to benchmark the performance of countries, and for Member States with less resources dedicated to environmental and climate knowledge, the EEA and EIONET provide economies of scale and enable performing data integration and assessments that would not be possible with own national resources. Some functions are entirely unique to the EEA and EIONET and cannot be easily replicated. Stopping EEA and EIONET would result in the provision of poorer data quality and a likely divergence of reporting standards and lack of comparability of data.

EEA membership beyond the EU Member States allows, in particular, non-EU member countries to draw on the EEA expertise and advice as part of the QA/QC processes, to consult on implementation of the legislation and to draw on EU Member State experiences and lessons learned when implementing EU environmental and climate legislation. The inclusion of non-EU countries is thus supporting harmonization of environment and climate legislation across the single market as well as cooperation on the provision of supranational public goods such as clean air or the mitigation of climate change. However, there is no homogeneous framework defining the obligations (financial participation, data flows, etc.) of non-EU member countries. The design of the EIONET was seen as key mechanism to ensure that the EU environmental and climate acquis was transposed effectively in national law, rather than just being copied, building capacity within candidate countries. However, this activity is not funded under the core subsidy.

#### *6.1.6. Conformity to Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies*

The Founding Regulation is broadly in conformity with the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies agreed in July 2012 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The few gaps or inconsistencies identified refer to the absence in the Founding Regulation of a requirement for regular evaluations and of a 'sunset clause', and the need to update/fill some gaps in provisions describing the role of governance bodies and the planning and budgetary procedures. From an operational perspective, the analysis shows that annual work programmes and reports were mostly in conformity with the

template provided by the Commission. The exceptions found are limited specification of indicators and targets against specific activities and limited reporting against key performance indicators and objectives set out in the multi-annual work programme. Annual work programmes and reports were also not found to be very specific on how recommendations from evaluations were followed up, nor detailed on resource allocation to activities. However, the situation improved with the establishment of activity-based budgeting at the end of the evaluation period.

## 6.2. Overall conclusions

The overall conclusion of the evaluation is that, during the 2012-2016 period, the **EEA and EIONET fulfilled the main objectives set by the Founding Regulation**, which continue to be relevant, and provided EU value added by implementing the multi-annual work programmes in a largely effective, efficient and coherent way. Both the Agency and its network worked overall well, with very good products and co-operation. EEA has proven to be reliable in providing the necessary information to support EU policy making e.g. in areas such as air quality, the follow-up on the 2020 climate and energy package, bathing water, and others. The EEA has adapted very well to new EU policy developments and has fulfilled its objectives in the context of decreasing staff resources and increasing expectations for further high quality deliverables by the Agency.

The evaluation has also identified **a certain number of issues** on the matching between the **scope** of EEA action and its resources, on **governance** mechanisms and on the **processes** for integrating data into policy-relevant knowledge.

In terms of its **scope**, the EEA faced during the evaluation period increasing demand from the Commission to support new legislation on both environment and climate sides and as entrusted entity for Copernicus Land service and in-situ co-ordination. This was clearly due to the recognition that EEA and its network provide unique value for money.

While additional but temporary resources accompanied some of these specific requests, EEA had to adjust to a nominal freezing of the EU core subsidy and corresponding human resource reduction in line with the Commission policy for decentralised agencies. In some cases, this freezing hampered the full implementation of EEA work programme, including work on support to EU legislation (e.g. reporting). The continuation of the nominal freezing of the EU core subsidy for 2021 -2027 proposed by the Commission would require further prioritization and eventual deselection of activities and tasks currently undertaken.

In terms of **governance**, the existing arrangements fulfilled their main functions and were perceived as broadly appropriate by many stakeholders. The EEA Management Board has not always fully played its role of strategic steer, including on resource prioritization. This was partially due to its working methods. Moreover, the multiplicity of additional technical coordination mechanisms between Commission services and EEA has sometimes affected negatively the overall structural coordination with the Commission

Overall the **processes** worked well and information management systems and generic planning and reporting instruments have improved. EEA and EIONET were seen as essential data provider both for the Commission and for the member countries. Some weaknesses were identified in EEA's role of integrating data into environmental policy-relevant knowledge. While data collection processes worked efficiently in all climate and many environmental fields, they did not always fully benefit yet from new technologies and processes, in particular in view of the substantial resources provided for Copernicus

towards the end of the evaluation period. Effectiveness and efficiency gains can be expected from the ongoing streamlining and e-reporting infrastructure modernisation across the supported policy domains.

Overall, indicators fulfilled their role of providing comparable and robust knowledge. EEA delivered most of its reports as planned and with broad consultation, which however may need to widen the scope to reach all relevant actors, including from the sectors affected. There was some room for improvement in the timing, scope and formats of some EEA reports, to be better coordinated with the Commission's policy agenda.

The EIONET is a unique network of environment and climate expertise that provides essential expertise in many areas and contributes e.g. through the European Topic Centres to the efficiency of the EEA's work. There was margin for improvement in the information on EIONET activities, the clarification of the role and better visibility of the value added of the various EIONET components and how these interact with the EEA and the Commission services, notably in the area of reporting.

### 6.3. Lessons learnt

#### 6.3.1. On-going working streams since the end of the evaluation period

As the scope of the evaluation covers the period 2012 - 2016, a number of on-going work-streams are already contributing to addressing some of the above findings.

- The essential role of EEA in supporting EU policy-making through support to environmental and climate regulatory reporting is increasingly recognised through **specific mentions in recently adopted legislation on waste/circular economy**<sup>42</sup> and the monitoring, reporting and verification of **CO2 emissions from heavy duty vehicles**<sup>43</sup>. EEA proposed support to reporting is also specifically included in the Regulation on **Energy Union Governance and Climate Action** to support achieving the 2030 EU climate and energy targets, in the proposal for a revised **Drinking Water Directive**<sup>44</sup>, in the proposal for a Regulation to stimulate and facilitate **water reuse** in the EU for agricultural irrigation<sup>45</sup>, in the proposed Directive on the reduction of the impact of **certain plastic products on the environment**<sup>46</sup> and in the proposal for a Regulation on the alignment of **reporting obligations** in the field of environment policy<sup>47</sup>.
- Recent **Commission opinions on EEA Programming Documents**<sup>48</sup> have highlighted their overall alignment with the priorities of the EU, the Commission,

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<sup>42</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/850 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste, Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and Directive (EU) 2018/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste.

<sup>43</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/956 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 June 2018 on the monitoring and reporting of CO2 emissions from and fuel consumption of new heavy-duty vehicles

<sup>44</sup> COM(2017) 753

<sup>45</sup> COM(2018) 337

<sup>46</sup> COM(2018) 340

<sup>47</sup> COM(2018) 381

<sup>48</sup> C(2017) 5445 and C(2018) 6048

the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Environment Action Programme, the 2030 climate and energy framework, the Energy Union, and **required a more precise description of the resource allocation per activity** in order to, inter alia, assess the proportion of staff in horizontal/administrative activities, the priority given to specific activities and the possibility of efficiency gains.

- The follow-up of the environmental reporting Fitness Check, which contributes (with additional 3,0 M€ funding) to EEA **e-Reporting infrastructure modernisation**, taking into account national capabilities and producing a platform that can support the new challenges in reporting for the years 2020 to 2030 and beyond (so-called “Reportnet 3.0”) incorporating the requirements of the INSPIRE directive, integrating and reducing costs of the process steps from definition of datasets, through QC procedures, data processing and dataflow products, and drastically improving user experience. Against the same background, the EEA is establishing a coherent framework of service levels for the support to reporting, enabling a joint definition of priorities with the Commission.
- An analysis of possibilities for **streamlining of energy and climate reporting obligations** was carried out<sup>49</sup>. The Regulation on Energy Union Governance and Climate Action, which succeeds the Climate Monitoring Mechanism Regulation<sup>50</sup> and which covers energy and climate planning, monitoring, and reporting obligations better specifies the role of the EEA and extends its (e-)reporting support to the areas of renewables and energy efficiency, with a total additional 1,6 M€ funding during 2018-2020.
- The EEA Management Board has started a **review of the rules of procedure** of the Board and the Bureau, which aims at increasing effectiveness through a reinforcement of the **role of the Management Board for strategic prioritization**.
- At operational level, EEA performed in September 2018 an **internal reorganisation** leading to a reinforcement of co-ordination between areas, and a substantial improvement in addressing above mentioned weaknesses in terms of knowledge integration, e.g. by a clearer allocation of responsibilities in the area of land use, and EIONET co-ordination. It also included further alignment to recent policy developments e.g. on enhanced integration between climate and energy reporting.
- Internal Commission mechanisms for upstream co-ordination before EEA meetings and comments to draft publications have started to be strengthened, involving also the DGs not members of the Management Board.

### 6.3.2. *Other Lessons Learnt*

Against this background, the present Staff Working Document identifies these remaining “lessons learned”, in a general context of a proposed freezing of EU core resources:

- **Effectiveness**, but also **efficiency** could benefit from a **review of resources allocated to processes across strategic areas** to continue ensuring the support of environment and climate policies based on policy-relevant knowledge. This review could take into account the effects of integrating emerging data sources like Copernicus. The review could be supported e.g. by streamlined Key

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<sup>49</sup> See e.g. Commission SWD(2016) 394.

<sup>50</sup> COM(2016) 759, GEDA/A/(2018)005545



Performance Indicators, activity-based accounting and a single framework for discussion of the detailed annual work programme.

- **Relevance** and **coherence** could be further enhanced from more (in-depth) contacts with Commission services when embedded in a uniform framework. It would also benefit from a full participation of the policy-relevant Commission services in the Management Board, as well as a clearer definition of the roles of EIONET components and more visibility of EIONET activities. Coordination within the Environmental Knowledge Community is very important, in particular in new areas with many partners, evolving fast such as e.g. for the Copernicus services.
- Finally, efficiency and EU-added value would benefit from a homogeneous framework defining the obligations (financial contribution, data flows, etc.) linked to **participation of non-EU member and co-operating countries**.

## 7. ANNEXES TO THE FINAL REPORT

### 7.1. Annex 1 - Procedural information concerning the process to prepare the evaluation

The evaluation followed usual procedural requirements of the better regulation Guidelines. The process started in July 2016 with the publication of the Evaluation Roadmap<sup>51</sup>, which draft was previously discussed with the EEA Management Board.

The lead DG for this evaluation was DG ENV. An inter-service steering group was set up including DGs AGRI, CLIMA, ESTAT, ENER, JRC, RTD and SG .

The evaluation was carried out with the support of a consortium led by COWI (DK), under a **20-months contracts** signed in November 2016, which has performed a large stakeholder consultation and produced a study report.

The Regulatory Scrutiny Board did not include this evaluation in its agenda.

### 7.2. Annex 2 - Synopsis report of the Stakeholder consultation

#### 7.2.1. Evaluation Roadmap

The Evaluation Roadmap was published on 21/07/2016. The draft was subject to an internal consultation of relevant Commission services and presented to EEA management Board (June 2016). Final version took on board the comments received, notably aiming at better taking into account the outcome of the previous evaluation and at a more precise formulation of the evaluation questions.

There was no comment during the 4-weeks feedback period.

The terms of reference for the call for tender for the support study took into account the evaluation roadmap.

#### 7.2.2. Key outline of the consultation strategy

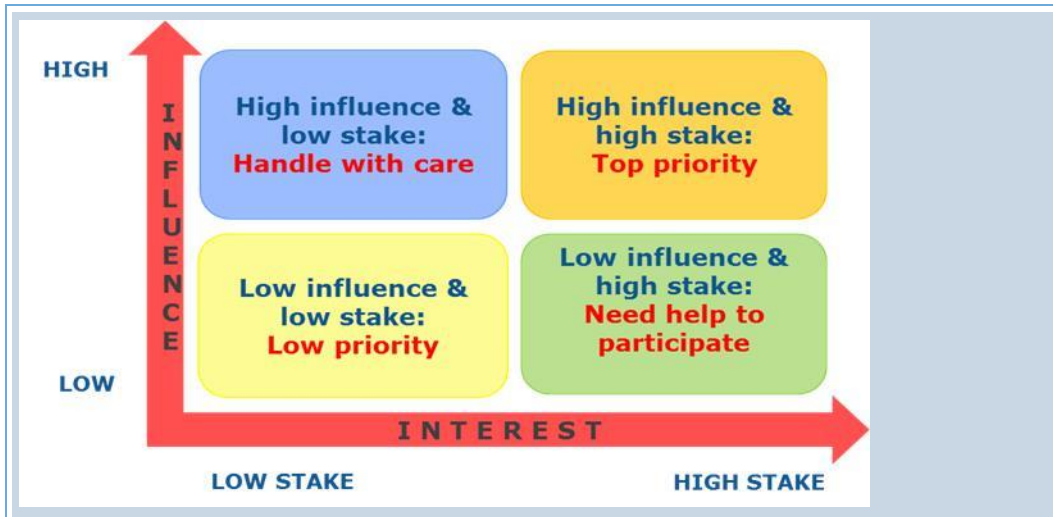
The consultation strategy was developed during the inception phase of the support study, based on the requirements from the evaluation roadmap and developing the terms of reference of the support study. The study was initiated in November 2016. Subsequently, a draft consultation strategy was submitted for review in January 2017, and revised in April 2017 following feedback from the ISSG.

One of the aims of the consultation strategy was to identify stakeholders, who have a direct working relation with, are relevant for, or interested in, the EEA and EIONET, avoiding an excessive focus on “insiders”, i.e. organisations members of the Board or part of EIONET. In line with Better Regulation Guidelines, stakeholders were analysed according to the extent to which 1) they influence the EEA/EIONET, and 2) they have an interest in the EEA/EIONET.

#### *Figure 13 Stakeholder mapping*

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<sup>51</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018\\_env\\_002\\_eea\\_evaluation\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2018_env_002_eea_evaluation_en.pdf)



Source: Better Regulation Guidelines, Tool #50

In terms of influence, the Consultation Strategy distinguished between influence on the activities and tasks undertaken by the EEA/EIONET and influence on the outcomes and impacts generated on the basis of these activities/tasks.

The main categories of stakeholders included in the consultation strategy were the following:

- Countries (EU Member States, member countries, cooperating countries)
- The Commission
- The European Parliament
- The scientific community
- The EEA itself
- The European Topic Centres
- Interest organisations (environmental/climate NGOs and other NGOs)
- International bodies
- The general public of the EU

The consultation strategy included the key elements foreseen in the terms of reference, namely public consultation, interviews with selected stakeholders and a stakeholder workshop, and also included targeted surveys, focus group interviews and workshops as consultation methods.

### 7.2.3. Actual implementation of the consultation strategy

The table below summarises how the planned consultation methods were actually implemented:

**Table 9: Consultation methods**

Method	Purpose	Key considerations and intentions of the consultation strategy with regard to stakeholders and implementation of the method
Exploratory interviews	To gain an insight into key issues in relation to EEA performance – thus enabling targeting of methodology and	During the inception phase, the support study tem performed interviews with staff the Commission (DG ENV, DG CLIMA and SG) and of the EEA, to better frame the intervention logic, evaluation matrix, list of reference documents and consultation strategy.

	questions	
Public consultation	To allow a broad range of stakeholders, including organisations and individuals of the general public to voice their opinion on the EEA performance and relevance	<p>A public consultation was launched<sup>52</sup> on 17 July 2017 and lasted until 6 November 2017.</p> <p>A two-tier questionnaire was developed, consisting of a short general part and a more specific and technical part for stakeholders with deeper insight.</p> <p>Although the public consultation was, by nature, open to all stakeholders, the intention was to gather the views of those stakeholders who were not consulted through other targeted methods mentioned below or where only some few selected representatives of a stakeholder group were consulted individually. This means that the support study was in particular looking for responses from public authorities (national, regional, local) who were not involved in EEA governance or EIONET, interested actors beyond environment sector, academia, NGOs (especially but not limited to NGOs at national level) and the public at large.</p> <p>The response rate to the questionnaire was low, with a total of 51 replies (21 to the general questionnaire, and 30 to the stakeholders questionnaire)</p>
Interviews with key stakeholders	To gain in-depth understanding of the views of key stakeholders.	<p>The support study team performed interviews with Member States, the Commission, the Parliament, the Scientific community, international bodies, key interest organisations and the EEA itself, including the ETCs.</p> <p>Interviewees encompassed key representatives of these stakeholders to capture the general views of these stakeholders as well as selected persons responding to the individual case studies. The case study related interviews included a combination of general questions and specific case study questions.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the support study included the provision for approximately 50 interviews, however, already during the elaboration of the consultation strategy, it was clear that this would be insufficient if to cover all the relevant stakeholders. The support study team therefore performed 74 interviews, the details are provided in Appendix G of the support study report.</p>
Targeted surveys	To gain the views of particular stakeholder groups on particular subjects which are more specific than those covered by the public consultation. To enable comparison with previous evaluation.	<p>The support study developed three mini-surveys using e-questionnaires. These targeted specific stakeholder groups and asked questions that were specifically addressed to each stakeholder group and targeted some key evaluation questions of particular relevance to that group. The three target groups were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commission staff from all relevant DGs (questionnaire sent at head of Unit level))</li> <li>- Members, alternates and observers of the Management Board</li> <li>- National Focal Points and main contact points of the National Reference Centres.</li> </ul> <p>The response rate was low in the case of Commission Survey (18% consulted units sent one of several replies), fair in the case of Management Board survey (60% of member countries sent a reply) and NFP/NRC survey (72% of members or co-operating countries sent at least a reply).</p>
Workshops	To enable discussion on	Two workshops were organised, one for Bureau members (in connection

<sup>52</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-support-evaluation-european-environment-agency-and-its-european-environment-information-and-observation-network-0\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations/public-consultation-support-evaluation-european-environment-agency-and-its-european-environment-information-and-observation-network-0_en)

for specific stakeholder groups	topics of key concern for a particular stakeholder group thus giving a more nuanced insight across all the individuals in the group	with the Bureau meeting) on 16 May 2017, and the other with NFPs and ETCs co-ordinators (in connection with the NFP-EIONET meeting) on 31 May - 1 June 2017).  This was a way of targeting these stakeholders instead of performing a large number of interviews – in particular for the NFPs.
Stakeholders Workshop	To validate findings and to deepen the understanding of key issues and give better foundation for producing useful recommendations	The stakeholder workshop, organised on 5/12/2017, was a key element in the consultation strategy. The workshop aimed at providing transparency in the evaluation and allowing a broad range of stakeholders to comment and discuss the findings. The objective was to validate draft findings and add deeper insight. To get the maximum benefit, the workshop encompassed break-out sessions.  60 stakeholders attended the workshop, having received a background document 2 weeks in advance. The outcome of the discussions is summarised in Appendix K of the support study report.

In summary the consultation strategy was implemented as planned although not all interviews were conducted as planned and other interviews not originally planned were conducted. In total, more interviews than foreseen in the terms of reference were conducted. Also, additional activities in the form of workshops and meetings with stakeholders which were not foreseen in the terms of reference were conducted.

Due to the large number of EC services and EEA member countries organisations (both environmental and sectoral), it was not possible to perform individual interviews beyond a sample, and they were therefore targeted through both targeted and public consultations. However, both surveys had very low response rates, despite several extensions and reminders.

Despite insistent contacts, the participation of MEPs and of Environment and climate NGOs and industry and business organisations was very limited. The understanding of the support study is that this was primarily due to resource constraints as well as considerations that the study was not about specific legal initiatives (environmental and climate NGOs) or not of primary interest to national member organisations (industry and business).

In summary, the 'core' stakeholders were reached (MB members in countries, the Commission, the Scientific Committee, the NFPs and NRCs, the ETCs and the EEA itself) – typically through several methods allowing both breadth and depth. Challenges were encountered in reaching beyond these groups and out to a wider set of stakeholders, including other authorities in Member States, interest organisations in other areas than environment and climate, the scientific community and the general public.

#### 7.2.4. Methodology and tools used to process the data.

The data from the public consultation and the targeted surveys were extracted from the host site EU Survey<sup>53</sup> website in Excel format. The data was then checked for incomplete and/or duplicate records so to avoid any contamination. Data was also checked for any responses whereby the respondent had only selected the first answer option for each question. Following these checks, the data was analysed with summary statistics created for each question. These were then created for all respondents and various sub-groups. Summary tables and charts were then created and analysed.

<sup>53</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/home/welcome>

The interview data was logged in notes (one for each interview) and structured according to interview questions to enable the team to quickly identify answers to specific questions. Analysis was then performed across interviews from similar stakeholders to identify patterns in responses to specific questions. Interviews were conducted with an understanding that individual interviewees would not be quoted and interview results should be presented per stakeholder group rather than being referred to a specific institution or person unless specifically agreed. For this reason, interview records are kept by the consultant.

Data triangulation was an important part of the analysis of each evaluation question considering the data from the consultation activities in the context of data collected through desk research and considering whether data from different consultation methods pointed in the same direction or not.

#### *7.2.5. Results of consultation activities*

**Interviews** were conducted with an understanding that individual interviewees would not be quoted, therefore interview results are presented per stakeholder group rather than being referred to a specific institution or person unless specifically agreed.

- **Management Board members from member countries:** All interviewees found that the EEA offered a clear value to countries. The majority of MB members interviewed highlighted that EEA had helped to organise the internal coordination with the country (especially, but not limited to, countries with a federal system). Overall, the interviewees found that the EEA had made an important albeit indirect contribution as indirect towards stronger environmental and climate protection, with a specific mention to SOER. Interviewees noted that during the evaluation period, there was a decision to reduce some of the international work due to budget constraints and those who mentioned this also found that this was the right decision. Interviewees found that the EEA was responsive to the needs of the countries and the Commission and the EEA was found to perform well in managing the relations. All interviewees regard the EEA as a well-managed organisation. Several interviewees mention the budget constraints and said that these have been felt during the period and stated that the EEA has managed well under these constraints. Most interviewees state that the draft budget was closely scrutinised by the MB members and found no areas where there was a misallocation. All interviewees expressed appreciation for the Eionet and its functioning. Several interviewees mention the role of technology and that new technologies for monitoring (e.g. satellite based) are available and will cause the role of the Eionet to adjust. All interviewees find that the interaction with the SC developed in a positive direction during the evaluation period – especially in the later years after recruitment of new members. Note that for several of these interviews, the NFPs for the respective countries also took part and therefore, the responses are to be regarded as valid for NFPs as well.
- **Commission / EKC DGs:** Interviewees explained that the cooperation was not guided by specific agreements or MoUs. It was framed by the work programmes and the processes in the MB, but at the operational level, it was more 'ad hoc' and depended on the personal relations between staff on both sides. Few overlaps or duplications were identified by interviewees. The interviewees found that cooperation was in general working well. Interviewees found that the EKC has worked to ensure that the relevant entities are better informed and has provided a platform for working on common projects. The interviewees found that the main factors that determined successful cooperation were good and effective

interpersonal / working relationships, clear distinction of roles of the DG and the EEA as well as clear and strong role taken by one DG. Several interviewees emphasise that clear guidance on coordination should come from DG ENV. The interviews showed that the cooperation between the DGs and the Eionet entities varied depending on the topic. Interviewees emphasised that it was positive that the consultation procedure for the work programmes was coordinated by DG ENV and found it important that the Commission response was coordinated. Interviewees found that comments provided were generally taken into account by the EEA. The interviewees expressed some caution on EEA's further engagement into foresight oriented work considering its size and the resources involved in order to do this type of work, e.g. this requires considerable effort in modelling, which is very resource-demanding. It was also emphasised that the Commission was investing in this area and therefore it was not considered relevant by the interviewees that the EEA should also be engaged.

- Commission / Sectoral DGs: Data from interviews with representatives of DG AGRI, DG MARE and DG ENER provided details and understanding of the use of EEA outputs in these DGs and about the mechanisms for cooperation between the DGs and the EEA (complementing data from desk reviews). While there is recognition of the work done by the EEA by the DGs, the interviews also expressed some concerns related to the understanding of the economic sector and the interplay between the environmental issues and sector issues. Further, there were concerns related to level of precision in the data provided in relation to e.g. reporting on the Habitat Directive and Water Framework Directive. On the other hand, there is also a concern that EEA in some cases mainly drew data from other sources, which were already available to these policy DGs and thus did not always add value to the knowledge base (seen in the eyes of the sector DGs). However, it is important to note that there are differences between the DGs, the intensity of the cooperation between the EEA and the DGs and the mechanisms ensuring this cooperation. Overall, the data from interviews indicated that cooperation with other DGs was limited but intensified towards the end of the evaluation period.
- NGOs and interest organisations: The organisations consulted, notably environmental NGOs, make quite extensive use of the EEA reports and databases as part of the preparation of their work – the data is translated by the organisations into policy demands. Neutrality and independence were regarded as very important along with ensuring high quality of data from Member States. The strength of the EEA was seen as being able to provide unbiased scientific data and assessments. Interviewees found the web-site to be difficult to use unless one knows what to look for and how to navigate to it. One interview suggested a list of report by Directive as linkages to policy were considered unclear. Many of the interviewees highlighted that dissemination of the EEA's work to general public would require adapting the language and translating it into all the national languages, which would lead to unnecessary burden for the EEA.
- Other agencies: Interviews were undertaken with EFSA and ECHA. The interviews served to support the analysis of coherence and questions were posed on areas of common interest and cooperation, interactions and mechanisms for coordination/cooperation, duplication/issues in cooperation and synergies (exploited or unexploited). The interviews showed limited cooperation between the EEA and the two other agencies due to the different mandates. Cooperation was characterised as quite ad-hoc and not driven by formal mechanisms, which were not regarded as needed. Overall, the interviewees did not identify major

issues in relation to duplications or synergies and were positive on the cooperation that did take place. The interviews indicated some scope for expanding cooperation based on the positive experiences during the evaluation period.

#### Public Consultation:

- Stakeholder survey: Overall a poor response to the survey given the population of the EIONET and the number of organisations that feed in directly to the work of the EEA and EIONET. Generally responses are dominated by organisations that are part of the EEA and EIONET and therefore likely to have provided an informed view. Responses were from a range of countries, with no single country dominating. The respondents have a strong interest in the products and services that the EEA provides. Overall the majority of respondents expressed positive views towards the products and services provided by the EEA and EIONET. Reports (including the SOER and non-SOER) alongside maps, graphs and datasets and indicators were reported upon favourably. Exhibitions and WISE have received less favourable feedback. There is significant appreciation of the EU value added of all of the functions of the EEA. There is recognition that the resources allocated to the EEA are either adequate or too low.
- General survey: Overall a poor level of response to the survey was received, with only 21 responses being received from individuals and organisations who had a general interest in the EEA. The majority of responses were provided by organisations and institutions not part of the EEA and EIONET. Responses were from a range of countries, with no single country dominating. The respondents have a varied awareness of the different products and services that the EEA provides, most of which are occasionally or less frequently used. The majority of respondents expressed work purposes being the main reason for use. Overall, the respondents do not think the information provided by the EEA is that much better than other sources.

#### Targeted surveys:

- European commission units: Overall the response to the survey was relatively small. Response rate was much lower in DG Environment than in DG Climate Action. Survey found that overall EEA reports are used most in both policy development and implementation. Datasets/maps are considered to be the most robust and impartial in both areas, and are also considered to be the most useful, while meetings/workshops are considered as less useful. Overall, respondents agreed that the EEA was providing a wide range of benefits, however the level to which it is providing these benefits could be improved. Respondents did not feel strongly that national institutions and the European Commission would not be able to provide the same benefits as the EEA on their own. Overall the level of coordination of work between the respondents and their EEA counterparts was reported to be good, with 75% coordinating at least a few times per year, and 50% coordinating once per month or more frequently.
- Management Board: Overall, the majority of MB members agreed that the number of meetings they have, the level of information supplied to them for those meetings, and the timing for delivery in advance of this information, are adequate. The majority also agreed that the balance of interests within the MD is adequate and that role divisions and responsibilities are clear. In terms of the role of the MB in contributing to EEA priority setting, 80% of respondents felt they were



provided with adequate information to be able to assess and provide feedback in this area. However, only 25% thought that they could exercise real influence in EEA priority setting to a large extent. Examination of the five main areas of the EEA's work – Monitoring, Data, Information, Assessments, and Knowledge – showed that MB members generally felt the divisions between each area were clear and agreed with the level of prioritisation, except for “Knowledge” where 50% felt it should be given higher priority. Overall, the majority of respondents find the level of coordination between the EEA and EIONET in their country and across countries, to be good. A large majority of respondents meet with the NFP in their country 6 or more times per year and many said they conducted pre-meetings with their NFP in advance of MB meetings every time. An area of weaker coordination was the discussion of the EEA budget and country positions on the budget. Similarly, the frequency of meetings with NRCs in their country was low: only 41% meet more than once per year. Respondents generally agreed that national institutions could provide the same benefits in the absence of the EEA to only a little extent, except for the provision of “high quality data and information on environmental issues to policy makers”, where a higher proportion of respondents felt their national institutions could do to some or a large extent without the EEA.

- NFP/NRC: The majority of respondents know, at least to some extent, the scope and definition of the roles within the EIONET. However, one third do not know the usefulness of the tools and systems, suggesting they may not be aware of the existence of these facilities. Overall, the meetings organised by the EEA are well-received but a wide range of qualitative remarks were made to help improve the service provided by the EEA. Overall, the responses to NFP coordination is positive. The respondents who are NRC members tend to be satisfied with coordination, with most having frequent meetings and regular correspondence via emails. The majority also agree that meetings regarding the national network (wholly or partially) happen either regularly or when needed; only a third or less think these meetings are random or non-existent. The responses concerning the statements on external coordination by the EEA are generally positive. The majority of respondents did not spend more than 40 days on their duties. When asked about the relevance of EEA activities in the field of sustainable transition, the Copernicus Programme and the INSPIRE Directive, a significant portion of the respondents either did not think it relevant to their work or did not know about the subject matter. Overall, participants think EEA succeeds in providing a range of benefits. In the absence of the EEA, generally respondents either do not think that national institutions (alone or in collaboration with national institutions in other countries) would be able to provide the same benefits to the same extent or do not have an opinion either way.

#### Stakeholders workshop

- The workshop succeeded in identifying the key issues relevant for the evaluation and contributed to further steering the support study team towards the delivery of the final report in the following months.
- During the workshop, some Commission services expressed the need for more co-ordination as they are not involved in the management of the EEA, and some EEA reports overlap with Commission reports. The question of mainstreaming / how far EEA should go in direct relations with sectoral DGs appeared as a very important one. Various National Focal Points asked for a greater involvement of EEA and EIONET in the EIR process.

- The workshop revealed that the role of Board member is not fully clear. There was a recommendation in previous evaluation to have subgroups, which was not implemented. The articulation between meetings of National Focal Point, Bureau and Board needs to be revised to ensure a more informed decision making. It appeared however that priorities and resource setting is often done elsewhere (discussions of regulations, budget, etc.).
- Some Board members clearly warned against an opening of EEA-EIONET regulation, and gave the example of EEA working a lot on Climate Action while this is not formally in the regulation.
- The opening of EEA to non-EU countries is perceived as a great advantage (e.g. for standardization of environmental information and exchange of best practices). Some non-EU member countries argued that the perception of independence of the EEA from EU institution is a key criterion for their membership.
- EEA overall strategic management is good, but it is difficult to make it operational, in particular for cross-cutting topics. There was concerns expressed that internal EIONET co-ordination function at EEA has somewhat declined over the last years
- Finally, the question of outreach was discussed: should EEA target citizens in its products was also raised by some Focal Points. It requires a lot of resources and capacity, national agencies/ministries often don't even do it at national level, and prefer focus on "influencers"
- The workshop lead to remarks from participants on the methodology followed so far and the gap between the interim findings in the background document and the amount of documents collected by the Consortium and the time spent on interviews notably by EEA & Commission staff, Management Board members or National Focal Points.

More details on the consultation activities undertaken by the support contract can be found in support study's Appendix B.

The results of the open public consultation, the three targeted surveys, the workshops and the interviews are described respectively in appendices I, J, K-L-M and G of the support study report.

### **7.3. Annex 3 - Methods and analytical models used in preparing the evaluation**

#### *7.3.1. Intervention logic*

An intervention logic was designed to be used as a basis for the analysis of the evaluation questions, which reflects how the EEA and EIONET are intended to work following the Founding Regulation, and includes key facts reflecting the de facto functioning of the Agency and EIONET during the evaluation period (mid-2012 to 2016).

The intervention logic identifies the elements, which are within the control of those involved in implementation in the EEA and EIONET. It shows two main 'layers' reflecting the built-in dynamic nature of the agency and EIONET. The top regulatory level giving a fairly broad mandate by the objectives and tasks set out in Articles 1 and 2 of the Founding Regulation; and the operational level (below), where multi-annual and annual work programmes set specific priorities and define the activities to be undertaken.

It also includes the intended effects from establishing the EEA and EIONET. Whereas the outputs are within the control of those involved in implementation, the achievement

of results and wider impacts are influenced by other societal and political factors, which are beyond the control of those involved in EEA and EIONET activities.

### 7.3.2. *Evaluation matrix*

For each of the evaluation questions from the roadmap, the support study elaborated a framework of judgement criteria and indicators to form the basis against which the question would be assessed. This framework was deeply discussed and validated by the ISSG elaborated in the inception phase. It was also modified during the course of the study based on lessons learnt and data availability. The final version of this evaluation matrix can be found in Appendix A of the support study.

The evaluation matrix reflects that the evaluation follows the Better Regulation Guidelines and thus the understanding and application of the five evaluation criteria as described in these Guidelines. At the same time, the Guidelines are intended for evaluation of policies and regulatory instruments and not targeted at the evaluation of Agencies. This means that some further delineation and understanding of the questions and how they fit with the guidelines was undertaken by the study team in dialogue with the Commission – and this is reflected in the matrix in Appendix A. Most notably:

- Although not mentioned in the evaluation questions on efficiency, the judgement criteria and indicators set out for these questions reflect the need to analyse costs and benefits as this follows the Guidelines. This is reflected through introducing judgement criteria reflecting the analysis of costs and benefits under efficiency.
- The need to look into issues of governance which affect both effectiveness and efficiency is reflected in the evaluation questions, however, this element is not covered by the Guidelines. In order to have a structure which is as streamlined as possible, governance issues are primarily dealt with under effectiveness (third question) and efficiency (second question). The third efficiency question is answered as part of answering these two questions (and thus not addressed independently).
- An element of the evaluation linked with the governance issues is the requirement to address whether the principles set out in the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies are implemented in the case of the EEA. Reference to relevant principles are reflected in the indicators in the evaluation matrix in Appendix A under relevant evaluation questions (in particular under efficiency, second question). In addition, the assessment against the Common Approach principles is summarised in Appendix E.
- The relevance questions are delimited to an assessment of the relevance of the Founding Regulation in the light of the evolving policy landscape and technological developments (whereas questions related to effectiveness/efficiency in delivering work programmes that align with this context are handled under effectiveness (third question) and efficiency (second question)).
- The analysis of coherence according to the Better Regulation Guidelines would normally focus on coherence between policies (i.e. the coherence between the policy/legislation being evaluated and other policies within the same or related policy field) and assess how well the policies work together. In the case of this evaluation, the focus is somewhat different – the analysis of coherence focuses on tasks and activities rather than policies and assesses the extent to which there are overlaps/duplications or synergy effects.

### 7.3.3. *Challenges and limitations*

The evaluation encountered numerous methodological challenges and limitations.

- A key challenge with the research was the issue of recall bias. As the evaluation period was long and the bulk of the consultation took place one year after its end, stakeholders placed greater focus and weight on recent events (including those outside of the evaluation period). This led to difficulties of examining the evaluation question in the earlier parts of the evaluation period and required additional probing from interviewers. In some cases, key persons who had worked in the particular area during the evaluation period were no longer in the position and the persons actually interviewed were only able to give partial answers in relation to the evaluation period.
- The activities of the EEA and EIONET are wide ranging and thus cover a number of different environment and climate issues. One particular challenge was therefore to engage with as wide as range of stakeholders as possible. The solution agreed between the support study and the steering group was to rely on the Public Consultation (with two separate questionnaires; one for stakeholders with a more general interest and one those with expert knowledge) and the Targeted Surveys. The responses to these consultations were low and disappointing, despite efforts to promote the surveys to a wide audience, ensure they were short, and extend the deadlines. While additional research (in the form of interviews and workshops) was undertaken with stakeholders engaged in the study, few organisations outside the EIONET and the Commission responded to interview requests or were able to join the stakeholder workshop. Consequently, the representation of stakeholders outside the environmental and climate sphere is limited (see also appendix B of the support study).
- The study focused on case studies (eight case studies in total) giving a more detailed insight into some topics than others. This was deemed necessary as it was not possible within the scope to cover all topics and sectors with equally detailed data collection. This means that the study was not able to generate a full overview of effectiveness, efficiency and coherence for all the different topic areas in which the EEA and EIONET were engaged. Rather, overall assessments could be made drawing on specific and detailed data collection from the case studies.
- The evaluation period (summer 2012 – 2016) was not consistent with the EEA planning cycle and thus cut across two cycles of EEA multi-annual planning (2009-2013 with 2014-2018). The EEA changed the planning framework from the one cycle to the other, meaning that it was difficult to compare across the two. The support study analysed data based on the entire evaluation period, however, the most detailed assessment and focus was on the period starting from the latest multi-annual work programme (2014-2016) as it was spanning the majority of the evaluation period, the data availability was better, and also, it was the main reference frame for the stakeholders during interviews and workshops (difficult to get stakeholders to relate to a multi-annual work programme dating back 4 years and more).

## 7.4. Annex 4 – EEA's MDIAK and DPSIR conceptual frameworks

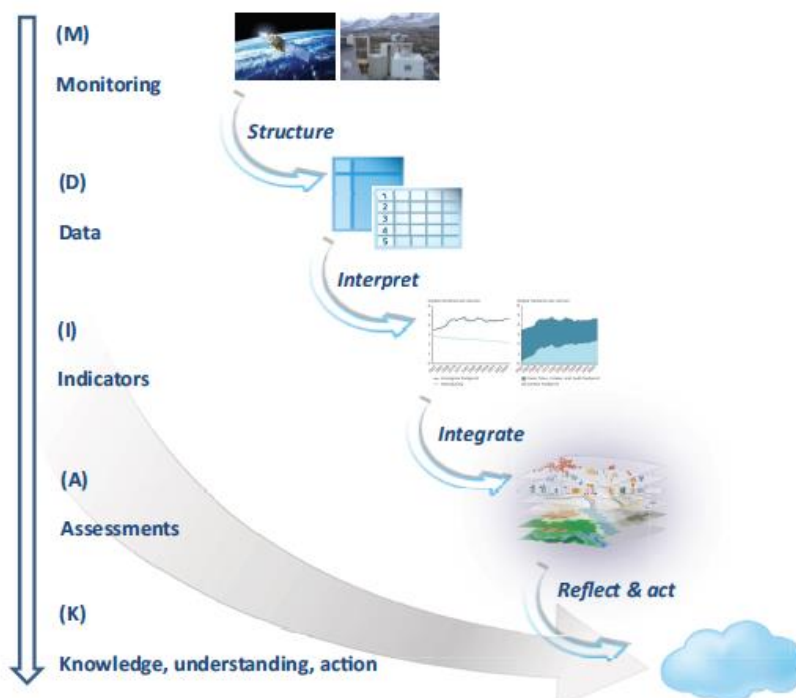
This annex provides explanations on the two key conceptual frameworks used by the EEA to describe its knowledge management activities: the MDIAK framework describing the transformation from data monitoring and collection to knowledge, and the DPSIR causal framework use for describing the interactions between society and the environment.

### 7.4.1. MDIAK framework:

The MDIAK framework conceptualises the flow from monitoring and collection of data on the environment (state, pressures and measures, etc.), transforming this to information and understanding and knowledge, which can inform policy and action. It is an illustration of the core function of the EEA and EIONET. In addition to the key functions represented by the MDIAK, the EEA and EIONET involves some cross-cutting 'support functions', which enable the MDIAK to be carried out, notably the coordination of the EIONET, coordination with other actors in the field, as well as the operation of a set of IT systems to handle the data flows and assessment processes.

In this context, 'monitoring' provides observations or measurements of environmental parameters. 'Data' refers to combinations of measurements, structured in a manner that allows further processing and comparisons. 'Indicators' can then be derived by further selection, aggregation and interpretation of sometimes multiple data, with a view to communicating the state and trends clearly and answering specific policy or assessment questions. Indicators underpin 'assessments' and result in 'knowledge' which supports policymaking. The term 'knowledge' is understood as key insights into environmental processes, their management and options for action, to be taken on board by experts and policymakers alike.

**Figure 14: the MDIAK framework**



Source: EEA

The 15 tasks in the Founding Regulation can be seen within the MDIAK framework although it is clear that the tasks were not originally conceptualised exactly in that way.

*Table 10: relation between regulatory EEA tasks, MDIAK approach and activities of the (M)AWP*

Tasks	Reference FR	MDIAK	Reference MAWP
Management of EIONET	Article 2(a)	Support	SA3.1
Support to reporting requirements	Article 2(c) (f) (g)	MDI	Some share of: SA1 + SA2.1 + SA3.3
Collect, record, and manage dataflows for SOER data	Article 2(e) (f)	MDI	Some share of: SA1 + SA3.3
Manage data and information systems	Article 2(e)	Support	SA3.2
SOER	Article 2(h)	AK	Some share of: SA2.4
Assessments other than SOER	Article 2(e)	AK	Some share of: SA2.2 + SA2.4
Dissemination of environmental information	Article 2(m)	IAK	SA 3.4
Forecasting and megatrends	Article 2(i)	AK	SA2.3
Diffusion of information on the results of relevant environmental research	Article 2(o)	AK	Mission/goals + SA1 objective

Source: Support study

#### 7.4.2. DPSIR framework

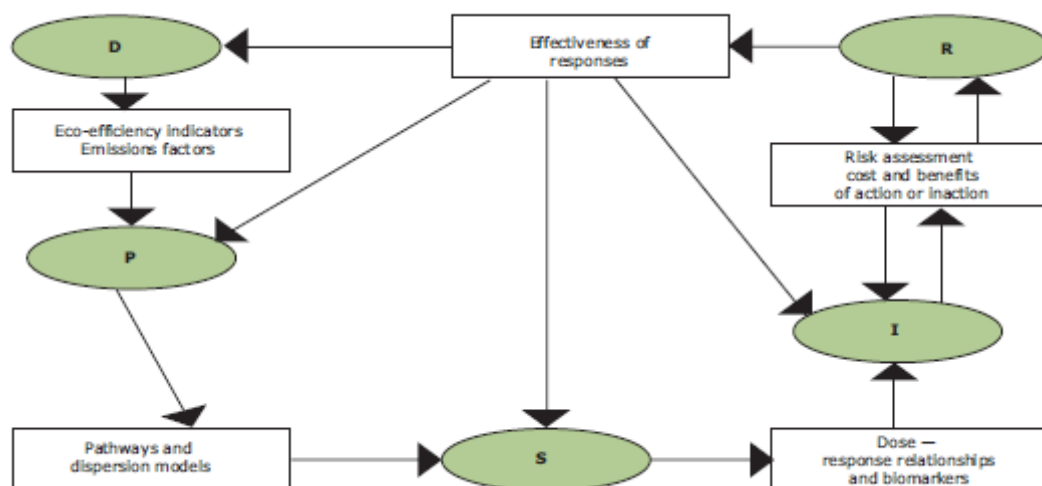
To structure thinking about the interplay between the environment and socio-economic activities, the EEA developed the DPSIR (driving force, pressure, state, impact, and response) framework, an extended version of the OECD model. In the DPSIR framework, social and economic developments drive (D) changes that exert pressure (P) on the environment. As a consequence, changes occur in the state (S) of the environment, which lead to impacts (I) on human health, ecosystem functioning and the economy. Finally, societal and political responses (R) affect earlier parts of the system, directly or indirectly. From a policy perspective, there is a clear need for indicators on all parts of the DPSIR chain (Stanners et al., 2007; EEA, 2010)

- Driving force indicators describe the social, demographic and economic developments in societies, and the corresponding changes in lifestyles and overall levels of consumption and production patterns. Examples include population growth and GDP.
- Pressure indicators describe developments in the release of substances (e.g. emissions to air or water), physical and biological agents, the use of resources and land. Examples include CO2 emissions by sectors and land take.
- State indicators provide a description of the quantity and quality of physical, biological and chemical variables in a certain area. Examples include air quality, species diversity and atmospheric CO2 concentrations.
- Impact indicators describe the relevance of changes in the state of the environment and corresponding implications for ecosystems, the economy and

human well-being and health. Examples include the percentage of the population exposed to noise above particular thresholds, or drinking water below quality standards.

- Response indicators relate to responses by society and policymakers that attempt to prevent, compensate, ameliorate, or adapt to changes in the state of the environment. Examples include environmental expenditure and recycling rates.

**Figure 15: the DPSIR framework.**



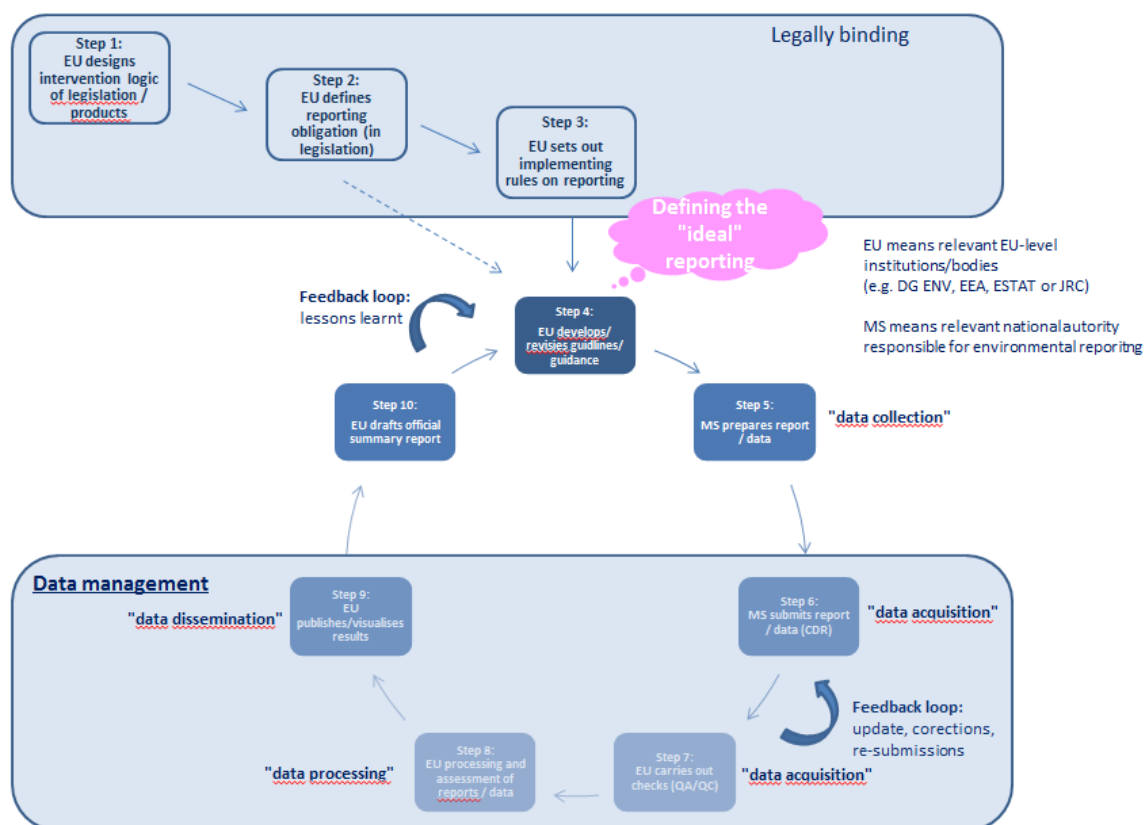
Source : EEA

## 7.5. Annex 5 - EEA support to reporting under EU environmental and climate legislation

This annex reports on the outcome of Commission work undertaken in collaboration with EEA as a follow-up of the 2017 Fitness check evaluation on reporting and monitoring of EU environment policy. In the latter, a cross-cutting and comprehensive analysis of reporting obligations in all relevant pieces of environment legislation was performed, with specific emphasis on EEA supporting role. The follow up work has further refined the analysis by distinguishing different steps of the reporting cycle and extended it to climate legislation.

The support EEA was providing during the evaluation period 2012-2016 is presented and structured along the 10 generic steps of the reporting and monitoring process (see figure below). These generic “reporting steps”, which are common for most reporting exercises, help develop a more coherent approach to environmental and climate reporting and monitoring, taking also different extent of support into consideration. The different extent of support reflects agreements between Commission and EEA. This analysis does not distinguish the different scales and magnitudes of data flows per reporting obligation.

*Figure 16: The generic 10 steps of a reporting and monitoring process*



The table analysing the environmental Reporting Obligations (RO), developed under the above fitness check, was cross-checked with information from the Reporting Obligation Database<sup>54</sup> (ROD), maintained by EEA and containing records describing environmental and climate reporting obligations that countries have towards the European Commission and international organisations. The table was therefore also extended to climate legislation. The preliminary assessment of EEA involvement performed by the Fitness Check in 2016 was further developed using the above 10-steps framework, including 8

<sup>54</sup> <http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/>



new columns providing response to the following questions, for each of the reporting flows:

- Step 2/3 (is EEA mentioned in legislation / implementing rules?)
- Step 4 (is EEA (ETC) contributing to reporting template?)
- Step 5 (Is EEA / ETC providing helpdesk support or similar for countries?)
- Step 6 (is the reported information submitted through the EEA's Common Data Repository)
- Step 7 (is EEA (ETC) performing Quality Assurance/ Quality Check?)
- Step 8 (is EEA (ETC) performing data process?)
- Step 9 (is EEA presenting results on website?)
- Step 10 (is EEA publishing the official report?)

61 out of 74 pieces of environment and climate legislation have reporting obligations relevant from the perspective of assessing EEA support.

These 61 regulations include 206 reporting obligations, 136 being relevant from the perspective of assessing EEA support. For the majority of those there is either full or a significant EEA involvement in many of the steps going far beyond providing the platform for data submission and covering elements like contributing to the reporting template, performing quality assurance and checks and data publication.

Beyond that, the analysis of EEA involvement in each of the 8 relevant steps, per area, reveals a large variety of situations, from the Air, Climate Change or Nature where EEA is providing support to a large majority of relevant reporting obligations, to Products or Waste, where support is limited to storage of reports in the Common Data Repository.

It is worth noting that not all reporting obligations are included in the EEA catalogue of reporting obligations (ROD) which includes 119 out of the 136 relevant reporting obligations. A detailed analysis of the ROD records shows that when EEA is not actively involved in the reporting stream, the information stored in the database can be obsolete as there is no formal mechanism involving European Commission services and the regulatory reporting working groups to maintain the database up-to-date.

It should also be noted that for avoiding double counting legislations have only attributed to one area, so it can for example not be concluded that only 15% of the relevant reporting obligations would be climate related, as e.g. some of the industrial emissions legislations (e.g. LCP or MCP Directives) and the horizontal governance legislations (e.g. Impact Assessment or INSPIRE Directives), are also climate relevant.

**Table 11: Overview EEA involvement in reporting cycle**

Areas	Total RO	Relevant RO	Step 2/3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6	Step 7	Step 8	Step 9	Step 10
Air	34	32	19	28	24	29	28	28	28	28
Climate Change	19	19	15	18	18	18	13	13	13	12
Ind. emissions / accidents	11	8	6	6	5	6	2	3	3	5
Nature	19	13	0	9	8	10	6	6	7	7
Noise	6	6	0	3	5	6	5	5	5	5
Products	25	12	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
Waste	51	19	0	1	0	16	0	0	0	0
Water	34	23	11	24	25	29	22	19	13	10
Horizontal	7	4	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>

The first table below provides the detailed picture of EEA support for each legislation, and the second table provides details for step 2/3, on how EEA role is specified in the legislation or the implementing legislation.

**Table 12: EEA support to reporting cycle for each legislation**

Area	Short Name Legislation	EEA SA	Relevant RO / total RO	Step 2/3 (is EEA mentioned in legislation / implementing rules?)	Step 4 (is EEA (ETC) contributing to reporting template?)	Step 5 (Is EEA / ETC providing helpdesk support or similar for countries?)	Step 6 (is the reported information submitted through CDR?)	Step 7 (is EEA (ETC) performing QA/QC?)	Step 8 (is EEA (ETC) performing data process?)	Step 9 (is EEA presenting results on website?)	Step 10 (is EEA publishing the official report?)
Air	Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC	SA 1.1	16/16	14	16	14	16	16	16	16	16
Air	4th AQ Daughter Directive 2004/107/EC	SA 1.1	1/1		1		1	1	1	1	1
Air	Fuel Sulphur Directive 1999/32/EC	SA 1.1	1/3		0		1	0	0	0	0
Air	National Emissions Ceilings Directive 2001/81/EC	SA 1.1	6/6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Air	VOC Petrol Stations Directive 94/63/EC	SA 1.2			0		1	0	0	0	0
Air	VOC Stage II Directive 2009/126/EC	SA 1.2			0		0	0	0	0	0
Air	Medium Combustion Plants (MCP) Directive (2015/2193/EU)	SA 1.2	2/2		0		0	0	0	0	0
Air	LCP Directive 2001/80/EC	SA 1.2	1/1		1		1	1	1	1	1
Air	Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution	SA 1.1	5/5	0	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Climate Change	ETS Directive 2003/87/EC	SA 1.3	1/1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	Fuel Quality Directive 98/70/EC	SA 1.1	2/2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	ODS Regulation (EC) No 1005/2009	SA 1.2	1/1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	CO2+Cars Regulation (EC) No 443/2009	SA 1.1	1/1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	CO2+Vans Regulation (EU) No 510/2011	SA 1.1	1/1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	F-Gas Regulation (EU) No 517/2014	SA 1.2	1/1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Climate Change	GHG Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 covering e.g. reporting on greenhouse gas inventories, Member State policies and measures, projections, low carbon development strategies and maintaining and updating the European Climate Adaptation Platform	SA 1.3, SA 1.4	9/9	9	9	9	9	6	6	6	5
Climate Change	Effort Sharing Decision No. 406/2009/EC, as specified in Regulation No 525/2013	SA 1.3	1/1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0

Area	Short Name Legislation	EEA SA	Relevant RO / total RO	Step 2/3 (is EEA mentioned in legislation / implementing rules?)	Step 4 (is EEA (ETC) contributing to reporting template?)	Step 5 (Is EEA / ETC providing helpdesk support or similar for countries?)	Step 6 (is the information submitted through CDR?)	Step 7 (is EEA (ETC) performing QA/QC?)	Step 8 (is EEA (ETC) performing data process?)	Step 9 (is EEA presenting results on website?)	Step 10 (is EEA publishing the official report?)
Climate Change	LULUCF Decision No. 529/2013/EU, as specified in Regulation No 525/2013	SA 1.3	1/1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Climate Change	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, including as specified in Regulation No 525/2013	SA 1.3	1/1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Water	WISE	SA 1.5	6/6		6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Nature	Nationally designated areas (CDDA)	SA 1.7	1/1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Nature	European Red list of Birds	SA 1.7	1/1		1	0	0	0	0	1	1
Horizontal	Environmental Liability Directive 2004/35/CE				0		0	0	0	0	0
Horizontal	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive 2011/92/EU		1/3		0		0	0	0	0	0
Horizontal	Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC		1/2		0		0	0	0	0	0
Horizontal	INSPIRE Directive 2007/2/EC	SA3	2/2		0		2	1	1	1	0
Horizontal	Public access to environmental information Directive 2003/4/EC				0		0	0	0	0	0
Horizontal	EEA-EIONET Regulation (EC) No 401/2009				0		0	0	0	0	0
Ind. emissions / accidents	Industrial Emissions Directive 2010/75/EU	SA 1.2	4/4	4	4	4	4	1	1	1	3
Ind. emissions / accidents	EPRTTR Regulation (EC) No 166/2006	SA 1.2	2/2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2
Ind. emissions / accidents	Seveso III Directive 2012/18/EU	SA 1.2	1/4		0		0	0	0	0	0
Ind. emissions / accidents	Shale Gas Recommendation 2014/70/EU	SA 1.2	1/1		0		0	0	0	0	0
Ind. emissions / accidents	Asbestos Directive 87/217/EEC	SA 1.2			0		1	0	0	0	0
Nature	Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC	SA 1.7	3/4		3	3	3	3	3	2	2

Area	Short Name Legislation	EEA SA	Relevant RO / total RO	Step 2/3 (is EEA mentioned in legislation / implementing rules?)	Step 4 (is EEA (ETC) contributing to reporting template?)	Step 5 (Is EEA / ETC providing helpdesk support or similar for countries?)	Step 6 (is the information submitted through CDR?)	Step 7 (is EEA (ETC) performing QA/QC?)	Step 8 (is EEA (ETC) performing data process?)	Step 9 (is EEA presenting results on website?)	Step 10 (is EEA publishing the official report?)
Nature	Birds Directive 2009/147/EC	SA 1.7	3/4		3	3	3	2	2	2	2
Nature	Invasive Alien Species Regulation (EU) No. 1143/2014	SA 1.7	1/3		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nature	Wild Species Trade Regulation (EC) No 338/97		2/2		0		2	0	0	0	0
Nature	Whales Regulation (EEC) No 348/81				0		0	0	0	0	0
Nature	Seal Skin Directive 83/129/EEC				0		0	0	0	0	0
Nature	Genetic Resources Regulation No 511/2014		1/3		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nature	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	SA 1.7	1/1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Noise	Noise Directive 2002/49/EC	SA 1.1	6/6		3	5	6	5	5	5	5
Products	EMAS Regulation (EC) No 1221/2009		1/3		0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	Ecolabel Regulation (EC) No 66/2010	SA 1.9			0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	VOC Solvents Directive 2004/42/EC	SA 1.2			0		1	0	0	0	0
Products	POP Regulation (EC) No 850/2004		2/5		0		1	0	0	0	0
Products	REACH-ECHA Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006		1/1		0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	CLP Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008		1/2		0		1	0	0	0	0
Products	Hazardous Chemicals Regulation (EU) No 649/2012		1/2		0		1	0	0	0	0
Products	FLEGT Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005		1/2		0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	Timber Regulation (EU) No 995/2010		1/4		0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	Seal Products Regulation (EC) No 1007/2009		1/3		0		0	0	0	0	0
Products	Animal Testing Directive 2010/63/EU		3/3		0		0	0	0	0	0
Waste	Council Directive 1999/31/EC on the landfill of waste	SA 1.9	1/4		0		1	0	0	0	0
Waste	Mining Directive 2006/21/EC	SA 1.9	2/3		0		2	0	0	0	0

Area	Short Name Legislation	EEA SA	Relevant RO / total RO	Step 2/3 (is EEA mentioned in legislation / implementing rules?)	Step 4 (is EEA (ETC) contributing to reporting template?)	Step 5 (Is EEA / ETC providing helpdesk support or similar for countries?)	Step 6 (is the information submitted through CDR?)	Step 7 (is EEA (ETC) performing QA/QC?)	Step 8 (is EEA (ETC) performing data process?)	Step 9 (is EEA presenting results on website?)	Step 10 (is EEA publishing the official report?)
Waste	Sewage Sludge Directive 86/278/EEC	SA 1.9	1/2		1		1	0	0	0	0
Waste	Waste Framework Directive 2008/98/EC	SA 1.9	2/6		0		2	0	0	0	0
Waste	Waste Shipment Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006	SA 1.9	2/8		0		1	0	0	0	0
Waste	Batteries Directive 2006/66/EC	SA 1.9	3/7		0		3	0	0	0	0
Waste	Packaging and packaging waste Directive 94/62/EC	SA 1.9	3/6		0		3	0	0	0	0
Waste	PCB/PCT Directive 96/59/EC	SA 1.9			0		0	0	0	0	0
Waste	End-of life vehicles Directive 2000/53/EC	SA 1.9	2/5		0		2	0	0	0	0
Waste	Waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) Directive 2012/19/EU	SA 1.9	2/7		0		1	0	0	0	0
Waste	RoHS Directive 2011/65/EU	SA 1.9			0		0	0	0	0	0
Waste	Mercury Regulation (EC) No 1102/2008	SA 1.2			0		0	0	0	0	0
Waste	Ship Recycling Regulation (EU) No 1257/2013		1/3		0		0	0	0	0	0
Water	Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	SA 1.5	2/6	6	3	3	5	3	3	1	1
Water	EQS Directive 2008/105/EC	SA 1.5	1/2	2	1	1	2	1	1	0	0
Water	Floods Directive 2007/60/EC	SA 1.5	3/4	3	4	4	4	3	0	0	0
Water	Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC	SA 1.6	4/6		6	6	5	4	4	1	1
Water	Drinking Water Directive 98/83/EC	SA 1.5	1/1		0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Water	Bathing Water Directive 2006/7/EC	SA 1.5	2/3		2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Water	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC	SA 1.5	3/3		2	3	3	3	3	3	0
Water	Nitrates Directive 91/676/EEC	SA 1.6	1/3		0	0	1	0	0	0	0

**Table 13: Specification of roles and tasks of the EEA in other pieces of legislation**

Regulation	Article(s)	link
<p><b>Directive 2000/60/EC</b> establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 16.5. In preparing its proposal [<i>on priority substances</i>], the Commission shall <b>take account of recommendations from</b> the Scientific Committee on Toxicity, Ecotoxicity and the Environment, Member States, the European Parliament, <b>the European Environment Agency</b>, Community research programmes, international organisations to which the Community is a party, European business organisations including those representing small and medium-sized enterprises, European environmental organisations, and of other relevant information which comes to its attention.</li> <li>• Article 18.2. The report [<i>on the implementation of this Directive</i>] shall include the following: [...] (b) a review of the status of surface water and groundwater in the Community undertaken <b>in coordination with the European Environment Agency</b>;</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/?uri=CELEX:32000L0060</a></p>
<p><i>Directive 2001/81/EC of 23 October 2001 on national emission ceilings for certain atmospheric pollutants (repealed by Directive (EU) 2016/2284, see below)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Article 7.3. The Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency, shall, in cooperation with the Member States and on the basis of the information provided by them, establish inventories and projections of the pollutants referred to in Article 4. The inventories and projections shall be made publicly available.</i></li> <li>• <i>Article 8.1. Member States shall each year, by 31 December at the latest, report their national emission inventories and their emission projections for 2010 established in accordance with Article 7 to the Commission and the European Environment Agency. They shall report their final emission inventories for the previous year but one and their provisional emission inventories for the previous year. Emission projections shall include information to enable a quantitative understanding of the key socioeconomic assumptions used in their preparation.</i></li> <li>• <i>ANNEX III. Member States shall establish emission inventories and projections using the methodologies agreed upon by the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and are requested to use the joint EMEP/CORINAIR(Air emissions inventory of the European Environment Agency) guidebook in preparing these inventories and projections.</i></li> </ul>	
<p><b>Regulation (EC) No 166/2006</b> of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 7.3. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall incorporate the information reported by the Member States into the European PRTR within the following time-limits: (a) for the first reporting year, within 21 months after the end of the reporting year; (b) for all reporting years thereafter, within 16 months after the end of the reporting year.</li> <li>• Article 8.1. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall include in the European PRTR information on releases from diffuse sources where such information exists and has already been reported by the Member States.</li> <li>• Article 10.1. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall make the European PRTR publicly accessible by</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/?uri=celex:32006R0166">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/?uri=celex:32006R0166</a></p>

Regulation	Article(s)	link
	dissemination free of charge on the Internet in accordance with the timeframe set out in Article 7(3).	
<b>Commission Regulation (EU) No 1014/2010</b> of 10 November 2010 on <b>monitoring and reporting of data on the registration of new passenger cars</b> pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 443/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Text with EEA relevance)	Article 2 on Data transmission states "The aggregated monitoring data together with the detailed monitoring data shall be transmitted by the Member States via electronic data transfer to the Central Data Repository managed by the European Environmental Agency. Member States shall notify the Commission when the data is transmitted."	<a href="https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/148700eb-ece7-4023-aa94-5ed1a699f101/language-en">https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/148700eb-ece7-4023-aa94-5ed1a699f101/language-en</a>
<b>Implementing Decision 2011/850/EU</b> of Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on ambient air quality and cleaner air for Europe & Directive 2004/107/EC of 15 December 2004 relating to arsenic, cadmium, mercury, nickel and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in ambient air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 3.1. <b>The Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall establish a data repository and make it accessible through the ambient air quality portal (hereinafter referred to as 'the portal').</li> <li>• Article 3.3. <b>The European Environment Agency shall</b> manage the data repository.</li> <li>• Article 4. <b>The Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall on the portal make available to Member States the standardised machine-readable description of how to encode the information required by this Decision.</li> </ul>	<a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=urisrv:OJ.L_2011_335.01.0086.01.ENG">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=urisrv:OJ.L_2011_335.01.0086.01.ENG</a>
<b>Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 293/2012</b> of 3 April 2012 on <b>monitoring and reporting of data on the registration of new light commercial vehicles</b> pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 510/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council Text with EEA relevance	Article 3 on Data transmission states "The aggregated monitoring data together with the detailed monitoring data shall be transmitted by the Member States via electronic data transfer to the Central Data Repository managed by the European Environmental Agency. Member States shall notify the Commission when the data is transmitted."	<a href="https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8ec9697f-818a-4f93-b7c1-9f1bda28918a/language-en">https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/8ec9697f-818a-4f93-b7c1-9f1bda28918a/language-en</a>
<b>Regulation (EU) No 525/2013</b> of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on a mechanism for <b>monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and for reporting other information at national and Union level relevant to climate change</b> and repealing Decision No 280/2004/EC  (role of EEA partly further specified by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 749/2014 of 30 June 2014 on structure, format, submission processes and review of information reported by Member States pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council)	Article 24 - Role of the European Environment Agency <b>The European Environment Agency shall assist the Commission in its work to comply with Articles 6 to 9, 12 to 19, 21 and 22 in accordance with its annual work programme.</b> This shall include assistance with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) compiling the Union greenhouse gas inventory and preparing the Union greenhouse gas inventory report;</li> <li>(b) performing quality assurance and quality control procedures to prepare the Union greenhouse gas inventory;</li> <li>(c) preparing estimates for data not reported in the national greenhouse gas inventories;</li> <li>(d) conducting the reviews;</li> <li>(e) compiling the Union approximated greenhouse gas inventory;</li> <li>(f) compiling the information reported by Member States on policies and measures and projections;</li> <li>(g) performing quality assurance and quality control procedures on the information reported by Member States on projections and policies and measures;</li> <li>(h) preparing estimates for data on projections not reported by the Member States;</li> <li>(i) compiling data as required for the annual report to the European Parliament and the Council prepared by the Commission;</li> </ul> disseminating information collected under this Regulation, including maintaining and updating a database on Member States' mitigation policies and measures and the European	<a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R0525">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32013R0525</a>



Regulation	Article(s)	link
	Climate Adaptation Platform relating to impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change.	
<p><b>Comission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 1191/2014</b> of 30 October 2014 determining the <b>format and means for submitting the report</b> referred to in Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council <b>on fluorinated greenhouse gases</b></p>	<p>Recital (2) states: "With a view to ensuring uniformity and coherency in the collection of data and to limiting administrative burden, undertakings should submit the information required under Article 19 of Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 by means of an electronic reporting tool containing the relevant forms for their individual activities provided by the European Environmental Agency, accessible from the website of the European Commission"</p>	<p><a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R1191&amp;from=EN">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/XT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R1191&amp;from=EN</a></p>
<p><i>Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2016 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants, amending Directive 2003/35/EC and repealing Directive 2001/81/EC.</i><sup>55</sup></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Article 5.6. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall review and assess whether the use of any of the flexibilities for a particular year fulfils the relevant conditions set out in paragraph 1 of this Article and in Part 4 of Annex IV or in paragraphs 2, 3 or 4 of this Article, where applicable.</i></li> <li>• <i>Article 8 6. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b>, shall annually prepare and update Union-wide emission inventories and an informative inventory report as well as, every two years, Union-wide emission projections and, every four years, spatially disaggregated Union-wide emission inventories and Union-wide large point source inventories, for the pollutants referred to in Annex I, on the basis of the information referred to in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this Article.</i></li> <li>• <i>Article 10. 2. Member States shall provide their national emission inventories and projections, spatially disaggregated national emission inventories, large point source inventories and the informative inventory reports referred to in Article 8(1), (2) and (3) and, where relevant, in Article 8(4), to the <b>Commission and to the European Environment Agency</b> in accordance with the reporting dates set out in Annex I. This reporting shall be consistent with the reporting to the Secretariat of the LRTAP Convention.</i></li> <li>• <i>Article 10.3. The <b>Commission, assisted by the European Environment Agency</b> and in consultation with the Member States concerned, shall review the national emission inventory data in the first year of reporting and regularly thereafter. That review shall involve the following: (a) checks to verify the transparency, accuracy, consistency, comparability and completeness of information submitted; (b) checks to identify cases where inventory data is prepared in a manner which is inconsistent with the requirements set out under international law, in particular under the LRTAP Convention; (c) where appropriate, calculation of the resulting technical corrections necessary, in consultation with the Member State concerned. Where the Member State concerned and the Commission are unable to reach an agreement on the necessity or on the content of the technical corrections pursuant to point (c), the Commission shall adopt a decision laying down the technical corrections</i></li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TX/?uri=CELEX:32016L2284">https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TX/?uri=CELEX:32016L2284</a></p>

<sup>55</sup> Adopted at the very end of the evaluation period.

Regulation	Article(s)	link
	<p><i>to be applied by the Member State concerned.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Article 10.4. Member States shall <b>report</b> the following information referred to in Article 9 to the Commission and the European Environment Agency: (a) by 1 July 2018 and every four years thereafter, the location of the monitoring sites and the associated indicators used for monitoring air pollution impacts; and (b) by 1 July 2019 and every four years thereafter, the monitoring data referred to in Article 9.</i></li> </ul>	

