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EVALUATION

of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) for the period 2017-2021

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Glossary

Term or acronym	*Meaning or definition*
AI	Artificial Intelligence
ASEAN	Association of South-East Asian Nations
AWP	Annual Work Programme
BISE	Biodiversity Information System for Europe
CA	Contract Agent
CAAR	Consolidated Annual Activity Report
CAP	Common Agriculture Policy
CEAP	Circular Economy Action Plan
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational
CLMS	Copernicus Land Monitoring Service
CLRTAP	Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution
CoA	Court of Auditors
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DG AGRI	Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action
DG CNECT	Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology
DG DEFIS	Directorate-General for Defence, Industry and Space
DG ENER	Directorate-General for Energy
DG ENV	Directorate-General for Environment
DG FISMA	Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union
DG GROW	Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG HR	Directorate-General for Human Resources and Security
DG MARE	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

DG MOVE	Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
DGs	Directorates-General
EAP	Environment Action Programme
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
ED	Executive Director
EEA	European Environment Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EG	EIONET Group
EGD	European Green Deal
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EIONET	European Environment Information and Observation Network
EKC	Environment Knowledge Community
EMODnet	European Marine Observation and Data network
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
e-PRTR	European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register
EQS	Environmental Quality Standard Directive
ETC	European Topic Centre
ETS	Emission Trading Scheme Directive

EU	European Union
EUAN	EU Agencies Network
EU-DEM	EU Digital Elevation Model
EUROSTAT	European Statistical Office
FPA	Framework Partnership Agreement
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GHG	Greenhouse gases
HBM4EU	Human Biomonitoring for the EU
HE	Horizon Europe
HFC	Hydrofluorocarbons
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IED	Industrial Emission Directive
IL	Intervention Logic
ISG	Inter-Service Group on relations with EEA
IT	Information Technology
JRC	European Union Joint Research Centre
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LULUCF	Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry Regulation
MAWP	Multi-Annual Work Programmes
MB	EEA Management Board
MBAC	EEA Management Board Advisory Committee
MFF	Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks
MMR	Monitoring Mechanism Regulation
MS	Member States

MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NEC	National Emission reduction Commitments Directive
NFPs	EIONET National Focal Points
ODS	ozone-depleting substances
ROP	Rules of Procedure
RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Technological Development
SG	Secretariat-General
SJ	Service Juridique
SA	Strategic Area (Multi-Annual Work Programme 2014-2020)
SC	EEA Scientific Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound
SO	Strategic Objective (EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030)
SOER	State and Outlook of the Environment Report
SPD	Single Programming Document
SPP	Staff Policy Plans
SWD	Staff Working Document
TA	Temporary Agent
TERM	Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
US	United States
UWWTD	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
WFD	Water Framework Directive

WG	Working Groups
WISE	Water Information System for Europe
ZPAP	Zero Pollution Action Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Environment Agency (EEA), headquartered in Copenhagen, is a decentralised agency of the European Union (EU) that has been operational since 1993. Established by its founding Regulation (hereafter "the Regulation") in 1990[1], the Agency encompasses the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET). Its primary objective is to produce environmental data and insights that strengthen environmental policies and public awareness of the state of environment within and beyond the EU. The 2012 Common Approach[2] invites decentralised agencies to undergo evaluations every five years and includes a sunset/review clause every second evaluation[3]. The Financial Regulation[4] provision on evaluations of EU interventions of over €5 million also applies to the Agency.

1.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The purpose is to assess the EEA and the EIONET's performance against the objectives of the Regulation and work programmes, as well as progress made since the last evaluation which covered the period 2012-2016[5]. In addition, the evaluation analyses if the Regulation remains fit for purpose in light of current EU policy priorities, the European Green Deal (EGD) and the 8th Environment Action Programme (EAP).

The scope of the evaluation covers the period from 2017 to 2021 and considers recommendations from the previous evaluation and their implementation. The evaluation spans two Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks (MFF 2014-2020 and 2021-2027) and two Commission terms. The geographical scope extends to EU and non-EU countries, including non-EU member countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Türkiye) and cooperating countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo[6]).

1.2. Methodology overview

The evaluation began on 25 April 2022, with the publication of the Call for Evidence and a consultation of the EEA Management Board (MB)[7]. The process is coordinated by DG Environment, the Agency's partner Directorate General, and supported by the Inter-Service Group (ISG) comprising 22 other DGs, and the EEAS (see Annex 1 for the full list). The EEA and its MB have been informed and consulted throughout the process.

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[1] Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90, amended by Council Regulation (EC) No 933/1999 and Regulation (EC) No 1641/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council and, subsequently, codified through Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009.

[2] Joint statement on decentralised agencies

[3] Such a review was done in the previous evaluation for the period 2012-2016.

[4] Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012.

[5] (SWD(2018) 470 final, 19.11.2018.

[6] without prejudice to positions on status, and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

[7] 96th Management Board meeting of 16 June 2022.

This evaluation was supported by an external study, which produced a final study report in September 2023[8]. The evaluation, based on 27 questions across five criteria (see Annex 3), followed a mixed approach combining data from various sources. The evidence base consisted of (i) secondary data: 500 documents were screened, with the 200 most pertinent documents reviewed in detail for analytical task (programming documents, annual activity reports, EEA internal documents, publications, etc.), and (ii) primary data including 83 stakeholder interviews[9], an online survey with 52 responses[10], and four workshops[11] (see details in Annex 2. The evaluation follows the Better Regulation Guidelines to scrutinise the following criteria. For effectiveness and efficiency, the analysis relies primarily on factual evidence complemented by stakeholder feedback. Relevance relies almost exclusively on desk research and critical assessment of factual evidence, whilst coherence and EU added value more on stakeholder feedback:

- **Effectiveness**: Assessed through reporting obligations, citations of EEA in EGD policy documents and outputs detailed analysis, KPIs (when available), media coverage, and document analysis. Stakeholder feedback has been used to complement factual evidence and fill data gaps (e.g. on Eionet performance and modernisation process).
- **Efficiency**: Assessed through documentary evidence on the evolution of costs compared to outputs, allocation of resources, comparison with other similar organisations. Stakeholder feedback has been used to complement factual evidence and fill data gaps.
- **Coherence**: Assessed primarily through stakeholder feedback, and desk research (programming documents, MB decision, audits, coordination with the Commission, etc.) to scrutinise both internal and external coherence.
- **Relevance**: Assessed through desk research based on a comparison of the EEA Regulation and current policy priorities, case studies, and an analysis of the use of EEA outputs in EU documents. Limited use of stakeholder feedback to complement.
- **EU added value**: Assessed using stakeholder opinions, hypothetical scenarios, and by looking at concrete examples of cooperation beyond the EU.

1.3. Limitations and mitigation measures

This section addresses limitations and difficulties during the evaluation process, and the mitigation measures that were taken:

a. **Consultation scope and stakeholders' engagement:** the evaluation targeted various stakeholders' groups but faced some challenges in gathering feedback from stakeholders beyond the 'inner circle' of those who work directly with (or at) the EEA and its Eionet

[8] Ares(2023)7746297

[9] 29 with Commission representatives, 17 with EEA staff and management, 14 with members of the Management Board and Scientific Committee, 16 with Eionet NFPs or ETCs, and 7 with other stakeholders

[10] 28 respondents from EEA staff (54%), 9 from the Commission (17%), 9 from national environmental protection agencies (17%), 1 from other EU institutions and 5 from other national or local public organisations

[11] One workshop with members of the EEA Management Board, one with the Scientific Committee, one with NFPs and ETCs, and one with external stakeholders

(either EEA staff or members of the governing bodies)[12]. Among the other stakeholder groups, the Commission was largely represented compared to other EU institutions, researchers, civil society or business organisations (see 1.2). This is linked to the limited awareness of EEA operations of stakeholders beyond the 'inner circle' and the Commission, as revealed by a stakeholder analysis done by EEA in 2020 (60% of over 5,000 respondents unaware of its function or entirely unfamiliar with its work). Difficulties engaging stakeholders outside the EEA's 'inner circle' led to a low number of online survey's responses. Mitigating measures (survey deadline extension, further communication) had minimal impact. Due to the low response rate and potential bias (only 52 responses of which 54% from the EEA staff and 17% from the Commission), the quantified results of the online survey were removed, and (qualitative) feedback from the interviews and workshops was used to complement the analysis. Despite representativeness gaps and overrepresentation of certain groups, sufficient input was gathered to provide significant results on effectiveness and efficiency (see Annex 2). In addition, this unbalance was taken into account when formulating the conclusions.

b. **Establishing benchmarks:** the absence of an ex-ante impact assessment of the Regulation presented challenges in establishing a baseline. The limited available data when the Agency was created made a comparison with a 'no-EEA' scenario difficult. Therefore, the benchmarks are based on the 2012-2016 EEA evaluation.

c. **Differences between Multiannual Work Programmes (MAWPs):** the two multiannual work programmes (MAWP 2014-2020, hereinafter "MAWP" and the EEA-Strategy 2021-2030, hereinafter "the Strategy") with distinct objectives, as well as EEA reorganisations and changes of reporting methods complicated the comparisons and assessment.

d. **Lack of specificity in EEA programming documents:** lack of detailed information in SPDs (Single Programming Documents) and CAARs (Consolidated Annual Activity Reports) hindered evaluation, particularly of completed outputs and resource allocation.

e. **Inconsistent performance indicators:** Differences in use and reliability of performance indicators between MAWPs complicated the assessment. Original (108) indicators were not SMART[13] and have not been operationalised, and subsequent KPIs (19) did not align with the Strategy (cf. 4.1.2.5). Performance analysis compared the delivered outputs to those planned in the in Annual Work Programmes (AWPs).

f. **Reliability of the MAWP 2014-2020 as evidence:** Limited operationalisation of original performance indicators reduced the reliability of evidence. However, assessment against expected outputs in the EEA's work programmes provided some utility.

g. **Quantifying efficiency:** Benefits can be indirectly linked to the work of the Agency, such as improved measures on environment through policy making or increased environmental awareness among the public but are difficult to attribute solely to the EEA and EIONET's contributions. Therefore, the analysis focused on direct benefits. Moreover, benefits being more difficult to quantify than costs, the assessment of efficiency was mostly qualitative

[12] 75% (3 out of 4) workshops, 57% (47 out of 82) interviews and 54% (28 out of 51) survey respondents.
[13] SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound

(looking at task implementation, allocation of resources, prioritisation and synergies) and based on quantitative comparison of costs and outputs, with very limited possibility to conclude on the "value for money". In the absence of benchmarks, a comparison with similar organisations was also carried out (see 4.1.2.4).

h. **Availability of EIONET information:** Limited availability of data on EIONET's operations, particularly the component managed by Member States. Interviews were conducted with National Focal Points (NFPs) to gather more information, paying attention to geographical balance (see Annex 2 and 5).

i. **Comparison with previous evaluation:** Differing information availability in the evaluations complicates direct comparison. This is tied to the evolution of MAWPs aligned to evolving policy context, and the structure of EEA programming documents. In addition, due to an insufficiently robust monitoring system, consistent data were not always available to compare with the previous evaluation and approximations were made (e.g. for comparing reporting obligations, more details in Annex 2).

1.4. Baseline and points of comparison

In the absence of an impact assessment at the time of the Regulation, the previous 2012-2016 evaluation served as the baseline. Comparisons were made using the Regulation's objectives and the MAWPs, along with intended results. Annex 3 details the criteria and indicators selected for assessing each question.

The previous evaluation determined that EEA/EIONET fulfilled regulatory objectives and demonstrated continued relevance by delivering EU added value through the efficient and coherent implementation of MAWPs. EEA/EIONET consistently provided vital information for EU policymaking and adapted to policy shifts despite reduced staffing. Table 1 outlines the implementation status of measures addressing previous evaluation deficiencies, with many partially resolved or ongoing. For example, the Rules of Procedures underwent revision to clarify the function of the MB and Bureau. Concurrently the MB guided the formulation of the Strategy by incorporating feedback from the prior evaluation. Ongoing actions include modernising EIONET, reviewing and renewing ETCs, and implementing the Digitisation Strategy. KPIs should be revised by the MB to enhance monitoring performance of EEA/EIONET. Agency-Commission coordination has likewise improved, notably through the establishment of the ISG and 'structured dialogues' with DG ENV and CLIMA. However, prioritisation remains a challenge given resource constraints.

Table 1: 2012-2016 evaluation responses: challenges, shortcomings, recommendations

EEA Evaluation 2012-2016	EEA MB response/follow-up actions and state of implementation
MB Governance. Lack of strategic steer of the MB on resource prioritisation and priority setting.	**Partly addressed** – MB reviewed the Rules of Procedures to clarify division of tasks between it and the Bureau, increase its involvement in strategic discussions. MB led development of the Strategy, ETCs review, and EIONET modernisation. **Challenge**: further enhancement of MB strategic steer (cf. 4.1.2.5)

Monitoring/evaluation system. KPI system not operationalised.	**Partly addressed** – New KPIs introduced in 2019, however these are aggregated, are missing indicators to monitor process performance (e.g., on reporting) or the use and impact of outputs in policy making (cf. 4.1.2.5). **Challenge**: revise the KPIs to align with the Strategy.
Use of digital technologies. EEA/EIONET can maximise utility of digital technologies, in particular by leveraging Copernicus.	**Ongoing** – Implementation of digitalisation strategy with progress on monitoring and reporting processes (Reportnet 3), to optimise ICT solutions and leverage Copernicus capabilities in alignment with the Strategy), and creation of a new ETC on Data integration and digitalisation (ETC DI). **Challenge**: securing IT investments and capacity building (cf. 4.1.1.5)
Coordination between the EEA and the European Commission. Room for improved coordination between Commission and Agency to avoid duplication, ensure consistency across sectoral policies, and further efficiency gains.	**Ongoing** – Enhanced coordination via internal relations between EEA and Commission (ISG), high-level 'structured dialogue' with DG ENV and CLIMA to define needs and priorities, and reinforce coordination with JRC, ESTAT and RTD (4.1.3.1).
EEA outputs. Room to improve timing, scope and format of some EEA reports and better coordination with Commission policy agenda.	**Partly addressed** – Coordination has improved (4.1.3.1), but a process is required to define publications' priorities (4.1.2.3).
EIONET. EIONET lacked visibility, its role deemed unclear. Information on its activities can improve.	**Ongoing** - MB begun modernising EIONET by improved organisation, value-added, and national visibility. (cf. 4.1.1.2)
Membership of non-EU countries. Lacks homogenous framework defining obligations.	**Unchanged** – to be considered in the context of potential future partnerships.
Aligning EEA/EIONET resources with evolving policy and knowledge priorities. Workload increased with Commission demand for new tasks, necessitating de-prioritisation and the eventual eliminate of activities and tasks.	**Partly addressed** - Increased resources in the second part of the evaluation linked to new legislative proposals, but there is a need for further prioritisation of tasks and resources due to increasing demands (linked to the EGD) (cf. 4.1.2.3).

2. BACKGROUND TO THE INTERVENTION

2.1. Overview of the EEA and EIONET governance structure

The EEA governance structure includes a MB with representatives[14] from 32 member countries (27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey), and two representatives designated by the European Parliament and two from the European Commission. The MB decides on work programmes, annual activity reports, budgets, and the appointment of the executive director. With members down from the MB, the Bureau[15] is tasked with executive decisions. The Commission is represented by members from various DGs: DG ENV, the Agency's partner DG and RTD as members Eurostat and JRC as alternates, and DG CLIMA acting as observer. Agency relations are overseen by the Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

[14] List of Management Board members
[15] List of Bureau members

The Executive Director (ED) oversees the implementation of work programmes and daily administration[16]. The Senior Management Team included the ED and eight Heads of Programme[17].

EIONET is coordinated by the EEA and comprises members who contribute time, knowledge, and networks with the aim of ensuring high-quality outputs and dissemination of up-to-date scientific knowledge. Its operational structure consisted of:

- **National Focal Points (NFPs)** coordinating national contributions to EEA and EIONET activities. They are typically situated within environment agencies or ministries.
- **EIONET National Reference Centres,** currently known as **EIONET Groups (EGs)**, consist of experts from national institutions and other bodies involved in environmental information. Coordinated by the NFPs, they provide expertise to support the EEA.
- **European Topic Centres (ETCs)** are consortia comprised of organisations from EEA member countries. They offer specialised expertise in various environmental domains and are funded by the EEA budget to perform tasks in support of its work programmes.

The Scientific Committee (SC) is an advisory body of the EEA. Comprising academics from a range of natural and social science disciplines who focus on environmental topics in their research, the SC advises on work programmes, scientific staff recruitment, and scientific matters related to EEA objectives. For an evaluation of EEA/EIONET governance, see 4.1.2.5.

2.2. Intervention logic

The intervention logic details the purpose, rationale, and sequence of steps followed by the EEA/EIONET to produce outputs. It adheres to the Better Regulation Guidelines

[16] For the whole duration of the evaluation the ED was Professor Hans Bruyninckx, who took office on 1 June 2013. His mandate was renewed once in 2018 and expired in June 2023.
[17] EEA organisational chart — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

Figure 1: Intervention Logic of the EEA and EIONET

Stakeholder needs

Citizens require knowledge on the state of environment in Europe, in line with the Aarhus convention and environmental legislation on public access to environmental information. Policy makers require transparent, consistent, and comparable environmental data for policy development, implementation assessment and to foster environmental awareness. Stakeholder needs evolve over time alongside policy priorities, global commitments, and events, all coming together to shape the required EEA/EIONET knowledge.

Objectives

The general objectives, set out in in the Regulation structure the work of the EEA/EIONET (Art 1.2.*"to provide the Community and the Member States with: (a) 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; (b) the necessary technical and scientific support"*). The evaluation translated the general objectives into **five specific objectives** to assess the performance of the EEA/EIONET:

1) Inform EU environmental and climate policies, and global commitments

2) Coordinate EIONET

3) Conduct regular assessments on the state of the environment

4) Inform the public by ensuring access to environmental and climate data

5) Make full use of digitalisation to improve operations

The objectives, influenced by external factors and stakeholders' needs, guide the inputs received by the EEA and are implemented to produce outputs and generate expected results.

External Factors

The evaluation notes three key external factors affecting the EEA:

1) EU and national policy priorities, including funding via the MFF
2) International policy shifts, including SDG commitments and UN conventions
3) Unexpected challenges like Covid-19 and Brexit, requiring adaptability

Inputs

The EEA and EIONET rely on inputs to deliver their activities and execute the multi-annual and annual work programmes.

The EEA's budget consists of two categories:

1) Core budget: funded by the EU subsidy and contributions from non-EU member countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Türkiye, Switzerland)

2) Non-core budget: sourced from other EU programmes via grants and agreements (Service Level, Delegation and Contribution Agreements) with the Commission services.

Member countries provide also in-kind resources, including the involvement of MB members and EIONET experts (see details in 4.1.2.1). They also make available Seconded National Experts (SNEs) who directly contribute to Agency activities.

Data collected from member countries through EIONET, combined with data from other sources, are processed and analysed to generate outputs, including publications and indicators.

Activities

Article 2 of the Regulation defines the EEA core tasks across 8 priority areas of work[18]. In addition, specific tasks stem from environmental and climate legislations (see Annex 9). Their implementation, aligned with evolving policy priorities and other external factors, is detailed in the MAWPs and the SPDs. These tasks have been grouped into five activities corresponding to the five specific objectives:

A. Collect, process EU environmental/climate data; produce reports/indicators; maintain databases; submit data for international commitments; cooperate with global bodies.
B. Support EIONET member countries with reporting infrastructure and capacity building; Facilitate coordination (Eionet meetings); EIONET consultations on publications.
C. Assess and monitor past trends and progress towards established EU policy targets.
D. Disseminate products to the public, monitor outreach campaigns through social media.
E. Develop a comprehensive digitalisation strategy; improve IT infrastructure and use of new technologies; integrate novel data sources.

Outputs

The EEA and EIONET generate a range of outputs, including publications (reports, briefings, country factsheets), indicators, interactive maps, and charts (dashboards, infographics), and data (datasets, databases, and EIONET core data flows). EIONET meetings and support via the EIONET helpdesk are included in the outputs (see Annex 6).

Results

Through its activities and delivered outputs, the EEA seeks to achieve the following results:

a. Evidence-based EU environmental and climate legislation development and implementation and international environmental and climate policies.
b. Operational EIONET's capacity for data collection and knowledge co-creation.
c. Periodic assessments of Europe's environment state, systemic challenges, future prospects.
d. Ensured citizens' access to European environmental and climate information.
e. Enhanced operations through digital technologies and innovative data sources.

Impacts

[18] (a) air quality and atmospheric emissions, (b) water quality, pollutants and water resources, (c) the state of soil, of fauna and flora, and of biotopes, (d) land use and natural resources, (e) waste management, (f) noise emissions, (g) chemical substances which are hazardous for the environment, and (h) coastal and marine protection

EEA/EIONET seek impacts through their long-term work, including enabling policymakers to **address issues and implementation gaps** in EU environmental and climate legislation, by increasing relevance, efficacy, and efficiency in line with the goals of the EGD and EAP. The work of EEA/EIONET furthermore **raises public awareness about environmental and climate issues**, empowering citizens to respond effectively to challenges.

3. STATE OF PLAY

This section presents quantitative information on inputs, activities, outputs, and external factors from 2017 to 2021, providing essential evidence to analyse evaluation findings (4).

3.1. Overall context and policy developments during the period 2017-2021

Throughout the evaluation period, EEA and EIONET activities aligned to 7th EAP objectives. Likewise, the MAWP 2014-2018 was extended to 2020 to align with the new EU legislative term and the EGD. The evaluation indicates that the EEA effectively adapted its priorities to the evolving political agenda and policy context.

In 2019, the EGD[19] elevated environmental and climate policies to the top of the political agenda, introducing a cross-cutting approach to the green transition. This led to increased demand for environmental knowledge across different policy areas. As a result, **coordination between the Commission and EEA-EIONET** became more complex, involving more policy areas and DGs.[20] The Strategy aligns with EGD policies and 8th EAP priorities introducing cross-cutting strategic objectives alongside five thematic areas. Moreover, the EEA was tasked with monitoring the progress indicators with the 8th EAP priorities.

3.2. COVID-19

The Agency smoothly transitioned to remote working, maintaining delivery consistency. Only some publications were delayed or cancelled due to resource and time constraints. Notably, a briefing on 'COVID-19 and Europe's environment: Impacts of a global pandemic' was published in November 2020. In 2021, the Agency focused on the impact of the pandemic on single-use plastics in a circular economy and resource efficiency context. A similar briefing analysed the implications of COVID-19 on urban sustainability. The EEA also hosted online debates on COVID-19and sustain recovery, garnering significant social media attention.[21]

Overall, the collected evidence suggest that the **COVID-19 minimally impacted the EEA**'s operations and work quality, however **some negative impact on dissemination of products** was noted, particularly limiting the dissemination of the 2020 SOER and the visibility of ENI projects. Similarly, although in-person events were cancelled due to the pandemic, **EIONET coordination was minimally affected** as interactions swiftly transitioned online. **Staff**

[19] COM/2019/640 final
20 In response, in 2022 a permanent Inter-Service group (ISG) led by DG ENV in which 22 other DGs are involved was created. It A 'structured dialogue' between EEA, DG ENV and DG CLIMA was also set up in November 2021, as a response to a 2020 internal audit of IAS on relationships between EEA, DG ENV and DG CLIMA.
[21] CAAR 2020

wellbeing was adversely affected as indicated in the 2021 EEA staff satisfaction survey, possibly by pandemic challenges and internal organisational changes (see 4.1.2.3).

3.3. Brexit

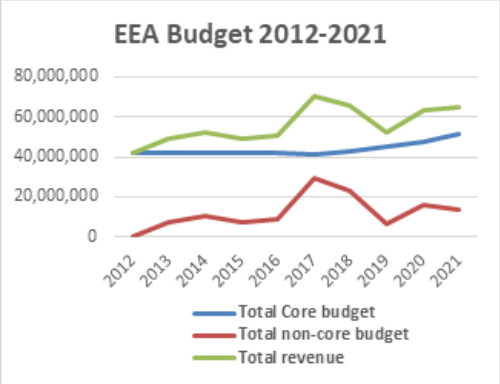
The EEA was well prepared to the UK's exit, promptly and efficiently making the necessary IT systems and data collection adjustments.[22] UK staff at the EEA remained in line with Commission protocols. Finally, Brexit did not directly affect financial contributions as it indirectly shifted the burden of EU funding from 28 to 27 Member States, impacting contributions from Switzerland (which is equal to the EU contribution divided by the number of Member States). The collected evidence shows that Brexit did not disrupt the operations given that the Agency was prepared to respond.

3.4. Human and financial resources

The evaluation period witnessed an increase in the EEA's core resources, reversing a previous period of funding stagnation. The increase was necessary to support new tasks related to the EGD, although it was partially realised at the expense of resources diverted from the LIFE budget. The evaluation covers two MFF cycles, with the MFF 2014-2020 in a particular period of austerity measures for decentralised agencies[23].

The EEA received additional tasks and resources given the EGD, increase the Agency's core budget by 25% from around EUR 41 million in 2017 to EUR 51 million in 2021. Since these additional tasks were not known when adopting the MFF 2021-2027 (due to the freezing of the EU contribution at 2018 levels in nominal terms[24]) subsidy), the required resources were decided to be reallocated from the LIFE budgetary envelope. See Annex 11 for the table on resources and 4.1.2.3 for full explanations on LIFE budget impact.

Figure 2: EEA Budget 2012-2021



Compared to the previous evaluation period, there was a 55% increase in the overall budget from 2012 to 2021, driven by consistent growth both in the EU contribution (+23%) and non-core budget. However, the non-core budget experienced volatility, starting at 0 in 2012, peaking at EUR 29 million in 2017, then decreasing to EUR 13.5 million (-53%) in 2021, primarily due to variable planning of Copernicus funding (see Annex 11).

The EEA's financial foundation is further reinforced through shared projects for a total of EUR 6.7 million during the evaluation period, funded by DG ENV and DG CLIMA for the

[22] EEA (2021), CAAR 2020.
[23] European Commission (2013) COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, Programming of human and financial resources for decentralised agencies 2014-2020
[24] The EEA was categorised as 'cruising speed" agency but the EU contribution continued to increase by applying the annual inflation rate (2%).

creation and enhancement of databases and platforms. Agency staffing mirrored the budget trajectory and austerity measures. Designated as a *new task agency* for Copernicus land service and as *cruising speed agency* for all other tasks, the Agency had to reduce staff by 5% over five years (until the end of austerity measures in 2018)[25].

Figure 3: EEA Staff 2012-2021

Additional resources were allocated for new tasks from the 8th EAP and legislation revisions in 2019, 2020 and 2021, resulting in a 12.7% increase in total staff compared to 2018 (from 213 to 240). Increased use of contractual agents reflects the growth of 'non-core' activities (see details in Annex 11). Between 2012 and 2021, EEA staff increased by 11%; establishment posts by 7%, contractual agents by 27%, whereas SNEs decreased by 13%.

3.5. Monitoring implementation of EU environmental and climate legislation and support to policy development

EU environmental and climate legislation mandates reporting obligations (ROs) for Member States, industries, and stakeholders, to track progress towards environmental and climate goals. The Agency monitors these obligations and aids the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data and indicators for a range of variables.

During the evaluation, the EEA supported the **development of EGD initiatives** and the implementation of **36 EU environmental and climate legislative instruments** (see 4.1.1.1 and Annex 9), managing **123 EU reporting obligations** across different policy areas.

Table 2: Overview of reporting obligations supported by the EEA

Policy area	Number of supported legislations	Number of Reporting Obligations	Legislations including ROs supported by EEA
Air	3	30	Air Quality Directives, CLRTAP, NEC Directive
Industrial Emissions	4	8	e-PRTR, IED, Medium Combustion Plants, Mercury Regulation
Climate Change	11	27	Effort Sharing Decision, Ozone Depleting Substances Regulation, F-Gas Regulation, EU ETS Directive, Fuel Quality Directive, Regulation on CO_2 emissions from new passenger cars, Regulation on CO_2 emissions from new vans, Regulation on CO_2 emissions from new heavy duty vehicles, Climate Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (MMR), Governance Regulation
Water	7	22	MSFD, WFD, EQS, Floods, Bathing, Drinking Water, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directives
Nature	5	10	Birds, Habitats, Nitrates Directive, Bern Convention, Invasive Alien Species Reg.
Noise	1	7	Environmental noise Directive

[25] Agencies were divided into three categories: (a) cruising speed, for those agencies which were well established and had stable tasks; (b) new tasks, for agencies with a cruising speed part as well as additional or modified tasks; and (c) start-up phase agencies, for those who had been recently created and had not yet reached a stable status.

Products	1	1	Volatile Organic Compounds in paints Directive
Waste	2	2	Waste Framework Directive, Sewage Sludge
Horizontal	2	16	EEA/EIONET Regulation, Union Space Programme (Copernicus)
TOTAL	**36**	**123**	**-**

In addition, the EEA managed the EU submission under five pieces of international legislation[26], based on data and information collected for associated EU legislation. During the evaluation period, the EEA also supported the Commission in its engagement with organisations at regional and international levels. The Agency cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was underpinned by two multiannual projects (2016-2020) with six Eastern Partnership and nine Southern Mediterranean partner countries. At the international level, the Agency cooperated with the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and maintained regular interactions with other organisations[27].

3.6. EIONET, European Topic Centres (ETCs) and Reportnet

Overall, EIONET consists of circa 400 national organisations from 38 countries, with expertise in environmental issues, and ETCs, centres of thematic expertise designated by the MB and contracted by the EEA. One of the objectives of the EEA is to coordinate the Network at EU level with the National Focal Points (NFPs) coordinating at national level.

Following the previous evaluation, a process for modernising EIONET was launched in 2020. The implementation started in 2022 and is ongoing (see 4.1.1.2). It builds around three key principles – co-creation of knowledge, enhanced capacity building, and raising EIONET's national profile. Its activity strands were coordinated by three NFP/EIONET Working Groups (WGs)[28] and one MB Advisory Committee (MBAC)[29]. It was also governed by the overarching objective of aligning the Network with the EGD priorities and the Strategy. The objectives covered four key aspects:

- **Structure and coordination at national level**. A clear distinction of roles has been put in place. The functions at national level are clearly defined between the NFPs (overall responsibility over the network's coordination), EIONET Group Leads (responsible for coordinating knowledge development and organising participation in thematic EIONET groups), and the National Data Flow Coordinator (responsible for data flows and reporting obligations management).

[26] UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP), UNECE Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Protocol (PRTR Protocol) under the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, UN Minamata Convention on Mercury, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC), UN Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Montreal Protocol), under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer

[27] The indicative list comprises: United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the secretariats of global conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

[28] EIONET Modernisation Working Group (MWG), National Reference Centres (NRC) Review WG, EIONET Core Data Flow (ECDF) Review WG

[29] Management Board Advisory Committee on EIONET mapping

- **Structure of the thematic groups.** The 24 NRCs were replaced with 13 cross-cutting EIONET Groups (cf. Annex 10) mirroring the EGD priorities and Strategy.
- **Data flows.** EIONET Core Data Flows, a subset of key data flows which are essential for the EEA's main assessments, products, and services, were revised.
- **National mapping.** A mapping exercise was carried out to prepare the implementation of the modernisation and engagement with the Strategy at national level.

Another significant process was the update of the ETCs. After a first preliminary "light" review in 2017 (split of the ETC on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM) into two ETCs), a thorough review established seven new cross-cutting ETCs[30] in 2021 across areas such as biodiversity, circular economy, climate change, data integration, human health, and sustainability. This process aligned the composition of the ETCs with the new cross-cutting approach of the EGD. The budget assigned over the period was EUR 37 million, with an average of 547 experts involved per year and 219 reports produced in total.

To assist EIONET member countries with data reporting, the EEA has developed a reporting platform referred to as Reportnet[31], which has been operational since 2002. In 2018, as a follow-up of the **environmental reporting Fitness Check, the EEA initiated the Reportnet 3.0** project to upgrade Reportnet 2. The first version was released in July 2020 and 10 pilot data flows were progressively integrated (on GHG emissions, Bathing Water Directive, Environment Noise Directive etc., see Annex 10). A new phase was initiated in 2021 to continue the transition and integrate new data flows (citizens science and Copernicus).

3.7. Periodic assessment of the EU State of Environment

The SOER draws on thematic indicators to assess the state of EU environment and anticipate future trends. The SOER 2020 was published in December 2019, timed with the launch of the EGD. It provides a comprehensive assessment of Europe's environment to support governance and inform the public. Its launch received significant media attention, including a press conference with First Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius. To maximise outreach, the EEA organised webinars and created communication products such as a press release, infographics, and a corporate video, distributed among key stakeholders and journalists. However, some of the planned outreach activities in 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the cancellation of in-person events, limiting media attention (cf. 3.2). In addition, from 2017 to 2019 the EEA published the annual Environmental indicators reports that inform the 7th EAP, replaced subsequently by a set of indicators for the 8th EAP Monitoring Framework. The impact of SOER 2020 on the EU policy agenda is further discussed in 4.1.1.3.

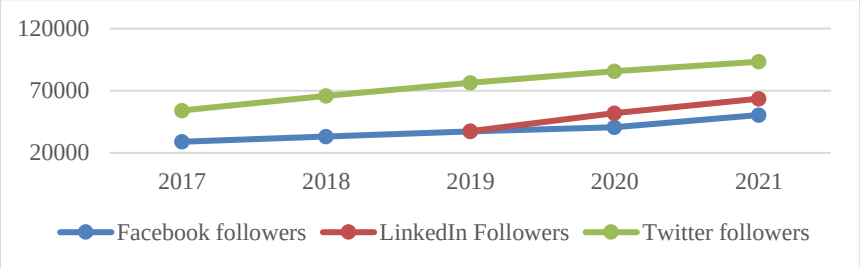
[30] Biodiversity and ecosystems (ETC BE); Circular economy and resource use (ETC CE); Climate change adaptation and LULUCF (ETC CA); Climate change mitigation (ETC CM); Data integration and digitalisation (ETC DI); Human health and the environment (ETC HE); Sustainability trends, prospects, and responses (ETC ST)
[31] https://www.EIONET.europa.eu/reportnet

3.8. Dissemination and uptake of environmental information by the public

Dissemination of information to the public is one of the key objectives of the EEA. During the evaluated period, the EEA tried to achieve this objective operating under two Communication Frameworks. The first, aligned with the MAWP 2014-2020, aimed to improve content accessibility and promote usage of environmental information, with a focus on digital engagement and stakeholder alignment. In 2021, a new framework was adopted which prioritises enhancing collaboration, strengthening identity, and innovating digital communication for better engagement.

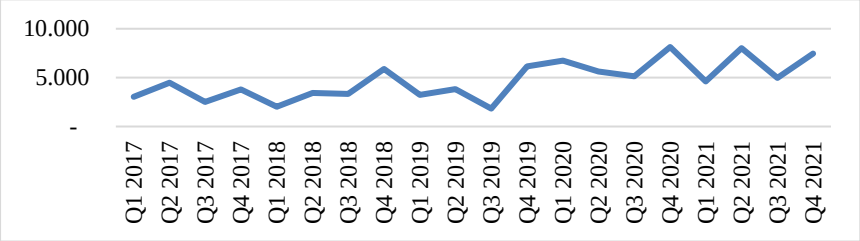
The EEA engaged with diverse audiences on social media, including policymakers, NGOs, and researchers on Twitter, and researchers, organisations, and students on LinkedIn.

Figure 4: Overview of EEA following on public social media platforms



Over the evaluated period, efforts of the EEA to increase its outreach are reflected in the increased number of followers on social media platforms (+150% from 83k to 207k) and the higher number of articles (+81%, from 14k to 25k) covering EEA products in the media. The number of newsletter's subscribers declined from over 40,000 in 2017 to under 25,000 in 2018 due to programmed clean ups of the database. Efforts were intensified thereafter, with subscribers increasing by 40% to around 35,000 by 2021.

Figure 5: EEA media coverage (number of articles) 2017-2021



3.9. Data, digital technologies, and digitalisation strategy

Since 2017, the EEA diversified its data sources and enhanced its digital capacity. Between 2017 and 2021, the EEA worked to develop Copernicus services under successive agreements with DG DEFIS. The aim was to implement the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service (CLMS) as well as coordinate and harmonise the collection and provision of in-situ and reference data. Outputs produced from Copernicus include land monitoring data, several land- and soil-related indicators, and CORINE[32] Land Cover country factsheets for the period until 2018. In addition, the EEA integrates data and products from other Copernicus services with its data (the Copernicus Climate Change and Atmosphere Monitoring services).

[32] CORINE (Coordination of Information on the Environment) program was launched in 1990, it then became a component of the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service, providing European land cover/land use information for over three decades.

In 2021, the EEA adopted a new digitalisation framework, aligned with the EU Digital Agenda[33] and European Strategy for Data[34] built on four pillars: a digital workplace, the EEA as a central environmental data hub, data intelligence and information services and ICT infrastructure and security. Several key activities enhanced operations and service delivery as part of the framework, including a robust teleworking infrastructure, modernised data infrastructure by integrating cloud technologies and cybersecurity measures, launching Reportnet 3 (cf. 3.6) and exploring AI and machine learning for environmental applications and foresight. The new website and data hub was launched in 2023.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1. To what extent was the EEA and EIONET successful and why?

This section assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, and coherence of the EEA and EIONET in fulfilling tasks and achieving expected impacts compared to the objectives. It also analyses their adaptability and progress made since the last evaluation. Information gaps limit a more thorough assessment of the three criteria. This limitation is considered in the conclusions.

Summary of findings

The EEA and EIONET have been largely successful due to their significant contributions to EU environmental and climate policy, the impact created through the SOER 2020 and enhanced network coordination and digital strategies. There are indications of efficiency gains, including the MB's increased involvement in strategic decisions and data handling, although limited data hinder the analysis. Coherence is strong, especially with member countries, yet coordination with the Commission, particularly DG ENV, needs refinement.

4.1.1. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is gauged by the contribution of activities and outputs to expected results. Effectiveness is also evaluated against internal and external factors influencing task implementation and results, comparing progress to the previous evaluation. The findings rely on quantitative data, including the analysis of activities (MAWPs, SPDs, CAARs), KPIs, case studies, and the impact of publications on policy developments, complemented by qualitative information from the stakeholder consultations.

Summary of findings

The EEA and EIONET have supported the development and implementation of EU environmental and climate policies. Their data collection and management efforts provided objective input for policy development, monitoring, and international commitments, with notably the SOER 2020 helping to shape EGD priorities. This positive impact suggests an

[33] Communication: Shaping Europe's digital future and Communication: 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade
[34] Communication on a European strategy for data

opportunity to strategically align future SOER releases with the EU legislative term. However, some misalignments with the policy agenda and issues with prioritisation of outputs are areas for improvement. Coordination of EIONET was effective, promoting active collaboration and knowledge sharing, although the consistency of modernisation across countries requires further assessment. The EEA's outreach was successful specifically with regard to institutional stakeholders. The Agency has incorporated advanced digital technologies in its strategy, but there is still untapped potential for digitalisation and enhancing use of Copernicus products.

4.1.1.1. Inform EU environmental and climate policies and global commitments

Summary of findings

Evidence indicates that the EEA and EIONET contributed to the development of EGD environmental and climate initiatives. Robust data collection and outputs, including assessments of the environmental acquis, informed policy design and supported reporting obligations. Moreover, the EEA effectively handled EU submissions to international bodies, meeting international commitments through timely provision of data and reports. However, shortcomings were identified, including delays and misalignment of some products with the policy agenda, the lack of performance indicators on reporting obligations and on the use of products in policy making, and the large proportion of 'EEA own initiative' publications. Findings suggest areas for improvement, such as prioritisation of publications and their enhanced use in policy making.

Effectiveness in the delivery of outputs

In the absence of KPIs, the analysis of CAARs reveals that from 2017 to 2020, the EEA supported by EIONET delivered 780 outputs, including publications, datasets, infographics, maps, and other products. The figure for 2021 is unavailable due to changes in reporting under the Strategy. Compared to the planned 844 outputs (cf. table below), this translates to a 92% delivery rate, with a slight inflection in 2020 largely attributed to COVID-19.

Table 3: EEA output completion rate 2017-2020

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total 2017-2020
Total delivered outputs	157	170	244	209	780
Total planned outputs	172	180	259	233	844
Outputs completion rate (% of delivered/planned)	91%	94%	94%	90%	92%

As of 2019, two KPIs monitored the delivery performance of a subset of outputs (key reports and core set of indicators) against a baseline target of 90%. As depicted in the table below, the delivery rates for key reports and share of updated core set indicators were high in 2019 but experienced slight underperformance in 2020 and 2021, attributed to the pandemic. Overall, this reflects effective delivery considering the unforeseeable impact of COVID-19.

Table 4: Output KPIs 2019-2021

Performance objective	No	KPI	KPI measurement	Baseline (2019)	Target	2019	2020	2021

Output	5*	AWP delivery – Assessments	Delivery rate of key reports/assessments as planned for year N	93.1%	Min. 90%	93.10 %	87.50 %	89%
	6*	AWP delivery – Indicators	Share of Core Set indicators updated as planned for year N	96%	Min. 90%	96%	88.20 %	>90 %

Additional evidence collected from the EEA shows increased effectiveness in the delivery of publications: 82% of the planned publications were delivered (267 out of 324) from 2017 to 2021, while 9% were cancelled and 9% postponed to the next year to align with the policy agenda or were reprioritised due to resource restrictions. During the evaluation period, short briefings (48% of 267) surpassed traditional reports (40%) as the most common publication type. Country factsheets, valued by national stakeholders, were the second most frequent (13%), followed by corporate publications (3%).

Based on a categorisation provided by the EEA, 38% of the publications corresponded to legal requirements, 13% to 'Eionet co-creation' and 49% to 'EEA own initiative'. However, these two last categories do not necessarily reflect relevant policy priorities. Appropriate metrics should be put in place to monitor and assess the use of outputs in policy making.

Informing policy development

Without a specific KPI related to policy support that should be further addressed in the future, the impact of the EEA and EIONET on policy development has been assessed primarily based on the number of citations of EEA publications in impact assessment and major initiatives developed under the EGD integrated with Commission stakeholders' feedback.

From 2019 to 2021, 36 publications were referred to in major EGD initiatives, which indicates EEA had a tangible impact on EU policy development. Table 5 provides an overview of the publications that were mentioned in more than three initiatives – the SOER 2020 was by far the most frequently cited providing evidence to 10 different initiatives under the EGD (see detailed analysis of SOER impact in 4.1.1.3). However, a lower number of mentions does not equal a lower relevance. For example, the 2020 State of Nature report, despite being mentioned only in the Nature Restoration Law, was a key input for this initiative. Moreover, the EEA's EU GHG inventory, provisional data on CO_2 emissions from cars, the EEA data viewer, and the overview of low-carbon development strategies in European countries published in 2018 were used to inform the preparation of the European Climate Law, although not directly mentioned therein (See Annex 9bis for more details on EEA support to the development and implementation of climate legislation in 2017-2021).

Table 5: EEA reports with over three mentions in major EGD initiatives

Publication	Number of major initiatives where mentioned	Name of major initiative where mentioned
EEA Report. 'The European environment — state and outlook 2020 Knowledge for transition to a sustainable Europe'	10	Nature Restoration Law, Soil Strategy, Deforestation Regulation, LULUCF Regulation, Zero Pollution Strategy, Adaptation Strategy, 8th EAP, Toxic-free Environment Strategy, 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy, Climate Law
EEA Report No 7/2018. 'European	4	Groundwater Directive, UWWTD, Nature

waters – assessment of status and pressures 2018'		Restoration Law, IED
EEA Report No 1/2017. 'Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2016'	3	UWWTD, Adaptation Strategy, 2030 Climate Ambition
EEA Report 22/2018. 'Unequal exposure and unequal impacts'	3	Ambient Air Quality, Zero Pollution Strategy, Adaptation Strategy
EEA Report No 18/2018. 'Chemicals in surface waters 2018 – Knowledge developments'	3	Groundwater Directive, UWWTD, Toxic-free Environment Strategy
EEA Report No 4/2019. 'Climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector in Europe'	3	Soil Strategy, LULUCF Regulation, Adaptation Strategy
EEA Briefing. 'Textiles in Europe's circular economy '	3	Ecodesign Regulation, Shipments of Waste, Circular Economy Action Plan
EEA Report No 21/2019. 'Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe 2020'	3	Nature Restoration Law, Zero Pollution Strategy, Adaptation Strategy

These major initiatives not only refer to EEA publications but also to a wide range of EEA products – databases, indicators, indicator assessments or dashboards. Two indicators have been used very extensively: the "Water scarcity conditions in Europe (Water exploitation index plus)" (IED, Adaptation Strategy, 8th EAP Monitoring Framework) and the "Economic losses from weather- and climate-related extremes in Europe" indicator (Soil Strategy, Adaptation Strategy). Also, the European Air Quality Index is mentioned in the initiatives on Ambient Air Quality and the Zero Pollution Strategy.

Informing policy implementation

Between 2017 and 2021 the reporting obligations managed by the EEA covered policy areas including air quality, noise, industrial emissions, water and marine environment, biodiversity and ecosystems, waste, and climate change adaptation and mitigation (see 3.2).

An in-depth analysis (see details in Annex 9) revealed that, compared to the previous evaluation, the Agency handled 10% more reporting obligations (123 in 2021 vs 113 in 2016). The level of support also increased: during the evaluation period the EEA provided full support to 92% of reporting obligations (113 out of 123), against 48% in 2016, suggesting a more active involvement throughout the whole reporting cycle. However, this comparison is approximate because the level of involvement is not systematically tracked by the EEA. A more systematic monitoring of the support to reporting obligations should be considered.

Commission stakeholders consider this work particularly indispensable for the Birds and Habitats Directive, Air quality Directives, Bathing Water Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, the Industrial Emission Portal, as well as the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action. The EEA assists the Commission with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting, which is the key information source for tracking EU and Member State progress towards climate targets and compliance with EU and international obligations. A 2018 European Court of Auditors (ECA) "*Special report on the*

EU's greenhouse gas emission reporting"[35] assessed the quality checks done by the EEA on the EU greenhouse gas inventory, concluding that the EU's emission data was appropriately reported and noting an improvement of the EU GHGs inventories over time. Several publications were mentioned by interviewees as being key for informing policy implementation, especially for climate mitigation[36]. However, according to stakeholders from DG ENV, the alignment of publications with the policy agenda and adoption of Commission initiatives was not always optimal (e.g. in the field of biodiversity) and could be enhanced.

Monitoring and reporting were improved through the Environmental Information Systems operated by the EEA[37], 11 (out of 16) being directly required by legislation. Some are the vehicle for Member States to report data such as Climate-ADAPT, which offers tools to help them preparing their National Adaptation Plans and reporting their adaptation policies under the Governance of the Energy Union Regulation. One of the challenges in the coming years the better integration of these platforms and datasets to improve their interoperability (as it is the case for instance between WISE Marine and WISE Freshwater), and with reporting tools.

The increased involvement of the Agency in reporting obligations and the generally positive feedback, especially from the Commission stakeholders, indicate that the **EEA was able to support monitoring the implementation of environmental and climate initiatives despite some shortcomings** related to the timeliness of certain indicators and the alignment of some publications with the policy agenda.

The opinions expressed in the online survey confirm these findings: 86% (24 out of 28) of EEA staff and 91% (21 out of 23) of other respondents considered that the EEA provided objective information for framing and implementing EU environmental policies effectively, although the low number of responses limits the reliability of this finding.

By collecting reporting obligations of relevant EU regulations (NEC Directive, E-PRTR Regulation, Mercury Regulation, Governance Regulation, Ozone Regulation and F-gas Regulation), the **EEA and EIONET also contributed to fulfil international commitments on behalf of the EU, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**. The Agency is responsible for collecting annual reporting data on fluorinated gases and ozone-depleting substances required by the F-gas and Ozone Regulations. This allows the Commission to comply with EU reporting obligations under the Montreal Protocol for ozone and F-gas reporting. For that purpose, the EEA compiles every year (including

[35] https://op.europa.eu/webpub/eca/special-reports/greenhouse-gas-emissions-18-2019/en/

[36] Some of them are annual reports, like the Air Quality in Europe, European Bathing Water Quality, the Trends and Projections in Europe reports, European GHG inventory, and Ozone depleting substance. Others were published less regularly but also important, such as the Environmental Noise in Europe (2017 and 2019), EU Emissions Trading System: trends and projections (2018, 2019 and 2021), Quality and greenhouse gas intensities of transport fuels in the EU (2017, 2018 and 2019), State of Nature in Europe (2020), and State of Water (2018).

[37] Air Quality e-Reporting and Portal, Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE), Copernicus In-situ Component (non-core activity), Copernicus land monitoring service (non-core activity), EEA website on climate and energy data and information, Emerald Viewer, European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT), European Nature Information System (EUNIS), Forest Information System for Europe (FISE), ENI SEIS II (non-core activity), Industrial Emission Portal European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (e-PRTR), Invasive Alien Species data (IAS), Natura 2000 Network Viewer, NOISE Observation & Information Service, Water Information System for Europe – Freshwater and Water Information System for Europe – Marine

during the evaluation period) the data for direct submission to the UN Ozone Secretariat. Other international commitments include the EU emissions inventory reports under the LRTAP Convention, which collate and aggregate data from member countries to provide an EU-level output, the PRTR Protocol, and Minamata Convention on Mercury.

4.1.1.2. Coordinate EIONET

One of the core tasks of the Agency as referred in Art.2(a) of the Regulation is *'to establish, in cooperation with the Member States, and coordinate the network (EIONET)*' and Art.2(d) '*to advise individual MS on the development, establishment and expansion of their systems for the monitoring of environmental measures*'. The expected result is to have an active network that effectively collects data and co-creates knowledge.

Summary of findings

Over the evaluation period, the EEA achieved the expected results by coordinating the network and ensuring engagement, knowledge sharing and capacity building at country level. The factual evidence collected shows that the EIONET is well established, largely fulfils its functions and that the cooperation with the EEA was effective. The EEA organised regular meetings with high level of attendance, workshops, specific capacity building activities and ensured the availability of IT tools.

The ongoing EIONET modernisation was generally seen as inclusive and effective by the EEA and national representatives. It introduced a new EIONET structure, upgrading its operational capacity, aligning the areas of expertise with policy priorities and engaging more pluri-disciplinary experts in line with the EGD cross-cutting approach. An ETC review was also part of this modernisation. Shortcomings were identified: existing KPIs do not measure the overall performance of Eionet and there is no KPI for ETCs. The ongoing modernisation poses challenges that will need to be better assessed by the next evaluation: the division of roles between NFPs, EIONET Group leaders and Dataflow coordinators (challenging for small countries), the variable progress of implementation between countries, the difficulties to engage pluri-disciplinary experts and the increased complexity of coordination.

Performance of EIONET

Since 2019, three key performance indicators (KPIs) measure the performance of EIONET (see table 6) consistently reflecting high score on core dataflows submission (apart in 2021 due to delays in data delivery and quality checks), Eionet meetings delivery and participants satisfaction. **However, these KPIs only partly measure the performance of Eionet. Appropriate metrics should be put in place to monitor and measure the overall performance of the overall reporting process handled in Reportnet, and statistics on the participation to Eionet meetings and consultation on the publications**. The EEA's 2021 publication on EIONET core data flows[38] provides additional evidence, indicating notable improvements in timeliness and data quality, with an increased number of countries

[38] EIONET core data flows 2021 — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

surpassing the 90% target compared to previous years (15 in 2021 against 12 in 2016). This progress can be attributed to the implementation of well-structured data flows, clear procedures and robust quality assurance processes with shared responsibilities between EEA and EIONET (including dataflow helpdesk, dataflow reporter groups, dataflow expert groups, National Dataflow Coordinators Group and EIONET Group on Data and Digitisation).

In addition to these activities, the EEA has undertaken supplementary efforts to bolster EIONET, including enhancing the Reportnet system (discussed below), providing comprehensive helpdesk support, and conducting thematic webinars (e.g., on air pollutant emissions, air quality, transport and noise). These initiatives aimed to streamline data reporting processes and to provide essential assistance to member countries.

Table 6: EIONET KPIs 2019-2021

Performance Objective	No.	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	KPI measurement	Baseline (2019)	Target	2019	2020	2021
EIONET	7*	EIONET Data submission	Annual performance EIONET core data flows	92%	90%	92%	96%	86%
EIONET	12	EIONET Meeting delivery	Delivery rate planned EIONET meetings	95%	90%	95%	100%	95%
EIONET	13	EIONET Satisfaction	Average participant satisfaction rating	95%	80%	95%	94%	93%

Eionet modernisation

The **ongoing modernisation of EIONET** prompted by the conclusions of the previous evaluation[39], seeks to enhance the network's flexibility and visibility at national level[40] while aligning with the objectives of the European Green Deal. The modernisation, launched by the MB in 2020, has involved extensive consultation and collaboration with member countries to redefine EIONET's structure and operations. Key aspects include: EIONET engagement including a **comprehensive mapping exercise** of national networks, **structural reforms** with a transition from administrative roles to more flexible functions within EIONET (NFPs coordinating the network at national level and with the EEA, EIONET Group leads coordinating the knowledge development and National Data Flow Coordinators), capacity building to empower member countries in leveraging EIONET effectively, Eionet visibility enhancement through broader engagement with multi-disciplinary experts.

While the modernisation is still ongoing, a **preliminary assessment** is presented, based mainly on the opinions of EEA staff, governance bodies and Eionet members, and the case study on Eionet modernisation. The modernisation efforts have made significant progress in aligning EIONET with the priorities outlined in the European Green Deal (EGD). It has

[39] The previous evaluation identified that the 'definition of stakeholders' roles within EIONET lacked clarity, that the 'annual planning process was not sufficiently transparent', and 'the need for better visibility of the various EIONET components and for enhanced cooperation with national bodies, including those that are not formally part of EIONET', cf. SWD(2018) 471 final, page 27 and 46.

[40] In the EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030's strategic objective to 'transform EIONET into a more flexible and innovative knowledge network, connecting better the strong country-level expertise to the European level' and to 'Foster more active engagement at the country level, through activities involving a diverse set of authorities, organisations and the public.'

fostered greater engagement and collaboration among member countries, promoting knowledge exchange and co-creation of solutions. Despite some initial resistance, the EIONET structural reforms were viewed positively, with benefits from a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities. EEA stakeholders welcomed the efforts to enhance EIONET's visibility, both within the environmental community and beyond and acknowledged the potential for broader engagement and recognition of EIONET's contributions.

Shortcomings have also been identified: NFPs expressed concerns that national perspectives were not fully considered during the modernisation. There were (albeit limited) criticisms that discussions about the structure of the new EIONET took precedence over practical considerations about its day-to-day functioning, potentially detracting from the effectiveness of the modernisation efforts. Variations in national structures and resource constraints pose obstacles to implementing the proposed changes, highlighting the need for ongoing support and guidance for member countries.

The Eionet modernisation included a **review of the ETCs**, crucial for providing expertise and producing technical reports on environmental topics. After a 'light' review in 2017, the decision was made to continue with the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) model, covering direct costs with a small overhead and national contributions (10% of funding). The second review led to the establishment of seven cross-cutting ETCs for 2022-2026, aligning with policy priorities and the Strategy (see also 3.6). Calls for proposals were launched in February 2021, resulting in consortia selection for six of the seven ETCs in June 2021. However, only one proposal was received for the ETC Biodiversity and Ecosystems, which was deemed insufficient. As a result, the existing ETCs on Biological Diversity and Inland, Coastal, and Marine Waters were extended for twelve months, with a new call for proposals published in December 2021. While there are currently no KPIs specifically for ETCs, their effectiveness can be inferred from indicators such as the number of involved experts (averaging around 550 annually) and the production of technical reports (approximately 45 per year). However, the linkage between ETCs and EEA publications is unclear and there is room for improvement in synergies. Additionally, there is a risk of losing expertise in key areas, such as the Birds and Habitats Directives and Natura 2000 sites, due to the reorganisation of the ETC on Biodiversity and Ecosystems. This should be closely monitored.

A significant improvement compared to the previous evaluation has been **the implementation of Reportnet 3**, improving the reporting infrastructure and the automation of data flows and quality control processes (see 3.6 and Annex 11). This has resulted (in combination with the new function of Eionet dataflows coordinators) in increased effectiveness of the reporting process, with future progress expected to simplify further the reporting burden at national level and enhance interoperability between the EEA and member countries' databases. As highlighted in 4.1.1.2, appropriate metrics should be defined to measure the overall performance of the reporting process through Reportnet.

Overall, while the modernisation of EIONET represents a significant step towards enhancing its effectiveness and relevance, continued monitoring and evaluation will be essential to ensure successful implementation of reforms and address any emerging issues or concerns.

4.1.1.3. Conduct regular assessments on the state of the environment

In line with Article 2(h) of the Regulation, every five years the EEA is expected to provide a comprehensive assessment of the state of the European environment through the SOER.

Summary of findings

The expected result was met when the EEA published the SOER 2020 in December 2019, slightly in advance of the initial publication date to align with the EGD and new Commission mandate. The comprehensive assessment has been praised extensively by stakeholders and is considered one of the building blocks of the current EU legislative term. It was effective in terms of timing of the report's release. This could lead to strategically align the future SOER releases with the mandate of the European Commission and European Parliament to have a stronger and deeper impact on the setting of environmental and climate priorities.

The preparations and publication of the SOER 2020 in December 2019 was well aligned with the EGD adoption. The report not only provided a thorough analysis of the state of the environment, but also provided a deeper look into future prospects. The decision to anticipate the publication (initially foreseen for 2020) allowed it to usefully **feed into the preparation of the new Commission mandate and in shaping of priorities under the EGD**. The document is cited on the first page of the EGD Communication as overall evidence justifying the need to take ambitious action. As reported in the 2019 CAAR, several policymakers referred to SOER 2020 as the "main evidence underpinning the EGD proposal". Frans Timmermans (Executive Vice President of the European Commission) stated that the SOER was "perfectly timed to give us the added impetus we need as we start a new five-year cycle in the European Commission and as we prepare to present the EGD." EU and national stakeholders highlighted the role played by the SOER (and its underlying data) in shaping the narrative of the EGD, but also how it helped gathering stakeholder engagement, including within the Commission, in the lead-up to the new policies.

These opinions are underpinned by positive data on media outreach. According to the SOER 2020 case study, the publication received substantial media attention, especially after its launch in December 2019. As a result of active outreach and dissemination activities, the report generated over 6,000 media entries within the first week, as well as coverage in global and national news outlets, particularly in Belgium, Germany, Spain, the UK and the US.[41] From December 2019 to end of November 2020 there were a total of 5,688 posts likes and comments on social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 2,716 post shares, 13,758 post clicks and 69,339 post video views. However, some of the planned outreach activities in 2020 were curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing the EEA to cancel in-person events and limiting media attention. The SOER thus did not achieve its full visibility potential.

As discussed in section 4.1.1.1, the SOER 2020 not only influenced the shaping of the EGD but also contributed to developing EGD policies and legislation. All stakeholder groups

[41] European Environment Agency, Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019

emphasised its significant impact, considering it the most influential output of the EEA and Eionet, and a key reference for EU policymakers. Member States also value the SOER as it offers a basis for benchmarking against other countries. A survey conducted by the EEA in 2020 revealed that 42% of respondents had recently consulted the SOER, with particularly high rates among national civil servants (47%) and EU civil servants (54%).

In terms of process, EEA staff described the preparation of the SOER as inclusive but rigorous. It involves collaboration with Eionet and engagement of numerous experts and scientists from all member countries (see 4.1.2.2). Commission services are also consulted throughout the development stages. While the previous evaluation noted limited evidence of the SOER 2015 informing policy developments, it highlighted the need for alignment with the EAP cycle. While aligning this is challenging due to differing time spans, synchronising with the EU political cycle, which lasts five years, could amplify its influence, as demonstrated by SOER 2020's example. This adjustment should be considered for future releases.

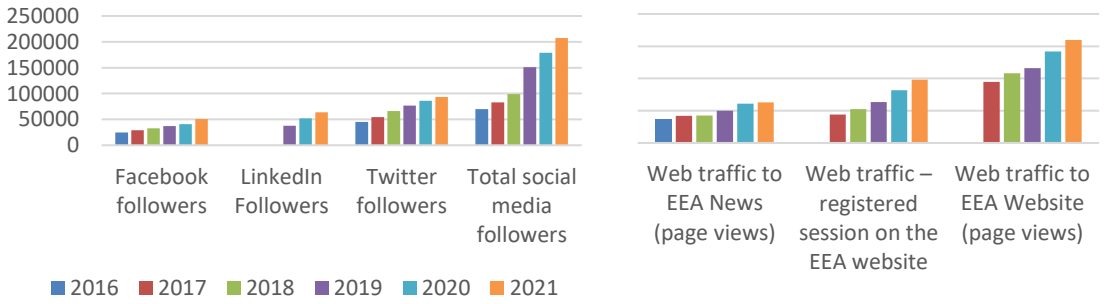
4.1.1.4. Inform the public by ensuring access to environmental and climate data

In line with Article 2(m) of the Regulation, the EEA is expected to disseminate environmental information to the general public, to allow EU citizens to be informed about the state of the environment and climate in Europe.

Summary of findings

The evidence collected by the evaluation shows that the EEA has disseminated information primarily through publications, website content, social media, and other media channels. The EEA has been proactive in ensuring data and knowledge products accessibility, implementing communication plans, maintaining web content and media relations, along with increasing social media presence and improving the corporate website. The Agency has also contributed to the development of various platforms and websites for data accessibility. EIONET members have contributed to dissemination of EEA products at national level, although there could be more consistent efforts in that sense. While not being the primary objective of dissemination efforts, the outreach and engagement of the general public is not easy to assess.

Figure 6: EEA social media followers and web traffic 2016-2021



A survey in 2017 and assessments in 2020 of online presence and products review informed improvements in the communication strategy and the redesign of the Agency's website. The 2017 survey showed strong support for both traditional 'key' reports and shorter, innovative

briefings, leading to a shift towards shorter briefings during the evaluation period (see 4.1.1.1). The 2020 assessment highlighted the effectiveness of the EEA and EIONET, with over three quarters of respondents mentioning recent use of EEA reports or assessments, and over half accessing data or maps. They appreciated the quality and scope of EEA outputs, with 83% preferring the EEA website for engagement. However, areas for improvement in website coherence and user friendliness, particularly the search function were identified, echoing criticism of difficulty in finding and accessing EEA data, including 'primary data' collected from member countries. To address these issues, the EEA adopted a **new communication framework for 2021-2030**, aiming to enhance partnerships, communication, and innovation to make environmental data more accessible and improve website functionality. While it is too early to assess the implementation, stakeholder feedback suggests these efforts are promising, especially for EU policymakers.

The EEA developed and maintained various platforms and websites over the course of the evaluation to ensure data accessibility to stakeholders and to the general public. To increase the outreach, **there has been a shift towards more digital products favoured by these digital platforms**. For example, the EEA presented its work on protected areas (Natura 2000 and Nationally Designated Areas) in the form of a digital report as part of the upgraded BISE, developed the European Air Quality index and app (see 4.1.1.5). The CAAR 2021 mentions several digital knowledge products such as the European Climate and Health Observatory launched in 2021 and the European Climate Data Explorer launched within the Climate-ADAPT, as well additional interactive web reports on air quality and climate hazards.

Commission stakeholders stressed the need to improve the communication to non-expert audience with clear messages and fact-based evidence, visuals and interactive tools. Furthermore, a limited number of NFPs underlined that EIONET contributed to the visibility of EEA products by publishing EEA publications on their national institution's website. However, this is not a common practice among all countries, and it could be more systematic. The fact that most publications are available in English limits their uptake at national level.

The increased number of social media followers indicates that the EEA effectively disseminated information and outputs to the public, however it does not provide conclusive evidence of their engagement. The EEA could consider the potential benefits of additional efforts to reach the public beyond the main target audience under the current communication framework to 2030 (i.e. EU and national policymakers and experts), including a targeted analysis on how the products are received and perceived.

4.1.1.5. Make full use of digitalisation for improving operations

In line with the conclusions and recommendations of the previous evaluation, the EEA was expected to make a better use of the potential of modern digital technologies and further integrate novel data sources into its process, especially Copernicus data.

Summary of findings

During the evaluation period, the EEA made noteworthy strides in digitalisation. Despite handling exponentially growing data, the EEA has managed to maintain and improve internal data processes and systems. The digital infrastructure was improved with the launch of Reportnet 3.0 and novel data sources like Copernicus started to be incorporated. The EEA has also been utilising digitalisation to create more interactive outputs such as data maps and apps. With the adoption of the EEA digitalisation framework in 2021, further efforts to harness digitalisation are expected.

EEA is considered to have made sufficient use of digitalisation within its resources, although stakeholders from the Commission and Scientific Committee believe that there is room for more progress, especially in incorporating cutting-edge technologies and data sources, and improving the alignment of CLMS datasets with environmental policy need and their access/exploration for end users.

Several changes have been implemented since the last evaluation to improve the effectiveness in the way the Agency uses digital technologies. This is directly related to Strategic Objective 4 of the Strategy to "*embrace digitalisation, including new technologies, big data, artificial intelligence and earth observation that will complement and potentially replace established information sources to better support decision making*." Specifically, the use of novel digital technologies and new data sources is also intended to improve the timeliness and granularity of data, to facilitate a shift towards more dynamic monitoring and improved benchmarking.

In line with the Strategy, **a Digitalisation Framework** centred around four action clusters (cf. 3.9) was adopted in 2021. The implementation of this framework will be assessed in the next evaluation. During this evaluation period, the continuous maintenance and improvements to internal processes and systems, such as improvements in standardisation and automation of data streams has allowed the EEA to handle an increasing amount of data, in particular thanks to the modernisation of Reportnet (see 4.1.1.2). Compared to the previous evaluation, the dataflows handled internally by EEA increased from around 30 in 2016 to around 70 in 2018 and approximately 120 in 2021 (see also 4.1.2.2). Efforts to improve data management led to a clearer definition across data flows, resulting in a separation between data custodians (responsible for managing data securely and implementing business rules) and data stewards (responsible for ensuring the operational flow of data collection, processing, and dissemination). This involves establishing and managing technical processes to ensure operational data flows for collection, processing, and dissemination. In addition, a Data Management post was established in 2021 to improve the coordination of dataflows, serving also as the first contact point for the EIONET and the Commission. The CAAR 2021 indicates that the EEA data infrastructure, including the underlying general ICT infrastructure, was modernised through outsourcing key cloud components and strengthening cybersecurity.

During the evaluated period there was a shift towards integrating new digital solutions in outputs, as reflected in the production of more interactive data viewers and interactive data maps. There were enhancements to the EEA's website to improve the effectiveness of EEA information services in 2018 – that year, the EEA website managed over 5.2 million sessions, an increase compared to the number of sessions managed in 2017. The **Air Quality Index** site

was launched at the Clean Air Forum in November 2017 to improve public access to air quality information in near real-time. It was the most visited page in 2018 with around 10,000 unique visitors per week. Moreover, the European Air Quality Index App was developed by the EEA and launched in 2021 to make air quality data more accessible.

The EEA targets novel data sources, for example citizen science data, in the MapMyTree[42] and Marine Litter Watch[43] projects, and integrating Copernicus data into its products. A notable example is the use of data from the Copernicus Land Monitoring Service (CLMS) to support the implementation of new data flows under the LULUCF. The Agency also produced several land and soil-related indicators based on CLMS, CORINE Land Cover country fact sheets for the period 2000-2018, and change analysis for the EEA's member and cooperating countries in the format of interactive dashboards[44]. The success of these outputs is evidenced by the large number of visitors to the webpage hosting the link to country fact sheets, which totalled 829,000 sessions in 2017. The EEA web map servers (DiscoMap) received more than 175,000,000 requests to view maps produced by the Agency over 2017. However, there is margin for improvement. Issues linked to insufficient timeliness, frequency and comparability of datasets produced by the CLMS were flagged by Commission stakeholders, whereas the Copernicus Climate Service provides more relevant datasets. The CLMS products do not always comply with policymakers' needs; moreover, their uptake is not substantiated by quantitative indicators. Further review should be considered in the context of the Copernicus programme to better align the CLMS portfolio with the environmental policy needs, especially in light of the resources invested. This should be part of a broader reflection that takes into account IT investment needs (which are deemed the main obstacles towards future progress) and capacity building.

4.1.2. Efficiency

The analysis of efficiency explores the relationship between inputs (costs) and achieved results (benefits) in order to establish whether costs are proportionate with respect to benefits. It analyses efficiency in task implementation, looking at relations between inputs and outputs (including comparison with similar organisations), adequacy and allocation of resources, and the governance mechanisms in place for programming and monitoring the Agency. Finally, it explores simplification and burden reduction potential. The evaluation faced limitations regarding quantification of benefits and the estimation of EEA/EIONET contributions to environmental policies and impact on the environment (see 1.3).

Summary of findings

Efficiency is difficult to gauge. Despite improvements on governance, where the MB now plays a more strategic role, limitations are still present, and a comprehensive assessment is hindered by data limitations. Costs have risen but benefits are difficult to monetise, making cost-benefit analyses inconclusive. Overall, there is some evidence of efficiency gain but there

[42] MapMyTree (europa.eu)
[43] Marine Litter Watch (europa.eu)
[44] European Environment Agency Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2020

are also remaining shortcomings and a need for more robust metrics and monitoring system to measure the performance. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and internal controls require updates for better performance monitoring. A lack of detailed resource allocation data, the need for a comprehensive strategy for efficiency gains, and potential improvements in database interoperability and technology investment are issues to be addressed. Specific areas however, such as data handling, networking activities and the streamlined SOER 2020 process, demonstrate clear efficiency gains compared to the previous one.

4.1.2.1. Costs and benefits

'Direct' costs are estimated by the financial resources of the Agency. The EEA is a 'no fees' Agency funded by the EU general budget mainly (64% through the EU contribution and 28% from 'non-core' revenues financed by other EU programmes) and by non-EU member countries (8% by EFTA countries[45], Switzerland, and Türkiye). The 'cooperating countries' do not contribute financially to the costs. The other stakeholders (citizens, NGOs, business, scientists) benefit from the free access to EEA environmental knowledge, in line with the principle of public access to environmental information[46]. As highlighted in section 3.4 the 'core budget' increased by 24% during the evaluation period, linked to new tasks while the 'non-core budget' decreased by 54% due to the variability of agreements.

The **'indirect' costs** include:

- 'Indirect' costs for Member countries participating in EIONET for the coordination activities of the National Focal Points and data coordinators (estimated to a maximum of 1 FTE/yr./country according to the interviewed NFPs), as well as in-kind contribution of national experts to EEA and EIONET products. The previous 2018 evaluation estimated these costs to approximately 15 million EUR per year but with a wide range of uncertainty (7-22 Mio EUR), due to the limitation of the method (variability of EIONET cost estimates at national level). Given the uncertainties, a similar calculation was not repeated.
- 'Shared projects' costs of approximately 6.7 million EUR, funded by DG ENV and CLIMA for specific databases and IT platforms developed and operated by EEA.

Annex 4 provides an overview of benefits identified under effectiveness across the five specific objectives and during the stakeholder consultation. The analysis focused on direct benefits from EEA and EIONET activities. The expanded scope, particularly with the EGD, and increased number of dataflows and outputs with high delivery rates along with improved dissemination (including increased social media followers, web traffic on the EEA website, and downloads) indicate growing benefits for stakeholders during the evaluation period. For EU policymakers, the main benefits include data and knowledge supporting policy developments, reporting obligations and assessments of EU environmental and climate legislation, and access to data through the EEA web platform and information systems.

[45] Excluding Switzerland, which pays a separated fee.

[46] Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC

National stakeholders benefit from comparable data and information on the state of the European environment for benchmarking country performance, exchanges of knowledge and best practices through EIONET and capacity building. Additionally, the reporting platform improvement (Reportnet 3) facilitates data collection and reduces reporting burdens. Citizens and other stakeholders (e.g. NGOs, businesses, scientists) benefit from open access to environmental data and knowledge, increasing public awareness of environmental issues.

4.1.2.2. Efficiency in tasks implementation

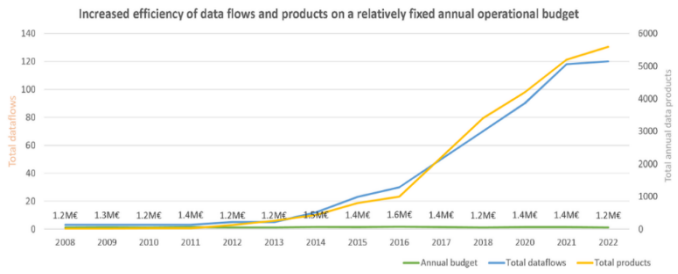
Comparing costs and outputs reveals the agency's overall efficiency (table 8). Costs per output (including publications and other products generated by the EEA) decreased by 14% between 2017 and 2020, indicating improved efficiency. Between the two evaluation periods, the average number of outputs per year rose by 50%, while costs rose by 26%. However, costs per publication increased by 14% during the evaluation period and by 27% between the two periods, underscoring the need for detailed data on publication costs to understand this trend.

Table 7: variation of Inputs vs Outputs during the evaluation period

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL 2017-2021	Annual average 2017-2021	Variation 2017-2021
Number of DELIVERED OUTPUTS	157	170	244	209	n.a.	780	195,0	33%
Number of DELIVERED PUBLICATIONS	45	58	54	61	49	267	53,4	9%
TOTAL COSTS (Core budget) Mio €	41.6	43	45.2	47.6	51.4	228.9	45.8	24%
TOTAL STAFF	213	213	216	224	240	-	221.2	13%
average COSTS/output (€)	264.718	253.343	185.300	227.804	-	227.504	227.504	-14%
average COSTS/publication (€)	923.573	742.557	837.282	780.509	1.049.351	857.197	857.197	14%

It was difficult to find clear evidence of efficiency gains in the programming documents. Since 2020, the Agency has incorporated a dedicated section on "Strategy for efficiency gains", but it is quite broadly focusing on increased use of Commission services and systems, cost-saving measures through joint procurement and electronic processes, and reductions in travel-related expenses. Only one reference was found on the streamlined reporting under the Industrial Emission Directive that resulted in staff reduction from 6 to 2.

Figure 7: Comparative evolution of EEA operational budget and dataflows and products



Efficiency gains were identified in the evaluation notably in data handling, reporting obligations, and production of SOER 2020. The introduction of Reportnet 3.0 facilitated streamlined reporting processes (see also 4.1.1.1), enabling the Agency to manage a larger volume of dataflows (from approximately 30 in 2016 to 120 in 2021) and increased support to reporting obligations with relatively stable resources.

The production of SOER 2020 was described in its case study as an advanced and complex process, requiring collaboration across different units and programs within the Agency. While challenging to estimate cost-efficiency quantitatively due to the involvement of various agency groups, cross-cutting cooperation between different groups and with EIONET was highlighted as particularly efficient. Clear responsibilities were defined among team members, leading to effective resource planning.

Additionally, the emergence of COVID-19 necessitated innovative solutions to overcome logistical challenges. Travel restrictions prompted the agency to explore alternative meeting formats, resulting in significant cost savings associated with reduced travel (-75% in 2020 and -83% in 2021). These savings were redirected to other operational needs, underscoring the Agency's adaptive and resourceful approach to addressing unforeseen circumstances. During stakeholder consultations, feedback on the EEA's efficiency was generally positive, with EEA staff acknowledging some tangible gains in data handling and reporting procedures thanks to training and support provided. Particularly, EU policymakers praised the Agency's responsiveness in adapting to changing circumstances and its commitment to delivering "value for money" (i.e., with benefits exceeding the costs). However, opinions varied regarding the extent of efficiency gains achieved and overall effectiveness of resource allocation. It was emphasised the importance of long-term planning and strategic resource management to enhance synergies (i.e., optimisation of resources across activities).

In sum, while some efficiency gains were identified, lack of evidence remains a challenge in conclusive findings. **More granular data and a comprehensive strategy on efficiency gains** embracing various aspects (resources use, administration, communication, publications, data management, reporting, general operations, networking etc.) would be needed. This is crucial in a context of limited resources for justifying additional resource for new tasks.

4.1.2.3. Adequacy of resources, efficiency in resource allocation and prioritisation

Adequacy of resources

Austerity measures led to decreasing core resources in 2017-2019, while the EGD introduced new tasks and responsibilities post-2019, accompanied by additional resources (+27 staff). These resources, not planned in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, were offset from the LIFE programme[47] to maintain budget stability and represented around 4% of the 2021 LIFE procurement envelope[48]. However, the impact of successive reinforcements on LIFE (for new EGD tasks) became more substantial post-2021. By summer 2023, they represented about 20% of the overall LIFE procurement envelope.

Mixed views were expressed on resources adequacy. Interviewees across different groups welcomed that additional tasks came with additional staff, stressing however that the EEA

[47] REGULATION (EU) 2021/783 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 29 April 2021 establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE), and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013

[48] at least 85% of the LIFE budgetary envelope is allocated to grants or projects carried out in MS. Therefore, the additional resources allocated to the Agency had to be offset from the remaining 15% (called 'procurement envelope')

was operating at its limit. Specifically, EEA interviewees highlighted challenges with the use of contractual agents, citing issues with long-term continuity of activities and difficulties in recruiting agents with competitive salaries. From the Commission's viewpoint, successive EEA reinforcements pose challenges in the context of limited resources and further efforts are required to prioritise tasks and achieve efficiency gains.

A review of web views revealed that 15% of publications with over 10,000 views account for 62% of total views (see Annex 8). These include flagship reports (e.g. SOER 2020, Trends and projections in Europe, annual air quality, environmental indicators, European bathing water), along with publications of general interest (e.g. on human health, emerging chemical risks, circular economy). However, a significant proportion reached a limited audience, suggesting opportunities for efficiency improvements by prioritising publications.

Efficiency in the allocation of resources

Staff allocation per strategic activity remained relatively stable from 2017-2020 (table 8), with around 40% allocated to informing policy implementation and assessing systemic challenges (SA1 and SA2). The allocation in 2021 reflects better alignment with EGD priorities.

Table 8: Staff time by strategic activity in 2017-2021

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th><th>2020</th><th>2021</th></tr>
<tr><td>SA1: Informing policy implementation</td><td>31%</td><td>30%</td><td>32%</td><td>31%</td><td rowspan="5">N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td>SA 2: Assessing systemic challenges</td><td>8%</td><td>9%</td><td>11%</td><td>8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>SA 3: Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use</td><td>28%</td><td>28%</td><td>25%</td><td>26%</td></tr>
<tr><td>SA 4.1: EEA Management: Governance and management</td><td>20%</td><td>21%</td><td>21%</td><td>23%</td></tr>
<tr><td>SA 4.2: EEA Management: Administration</td><td>13%</td><td>12%</td><td>11%</td><td>12%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Biodiversity and ecosystems</td><td colspan="4" rowspan="5">N/A</td><td>29%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Climate change mitigation and adaptation</td><td>30%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Human health and the environment</td><td>11%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Resource use and the circular economy</td><td>8%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sustainability, trends, prospects and responses</td><td>22%</td></tr>
</table>

During the stakeholder consultation, EEA Senior Management mentioned that **a number of activities were stopped during the austerity period.** However, **evidence of task de-prioritisation or efficient resource allocation is limited**, with few references in programming documents. The CAAR 2017 cites the cancellation of the energy efficiency index update. The SPD 2019-2021 mentions that with **staff cuts in 2018 some 'peripheral' activities were phased out or reduced without impacting core activities** such as some international activities (e.g. with the Central Asian region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Latin America), partnerships with specific regional conventions or EU Macro-Regions, the EU-Arctic file and sustainable tourism.

Balance between operational and administrative staff

The imbalance between operational and administrative and support staff (IT, communication, strategy) is a persistent concern raised by EEA and discussed in the MB. While operational

staff increased, support functions saw a relative decrease (from 20% in 2014 to less than 14% at present), leading to increased workload for support staff. The lack of administrative and support staff poses challenges in maintaining operational efficiency. This is because the majority of the additional staff were assigned to operational roles, leading to an imbalance and placing greater demands on support functions.

Staff well-being

Staff well-being emerged as a significant issue, exacerbated by the pandemic and increasing workloads. The creation of a staff well-being coordinator post in 2017 aimed to address these concerns. However, decreasing staff satisfaction reflected in the results of the EEA's annual Staff Engagement Surveys in 2017-2021, and cases of burnout underscore the need for further measures to support staff well-being.

4.1.2.4. Comparison with similar organisations

The 2020 EU Court of Auditors (CoA) special report titled "Future of EU agencies – Potential for more flexibility and cooperation"[49] categorised agencies into four groups based on their primary tasks and responsibilities[50]. The EEA was compared with three other agencies also falling under the group "concerned with research, data collection, and analysis aimed at supporting EU institutions and Member States develop evidence-based policies": the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in Thessaloniki, Greece (Cedefop), the European Institute for Gender Equality in Vilnius, Lithuania (EIGE), and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in Vienna, Austria (FRA).

An analysis of information extracted from their CAARs 2021 and the CoA 2021 annual audit report on the EU agencies revealed that the EEA had the highest costs per staff member, albeit lower than FRA when calculated based on the core budget which is more appropriate considering the specificities of EEA's 'non-core' budget, particularly the Copernicus budget largely covering procurement of external services with few internal staff. This difference can also be attributed to varying living costs, with Copenhagen having relatively high property and staff costs compared to the other agencies. However, this analysis is somewhat crude as it does not consider the differences in the nature of the agencies' work.

Table 9: Comparison of staff costs with other agencies

Agency	2021 staff	2021 publications	Costs €/publication	Costs €/staff member
EEA	230	49 publications	€1,049,351/pub (2021) € 857,197/pub (2012-2021)	€282,173 (total budget) €223,557 (core budget)
CEDEFOP	108	40 publications	€462,500/pub	€171,296

[49] https://www.eca.europa.eu/lists/ecadocuments/sr20_22/sr_future_of_eu_agencies_en.pdf

[50] A first group of agencies support internal market, health and environmental objectives related to registrations, certifications and authorisations at EU level (e.g. CPVO, EASA, ECHA, ERA, EUIPO, EFSA and EMA)
A second group, with mandates in the areas of security and justice have more operational responsibilities and help Member States by coordinating joint activities (e.g. CEPOL, EASO, Eurojust, Europol and Frontex).
A third group have mainly rule-making and supervisory responsibilities (e.g. ACER, EBA, EIOPA and ESMA, which prepare technical standards for the energy and financial sector and ensure common supervisory practice across the EU).
A final group are mainly concerned with research, data collection and analysis aimed at supporting EU institutions and Member States develop evidence-based policies (e.g. Cedefop, EIGE and FRA).

EIGE	42	23 publications	€378,260/pub	€207,143
FRA	101	516 (42 main publications + 474 others)	€592,857 (main) €48,256 (all)	€246,535

Additionally, an analysis of publication costs indicates that the EEA had a much higher cost per publication compared to the other agencies in 2021, although it delivered fewer publications than in previous years. However, this analysis overlooks factors such as publication length, complexity, and total outputs of the agencies. As outlined by the Court of Auditors in its special report, the comparison between agencies is difficult: "*as the agencies' activities are so diverse, it is not possible to compare their performance and KPIs**. It is also very difficult to compare dissimilar agencies by efficiency**. None of the agencies' reports includes a comparison with similar national or international bodies*."

Comparisons with other organisations are also challenging due to differences in mandates. For instance, the German Federal Environment Protection Agency has significantly more employees (1800 employees) but focuses on data collection from measuring stations and businesses, as well as legislation enforcement, tasks not within EEA's mandate. Similarly, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has higher costs per staff (ca. 1 Mio €/yr. corresponding to an annual budget of 436 Mio €/yr. for 431 staff) but primarily focuses on global policy setting and awareness, with limited report production and data collection.

4.1.2.5. Adequacy of the governance structure and internal programming, monitoring and reporting mechanisms

Adequacy of governance

The MB composition generally adheres to the Common Approach on decentralised agencies. During the evaluation period, the MB saw significant turnover, with representation from ministries, national environmental protection agencies, and other organisations.

Following the previous evaluation, a committee was convened to review the rules of procedure (ROP) and working methods[51], although no new version was officially adopted. Measures have been undertaken to streamline decision-making, such as outsourcing decisions to the Bureau. However, the goal of enhancing the MB's capacity for strategic decision-making is only partially achieved. Suggestions from MB members during the consultation included establishing mechanisms, possibly facilitated by MB Vice-Chairs, to delve into issues like budget assessments, prioritisation and performance discussions. There were also proposals for tools like electronic dashboards for retrieving day-to-day EEA business information (published reports, emerging topics).

SC members had a positive assessment of their role and the rotation principle, whilst suggesting the EEA could engage more and provide feedback on their opinions.

Mechanisms for programming, monitoring and reporting

[51] Doc. EEA/MB/83/06

The MAWP 2014-2020 offered a consistent framework, while the Strategy took a more holistic approach, developed through wide consultation within the EEA's structures and aligned with the EGD, 8th EAP and the SDGs.

While the SPD and CAAR remain key for annual programming and reporting, their detail decreased in 2021, complicating assessment, as noted in the related Commission Opinion [52].

The monitoring and reporting framework present serious shortcomings that limit the current assessment and availability of information. Activity-based monitoring is insufficient, the outputs being mainly assessed in terms of their delivery or lack thereof, without measuring the performance of the underlying generative process. More **granular information on the allocation of resources per sub-activity area, including resources invested for developing the outputs (publications, indicators, databases) should be provided for properly assessing prioritisation, synergies, and efficiency gains** (see 4.1.2.2 and 4.1.2.3). The categorisation of publications should be reviewed and consistently applied for prioritising the outputs (e.g. according to their response to legal obligations, political priorities or EEA own initiative). It also includes information on resources invested for the publication of products, the quantification of impacts achieved in support to EU and national policies, the stakeholders' uptake of EEA products (including Copernicus), the consistent tracking of policy monitoring activities, outreach and engagement with the general public. The EEA and Eionet should keep and regularly provide a consistent overview on the number of reporting obligations handled, as well as a quantification of the level of involvement and resources. Specific focus should be given to monitoring the preparation of the SOER, with different EEA departments involved and contributions from member countries. Another important aspect to be followed is the consultation process on draft reports, which is decentralised and does not offer a combined overview of consultations with Eionet and the Commission services. The mechanism to monitor the planning and execution should be improved (see 4.1.3.1).

The monitoring of Eionet activities is not optimal. Costs related to the operation of the Network should be further integrated into the monitoring and reporting for an overview of the total resources invested, including countries contributions. The overall performance of the reporting process, and not only dataflows delivery, should be measured and reported. The same applies to the ETCs. While the MB designates and review the ETCs, there is no formal mechanism for adopting their annual action plans and monitoring their activities, the link between the ETC and EEA publications, and the extent to which ETCs outputs are used.

Since the introduction of KPIs in 2019, the EEA has addressed concerns raised in the 2018 Evaluation Support Study regarding unquantifiable KPIs. However, the **current KPIs are inadequate for monitoring various activity areas and not fully aligned with the Strategy**. Strategic Objectives like the EIONET modernisation and leveraging data, technology and digitalization remain uncovered. Additionally, the ECA 2020 report stressed the importance of linking the agency performance with EU policy contributions. For that, there is a need for KPIs on reporting obligations and the use of EEA knowledge/data in policy-making processes

[52] C/2020/7133

(see 4.1.1.1). These limitations underscore the necessity for the MB to review the KPI framework, incorporating specific metrics tailored for the ED to assess performance and contributions to EEA objectives, in line with the elements above.

The previous evaluation underlined that CAARs lacked information on **internal control systems**. The adoption of a new internal control framework in 2017 improved this. However, assessments in 2020 and 2021 revealed partial non-compliance in control activities and information and communication, largely due to Covid-19 impact, necessitating urgent action.

4.1.2.6. Potential for simplification and burden reduction

As highlighted in previous sections and Annex 4, efficiency gains have been achieved during the evaluation period in data management, reporting processes (with Reportnet 3) and publications, digital procurement and recruitment procedures, as well as online meetings and teleworking. Further efficiency gains and reduction of operating costs are expected from the full implementation of the Digitalisation Framework 2021-2030, in particular:

- migration of all dataflows to Reportnet 3 and advanced functionalities will facilitate further the collaboration in design, standardisation and configuration of dataflows, opening up to the system-to-system transfer of data. It will lower the time and costs of data flow handling and processing. Further simplification and burden reduction for MS is also expected by enhanced interoperability, enabling direct access to national databases.
- implementation of data intelligence tools and data analysis platforms, where 'heavy' computation and data analysis tasks (using machine learning or AI) can be done in a cloud environment, is expected to improve existing data management. It will facilitate the use of 'big data' (Copernicus data, citizen science) in the monitoring of environmental policies.
- exploring the potential of Copernicus for reducing reporting burden.
- the newly established ETC DI (Data Integration and digitalisation) is expected to play a crucial role in streamlining operational processes and enhancing member countries capacities, which represents additional areas for simplification and efficiency gains.
- standardisation of IT tools moving away from tailored development is also expected to improve efficiency by enabling non-technical users to create or manage an increasing amount of interactive data products such as map viewers, story maps, data dashboards, data viewers, while keeping the same IT budget and staff.
- shift from a decentralised data handling across ETCs towards a centralised EEA-hosted data management platform will reduce inefficiency in data transfers, different tools, silos, lack of data lineage. It will provide a collaborating working environment (the 'common workspace') for EEA staff, consultants and ETCs that can contribute to the same technical environment, thus improving operations. It can also facilitate cross-thematic integration.

However, EEA staff identified resource constraints, particularly in IT infrastructure and digital skills, as key challenges. The implementation of the Digitalisation strategy requires investments in IT infrastructure, enhancing staff skills through digital literacy, targeted training and capacity building, and fostering collaboration with external partners in the digital

ecosystem. A capacity building plan is also essential to ensure effective adoption and use of digital technologies across the Eionet network.

4.1.3. Coherence

The EGD prompted an increasing demand for environmental knowledge from the European Commission, with the EEA taking on new work e.g. in relation to LULUCF, the Drinking Water Directive, Water Reuse and Invasive Alien Species, sustainable finance (Taxonomy), the Governance of the Energy Union, and implementation of the 8th EAP. The expansion concerned not only ENV and CLIMA, but other DGs as well: in 2021 the Agency entered a 3-year agreement with RTD on EuroGEO, a 4-year agreement with SANTE for the European Climate and Health Observatory and a 3-year agreement with REGIO to cover regional and urban environmental indicators. Consequences of the extending scope are analysed below.

Summary of findings

The EEA maintains strong internal and external coherence, particularly in its collaboration with countries through Eionet for reporting and knowledge production. Relationships with the Commission, especially DGs represented within the MB are generally positive, marked by a clear division of roles. This is the case especially of CLIMA, Eurostat and RTD. Challenges arise with the expanding scope of the EEA's work, especially affecting the coordination with DG ENV due to the complex harmonisation of priorities vis-à-vis a growing stakeholder base. To manage the risks associated with expanding beyond its core tasks, the EEA should focus on synergising core and non-core activities. There is also a need to enhance coherence with the JRC to reduce overlaps, which are already addressed through improved cooperation.

4.1.3.1 External coherence

Coherence with the European Commission

Stakeholders, including Commission policymakers, EEA senior staff, and the MB, generally acknowledge the EEA's cooperative and coherent way of working with the Commission and other EU agencies regarding environmental and climate issues. However, concerns persist from a coordination perspective about clarity on roles and responsibilities, especially between knowledge provision and policymaking responsibilities.

DG ENV is the main user of EEA knowledge and support, together with DG CLIMA. As 'partner DG' it has a role of overall coordination between the Commission and the EEA. The collaboration is overall positive, although some challenges remain. **DG ENV plays a critical role as the partner DG, coordinating between the Commission and the EEA**, and representing the Commission in the MB alongside DG RTD. The collaboration is generally positive, although challenges remain due to the expanding scope and engagement with DGs.

An audit by the Internal Audit Service (IAS)[53] identified risks and recommended setting up mechanisms to monitor activities and enhance coordination. As a response, an Interservice Group (ISG) was established in February 2022, aiming to reinforce coherence and streamlined coordination. However, the complexity of coordination within the EGD, evidenced by the multitude of DGs represented in the ISG, underscores the need to consult DG ENV on additional support needs to ensure coherence with the EEA mandate and that they are not detrimental to the core tasks. Concerns were expressed by EEA staff and management who consider that DG ENV exceeds its role of partner DG and uses it to control the Agency. **However, in light of budgetary constraints it is essential to consider prioritisation, synergies and optimisation of resources in a more coordinated and strategic way**.

The EEA has a well-structured cooperation with **DG CLIMA that intensified with the EGD**, particularly in support to extended reporting obligations under revised climate legislation and climate adaptation initiatives (see details in Annex 9bis). Overall, DG CLIMA considers the EEA as flexible and adaptable. The EEA's forward-looking capacity is also appreciated. The EEA's timely and reliable data support DG CLIMA's legislative work effectively and efficiently, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities between the two entities. The EEA is primarily responsible for reporting and data handling, while DG CLIMA focuses on compliance assessment and legislative work. In response to the 2021 IAS audit, DG CLIMA developed an internal document on its relation with the EEA, aiming to enhance its internal coordination arrangements with the Agency and improve the synergies, coherence, and efficiency of working relations.

Cooperation with the **Joint Research Centre (JRC), DG RTD and Eurostat** (continued in the EEA regulation[54]) is essential to combine competences, foster knowledge integration, enhance synergies and avoid duplication. In the first half of the evaluation, this was addressed in the Environment Knowledge Community (EKC) established in 2015 to improve coordination and synergies on environmental knowledge between Commission services (DG ENV, CLIMA, Eurostat, JRC, RTD and AGRI in 2018) and the EEA. However, with the EGD, the EKC became less prominent and replaced by other coordination mechanisms.

Compared to the previous evaluation, collaboration with the JRC has improved but challenges remain. Each organisation has distinct roles, with the JRC focusing on scientific approaches including development of new methods and models, and the EEA concentrating on data collection, monitoring, assessment, and reporting. There are concrete examples of distinct areas of work, such as the JRC involvement on batteries and ecodesign for sustainable products and the EEA engagement (in collaboration with ECHA) on indicators under the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability. However, a one-size-fits-all approach cannot be applied, and the sharing of responsibilities should be fine tuned for common work areas. Examples of

[53] IAS.A3-2020-Y COMM-002, 25 November 2021

[54] Art 15.1 "The Agency shall actively seek the cooperation of other Community bodies and programmes, and notably the Joint Research Centre, the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) and the Community's environmental research and development programmes".

synergies and coherent collaboration are the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity[55], and the Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook initiative, with the EEA being responsible for monitoring and the JRC for the outlook. Further efforts have been made through dialogues at senior management level and exchanges to align respective work programmes. A successful example of mitigation was the setting up of Copernicus Steering and Working Groups between EEA, JRC, and DEFIS for streamlining collaboration and products. However, some overlaps persist, such as on biomass and the work on a consumption footprint. The JRC produces the indicator used in the Circular Economy and 8th EAP monitoring, but the EEA developed its own indicator, thus creating issues of methodology and coherence.

The EEA maintains coherent cooperation with EUROSTAT over many years. The EEA MB annually approves the EUROSTAT's work programme as outlined in the Regulation, ensuring alignment and addressing potential overlaps, such as on circular economy indicators. Facilitated access to data for stakeholders is one of EEA's future challenges, which can be achieved through further integration of its information platforms (see 4.1.1.1). In this context, interoperability of EEA, JRC and Eurostat data could lead to enhanced synergies and more coherent use of existing information.

Furthermore, collaboration with DG RTD and synergies with EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (Horizon Europe and Horizon 2020) are crucial. The EEA actively engages in bilateral meetings with RTD, discussing its contribution to Horizon Europe. Participation in research projects like HBM4EU and support on enhancing the access to in situ Earth observation data in support of climate change adaptation policies and activities (through an SLA signed with DG RTD) demonstrate the EEA's commitment to engage with the research community. However, there is a potential for enhanced synergies with past and ongoing research projects in line with Article 2(o) of the Regulation, and with the SC.

The EEA has a well-established cooperation with DG NEAR (through successive agreements in particular to support work with Western Balkan countries) and DEFIS (through the Copernicus delegation agreements) and has reinforced its relations with other DGs like DG ENER, SANTE, REGIO, AGRI, MOVE, MARE and GROW. The EEA efforts to promote their work have contributed to raising the profile of environmental issues with these DGs and have resulted in increasing demands and agreements.

Another remaining challenge is the consultation of Commission services on draft reports, indicators, and press releases prior to publication. Currently, this process is very decentralised, lacking a monitoring mechanism to oversee task planning and execution. Commission interviewees noted being occasionally unaware of consultations, leading to short-notice responses to meet deadlines. Moreover, the KPIs primarily focus on output delivery rather than generation, which should also be monitored.

Coherence with the other agencies

[55] https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/biodiversity/about_en

The EEA actively collaborates with other EU agencies, such as the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). With the EGD, the EEA has extended cooperation to more agencies and ensuring synergies (in particular with ECHA, EMA, EFSA and ECDC) became even more important. The EEA has been active in promoting collaboration within the EU's decentralised Agencies Network (EUAN), with the ED chairing the network during the evaluation period.

4.1.3.2 Internal coherence

Coherence between core and non-core activities

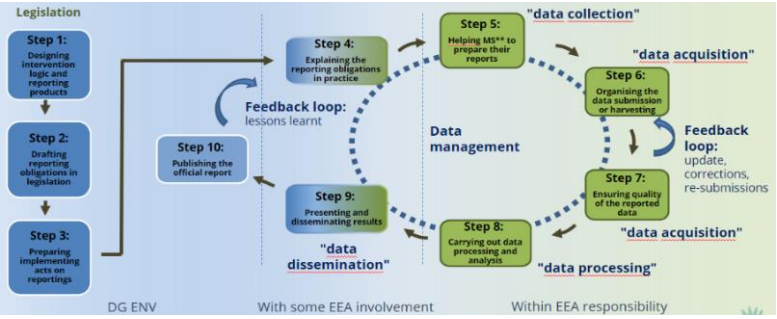
The EGD broadened the scope of EEA activities through agreements with different DGs (see Annex 11), yet coherence with core tasks outlined in the Regulation is crucial to make sure that the Agency fulfils its mandate (see 4.1.3.1). A positive example of coherence was the grant agreement with RTD for the European Human Biomonitoring Initiative (HBM4EU), a Horizon 2020-funded project. This initiative not only contributed to core activities on human health and the environment but also facilitated research results dissemination.

EEA and Commission stakeholders generally considered non-core and core activities as synergetic, enhancing complementarity. A more strategic approach could foster stronger synergies between core and non-core activities. Ensuring coherence between core and non-core activities is fundamental to mitigate specific risks. Firstly, overburdening existing resources with non-core tasks may compromise the ability to deliver core tasks and maintain output quality. Secondly, engaging into new work areas may require expertise that the EEA lacks. Thirdly, managing multiple agreements adds administrative burdens. Fourth, such agreement can hamper long-term planning and efficient resource allocation as they are not intended for permanent tasks (e.g., Copernicus and neighbourhood countries agreements).

Coherence between EEA and countries within EIONET

Overall, the coherence between the EEA and member countries is ensured within EIONET through well-established processes and clear delineation of responsibilities in the collection, processing, co-creation, and dissemination of results. This coherence is pivotal for the success of the monitoring and reporting process depicted in the figure below, ultimately ensuring accurate and necessary monitoring of EU policies.

Figure 8: EEA-Eionet reporting process



The EEA is responsible for preparing the work, by providing the IT infrastructure, defining technical requirements, and providing the necessary support to EIONET through helpdesk functions (steps 4 and 5). EIONET is responsible for collecting and delivering data submissions to the relevant dataflows (step 6).

The EEA performs quality checks (step 7), process and analyse data to inform the policy process (step 8) and disseminates the results to the relevant stakeholders (step 9).

Step 4 Explaining the reporting obligations in practice	Step 5 Helping MS to prepare their reports	Step 6 Organising the data submission or harvesting	Step 7 Ensuring quality of the reported data	Step 8 Carrying out data processing and analysis	Step 9 Presenting and disseminating results
4.1 Define reporting requirements	5.1 Establish helpdesk	6.1 Member State delivery	7.1 Execute automated Quality Control	8.1 Merge data in European datasets	9.1 Publish online data and map products
4.2 Plan for other obligation e.g. INSPIRE	5.2 Develop reporting tools i.e., DExM, Forms	6.2 Member State resubmission	7.2 Execute manual Quality Control	8.2 Create European dataset products	9.2 Create Implementation Reports
4.3 Design data model	5.3 Implement Quality Control tools	6.3 Monitor status	7.3 Publish Quality Control dashboards and data visualisation		9.3 Create Evaluation Reports
4.4 Define data schema	5.4 Configure Reportnet for reporting				9.4 Undertake Reviews
4.5 Define dataflow	5.5 Configure Reportnet for Member States				9.5 Communicate
4.6 Develop guidance document	5.6 Help Member States in preparation				
4.7 Define Quality Control rules					

The reporting workflow is a synergistic process with upfront and well-defined responsibilities between EEA and Eionet (in which the ETCs also play a role). As discussed in 4.1.1.2, the EEA ensures the functionality of Reportnet, establishes assistance mechanisms, and strives to enhance the process further.

4.2. How did the EEA make a difference and to whom?

This section assesses the impact of the EEA and EIONET and the value they add, especially compared to what would be achieved by national, regional and local authorities alone, taking into account the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The assessment is mainly based on qualitative information collected during the stakeholder consultation.

Summary of findings

The EEA and Eionet provide added value by streamlining knowledge exchange and data sharing across Member States, easing the burden of policy monitoring and providing the necessary technical infrastructure. The collaboration with non-EU countries enriches the European environmental perspective by ensuring access to "external" data and supports capacity building in candidate countries. The EEA is also instrumental in expanding environmental considerations into other policy areas, thus elevating environmental priorities.

The EEA's added value is rooted in its specialist skills, which ensure the objectivity of data, data analysis, and assessment. Through the provision of credible and comparable data, the EEA promotes benchmarking for Member States and non-EU countries. Without the EEA, access to comparable European environmental data would have been difficult for both the European Commission and individual countries. The EEA plays a critical role in coordinating and collating data from different countries and handling various datasets used to monitor environmental policies and ensuring EU compliance with international reporting obligations (see 4.1.1.1). An example is the Montreal Protocol for ozone and F-gases, year data the EEA compiles for direct submission to the UN Ozone Secretariat.

The EEA fosters extensive knowledge and data sharing between member countries through EIONET coordination activities, such as meetings and training (see 4.1.1.2). It also provides capacity building through other means, such as support under the Effort Sharing Decision, for which it coordinated the annual inventory reviews from 2015 to 2022. However, while EIONET has been effective in knowledge sharing, there is room for improvement in facilitating a bi-directional flow of knowledge between the EEA and the Member States. The EEA's scope of activities extends beyond EU Member States, creating added value through cooperation. It provides access to non-EU data, contributing to a more comprehensive

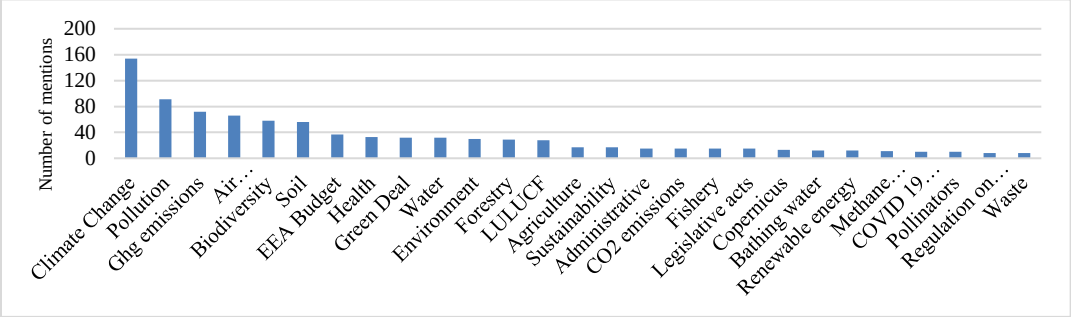
understanding of the European environment. The EEA also supports candidate countries in complying with the environmental acquis, thereby aiding in their integration with EU processes and rules. When Eastern European countries were preparing to join the EU, their performance as measured by EIONET core data flows, improved considerably. The EEA cooperation with European Neighbourhood regions includes support to capacity building, monitoring, and regular data flow processes.

Based on the collected evidence, this evaluation concludes that the EEA adds value and intervention is considered more effective, efficient, coherent, and relevant compared to what other EU and national institutions could achieve.

4.2.1 Mainstreaming environmental objectives and producing impacts

As highlighted in section 4.1.1.1, the EEA had significant impact on the development and assessment of policies beyond the traditional areas of environment and climate. The products covered 14 areas in 2017 and 27 in 2021 (cf. figure 9). AGRI used indicators and publications developed by the Agency for the CAP monitoring and evaluation[56]; ENER for the integrated energy and climate progress reporting; FISMA for drafting Taxonomy criteria; GROW for the EU Tourism Dashboard; REGIO for the Cohesion Report and SANTE for the environment and climate impact on health and development of pesticide risks indicators.

Figure 9: Number of EEA products mentioned by themes, 2021



This increased impact is also reflected in the number of mentions of the EEA and its products in documents of the European institutions (table 11). It increased significantly between 2017 and 2021 (from 295 to 994, i.e., +237%), especially after the adoption of the EGD (+56% in 2020 and +113% in 2021). The increase is even more evident if compared with the previous evaluation, +537% from 156 in 2016 to 994 in 2021.

Table 10: Number of EEA mentions in EU institutions documents, 2016-2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of total mentions	156	295	359	299	467	994

[56] see Context and Impact Indicators, e.g.: Greenhouse gas emissions by source sector-emission from agriculture/ EEA indicator 'Woody landscape features on agricultural land'/ I.20 CAP "Share of species and habitats of Community interest related to agriculture with stable or increasing trends"; and eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021SC0424 evaluation of the impact of the CAP on biodiversity, soil and water (natural resources) 2021

Other EEA publications have impacted various policy areas (including transport, energy, agriculture), such as the Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) reports and the European maritime transport environmental report 2021. The reports flagged by several stakeholders, both at the EU and national level, as having had a significant impact are the annual *Bathing waters report*, which generate public interest and is frequently picked up in the media, and the annual *Trends and projections report*.

Based on collected evidence, the EEA had a tangible impact in mainstreaming environmental and climate considerations across policy areas, reinforced with the arrival of the EGD. However, there are risks associated with expanding its scope of work and increasing complexity that the EEA must address, as presented in section 4.1.3.2.

4.3. Is the EEA still relevant?

The goal is to demonstrate whether or not the objectives of the EEA, as defined in the Regulation and annual and multi-annual work programmes, reflected and still reflect the EU's environmental and climate needs, and to what extent they are aligned with the EGD and EAP.

Summary of findings

The Agency remains relevant, effectively aligning its objectives and core tasks with EU environmental policy priorities, including those set out by the EGD and EAPs. The Regulation, despite being over 30 years old and its work areas not reflecting a cross-cutting and integrated approach, has not hindered EEA work and ability to adapt to the changing priorities. Through successive multi-annual and annual work programmes, the EEA and Eionet have managed to align with evolving environmental challenges, addressing key issues such as circular economy, biodiversity, pollution, and climate change which are absent from the Regulation but for which the Agency in most cases has a legal mandate in specific pieces of legislation. To enhance relevance further, a revision of the Regulation has been considered but without sufficient evidence to reach a firm conclusion.

4.3.1. Relevance of EEA tasks and objectives for current policy priorities

The analysis of the relevance of the EEA and EIONET is conducted vis-à-vis the EGD priority objectives. The EGD has promoted deep transformative changes in the environment and climate fields, by strengthening EU legislation in these two areas and seeking to mainstream environmental and climate considerations in other policy fields. The magnitude of these developments has to be assessed and monitored to ensure that that the necessary measures are taken to reverse negative trends affecting the European environment and achieve the intended goals. The provision of objective, reliable and comparable information is therefore key to support these efforts, underpinned by the necessary technical and scientific support. Informing the public about these objectives is equally important. Therefore, **the objectives as defined in the Regulation (Article 1) are still relevant for the current policy context. The core tasks in Article 2 are also relevant** to meet the current requirements and priorities, such as developing and applying environmental forecasting techniques (cf. Article 2(i)) which is relevant for the current importance of foresight.

However, the eight sectoral areas of work defined in Article 3(2)[57] present some limitations. They do not reflect the cross-cutting and systemic approach of the EGD and 8th EAP, and only partially cover current priorities. For instance, climate change is not mentioned, in spite of the fact that the EEA has become the main data and knowledge provider informing EU climate policies. Biodiversity, circular economy and environmental pollution are partly covered. Despite these limitations, the Regulation objectives and core tasks still provide a sufficiently broad framework to accommodate evolving political priorities. The multi-annual and annual work programmes are the instruments in which the specific objectives and activities are aligned with the policy priorities (e.g., the EGD, the EAPs, the SDGs and sectoral policies allocating specific tasks to the EEA). In the case of climate action, virtually all of EEA's tasks for supporting the Commission are laid down in the relevant climate legislation, which has been continuously updated in the past 20 years.

The comparison of the two MAWPs with the Regulation and the main EGD actions (see Annex 12) reveals a shift from a sectorial approach (as in the MAWP 2014-2020) to the EGD integrated systemic approach embraced by the Strategy. The current work areas of the EEA have been broadened compared to its original tasks, covering (to varying degrees) the key actions of the Green Deal and EAP. The Strategy considers the links between the environment, production sectors (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry) and production and consumption systems (energy, mobility, food, buildings) integrating more cross-cutting concepts such as circular economy, climate change, biodiversity of ecosystems and natural capital, impact of pollution on the environment and sustainability, in line with the EGD overarching approach, the 8th EAP and the SDGs.

Further efforts were made to ensure alignment with the current policy priorities. The decision to extend the validity of the MAWP 2014-2018 to 2020 was taken to align the Strategy with the new EU legislative term. Similarly, the modernisation process of EIONET aligned the 13 new EIONET Groups and the seven new ETCs with the EGD priorities (see 4.1.1.2). The stakeholder consultation confirmed that the support provided by the EEA and EIONET is relevant for the new policy priorities. EIONET is considered very responsive to policy developments, especially after the modernisation. Commission policymakers suggest activities should better cover soil and agri-food sector, transport and mobility, waste, impact of chemicals on environment, and the social dimension of climate and environmental policies.

In conclusion, based on the information collected, the key objectives remain relevant in the current policy context. Alignment of EEA and EIONET with the current EU policy priorities is ensured by the broad definition of tasks and objectives in the founding Regulation and the alignment of the Strategy with the EGD and EAPs. However, it is also recognised that the new integrated approach of environmental and climate issues is not fully reflected in the work areas of the Regulation, such as circular economy, biodiversity, climate change and environmental pollution and the links between them.

[57] (a) air quality and atmospheric emissions; (b) water quality, pollutants and water resources; (c) the state of the soil, of the fauna and flora, and of biotopes; (d) land use and natural resources; (e) waste management; (f) noise emissions; (g) chemical substances which are hazardous for the environment;(h) coastal and marine protection

4.3.2. Alignment of the EEA with the Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies

The evaluation found that the Agency applies most of the Common Approach principles either in the Regulation, the Rules of Procedure of the MB and SC or as current practice. Annex 13 provides details on the degree of implementation per principle. There is full alignment in: (i) the Management Board composition, including the Bureau (Art. 8(1), 8(2)); (ii) the definition of ED role (Art. 9); (iii) the preparation and adoption of annual and multiannual work programmes (Art 8(4), 8(5)). Shortcomings in terms of governance and structure include: the Regulation does not contain either a sunset or review clause, as well as a provision for a periodic overall evaluation every five years. Therefore, the basis for this evaluation is constituted also by the EP discharge of the Agency's 2005 budget[58] and Article 34 of the Financial Regulation[59]; the four-year term duration for MB members (renewable) is not specified (Art. 8)); no specific procedure for ED dismissal (Art. 9).

In operational terms, the annual work programmes and activity reports of the EEA were found to be in conformity with the templates provided by the Commission. However, there were some limitations: (i) some KPIs related to strategic objectives were missing; (ii) the KPIs for the Executive Director are not specified, as there is no separation from the KPIs for the whole Agency; (iii) lack of specificity regarding resource allocation to specific tasks and activities, particularly since 2021, and limited indicators and objectives in the annual work programmes and reports; (iv) coherence between the Agency's and the Commission's communication strategies cannot be demonstrated by robust evidence; (v) the EEA's human resources programming as presented in the Staff Policy Plans (SPP) was not always consistent with the draft EU budget, although it improved throughout the evaluation.

In conclusion, while the EEA largely aligns with the Common Approach, there is room for improvement in terms of defining more specific targets and indicators in its annual work programmes and reports, as well as providing more detailed information about resource allocation to specific tasks and activities. Additionally, addressing the identified gaps and inconsistencies in the Regulation could improve the alignment with the Common Approach.

4.3.3. Is the EEA and EIONET founding Regulation still relevant?

The evaluation analysed potential benefits and drawbacks of revising the Regulation based on the factual findings presented in this document (see in particular 4.3.1) and stakeholders' opinions. While the revision of the founding Regulation is outside the remit of the evaluation, available evidence suggests that advantages and disadvantages are equally balanced.

On the one hand, it would be an opportunity to update the Agency's scope and tasks in the Regulation to reflect the broader and more cross-cutting scope of the EEA's current activities. Moreover, the text could be adapted to the standard of the more recent legal basis of other agencies and aligned with the Common Approach and the Financial Framework Regulation. Finally, it could be an opportunity to consider diversification of the Agency's funding in the

[58] The EP requested an evaluation "before 1 January 2010 and every five years thereafter".
[59] It requires that all activities entailing significant spending (indicatively set at €5 million) must be evaluated.

legislation (in particular the potential integration of long-term 'non-core' activities in core tasks) and to update some obsolete terminology in the text of the Regulation.

On the other hand, the governance aspects in the EEA Regulation are still relevant and the mandate remains valid for the purpose of the EIONET. The Regulation is sufficiently flexible to accommodate current and additional tasks and to adapt to changing policy priorities, as detailed in the multi-annual and annual work programmes. EEA roles and tasks for supporting specific EU environmental and climate legislation are clearly laid down in the relevant legislative acts, and do not necessarily have to be incorporated in the EEA Regulation.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

5.1. Conclusions

The **evidence collected indicates that the performance of the EEA and EIONET has overall been good over the evaluation period across four of the five evaluation criteria** – Effectiveness Coherence, Relevance and EU added-value. The Agency and its network generally fulfilled their objectives and produced the expected results. **However, the insufficient monitoring and evaluation framework in the EEA limits this assessment.** Shortcomings to assess efficiency have also been identified. In addition, not all recommendations of the previous evaluation have been addressed, either because a process started but it is too soon to appreciate the outcomes or because they were not followed-up.

Effectiveness: The EEA and EIONET have contributed to shaping and implementing EU environmental and climate policies, especially in the context of the European Green Deal. Their data collection and management have provided objective information for policymaking and implementation, supporting EU reporting obligations and international climate commitments. The flagship "SOER 2020" notably contributed to EGD priorities, prompting reflections on aligning the SOER cycle with the EU legislative term in the future. However, several key challenges, including insufficient prioritisation of publications and occasional misalignment of products with policy objectives, represent areas for improvement.

The coordination of Eionet was effective overall, resulting in an active network that fosters collaboration and knowledge production. Although the implementation of the Eionet modernisation falls outside the scope of this evaluation, preliminary findings suggest improvements of its operational capacity, better alignment with policy priorities but also evident risks in the consistency of countries' engagement that should be monitored.

Limited evidence affects the assessment of information dissemination to citizens, including publications and other products, which primarily target institutional stakeholders. Despite indicators of a broad audience through the website and social media platforms, it is challenging to analyse it and the dissemination to the public remains a lower priority.

By comparison with the previous evaluation, the EEA has made progress in enhancing its operations through the upgrade of digital systems, such as Reportnet 3.0 and the incorporation of new data sources like Copernicus and citizen science. However, there is still untapped

potential for further improvement, particularly in leveraging cutting-edge technologies like AI and big data, as well as further enhancing the use of Copernicus products.

Efficiency: The evaluation faced major limitations in fully assessing efficiency due to limited evidence on resource allocation. While available data suggest increased efficiency on data handling and reporting, the trend seems to be opposite for publications. The EEA should explore opportunities for efficiency improvements and cost reductions for its publications.

Progress on the governance structure since the last evaluation includes clearer responsibility delineation between the MB and Bureau and greater MB involvement in strategic decisions such as Eionet modernisation and strategy development. There is a room for improvement on formal updates to the Rules of Procedure and clearer roles for Vice-Chairs. Additionally, active participation of the MB in key strategic processes, like KPI revision, is recommended.

Enhancements in programming, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms are crucial to increase transparency and assessing efficiency. Current monitoring and reporting frameworks, including KPIs, are inadequate to assess the performance and impacts in a comprehensive way, hence necessitating to put in place a robust monitoring system with appropriate metrics and targets to adequately measure and assess the performance of various activities and processes. These would provide more granular data and evidence for next evaluations, but also strengthen the monitoring of operations by the governance bodies.

Comparing costs and benefits to assess efficiency is challenging. Costs increased compared to the previous evaluation, particularly direct costs driven by the EU contribution. Qualitatively, accrued benefits are evident, but hard to quantify in monetary terms. Therefore, a quantitative comparison of costs and benefits has not been possible. Assessing the efficiency of output delivery also presents challenges. While products increased at a higher rate than costs and staff, indicating potential efficiency gains, publication costs per item increased, suggesting reduced efficiency. However, complexities affecting publication costs could not be fully considered and make unequivocal conclusions impossible.

Data limitation is the main obstacle for assessing efficiency in resource allocation and tasks prioritisation as well. A more consistent and structured approach to activity prioritisation, including more details on de/reprioritisation, would be needed, together with a comprehensive strategy on efficiency gains to explore synergies across activities. More granular data should be provided on resource investments and allocation, the costs of outputs, and the allocation of human resources per work area (at sub-activity level).

Efficiency gains were observed in data handling, networking activities, and the SOER process. The EEA managed more dataflows with constant resources and realized savings on travel costs due to COVID-19, contributing to increased efficiency. The SOER 2020 process was also considered to be more efficient than its predecessor. Further simplification and burden reduction, interoperability of national and EEA databases and additional investments in modern technologies should be explored for further efficiency gains.

Coherence: The EEA demonstrated good internal coherence, in particular in relation to the collaboration with member countries. However, external coherence should be improved. The increased scope and enlarged circle of EEA stakeholders pose challenges in terms of coordination in particular for DG ENV as partner DG and calls for a more coherent definition of priorities. The increased number of agreements with other DGs not only creates challenges in terms of external coherence, but also internal coherence between core and non-core activities. To avoid risks linked to an over-expansion of tasks beyond those defined in the Regulation, the EEA should seek synergies between core and non-core activities. The relations with CLIMA, RTD and ESTAT were good and characterised by a clear division of roles. Coherence with the JRC work warrants attention. Although there were overlaps during the evaluation period in some areas (like consumption footprint and biomass), the coordination has progressively improved. These should be further pursued for a better sharing of responsibilities on common files. Inter-agency coordination was good, strengthened in particular through the EUAN, but there is potential for stepping up efforts and explore additional synergies. Positive internal coherence was demonstrated with countries in Eionet as regards reporting. The process is synergetic, with clearly defined and separated tasks ensuring timely delivery of quality data to support policy monitoring and knowledge production.

EU Added Value: The EEA and EIONET added significant value to what could have been achieved at the national and EU level by facilitating knowledge and data sharing and fostering collaboration through the Network. Over the period 2017-2021, the Agency's tasks for supporting climate legal reporting obligations were expanded. If the Agency did not exist, the burden of monitoring policy implementation would fall to the MS and EU institutions.

The partnership and cooperation with non-EU countries offer a broader perspective of the European environment. Through access to non-EU data, the Agency has been able to foster capacity building and assist candidate countries in their accession path. Moreover, the Agency played a pivotal role in mainstreaming environmental considerations across different policy areas, thus increasing the uptake of environmental priorities. However, the recommendation of the previous evaluation on the benefits of a homogeneous framework defining obligations for the participation of non-EU member and co-operating countries was not addressed.

Relevance: The EEA and EIONET are still relevant in relation to EU policy priorities, although the introduction the EGD has made some of the objectives, tasks and areas of work as defined in the Regulation less significant. While the objectives and core tasks, outlined in the Regulation, fit with the current policy context, the core work areas do not fully reflect the cross-cutting approach promoted by the EGD and 8th EAP. Having been defined more than 30 years ago, they are characterised by a rather compartmentalised approach, lacking the integrated perspective of circular economy, biodiversity, environmental pollution and climate change. It is important to underline, however, that this did not limit the ability of the EEA and Eionet to provide the necessary support because, through the specific priorities defined in the multi-annual and annual work programmes were aligned with the evolving priorities. Adherence to the Common Approach on decentralised agencies and the Financial Framework Regulation were also considered for assessing a mandate revision to ensure overall relevance. Advantages and drawbacks counterbalance each other, thus not allowing a firm conclusion.

5.2. Lessons learned and recommendations

Several new developments have occurred since the end of the evaluation period, in particular in relation to environmental and climate legislation under the EGD. The focus in the next years will be on implementing these policies. The EEA and EIONET will therefore need to be well equipped to play their role in the reporting on achievements and assessment of progress under the EGD and 8th EAP while providing data and reports on emerging issues.

Processes that started during the evaluation period, such as the Strategy, the digitisation and communication strategies and the EIONET modernisation of 2022, are still ongoing and are expected to address several challenges identified in this evaluation. With the launch in 2023 of a new website, the Agency introduced several web products and services facilitating access to information and data. Implementation of Eionet's modernisation is expected to increase its effectiveness. Inclusion of additional dataflows in Reportnet 3 and continuous improvement of the IT infrastructure, further integration between data platforms and use of new data sources are expected to simplify data process, resulting in significant efficiency gains. An example is the ongoing dialogue with MARE to improve interoperability and availability of marine in situ data though the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet).

The coordination between the EEA and the Commission, has already considerably improved after the evaluation period, steered by the creation of an ISG in 2022. A structured dialogue has been set up at Senior Management level between DG ENV and the EEA, facilitated by an Intergroup at Director's level with DG CLIMA participation. A structured dialogue was also established between DG CLIMA and EEA senior management. The coordination between the EEA and the JRC was also reinforced, for instance through the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity: the EU Biodiversity Strategy dashboard launched in December 2021 is a successful example. The division of roles of responsibilities between the EEA, the JRC and Eurostat will become even more important in the context of the EGD with potential future reallocation of tasks, e.g. for waste related workstreams.

Concerning internal monitoring and control systems, discussions on updating KPIs started being discussed as of 2024, although no concrete steps have been taken yet. Mitigating measures have been put in place to address some non-compliance identified by the internal control system, for instance in 2022 to improve the Quality Monitoring System.

The trend observed in 2020 and 2021 of additional tasks and resources for the Agency accelerated after the end of the evaluation. This development makes it even more important for the EEA to focus on the prioritisation of its activities. A recent (May 2024) projection of EEA additional staff from new and upcoming legislation, indicates an increase of 86 staff or +40% in 2025 compared to 2020 (see table 37 in Annex 11). The offset of these financial resources from the LIFE programme creates concerns about the sustainability of this approach (cf. 4.1.2.3). Moreover, the integration of such a large number of new staff is challenging and is an important task for the EEA senior management. The increased number of agreements between the EEA and other DGs after the evaluation provide additional (non-core) resources

to the Agency but are demanding in terms of administrative burden, coherence between core and non-core activities and coordination with the Commission.

Based on the findings and lessons learned, the evaluation has the following recommendations:

- **Develop a comprehensive monitoring system is the main priority, with appropriate metrics to measure the performance of processes, from data collection, reporting and publications, their use in EU policy making and outreach to the public, and Eionet coordination. A complete tracking of reporting obligations is also necessary. The KPIs should be revised, setting clear baseline scenarios, to ensure a more comprehensive assessment of EEA and Eionet performance,** covering all strategic objectives under the Strategy. More granular information on resource allocation and outputs should be provided to facilitate the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance for next evaluations but also to improve the internal control and management.
- **Further strengthen coordination with the Commission through its partner DG, DG ENV.** Ensuring coherence and optimal alignment between EEA activities and policy priorities, fostering synergies and avoiding overlaps. Ensure that outputs, especially publications, are coherent with and feed into the policy agenda.
- **Address EEA-JRC coordination on a more structured basis through an ad-hoc coordination group** focusing on synergies and sharing of responsibilities on common activities. It could also cover cross-cutting issues like exchange of data and interoperability. Continuous coordination with EUROSTAT is also important.
- **Ensure that synergies with activities of the other EU Agencies**, ECHA in particular, are explored and fully exploited (e.g. through potential pooling of resources).
- **Consider including long term non-core activities** (currently funded under separate agreements with other DGs) into the core activities whenever appropriate.
- **Adapt the SOER cycle to align with the EU political mandate,** ensuring maximum impact, visibility and input to policy development and implementation.
- **Enhance involvement of the MB in some of the strategic processes**. This could include: (i) follow-up to this evaluation with an action plan to address shortcomings; (ii) update of KPIs; (iv) better definition of the role of Vice-Chairs; (iii) adoption of updated Rules of Procedure to reflect the new division of tasks between Bureau and MB.
- **Improve prioritisation of publications and explore opportunities for efficiency improvements.** Another remaining challenge is to improve consultation with Commission services on draft reports, briefings, indicators, and press releases prior to publication.
- **Enhance the digitalisation strategy and expand the uptake of Copernicus services and products (including for reducing reporting burden) and other modern digital technologies in the operations of the EEA and Eionet.** This also includes facilitated access to data, further integration of new data sources, and capacity building.
- **Closely monitor the implementation of Eionet's modernisation.** The implementation should be documented to ensure that each country can benefit from the measures developed. The state of implementation should be regularly tracked and reported to the MB. This assessment should also be part of the mid-term review of the Strategy.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

General information

Lead DG: DG ENV

Decide reference: PLAN/2021/13163

Derogations and justification

No derogations or justification have been requested.

Organisation and timing

Chronology of the evaluation

Table 11: Evaluation chronology step-by-step

Step	Timeline
1st ISG meeting (Call for Evidence)	28 Feb. 2022
Publication and consultation of the Call for Evidence on the "Have Your Say" web portal	25 Apr. – 23 May. 2022
Publication of the call for tender for the external study contract	8 Jul. 2022
Signature of the external study contract	20 Sept. 2022
2nd ISG meeting - Kick-off meeting with the contractor carrying out the external study	5 October 2022
Upstream meeting with the Regulatory Scrutiny Board	10 October 2022
3rd ISG meeting – Presentation and discussion of the inception report of the external study	8 Nov. 2022
Finalisation of the external study inception report	27 Jan. 2023
4th ISG meeting – Presentation and discussion of the interim report of the external study	26 Apr. 2023
Finalisation of the external study interim report	16 Jun. 2023
5th ISG meeting – Presentation and discussion of the final report of the external study	26 Jul. 2023
6th ISG meeting to present the preliminary evaluation conclusions	26 Oct. 2023
7th ISG meeting to present the draft Staff Working Document	13 Nov. 2023
Finalisation of the external study final report	14 Nov. 2023
Submission of the SWD to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board	15 Nov. 2023
Regulatory Scrutiny Board meeting	13 Dec. 2023
Regulatory Scrutiny Board opinion	15 Dec. 2023
8th ISG meeting to present the follow up of the opinion	22 Feb. 2024
Re-submission to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board	21 May 2024
2nd Regulatory Scrutiny Board Opinion	6 June 2024

Inter-Service Steering Group composition

The ISSG is coordinated by DG ENV and composed by 22 other DGs and the European External Action Service (EEAS): SG, SJ, BUDG, HR, GROW, DEFIS, AGRI, MOVE, ENER, CLIMA, RTD, CNECT, JRC, MARE, FISMA, REGIO, SANTE, TRADE, NEAR, INTPA, ECHO, ESTAT and EEAS.

Evidence used together with sources and any issues regarding its quality.

The evidence underpinning this evaluation was collected through an external study conducted by a consortium of Trinomics B.V. and Ipsos, which were also responsible for quality assuring according to their internal mechanisms. The information and findings of this study were complemented by further analysis of the Commission staff responsible for this evaluation.

The limitations of the evidence collected, as well as a broader overview of the methodology used is detailed in Annex 2.

Consultation of the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB)

An upstream meeting between DG ENV and the RSB was held on 10 October 2022. Board members pointed at certain aspects that should be included in the evaluation:

- The effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the EEA are essential to analyse how the Agency works and to what extent the Agency it contributed to EU policy objectives.
- Lessons learned from the previous evaluations and the corrective measures applied by the Agency.
- Obligations and tasks stemming from new legislations.
- Identify the potential for simplification and quantify it to the extent possible.
- The Common Approach on decentralised agencies.

The evaluation submitted in November 2023 was discussed in front of the RSB on 13 December 2023, eventually receiving a negative opinion from the Board (cf. **Ares(2023)8616388).** A revised version was submitted to the Board on 21 May 2024, receiving a positive opinion with reservations (**Ares(2024)4092612**).

The table below presents the shortcomings identified by the Board as well as how they have been addressed in this revised Staff Working Document. For simplicity and to improve clarity, the comments contained in the Board's opinion have been split.

Table 12: Overview of RSB comments and revisions

RSB COMMENTS	HOW IT HAS BEEN ADRESSED	SECTION
Summary of findings		
(1a) The factual evidence base is too narrow, and the stakeholder consultation is too limited.	• Data was collected as part of the supporting study and revision after the initial RSB negative opinion. A related shortcoming has been integrated in the section on limitations.	1.3
(1b) The adequacy and suitability of the monitoring system for the management and evaluation of the agency's activities is not sufficiently assessed.	• A more comprehensive analysis has been developed and included under the efficiency criteria, going beyond the need to update and develop a new KPI framework.	4.1.2.5
(2) The conclusions and lessons learned section do not fully reflect all the findings of the analysis.	• The conclusions are more balanced in reflecting the elements and evidence of the analysis. • The recommendations under lessons learned have been revised to include additional elements from the analysis.	5.1 – 5.2
(3) The potential for efficiency gains and for digitalisation in reducing operating costs is not sufficiently explored.	• The potential for efficiency gains and digitisation in operating costs reduction has been further elaborated.	4.1.2.6
What to improve		
(1a) The evaluation predominantly relies on opinion-based evidence from a limited number of stakeholders, the majority of whom are the Agency's staff. The report should be more transparent about this limitation throughout the analysis avoiding general reference to "(some) stakeholders" or "(some) interviewees".	• The limitation section presents the shortcoming about availability of information and data more clearly and transparently. • The general references have been reworked to the extent possible throughout the text.	1.3 Throughout section 4.
(1b) The report should clearly indicate how much relative weight is given to factual evidence collected and which groups of stakeholders support which statement.	• The overview of methodology in the introduction section has more information on the relative weight given to factual evidence compared to stakeholders' opinions. This is further integrated in the analysis of each criterion. • The text has been revised accordingly, providing clearer indications of the stakeholder groups.	1.3 – 4.1 – 4.2 – 4.3 Throughout section 4.
(1c) The conclusions on the effectiveness, coherence and relevance should be more nuanced as currently not sufficiently based on robust evidence.	• The conclusions have been adapted and nuanced to better reflect the limitations of the evidence collected.	5.1
(2) The report should assess in greater depth the adequacy and suitability of the existing monitoring system for the management of its activities and evaluating the Agency's	• A more comprehensive analysis has been developed and included under the efficiency criteria, going beyond the need to update and develop a new KPI framework.	4.1.2.5

functioning. Whereas the revised report has made better use of the available evidence, it does not investigate it more thoroughly.		
(3) The report should better reflect in its conclusion and lessons learned section all the findings of the analysis section, in particular the need (i) to develop a comprehensive monitoring system which would provide robust data base for evaluation of effectiveness, efficiency and relevance, and not only for the KPIs, (ii) to improve the prioritisation process, and (iii) to measure resource allocation.	• The conclusion and lessons learned better reflect the elements of the analysis, in particular the three mentioned by the RSB comment. • The scope of the recommendation to revise the KPIs has been expanded and covers a more comprehensive monitoring system, in which KPIs are a component.	5.1 – 5.2
(4a) The report should make a further effort to uncover what the critical issues are – apart from staff shortage – that impacted the Agency's performance in the period under evaluation.	• The critical issues that impacted the Agency's performance are mainly covered by the state of play, particularly in the section on external factors, which presents the consequences that unexpected events such as Covid and Brexit had on the operations of the EEA and Eionet.	3.2 – 3.3
(4b) It should better develop the potential for further efficiency gains, in particular the potential to reduce operating costs through digitalisation.	• The potential for efficiency gains and digitisation in operating costs reduction has been further elaborated.	4.1.2.6
(4c) It should also better distinguish the roles and responsibilities of the Agency and the JRC and EUROSTAT to avoid overlaps and maximise synergies, among other things, also in data interoperability and management.	• Additional information has been integrated in the external coherence section to emphasise the existing differences between EEA and JRC work, with concrete examples. • The necessity to explore the potential of EEA, JRC and EUROSTAT data interoperability is now reflected under coherence. • A new recommendation suggests the set up of an ad-hoc group for regular tripartite (ENV, JRC, EEA) discussions on synergies and sharing of roles and responsibilities.	4.1.3.1 5.2
(5a) The report should be more specific on what data and evidence was used, and how, in the efficiency and effectiveness analysis.	• The overview of methodology in the introduction section has more information on the relative weight given to factual evidence compared to stakeholders' opinions. This is further integrated in the analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency criteria.	1.3 – 4.1
(5b) It should further apply the value for money concept and present in more structured way outputs and resources allocated.	• The concept of value for money is very difficult to apply, especially because of a lack of benchmark and the impossibility give a monetary value to the benefits generated by the EEA. This is more clearly explained in the limitation section. • Its use is limited to a qualitative assessment provided by stakeholders when assessing the efficiency in tasks implementation.	1.3 4.1.2.2

ANNEX 2. METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL MODELS USED

This evaluation was conducted in compliance with the provisions of the Better Regulation guidelines.

The evidence gathering started with the publication by the Commission of the Call for Evidence on the "Have Your Say" portal, which remained open for consultation for four weeks, from 25 April to 23 May 2023.

The remainder of the data collection was contracted by DG ENV externally through a supporting study. The Terms of Reference of the call for tender (published from 8 July to 8 August 2023) provided: (i) a draft intervention logic ; (ii) an outline of the targeted stakeholder consultation ; (iii) a draft evaluation question matrix with 27 questions covering the criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value; (iv) non-exhaustive lists of both public documents and documents that would be made available after the signature of the contract to base the desk research on.

Additional data and evidence were collected by DG ENV after the decision to resubmit the SWD to the RSB for a second opinion.

The study contract was awarded to a consortium composed by Trinomics B.V. and Ipsos, which decided on the internal share of tasks among the evaluation team 's members.

Throughout the whole process DG ENV has been supported by an Inter Service Group (ISG) with 22 other DGs and the EEAS. The members met seven times during the evaluation process and have been informed about draft deliverables, on which they provided their comments, and other key developments.

External study

During the inception phase of the contract, the external study further elaborated the intervention logic – with limited modifications compared to the Terms of Reference – and the evaluation question matrix. The latter was expanded to include, for each question, a cross-cutting theme, sub-questions, judgement criteria / indicators, and analytical methods and sources of data.

A theory-based evaluation approach founded on the detailed intervention logic was used. The intervention logic served as the basis for identifying key objectives, expected outputs, outcomes and impacts, and the causal relationships between them, which allowed these to be systematically investigated.

The study addresses 27 evaluation questions across all five evaluation criteria:

- **Effectiveness** assesses how successful the EEA and its EIONET have been in implementing their tasks and delivering the desired impact, including the results obtained compared to the planned and foreseen outcomes, and the main success factors and obstacles**.**

- **Efficiency** evaluates the extent to which the EEA and EIONET have operated in a way that is conducive to achieving its objectives at the lowest possible cost, taking into account elements relating to governance and structure, operation, programming of activities and resources, accountability and controls.

- **Coherence** is about whether the work of the EEA is coherent both externally (in terms of how well it interacts with and supports stakeholders including the European Commission, while avoiding duplication of work or overlaps) and internally (in terms of ensuring coherence between different activities carried out by the Agency itself).

- **Relevance** considers the extent to which the EEA's mandate, tasks and activities are aligned with current EU policy priorities (especially in the field of environment and climate), as well as the extent to which they are relevant for the stakeholders it works for and the general public it aims to inform.

- **EU added value** assesses the value the EEA and EIONET add, compared to what would be achieved by national, regional and local authorities acting alone, taking into account the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

The collection of information relied on a combination of analytical and field work, as well as primary and secondary data, summarised in the section below. Overall, the evidence collected via the methods outlined below, provides a sound basis for drawing robust conclusions. The comprehensive review of existing secondary data, and the big volume of primary data generated via consulting relevant stakeholders, produced a very large amount of information, which ensures validity of the results.

Desk research and document review

Over 500 documents were provided by the EEA and DG ENV for the desk research analysis, consisting of the following:

- EEA's SPDs, CAARs and MAWPs for the period 2017-2021.
- Management Board and Bureau decisions made between 2017-2021.
- Management Board and Bureau agendas and minutes from meetings held between 2017-2021.
- Minutes from meetings held by the Advisory Committee on mapping of EIONET resources during 2021.
- Minutes from meetings held by the Advisory Committee on EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030 between 2019 and 2020.
- Management Board briefing documents for the purpose of aiding decision-making, approving amendments, and providing guidance.
- Lists of decisions and guidance from management board meetings.
- Presentations used at Management Board meetings.
- Documents used for EIONET seminars.
- Audits conducted by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

Through the desk research, the external study developed the following analytical tasks:

- Six case studies covering the following topics: (i) the 7th Environmental Action Programme (EAP), (ii) the new Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP), (iii) the Trends and Projections work, (iv) the State of the Environment Report (SOER), (v) the EEA and EIONET's use of new technologies, and (vi) the EIONET modernisation process. The case studies were not planned in the terms of reference, and the list represents a compromise between those proposed by the consortium and those suggested by the Commission during the inception phase. It was agreed that, for the purpose of the analysis, they would have a purely illustrative function.
- Analysis of EEA programming documents and annual reports to assess the extent to which the tasks had been implemented, and how the budget evolved during the evaluation period.
- Detailed analysis of the evolution of resources and the impact on LIFE budget in particular.
- Analysis of reporting obligations stemming from environmental legislations, supported by the EEA and EIONET. The 2017 Fitness Check on environmental monitoring and reporting obligations (Ros) and previous evaluation were used to compare how the situation had evolved. It has been used to address questions on effectiveness, efficiency and relevance.
- Comparative analysis of the MAWP 2014-2020 and the 2031-2030 EEA-EIONET Strategy, and the rationale underpinning the changes. The study also mapped and analysed the new tasks assigned to EEA/EIONET by the EGD and the 8th EAP.
- Analysis of the processes to improve coordination between the EEA and the Commission.
- Analysis of the EEA/EIONET publications in 2020 and 2021, whether they responded to legal reporting obligations, policy priorities or whether they were produced for other reasons.
- Analysis of EEA programming documents and annual reports in order to assess the extent to which tasks have been implemented to plan during the period covered by the evaluation. This also includes an analysis of how costs have evolved by strategic priority over the evaluation period.
- Analysis of KPIs and their efficacy to assess the performance of the EEA and EIONET.
- Analysis of the alignment of the EEA Regulation with the Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies.
- Analysis of benefits and drawbacks of a possible revision of the EEA legal mandate.

Stakeholder consultation

In the strategic definition of the consultation requirements, the Commission opted for a targeted stakeholder consultation rather than a public open consultation. This ensured more focussed and precise inputs form stakeholders actively involved or working for the EEA, thus strengthening the evidence-base of the evaluation.

It was stressed since the beginning the importance of underpinning the opinions with concrete examples that would ensure the reliability of views that would otherwise be difficult to prove right.

In-Depth Interviews

The consultation strategy included 80 in-depth interviews with stakeholders with different levels of involvement and interest in the EEA and EIONET. In total, 78 interviews were conducted.

The EEA, DG Environment and DG CLIMA identified and provided the contacts of suitable interview candidates, covering a wide range of organisations and services, roles and positions, at both the EU and national level:

- Members of the EEA Management Board
- EEA Senior Management and Staff
- EIONET National Focal Points (NFPs)
- European Topic Centres (ETCs)
- EEA Scientific Committee (SC)
- Environment Protection Agencies (EPA)
- European Parliament
- Council of the European Union,
- Staff of the European Commission DGs
- Staff of EU Agencies.

Additionally, a meeting with ENV Directors was organised online at the beginning of the data collection phase.

The objective was to cover with the interviews the entire spectrum of stakeholders directly for or collaborating with the EEA, as well as those that use the Agency's outputs but do not have a direct contact with it.

When targets with certain groups were not reached (due, for instance, to unavailability of interviewees), the evaluation team reached out to alternative groups so as to maximise the resources available for the evaluation.

Table 13: Completed interviews

Stakeholder type	Target	Contacted	Conducted
EEA Management Board	12	16	11
EEA Senior Management and staff	15	17	17
EIONET National Focal Points (NFPs)[60]	10	10 (15)	8 (13)
Representatives of European Topic Centres (ETCs)	3	3	3

[60] 5 additional NFPs have been interviewed to gather additional evidence following the RSB negative opinion.

EEA Scientific Committee	3	3	3
Other EU Agencies and the EU Agency Network	4	4	3
Members of the European Network of the Heads of Environment Protection Agencies (EPA Network)	5	6	1
European Commission DGs directly working with the EEA / members of the Inter-Service Group	23	31	29
European Parliament	4	11	1
Council of the European Union	1	1	1
Other stakeholders based in Brussels	0	2	1
Total	**80**	**104**	**78**

For reference, although the two consultation strategies are different, the share of interviews from the EEA and the Commission are consistent with the previous evaluation 2012-2016: the share of Commission interviews slightly decreased from 40% in 2012-2016 to 37% in the current evaluation, the representation of EEA governance bodies (MB, NFP, ETC and SC) increased from 23 to 33% and EEA Senior Management and staff remained stable at around 23%.

Workshops

Four workshops were held as part of the consultation strategy:

- A one-day workshop with the EEA Management Board. It was attended by 33 members of the Management Board, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG Environment as observers. The focus was put on (i) how the recommendations of the previous evaluation had been taken into account, (ii) key achievements of the EEA, (iv) reactiveness to major challenges., (v) governance structure, and (vi) relevance and added value of the EEA to its stakeholders.
- A one-day workshop with the National Focal Points (NFPs) and European Topic Centres (ETCs). It was attended by 49 NFPs and ETCs Directors, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG Environment as observers. The workshop aimed that collecting information on how the recommendations of the previous evaluation had been considered in the preparation of the Strategy 2021-2030 in addition to specific information responding to the five evaluation criteria.
- An online workshop with the EEA Scientific Committee. It was attended by 13 members of the SC, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG Environment as observers. This workshop addressed one of the issues raised after the previous evaluation lamenting a scarce involvement of the SC in the process. Its objective was to gather views on key aspects of the functioning of the EEA and of the Scientific Committee, their respective roles relations, as well as the impact of the EEA and EIONET in the scientific community.
- An online workshop with external stakeholders. It was attended by 10 representatives of civil society organisations, business associations and other EU Agencies, as well as

representatives of the EEA and DG Environment as observers. As explained below, this workshop responded to one of the challenges faced by the evaluation, i.e. a limited representation of "external" stakeholders. The objective was to gather views on their experience using EEA and EIONET outputs, the relevance of the activities conducted by the Agency, and the impact that the EEA and EIONET outputs had on their work.

Online survey

An online survey was distributed to EEA staff, European Commission's staff, and broader EEA audience, i.e. subscribers to the EEA newsletter. At the closure, after five weeks, the total number of respondents was 52. A detailed breakdown of respondents is shown in Table below.

Table 14: Breakdown of survey respondents

	EEA Staff	European Commission Staff	National Environmental Protection Agency	Other EU institutions	Other public organisations at the national or local level
Number of respondents (n = 52)	28	9	9	1	5
Percentage of respondents	54%	17%	17%	2%	10%

Source: Online Survey (10/2/2023 – 27/4/2023)

Additional information collected

After the RSB negative opinion, DG ENV collected additional evidence to fill the information gaps and address the shortcomings identified by the Board. This collection, in collaboration with the contractor (thanks to a contract extension signed to address the Board's comments) and the EEA, focussed on additional secondary documentary material and based on an action plan developed by DG ENV. The data gathering was accompanied by five additional interviews with NFPs collect more information on Eionet and its functioning from the countries' perspective.

Limitations of the evaluation and mitigating measures

The evaluation encountered several limitations.

One such limitation is the difficulty to determine points of comparison. The lack of an ex-ante impact assessment at the time of drafting the Founding Regulation, which would have outlined the anticipated results and impacts of a hypothetical preferred policy option and provided a benchmark for subsequent comparison, is a limitation. Using the findings from the previous EEA evaluation covering the period 2012-2016 is the remedy adopted. The possibility to compare the situation now to a hypothetical "no-EEA" scenario is used only for specific criteria, as the obtainability of data from around the time the EEA was founded (1990-1994) is extremely cumbersome, limiting the possibility to apply this approach to criteria like effectiveness and efficiency.

The fact that the evaluation overlaps two different MAWPs is per se another limitation, because the objectives, activities and tasks have greatly changed, as it is the way the EEA report them. Each had different categories and strategic objectives, making a direct comparison of outputs difficult. The EEA's activities between 2014 and 2020 were categorized into four strategic areas (SAs): Informing policy implementation (SA1), Assessing systemic challenges (SA2), Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use (SA3), and EEA Management (SA4). In 2021, with the new Strategy, the EEA introduced five strategic objectives across five thematic work areas. Activities and outputs did not 'migrate' into the new thematic areas of work neatly. From 2017 to 2020, detailed descriptions and figures of planned and completed outputs were available in the CAARs, but this information was no longer provided in 2021. There were also changes in reporting from 2019 onwards, such as updated indicators reported as separate outputs, whereas previously these would have constituted one "joint" output. In this case, the number of outputs produced overall increased, but it became much more difficult to assess whether this was part of a broader trend, or merely due to 'accounting'.

Over time, there has been a trend towards providing fewer details in the Single Programming Documents (SPDs) and Consolidated Annual Activity Report (CAAR), especially in terms of completed outputs, disaggregation of resources and granularity of tasks. For instance, the EEA monitors the time spent by their staff per strategic activity, and not per sub-activity, which makes it difficult to assess exactly how human resources were used and evolved over the period covered. Also details on the rationale behind specific outputs, the extent to which they corresponded with specific stakeholder needs, the use that was made of them, or the ultimate outcomes or impacts that these outputs contributed to were not available. Lack of information about the rationale behind (linkages) publications and reporting obligations and/or core tasks: in the case of most EEA publications and reporting outputs, it was difficult to assess a clear link between the outputs and a specific legal obligation (reporting obligation), or to assess whether the output directly linked to a piece of legislation or policy need. Remedy: the EEA provided additional information on link between outputs and legal obligations during the revision process following the RSB opinion, and additional ad-hoc interviews were conducted with end users (Commission, EIONET NFPs) to collect evidence on the use of publications at EU and national level.

Of the information that was available, a lack of detail and lack of comprehensiveness further limited the analysis of outputs: there was often no explanation for why outputs were postponed or cancelled (for less than 25% of the cancelled or postponed outputs an explanation was provided), making it extremely difficult for the evaluation to assess the challenges (including on resourcing) the Agency faced. Although EEA programming documents during the evaluation period frequently highlighted the need to prioritise and deprioritise tasks in light of resource constraints (e.g. CAAR 2018: "(…) the EEA is now facing the impossibility to fulfil adequately any new tasks without additional resources, further prioritisation and/or discontinuation of current core tasks"), information about de-prioritisation of tasks due to resource constraints was lacking, with very limited internal documentation listing deprioritised tasks at a very generic level and little to no information on

tasks that were actually de-prioritised (e.g. CAAR 2017: Annual update of the energy efficiency index to evaluate energy efficiency policies across countries and sectors and their impact on meeting energy efficiency targets – Not done (cancelled due to changes in internal resources and subsequent reprioritisation of activities)). The SPDs 2017 – 2020 contain sections on "negative priorities", but they remain at a relatively generic and headline level. The SPD 2021 does not contain a section on negative priorities (however, it has to be noted that that from 2022 onwards, the information on negative priorities contained in the SPDs has become more specific, and this practice is being continued in the SDPs 2023 and 2024). No internal document containing a list of deprioritised tasks (per year, or over the period of the evaluation) was available to the evaluation, and was also not included in Management Board documents, including meeting minutes and decisions. The lack of information about the scale of de-prioritisation, and where this de-prioritisation took place limited the assessment of the adequacy of resources of the EEA, and also the assessment of whether the EEA fulfilled its objectives and legal obligations. Further efforts to identify those areas that were deprioritised were necessary and included an analysis of human resources dedicated to each strategic activity, triangulation with documents supporting the discussion of the Management Board and Bureau, and interviews. These further efforts have achieved limited results.

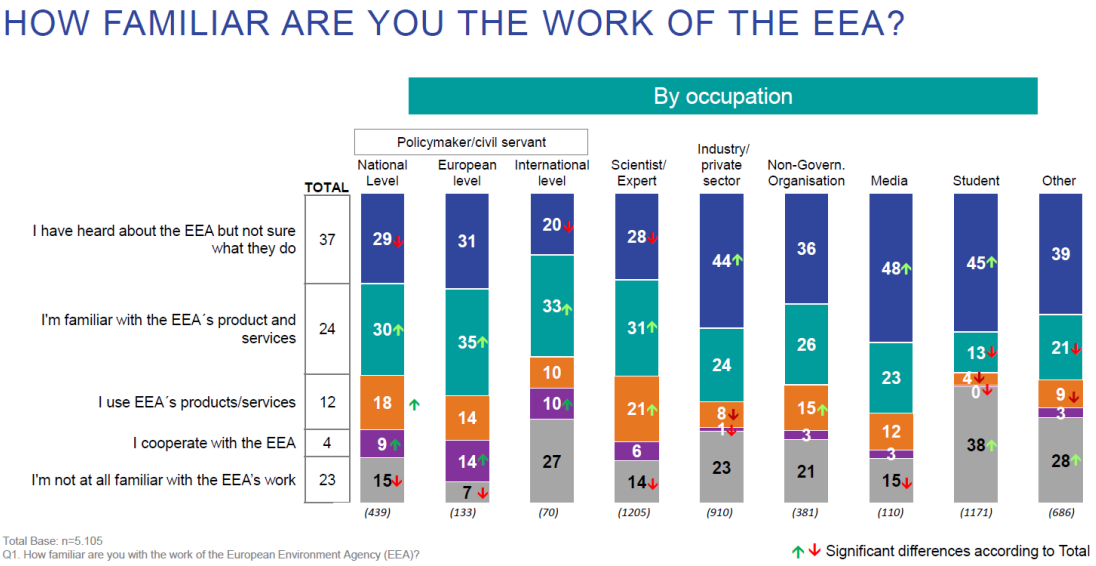
The difference between MAWPs is also reflected in the use and reliability of the performance monitoring system. Across all strategic and specific areas, the MAWP 2014-2020 defined 108 performance indicators. However, most of these indicators were framed in a very general way (e.g. "data reported by EEA member countries collected, processed, quality-assured, stored, and disseminated according to agreed deadlines in a timely manner"), and never systematically operationalised to make them 'SMART' (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound), that is to say no data was provided on their achievement. It was only for the last two years of the MAWP that an overarching structure for performance management was developed setting out measurable key performance indicators (KPIs). These 17 "multiannual KPIs" (with baselines and targets) appeared for the first time in the CAAR 2019. The EEA started reporting against these 17 KPIs across the EEA's work streams, while also setting separate 'performance indicators' in each SA. The reporting of KPIs largely overlaps with the reporting of outputs delivered against outputs planned but differs in the sense that the KPIs correspond only to a sub-set of EEA outputs per SA that were selected by the EEA. Additionally, these KPIs remained unchanged with the new EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030 and were not adapted to the new strategic objectives. Mitigating measures: the use of KPIs is very limited and the analysis of the EEA performance cannot rely entirely on them, as their correct application is limited to the second half of the period being assessed. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of the EEA performance was partly derived from the comparison with the expected outputs defined in the EEA Annual work programmes (Programming and Single Programming Documents) for the year in question.

Other external sources, in particular audits reports by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA), and previous studies conducted by the same contractor to analyse EEA stakeholders, their needs and the EEA's web presence. were used to bridge the

gaps left by the EEA programming documents, which are not sufficiently telling in terms of performance for the limitations explained above.

Another limitation was the difficulty to engage stakeholders beyond the "inner circle", despite the best efforts to increase their participation during the collection of evidence through dedicated interviews and a dedicated workshop (more on it below). The participation of certain target groups, in particular member of the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) Network and European Parliament's representatives. This was particularly evident in the low response rate to the online survey, especially from stakeholders other than EEA staff, Commission staff. This is likely due to the fact that the "wider" circle of users of EEA products is less informed about the EEA operates, and therefore less willing to engage in such a survey which required a certain level of knowledge. This is corroborated by the results of a 2020 EEA stakeholder analysis presented in 1.3, where 60% of the over 5,000 respondents had either heard about the EEA but did not know what it does or were not at all familiar with the EEA's work (see the figure below). This proportion was even higher among industry, media, student and other respondents. By contrast, only 16% of respondents claimed they used EEA products or cooperated with the EEA (and hence would have been likely to be able to provide feedback for the evaluation).

Figure 10: Survey responses on the familiarity with the EEA's work



Overall, these gaps represent a limitation of the evidence base, but do not detract significantly from the validity of the results. Most of the evaluation questions were focused on the organisational effectiveness and efficiency of the EEA, including its usefulness for and coordination with its 'inner circle' of stakeholders. To answer these questions, the study did receive stakeholder input of a sufficient quantity and quality.

Mitigating measures have contributed to address the shortcoming: the closing of the survey was delayed by two weeks than initially planned (although achieving very marginal benefits); additional efforts in reaching those stakeholders further from the EEA inner circle resulted in the organisation of a dedicated online workshop for external stakeholders; use of secondary

data to fill the gaps left by other stakeholders, such as the number of downloads of EEA's outputs and number of citations in the media, and the study conducted for the EEA in 2020 referred to above, which included a mapping of EEA and EIONET stakeholders, analysis of their feedback on product content and design, analysis of EEA and EIONET's policy makers audience and their needs.

The evaluation also faced challenges in assessing the EEA's efficiency. While costs are largely quantifiable, quantifying or monetising the benefits of the EEA work and outputs is not. The operating costs can be presented through one clear proxy, i.e., the EEA's budget, with the financial contributions of Member States and Cooperating Countries. Indirect costs could include additional costs that are incurred by Member States and Cooperating Countries, and also include time and effort spent by the national Ministries or Agencies representatives to participate in the EEA's activities. In addition, comparability across administrations is likely to be low, and activities at national level are very difficult / not possible to relate back to the EEA's activities. Results could only be an approximation at best. As regards the benefits, facilitating better environmental and climate policy making and increasing awareness on the environment would ultimately be expected to lead to a range of (quantifiable) benefits on the environment and climate (e.g. reduced greenhouse gas emissions, improved biodiversity etc.). However, attributing them solely to the EEA and EIONET knowledge would not be possible, given the multifaceted factors influencing the impacts of policies and the nature of indirect benefits (also called co-benefits). As a result, a full cost-benefit analysis was not feasible for this evaluation, which instead identifies costs and benefits from various perspectives. To partially close the gaps presented above, it has been attempted to collect more information on resources dedicated by some member countries to EIONET and compare the costs and benefits produced by the EEA to those of other similar organisations at national (national protection agencies), EU (other decentralised agencies) and international (UNEP and OCSE) level. The scientific rigorousness of this approach is limited due to the different nature of each organisation, as well as objectives they pursue and constraints they face.

A final limitation encountered, as also underlined by the RSB opinion, was the availability of information and data on the functioning of EIONET. The Network is complex and the data on costs and benefits are very difficult to find, especially for the component managed by Member States. In order to fill this gap and collect additional evidence, the Commission has conducted five additional interviews with as many EIONET NFPs (paying attention to respect a geographical balance, but also balancing the size of the countries interviewed) to inform the revision of the SWD.

ANNEX 3. EVALUATION QUESTION MATRIX

Table 15: Evaluation Question Matrix

SWD section	Link to Evaluation Questions (support study)	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Analytical methods & data sources
Effectiveness				
4.1.1.1 To what extent have the EEA and Eionet informed EU environmental and climate policies and global commitments?	EQ1 To what extent have the tasks of the EEA and the EIONET achieved their objectives as set out in the Regulation 401/2009? EQ2 How effective was EEA's work against the environmental and climate objectives and obligations stemming from the EU legislation and across all activities including international ones (management of reporting data flows, assessment of policies, prospective analyses)? EQ 3 To what extent have the tasks of the EEA, as defined in the founding regulation and complementary legislation, been implemented in the multi-annual and annual work programmes and other programming documents? If applicable, what are the factors that have hindered the implementation?	Production of outputs ensures the delivery of high quality and comparable information on the environment that are useful for stakeholders.	• Output completion rate 2017-2020. • Output KPIs (no. 5, 6) 2019-2021. • Rate of publication delivery • Publication categorisation	• Review of Programming Documents 2017, 2018 and Single Programming Documents 2019-2021 – 2021-2023 • Review of CAAR 2017-2021. • EEA KPIs 2019-2021. • Analysis of ad-hoc information provided by the EEA on publications 2017-2021.
		Provision of objective, reliable and comparable information at European level support policy development.	• Number of citations of EEA products in Impact Assessments	• Analysis of Commission Impact Assessments for environmental and climate legislative proposals 2019-2021
		Collection and provision data stemming from EU reporting obligations inform the assessment of results of environmental measures.	• Number of policy areas supported. • Number of EU legislative instruments for which reporting obligations are collected. • Number of reporting obligations managed.	• Comparison with the EEA and Eionet evaluation 2012-2016. • Analysis of the Fitness Check of Reporting and Monitoring of EU Environment Policy.

			• Intensity of support to reporting obligations. • Stakeholders feedback EEA support to reporting obligations.	• Reporting Obligation Database • Ad-hoc analysis of EEA reporting obligations (evaluation support study) • 2018 European Court of Auditors (ECA) "Special report on the EU's greenhouse gas emission reporting" • Review of Programming Documents 2017, 2018 and Single Programming Documents 2019-2021 – 2021-2023 • Review of CAAR 2017-2021. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops, online survey).
		Collection and submission of data to international conventions fulfil international legal obligations on behalf of the EU.	• Number of reporting obligations relevant for international commitments • Data and reports submitted to international organisation	• Review of Programming Documents 2017, 2018 and Single Programming Documents 2019-2021 – 2021-2023 • Review of CAAR 2017-2021.

4.1.1.2 To what extent Eionet coordination was effective?	EQ1 To what extent have the tasks of the EEA and the EIONET achieved their objectives as set out in the Regulation 401/2009? EQ 3 To what extent have the tasks of the EEA, as defined in the founding regulation and complementary legislation, been implemented in the multi-annual and annual work programmes and other programming documents? If applicable, what are the factors that have hindered the implementation? EQ 5 How effective is EEA-Eionet in responding to major crisis (based on the COVID-19 pandemics experience in 2020-2021) and change in geopolitics?	Continuous improvement of the Network to ensure the implementation of activities and delivery of outputs.	• Qualitative information on the Eionet modernisation process. • Number of and thematic areas covered by Eionet Groups • Number of national organisations part of Eionet. • Development of the functions and responsibilities of national coordinators	• Review of Management Board and Eionet/NFP meetings supporting documents. • Review of documents of Eionet Working Groups involved in the modernisation. • Review of documents of the MB Advisory Committee on Eionet Mapping. • Case study on Eionet modernisation (evaluation support study) • Conclusions and recommendations of the EEA evaluation 2012-2016
		Regular Eionet-NFP and Eionet groups meetings are organised to ensure the network remain active.	• Number of Eionet/NFP meetings • Number of Eionet Groups meetings • Satisfaction rate for Eionet meetings.	• Review of Eionet KPIs 2019-2021 – CAAR 2-19-2021
		Development and maintenance of IT infrastructure for data delivery and production of dataflows.	• Number of dataflows integrated in Reportnet 3.0 • Rate of dataflows delivery	• Review of the conclusions of the Fitness Check Reporting and Monitoring of EU Environment Policy. • Review of Eionet KPIs 2019-2021 – CAAR 2019-2021

		Quality and timeliness of data deliveries and technical support to Member States is ensured.	• Data reporting performance of Eionet countries. • Quality assurance and quality control procedures (qualitative, no figures) • Helpdesk support (qualitative, no figures)	• Analysis of annual Eionet core data flows briefings 2017-2021
		Regular update of European Topic Centres (ETCs) ensures their ability to deliver on current policy priorities.	• Number of thematic areas covered by ETCs. • Number of ETC experts. • Number of ETC outputs (technical reports). • Resources invested in the ETCs.	• Analysis of the 2017 and 2021 ETC review process. • Review of the ETC Review Committee working documents. • Review of MB documents on the ETC reviews. • Analysis of 2021 ETCs Terms of Reference.
4.1.1.3 How effectively did the EEA conduct regular assessments on the state of the environment?	EQ 6 (1st part) To what extent have the tasks of the EEA produced the desired impact and expected results?	The State and Outlook of the Environment Report (SOER) 2020 ensures the assessment of the state of the EU environment and is disseminated widely.	• Number of SOER 2020 mentions in impact assessment (cf. support to policy implementation) • Impact of the SOER on the policy process (qualitative) • Number of media entries. • Social media data (posts likes, shares, clicks and video views.	• Review of case study on SOER 2020 (evaluation support study). • Review of CAAR 2019 and 2020. • Comparison with EEA evaluation 2012-2016. • Analysis of EEA Quarterly Communication Reports 2019-2021 • Analysis of DODs Monitoring reporting on 'EEA mentions 2017-2021 • Review of the final report of the Stakeholder analysis

4.1.1.4 How effectively did the EEA inform the public and ensure access to environmental and climate data?	EQ 6 (1st part) To what extent have the tasks of the EEA produced the desired impact and expected results? EQ 24 To what extent is the work of the EEA relevant for the stakeholders (EU institutions, policy makers, member countries, etc.) and the general public it aims to inform?	The public benefits from availability and accessibility of data and information.	• Priorities of EEA communication frameworks. • Stakeholders' opinion on data accessibility. • Number of information systems, online platforms and websites developed and managed by the EEA.	• Analysis of EEA communication frameworks. • Analysis of EEA programming documents 2017-2021. • Analysis of EEA Quarterly Communication Reports 2019-2021 • Analysis of DODs Monitoring reporting on 'EEA mentions 2017-2021
		Communication efforts are directed at increasing the outreach of outputs.	• Figures on engagement on social media platforms (number of followers). • Number of newsletter subscribers. • Number of articles in the media mentioning the EEA. • Web traffic on the website. • Use of reports, data and maps by stakeholders.	• Analysis of EEA Quarterly Communication Reports 2019-2021 • Analysis of DODs Monitoring reporting on 'EEA mentions 2017-2021 • Comparison with EEA evaluation 2012-2016 • Analysis of 2017 Survey of EEA's product categories. • Analysis of the 2020 Stakeholder analysis final report • Analysis of the 2020 EEA Web presence analysis final report • Analysis of the 2020 "Improving the EEA's Website" report

				• Communication KPIs (2019-2021)
4.1.1.5 To what extent did the EEA and Eionet make full use of digitalisation for improving operations?	EQ 4 To what extent has the EEA taken into account the outcomes of the previous evaluation, in particular for developing the new EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030? EQ 15 To what extent do EEA and Eionet make full use of the potential of digital technologies (big data, artificial intelligence, Earth Observation, analytics) and scientific state of the art?	Integration of new data sources (Copernicus, citizen science, etc.) are sought to improve the operations.	• Number and length of agreements to cover Copernicus work. • Copernicus services developed. • Number of web sessions and requests to access Copernicus products. • Number of initiatives integrating citizen science.	• Review of EEA programming documents 2017-2021 • Review of EEA financial documents 2017-2021 • MapMyTree • Marine Litter Watch
		A clear and robust digitalisation strategy facilitates the integration of new technologies	• Priorities of the EEA digitalisation strategy • Alignment of the strategy with overarching EU initiatives on digitalisation • Division of responsibilities in data collection and management functions.	• Review and analysis of the 2021 EEA digitalisation framework. • Review of the case study on the use of new technologies (evaluation support study).
		Development of Reportnet 3 improved data submission, collection and management.	• Number of internally managed dataflows. • Stakeholders' opinion on the improvements apported by Reportnet 3 (qualitative).	• Analysis of MB documents on Eionet modernisation. • Analysis of Eionet/NFP meeting documents on Eionet modernisation. • Ad-hoc information provided by the EEA DIS

				Programme • Analysis of EEA internal document "Vademecum for Streamlining Environmental Reporting" • Review of information on Reportnet 3 website. • Review of information on Eionet Portal, including newsletters and leaflets. • Review of the case study on Eionet modernisation. • Stakeholder consultation activities (interviews and workshops).
Efficiency				
4.1.2.1 To what extent are costs commeasured to benefits?	EQ 13 To what extent has the EEA implemented its activities, the annual budgets (including non-core budgets that may be of a multiannual nature if the activity covers multiple years), and achieved the expected results in a cost-efficient and timely manner?	Quantification of direct costs	• EU subvention • Non-core revenues • Financial contribution of non-EU member countries	• Analysis of annual EU budgets 2017-2021. • Analysis of financial tables in EEA Programming and Single Programming Documents 2017-2021. • Analysis of financial tables in CAARs 2017-2021. • MFF 2014-2020 and 2021-2027
		Quantification of indirect costs	• Costs for member countries to participate in Eionet. • Resources invested in shared projects.	• EEA Evaluation 2012-2016 • Internal financial table on shared project expenditures • Ad-hoc information

				provided by DG ENV and EEA financial departments.
		Quantification of benefits (qualitative)	• Expanded scope and increased number of outputs. • Improved dissemination of knowledge. • Availability and access to comparable data and knowledge.	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (workshops, interviews).
4.1.2.2 How efficient were the EEA and Eionet in tasks implementation?	EQ 7 To what extent have the EEA and Eionet been efficient in implementing the tasks set out in their mandate and programming documents? EQ 10 Did the EEA conduct any analysis of tasks (old and newly assumed) in view of finding synergies between them? E.g. synergies between tasks related to the creation and maintenance of databases, data collection	Outputs and publications are produced with an efficient use of resources.	• Number of outputs • Number of publications • Total costs • Cost per output • Cost per publication	• Analysis of information on output delivery reported in programming documents (SPDs and CAARs). • Analysis of table of EEA publications 2017-2021 provided ad-hoc. • Data on financial resources (cf. 4.1.2.1)

	and reporting? Is the EEA strategy for efficiency gains appropriate and sufficient? EQ 13 To what extent has the EEA implemented its activities, the annual budgets (including non-core budgets that may be of a multiannual nature if the activity covers multiple years), and achieved the expected results in a cost-efficient and timely manner?	The Agency and Eionet achieved significant efficiency gains.	• Savings for travel expenses • Streamlining of reporting • Number of dataflows handled. • Number of reporting obligations handled. • Costs for the production of the SOER. • Total costs. • Qualitative opinion on value for money.	• Analysis of "Strategy for efficiency gains" in EEA programming documents (2020 and 2021). • Analysis of table of EEA publications 2017-2021 provided ad-hoc. • Information on Reportnet 3 (cf. 4.1.1.5). • Ad-hoc information on dataflows managed by the EEA and relative costs. • Review of case study on SOER 2020. • Review of information on impact of Covid-19 reported in CAAR 2020, 2021. • Stakeholder consultation activities (workshops, interviews).

4.1.2.3 How efficient was the Agency in the allocation of resources and prioritisation of tasks?	EQ 9 Does the EEA undertake any prioritisation screening of certain environmental and climate topics or tasks and, if so, has this prioritisation been efficient taking into account its resources (including prioritisation between tasks that respond to legal obligations or policy priorities over other tasks that do not respond to any particular policy priority)? Has the Agency done so in response to new policy needs? EQ 10 Did the EEA conduct any analysis of tasks (old and newly assumed) in view of finding synergies between them? E.g. synergies between tasks related to the creation and maintenance of databases, data collection and reporting? Is the EEA strategy for efficiency gains appropriate and sufficient? EQ 11 How efficiently has the EEA managed to align to new policy priorities taking into account its resources? To what extent are the resources adequate for the mandate of the Agency? EQ 14 To what extent is the allocation of staff across the different activities efficient? Is the	The allocation of resources across strategic activities reflects the priorities of the Agency determined by the overall policy context.	• Rate of staff allocated to the different functions. • Number and nature of deprioritised activities. • Rate of operational staff vs. administrative staff. • Staff well-being indicators.	• Analysis of human resources information and establishment plans in EEA programming documents (SPDs, CAARs 2017-2021). • Review of "Negative priorities/decrease of existing tasks and redeployment of resources" sections in EEA SPDs 2017-2021. • DG ENV statistics on the financial impact of EEA additional resources on LIFE. • Review of MFF 2014-2020 and 2021-2027. • Review of MB preparatory documents on staff discussions. • Review of MB conclusions on staff. • Analysis of EEA Staff Engagement Surveys 2017-2021.

	allocation consistent with the Agency's (and EU) priorities? Is the Agency reallocating or allocating (new) staff to its priority tasks in an efficient way? Is there a correct balance between the number of staff assigned to administrative tasks and the number of staff assigned to the operational tasks? EQ 16 To what extent do shared projects (co-financed by DG ENVIRONMENT and the EEA) define roles and responsibilities at the planning stage, including the financial sources to ensure optimal financing practices? What are the challenges and what remedial actions/best practices are worth flagging?	The allocation of resources enables the Agency to carry out its activities without impacting the staff wellbeing.	• Rate of operational staff vs. administrative staff. • Staff well-being indicators	• Analysis of human resources information and establishment plans in EEA programming documents (SPDs, CAARs 2017-2021). • Review of MB preparatory documents on staff discussions. • Review of MB conclusions on staff. • Analysis of EEA Staff Engagement Surveys 2017-2021.
4.1.2.4 To what extent is the efficiency of the EEA comparable with that of similar organisations?	N/A	The EEA has comparable level of efficiency performance with similar organisations	• Number of staff • Total costs • Costs per staff member • Number of outputs (publications) • Costs per outputs (publication)	• Analysis of EU Court of Auditors special report titled "Future of EU agencies – Potential for more flexibility and cooperation". • Analysis and comparison of the CAARs 2021 of the EEA, CEDEFOP, EIGE and FRA. • Analysis of the CoA 2021 audit report on EU agencies. • Review of UNEP – Programme of work and budget

4.1.2.5 How efficient and fit for purpose are the governance structure and internal programming, monitoring and reporting mechanisms?	EQ 4 To what extent has the EEA taken into account the outcomes of the previous evaluation, in particular for developing the new EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030? EQ 8 To what extent are the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the EEA work and activities adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the EEA while minimising the administrative burden of the EEA and its stakeholders (established procedures, layers of hierarchy, division of work between groups or programmes, IT systems, initiative for streamlining and simplification, etc.)? EQ 12 To what extent is the Agency's organisation (governance and structure) fit for purpose and conducive to efficiency (maximising synergies and avoiding overlaps) and economies of scale?	The Management Board is governed by clear Rules of Procedures that allows for strategic discussions.	• Definition of tasks in the Management Board Rules of Procedures	• Review of MB Rules of Procedures
		The Management Board is involved, participates and is consulted on the main strategic decisions that have an impact on the operations of the Agency and Eionet.	• Processes and actions steered by the Management Board. (qualitative)	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews and workshops).
		The programming documents offer a comprehensive and detailed picture of the achievements and shortcomings affecting the operations and delivery of tasks and results.	• Quantifiable and verifiable data in EEA programming documents on: (i) planning of activities, (ii) implementation of activities, (iii) prioritisation of tasks, (iv) efficiency gains. • Consultation process with stakeholders on draft programming documents (qualitative)	• Analysis of EEA programming documents (SPD and CAARs 2017-2021). • Review of Commission Opinions on the EEA SPDs 2017-2021
		The performance is regularly monitored through a robust set of indicators.	• Set of Key Performance Indicators • Activities monitoring through Key Performance Indicators. • Assessment of data collected through the Key Performance Indicators • Areas covered by the Key	• Analysis of KPIs introduced in the SPD 2019-2021. • Analysis of KPIs results reported in EEA CAARs 2019-2021. • Conclusions and recommendations of the EEA evaluation 2017-

			Performance Indicators • Strategic objectives in the annual and multi-annual work programmes	2021. • Comparison of KPIs with annual and multi-annual WPs objectives. • Analysis of MB documents and conclusions on discussions regarding performance indicators.
		The internal control system efficiently identifies issues, which are then addressed.	• Internal control framework. • Results of the internal control framework reported in EEA programming documents.	• Analysis of EEA Internal Control Framework • Analysis of assessments of EEA Internal Framework (CAARs 2017-2021)
4.1.2.6 What is the potential for simplification and burden reduction?	EQ 8 To what extent are the internal mechanisms for programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluating the EEA work and activities adequate for ensuring accountability and appropriate assessment of the overall performance of the EEA while minimising the administrative burden of the EEA and its stakeholders (established procedures, layers of hierarchy, division of work between groups or programmes, IT systems, initiative for streamlining and simplification, etc.)?	The implementation and full exploitation of digital solutions ensure simplification and burden reduction.	• Improvements to the reporting infrastructure (Reportnet) • IT systems integration • Digitalisation strategy • Information on increased efficiency in reporting processes and Agency's operations (qualitative) • Potential monetary savings and investment needs (qualitative)	• Information on Reportnet (cf. 4.1.1.5). • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).

		Streamlined operational processes and improved networking activities result in simplification opportunities.	• Savings stemming from replacing in-person networking events with online meetings. • Level of stakeholders' engagement in online set-up (qualitative) • Benefits of online consultation processes (qualitative)	• Review of information on impact of Covid-19 reported in CAAR 2020, 2021. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
Coherence				
4.1.3.1 To what extent the EEA and Eionet ensure external coherence?	EQ 17 How does the EEA coordinate with the EU institutions (in particular the Commission), the member and cooperating countries, other EU agencies (including but not limited to ECHA, EFSA and EMSA) and other environmental knowledge providers to enhance synergies and avoid duplication of work? Did the EEA identify any such synergies, in particular in areas where there might be overlaps or complementarities with the work performed by other Agencies and the JRC?	The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with DG ENV	• Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and DG ENV (qualitative) • Degree of complexity of the coordination between EEA and DG ENV • Coordination mechanisms implemented. • Level of participation to the coordination mechanisms • Clear definition of tasks and roles to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps.	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops). • Analysis of 2021 IAS audit on "ENV-CLIMA relations with decentralised agencies" • Analysis of DG ENV action plan to address IAS audit conclusions. • Review of composition, objectives and tasks of the structured dialogue at Senior Management level, Intergroup, and Inter-Service Group for the coordination with the EEA.
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with DG CLIMA	• Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and DG CLIMA	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).

			• Degree of complexity of the coordination between EEA and DG CLIMA • Clear definition of tasks and roles to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps.	• Analysis of EEA support to climate legislation. • Review of DG CLIMA response to the IAS audit "ENV-CLIMA relations with decentralised agencies"
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with the JRC	• Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and the JRC • Clear definition of tasks and roles to ensure complementarity and avoid overlaps.	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops). • Review of EKC documents, including mandate and meeting reports. • Analysis of Commission Opinions on the EEA SPDs 2017-2021.
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with DG RTD	• Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and DG RTD • Initiatives to ensure complementarity and synergies with the EU Framework Research Programmes and avoid overlaps. • EEA participation in research projects.	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops). • Review of EKC documents, including mandate and meeting reports. • Analysis of Commission Opinions on the EEA SPDs 2017-2021.
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with Eurostat	• Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and Eurostat	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).

			• Mechanism to ensure complementarity of the respective work programmes and avoid overlaps.	• Review of EKC documents, including mandate and meeting reports. • Analysis of Commission Opinions on the EEA SPDs 2017-2021. • EEA founding Regulation 401/2009. • Review of Management Board decisions approving ESTAT work programmes (2017-2021).
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with other Commission DGs	• Number of other DGs with which the EEA interacts. • Degree of success of the coordination between EEA and other DGs • Degree of complexity of the coordination between EEA and other DGs.	• Analysis of EEA programming documents (SPDs and CAARs) outlining EEA tasks supporting other DGs. • Analysis of EEA agreements with other DGs. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The EEA has a cooperative and coherent approach with other decentralised agencies	• Number of other decentralised with which the EEA interacts. • Degree of involvement in the EU network of decentralised agencies.	• Analysis of EEA programming documents (SPDs and CAARs) outlining EEA tasks in collaboration with other EU agencies. • Review of EUAN

				documents. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
4.1.3.2 To what extent the EEA and Eionet ensure internal coherence?	EQ 20 To what extent are the non-core activities and core activities coherent with each other?	The non-core activities contribute to the objectives of the core tasks mandated by the founding Regulation.	• EEA core tasks (Article 2) • Number of activities financed by agreements with other DGs. • Scope of the objectives of non-core activities. • Risk of non-coherence between core and non-core activities (qualitative)	• Comparison of EEA core tasks (Regulation 410/2009) and tasks defined in agreements with other DGs. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The collaboration between the EEA and member countries is collaborative and coherent.	• Responsibilities and complementarity of task in the reporting process.	• Fitness Check Reporting and Monitoring of EU Environment Policy. • Ad-hoc information provided by the EEA DIS Programme on quality check and quality assurance procedures.
Added value				
4.2 What is the value added by the EEA and Eionet?	EQ 25 What is the European added value of the work done by the EEA and Eionet compared to what could have been achieved by the Member States at national and/or regional levels in its absence? What has been the impact of the EEA and Eionet on national, regional and local authorities? EQ 26 What is the EU added value of having	The EEA and Eionet produces comparable and high-quality data.	• EEA/Eionet data collection mechanisms. • Stakeholders' opinion on the comparability and quality of data produced (qualitative)	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The EEA and Eionet promotes information and knowledge sharing between	• Eionet coordination activities (meetings,	• Review of Eionet/NFP meeting documents.

	the EEA collaborating with countries that are not part of the EU in terms of acquis alignment and implementation as well as regional cooperation? EQ 27 What would be the consequences at EU level if the EEA and Eionet were terminated?	countries.	training sessions, etc.). • Stakeholders' opinion on the information and knowledge sharing promoted by EEA and Eionet (qualitative)	• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The EEA ensures a wider perspective on the state of the European environment.	• EEA scope of collaboration beyond EU Member States	• Review of Eionet/NFP meeting documents. • Review of the SOER 2020. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The EEA promotes capacity building and prepares countries for the EU accession.	• EEA's support to non-EU countries (Western Balkans and European Neighbourhood) • Eionet dataflows delivery of non-EU/candidate countries.	• Analysis of EEA agreements with DG NEAR (2017-2021). • Analysis of EEA activities with non-EU countries in programming documents (SPDs and CAARs) 2017-2021. • Analysis of Eionet Core Data Flows briefings 2017-2021. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
4.2.1 How did the EEA and Eionet add value by mainstreaming environmental objectives and producing impacts?	EQ 6 (2nd part) To what extent is the work of the EEA enabling the mainstreaming of the environmental and climate issues in other policy areas?	The EEA contributes to extending the importance of environmental considerations to other policy areas.	• EEA outputs used by other DGs (beyond the ones sitting in the MB) to develop policies / produce reports / inform internal	• Analysis of ad-hoc inputs on EEA products used by other DGs. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities

			processes. • Theme areas mentioning EEA products. • Number of EEA mentions in EU institutions documents.	(interviews, workshops). • Review of internal statistics of EEA Communication department. • Review of DODs quarterly reports 2017-2021.
Relevance				
4.3.1 How relevant the tasks and objectives of the EEA are in the current policy context?	EQ 18 To what extent is the work of the EEA and Eionet (both core and non-core activities) coherent with EU environmental policy priorities, such as reaching the zero pollution ambition, achieving climate neutrality, preserving and protecting nature and ecosystem and enhancing circular economy? EQ 21 To what extent are the EEA's objectives and mandate, as set out in the founding regulation and complementary legislation, still relevant and aligned with the current EU policy priorities? EQ 22 (1st and 3rd part) How far are the EEA's tasks and resources aligned with key EU policy priorities? To what extent is it possible to envisage a reprioritisation of certain tasks to make the Agency's work more relevant in the	The objectives of the EEA are aligned with and contribute to the current policy priorities.	• Degree of correspondence of Article 1 of the EEA Regulation with EGD objectives. • Degree of correspondence of the objectives defined in the MAWP 2014-2020, EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030 with EGD objectives. • Degree of correspondence of the objectives defined by the Eionet modernisation with EGD objectives.	• Comparison of EEA objectives defined in the Regulation and objectives defined in the European Green Deal Communication. • Comparison of EEA objectives defined in the MAWP 2014-2020, EEA-Eionet Strategy and objectives defined in the European Green Deal Communication. • Analysis of MB and Eionet documents related to Eionet modernisation. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).

	context of new policy priorities? EQ 23 To what extent have the EEA and Eionet shown flexibility, within the boundaries set by the founding regulation, and accommodated new tasks to respond to new policy priority needs? EQ 24 To what extent is the work of the EEA relevant for the stakeholders (EU institutions, policy makers, member countries, etc.) and the general public it aims to inform?	The tasks of the EEA are aligned with and contribute to the current policy priorities.	• Degree of correspondence of Article 2 of the EEA Regulation with EGD objectives and actions.	• Comparison of EEA tasks defined in the Regulation and objectives and actions defined in the European Green Deal Communication. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
		The areas of work of the EEA are aligned with and contribute to the current policy priorities.	• Degree of correspondence of Article 3(2) of the EEA Regulation with EGD actions. • Degree of correspondence of the work areas defined in the MAWP 2014-2020, EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030 with EGD actions. • Degree of correspondence of Eionet groups' work areas with EGD actions. • Degree of correspondence of the work areas of ETCs with EGD actions.	• Comparison of EEA areas of work defined in the Regulation and actions defined in the European Green Deal Communication. • Comparison of EEA areas of work defined in the MAWP 2014-2020, EEA-Eionet Strategy and actions defined in the European Green Deal Communication. • Review of Eionet groups' work areas. • Analysis of European Topic Centres' Terms of Reference. • Analysis of MB and Eionet documents related to Eionet modernisation.

				• Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).
4.3.2 To what extent do the EEA and Eionet implement the Common Approach on Decentralised Agencies?	EQ 19 To what extent are the Agency's mandate and activities, as defined in its founding regulation, coherent with the Common Approach to EU decentralised agencies?	The EEA is aligned and applies the principles defined in the Common Approach throughout its operations	• Degree of correspondence of the EEA Regulation with the Common Approach. • Degree of correspondence of the Management Board Rules of Procedure with the Common Approach. • Degree of correspondence of the Scientific Committee Rules of Procedure with the Common Approach. • Degree of correspondence of the Management Board Rules of Procedure with the Common Approach. • Degree of correspondence of the SPDs with the template and requirements defined in the Common Approach. • Degree of correspondence of the CAARs with the template and requirements defined in the Common Approach.	• Comparison of EEA Regulation and Common Approach on decentralised agencies. • Comparison of MB Rules of Procedure and Common Approach. • Comparison of EEA programming documents (SPDs and CAARs) 2017-2021 and Common Approach requirements.
4.3.3 Is the EEA and Eionet	EQ 18 To what extent is the work of the EEA	The EEA Regulation allows	• Degree of alignment of	• Critical analysis of all

Regulation still relevant?	and Eionet (both core and non-core activities) coherent with EU environmental policy priorities, such as reaching the zero pollution ambition, achieving climate neutrality, preserving and protecting nature and ecosystem and enhancing circular economy? EQ 19 To what extent are the EEA's mandate and activities, as defined in its founding regulation, coherent with the Common Approach to EU decentralised agencies? EQ 21 To what extent are the EEA's objectives and mandate, as set out in the founding regulation and complementary legislation, still relevant and aligned with the current EU policy priorities? EQ 22 (1st part) How far are EEA's resources/ tasks aligned with key EU policy priorities? EQ 23 To what extent have the EEA and Eionet shown flexibility, within the boundaries set by the founding regulation, and accommodated new tasks to respond to new policy priority needs? EQ 24 To what extent is the work of the EEA relevant for the stakeholders (EU institutions, policy makers, member countries, etc.) and the general public it aims to inform?	the EEA to respond to current policy priorities.	objectives, tasks and areas of work defined in the Regulation with the Green Deal priorities, tasks and objectives. • Degree of alignment of the Regulation with the Common Approach. • Degree of uptake of new tasks and requests not explicitly defined in the Regulation. • Definition of specific advantages and drawbacks of a revision process (qualitative).	elements and documents considered for the relevance section. • Review of stakeholder consultation activities (interviews, workshops).

ANNEX 4. OVERVIEW OF BENEFITS AND COSTS, AND SIMPLIFICATION AND BURDEN REDUCTION

Table 16: Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation

		Citizens/Consumers		EU level		National level	
		Quantitative	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**
Direct cost – financial contributions to the EEA's core budget	**Recurrent**	n/a	No cost for citizens – open and free access to EEA data and information	41.5 Mio EUR/a – 51.5 Mio/a in total of which: • EU contribution: 36.3 Mio EUR/a – 45.4 Mio EUR/a.	72% of the total budget is financed by the core budget including the EU contribution financed via the MFF (64% of the total budget). The figure is a range, as the EU contribution increased over the 5 years period.	Third countries contribution, which are direct contributions from non-EU countries (EFTA and candidate countries (Türkiye)): • 4 Mio EUR/a – 4.3 Mio EUR/a Other contributions (Switzerland): • 1.3 Mio EUR/a – 1.7 Mio EUR/a In addition, Member countries provides (in kind) contributions at national level (to the functioning of EIONET).	-
Redirected direct cost – financial contributions to the EEA's non-core budget	**Recurrent**	n/a	n/a	6.9 Mio EUR/a – 29 Mio EUR/a	28% of budget corresponds to 'non core' revenues from grants and agreements financed by other EU programmes.	n/a	n/a
Benefits associated to Specific Objective A. Inform EU environmental and climate policies and global commitments							
Delivery of high-level quality and comparable environmental data to	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	780 outputs, including 267 publications and 108 indicators made	Information is publicly available and freely accessible to	(see 4.1.1.1, 4.2.1) Delivery of a total of 780 outputs, including	Information is publicly available and freely accessible to	780 outputs, including 267 publications and 108 indicators made	Data collected through Eionet and harmonised at EU

inform policy making, citizens and other users		available on the website of the Agency.	any citizen or user (globally)	267 publications and 108 indicators relevant for EU policy making, with high delivery rate. SOER 2020 helped to shape EGD priorities. 36 publications referred to in major EGD initiatives. Number of mentions of EEA and its products in EU institutions documents increased by 237% between 2017 and 2021. 38% of publications directly linked to environmental and climate legal obligations, other publications useful to broader inform policies. In 2021, EEA supported 46 EU environmental and climate legislations and 123 Reporting Obligations (increased by 9% compared to 2016). Submission of data to	any EU institution, increasing interest by the European Parliament and Commission in EEA knowledge (4.2.1)	available on the website of the Agency	level inform the implementation of EU environmental and climate policies at national level. Publications and data are publicly available and freely accessible to any national administration

				5 international bodies (UNECE LRTAP and PRTR Protocol, Minamata Convention, UNFCCC and Montreal Protocol)			
EEA is a unique repository of European environmental data	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	Not quantified	Information is publicly available and freely accessible to any citizen or user (globally)	Data managed by the EEA increased by 250 times compared to 2002, in some cases data goes back to 1900. Data volume in 2017 was at around 162 MB and exceeded 20GB in 2021. The EEA operates 16 EU-wide policy information and knowledge platforms across various thematic areas.	The EEA maintains and archive European environmental data over long time period, allowing the comparability and long-term assessments which are important for EU policy making.	Not quantified	The fact that EEA maintains a repository of EU harmonised data is important for national policy makers and national organisations involved in the implementation of EU policies
Delivery of EU environmental data and knowledge that is relevant for EU cross-cutting policy making and allow benchmarking between countries	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	Not quantified	Information is publicly available and freely accessible to any citizen or user (globally)	Between 2017 and 2021, EEA delivered a total of 780 outputs, including 267 publications (of which 25 country factsheets) and 108 indicators relevant for EU policy making.	EEA delivers reports and comparable and harmonised data from member countries. Information is freely available and publicly accessible for European institutions involved in policy-making. The outputs inform	Between 2017 and 2021, the EEA delivered 25 country factsheets or country reports useful for comparing information between countries (e.g. on air Pollution, industrial pollution, bathing water quality, waste prevention	EEA delivers reports and comparable and harmonised data from member countries, used for benchmarking and raising quality standards. Information is freely available and publicly accessible for national administrations

					environmental and climate policies beyond reporting requirements (e.g. on circular economy, health and environment, biodiversity). Greater focus on systemic perspective in recent years. Information used for other EU policies (e.g. Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Regional, neighbourhood policies). (4.2.1)		engaging in policy-making at national/EU level
Benefits associated to Specific Objective B. Coordinate EIONET							
Exchange of knowledge and best practice among national experts in the member countries	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	EIONET encompasses the EEA and ca 400 national institutions from the 38 member countries, and 8 ETCs	EEA coordinates NFP/EIONET thematic workshops, and also, in the context of the ETCs, learning workshops for national experts.
Improved EIONET structure through the ongoing EIONET modernisation		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24 National Reference Centres replaced by 13 cross-cutting EIONET Groups aligned with EGD priorities	Better definition of roles between NFPs, EIONET group leads National data flows. Review and renewal of the ETCs aligned with EGD priorities
Improved reporting infrastructure and	**Direct benefit -**	n/a	n/a	n/a	Upgrading by EEA of the reporting	EIONET core data flows submission	Constant evolution of EEA reporting

processes	**Recurrent**				infrastructure (REPORTNET 3) and integration of 10 dataflows during the evaluation period. Use of standardised tools and methods, permitting collection of comparable data	rates high and improved (15 countries surpassing 90% target in 2021 vs 12 in 2016) (see 4.1.1.2)	infrastructure (REPORTNET 3) and use of standardised tools and methods, permitting collection of comparable data
Benefits associated to Specific Objective C. Conduct regular assessments on the state of environment							
SOER 2020 is a key flagship product influencing policy making and informing the public	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	The SOER 2020 generated over 6000 media entries within the first weeks of publication, ca. 5700 posts likes and comments on social media, ca 2700 post shares, 13700 post clicks and ca 69300 video views	Information is freely available and publicly accessible for interested citizens or stakeholder group (e.g. NGOs)	EEA stakeholder survey in 2020 showed that 54% of EU civil servants respondents recently consulted the SOER	Every 5 years the EEA and EIONET release the **Flagship report "State and Outlook of the Environment"** Report. The SOER 2020 released end of 2019 has systemic character that looks at **interlinkages with other policy** areas and provided important **data input to shaping the EGD. It also contributed to the development of EGD initiatives** In addition, Annual Environmental Indicators Reports (informing 7th EAP) were released between 2017 and 2019.	EEA stakeholder survey in 2020 showed that 47% of national civil servant's respondents recently consulted the SOER	Information is freely available and publicly accessible for national administrations engaging in policy-making at national/EU level.

Benefits associated to Specific Objective D. Inform public by ensuring access to environment and climate data							
Public and free access to data and knowledge on European environment	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	Increased number of social media followers (+150% between 2017 and 2021) and media coverage (+81%)	Efforts made by EEA to increase its outreach, to improve content accessibility and shift from traditional report to shorter briefings. New Communication strategy and website upgrade were launched.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Benefits associated to Specific Objective E. Make Full use of digitalisation to improve operations							
Facilitates reporting on EU environmental and climate legislation for Member States and manufacturers, reducing the burden associated with reporting for EU environmental and climate legislation	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	Not quantified	EEA reporting tools specifically set up for manufacturers to report data where foreseen in legislative acts, for example on CO2 emissions from cars and vans or on f-gases (Business Data Repository). This facilitates reporting for manufacturers, thus reducing their costs.	Not quantified	The EEA has set up a standardised reporting process, which allows for full understanding of the content and data requirements. In some instances, integrated reporting platforms have been set up that allow data to be reused for multiple purposes (e.g. WISE)	EIONET core data flows submission rates high and improved (15 countries surpassing 90% target in 2021 vs 12 in 2016) (see 4.1.1.2)	Constant evolution of EEA reporting infrastructure (REPORTNET) and use of standardised tools and methods, facilitating the collection of comparable data, and more automated processes (e.g. Quality Control)
Facilitates reporting on EU environmental and climate legislation, reducing the burden of delivering environmental and climate data to the UN and other international bodies	**Direct benefit - Recurrent**	n/a	n/a	Not quantified	The EEA collects information that is not only relevant for EU legislation but also for international reporting obligations like for example LRTAP, the Montreal Protocol or the UNFCCC.	n/a	n/a

Table 17: Simplification and burden reduction

PART I: savings already achieved						
	Citizens/Consumers/Workers		**EU institutions**		**National administrations**	
	Quantitative	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**
Efficiencies in data handling and reporting (systems)						
Recurrent	n/a	n/a	In this evaluation period, the EEA has increased its total commitment to supporting reporting obligations by 9% (a total of 123 reporting obligations in 2021 as contrasted to 113 in 2018). More than half of the reporting obligations for which EEA fully handles operations require substantial time (more than 3 months) and resources of exceeding 50,000 EUR. EEA involvement for these operations has notably increased for stages quality assurance, data processing, web presentation and report publication.	Through this, new reporting obligations were able to be integrated into existing systems, such as for example the reporting for the Drinking Water Directive into Reportnet 3 and WISE. This allows EEA/the Commission to make integrated assessments easily across different legislative acts (in this case Water Framework Directive, Bathing Water Directive, Urban Wastewater Directive and Drinking Water Directive)	In this evaluation period, the EEA has increased its total commitment to supporting reporting obligations by 9% (a total of 123 reporting obligations)	Through this, new reporting obligations were able to be integrated into existing systems, such as for example the reporting for the Drinking Water Directive into Reportnet 3 and WISE. This simplifies reporting for Member States that only have to report once into one system.
Contextual	n/a	n/a	Approximately 2 Mio EUR in previously committed mission budget was reassigned to different budget titles following Covid-19 travel restrictions	In 2020 and 2021, meetings foreseen in the context of the EEA were predominantly held online, allowing for faster and more frequent		

				interaction.		
PART II: Potential simplification and burden reduction						
	Citizens/Consumers/Workers		**EU institutions**		**National administrations**	
	Quantitative	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**	**Quantitative**	**Comment**
Potential for future efficiency gains in meetings and missions costs						
Potentially recurrent	n/a	n/a	Not quantified	It is expected that savings on meetings and missions occur also in the future through more frequent use of online meeting possibilities, however not to the extent as during the travel restrictions	n/a	n/a
Potential for future efficiency gains on modernisation of EEA workplace						
Potentially recurrent	n/a	n/a	Appropriate metrics needed to measure the costs of enhanced infrastructure and the benefits (	Further improve the in-house and teleworking infrastructure, usage of collaboration tools. Enhance the physical workplace in support to hybrid meeting facilities and collaborative spaces.	Not quantified	Establish a modernise infrastructure of communication with Eionet (e.g. enhanced collaboration tools)
Potential for future efficiency gains on digitalisation						
Potentially recurrent	n/a	n/a	It was noted that IT developments related to the Digitalisation framework might be resource intensive (IT infrastructure, IT developments and digital capacity building). It should	It is expected that future efficiencies will be gained through the full implementation of the Digitalisation Framework 2021-2031. Future efficiency gains were still	Appropriate metrics would be needed to measure the performance of Reportnet3 from Eionet perspective, e.g. additional data flows handled vs resources	It is expected that the further implementation of Reportnet 3 and modernisation of Eionet structure with reduce costs and burden of reporting for national

			be accompanied by appropriate metrics to adequately measure, monitor and steer the overall performance of EEA IT system	seen as possible through enhanced data infrastructure for handling growing dataflows and 'big data', the upgrade of underlying IT infrastructure, the further implementation of Reportnet 3 and interoperability with Eionet countries databases, the better integration between data from various sources (e.g. Citizen Science, Copernicus etc.) including integration of internal EEA platforms, the development of analytical tools and use of Artificial Intelligence		organisations, e.g. interoperability with MS databases, which will allow a more automatic access/retrieval of information from national databases, direct and automated reporting,

ANNEX 5. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTATION - SYNOPSIS REPORT

Introduction

This annex provides a summary of the various stakeholder consultation activities that were undertaken as part of the Study to support the evaluation of the European Environment Agency (EEA) and its EIONET 2017-2021. The various types of consultation activities are listed in the table below and are then presented in the different chapters.

Table 18: Consultation activities

Consultation	Dates
Call for evidence	25/04/2022 – 23/05/2022
Online survey	10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023
Workshops	07/12/2022 – 23/05/2023
In-depth interviews	08/02/2023 – 31/05/2023
Additional NFP interviews	13/02/2024 – 18/03/2024

Consultation strategy

Objectives

The objective of this consultation was to inform the Evaluation of the EEA and EIONET. The evaluation assesses the extent to which the EEA and EIONET have met their objectives of informing policymakers, the public and the scientific community on the state of the environment, and of providing Member States and cooperating countries with objective, reliable and comparable information at European level to enable evidence-based policy decision making. The evaluation also assesses how efficient the EEA and EIONET have operated, including how well they coordinated with each other, with the European Commission, and with other Agencies, and analysed whether resources were utilised in the most efficient way, and according to EU policy priorities. A focus was also placed on assessing the processes the Agency undertook to design the new EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030 and the progress made in 2021 towards the objectives set in the strategy. Other aspects covered by the evaluation comprise: relevance, coherence, and EU added value provided by EEA and EIONET.

A key objective of the consultation was to inform reflections on further policy development, including a potential re-alignment of the Agency's mandate to the new policy priorities through a revision of the founding regulation. The consultation process also analysed the international activities of EEA-EIONET, particularly in cooperating countries, Türkiye, and countries covered by the neighbourhood policy.

Stakeholders consulted, methods and tools

The consultation comprised a Call for Evidence, an online survey, four workshops, a meeting with DG Environment Directors, and in-depth interviews. The table below summarises the targeted consultation activities undertaken. For each activity, it indicates which stakeholders were targeted and how many responses were achieved.

Table 19: Consultation of stakeholders

	Workshops and meetings	Interviews	
Type of stakeholder	**Targeted**	**Target**	**Interviews conducted**
EEA Management Board and Bureau members	✓	12	11
EEA Senior Management and staff		15	17
EIONET National Focal Points (NFPs)	✓	10	8 (13)
EIONET representatives: European Topic Centres (ETCs)	✓	3	3
EEA Scientific Committee	✓	3	3
EC's DGs working with EEA	✓	23	29
EPA Network		5	1
Other EU Agencies and EUAN	✓	4	3
Members of the EP and the Council	✓	5	1
Interest groups (environmental/climate NGOs and others)	✓	0	1

Results of the consultation

Call for evidence

The Call for evidence feedback period concerning this evaluation was open for one month, between 25 April and 23 May 2022. During this period, a total of 13 submissions[61] were provided by stakeholders to the 'Have your say' website[62]. Half of these were submitted by civil society organisations (n=7), a few by EU citizens (n=4), one from an environmental organisation, and one from a European Citizen Initiative.

In total, fours of the papers touched upon topics directly relevant to the evaluation. In two papers it was mentioned that the EEA and EIONET provide great added value, as they bring together perspectives on environmental topics that are relevant to policymakers and scientists, and that therefore enable timely discussion. One area of improvement was mentioned. The health impact assessments for air pollutants that the EEA carries out were claimed by one of the papers to not always follow the latest scientific evidence, which can lead to underestimation of costs and impacts on vulnerable populations. The paper from a national environment agency also mentioned that cooperation between the EEA and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and DG RTD could be further improved. Furthermore, two submissions also provided direct considerations for the evaluation. It was mentioned that the policy impacts of

[61] 14 in total, with one position paper being submitted in two languages.
[62] See https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13365-European-Environment-Agency-2017-2021-performance-evaluation_en

the EEA's main deliverables (i.e. the SOER) should be investigated. Furthermore, it was flagged that the evaluation criteria used to evaluate the Agency are not relevant for assessing the EEA's quality of work, but rather its operational and economic performance.

The majority (n=8) of the papers submitted, however, addressed only topics that are not directly relevant to the evaluation. Instead, their focus was on the lack of work of the EEA in the field of neutral scientific information on risks from man-made electromagnetic field (EMF) pollution. Stakeholders believed the EEA's mandate should be expanded, in order to provide greater focus on this topic. One paper was not relevant to the work of the EEA and EIONET and/or the evaluation.

Online survey

The online survey ran from the 10th of February 2023 to the 28th of March 2023; within this period 52 respondents completed the survey. This was a lower than expected response rate, especially as regards 'external' stakeholders. The responses came in majority from the EEA staff (54%) which should be taken in account when analysing the results.

Table 20: Breakdown of survey respondents

	EEA Staff	European Commission staff	National environmental protection agencies	Other EU institutions	Other public organisations at the national or local level
Number of respondents (n = 52)	28	9	9	1	5
Percentage of respondents	54%	17%	17%	2%	10%

Source: Online Survey (10/2/2023 – 28/3/2023)

The survey covered a range of topics, including the performance of the EEA and EIONET against effectively delivering key objectives, policy priorities, and core activities, efficiently allocating resources, and overcoming challenges.

When asked how well the EEA and EIONET were able to meet key objectives, the majority of stakeholders (91% - 47 out of 52) found that the Agency and its network met the objective of providing reliable information at EU level; either 'very well' (58% - 30 out of 52) or 'quite well' (33% - 17 out of 52). Overall, large majorities of respondents reported that the EEA and EIONET had met each of their objectives either very well or quite well (e.g., only 4% (2 out of 52) respondents thought that the EEA and EIONET had not met the objective of 'providing environmental-related technical and scientific support to Member States and EEA cooperating countries', and 'ensuring that the public is informed about the state of the environment' 'well at all'). Comparing responses between EEA staff and others, it can be noted that in most cases EEA staff considered the EEA and EIONET to have met their objectives slightly better, with higher shares of EEA staff tending to agree objectives were met 'very well', whereas others would chose 'quite well' more often.

Stakeholders were subsequently asked how well the EEA and EIONET delivered core activities. The highest ranked activity was collecting data and preparing publications on the state of the environment in Europe (92% - 'very well' and 'quite well'), corresponding to 47 out of 51 respondents. This was closely followed by reporting on trends and prospects of the environment on a regular basis (88% - 'very well' and 'quite well'), corresponding to 45 out of 51 respondents, and by providing objective and reliable information at European level (88% - 'very well' and 'quite well'), corresponding to 45 out of 51 respondents. In contrast, 33% of survey respondents felt that developing and encouraging the application of environmental forecasting policies was either delivered 'not very well' (25%) or 'not well at all' (8%), corresponding to 13 out of 51 and 4 out of 51 respondents respectively.

With respect to the highest ranked delivery activity, i.e. collecting data and preparing publications on the state of the environment in Europe, the proportion of stakeholders who felt the EEA performed 'very well' in this aspect was lowest among Commission respondents (44% - 4 out of 9), followed by EEA staff (54% - 15 out of 28), and highest among other stakeholders (71% - 10 out of 14). Interestingly, while EEA staff was more likely to respond that the EEA and EIONET had delivered activities 'very well', they were also more likely to report that they had delivered activities 'not very well'.

The survey asked respondents about how well they feel the EEA supports four different EU environmental policies. The results suggest that all policies nearly equally supported, with a very small difference of only a few percentage points. The policy receiving the most support according to respondents was the Net Zero ambition; 37% felt it was 'very well' supported (19 out of 51 respondents), and 51% felt it was 'quite well' supported (22 out of 51). Likewise, 37% (19 out of 51) felt that enhancing the circular economy and net emissions of greenhouse gases were also 'very well' supported policies, and 43% (22 out of 51) felt that both policies were 'quite well' supported. Climate neutrality ranked first as a 'very well' supported policy (39% - 20 out of 51).

The evaluation period largely coincided with major contextual factors that may have affected EEA and EIONET's work, including Brexit, COVID-19, and the EU Green Deal. The majority of stakeholders (80%) felt that the EEA and EIONET dealt either 'very well' (37% - 19 out of 51 respondents) or 'quite well' (43% - 22 out of 51) with the COVID-19 pandemic, whilst they found that the Agency and its network dealt the least well with changing political priorities at national level in EEA member countries; 24% selected either 'not very well' (16% - 8 out of 51) or 'not well at all' (8% - 4 out of 51). Additionally, only 2% (1 out of 51) found the EEA and EIONET's to have responded to this challenge 'very well'.

To gain insight on the relevance of the EEA, respondents were asked how relevant a selected number of EEA publications were. The most valued publication was the Environmental Indicator Report published in 2018, with 93% of respondents indicating that it was either 'very relevant' (73% - 37 out of 51) or 'quite relevant' (20% - 10 out of 51) to them. The least relevant publication was found to be The EU Emissions Trading System in 2021, which was found either 'very relevant' (33% - 17 out of 51) or 'quite relevant' (33% - 17 out of 51) by about two thirds of respondents (66%). Overall, we found that the most relevant publication

for the EU Commission was the Environmental indicator report 2018, where 93% of participants found it either 'very relevant' (73% - 37 out of 51) or 'quite relevant' (20% - 10 out of 51). Looking at the different audience, we found that the least relevant publication for the EU Commission was the Progress towards preventing waste in Europe (2021), where 33% (3 out of 9) of respondents found it to be 'not very relevant', whilst for the EEA, amongst the least relevant publications was the Environmental indicator report 2018, where 14% of respondents found it to be either 'not very relevant' (11% - 3 out of 28) or 'not relevant at all' (4% - 1 out of 28).

Finally, stakeholders were asked whether they consider the financial and human resources allocated to the EEA as sufficient, or whether the Agency is over or under resourced. The resources allocated through grant agreements were considered to be sufficient by 39% (18 out of 46) of respondents. In contrast, resources allocated through government grants (core contribution) and human resources, were considered to be under-resourced by half of survey respondents (52% - 24 out of 46 and 50% - 23 out of 43, respectively).

Workshops

Four workshops were held to inform the evaluation:

- A one-day workshop with the EEA Management Board was held in Copenhagen on 7 December 2022. It was attended by 33 members of the Management Board, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG ENV in an observer capacity. Following the workshop, a member of the study team observed the Management Board meeting on 8 December 2022.
- A one-day workshop with the National Focal Points (NFPs) and European Topic Centres (ETCs) was held on 28 February 2023, in Copenhagen. It was attended by 49 NFPs and ETCs Directors, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG Environment in an observer capacity. Following the workshop, two members of the study team observed the EEA-EIONET day on 1 March 2023.
- An online workshop with the EEA Scientific Committee, lasting approximately 2.5 hours, was held on 7 March 2023. It was attended by 13 members of the Scientific Committee, as well as representatives of the EEA and DG Environment in an observer capacity.
- An online workshop with external stakeholders, lasting 1.5 hours, was held on 23 May 2023. It was attended by 10 representatives of civil society organisations, business associations and other EU agencies, as well as 4 representatives of DG Environment and the EEA.

Workshop with Management Board

The workshop with the Management Board was held on 7 December 2022. It included the following sessions:

- A plenary discussion, following up on the lessons learned from the previous evaluation,

- A breakout session, where participants were divided into three groups, discussing questions related to either effectiveness, efficiency or relevance and EU-added value, and
- A plenary discussion to summarise and complement the outputs of the breakout sessions.

The Management Board actively engaged with the previous evaluation (2018) and acted on its recommendations. This includes a clarification of the responsibilities of the Board and the Bureau, the launch of the EIONET modernisation process, and improved coordination between the EEA and the European Commission.

The Management Board considers the EEA to be meeting its objectives and deems the EEA's products of high quality. In particular, the EEA is seen as playing an important role in developing the evidence base for policy. For example, the SOER was instrumental in the development of the EGD as it provided the framing and rationale for it. The EEA purposely adapted the timing of its publication to increase its impact and coincide with the policy discussion. In addition, the Board noted that the EEA's approach to communicating data and outputs to various stakeholders improved over time, as exemplified by the efforts put into the launch of the SOER 2020.

Resource constraints (budgetary as well as staff time) and the wider political landscape were identified as the main constraints to the EEA's effectiveness (albeit resources increased in 2020). This is, in some cases, exacerbated by lack of resources at national level. Nevertheless, the Board considered that the EEA used the resources at its disposal efficiently. The EEA's governance structure and processes were also deemed efficient.

The Board agreed that the EEA and EIONET fulfilled crucial roles for the EU. They underlined the importance of having an organisation that collates and synthesises environmental data at the European level in order to understand the state of the environment in Europe and thus be able to design and implement effective environmental and climate policies. Reports such as the SOER, or publications on the circular economy, provided a blueprint to follow but also by providing the necessary data and evidence to support policy making – particularly for smaller member countries.

Workshop with NFPs and ETCs

This workshop was attended by 48 participants, including National Focal Points (NFPs) from Member States, non-EU countries and cooperating countries, and Directors of Environmental Topic Centres (ETCs). The workshop was divided into two main parts: i) plenary, during which the modernisation process of EIONET and the use of digital tools was discussed; and ii) three break-out sessions, on effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance and added value of the EEA and EIONET.

Regarding the **modernisation process**, there was general agreement that the process has helped to improve the relations between the EIONET and the Management Board. The NFPs also reported that there has been an improvement to access to information that is important to

their work. However, at the same time, they also reported struggling to find the right experts and that some experts become overloaded, with too many tasks. Regarding the **use of digital tools**. These are being used mainly in relation to topics of air and/or urban land and soil. However, lack of resources was given as a reason for limited utilisation of digital tools. Furthermore, stakeholders also welcomed the changes to Reportnet 3.0.

Regarding **effectiveness**, stakeholders recognised that the comparability of data has improved as a result of the quality checking (and other actions) of the EEA. In terms of impact of the EEA's work at national level; this has improved though this could be further enhanced, especially in terms of visibility of the EEA at national level and general public awareness of the EEA. Regarding NFP's awareness of the of EEA's strategic documents, it was reported that EEA member countries get to view and express their opinions on the strategic documents through the NFPs and the Management Board; however, generally speaking, EEA's strategic documents (mainly, multi-annual programmes) often remain very general, and it is difficult to understand what the final outcomes of the strategies will be. The view here was that the EEA could allow member countries to be more involved in the detailed development of strategies and long-term plans. The EEA's performance during the Covid 19 pandemic was perceived as positive.

Regarding **efficiency** of the EIONET modernisation process, participants thought that a number of aspects were going well. For example, the EIONET now enjoys improved visibility, especially at national level. It has also resulted in better alignment of EIONET's work with EU's policy priorities and improved integration of data into knowledge. EIONET members also now enjoy improved interaction among each other. However, some participants reported having experienced some challenges, e.g. there are some coordination issues and unclarity on the description of roles of EIONET group leads.

On **relevance and EU added value**, stakeholders agreed that the EEA and its EIONET has been and remains a highly relevant and useful organisation in relation to current EU's policy priorities and policy making. At the same time, it was pointed out by one participant that the EEA is lowering its focus on collecting data, which is one its primary tasks. Regarding the EEA's Founding Regulation, stakeholders remain up-to-date and is flexible enough to accommodate new and emerging topics and policy priorities, though with a better specification of the EIONET and ETCs.

Workshop with the Scientific Committee

The workshop with the Scientific Committee took place on 7 March 2023. The workshop covered three main sessions: (a) The role of the Scientific Committee, (b) the impact, relevance and added value of the EEA and EIONET for the scientific and academic community, and (c) the EEA and EIONET's capacity to adapt to new circumstances, challenges, and technologies.

Participants explained that the role of the Scientific Committee is to provide opinions upon the EEA's request. In their view, the EEA takes the Scientific Committee's opinions seriously, and generally implements them. They saw their role as complimentary to the EEA's

expertise. Some Scientific Committee members indicated that the EEA could engage more with the Scientific Committee as regards suggestions – for example, by justifying the rejection of the Scientific Committee's suggestions on the work programmes. Positive views were expressed on the involvement of the Scientific Committee along with other institutions (such as DG RTD or the JRC) in workshops. It should be noted that the SC Chair attends the meetings of the MB and Bureau, and reports to the MB at each meeting on SC activities and plans.

Positive comments were also made around the publications and data produced by the EEA, but some participants saw room for improvement in terms of dissemination and presence in scientific journals. Concerns were expressed about the fact that the EEA data does not comply with FAIR principles[63]. Whilst data visualisation is useful for the general public, the EEA's data format is often unsuitable for scientific use – although it was recognised that the scientific community may not be the EEA's primary target audience.

As regards the general management and operation of the EEA, participants expressed positive opinions about the way it adapted to the COVID-19 challenges, both in terms of operations and of research outputs. In particular, the EEA produced relevant documents on COVID-19 and its links with environmental issues.

Resource constraints were mentioned: according to participants, the 2020 budget increase is insufficient to cover the additional tasks that the Agency is now carrying out. Limited resources also hinder the use of technologies, especially artificial intelligence.

Workshop with external stakeholders

The online workshop with external stakeholders took place on 23 May 2023. Two main topics were discussed, first of all, the influence and target of EEA's work and outputs and, two, impact of EEA's work on policies and politics.

During the first session stakeholders provided feedback regarding their individual experiences cooperating with the EEA. Generally speaking, stakeholders were very positive regarding their individual collaborations. As to the use of EEA's outputs, most stakeholders flagged that the EEA's outputs are very relevant to their work, as it serves as an important and reliable source of information. Regarding the EEA's audience and users of their outputs, stakeholders agreed that while the EU institutions (including certain agencies) remain the EEA's main client, policymakers more broadly speaking are also the EEA's audience. As such, there was a suggestion that the EEA could provide outputs that are better tailored to national policy makers, in terms of length and language (e.g. short policy briefs with visuals), which could be released around key policy debates.

During the second session it was suggested that the EEA cooperates more with EU accession countries, to ensure their environmental data are prepared. Furthermore, stakeholders also thought it useful that EEA's scope of work be expanded into socio-economic issues, for

[63] Data is FAIR when it adheres to principles of findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability.

example in relation namely social cost benefit analysis of technological and policy innovation or for registration of pharmaceuticals. Stakeholders also touched upon overlap between EEA's work and the work of other organisations. Here, the work of the JRC was briefly mentioned, however it was recognised that the stakeholders' understanding is that the EEA mainly collects data and the JRC conducts studies (science for policy analyses). As such, while there may be an overlap in topics, there is a clear split in work.

Inputs provided by EU Agencies

The workshop was also the main event during which inputs from EU decentralised agencies and other bodies have been collected. Inputs from the following bodies have been collected: European Banking Authority (EBA), European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), European Medicines Agency (EMA), European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) and European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The summaries of their inputs have been integrated into the section above. Nevertheless, some specific aspects raised by the representatives of EU Agencies touched upon their respective experiences working with the EEA, suggestions on the topics and/or policy areas that the EEA could be looking into or the impact of EEA's outputs on their work.

Meeting with DG Environment Directors

On 1 February 2023 there was an online meeting held with DG Environment Directors. The meeting was attended by nine participants from Units A through F.

First, the effectiveness of the Agency was discussed and representatives from different Directorates shared specific examples of how their work benefited from the work of the EEA. These examples included EEA work in the areas of biodiversity, zero pollution, circular economy, waste and the 8th EAP. There was praise for both the work/reports presenting the data, and for their work in analysing the numbers. Some concern was raised about cases, mainly in the past, where the EEA pointed out they found it difficult to meet all DG ENV's needs due to lack of resources, but this issue was reported as having improved over time and appears to be resolved. There was also a positive view on the fact that there appeared to be an increase in the level of interest in the EEA (and the environmental data it holds) from a wider range of DGs, (DG AGRI and DG GROW were mentioned) which is a positive example of environmental mainstreaming, although mainstreaming was not a formal role for the EEA, but it was recognised as being involved in that it can provide the . One director felt that at times some of what the EEA does is not in line with the EC's political agenda and strategy.

Another aspect discussed was the coherence and coordination between the EEA and DG ENV. Here, examples of the work through the Environment Knowledge Community (EKC, including DG ENV, DG CLIMA, JRC, DG RTD, ESTAT, EEA, DG AGRI, DG DEFIS) were mentioned. The coordination of work between JRC, EEA, and Eurostat is mainly discussed at the ISG on EEA Coordination. Some overlap between the EEA and the JRC was mentioned, but this was felt to be expected as they are dealing with similar issues and that the processes in place (the EKC, the ISG plus interactions between officers and managers) to deal

with this typically works. The high-level differentiation was described as the EEA mainly focussing on monitoring and JRC mainly focussing on forward looking topics.

Lastly, the relevance of the EEA was discussed. The EGD was highlighted as being key to the EEA, and central to their current strategy. The flexibility of the EEA in being able to consider new issues to match the EGD was praised, but it was also recognised that this has stretched their resources and led to some tensions over prioritisation of tasks.

Interviews

Effectiveness

Out of the 11 interviews conducted with the EEA Management Board (MB), the majority made very positive remarks on the overall performance of the EEA and EIONET for the evaluation period 2017-2021. According to interviewees, the internal performance of the Agency, defined by number of outputs, knowledge dissemination, and accessibility of information, was very good, and the tasks it set as well as its reporting obligations were all well achieved. The EEA was described as responding well to the key policy objectives of the EU, and its contribution to the achievements of the UNFCCC and CBD were also noted. It was further mentioned that the Agency had very capably undertaken and delivered additional tasks and has been flexible in doing so. The EEA was described as growing and progressively becoming more relevant; the latter was partly attributed to the EGD, but the increased relevance was mostly seen as the result of its good performance. However, it was pointed out by some interviewees that issues around timelines of reporting (of the underlying data) often result to a one-year delay in publishing the reports, making them unsuitable for national policymaking. Interviewees felt that where possible, the EEA should provide additional support to Member States' policy implementation approaches. Additionally, as the majority of reports are published in English, accessibility is restricted.

Commission representatives held very similar opinions to the EEA MB, in terms of relevance, progress reports, achieving objectives and publishing other outputs in a very effective manner. Additional points were made around the Agency's role in providing and interpreting data and comparable information upon which DGs rely to inform relevant assessments, policies and reporting, such as on air pollution and water policies. Most interviewees also referred to the positive interaction and good communication with the EEA, and emphasized on the high quality of information that the Agency provides. There was only one mention of finding it difficult to locate the desired data.

NFPs held similar views as above. Whilst interviewees placed emphasis on how well the EEA gathers data, and through its assessment of environmental data provides a benchmark, one NFP noted that information around the data provided could be clearer, and another NFP found that occasionally, the development of indicators could be improved. Overall, the Agency received very positive comments for their response during COVID-19. In contrast to the DGs' perception of the Agency's involvement in raising public awareness, NFPs found that the EEA was involved in several public events designed to disseminate knowledge; however, EIONET's visibility was still considerably lower. Finally, NFPs found that as environmental

legislation increasingly stems from the EU, the work of the EEA allows Member States to stay at the forefront of knowledge.

EEA Senior Management and Staff also provided positive feedback on the performance of the Agency and its consistency in delivering its commitments, further adding that its response to the period of austerity was very effective. According to interviewees, the number of mentions by stakeholders has grown considerably since 2016, whilst satisfaction with the Agency and its work remains high. One interviewee noted that the biggest challenge faced by the EEA is digitalization and the ability to reach varied audiences; the latter was attributed to the lack of resources dedicated to this and the accessibility of information.

Views of the representatives from the ETCs, Scientific Committee, the EPA network and other stakeholders of the EU Parliament, were also in line with the rest of the interviewees on the performance of the EEA. The positive engagement between the EEA and stakeholders, along with the Agency's responsiveness were emphasized, and so was the SOER and its effect on policy development. Representatives from these groups of stakeholders agree that data could be more accessible for the general public and policymakers alike.

Efficiency

Members of the Management Board confirmed that the EEA was working efficiently, with some giving credit in particular to its dedicated staff and to the close cooperation with Member States and their experts. The EEA was seen to deliver many benefits, amongst which policy information, information about the state of the environment in Member States, the ability of Member States to benchmark each other, and data handling and reporting. It was also acknowledged throughout that the EEA was constantly looking for synergies, and the development process of the SOER and of the EEA-EIONET strategy 2021-2030 were provided as positive examples for this. Regarding the adequacy of resources, it was noted however that resources were at their limit, and that new tasks will have to come with new resources. It was welcomed though in general that this seemed to have become current practice now. Regarding human resources, several MB members reported the lack of administrative staff. The EEA's governance structure was seen as largely adequate but some noted room for improvement – on the one hand regarding the interaction of the MB and the Bureau, and the involvement of the MB in decision-making and priority setting, and on the other regarding Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). These were largely seen as an improvement to the governance system, but some felt that more KPIs could be justified if carefully selected and tailored to the Agency.

Commission representatives also felt in general that the EEA was working efficiently, and that the EEA delivered many benefits similar to those mentioned by other stakeholder groups. Two benefits were highlighted in particular – one, the role of the EEA as data repository, and second the training and support that the EEA delivered to Member States in data reporting. The EEA's role in reporting procedures and data handling was especially valued amongst Commission staff. Commission representatives also felt that the Commission by itself would not be able to undertake the work that EEA does due do different staff profiles and due to the

fact that EEA was seen to be more flexible in adjusting its operations. Several noted also that in-house staff in EEA was preferable than outsourcing work to consultancies due to continuity. This was also seen true for the IT area, where otherwise EEA would lose its technical expertise. Commission staff highlighted some external barriers to delivery outside of the control of the Agency – the EEA was independent on external input for data, and sometimes legislative requirements also set high expectations or required adjustments of data sets. It was noted though in general that the EEA was looking for synergies, for example with the Business Data Repository. Information as to the synergistic potential use of data was seen as desirable as this would help in defining and justifying new resource requirements. Regarding resources, some felt they were adequate, others stated that the EEA was operating at their limit. In general, it was acknowledged that new tasks should also require new resources. It was state however that for each increase justification was necessary, and prioritization within EEA seem difficult. Since the EGD, demand towards the EEA had gone up and many more DGs were now interested in collaboration. The increase in resources was seen by some stakeholders as having had a minimal effect on the LIFE budget, as the LIFE budget itself had increased. The lack of administrative staff was also noted.

NFPs saw the EEA working efficiently, commending in particular the reporting procedures and data handling. EEA was looking for synergies, though a few felt that more could be done if more resources were available, in particular in the area of data management and business operations. It was welcomed that new staff was allocated to new tasks.

EEA staff saw the Agency as working efficiently, in particular regarding reporting procedures and data handling, with some room for improvement regarding the imbalance between operational and administrative staff, decision-making processes and better alignment internally regarding delivery of the EEA-EIONET strategy. The period of austerity was a period where activities had to stop, but it was also a learning period for more efficiency gains, where greater focus was put on indicator sets than on elaborate and comprehensive reports, or more efficiency in how data is collected or processed. It was confirmed that the EEA was constantly looking for synergies. By now, the EEA was processing 250 times more data than in 2002. Reportnet 3 was seen as a decisive tool for data collection and data quality checks, and in future interoperability with Member States databases should lead to automatic reporting. IT held more potential for efficiency gains; however, costs were expected to be high. It was also noted though that the ability to process more data went at the expense of the administrative staff. The period had not seen an increase in administrative staff but in fact a decrease (both in relative terms as well as absolute terms). EEA staff also reported that networking had become more efficient due to Covid-related travel restrictions and that the funds could thus be allocated to other areas. Regarding resources, EEA staff highlighted that since the EGD, demand and interest towards the Agency had gone up considerably, not only from the Commission but also from other institutions. However, the imbalance between operational and technical staff brought with it high stress levels on the administrative staff – first caused by the austerity period and Covid, later through increased demands and expectations. These developments were also reflected in the staff satisfaction survey. Regarding governance, decision-making in the MB was seen as sometimes inefficient but in

the nature of the organisation (network, many involved in decision-making), and that KPIs already fulfilled their purpose and that it was questionable whether an expansion would bring added value.

SC members' views were generally in line with what was reported above – EEA was working efficiently, benefits were many and hard to monetise, demand had increased on the EEA through the Green Deal and the SOER, and in general it was welcomed that new tasks would come with new resources. The imbalance between operational and technical staff was also noted. However, the SC felt that more could be done in terms of synergies between the EEA and the SC with regard to SC input to EEA products, or the attendance of EEA technical staff of SC meetings. Regarding governance, the SC saw their own structure as adequate and praised in particular the rotation principle. MB and SC could make more effort in working closer together.

Views from other stakeholder groups were similar as to those reported above. Other agencies acknowledged the efficient ways of working of the EEA and noted that greater demand was also due to the fact that legislation became more and more horizontal, and that EEA was not an isolated case in this regard. ETCs in addition brought examples for multiple use of data and saw need for sustainable improvement in EEA internal budgeting.

Coherence

Overall, the sentiments expressed by the DGs working with the EEA/members of the inter-service group highlight both positive aspects of coordination and collaboration, as well as challenges and areas for improvement. One recurring issue is the relationship between the EEA and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). Coordination between the EEA and JRC is generally viewed positively, with good personal relationships and complementary expertise. However, there are tensions regarding strategic direction and potential overlap in their roles. Efforts are being made to improve coordination, particularly through regular meetings and guidance on competence and responsibilities. However, DGs working with the EEA/members of the inter-service group note that clearer guidance on these competence and responsibilities, roles and responsibilities, task divisions as well as improved visibility and resource management, is still necessary in order to further improve the collaboration efforts. The relationship with the European Statistical Office (ESTAT) is described as more complex. While there is quite a bit of work collaboration on certain areas such as SDG indicators and follow-up, air pollution, and greenhouse gas statistics, there have been overlaps and duplication of work. One specific example mentioned is the development of the SDG indicators. Efficiency and coordination within the EEA are also mentioned as areas for improvement. The complexity of the reporting system involving multiple actors, such as the EEA core team, Environmental Topic Centres (ETCs), DG ENV staff, and external consultants, has led to inefficiencies in the past but there was recognition that these are slowly improving.

The interviews with EEA Management Board members showed that the Board also recognises the potential benefits of closer collaboration with the JRC, harmonisation of

reporting at the intra-national level, and improved delineation of roles and responsibilities. Similar to the DGs working with the EEA, the Management Board recognised potential for more collaboration between the EEA and the Joint Research Centre (JRC). Board members saw an opportunity to benefit from the JRC's work through cooperation between National Focal Points (NFPs) and the EEA as a focal point. They emphasised the need to utilise the JRC's infrastructure and capacity for regional-informed research and the development of tools for environmental monitoring. The use of remote sensing and AI technologies, in particular, can improve data quality and methodology, providing more up-to-date information about changes in land use. Coordination between the EEA and Eurostat is already established through close coordination of their work programs. However, coordination with the JRC is described as complex and only recently (after the end of the evaluation) discussed at the management board level at the occasion of their visit to the JRC. Overlaps with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) were mentioned but not extensively discussed. The stakeholders here showed a sentiment that coordination issues should be addressed within the EEA's individual teams rather than at the management board level.

Sentiments and observations from EEA senior management and staff painted a similar picture to DGs and Management Board observations, in that there were areas of effective cooperation and synergies with other organisations such as ECHA, EFSA, ECDC, but that challenges and overlaps in roles and responsibilities with JRC and ESTAT remained. Particularly issues related to funding mechanisms, resource allocation, and clarity of roles need to be addressed for improved coherence. Regarding the distinction of roles between the EEA and other organisations, there is generally a clear understanding, but some areas of overlap and duplication exist. The EEA has a long-standing cooperation with JRC and ESTAT, particularly in the context of data reporting. The exchange of expertise and cross-checking of data contribute to the quality of the EEA's work. Generally, however, senior management also noted that the cooperation and coordination with other organisations could be improved to lead to further mutual benefits.

NFPs' and ETCs' responses further pointed to certain overlaps and an occasional lack of coherence between the JRC and the EEA. While the lines between the EEA and JRC is not always clear, stakeholders suggest that this should be discussed among the relevant parties, particularly between the EEA, JRC, and DG ENV. They also noted that there is a need for improved information exchange between the EEA, and the European Commission (including JRC and Eurostat) to clarify their respective tasks and divisions of responsibility. While challenges and overlaps remain in certain instances, NFPs and ETC recognized the efforts made by the EEA to ensure coherence in its core and non-core activities, as well as with other organisations.

Relevance

EEA Management Board members, first of all, provided inputs on regarding the relevance of the EEA and its outputs to the general public. It was recognised that the general public is not the main client of the EEA. Nevertheless, there is an added value of the public having access to the EEA's outputs and stakeholders believed there would be no harm in further outreach.

There is a room for improvement in reaching out to the younger generations. They also expressed their views regarding the alignment of EEA's tasks with current policy priorities of the EU. They thought them to be well aligned with the objectives of the Green Deal and that all relevant topics are covered. They also did not generally see the need to revise the Founding Regulation, because of its broad formulation it remains wide enough to accommodate the new policy priorities stemming from the Green Deal. The MB members also explained that consideration of EU policy priorities could be better considered during prioritisation of tasks, though it was recognised that this has improved over the evaluation period.

The opinion on alignment of the EEA's tasks with policy objectives was shared by the EEA Senior Management and staff. They also thought this alignment has improved since the modernisation process. In terms of topics, the EEA staff saw a lot of room for additional topics, but expressed that choices have to be made due to budgetary constraints. The opinions of senior EEA staff and management regarding the reopening were somewhat divided. They saw some added value in revising (e.g. possibility to recognise all EEA's activities or specific recognition of climate policy), though were also cautions of the unexpected outcomes of political negotiations if reopened. With regards to prioritisation of tasks, the EEA staff expressed that coordination efforts between DG ENV and the EEA to prioritise tasks have not always been fruitful.

Representatives of European Commission DGs directly working with the EEA / members of the Inter-Service Group also expressed views on the relevance of the EEA's outputs for its stakeholders. They were generally happy with the EEA's outputs and considered them relevant and impactful for their work. Specific examples where the EC directly relied on the EEA's outputs, for example when revising specific EU legislation (e.g. in the area of LULUCF or CO2 emissions performance), preparing a guidance on how to implement a new implementing act of the Governance Regulation or developing a data inventory, which served as a basis for the Effort Sharing Regulation. Furthermore, the SOER has also been recognised several times by stakeholders as the most important and impactful output of the EEA. The report reaches a large audience at all levels of policy making. It raises interest in policy topics beyond the EEA's core topics (environment and climate), for example agriculture. Similar opinions regarding the revision of the Founding Regulation as by the EEA Senior Management and staff were shared by Commission staff. The EC staff was also rather positive on how adaptable, constructive, proactive and open to dialogue to accommodate new tasks the EEA is.

NFPs were of the opinion that there is a good alignment of the EEA's tasks with the policy priorities and that the EEA is very reactive to policy developments. They also touched upon the alignment of EIONET and the policy priorities stemming from the EGD. Furthermore, in relation to the relevance of the EEA's outputs, it was also mentioned that they consider themselves as users of the EEA's outputs (without any further details). The NFPs did not see the need to reopen the Founding Regulation.

Other stakeholders (NGOs) also recognised the relevance of the EEA for their own work, specifically it provides verified data from trustworthy sources, which is helpful when making a case for calls for action towards policy makers.

EU added value

Interviewees from the EEA Management Board considered the EEA to facilitate a comprehensive information system for the EU as a whole, providing reporting and a unique platform of information. They mentioned the added value of having a single agency providing comparable data for all member states. Interviewees in this stakeholder group further mentioned EEA as providing opportunity for knowledge-sharing between member states, contributing to the framing of environment and climate as global issues.

EEA Senior Management and staff were also positive on the EU added value provided by the Agency. They saw this primarily in the EEA's ability to provide the data that allows for benchmarking and tracking the performance of member countries, by providing a common framework. As such, the interviewees raised the consistency in environmental and climate data provided by EEA as an important added value, to enable a comparison across Europe. The value of the EEA and its work with non-EU countries was also mentioned in this group, where several people however also highlighted that this could be taken further.

NFPs reported similar perception of EU added value. They mentioned how the EEA fulfilled a function that would be difficult for the European Commission to perform on its own. Some of the interviewees further highlight the added value of the EEA in its cooperation with non-EU countries, such as those in the Western Balkan, which contributes to the integration of these countries into the community and also supports candidate countries in working towards adopting the environmental acquis. Among interviewees from the ETCs, the added value of comparison, harmonisation, and knowledge-sharing that the EEA brings was highlighted. These notions were also echoed by interviewees from the Scientific Committee, interviewees from other EU agencies and the EU Agency Network, as well as by a representative of the EPA Network.

Stakeholders in the European Commission directly working with the EEA were equally positive on the EU added value of the Agency, further stating the benefits of having a common EU agency, including in the context of collaboration with international organisations (even if the EEA does not hold a mandate to push for green diplomacy).

ANNEX 6. EEA OUTPUTS

Physical or electronic publication products: between 2017 and 2021, the EEA produced 267 publications to inform policymaking and the public. EEA's publications include recurrent and ad-hoc publications that focus on specific environmental themes, sectors, and cross-cutting themes (outlined in the section on indicators below) and are often produced to provide an updated assessment of the current state of play.

Core indicators: A total of 109 indicators across environmental themes (air pollution, biodiversity/ecosystems, climate change adaptation and mitigation, soil, water and marine environment), sectors (agriculture, energy, transport) and cross cutting-themes (environment and health, industry, sustainability transitions, land use, resource efficiency and waste) have been identified by the EEA. Creating a core set of indicators works towards improving the quality and coverage of data flows in the EU as it provides a common list of indicators to collect. This aids comparability and strengthens accuracy of data collected by Member States while also streamlining contributions to other indicator initiatives across the world. Furthermore, it provides a manageable and stable basis for indicator-based assessments of progress against environmental policy priorities and on the implementation of EU environmental legislation. Indicators are monitored and updated data on is published on an annual basis. This allows the EEA (and other entities accessing the data) to analyse and report on developments/trends in particular environmental fields, including whether or not policy objectives and quantitative targets are on track to be achieved. Other knowledge providers such as the JRC or ESTAT also produce indicators in related fields (e.g., ESTAT's indicators on circular economy and waste management and JRC's indicator on consumption footprint), requiring coordination to ensure alignment and consistency.

Datasets: A total of 186 datasets across all environmental indicator themes (outlined above) are produced by the EEA and made available to its audience through its website. This includes seven policy instrument templates used in the interpretation and analysis of datasets. The EEA website also displays a series of interactive datasets and static graphs across environmental themes to aid interpretation.

Maps: A range of infographics, interactive maps and static maps are produced by the EEA and displayed publicly on its website.

Databases: The EEA has developed a range of online platforms and resources used to share specialised data and information with the Community and member countries. Examples include Natura 2000, the Air Quality index, Climate adapt and E-PRTR.

Data flows: EIONET core data flows are a subset of existing key data flows evaluated and used by the EEA for its main assessments, products, and services. They are agreed upon by the Management Board and reported by EEA member and cooperating countries using Reportnet tools.

Communication: Physical or electronic publication products and data are disseminated and communicated directly to a range of stakeholders, including policy makers, industry and

citizens. This takes place through activities such as the publication and dissemination of reports, provision of data using Reportnet tools and sharing of other outputs through a variety of channels and EEA presentations given in different fora, but also other awareness raising activities such as collaboration and engagement with stakeholder groups and other organisations and institutions. They are also made publicly accessible through the internet and the EEA's social media accounts.

Support: Technical and scientific support provided to the European Union, and member countries to assist in the monitoring of environmental measures. Activities include monitoring and reporting on environmental indicators, such as air pollution, climate change adaptation and mitigation and land use and soil, but also direct, ad-hoc support to policy makers and regular contact with European Commission stakeholders to inform decision making processes. It is also important to reflect here the EEA's role in convening expertise and knowledge, i.e., facilitating the sharing of best practice through working with a vast range of stakeholders, including experts, industry and the EIONET.

Table 21: Breakdown of outputs per Activity and available information

Activities	Specific Outputs	Available information
A.1. Collect, process and analyse data and information stemming from EU environmental and climate reporting obligations	Reporting Obligations supported by the EEA and EIONET. Data flows handled by EEA and EIONET.	Number of Reporting Obligations supported by the EEA Number of data flows, KPI on the management of core data flows
A.1 Generate and disseminate indicators, reports, briefings to support policy implementation	Indicators disseminated by the EEA. Publications including reports, briefings etc.	KPIs on Core set of indicators, annual Environmental Indicators Reports Number of publications, breakdown by strategic area, and by category. No data available on the use of publications in the policy making process.
A.1 Develop and maintain environmental information systems and databases	Environmental information systems and platforms maintained by EEA	Yes
A.2. Coordinate the network, organising meetings with EIONET National Focal Points (NFPs), EIONET Working Groups and ETCs.	Number of NFPs meetings Number of EIONET Working Groups meetings.	Yes (3/year) EIONET Group meetings not recorded
A.2. Develop and maintain the reporting platform (Reportnet) and infrastructure.	Information available on Reportnet 3 including costs of developments	Yes
A.2. Support countries through the EIONET helpdesk, webinars and info sessions, and guidance documents.	Helpdesk support (qualitative) Number of webinars and info sessions Number of guidance	Partly (quantitative information not complete)

	documents	
A.2. Consultation of EIONET on draft publications.	Number of consultations of EIONET	Not available. Proxy: number of publications
A.3. Prepare and publish a comprehensive report on the state and outlook of environment (SOER) every 5 years.	Information on SOER including description of the development process and experts' engagement, number of downloads.	Yes
A.3. Prepare and disseminate annual indicators report.	Indicators reports were published each year, number of downloads.	Yes
Provide online access to the public to EEA environmental data and publications.	Number of downloads Number of sessions on EEA website	Yes (KPIs)
Outreach activities to disseminate environmental knowledge and engage the public.	Number of followers on social media. Number of Articles in the media with reference to EEA.	Yes (KPIs)
Collection and submission of data on behalf of the EU to respond to environmental and climate international commitments.	Number of reporting obligations related to international commitments	Yes.
Cooperation with international bodies and support to the European Commission in international conventions.	Information on cooperation with international bodies Information on the support to EU in international conventions	Yes. Partly
Engage with the scientific community (including Scientific Committee) and incorporate the research results into its activities.	Number of research bodies cooperating with EEA. Participation of EEA to EU research projects. Number of SC meetings/workshops. Citations of research results in the EEA reports	Not available Partly (HBM4EU) Yes Not available
Develop and implement a digitalisation strategy making full use of new data and digital technologies.	Digitisation strategy and use of new data sources like Copernicus (qualitative)	Partly, no quantitative information.

Table 22: EEA Information Systems

Information System Name	Short name / Acronym	EC policy DG	Legislative framework/reference[11]	ROD[11]
Air Quality e-Reporting and portal	AQ portal[12]	ENV	2011/850/EU: Commission Implementing Decision of 12 December 2011 laying down rules for Directives 2004/107/EC and 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the reciprocal exchange of information and reporting on ambient air quality	Y
Biodiversity Information System for Europe	BISE[5]	ENV	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 - COM/2011/0244 final	-
Copernicus in situ component (assigned revenue)	CISC[17]	DEFIS	Regulation (EU) No 377/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the Copernicus Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 911/2010 Text with EEA relevance	-
Copernicus land monitoring service (assigned revenue)	CLMS[16]	DEFIS	Regulation (EU) No 377/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 establishing the Copernicus Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 911/2010 Text with EEA relevance	-
EEA website or climate and energy data and information (tentative name	EEA website on climate and energy data and information (tentative name)	CLIMA	EU Energy Union and Climate Action Governance Regulation (2018/1999) - Greenhouse gas Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (MMR) (525/2013)	Y
Emerald Viewer[9]	EMERALD NETWORK[10]	Council of Europe and ENV	Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	Y
European Climate Adaptation Platform	Climate-ADAPT[2]	CLIMA	Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action	y
European Nature Information System	EUNIS[7]	ENV	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds	Y

Information System Name	Short name / Acronym	EC policy DG	Legislative framework/reference[11]	ROD[11]
Forest Information System for Europe	FISE[6]	ENV	COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector - COM/2013/0659 final	-
Implementation of the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) principles and practices in the European neighbourhood regions (February 2016 - July 2020) (assigned revenue)	ENI SEIS II[18]	NEAR	Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Towards a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) - COM/2008/0046 final	-
Industrial Emission Portal European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register	E-PRTR[11]	ENV	Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 January 2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register and amending Council Directives 91/689/EEC and 96/61/EC (Text with EEA relevance)	Y
Invasive Alien Species data	IAS[14][15]	ENV	Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species	Y
Natura 2000 Network Viewer	NATURA 2000[8]	ENV	Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds	y
The NOISE Observation & Information Service	N.O.I.S.E[13]	ENV	Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise	y
Water Information System for Europe – Freshwater	WISE-Freshwater[4]	ENV	Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy as amended by Decision 2455/2001/EC and Directives 2008/32/EC, 2008/105/EC and 2009/31/EC.	Y
Water Information System for Europe – Marine	WISE-Marine[3]	ENV	Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy	y

ANNEX 7. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI)

Table 23: EEA Key Performance Indicators 2019-2021 [64]

Performance objective	No.	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measurement	Baseline (2019)	Target	2019	2020	2021
Input	1*	Staff occupancy rate	Realised staff resources in annual establishment plan	96.7%	Min. 95%	96.70%	97%	99.30%
	2*	Budget execution – Outturn	Rate of annual outturn and carry forwards of EEA core budget	100%	Min. 98%	100%	99.50%	100%
	3*	Budget execution – Cancellations	Cancellation rate of payment appropriations in year N	0.5%	Max. 2% of core budget	0.50%	0.05%	0.00%
	4*	Budget execution – Execution	Payments executed within legal/contractual deadline (%)	99.5%	100%	99.50%	99.70%	95.20%
	17*	Audit compliance	Rate (%) of recommendations from Court of Auditors implemented (with deadline in year N)	75%	-	80%	50%	Not applicable
EIONET	7*	EIONET – Data submission	Annual performance for EIONET core data flows	92%	90%	92%	96%	86%
	12	EIONET – Meeting delivery	Delivery rate of planned EIONET meetings	95%	90%	95%	100%	95%
	13	EIONET – Satisfaction	Average participant satisfaction rating	95%	80%	95%	94%	93%

[64] The indicators marked as * are those mandatory for the Executive Director.

Output	5*	AWP delivery – Assessments	Delivery rate of key reports/assessments (%) as planned for year N	93.1%	Min. 90%	93.10%	87.50%	89%
	6*	AWP delivery – Indicators	Share of Core Set indicators updated (%) as planned for year N	96%	Min. 90%	96%	88.20%	>90%
Uptake	8	Media visibility – EEA references	Articles with reference to EEA (No.)	14 152	Stable/ Increase	14,152	25,626	23,066
	9	Media visibility – social media	Followers on social media (No.) of Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn combined	114 046	Stable/ Increase	114,046	178,593	207,404
	10	Web traffic	Registered sessions on EEA website (No.)	6.3 M	Stable/ Increase	6,345,995	8,200,866	9,817,181
	11	Downloads	Registered use of map services (No.) (Measured as 'Machine to Machine' traffic)	375 M	Stable/ Increase	375,218,782	533,072,168	658,948,125
Staff well being	14*	Staff satisfaction	Average favourable rate for common items for Agencies (%)	61%	-	61%	66%	63%
	15*	Learning	Average registered time for learning and development (days)	4.11	7	4.11	3.9	4
	16*	Absence	Annual average short-term sick leave (days)	9.7	Stable/ decrease	9.7	4.7	5

ANNEX 8. REVIEW OF PUBLICATION 2017-2021 AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Based on information provided by the EEA, a detailed analysis of all publications planned and delivered by the EEA between 2017 and 2021 was undertaken by the evaluation. This analysis complements the information provided by the KPI on delivery of 'key assessments' presented in the CAARs.

Overall, the number of delivered publication was quite stable with a peak in 2020 linked to momentum of the EGD, and a lower delivery performance in 2021, partly due to the impact of COVID. The analysis of delivered, carried over (i.e. postponed the next year) and cancelled publications, compared to the planned publications shows that overall, the performance was high with 82% publications delivered, 9% cancelled and 9% carried over (the proportion of cancelled and carried over was slightly higher in 2021 and 2017).

The type of publication (48% of reports, 39% of briefings, 10% of country factsheets, and 3% of corporate publication) evolved during the evaluation with an increasing proportion of briefings compared to 'traditional' long reports in response to stakeholders' needs (following survey carried out by the EEA).

Table 24: Overview of EEA publications and web views 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total 2017-2020	%Total 2017-2021
Total Number of publications planned	61	64	65	73	61	**324**	*100%*
Number of publications delivered	45	58	54	61	49	**267**	*82%*
Number of publications carried over	10	3	4	6	6	**29**	*9%*
Number of publications cancelled	6	3	7	6	6	**28**	*9%*
Type of publications							
Nbr. Reports published	29	33	29	20	18	**129**	*48%*
Nbr. briefings published	11	19	16	33	24	**103**	*39%*
Nbr. country factsheets published	5	5	8	5	4	**27**	*10%*
Nbr. corporate documents published	0	1	1	3	3	**8**	*3%*
Web views							
TOTAL nbr. web views	353.855	431.674	460.689	271.059	252.066	**1769343**	
Nbr. publications > 10000 views	8	10	11	4	8	**41**	*15%*
Nbr. views of these publications	239.717	282.459	322.778	95.403	151.244	**1091601**	*62%*
% views on these publications /total	68%	65%	70%	35%	60%	**62%**	

The number of web views (1,769,343 in total between 2017 and 2021) increased between 2017 and 2021 with a peak of 460,689 in 2019 (linked to the release of the SOER 2020 and the momentum created by the EGD), but a drastic reduction in 2020 and 2021, likely linked to

the COVID crisis. An important point to be highlighted is that 41 of publications (15% of the total delivered) got more than 10,000 views, and the views of these publications represented 62% of the total (1,091,601 out of 1769343).

Among these 41 'most popular publications" (over 10,000 web views) some 'flagship publications' or 'key assessments' performed well (like SOER 2020, annual Trends and Projections in Europe, EIR in 2017 and 2018, all annual Air Quality in Europe reports, State of Water report in 2018, Environmental Noise in Europe in 2020, Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in 2017, Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Europe in 2017), some other publications that did not correspond to specific legal requirements attracted also a lot of attention (e.g. Emerging Chemicals risk in Europe – PFAS in 2019, Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe in 2019, Shaping the future of energy in Europe in 2017, Electric vehicles from life cycle and circular economy, Signals 2018 – water is life, greening the power sector in 2018):

In 2017 (8 publications with > 10,000 web views

- Air quality in Europe — 2017 report
- Environmental indicator report 2017 (Briefings)
- Trends and projections in Europe 2017 — Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets
- Climate change, impacts and vulnerability in Europe 2016
- Shaping the future of energy in Europe: Clean, smart and renewable
- Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in Europe
- Circular economy by design — Products in the circular economy

In 2018 (10 publications with > 10,000 web views)

- Environmental indicator report 2018 – online briefings
- Air quality in Europe – 2018 report
- Signals 2018 — Water is life
- Electric vehicles from life cycle and circular economy perspectives TERM 2018: Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) report
- Renewable energy in Europe in 2018
- EEA State of Water report
- European bathing water quality in 2017
- Perspectives on transitions to sustainability
- Air pollution country factsheets 2018
- Greening the power sector: benefits of an ambitious implementation of Europe's environment and climate policies

In 2019 (11 publications with > 10,000 web views)

- EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook 2019
- Air quality in Europe – 2019 report
- Environmental noise in Europe – 2020

- Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990–2017 and inventory report 2019
- Trends and projections in Europe 2019 — Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets
- Climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector in Europe
- Construction and demolition waste: challenges and opportunities in a circular economy
- The plastic waste trace in the circular economy
- Emerging chemical risks in Europe – 'PFAS'
- Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe
- The European environment – state and outlook 2020

In 2020 (4 publications with > 10,000 web views)

- Air quality in Europe - 2020 report
- Trends and projections in Europe 2020 — Tracking progress towards Europe's climate and energy targets
- European bathing water quality in 2019
- Digital technologies will deliver more efficient waste management in Europe

In 2021 (8 publications with > 10,000 web views)

- National bathing water quality in 2021 - Country reports
- Trends and projections in Europe 2021
- Rail and waterborne – best for low-carbon motorised transport
- Who benefits from nature in cities? Social inequalities in access to urban green and blue space across Europe
- Europe's air quality 2021
- Impact of COVID-19 on plastics and the environment in Europe
- Microplastics from textiles: towards a circular economy for textiles in Europe
- The role of (environmental) taxation in supporting sustainability transitions

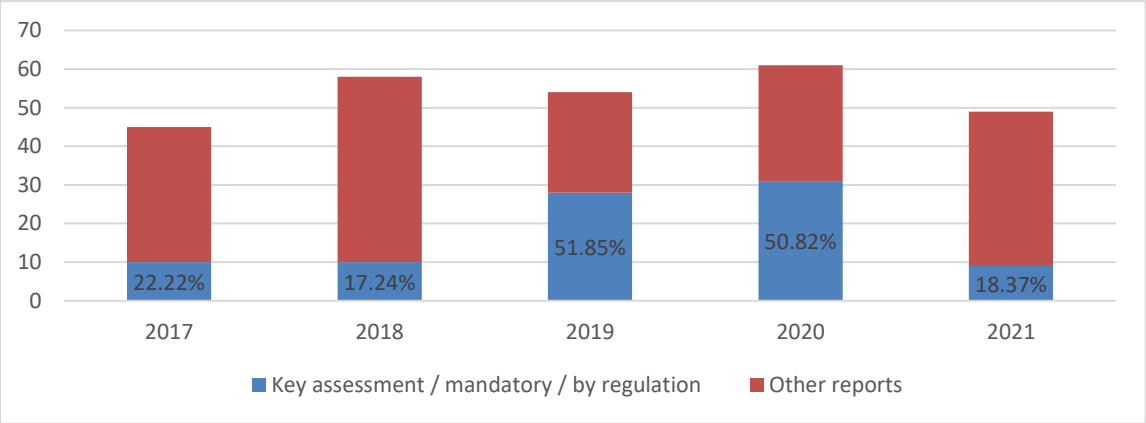
Moreover, based on a categorisation of publications made by the EEA, 49% of publications were on 'own EEA initiative', 38% linked to legal requirements and 13% 'EEA Eionet co-creation'.

Table 25: Categories EEA publications 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total	% total 2017-2021
EEA legal requirement	27	28	23	26	16	120	38%
EEA Eionet co-creation	4	9	7	10	12	42	13%
EEA own initiative	30	26	32	38	29	155	49%

As illustrated in the figure below the percentage of publications marked by the EEA as key assessments/mandatory under an EU legislation and/or international convention does not follow a precise pattern. This can be explained because the deadlines of reporting obligations vary greatly and are not aligned between legislations, and so do the EEA publications. As the EGD was only adopted in 2019, these regular reports respond to antecedent environmental and climate legal requirements.

Figure 11: Assessment of the priority of EEA publications 2017-2021



The last three years of evaluation reveal the following on stakeholders' engagement through social media:

- **Engagement on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and media presence increased steadily**, along with website visits and document downloads.
- **Media mentions of the EEA peaked in the fourth quarter of 2019**, coinciding with the release of the State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2020.
- Social media followers experienced a **notable increase of 57% in 2020, followed by a further 16% rise in 2021.**
- **Web traffic to the EEA's website rose by 29% in 2020 and continued to grow by 20% in 2021.**
- Document downloads from the EEA's resources surged by **42% in 2020 and increased by an additional 24% in 2021.**

Table 26: EEA outreach data 2016-2021 (in thousands)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Twitter followers	44926	54128	65962	76545	85836	93345
Facebook followers	24888	28940	33039	37251	40697	50450
LinkedIn Followers	NA	NA	NA	37453	52060	63609
Total social media followers				151249	178593	207606
EEA tweets	442	223	255	311	304	342
Facebook posts	NA	179	250	246	227	223
LinkedIn posts	NA	NA	NA	NA	212	217
Facebook content views	1075299	1416127	1445668	1299677	1260127	1094702
Web traffic to EEA Website (page views)	NA	9445118	10786881	11600085	14165612	15961637
Web traffic to EEA News (page views)	358991	422343	424249	498371	610802	626757

Web traffic – registered session on the EEA website	NA	4416971	5233265	6345995	8200866	9817181
Press communications/news items (total)	43	37	39	41	42	49
EEA media coverage (number of articles)	9937	13819	14683	15052	25626	25066
Public enquiries	812	770	816	962	1040	1783
Visiting groups	40	32	25	17	9	14
Exhibitions with EEA stand/presence	7	6	4	9	0	2

Source: EEA CAAR + Data provided ad-hoc by EEA

ANNEX 9. ANALYSIS OF THE EEA SUPPORT TO REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

European environmental and climate legislative instruments impose several reporting obligations (ROs) on Member States, industries and other relevant stakeholders. These play a crucial role in ensuring accountability and monitoring progress towards Europe's various environmental and climate ambitions and targets. The EEA's Reporting Obligations Database (ROD) currently lists over 390 reporting obligations.[65] The EEA plays a vital role in facilitating the collection and use of data pursuant to reporting obligations, as they support the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and indicators at various scales.

The legal reporting obligations managed by the EEA include:

- reporting obligations stemming from EU legislation (reporting by countries, companies and the Commission).
- EU data reporting or publication obligations (submissions) in light of EU ratification of international conventions.

Table 27: EU legislation reporting obligations managed by the EEA (arising from EU legislations in the field of environment and climate)

EU legislation	Link to ROD (Reporting Obligations Database)	Part of 2016 (baseline)	Part of 2021	Status compared to the baseline (2016)	Number of ROs in 2018	Number of ROs in 2021
Air Quality Directive 2008/50/EC	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/650	yes	yes	Amended ROs	16	14
CLRTAP Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/578	yes	yes	Amended ROs	5	6
National Emission Ceilings Directive (NECD) 2016/2284	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/675	yes	yes	Amended ROs	6	10
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	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/676	no	yes	New	0	2
Regulation (EU) 2019/631 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 setting CO2 emission performance standards for new passenger cars and for new light commercial vehicles	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/644	yes	yes	Amended - Recast	2	2

[65] The ROD is part of Reportnet and is a database that records the environmental reporting obligations that countries have stemming from EU legislations as well as towards international organisations.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/392 of 4 March 2021 on the monitoring and reporting of data relating to CO2 emissions from passenger cars and light commercial vehicles pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2019/631 of the European Parliament and of the Council	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/692	no	yes	New	0	2
Directive 2003/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 2003 establishing a scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community and amending Council Directive 96/61/EC ('Emission Trading Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/593	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	1	1
Regulation (EU) No 517/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on fluorinated greenhouse gases	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/657	yes	yes	Amended Ros	1	3
Directive 98/70/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 October 1998 relating to the quality of petrol and diesel fuels as amended	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/537	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	2	2
Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on a mechanism for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and for reporting other information at national and Union level relevant to climate change	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/652	yes	yes	Amended - Recast	9	4
Regulation (EC) No 1005/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 September 2009 on substances that deplete the ozone layer	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/554	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	1	1
Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/690	no	yes	Amended - Recast		7
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/411	yes	yes	Active	1	1
EEA Eionet (EEA AWP) REGULATION (EC) No 401/2009	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/499	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	0	10
Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/698 of 30 April 2021 on the security of systems and services deployed, operated and used under the Union Space Programme which may affect the security of the Union	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/693	no	yes	New	0	6

E-PRTR: Regulation (EC) No 166/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 January 2006 concerning the establishment of a European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/615	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	2	1
Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/654	yes	yes	Amended ROs	4	2
Directive (EU) 2015/2193 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on the limitation of emissions of certain pollutants into the air from medium combustion plants	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/659	yes	yes	Active	2	1
Regulation (EU) 2017/852 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on mercury	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/677	yes	yes	Amended - Recast	0	4
Bern Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/564	yes	yes	Active	1	2
Birds Directive 2009/147/EC	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/658	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	3	3
Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/560	yes	yes	Active	3	3
Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources as amended by Regulations 1882/2003/EC and 1137/2008/EC.	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/257	yes	yes	Active	1	1
Regulation (EU) No 1143/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/660	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	1	1
Directive 2002/49/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 June 2002 relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise (Environmental Noise Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/585	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	6	7
Directive 2004/42/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on the limitation of emissions of volatile organic compounds due to the use of organic solvents in certain paints and varnishes and vehicle refinishing products	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/647	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	0	1

Council Directive 86/278/EEC of 12 June 1986 on the protection of the environment, and in particular of the soil, when sewage sludge is used in agriculture.	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/514	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	1	1
Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/643	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	2	1
Directive 2008/105/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008, as amended by Directive 2013/39/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy (EQSD)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/634	yes	yes	Active	1	1
Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the assessment and management of flood risks (Floods Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/630	yes	yes	Amended ROs	3	4
Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy (Marine Strategy Framework Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/631	yes	yes	Amended - Consolidated	4	7
Directive 2006/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 February 2006 concerning the management of bathing water quality	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/609	yes	yes	Amended ROs	2	2
Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on the quality of water intended for human consumption (Drinking Water Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/545	yes	yes	Amended - Recast	1	1
Council Directive of 21 May 1991 concerning urban waste water treatment as amended by Commission Directive 98/15/EC and Regulations 1882/2003/EC and 1137/2008/EC	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/543	yes	yes	Active	3	3
Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy as amended by Decision 2455/2001/EC and Directives 2008/32/EC, 2008/105/EC and 2009/31/EC. (Water Framework Directive)	http://rod.eionet.europa.eu/instruments/516	yes	yes	Amended ROs	2	4
TOTAL					**86**	**123**

Table 28: EU submission to international bodies managed by the EEA (arising from EU commitments in the field of environment and climate)

EC policy DG	International legislation	Link to EU legislation
ENV	UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP)	NEC Directive
ENV	UNECE Pollutant Release and Transfer Register Protocol (PRTR Protocol) under the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters	E-PRTR Regulation
ENV	UN Minamata Convention on Mercury	Mercury Regulation
CLIMA	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC)	Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action
CLIMA	UN Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (Montreal Protocol), under the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer	Ozone Regulation and F-Gas Regulation

Source: EEA Single Programming Document 2019-2021

This analysis focuses on three different aspects of the EEA's contributions to the ROs: (1) the level of support and relative size of involvement of the EEA, (2) the overall changes in legislation and reporting obligations observed, and (3) the changes of the EEA's involvement through the reporting cycle steps.

For **(1), the level of support and relative size of involvement of the EEA**, it is important to be aware of the EEA's own categorisation of support and involvement in ROs, as presented in the box below.

Categorisation of EEA support and magnitude of involvement

Level of EEA support

o Level 1: EEA fully supports data flow and countries through staff, ETC and consultants (extent of support varies) (previous 'Full support')
o Level 2: Reporting is hosted in EEA systems but managed by Commission, so not EEA staff or ETC, but specific agreement using EEA FWC uses EEA consultants to implement. (previous 'Partial support')
o Level 3: Reporting only into Reportnet and no further use of EEA resources in reporting cycles. Post processing done by commission taking the data elsewhere. (previous 'CDR')

Relative size of EEA involvement in Level 1 support

o XL: Involves EEA staff, ETC and consultants – 6+ months EEA/ETC and EUR 100k+ resources

- L: Involves EEA staff, ETC and consultants – 3-6 months EEA/ETC and EUR 50k+ resources
- M: Involves EEA staff, ETC (maybe) and consultants – 1-3 months EEA/ETC and EUR 10k+ resources
- S: Involves EEA staff, ETC (maybe) and consultants - <1 month EEA/ETC and < EUR 10k resources

Overall, the EEA supports 36 EU legislative instruments. Within these, the EEA is directly involved in the management of 123 EU reporting obligations. Following from this, the analysis shows that for 80% of the legislations the EEA provided full support (level 1) where the EEA supports the full data flow through staff, ETC and consultants. Two instruments require partial (level 2) support (5%), and only 5 legislative instruments require minimal support (level 3) from the EEA (13%). The 80% of legislation requiring level 1 support represent 113 ROs out of 123, indicating that 90% of reporting obligations currently require full support of the EEA.As regards the relative size of level 1 support, over 50% of level 1 support by the EEA requires substantial time and resources of over EUR 50,000 (XL and L). Only very few legislative instruments with level 1 support require limited resources (S) from the EEA. This indicates that when the EEA is fully involved in the reporting cycle of a legislation it mostly does so with at least significant (M) if not substantial involvement and resource commitment. Looking at the breakdown in policy areas only within involvements of XL size, ROs related to air and nature legislation emerge as the most resource intensive for the EEA.

Regarding **(2), changes in legislation and reporting obligations**, the analysis shows that the majority of pieces of legislation that are relevant for the EEA had undergone significant amendments between the last and current evaluation period. The previous evaluation considered a total of 46 legislative instruments of relevance, whereas for the period of 2017-2021 36 instruments were determined to be of relevance. A total of 29 instruments had undergone amendments. Also, five new legislative instruments that affected ROs supported by the EEA were introduced, including the Union Space Programme. Only two instruments, covering 3 ROs, were terminated.

While the previous evaluation reported 136 relevant ROs to the EEA, 23 of these were considered as receiving 'no support'. Hence, only 113 obligations were considered. While this study identified a decrease in legislative instruments, the total number of ROs actually increases to 123. Thus, the EEA has increased its total level of support to ROs by around 9%. The 2017 Fitness Check[66] noted five pieces of legislation with ROs relevant to the EEA that required further streamlining to improve effectiveness[67]. However, no changes in ROs could be identified in three of these five. In the other two pieces of legislation (VOC Paints

[66] European Commission (2017). Fitness Check of Reporting and Monitoring of EU Environmental Policy. COM(2017) 312 Final.
[67] Habitats Directive (HD), Bird Directive (BD), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, Volatile Organic Compounds Directive (VOC), Waste Framework Directive

Directive and Waste Framework Directive), one RO was dropped, and one was added, respectively. Both were categorised as level 3 involvements.

Regarding changes in the number of ROs under a specific policy area, substantial increases in support level are observed in the areas of climate change (+100% increase, from 12 ROs in level 1 to 27), water and marine (70% increase, from 10 ROs in level 1 to 17), industrial emissions (800% increase, from 1 RO in level 1 to 8) and nature (60% increase, from 5 ROs in level 1 to 8). Within the horizontal policy area, there is also growing involvement and needs for the EEA's support with the introduction of the Union Space Programme and the associated Copernicus CLMS dataflows that substantially increased the level 1 support required from EEA. The Union Space Programme is a level 1 RO with a relative involvement of XL of the EEA.

As for **(3), step by step involvement of the EEA**, building on the 10-steps methodology, which was developed for the previously mentioned Fitness Check, a significant increase can notably be seen in steps 7 – 10 (quality assurance, data processing, web presentation, report publication). While the previous evaluation study also built on this 10-steps methodology, the EEA itself does not track its support level or magnitude of involvement across individual ROs in this manner. Furthermore, step 10 was not as comprehensive in the previous evaluation, where there was no differentiation between specific and integrated data uses for publication. Provided that the assumption of the EEA – that all level 1 supported ROs therefore require support from the EEA from step 2 – 10 consistently – is correct, then the EEAs support for ROs has significantly increased. Due to these limitations, a precise one-to-one comparison between the EEAs involvement in the 10-steps is at this stage not possible.

In order to accurately, and consistently, track the EEAs involvement and workload associated with ROs, it is imperative that a standard tracking of support and involvement approach be implemented. Most importantly, the EEA should be able to track and report where ROs are being used (or supporting) publications either led by the EEA or externally. This is critical not only to better track the usage of data, but moreover, allows insights into the usefulness of data collection which can further support bringing added value to data reporting.

ANNEX 9BIS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE ON THE EEA CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF CLIMATE LEGISLATION IN THE PERIOD 2017-2021

This annex provides detailed evidence collected from the consultation of DG CLIMA staff.

1. Monitoring, reporting and assessment of progress under EU climate legislation

The Commission (DG Climate Action) depends on the EEA for the implementation of EU climate legislation. Almost all EU climate legislative acts are supported by the Agency for performing monitoring, reporting and verification tasks. The EEA assists the Commission with greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting, which is the key information source for tracking EU and Member State progress towards climate targets and compliance with EU and international obligations. The Agency collects and performs quality assurance and control procedures of GHG emission inventories and approximated inventories, GHG projections and policies and measures reported by Member States. It also compiles aggregated data sets for the EU.

Member States reporting obligations and the role of the EEA were initially under the Council Decision for a monitoring mechanism of Community CO_2 and other GHG emissions[68], the Monitoring Mechanism Decision for monitoring Community greenhouse gas emissions and for implementing the Kyoto Protocol[69], later under the Monitoring Mechanism Regulation for monitoring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions and other information at national and Union level relevant to climate change[70], and are currently laid down in the Governance Regulation on the Energy Union and Climate Action.

Over the period 2017-2021, the Agency's tasks for supporting climate data reporting obligations were expanded and its legal mandate was strengthened with the Governance Regulation[71].

The Agency maintains the e-platform (Reportnet 3) that Member States use for reporting under the Governance Regulation, including for climate policies and measures, and GHG projections. It also provides climate data for the Commission's annual *Climate Action Progress Report* to the Council and the European Parliament assessing progress towards the EU GHG target, and the EU's National Communication and Biennial Report to the UNFCCC prepared by the Commission.

The EEA publishes every year the *Trends and projections in Europe* report which supports and complements the annual progress reports of the European Commission. This report uses

[68] 1999/296/EC: Council Decision of 26 April 1999 amending Decision 93/389/EEC for a monitoring mechanism of Community CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)
[69] Decision No 280/2004/EC
[70] EUR-Lex - 32013R0525 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[71] Article 42 of the Governance regulation describes the role of the EEA, Article 42 (e) provides a legal basis for the trends and projections report (as well as other outputs) "(e) disseminating information collected under this Regulation, including maintaining and updating a database on Member States' mitigation policies and measures and the European Climate Adaptation Platform relating to impacts, vulnerabilities and adaptation to climate change;"

the most recent information available to assess EU and Member States progress towards meeting climate and energy targets. It includes data on GHG emissions (historic and projected), energy consumption and renewable energy shares as well as approximated data for the latest year. Recent trends and projections are used to illustrate the progress towards targets for reductions in GHG emissions, deployment of renewable energy and gains in energy efficiency.

During the evaluation period 2017-2021, the report focussed on the EU's and Member States progress towards the 2020 climate and energy targets that were set in legislation through the 2020 climate and energy package and the 2030 targets of the 2030 climate and energy framework.

The European Climate Law in 2021 further emphasized the EEA's role. The Climate Law obliges the Commission to ensure a robust and objective assessment of progress and to base this assessment on relevant information, including information submitted and reported by Member States under the Governance Regulation, reports of the EEA, the EU Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change and the JRC. The EEA should assist as appropriate.

The EEA website includes a data viewer that presents emissions statistics per Member State, sector and year in graphs and tables. Underlying data are also available and downloadable from this data viewer.

EEA experts participate in working groups with the Commission and Member States under the Climate Change Committee which manages the implementation of the Governance Regulation.

The EEA coordinated the annual and comprehensive inventory reviews under the Effort Sharing Decision from 2015 to 2022 and assisted the Commission in checking Member States compliance with their annual targets and other obligations. It also provided capacity building support to countries under the Effort Sharing legislation.

In 2017-2021, experts from the EEA supported the EU delegation to the UNFCCC and the Paris agreement in negotiations on transparency, GHG inventories and adaptation.

2. **Road transport emission and fuel standards**

The CO_2 monitoring data collected by the EEA is the cornerstone for implementing EU legislation on CO_2 standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles. The knowledge of the EEA and the data collected by the Agency have been instrumental also for the development of the revised CO_2 standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles. They were used to track the state of play and progress made in reducing emissions from the road transport sector, as well as to show the recent trends in the market share of zero- and low-emission vehicles. The knowledge and resources of the EEA have also been crucial for the assessment of policy options, during both the development of the proposals as well as the ordinary legislative procedure.

Likewise, the monitoring data on the fuel quality and the GHG intensity reduction of transport fuels have been crucial for a successful implementation of the Fuel Quality Directive and the

contribution towards the EU decarbonisation objectives for road transport fuels. The yearly technical reports produced by the EEA have been helpful in the daily implementation work of the Directive as well as in the policy work, such as the recent amendment of the Fuel Quality Directive as part of the revision of the Renewable Energy Directive.

3. **Fluorinated gases and ozone-depleting substances**

The EEA collects the annual reporting data by companies concerning fluorinated gases (F-gases) and ozone-depleting substances (ODS) that are required under the F-gas and Ozone Regulations, which relate to EU production, import, export, use, reclaim and destruction of these substances from about 5000 companies. These data are quality checked and stored in a database at the EEA.

The EEA also publishes yearly reports by analysing the raw data, as well as indicators on F-gases and ODS. In this way the impacts of major obligations in the F-gas Regulation such as the quota system and sectoral prohibitions could be established. Remaining areas of ODS use were similarly identifiable. In a nutshell, these data have been crucial in measuring the policy impact for both Regulations and provided an excellent basis for improving EU policies.

A second important application of the data collected by the Agency was related to company compliance. The data allowed to check the compliance of single companies with their annual quotas or prohibited uses. Without the database, the quota system that is administered for the whole EU by DG Climate Action would not be implementable.

Finally, EU international compliance and likely development into the future could be modelled with the help of these data, in order to adjust our rules. It also allows the Commission to comply with EU reporting obligations under the Montreal Protocol for ozone and F-gas (HFC) reporting. For that purpose, the EEA compiles every year (including during the evaluation period) the data for direct submission to the UN's Ozone Secretariat.

4. **Use of EEA knowledge in the development of the European Climate Law**

When preparing of the European Climate Law, the Commission based itself on the full analysis on the implications of the 2050 climate-neutrality objective carried out in support of the 'Clean Planet for All' Communication (COM(2018) 773), and on the evaluation of the adaptation strategy. These documents used various sources, including many from the EEA (such as the EU GHG inventory, provisional data on CO_2 emissions from cars, the EEA data viewer, an overview of low-carbon development strategies in European countries published in 2018, *EEA Report no 13/2018*, *EEA Report 22/2017*, *The European Environment - State and Outlook 2015*: and the report *Climate change, impacts and vulnerabilities in Europe 2016*).

5. **ECA Special Report on GHG emissions reporting**

In 2018 , the European Court of Auditors (ECA) published a special report on the EU's greenhouse gas emission reporting. The objective of the audit was to assess whether the Commission assisted by the EEA appropriately checks the EU greenhouse gas inventory and the information on expected future emission reductions submitted by Member States. The

ECA assessed the quality checks done by the EEA on the EU greenhouse gas inventory. The ECA concluded that the EU emission data is appropriately reported and that the EU greenhouse gas inventories have improved over time. The Commission and the EEA have introduced checks on the quality of the information submitted by Member States on their mitigation policies and measures that aim at reducing future emissions.

6. **Adaption**

During the evaluation period, the EEA managed and operated the Climate-ADAPT platform in partnership with the Commission. The platform offers tools to help Member States including for preparing their National Adaptation Plans and report on them. Member States use the Agency's reporting interface to report their adaptation policies under the Governance Regulation.

The Agency's knowledge and experience from managing this service helped inform the Commission in developing further tools and strengthening its support on adaptation to Member States after 2019. Building on already established close collaboration, the EEA has increased its contribution to the Commission work on climate resilience and adaptation to climate change after 2019, including for implementing the Mission Adaptation to Climate Change.

ANNEX 10. EIONET AND REPORTNET 3.0

Overall, Eionet consists of the EEA and circa 400 national organisations from 38 Member countries (32 member countries and 6 cooperating countries), with expertise in environmental issues, and eight centres of thematic expertise contracted by the EEA, called European Topic Centres (ETCs).

The EEA is responsible for developing Eionet and coordinating its activities together with National Focal Points (NFPs) in the countries. The NFPs are the country institutions appointed to serve as the primary link between the EEA and the country. NFPs facilitate and coordinate networks of national experts involved in national activities related to the EEA work programme.

The concept of Eionet encompasses the following defining elements:

- Strong **institutional cooperation** across national, regional, European, and international levels and partnerships with civil society, facilitated by a coordinating entity
- Agreed **common content** — data, information, indicators, analysis
- Shared **infrastructure, standards and tools.**

Member and cooperating countries

For further information, see the pages under Countries on the main menu and the **countries** pages on the EEA main website

Eionet partners

Eionet partners are national environmental organisations nominated and funded by countries, which are authorised to be the main contact point for the EEA, other Eionet members, and relevant actors. A national focal point (NFP) institution coordinates the national Eionet network, consisting of various partner national institutions in order to support the implementation of the EEA work programme.

National Focal Points (NFPs)

The National Focal Points are the main contact points for the EEA in the member and cooperating countries. They are in charge of cooperation with the EEA and the ETCs and coordination national activities related to the **EEA Multiannual Work Programme**.

The initial definition of the National Focal Point (NFP) role in the European Environment Agency (EEA) Regulation is the following: “Member States may in particular designate from among the institutions referred to in paragraph 2 or other organisations established in their territory a ‘national focal point’ for coordinating and/or transmitting the information to be supplied at national level to the Agency and to the institutions or bodies forming part of the network including the topic centres referred to in paragraph 4.”

The National Focal Point (NFP) is the organisation nominated and funded by an EEA Member or collaborating 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 Multi Annual Work Programme, the more detailed Annual Work Programmes and support relevant activities at country level. Their organisational set-up 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 may be environmental Ministries, Agencies or other institutions in a centralised national administration or operate in a decentralised, federal, or other structure. The list of NFPs is available on the EEA website[72], they mainly originate from Environmental Protection Agencies (58%) and from Ministries of Environment or their equivalent at national level (37%), and few from other organisations (5%).

Main tasks and activities of NFPs

A National Focal Point has a number of tasks, activities and responsibilities. The situation from NFP to NFP may vary considerably depending, for example, on the agreed distribution of work and responsibilities between the NFP and the National Reference Centres (NRCs), the resources at the NFP's disposal, and possibly also to some degree on the administrative position of the NFP. The NFPs tasks cover a large spectrum: the establishment, development and maintenance of the national network and other actors in the country, the coordination of activities between the EEA ant the network including on the consultations for preparing the products and the consultations on the programming documents and other strategic documents, the participation to NFPs meetings (3 per year), communication actions at national level etc.

The working methods of NFPs differ from country to country. This partly reflects the diverse nature of the national environmental systems within which they are based. For example, some NFPs are located in environment agencies, others in environment ministries; some are in centralised national administrations, whereas others operate in decentralised, sometimes federal, systems.

NFPs maintain and develop the national network and facilitate and coordinate contacts, requests and deliveries at national and EU level. Some also act as advisers to their EEA's **Management Board members** and develop contacts to other relevant networks.

European Topic Centres (ETCs)

European Topic Centres (ETCs) are centres of thematic expertise contracted by the EEA to carry out specific tasks identified in the **EEA Multiannual Work Programme** and the **annual work programmes**. They are designated by the EEA Management Board following a Europe-wide competitive selection process and work as extensions of the EEA in specific topic areas. Each ETC consists of a lead organisation and specialist partner

[72] List of national focal points (europa.eu)

organisations from the environmental research and information community, which combine their resources in their particular areas of expertise. 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.

The tables below offer an overview of the costs related to operating the ETCs, changes in expert numbers over time, and number of reports published per ETC.

Table 29: European Topic Centres budget 2017-2021, EUR

Budget Line	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017-2021
ETC CM - Climate change mitigation	2,310,173	2,112,128	1,129,707	1,052,212	1,137,084	**7,741,304**
ETC ICM - Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters	1,452,446	1,352,328	1,324,817	1,232,990	1,410,611	**6,773,192**
ETC BD - Biological Diversity	1,491,578	1,428,624	1,343,437	1,362,232	1,280,889	**5,625,871**
ETC DI - Data integration and digitalisation	938,557	938,102	900,000	874,944	895,000	**4,546,603**
ETC CE - Circular economy and resource use	976,895	968,327	949,806	935,796	1,008,574	**4,839,398**
ETC CA - Climate change adaptation and LULUCF	630,000	662,904	679,955	655,000	675,000	**3,302,859**
ETC HE - Human health and the environment			1,380,000	1,395,000	1,386,148	**4,161,148**
TOTAL	**7,799,649**	**7,462,413**	**7,707,722**	**7,508,174**	**6,512,417**	**36,990,375**

Table 30: European Topic Centres staff 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2021-2027
ETC-ACM	152	149	NA	NA	NA	**301**
ETC-ATNI	NA	NA	88	99	94	**281**
ETC-BD	95	80	97	91	80	**443**
ETC-CCA	50	51	54	51	59	**265**
ETC-CME	NA	NA	81	85	93	**259**
ETC-ICM	115	109	95	104	112	**535**
ETC-ULS	70	62	65	59	67	**323**
ETC-WMGE	69	58	76	58	68	**329**
Total	**551**	**509**	**556**	**547**	**573**	**2736**

Table 31: European Topic Centres publications 2017-2021

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017-2021
ETC-ACM	20	20	7	0	0	**47**
ETC-ATNI	NA	NA	4	11	22	**37**
ETC-BD	10	14	5	4	2	**35**
ETC-CCA	1	4	0	2	3	**10**
ETC-CME	NA	NA	9	9	14	**32**
ETC-ICM	4	2	3	7	2	**18**
ETC-ULS	0	1	3	3	7	**14**
ETC-WMGE	1	3	4	5	13	**26**
Total	**36**	**44**	**35**	**41**	**63**	**219**

Eionet groups

Since 1st January 2022, there are 13 Eionet groups, working in the following areas:

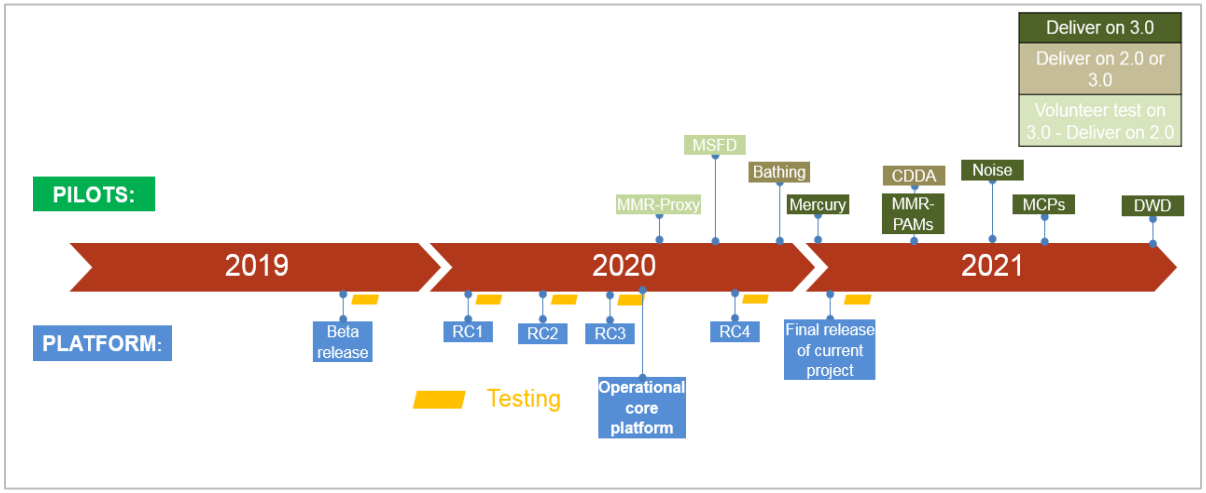
- Biodiversity and ecosystems - integration of knowledge for policies
- Biodiversity and ecosystems - cumulative pressures and solutions
- Circular economy and resource use
- Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation
- Climate change mitigation and energy systems
- Communications
- Data, technologies and digitalisation
- Food systems
- Foresight
- Human health and the environment
- Land systems
- Mobility systems
- State of the environment

Reportnet

Reportnet[73] is an EIONET infrastructure for supporting and improving data and information flows. It has been developed since 2000 and is operational since 2002. **In 2018, as a follow-up of the environmental reporting Fitness Check, the EEA initiated the Reportnet 3.0 project** to promote and modernise e-Reporting with the latest IT solutions. Reportnet 3.0 is acting as a central hub through which all e-Reporting activities handled by the EEA, EIONET and other partners are performed. Reportnet 3 stepwise integrates data flows under the EU environmental legislations, progressively incorporating functionalities to support the various reporting steps and INSPIRE requirements, as well as new types of data (e.g. Copernicus, citizen science) and data from an extended group of stakeholders.

In total 5 versions of Reportnet 3.0 were released, the latest on 24/9/2021:

Figure 12: EIONET 3.0 development timeline



[73] About Reportnet — EIONET Portal (europa.eu)

The incorporation of data flows into Reportnet 3.0 built on **10 pilots**:

Figure 13: Pilot data flows for the incorporation in Reportnet 3.0

Instrument	Pilot data flow	Reporting frequency	Pilot target date	Pilot scenario ambition
Greenhouse gas Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (MMR)	Approximated Greenhouse gas inventories	Annual	31/07/2020	Volunteer test on 3.0 - Deliver on 2.0
Marine Strategy Framework Directive	MSFD monitoring programmes (Art 11)	6-yearly	15/10/2020	Volunteer test on 3.0 - Deliver on 2.0
Bathing Water Directive	Bathing Water Directive - Monitoring and Classification of Bathing Waters	Annual	31/12/2020	Deliver on 2.0 or 3.0
Mercury Regulation	Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury	Annual	01/01/2021	Proposal: Remove as pilot
EEA AWP	Nationally designated areas (CDDA)	Annual	15/03/2021	Deliver on 2.0 or 3.0
Greenhouse gas Monitoring Mechanism Regulation (MMR)	National policies and measures (climate change mitigation)	2-yearly	15/03/2021	Deliver on 3.0
Environmental Noise Directive	Report on all major roads, railways, airports and agglomerations (DF1 and DF5)	5-yearly [continuous reporting]	30/06/2021	Deliver on 3.0
Medium Combustion Plants (MCP) Directive	Annual CO emissions and concentration of CO emissions from MCPs	TBD	01/07/2021	Deliver on 3.0
Environmental Noise Directive	Strategic noise maps (DF 4 and DF 8)	5-yearly	31/12/2022	Deliver on 3.0
New Drinking Water Directive (consolidated)	Drinking Water Directive - Report on Quality of Water for Human Consumption	TBD	TBD	Deliver on 3.0

Reportnet 3.0 increased the efficiency in the management of dataflows, now considered by stakeholders as faster, cheaper, and easier to maintain. It provides the opportunity for quality checks to be conducted using an automated method, increasing efficiency through the reduction of manual processes. Errors that are automatically identified are brought to the attention of the reporter and can result in the report being blocked. During the first round of reporting by member states, there were queues and system overload occurred close to deadlines. To help resolve this issue, the EEA implemented measures to increase capacity and reduce queuing during busy periods.

The advantages include:

(i) Increased standardisation to improve data comparability. Automation of tasks using software to lower maintenance costs between cycles and ensure repeatability – this is particularly important in the journey of the data ranging from the acquisition from countries, via the creation of an EU dataset, to the building of outputs and products. The standardisation of Reportnet 3 data store and the move from a file storage to a database storage system greatly facilitates this automation. However, it is not possible to supply comparable estimates for dataflows which were configured on Reportnet 2 against those on Reportnet 3 because the configuration in the two platforms is not the same.

(ii) improved user experience. Under Reportnet 2 the implementation of a dataflow required an IT developer and with each dataflow the same functionalities needed to be developed to support the reporters. With Reportnet 3 all the commonalities of a dataflow, for example how quality control results are presented to the user, are standardised. This means that the work is only in the configuration according to the data structure and QC of the dataflow. Also, the configuration of a dataflow does not require a developer. Now it can be undertaken by an experienced data user. The platform also allows a richer set of quality controls to be executed by the reporter at the time of delivery, facilitating higher quality of the data delivery.

(iii) a faster, cheaper and easier management of dataflows. Automation of tasks using software to lower maintenance costs between cycles and ensure repeatability – this is particularly important in the journey of the data ranging from the acquisition from countries, via the creation of an EU dataset, to the building of outputs and products. The standardisation of Reportnet 3 data store and the move from a file storage to a database storage system greatly facilitates this automation. However, it is not possible to supply comparable estimates for dataflows which were configured on Reportnet 2 against those on Reportnet 3 because the configuration in the two platforms is not the same.

(iv) a system-to-system API-based approach to support data harvesting and diversified data sources. Copernicus has contributed to the diversification of data sources. Atmosphere, Climate and Marine services of Copernicus increasingly contributed to the development of EEA indicators that were consulted with the Eionet. Copernicus Land Monitoring Service (CLMS) also provided similar inputs and cooperation with Eionet was extended via the then NRC Land cover group. This allowed countries to participate actively in the production of CLMS data, such as by reviewing and validating draft data sets.

(v) Automated and quicker quality checks. Reporters have more up-front quality control checks allowing them to improve the quality of data upon delivery as opposed to waiting for manual feedback processes.

A new phase was initiated with Reportnet 3.1 in 2021, to continue the transition activities and ensure the operational maintenance, to add missing functionalities, integrate additional data flows and carry out additional pilot projects (citizen science, Copernicus, and integration with other reporting systems).

ANNEX 11. EEA RESOURCES

Table 32: EEA revenues (core and non-core budget) 2017 – 2021, EUR

	2014-2020 MFF				2021-2027 MFF
	2017	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
CORE BUDGET					
EU contribution[74]	36,309,240	37,724,481	39,733,971	41,972,000	45,398,000
Contributions from other member countries (EFTA and candidate countries[75])	3,995,610	4,011,277	4,077,102	4,149,110	4,346,853
Other contributions[76]	1,225,943	1,332,545	1,402,156	1,489,957	1,673,324
Total	**41,560,793**	**43,068,303**	**45,213,228**	**47,611,067**	**51,418,177**
NON-CORE BUDGET					
Grant, contribution and service-level agreements (earmarked funds)	29,061,000	22,731,874	6,846,000	15,618,000	13,449,000
TOTAL REVENUE	**70,621,793**	**65,800,177**	**52,059,228**	**63,229,066**	**64,867,177**

Sources: EEA Consolidated annual activity reports (2017-2021).

Table 33: Non-core revenue, 2017 – 2021, EUR

Project/SLAs/Agreements	**Counterpart**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Grant Agreements						
HumanBio (HBM4EU)	RTD	1.400.000	0	0	0	265.000
Contribution Agreements						
Copernicus delegation agreement (Dec 2014 – 2021)	DEFIS	27.341.000	19.830.000	6.846.000	14.343.000	631.000
Copernicus contribution agreement (2021-2028)	DEFIS	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	12.000.000
ENI East	NEAR	0	2.600.000	0	N/A	N/A
IPA 2018	NEAR	320.000	0	0	N/A	N/A
IPA 2020	NEAR	N/A	N/A	N/A	1.275.000	0
Service-level agreements						
EuroGEO	RTD	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	365.000
European Climate and Health Observatory	SANTE	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	118.000
Regional and urban environmental indicators	REGIO	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Total		**29.061.000**	**22.731.874**	**6.846.000**	**15.618.000**	**13.379.000**

Source: SPDs and CAARs from 2017 to 2021

[74] Called 'EU subsidy' until 2019.
[75] The "candidate countries" contribution is from Turkey as a member country of the Agency.
[76] The "Other contributions" is from Switzerland as a member country of the Agency.

Table 34: EEA staff 2017-2021

Posts in authorised budget	2017		2018		2019		2020		2021	
Administrators (AD)	63	28%	61	27%	61	26%	69	29%	79	33%
Assistants (AST)	64	28%	63	28%	63	27%	61	25%	61	25%
Assistants/secretaries (AST/SC)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Establishment plan posts (all of the above)	**127**	**55%**	**124**	**54%**	**124**	**53%**	**130**	**54%**	**140**	**58%**
Contract agents (CA)	66	29%	69	30%	72	31%	74	31%	80	33%
Seconded national experts (SNEs)	20	9%	20	9%	20	9%	20	8%	20	8%
Structural service providers	*16*	*7%*	*16*	*7%*	*16*	*7%*	*16*	*7%*	*N/A*	*N/A*
Total[77]	**213 (229)**		**213 (229)**		**216 (232)**		**224 (240)**		**240**	

Source: SPDs and CAARs from 2017 to 2021

Table 35: EEA FWC consumption shared projects DG ENV and DG CLIMA, EUR

DG	Project	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Grand Total
CLIMA	Climate-Adapt		149,980		199,898	199,950	549,828
CLIMA Total			*149,980*		*199,898*	*199,950*	*549,828*
ENV	Air Quality					400,000	400,000
ENV	BISE			349,870			349,870
ENV	FISE		554,790		329,840	239,940	1,124,570
ENV	Industrial Emissions Portal			100,000	19,810	59,985	179,795
ENV	MapMyTree					250,000	250,000
ENV	Mercury Data Viewer				100,000		100,000
ENV	Natura 2000			199,950		70,000	269,950
ENV	ReportNet		165,673	63,950	10,000	20,000	259,623
ENV	WISE	199,748	199,748	205,000	99,852	100,000	804,348
ENV	WISE Marine		232,290	264,750	249,963	249,875	996,878
ENV	E-PRTR	25,730		71,270			97,000
ENV Total		*225,478*	*1,364,021*	*1,665,589*	*1,208,966*	*1,649,560*	*6,113,614*
Grand Total		**225,478**	**1,514,001**	**1,665,589**	**1,408,863**	**1,849,510**	**6,663,441**

[77] Between parenthesis the total with service providers.

Table 36: EEA additional resources from legislative financial fiches, 2021-2027

		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
8th EAP	**TA**	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	CA	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
European Climate Law	**TA**		10	10	10	10	10	10
	CA		6	6	6	6	6	6
SEVESO	**TA**			3	3	3	3	3
	CA			1	1	1	1	1
LULUCF	**TA**			4	8	8	8	8
	CA			1	3	3	3	3
Nature Restoration Law	**TA**				7	7	7	7
	CA				5	5	5	5
E-PRTR Regulation (recast)	**TA**				2	2	2	2
	CA				0	0	0	0
Zero Pollution Package	**TA**				5	5	5	5
	CA				3	3	3	3
Carbon Removals & HDVs	**TA**				1	1	1	1
	CA				3	4	4	4
Green Claims	**TA**					1	1	1
	CA					1	1	1
One Substance One Assessment	**TA**					3	3	3
	CA					2	2	2
Waste Framework Directive	**TA**					1	1	1
	CA					0	0	0
Forest Monitoring Law	**TA**					2	2	2
	CA					1	1	1
Soil Monitoring Law	**TA**					2	2	2
	CA					0	0	0
TOTAL		**15**	**31**	**40**	**72**	**86**	**86**	**86**

ANNEX 12. EEA REGULATION

Key tasks, activities and specific objectives

Figure 14: Tasks specified in Article 2 of EEA founding Regulation

a) To establish, in cooperation with the Member States, and coordinate the Network (EIONET);
b) To provide the Community and the Member States with the objective information necessary for framing and implementing sound and effective environmental policies;
c) To assist the monitoring of environmental measures through the appropriate support for reporting requirements, in accordance with the aim of the coordinating reporting;
d) To advise individual Member States on the development, establishment and expansion of their systems for the monitoring of environmental measures;
e) To record, collate and assess data on the state of the environment;
f) To help ensure that environmental data at European level are comparable;
g) To promote the incorporation of European environmental information into international environment monitoring programmes;
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;
i) To stimulate the development and application of environmental forecasting techniques so that adequate preventive measures can be taken in good time;
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;
k) To stimulate the exchange of information on the technologies available for preventing or reducing damage to the environment;
l) To cooperate with Community bodies and programmes and other bodies;
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;
n) To support the Commission in the process of exchange of information on the development of environmental assessment methodologies and best practice;
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

These 15 core tasks can be linked to the 5 specific objectives as follows (to be noted that some are cross-cutting several specific objectives):

Table 37: Correspondence IL specific objective – EEA core tasks (Article 2)

Specific objectives	Core tasks in Article 2 of the founding regulation (figure 2)
A. Inform EU environmental and climate policies, and global commitments.	b), c), d), e), f), g), l)
B. Coordinate EIONET	a), d)
C. Conduct regular assessments on the state of the environment	h)
D. Inform public by ensuring access to environmental and climate data	m)
E. Make full use of digitalisation to improve operations	o), n) plus i), j), k), l)

Table 38: Comparison EEA Regulation/EGD/MAWP/Strategy

Areas of work in EEA Regulation	EGD key actions/plans/strategies/funding	EEA Work areas (2014-2020 MAWP)	EEA Work areas (2021-2030 Strategy)
Air quality and atmospheric emissions Chemical substances hazardous for the environment Water quality, pollutants and	A zero pollution ambition for a toxic free environment – *Towards zero pollution for air water and soil*	1.1 Air pollution, transport and noise 1.2 Industrial pollution 2.2 Environment, human health and well-being	Human health and the environment

water resources Noise emissions			
The state of the soil, flora and fauna, and of biotopes Coastal and marine protection Land use and natural resources	Preserving and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity – Biodiversity Strategy to 2030, *EU Forest strategy for 2030, Action plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries*	1.4 Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation 1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems 1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime 1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests 1.8 Urban, land use and soil	Biodiversity and ecosystems
Waste management Air quality and atmospheric emissions	Mobilising industry for a clean and circular economy –*Circular economy action plan, Sustainable products package, EU Bioeconomy strategy*	1.9 Waste and material resources 2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment	Circular economy and resource use
Air quality and atmospheric emissions Transfrontier, plurinational and global phenomena	Increasing the EU's climate ambition for 2030 and 2050 - '*Fit for 55' strategy*	1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy 1.4 Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Land use and natural resources	From 'Farm to Fork' a fair healthy and environmentally friendly food system - *Farm to Fork Strategy*	1.8 Urban, land use and soil Climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation	Biodiversity and ecosystems
Air quality and atmospheric emissions	Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility - *Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy*	1.1 Air pollution, transport and noise 1.3Climate change mitigation and energy	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Socioeconomic dimension	Leave no one behind (Just Transition) - *The Just Transition Mechanism*	2.3 Megatrends and transitions 2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting	Sustainability trends, prospects and responses
Air quality and atmospheric emissions	Building and renovating in an energy and resource efficient way - *A Renovation Wave for Europe-Greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives*	1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
Air quality and atmospheric emissions	Supplying clean, affordable and secure energy – *EU Bioeconomy strategy, REPowerEU plan*	1.3 Climate change mitigation and energy	Climate change mitigation and adaptation
	Financing the transition – *NextGeneration EU recovery plan, 2012-2017 MFF, MFF biodiversity spending targets, Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)*		Sustainability trends, prospects and responses

	Area clearly picked up in multiple work areas
	Majority of area picked up
	Some aspects of the area picked up
	No clear mention of the area

Table 39: Alignment of EEA work areas and 8th EAP objectives

Areas of work in EEA Regulation	Areas of work / priority objectives of the 8th EAP
Air quality and atmospheric emissions	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans
Water quality, pollutants and water resources	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans
The state of the soil, flora and fauna, and of biotopes	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans 5: Protecting, preserving and restoring **biodiversity**, and enhancing natural capital
Land use and natural resources	3: Advancing towards a regenerative growth model, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a **circular economy** 4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans 5: Protecting, preserving and restoring **biodiversity**, and enhancing natural capital 6: Reducing environmental and climate **pressures related to production and consumption** (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system)
Waste management	3: Advancing towards a regenerative growth model, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a **circular economy** 6: Reducing environmental and climate **pressures related to production and consumption** (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system)
Noise emissions	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans
Chemical substances hazardous for the environment	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans 6: Reducing environmental and climate **pressures related to production and consumption** (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system)
Coastal and marine protection	4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans 5: Protecting, preserving and restoring **biodiversity**, and enhancing natural capital
Transfrontier, plurinational and global phenomena	1: Achieving the **2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target** and **climate neutrality by 2050** 2: Enhancing adaptive capacity, **strengthening resilience** and **reducing vulnerability to climate change** 3: Advancing towards a regenerative growth model, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a **circular economy** 4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for **air, water and soil** and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans

	5: Protecting, preserving and restoring **biodiversity**, and enhancing natural capital; and 6: Reducing environmental and climate pressures related to **production and consumption** (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system).
Socioeconomic dimension	1: Achieving the 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction target and **climate neutrality by 2050** 2: Enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening **resilience** and **reducing vulnerability to climate change** 3: Advancing towards a regenerative growth model, decoupling economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation, and accelerating the transition to a **circular economy** 4: Pursuing a **zero-pollution ambition**, including for air, water and soil and protecting the health and well-being of Europeans 5: Protecting, preserving and restoring **biodiversity**, and enhancing natural capital; and 6: Reducing environmental and climate pressures related to **production and consumption** (particularly in the areas of energy, industry, buildings and infrastructure, mobility, tourism, international trade and the food system).

ANNEX 13. EEA CONFORMITY WITH THE COMMON APPROACH OF DECENTRALISED AGENCIES

Table 40: Alignment of the EEA with the Common Approach

Principle		Degree of implementation (distinguishes the following: fully, largely, not responding; not applicable to the EEA; applicable to another institution)
Role and position of agencies in the EU's institutional landscape		
Definition and classification of agencies	Use standard term: "European union agency for …"	Not corresponding, however costs and established image of the agency would be determining factors that speak against a name change. Another reason is that that the EEA goes beyond the EU in terms of its member countries.
Establishment and ending of agencies	Agencies' founding acts should contain either a sunset or review clause	Not specified
Agencies' seat and role of the host country	Accessibility of an agency with a view to increasing the agencies' overall efficiency and even better interaction with stakeholders	Fully
	All agencies should have headquarters agreements concluded before the agency starts its operational phase	Fully (DK-EEA Headquarter Agreement from 10 May 1995 registered with UN Secretariat: https://doi.org/10.18356/2ecaba83-en-fr)
Structure and governance of agencies		
Management Board	Board composition: - One representative per Member State - Two representatives from the Commission (without prejudice to the relevant arrangements for existing agencies) - Where appropriate, one member designated by the European Parliament (without prejudice to the relevant arrangements for existing agencies) - Where appropriate, a fairly limited number of stakeholders' representatives	Fully (Art. 8(1) founding Regulation; it also stipulates the presence of European Parliament-designated representatives, however not of additional stakeholders. In addition, though, the Chair of the Scientific Committee and the third representative of the Commission are invited to attend all meetings of the Board)
	Members of the Board should be appointed in light of their knowledge of the agency's core business, taking into account relevant managerial, administrative and budgetary skills	Not specified
	The duration of the term of	Not specified

	office should be four years (renewable); increase efforts to limit turnover	The Rules of Procedure specify however that Chairs and Vice-Chairs are elected by 2/3 majority for a term of three years, renewable once
	A two-level governance structure should be introduced, when this promises more efficiency (a small-sized Executive Board with the presence of a Commission representative is introduced in addition to the Management Board)	Fully (Art. 8(2) founding Regulation, where a Bureau is mandatorily set up.)
	Existence of a policy on preventing and managing conflict of interests concerning members of the Management Board	Fully (https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/working-practices/procedures-and-policies/policy_prevention_management_conflict_interest_1st-review_71216.pdf/@@download/file)
	Management Board should have powers of Appointing Authority for the Director and staff, whereas authority in relation to staff is delegated to the Director and the Board only intervenes on a case by case basis in exceptional circumstances	Largely (Art. 9 Founding Regulation; Appointing Authority in relation to the Director; Responsibility for all staff matters rests with Director, who is to consult the SC on recruitment of scientific staff)
	Decision-making by absolute majority for current business matters, and 2/3 majority for the appointment and dismissal of the director, the designation of the chairperson of the board, adoption of the annual budget/work programme	Partially: 2/3 majority applies for all decisions by the Management Board, including current business matters; the Bureau's decisions require consensus
Director	Role of Director	Fully (Art. 9 Founding Regulation)
	Accountable to the Management Board, to which they submit an annual report, including accounts Also accountable to EP and Council through the annual discharge procedure Existence of performance indicators for Directors	Largely (Art. 8 and 13 Founding Regulation; while the MB reviews the ED's KPIs, it has to be noted that there is no clear distinction between general KPIs and ED KPIs, see also section 6.2.5)
	Management Board responsible for appointment of the Director on the basis of a shortlist drawn up by the Commission following an open and transparent selection procedure	Fully (Art. 9 Founding Regulation)

	Director's terms of office are defined in the constituent acts, and open for renewal once through decision by Management Board (based on evaluation of the first mandate). Director should not reapply if already renewed once	The regulation's provision on term of office is ambiguous (Art. 9 Founding Regulation). Given the high profile of the position, this principle is deemed as not specified.
	Existence of conflict of interest policy concerning the Director	Fully (https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/working-practices/procedures-and-policies/policy_prevention_management_conflict_interest_1st-review_71216.pdf/@@download/file)
	Existence of a procedure for dismissing the Director in the event of misconduct, unsatisfactory performance or irregularities	As provided for in Regulation No 31 (EEC), 11 (EAEC), laying down the Staff Regulations of Officials and the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community Furthermore, it is in the remit of the MB to appoint and to dismiss the Director in such an event A specific procedure in the EEA context has not been specified.
Other internal bodies	Agencies should exchange information on their experience with scientific committees; a coordinated approach to common problems could be considered	Provision applicable to all agencies The EU Agencies Network (EUAN) has been established to provide agencies a platform for collaboration, information exchange and for exploring efficiencies. The Shared Support Office (SSO) is in service of all agencies and exists for example in the preparation of discharge procedures.
	Selection procedures of Scientific committee members should be periodically reviewed, notably in the context of the agency's evaluations Independence of scientific experts should be fully ensured – should also be covered in evaluations	Not specified. However, since literature suggests[78] that the principle has been taken up in light of potential conflicts of interest, the EEA's conflict of interest policy is applicable here as well. (https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/working-practices/procedures-and-policies/policy_prevention_management_conflict_interest_1st-review_71216.pdf/@@download/file) Furthermore, the Scientific Committee's Rules of Procedure contain provisions on conflict of interest and the signature of a declaration of commitment and of interest is required.
	Boards of appeal	Not applicable
	Member States should regularly review the adequacy of resources/staff that they assign to work related to the agency	Provision appliable to another institution
Operation of agencies		
Administrative	Three options:	A distinction to which extent this principle has been applied is

[78] "EU Agencies, Common Approach and Parliamentary Scrutiny", European Parliamentary Research Service, 2018: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/627131/EPRS_STU(2018)627131_EN.pdf

support	- Improving or extending the services provided by the Commission - Merging smaller agencies - Sharing services between agencies	not possible, however the EEA makes use of services provided by the Commission in relation to administrative support (see strategy on efficiency). • Furthermore, via the EU Agencies Network (EUAN), Agencies are cooperating on many areas, one of which is sharing of services in administrative areas to enhance cost efficiency[79].
Security rules of EU classified information	Either foreseen in founding acts, or for existing agencies, to be adopted by the Management Board Not impede the access rights of the EP or imply the multiplication of bilateral agreements between the EP and EU bodies and agencies	Fully (the Management Board adopted on 22 June 2004 implementing rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents: Procedures and policies (europa.eu))
International relations	Existence of a clear strategy embedded in the annual and-or multi-annual work programmes with a specification of associated resources This strategy should ensure that agency stays within its mandate and is not seen as representing an EU position or committing the EU to international obligations Strategy and specific initiatives with an international dimension should be subject to approval by the Management Board Exchange of information between agencies, the Commission and relevant EU Delegations to ensure consistency of EU policy	Fully (The MAWP 2014 – 2020 describes the EEA's international engagement, which is further detailed by the document "The EEA framework for international engagement". Both documents were superseded by the EEA-EIONET Strategy 2021-2030, which specifies international engagement but to a more limited extent. Specific initiatives are described in the Single Programming Documents which are subject to adoption by the Management Board. Stakeholder consultations confirm in general the regular exchange between Agency, Commission and EU Delegations in areas where EEA engagement is sought internationally)
Communication activities	Coherence between agency's communication strategy and the Commission and other institutions' strategy and activities Ground rules are to be developed by the Commission Communication activities	Partially, since there seems to be space for improvement, event though EEA staff reported greater convergence with the Commission's communication unit during the evaluation period, which was welcomed by both sides and further intensification is foreseen.

[79] https://euagencies.eu/sites/default/files/euan_strategy_2021-2027.pdf

	should not be detrimental to agencies' core tasks Agencies' access to central communication tools and coordination structures should be facilities; also access to Commission framework contracts	
Programming of activities and resources		
Annual and multiannual work programmes	- Existence of annual work programmes - Existence of multiannual strategic programmes or guidelines linked with multiannual resource planning (budget and staff) - Commission is to provide formal advice on both documents; EP is consulted in multiannual work programmes (with Director presenting it to the relevant EP committee) - Programmes should respond to outcomes of evaluations - KPIs; link financial and human resources to each specific action to be carried out; link successive annual work programmes and multiannual programme - Director to report to Management Board	Fully (Art. 8 Founding Regulation, common practice in operations and KPIs adopted by the Management Board) Commission provides an Opinion (annually) on each multi-annual and annual work programme KPIS since 2019
Human resources	Simplified human resources procedures by agencies	No clear comparison can be made what can be regarded as simplified human resources procedure. EEA staff reported in consultations that in recent years recruitment procedures notably were modernised adopting digital recruitment methods, which allowed for a more efficient recruitment of a large number of vacancies.
	Existence of Staff Policy Plans (SPP) which provides	This is deemed to be met fully in practice. While the Founding Regulation only requires an establishment plan, the

	a full picture of staff needs, information on the number of all types of external staff, including interim staff and service providers, information on promotions, gender and geographical balance	Commission in 2020 published Guidelines for the Single Programming Document and the Consolidated Annual Activity Report (including templates for a Staff Policy Plan)[80], which the EEA applies.
	SPP and draft Union budget need to be aligned	This is deemed to be met fully in practice.
Funding, management of budgetary resources and budgetary procedure	Agencies to reduce high carry over and cancellation rates; Commission to provide guidance Rule for surplus carry-over for agencies fully financed by EU budget	These provisions were further specified by a circulaire issued by DG Budget. The combined amounts of budget appropriations for the current year and appropriations carried forward from the previous year that were not implemented should not exceed 3% in order to avoid penalties (see EEA CAAR 2020). The EEA is reporting in the context of the CAARs on carry overs and cancellations.
	(Partially) Self-financed agencies principles	Not applicable to the EEA
	Application of activity-based budgeting / activity-based management (ABB/ABM)	Such a system has been adopted in 2014-2016.
	Legislative financial statements should be presented in cases where agencies are being entrusted with new tasks	Provision applicable to another institution This provision has been taken up in recent years as reported by stakeholders in the consultation and has contributed to greater planning security of the agency.
	Reprioritisation of activities should always be considered by the legislative authority as alternative besides granting of additional resources in view of new tasks being introduced	Provision applicable to another institution As reported by Commission staff all additional tasks have to be duly justified, also in light of the question whether a reprioritisation of activities was a feasible alternative.
	Budget modifications are communicated to budget authority in any case	Fully (the Commission as budgeting authority is represented in the Management Board who is informed about budget and budget modifications)
	Efforts should be made to simplify implementation of the Financial Regulation rules by the Agencies	Provision applicable to another institution
Accountability, controls and transparency and relations with stakeholders		
Reporting requirements	One single annual report to inform on - Implementation of annual work programme, budget and staff policy	Fully (the EEA is reporting the required information through its Consolidated Annual Reports (see also reference to C(2020) 2297 final; for discharge procedures additional information is made available)

[80] C(2020) 2297 final

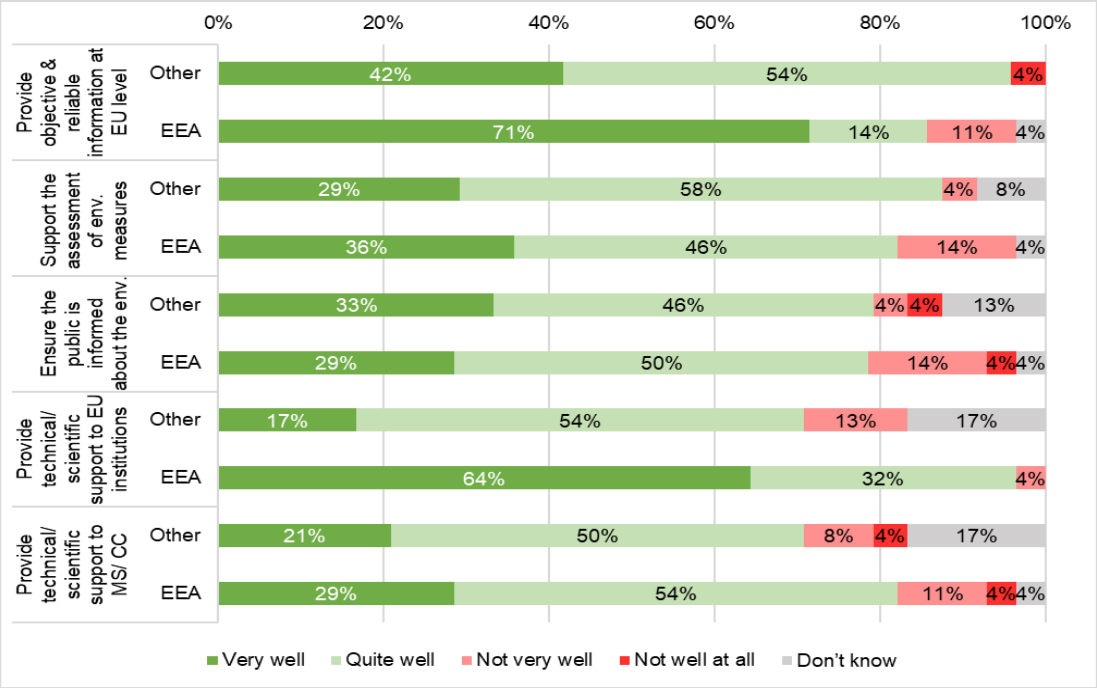
	plan, management and internal control systems, internal/external audit findings, follow-up to audit and discharge recommendations and statement of assurance of the ED - Could also include information required for the discharge procedures	
	Commission to draw up an indicative template for the report	Provision applicable to another institution The provision however was fully implemented through the 2020 Communication COM (2020)2297
	Report and MB assessment for information to Court of Auditors, EP, Council and Commission by 1 July	Fully (Art. 8 and 13 of the Founding Regulation)
Internal audit	Internal Audit System to discuss planning with agencies' management, report to the Director and to the Management Board, appropriate follow-up necessary. Setup of an Internal Audit Capability possible to coordinate with IAS	Provision applicable to another institution • EEA has an Internal Audit Capability dealing with auditing and reports.
External audit	Rules for involvement of private sector auditors	Provision applicable to another institution
Discharge	Systematic information of partner DG and DG BUDG of results of Court of Auditors' audits, measures to meet discharge and Court's recommendations	Fully (Art. 8, 13 of the Founding Regulation in conjunction with current practice, as this information is provided in the SPDs and CAARs)
	Take account of Commission recommendations on the discharge of each agency	Fully (This information is provided in the SPDs and CAARs)
	Rules for self-financed agencies	Not applicable
Alert/warning system	Activated by Commission in the event that it has serious concerns that the Management Board is about to take decisions which may not comply with the mandate	Provision applicable to another institution

	of the agency, violate EU law or be in manifest contradiction with EU policy objectives	
Evaluation of the agencies	Founding act should foresee periodic overall evaluation Evaluations are to take place every five years	Not explicitly but arguably in spirit (The Founding Regulation does not include a dedicated "review"-Article. However, following the requests of the European Parliament in 2005 and 2007 it has become common practice that a regular review is undertaken every five years (starting with the evaluation in 2008). From the 2008 evaluation study it also becomes clear that the Founding Regulation together with the Financial Regulation and the principles of sound and efficient management are being interpreted to support a regular review).
	Ex-ante evaluation of activities and programmes should be possible for cases involving a significant budget or when requested by the Management Board	Not foreseen explicitly, however the RoP foresee that any member with voting rights may propose an item to the agenda of MB meetings, thus theoretically it is possible
	Ex-post evaluation should be mandatory for all programmes/activities	As specified in the Financial Regulation 2018/1046 (Art. 34).
	Follow-up plan on conclusions of evaluations drawn up by agencies, and should be the task of the Management Board/Executive Board	Fully (The EEA provides for these discussions through the SPDs and decisions by the Management Board/Bureau).
	Commission should provide Parliament and Council with any other information on the evaluation of agencies if requested	Provision applicable to another institution
Transparency and relations with stakeholders	Multilingual websites to the maximum extent as possible and provide information to ensure transparency, including financial transparency	Largely (the EU's Translation Policy: Translation policy (europa.eu), indicates that newsletter articles, press releases, infographics and webpages are being translated, however this is subject to the availability of funds and the impact and relevance of the information for our target audience. The EEA's website has been updated in March 2023, and implementation of multilingual functionality is ongoing. However, this is outside of the evaluation period)
	Relations should be coherent with the agencies' mandate, the institutional division of tasks in international relations, EU policies and priorities and Commission's actions Agencies should also clarify the sharing of roles between	Fully (The EEA adheres to the Inter-Institutional Guide of Good Administrative Behaviour which stipulates Impartiality and independence and Obligation to transfer to the competent service of the institution. Furthermore, the Agency has undertaken further efforts in the context of the EIONET modernisation to contribute further to the sharing of the roles with the national counterparts.)

	them and their national counterparts	
Prevention, detection and investigation of fraud, corruption and other illegal activities	Formalisation of role of OLAF towards the agencies	Provision applicable to another institution

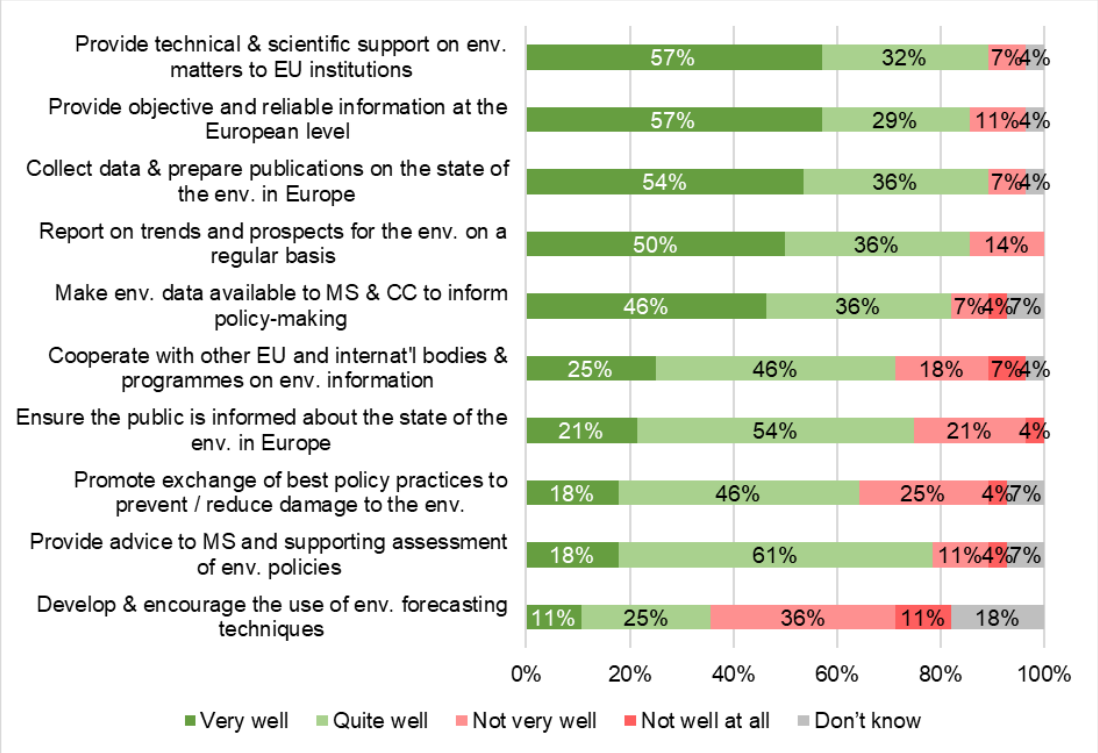
ANNEX 14. RESULTS OF THE ONLINE SURVEY

Figure 15: Thinking of the period 2017-2021, how well did the EEA and its network, the EIONET, meet the following objectives?



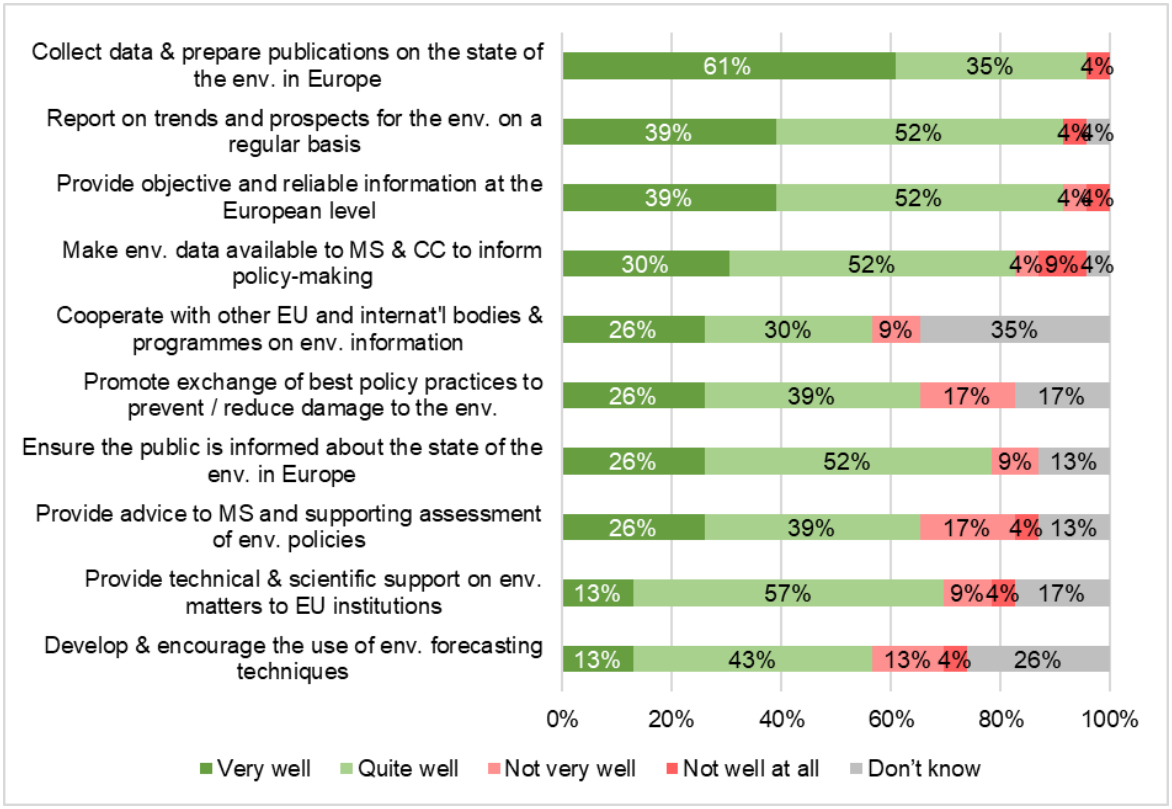
Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023). Q9, N=51. Split by respondents from EEA and other respondents (N=28 for EEA staff, N= 23 for 'other').

Figure 16: Thinking of the period 2017-2021, how well did the EEA and its network, the EIONET, deliver the following core activities? (EEA staff)



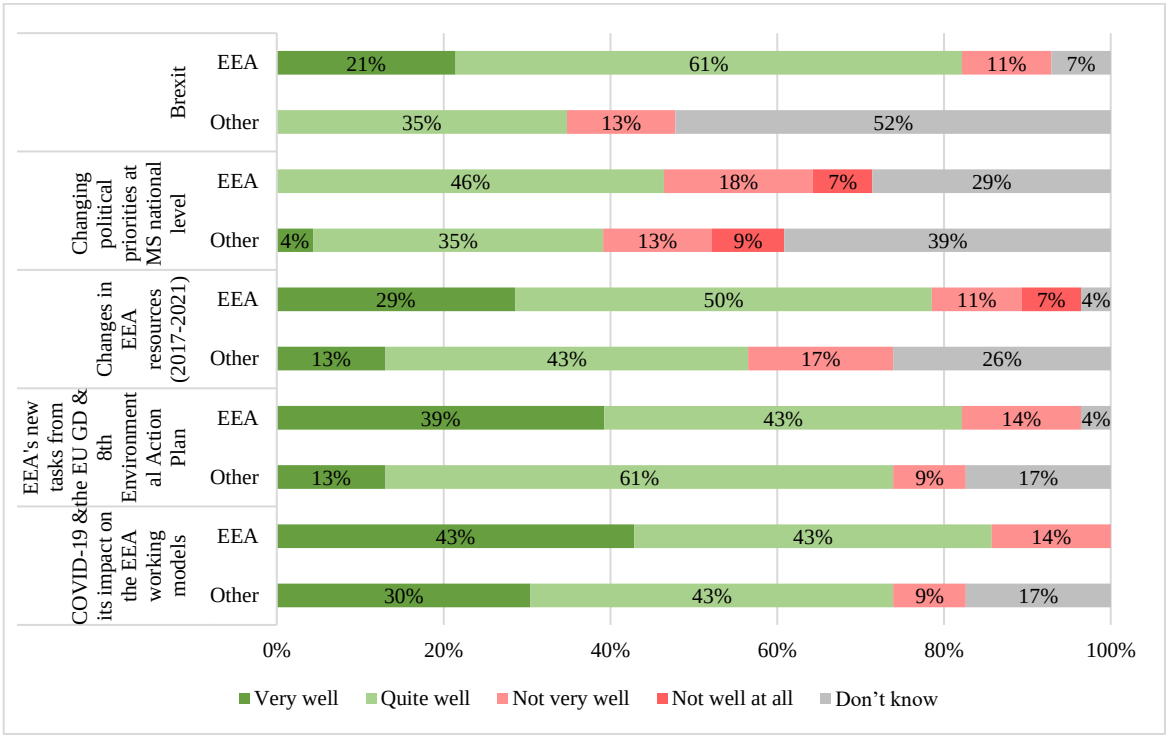
Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023). Q9, N=28

Figure 17: Thinking of the period 2017-2021, how well did the EEA and its network, the EIONET, deliver the following core activities? (Other respondents)



Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023). Q9, N=23

Figure 18: Overall, how well did the EEA deal with the following challenges that affected its areas of activity in 2017-2021?



Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023). Q11, N=51 (incl. 28 EEA staff and 23 Other respondents).

Figure 19: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements – the EEA... (EEA staff)

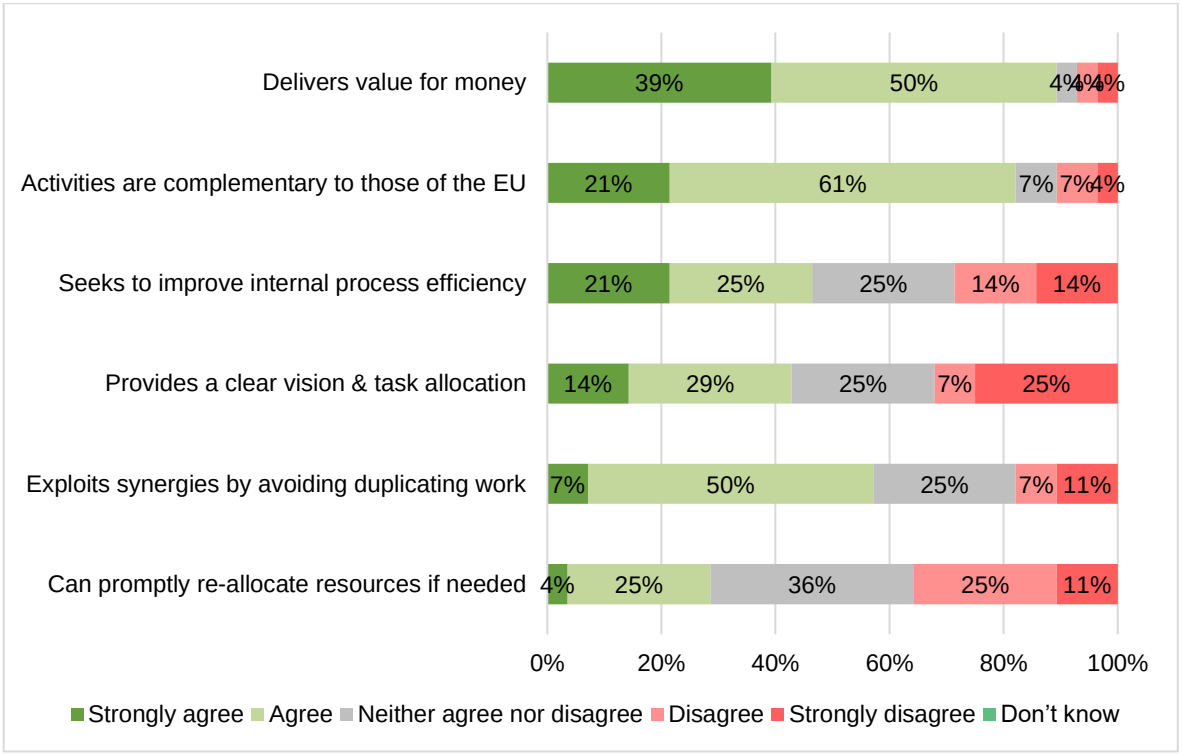
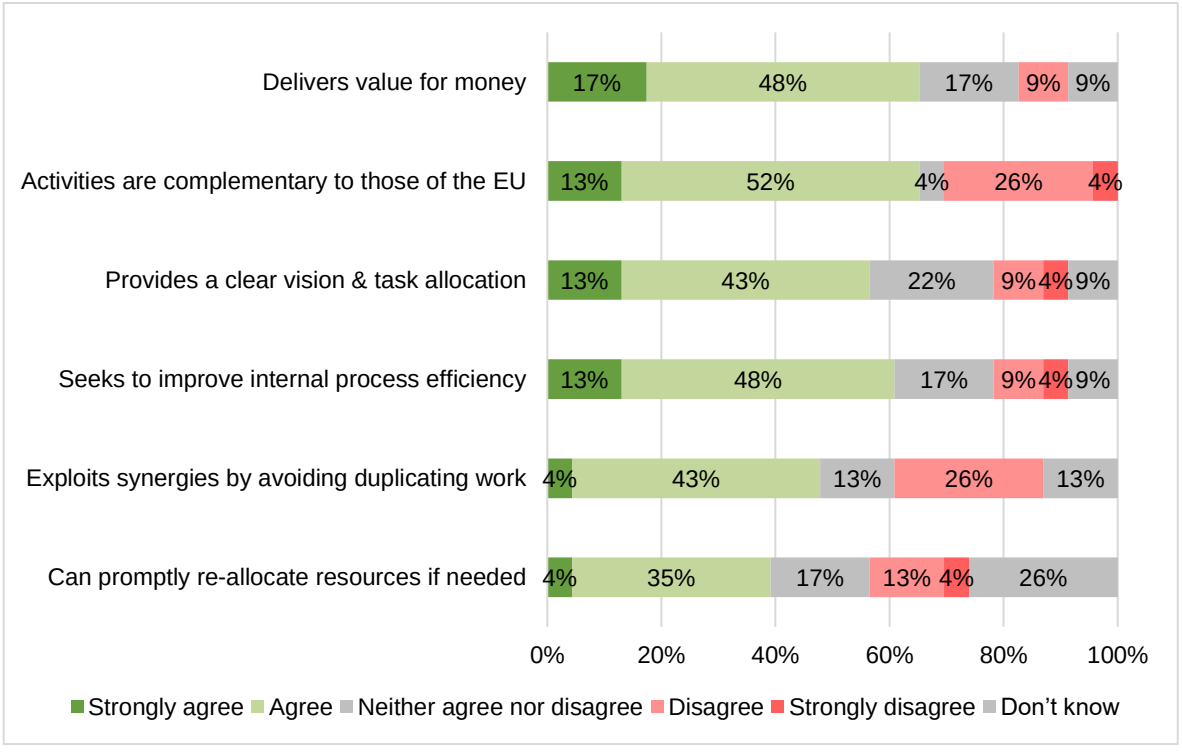
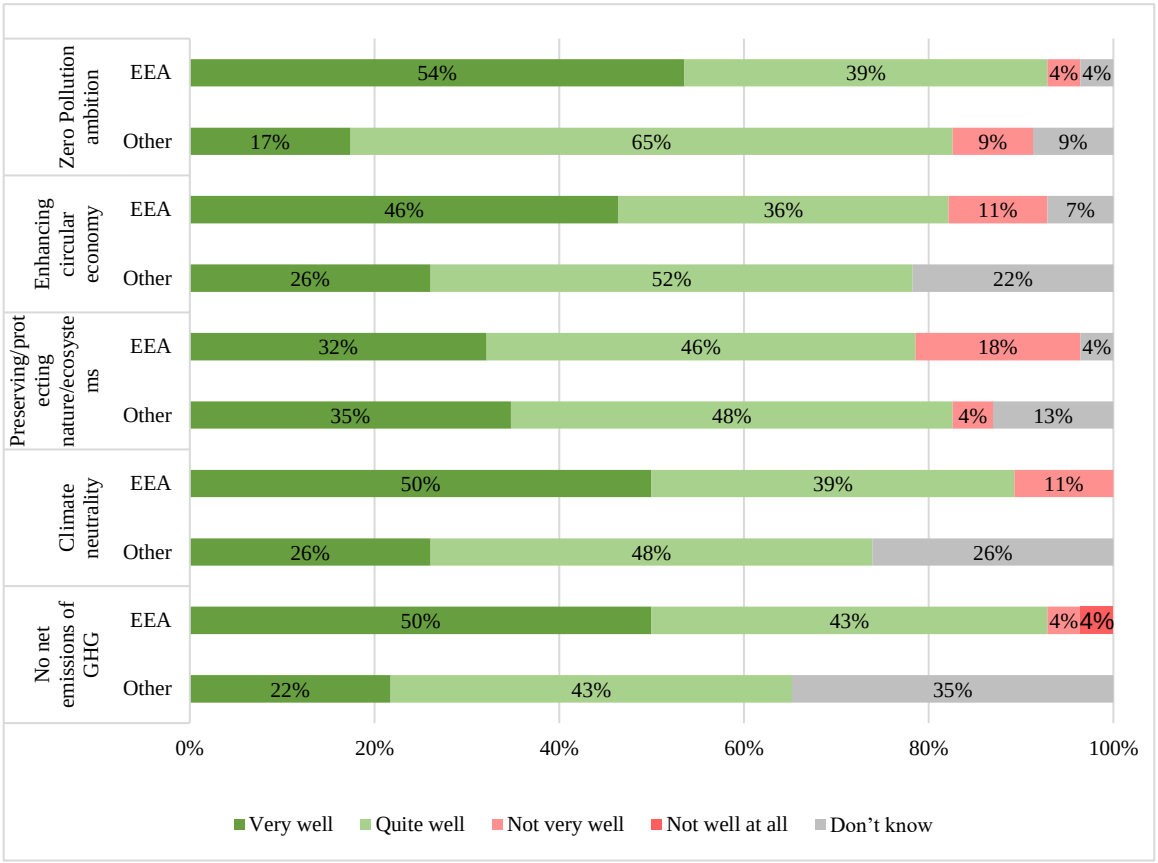


Figure 20: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements – the EEA... (Other respondents)



Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 – 28/03/2023). Q32, N=28 for EEA staff, N=23 for other respondents

Figure 21: Thinking of the work that EEA and EIONET do, to what extent does it support the following EU policy priorities?



Source: Online Survey (10/02/2023 - 28/03/2023). Q21, N=28 for EEA staff, N=23 for other respondents