



## **OPINION OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EEA SINGLE PROGRAMMING DOCUMENT 2020-22 AND THE ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020**

Article 8, paragraph 4-5 of the founding Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 dated 23 April 2009 requires the European Environment Agency's (EEA) Scientific Committee (SC) to be consulted on the Multi Annual Work Programme (MAWP) / Annual Work Programme (AWP) before the Executive Director submits them to the Management Board for adoption.

On 18 February 2019, the Scientific Committee was invited to provide its opinion on the draft Single Programming Document (SPD) 2020-2022 and the draft Annual Work Programme (AWP) 2020. The SPD 2020-22 reflects an extension of the MAWP 2014-2018 through to 2020, with the expectation that preparations for a new EEA strategy for the period 2021-2030 will be launched in 2019.

Following discussions at the 73<sup>rd</sup> SC meeting on 22-23 May 2019, we, the SC, agreed on this opinion.

We welcome the draft SPD 2020-22 and the AWP 2020. In view of the considerable external uncertainties relating to the EEA's work, not least in relation to the Multi-annual Financial Framework, we appreciate the effort that is now being invested by the Agency's senior management team in trying to identify and explore key strategic and operational priorities.

The publication of SOER2020 in December 2019 will be a significant milestone in the EEA's activities, and the communication of its results to a wide audience of stakeholders should be a high priority in 2019-2020. We have been consulted several times during the drafting of SOER2020 and are convinced that it will provide an important stimulus to reflect and act on the state of Europe's environment in a broader, systemic perspective. Such work is the necessary consequence of Article 2 of the EEA's founding Regulation (EC 401/2009), which requires the EEA to 'assess the results' of measures to protect the environment.

The SPD mentions some important opportunities for using Copernicus land monitoring data, e.g. in relation to support and monitoring of LULUCF (land-use, land-use change and forestry) mechanisms as well as in relation to air pollution. With regards to Land Use, there are further opportunities in the context of the greening of the Common Agricultural Policy, for which monitoring data, e.g. of high value nature areas, could be provided from Copernicus program.

Under Copernicus, the EEA manages by delegation the land monitoring service and the in situ component, with non-core funding that is higher than all the EEA topic centers combined. We are concerned that the potential of Copernicus has not yet been fully exploited. Specific deliverables and Key Performance Indicators for Copernicus activities are absent in the SPD and should to be defined. It is also advisable to consider ways in which Copernicus data and

products can be integrated into more of the EEA's products and activities (see SC Opinion on AWP2018).

The EEA should continue to respond to the increasing need for interdisciplinary knowledge drawing on health, human well-being, climate change and environmental pollution data. Better environmental health is closely related to achieving better human health and thus improving economic productivity. It implies reducing exposure to hazardous chemicals. The EEA's involvement in the human biomonitoring program, HBM4EU, focusing on chemicals in the human body, needs to be followed-up when the project ends in 2021. The data provided should be taken a step further via a report on where air, water and soil/food contamination adds substantially to human exposures, as its implications for environmental inequalities and justice. The health and well being of EU citizens are also linked to their access to green areas, better mobility, healthy housing conditions and urban planning.

It is also important that the Agency extends its role in the co-creation of a solutions-oriented knowledge base for systemic transitions. This work needs new measures to strengthen its capacity to build partnerships with other European institutions and resources are needed to support the development of this knowledge base.

However, we are still concerned that austerity measures adopted by the EU have undesirable implications on the EEA's activities. The addition of new tasks and the extension of existing tasks (see page 37), many of which appear to be underfunded, combined with the prospects of further cuts in core funding, further increase the pressure on the Agency's resources. It risks compromising on its ability to discharge the functions outlined in the founding Regulation. Non-core funds for dedicated activities have become substantial, and in 2020 amount to about 60% of the EEA's core budget for operational activities.

Finally, the EEA Regulation Article 19 established that the EEA is open to membership for countries that embrace its objectives. It is important that information about the opportunities and modalities of EEA membership is made clear to all parties, to ensure informed decisions on future arrangements, including for the UK and/or England, Scotland and Wales<sup>1</sup>. Further contingency planning for all eventualities (including an abrupt, 'no deal' UK withdrawal) is advisable.

We congratulate the EEA on the PD2020-2022 / AWP2020 and look forward to supporting the EEA and its partners in their implementation.

Copenhagen, 29 May 2019

*SIGNED*

Prof. Per Mickwitz  
Chair of EEA Scientific Committee

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<sup>1</sup> the [ISO list](#) of the subdivisions of the UK, compiled by [British Standards](#) and the UK's [Office for National Statistics](#), uses "country" to describe England, Scotland and Wales.

