



European
Environment
Agency



Consolidated annual activity report 2023

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Management Board's analysis and assessment

Introduction

The Management Board welcomes the Consolidated Annual Activity Report for 2023 and makes the following observations.

Commentary of overall achievements

The Management Board welcomes the following achievements by the EEA in 2023, which was a year of change when it came to the governance of the Agency, with a new executive director and a new Management Board chair. The Management Board noted the continued commitment of the EEA to delivering to a high level and adapting to the evolving context.

- Effective management of the governance processes and functioning of the Management Board and Bureau was ensured. The Management Board led the EEA through changes in its governance by selecting the EEA's new executive director and electing a new Management Board chair. The Management Board also implemented changes in its ways of working in terms of format, conduct and content of meetings following a review of Management Board and Bureau operations, for instance, to give adequate space to strategic discussions in the Management Board.
- It was the third year of implementation of the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030, which is aligned with the EU policy priorities. The EEA and the countries continued building on the modernisation of the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) to ensure that the network continues jointly delivering on future policy ambitions.
- A Management Board Advisory Committee (MBAC) was set up to follow the EEA/Eionet evaluation, looking back at 2017-2021. The MBAC has been instrumental in bringing knowledge and insights to the exercise from the Management Board and country/Eionet perspective.

The EEA continued supporting the delivery of Europe's environmental ambitions as part of the European Green Deal (EGD) and the Eight Environment Action Programme (8th EAP). It also contributed to Europe's global commitments, whilst preparing future engagement with EU institutional stakeholders and the countries in anticipation of the next policy cycle.

- The new European Topic Centre (ETC) on Biodiversity and Ecosystems started its work in 2023 and will be operational until 2026.
- The delivery rates for EEA key performance indicators 2023 were high: a budget execution rate of 100% of the annual budget, a 100% delivery rate of key reports and assessments, and high engagement with key stakeholders and network partners throughout the year.
- The Single Programming Document (2024-2026) (SPD) was further streamlined, resulting in improved quality and readability, with clearer outputs and priorities linked to EU policy priorities. The SPD consultation with the countries was improved, resulting in more consolidated, fit-for-purpose input and increased engagement in the process.

Recommendations

To ensure efficient operation in the forthcoming period, the Management Board puts forward the following recommendations:

- Given the upcoming policy cycle, the Management Board recommends the EEA continues its reflections with the Board on how to engage with EU institutional stakeholders in cooperation with key stakeholders in Eionet countries to ensure that the network keeps adding value by delivering on policy ambitions at the EU level and in the countries in line with the provisions of the Founding Regulation.
- The Management Board recognises the instrumental role of the MBAC in following the evaluation of EEA/Eionet for the period 2017-2021, bringing together Management Board members and Eionet National Focal Points. In line with the advice from the MBAC so far, the Management Board recommends that the EEA focus on better priority setting and on improving opportunities for digitalisation in the coming years. The Management Board also recommends the EEA continues discussions on the structure of the EEA budget in order to balance core and non-core budget.
- The Management Board recommends that the EEA continues its efforts to harvest improved input and ensure high engagement from Management Board members and the whole community of stakeholders consulted on the SPD, ensuring the timely submission of the final SPD to the Board for adoption by the end of the year.
- In light of the changes in ways of working following the review of the Management Board and Bureau operations, the Management Board recommends that the EEA should continue to bring more substantive issues to meetings. This will enable strategic discussions with Management Board members. The Management Board also recommends that the EEA bring forward topics about prioritisation and budget to Board meetings.
- The Management Board notes the importance of the EEA having sufficient resources allocated for support functions to continue to deliver on its operational tasks and its ongoing efforts to achieve synergies, in a context where new tasks are allocated to the Agency. The Management Board encourages the EEA to continue to actively engage with the European Commission to ensure an adequate balance between operational and support tasks.
- The Management Board notes the importance of the EEA continuing to provide an annual update to the Bureau and Board on the Agency's risk identification and to include information on mitigation measures in response to risks and provide a summary of the risks that have materialised.
- The Management Board recommends that the EEA reflects on the fitness for purpose of the Agency's key performance indicators (KPIs), which could be improved to better show whether the Agency is on track to fulfil its commitments.

Foreword

We are pleased to present the European Environment Agency's Consolidated Annual Activity Report for 2023. The report provides an overview of the EEA's key activities and achievements during the year, as we work to provide timely environmental data, knowledge, assessments and reporting to inform policy makers, the general public and other stakeholders. The year saw many achievements for the EEA, along with changes in leadership.

On 1 June, Leena Ylä-Mononen took over as EEA Executive Director from Hans Bruyninckx, who had served in the role for 10 years. In September, there was also a change at the head of the EEA's Management Board, with André Weidenhaupt (from Luxembourg) taking over from Laura Burke (from Ireland) as Chair.

The EEA saw significant growth in 2023. Progress in European Green Deal policies has meant additional tasks for the EEA. We have been able to welcome new staff members and expand our expertise and outputs. This sign of confidence in the EEA is welcome, and we look forward to developing insightful new knowledge products and services to inform the policy process over the years to come.

Working alongside member and partner countries in the Eionet network, the EEA has continued to implement the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030. In addition to this, the five-yearly EEA/Eionet evaluation by the European Commission, looking back at 2017-2021, is ongoing. Throughout 2023, the EEA provided coordinated input and information, and discussed preliminary conclusions and recommendations together with the Management Board, based on the EEA's fact-finding. The EEA has been providing support to the Management Board Advisory Committee on the evaluation, primarily via the Management Board Secretariat.

Further change and challenges are in store for 2024, with the upcoming European Parliament elections in June. Whatever the outcomes, further and decisive action will be needed to limit and adapt to climate change, halt biodiversity loss and stop pollution. The EEA and Eionet will continue to play a vital role in ensuring policymakers have the knowledge and data they need to make the right decisions for the years ahead, and to ensure the measures we take facilitate a just and sustainable transition.

Leena Ylä-Mononen, Executive Director, EEA

André Weidenhaupt, Chair of the Management Board

Executive summary

The year in brief

The EEA, together with its 38 member and cooperating countries and its knowledge network Eionet, provides vital support for the EU's environment and climate policy goals and targets.

In 2023, the Agency's assessments and data continued to support the European Green Deal (EGD) and its flagship initiatives, as well as the EU 8th Environment Action Programme and the many other EU policies and legislation on the environment and climate already established under the *environment acquis*. The year also saw changes at the EEA's helm, some major events and a number of new publications, some produced in rapid response to fast-changing circumstances.

In terms of events, a key meeting took place in Copenhagen in March 2023, with an EEA-Eionet day bringing together EEA National Focal Points, experts from Eionet groups and thematic groups, European Topic Centre managers and experts, and EEA staff. This was important to re-establish and strengthen the network after the COVID-19 pandemic and to accelerate implementation of the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030.

Also in March, the EEA organised a high-level conference, 'Delivering the European Green Deal in unprecedented times', in Brussels. The event's panel discussions, keynote addresses and interviews tackled some of the most pressing environmental governance issues – from sustainability transitions and challenges in reaching the EGD's goals to providing knowledge for policymakers to act upon.

The EU and its Member States have ambitious targets to achieve sustainability by 2050, as laid out in the EGD. Building on this, the 8th Environment Action Programme (8th EAP) guides EU environmental policy up to 2030. The EEA is tasked with tracking progress towards the 8th EAP's objectives and released its first annual monitoring report in 2023. Based on 28 indicators and corresponding targets, the analysis suggests the EU may not meet the majority of its 2030 goals. Areas related to production and consumption are particularly challenging. However, the outlook is positive for some objectives. For instance, the green economy's share will likely continue to increase, and premature deaths linked with exposure to fine particles should fall, in line with the EU's zero pollution action plan.

By 2050, the EU's ambition is for air, water and soil pollution to be reduced to levels no longer considered harmful to health and natural ecosystems. Air pollution is the greatest environmental threat to people's health in Europe. The risk is even higher when combined with climate change impacts, such as heatwaves and forest fires, and vulnerable groups like children and the elderly are disproportionately affected. In 2023, the EEA developed a wide range of products on air pollution, from analysis and data sets to indicators and air quality apps, allowing users to check the air quality where they live.

On water, the EEA supported key EU legislation on drinking water and urban wastewater, together with the Water Framework Directive, aimed at improving the status of Europe's rivers, lakes and groundwater. Clean water is critical for nature and for human health and well-being. It is also a crucial resource for numerous economic sectors. Many areas in Europe are increasingly suffering from water scarcity because

of over-exploitation and climate change, with pollution putting additional pressure on this finite resource.

Europe's soils are also under increasing pressure, due to soil sealing, pollution, intensive agriculture and climate change. The EEA's *Soil monitoring report*, published in January, presents a comprehensive set of indicators to assess soil health and identifies thresholds beyond which soil functions, such as food production, are negatively affected. These tools aim to inform protection and restoration needs and soil-related policies in Europe.

Another EEA report, *The European biomass puzzle*, released in November, looks at how biomass can help meet the EU's climate and environment objectives. Research shows there will not be enough EU-sourced biomass available to fulfil all the roles envisaged in the EGD. With increasing and competing demands from different sectors, including for nature conservation, biomass uses must therefore be prioritised.

Restoring Europe's habitats and species is important – for nature itself, to improve human health and well-being, and to reduce climate impacts. The EU biodiversity strategy for 2030 provides a broad long-term plan for protecting nature and reversing ecosystem degradation. The EEA supported this process in 2023 through data collection and by developing indicators.

The EEA also contributed to the EU's circular economy agenda, with further development of the Circularity Metrics Lab and indicator updates, and by delivering targeted knowledge for the textiles, plastics and buildings sectors. Through the circular economy action plan, the EU aims to reduce pressure on natural resources and double the circular material use rate by 2030.

Meanwhile, on top of the planned publications released in 2023, the EEA provided an agile response to some rapidly changing situations. This resulted in six additional publications on topics ranging from extreme weather to human health, including the briefing *The importance of restoring nature in Europe* which contributed to the ongoing policy debate in this area.

As the global climate changes, extreme weather events are increasing. The Agency's web report *Extreme summer weather in a changing climate: is Europe prepared?* looked at the impact of past weather events, what is expected long term, and how prepared European society is. The report aims to raise awareness among decisionmakers and the public about the urgent need to address climate change, continue putting mitigation measures in place, and build societal preparedness.

Another rapid-response briefing, *Human exposure to Bisphenol A in Europe*, focused on data from an EU human biomonitoring study. The synthetic chemical Bisphenol A is found in everything from plastic and metal food containers to reusable bottles and drinking water pipes. The updated research data shows that population exposure in Europe is well above acceptable health safety levels, posing a potential health risk for millions of people, and highlighting the need for more action at EU level.

These examples illustrate how, throughout 2023, the EEA continued to play a key role in responding to Europe's policy ambitions and global commitments. Through key activities – data flows, integrated assessments and informative briefings, all providing major input to policy implementation – EEA knowledge remains trusted and valued by partners and stakeholders, both for its analytical depth and for its influence on EU policy implementation.

The EEA in brief

The EEA's mission is 'to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policymaking agents and the public'.

The EEA is a decentralised agency of the EU. The EEA/Eionet Regulation ⁽¹⁾ established the EEA as an independent EU body with its own legal personality and for an indefinite period. The Agency's Founding Regulation also established Eionet ⁽²⁾ and includes the provision that the Agency is open to countries that are not members of the EU ⁽³⁾.

The overall objective of the EEA is defined in Article 1(2) of the Agency's Founding Regulation:

To achieve the aims of environmental protection and improvement laid down by the Treaty and by successive Community action programmes on the environment, as well as of sustainable development, the objective of the Agency and of the European Environment Information and Observation Network shall be 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.

EEA funding consists of an EU subsidy (subject to approval by the budgetary authority and non-core budget) and payments for services rendered. The EU Financial Regulation (and its rules of application) and the Framework Financial Regulation apply. The European Parliament is the Agency's discharge authority.

With respect to human resources, the Staff Regulation defines the overarching principles for EEA staff and implementing provisions have to be adopted in agreement with the European Commission. Furthermore, the establishment of and mandate for both the EEA Management Board and the EEA Scientific Committee are defined, as is the responsibility and accountability of the executive director as the legal representative of the Agency.

The EEA's organisational structure for 2023 included three hierarchical levels:

1. Executive Director's Office, led by the executive director;
2. seven programmes, led by heads of programme;
3. 21 groups, led by heads of group.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32009R0401>

⁽²⁾ <https://www.eionet.europa.eu>

⁽³⁾ Agreements with the EEA in the context of Article 300 of the Treaty have been established with the following non-EU countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Türkiye.

On top of these, the Management Board (with its Bureau), is the main decision-making body of the EEA. In 2023, the Management Board appointed the new EEA Executive Director and adopted the Agency's Single programming document (SPD) and budget.

For more information, see the organisational chart in Annex 3.

Article 41 of the EEA Financial Regulation entitles the director to delegate the powers of budget execution and for these to be sub-delegated. Powers to execute each type of expenditure are delegated to the heads of programme, with the head of administration having delegated authority for all types of expenditure. Sub-delegation, limited to only the approval of payments for certain types of expenditure, is given to the heads of groups in the administration programme.



1 Achievements of the year

Part 1 of this report is structured around the Agency's five activities, as set out in the EEA's Single Programming Document (SPD) 2023-2025 ⁽⁴⁾. The overall achievements for 2023 are placed in the context of multiannual goals, key objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs), and are reported in comparison with the performance indicators, specific objectives and expected results defined in the EEA's annual work programme for 2023.

The EEA's performance framework is closely related to KPIs for the executive director. These aim to achieve a quantitative monitoring of the Agency's performance in relation to its operational work planning and financial and human resource management. The EEA performance framework is structured around five performance objectives (Table 1.1), monitored by 17 multiannual KPIs (Table 1.2).

Table 1.1 EEA annual performance objectives

	Performance objective	Type
1	Sustainable use of financial and human resources, and adequate and efficient internal control systems	Input
2	Timely and qualitative delivery of key products planned in the EEA work programme	Operational output
3	Development and distribution of EEA products aligned with user needs	Uptake
4	Sustainable interaction between the EEA and the Eionet	Network
5	Sustainable human resource management	Staff well-being

The monitoring of the KPIs for Operational output and for Eionet is based on the operational performance across the five activities of the EEA's annual work programme.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/single-programming-document-2023-2025>

Table 1.2 EEA multiannual key performance indicators

Performance objective	No.	KPI	KPI measurement	Baseline (2021)	Target	2023 realisation
Input	1 ^(a)	Staff occupancy rate	Realised staff resources in annual establishment plan	99.3%	Min. 95%	97%
	2 ^(a)	Budget execution – outturn	Rate of annual outturn and carry forward of EEA core budget	100%	Min. 98%	100%
	3 ^(a)	Budget execution – cancellations	Cancellation rate of payment appropriations in year <i>n</i>	0.0%	Max. 2% of core budget	0.01%
	4 ^(a)	Budget execution – executions	Payments executed within legal/contractual deadline	99.2%	100%	92%
	17 ^(a)	Audit compliance	Rate of recommendations from ECA implemented (with deadline in year <i>n</i>)	100%	-	Not applicable ^(b)
Eionet	7 ^(a)	Eionet – data submission	Annual performance for Eionet core data flows	86%	90%	79%
	12	Eionet – network interactions	Eionet country participation rate in webinars and meetings (updated 2022)	66%	Stable/increase	66.1%
	13	Eionet – network satisfaction	Average participant satisfaction rating (updated 2022)	91%	80%	81%
Operational output	5 ^(a)	Annual work programme delivery – assessments	Delivery rate of key reports/assessments as planned for year <i>n</i>	93.1%	Min. 90%	100%
	6 ^(a)	Annual work programme delivery – indicators	Share of core set indicators updated as planned for year <i>n</i>	96%	Min. 90%	92%
Uptake	8	Media visibility – EEA references	Articles with reference to the EEA (number)	23,000	Stable/increase	32,852
	9	Media visibility – social media	Number of followers on social media (Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn combined)	207,000	Stable/increase	240,267
	10	Web traffic	Number of registered sessions on the EEA website	9.8m	Stable/increase	8.5m
	11	Downloads	Registered use of map services (number measured as 'machine-to-machine' traffic)	660m	Stable/increase	923m
Staff well-being	14 ^(a)	Staff satisfaction	Average favourable rate for common items for agencies	63%	-	Not applicable ^(c)
	15 ^(a)	Learning	Average registered time for learning and development (days)	4	7	6
	16 ^(a)	Absence	Annual average short-term sick leave (days)	5	Stable/decrease	2.5
Uptake	18	EEA support to EU policy documents	Number of EU policy documents referencing the EEA or its products	900	Stable/increase	1,079

Notes: ^(a) Mandatory KPIs of the executive director.

^(b) All recommendations from the European Court of Auditors (ECA) are implemented and therefore no data to report by end of December 2022.

^(c) No staff engagement survey in 2023, replaced with a 360 review.

m, million.

No. 1 Staff occupancy rate: three administrator and two assistant posts vacant.

No. 4 Clerical errors recording payment due dates in the finance system for some invoices has resulted in the payment delays being overstated. No interest was paid on any delayed payment.

No. 5 Reports and assessments: 35 publications were published in 2023, the launch of the remaining eight publications was postponed to 2024 at the request of external stakeholders to better fit with the policy agenda. Six additional publications were released, responding to emerging needs in an agile fashion. These are not included in the KPI calculation. In addition, 14 2022 publications were published in 2023, which were included in the 2022 KPI reporting, but had a communication impact in 2023. Altogether 55 publications were published in 2023 and a further 8 produced.

No. 6. Indicators: 53 of 58 indicators were published. Five were cancelled due to a lack of release of the underpinning data or changes in methodology.

No. 7 Data flows: this is a preliminary number based on the internal evaluation of 12 out of 12 data flows. The thematic consultation will take place in March 2024 and Eionet consultation in April 2024.

No. 10 Web traffic: the new web project's first phase excluded the multilingual sites which resulted in a drop in traffic from Google search results. Visits to the homepage maps, graphs and data service remained stable. Visits to publications and indicators experienced increases of 19%. The news section saw a traffic increase of 27% compared with 2022.

No. 12 Network interaction: network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

No. 15 Learning: the EEA's ambition of becoming a learning organisation means that learning is more embedded in the work practices (i.e. more on-the-job learning), which is often not recorded correctly.

1.1 Biodiversity and ecosystems

1.1.1 Specific objective

To ensure the delivery of data, information and knowledge that contributes to the maintenance and restoration of good ecosystem conditions and halting the loss of biodiversity across terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

Activity 1: Key performance indicators		
KPI	Target 2023 (%)	Achieved 2023 (%)
Eionet data submissions – Eionet data flows	90	78 ^(a)
Work programme delivery – indicators updated	90	78
Work programme delivery – publications	90	100
Eionet interactions – country participation in Eionet events	66 (TBC) ^(b)	62

Notes: ^(a) This KPI reflects the timeliness of country submissions of five core data flows: Bathing Water Directive Monitoring and Classification; Nationally designated areas; WISE2; WISE3; and WISE6. The target of 90% was not reached in any of the three WISE dataflows, with WISE2 significantly lower with a score of 55%. This is due to the number of countries not providing the data for reasons of lack of alignment between the EEA definition of the methodology for biological data collection and the country definition. This is being discussed in the relevant Eionet Group (TG Water).

^(b) Network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

1.1.2 Achievement of objectives and results

Action 1: Supporting the implementation of the environmental directives

Throughout 2023, the EEA focused on supporting the European Commission and EEA countries with the implementation of a range of EU legislation, including the Water Framework Directive, Floods Directive, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive, Bathing Water Directive, Drinking Water Directive, Water Reuse Regulation, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Habitats Directive and Birds Directive.

Key activities included supporting country reporting of the 3rd River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive. Additionally, the annual WISE-SoE data calls were launched, with notable participation from 34 out of 38 countries for WISE-6. Other support included the preparation of the 13th data call for the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive. Data models, quality checks and reporting guidance were developed for the Drinking Water Directive and Water Reuse Regulation. For the Bathing Water Directive, the latest data from 2022 were reported and the [bathing water map viewer](#), [country fact sheets](#) and the briefing [European Bathing Water Quality in 2022](#) were published in June.

The [BISE](#), [WISE \(Freshwater\)](#), [WISE \(Marine\)](#) and [Forest](#) online information systems for Europe were enhanced to offer integrated, comprehensive knowledge aligned with the EEA web design and harmonised across other jointly owned information systems. The EEA has also updated and published a number of [indicators](#), including key indicators used in the Eight Environment Action Programme (8th EAP) report published in late 2023.

Networking activities included meetings and webinars with thematic groups covering freshwater, marine, forest and soil. A co-creation activity was established with the Eionet Working Group on antimicrobial resistance in surface waters with engagement from 15 country members and three meetings have been held to date. A new ETC Biodiversity and Ecosystems (ETC BE) started operations on 1 January 2023 and delivered on its 2023 Action Plan and has had considerable activity across Action 1.

An agreement was reached with DG ENV and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) to support the Nitrates Directive reporting starting in 2024 and discussion with DG MARE facilitated further information sharing and identification of knowledge needs, with a proposed four-year agreement developed during the year (for finalisation in 2024) to support the monitoring of the Mission 'Oceans and waters'.

Action 2: Biodiversity and ecosystems – protection and restoration

To support the EU biodiversity strategy and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Agency has undertaken various initiatives. These include collecting data, developing indicators and delivering various products focused on freshwater, marine and biodiversity topics.

The Agency played an important role in supporting the development of knowledge related to the proposed Nature Restoration Law, including scientific information regarding its biodiversity aspects. The EEA shared its knowledge at a range of stakeholder meetings in countries and EU institutions. Throughout the year, it published several briefings to help increase understanding of nature restoration initiatives. These briefings covered topics such as the [condition of forest ecosystems](#), how forests support [sustainable development](#) and the importance of [restoring nature](#) in Europe. Furthermore, the Agency contributed advice and knowledge on proposed laws related to forest and soil monitoring.

A further area of focus has been the development and analysis of [pledges](#) regarding the ambition of [protected areas](#) for land and sea and [measures](#) to improve the state of nature in the EU.

Efforts within Eionet concentrated on optimising activities, notably by consolidating two biodiversity groups into a single Biodiversity Group with a clear emphasis going forward on nature restoration and protection engagement with Eionet countries.

Action 3: Sectors, systems and sustainability challenges impacting ecosystems

In 2023, the EEA prepared the draft of Europe's State of Water report, developed as an integrated assessment of the links between water, biodiversity, pollution and climate change and set for release in 2024. It will be published alongside a website on the WISE online platform, presenting results and allowing for data exploration based on electronically reported information under the Water Framework Directive.

Efforts were also directed towards water scarcity and droughts, resulting in the draft of a technical report on water-saving measures and providing input to European climate risk assessment. Automating workflows and implementing machine learning techniques improved efficiency, with future updates to the [water scarcity conditions in Europe](#) and [water abstraction by source and economic sector](#) indicators becoming more frequent.

Progress on collaboration with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) for the 2nd European Maritime Transport Environmental Report (EMTER 2024) is on track, with a first draft released and consultations conducted with key stakeholders through workshops and written feedback. Additionally, the EEA supported the ECA in their audit on seawater pollution from vessels.

Several reports were also published, including the EEA briefing [How climate change impacts marine life](#), the EEA report [From source to sea – The untold story of marine litter](#), and the report from the ETC on Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters (ETC/ICM), [Marine Litter in Europe](#) and [Benefits of bathing waters in European cities](#). The Agency also collaborated closely with the European Investment Bank to develop a note on [Unlocking finance and investments in nature](#), emphasising the need to integrate nature-based policy responses into economic models.

Progress was made in growing strategic partnerships in the marine area which are expected to deliver on improved collaboration and future EEA support to implementation under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD):

- Memoranda of understanding were established with key stakeholders such as EMSA and the European Fisheries Control Agency.
- Enhanced coordination with Regional Sea Conventions bolstered preparations for the 2024 MSFD data reporting.
- Collaborations expanded with organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), the World Maritime University and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea.

1.2 Climate change mitigation and adaptation

1.2.1 Specific objective

To ensure the delivery of data, information and knowledge in support of the implementation and further development of policies on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Activity 2: Key performance indicators		
KPI	Target 2023 (%)	Achieved 2023 (%)
Eionet data submissions – Eionet data flows	90	76 ^(a)
Work programme delivery – indicators updated	90	97
Work programme delivery – publications	90	100
Eionet interaction – Country participation in Eionet events	66 (TBC) ^(b)	61

- Notes:**
- ^(a) This KPI reflects the timeliness of country submissions to two key data flows: GHG inventories and GHG projections. While all Member States and reporting countries provided timely submissions to the GHG inventories, delays were observed on the submission of GHG projections, with seven Member States submitting more than two months past the reporting deadline of 15 March 2023. To note: Member States had a subsequent deadline for submission of draft National and Energy Climate Plans (NECPs) to the European Commission in June 2023 and the delays in submissions may be explained by national efforts to align the figures in the projections dataset and the draft NECPs. However, as with all data flows, timely submissions are important to ensure adequate time for quality assurance processes and aggregation of the final EU dataset.
 - ^(b) Network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

1.2.2 Achievement of objectives and results

2023 was a record year for the global climate, marked by a nearly 1.5-degree Celsius temperature increase above pre-industrial levels. In response, the EU took decisive climate action by adopting the Fit for 55 legislative package, which set a policy framework to achieve net 55% greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions by the end of this decade. Also, for the EEA's climate programme, 2023 was a particularly active year with a growing portfolio. The following paragraphs describe the knowledge contributions in this area, covering the actions of monitoring and reporting on progress towards climate neutrality, monitoring and reporting on climate change impacts and adaptation, and assessing solutions for the transition towards climate neutrality and resilience.

Action 1: Monitoring and reporting on progress towards climate neutrality

On climate mitigation, the [EEA's Climate and Energy package](#) was published in October 2023. The package included the flagship [Trends and Projections 2023 Report](#), which provided a comprehensive overview of the EU's progress toward climate neutrality and contributed to the progress reporting under the EU Climate Law. Drawing on key EEA-managed data such as the [GHG inventory](#), several of the 13 indicators released with the package were also instrumental for the progress assessment under the 8th EAP.

On energy, a [joint report](#) with the EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) highlighted the need for flexible solutions to effectively deploy wind and solar energy. The report was published against the backdrop of energy policy discussions, including those in the European Parliament and among the Member States energy ministers. Additionally, the EEA published briefings on the [decarbonisation of heating and cooling](#) and [the behavioural aspects of energy renovations](#)

On transport, EEA assessments showed that the [uptake of electric vehicles](#) and a [decreased GHG intensity of transport fuels](#) resulted in [reductions in emissions from new vehicles](#). The comprehensive [Transport and Environment Report](#) focused on the challenges and opportunities for Europe's mobility system of new technologies and digital transformation.

In addressing both climate change and ozone depletion, the EEA has released briefings and indicators on [ozone-depleting substances](#) and [fluorinated gases](#) and has also fulfilled the necessary submissions to the Montreal Protocol and its Kigali Amendment. These show that Europe continues to fulfil its obligations in reducing the use of these potent substances.

Underlying the above products are more than 20 data sets on climate, energy and transport that the EEA collects and quality assures each year. The data are viewable and downloadable through interactive visualisations on the EEA's [Climate and energy in the EU](#) website. In 2023, the EEA took up several new tasks, including the management of data reported in the context of the National Energy and Climate Progress Reports.

Moreover, on data handling related to transport, the EEA continued its crucial work on quality-assuring type-approved CO₂ emissions of new cars, while in 2023 data on real-world emissions from new vehicles were also prepared. Furthermore, the EEA broadened its geographical coverage, namely by supporting the Energy Community, where the EEA is supporting nine contracting parties in the West Balkan and Eastern Partnership regions to prepare and report high-quality climate and energy data.

In its capacity as part of the EU negotiation team, the EEA provided technical support to prepare for the November 2023 COP28 discussions in Dubai on the Enhanced Transparency Framework under the Paris Agreement and land use in the carbon market.

The land use, forestry and agriculture sectors are vital for the European Union to reach its goal of achieving zero net emissions by 2050 and the EEA has an important supporting role in this transition.

In 2023, The EEA supported the European Commission with the progress reporting and implementation of the Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) Regulation, which aims to increase land-based CO₂ removals in Europe. For the first time, the EEA performed quality checks on the reported agriculture and LULUCF emissions and worked on new monitoring methods, building on remote sensing data. The Commission's proposal for a Carbon Removal Certification further anticipates a role for the EEA in supporting monitoring, reporting and verification activities. EEA staff contributed to the European Commission's expert group on carbon removals by preparing the setup of the certification of carbon removals.

At the initiative of DG CLIMA and coordinated by the EEA, the first version of the LULUCF handbook was published. The objective of this LULUCF handbook is to enable an increase in the quality of GHG emissions and removals in the LULUCF sector emission inventory data making use of the latest methodologies and monitoring data. Investing in high-quality data today will influence the success of land use policies in the future. Therefore, this handbook is addressed not only to emission inventory experts but also to those involved in land use policy-making,

policy implementation and monitoring and reporting, including forestry and agricultural policy experts. The EEA is committed to updating this LULUCF handbook in the coming years and to engaging in emission inventory improvement activities and land policymaking in the coming years.

Action 2: Monitoring and reporting on climate change impacts and adaptation

As Europeans face more frequent extreme weather and climate events, the topic of climate change adaptation is getting increased attention. Simultaneously, the EEA is intensifying its work to deliver data and knowledge on this topic.

Demonstrating the acceleration of climate change, the EEA published five climate indicators with detailed, reliable and high-quality data on global and European [temperature](#) and [sea level rise](#).

Helping to understand the impact of climate change, the [2023 EEA indicator on the economic losses from weather- and climate-related extremes in Europe](#) estimated the total cost at EUR 650 billion in the EU since 1980. Actionable and up-to-date knowledge of climate change's impact on health was presented through the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#). These transparent data serve as tangible evidence of the impact of climate change and underscore the urgent need for action. In 2023, the EEA continued working with partners on the first [European Climate Risk Assessment](#), set for spring 2024, presenting a comprehensive climate vulnerability and risk assessment. Over the summer, the EEA published the interactive product [Extreme summer weather in a changing climate: is Europe prepared?](#) It consolidates current knowledge on climate extremes and presents the main data and solutions in an accessible manner for a wide audience, generating significant media and political attention.

Action 3: Assessing solutions for the transition towards climate neutrality and resilience

In addition to assessing the impacts of climate change, the EEA's products focus on the need to increase societal resilience. In this area, a briefing on the [costs and benefits of adaptation](#) was published, alongside another [on scaling nature-based solutions for climate resilience and nature restoration](#). Simultaneously, the EEA assessed the [progress of the Member States' adaptation actions](#), further contributing to the progress reporting under the EU Climate Law. The EEA additionally supports regional and local actions in the [Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), with more than 300 signatories at the end of 2023.

The data underlying the different assessments are available through websites such as [Climate-ADAPT](#) and the [European Climate and Health Observatory](#). These multilingual platforms present recent information and knowledge on climate impacts, risks and resilience.

Finally, the EEA published a comprehensive assessment of the role of biomass in the EGD. The EEA report [The European biomass puzzle – Challenges, opportunities and trade-offs around biomass production and use in the EU](#) looks at how biomass can help reach Europe's climate and environmental objectives and how climate change might affect the EU's biomass production in agriculture and forest sectors.

Action 4: Supporting the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

The Secretariat continued its support to the Advisory Board throughout the year. A detailed account of the execution of the Advisory Board's 2023 work programme is presented in section 2.2 of the [Advisory Board's 2024 work programme](#). This was adopted and published in December 2023 after consultation with the EEA Management Board. A key highlight was the publication of the Advisory Board's recommendations on the EU 2040 target ([Scientific advice for the determination of an EU-wide 2040 climate target and a greenhouse gas budget for 2030–2050](#)).

1.3 Human health and the environment

1.3.1 Specific objective

To deliver data and information to improve knowledge of the health impacts caused by air, water and soil pollution, noise, chemicals and the changing climate in Europe.

Activity 3: Key performance indicators		
KPI	Target 2023 (%)	Achieved 2023 (%)
Eionet data submission – Eionet data flows	90	83 ^(a)
Work programme delivery – indicators updated	90	100
Work programme delivery – publications	90	100
Eionet interactions – country participation in Eionet events	66 (TBC) ^(b)	58

- Notes:**
- ^(a) This KPI reflects the timeliness of country submissions of five core data flows: Air Quality Directive up-to-date data; Air Quality Directive assessment; CLRTAP Air emission annual reporting; EPRTR; and EU Registry. The target of 90% was not reached in any of the dataflows with EPRTR and EU Registry significantly lower with scores of 70% and 73% respectively. This is due to a number of deliveries with small delays and a few missing ones which is driven by the country data collection process for these complex datasets.
 - ^(b) Network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

1.3.2 Achievement of objectives and results

EEA's work on human health and the environment supported the implementation and further development of key policies on air quality, emissions to air, chemicals, environmental noise and industrial emissions.

Regarding airborne emissions, the EEA supported the data exchanges under the National Emission reduction Commitments Directive (NECD) and the Air Convention of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (CLRTAP). As part of the annual cycle, the EEA published the briefing [Air pollution in Europe: 2023 reporting status under the National Emission reduction Commitments Directive](#). The EEA also supported the EU submission to CLRTAP, producing the usual data tables and the relevant report [European Union CLRTAP Inventory report 1991-2021](#). The EEA also supported the update of the [EMEP/EEA air pollutant inventory guidebook](#), a technical document establishing harmonised methods for countries to employ when producing their country inventory data. All EEA indicators on emissions of air pollutants to air were updated as part of the annual cycle.

Reporting in the area of industry delivered as planned and data sets compiled through the various data flows are feeding the European [Industrial Emissions Portal](#) and indicators on industrial emissions to air and water and on large combustion plants. The EEA also supported countries and the European Commission in the process of co-decision of the Industrial Emissions Directive and the Industrial Emissions Portal Regulation (former European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register).

The EEA also hired additional staff, initiated the handover process and created a community of practice for the taking over of the Seveso Directive reporting, regarding industrial accidents involving dangerous substances – as agreed with the European Commission in 2022. Good cooperation with the JRC allowed for significant progress in defining the methods for the EEA to handle the two data flows on accidents (establishments and specific accidents) and to support the identification of lessons learnt and international cooperation. The operational phase for this will start on 1 January 2026, while the EEA is enabling a full testing of the new system by the end of 2024.

The EEA continues to collect, manage and communicate ambient air quality data from reporting countries, including [up-to-date data](#) and forecasts available through the [EEA Air Quality Index](#) (as well as in the EEA mobile app). The [Air Quality Portal](#) has also been maintained and updated to provide access to a broad range of available EEA air quality data, tools and viewers. Briefings on the [status of air quality in Europe](#) and on the [harm to human health from air pollution](#) were published in 2023, with the latter including new knowledge on mortality and morbidity associated with specific individual air-quality-related diseases. This new knowledge emphasises that, in addition to mortality, living with long-term illnesses such as asthma, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases presents a significant health burden to European citizens. Updates were also prepared for the [European city air quality viewer](#), while the EEA Air Quality mobile phone app received a significant update, now being available in all EU languages and also with the addition of mapped data (based on Copernicus data and developed using machine learning techniques) to allow assessment of air quality at specific locations rather than only at air quality monitoring station locations. Throughout 2023 the EEA also continued to provide support in the ongoing negotiation of the revision of the Ambient Air Quality Directive, including support to the Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV), the Committee of the Regions (engaging with the CoR rapporteur) and also the European Parliament rapporteur.

Concerning reporting of noise data under the Environmental Noise Directive, 2023 was particularly challenging as the noise reporting obligations had changed significantly since the previous reporting period, hence significant support was provided to the countries. Not all countries had reported by the end of the year and collaboration with countries is ongoing to complete this reporting and deliver the next Noise in Europe report in 2025. To better understand the impacts of transport noise on health and well-being, projects were also completed to identify previously unquantified health risks associated with noise exposure. This new knowledge will likely increase the estimated number of citizens who are adversely impacted by exposure to transport noise. The EEA also collaborated with the World Health Organization (WHO) on a joint report, [Uptake and impact of the WHO Environmental noise guidelines for the European Region: experiences from Member States](#).

EEA activities continued in 2023 to better understand and communicate the health risks related to exposure to a wide range of environmental pollution. The EEA [Environment and Health Atlas](#) was published in the second quarter of 2023 and provides a platform through which the public and other stakeholders can access information on the risks posed by exposure to pollution on their health and well-being,

including local information as part of the 'check your place' component. Inequalities in relation to both unequal exposure of different socioeconomic groups and impacts on vulnerable groups were highlighted through a new indicator on [unequal exposure to air pollution](#) and a briefing on the specific [risks posed to children as a result of exposure to air pollution](#). The health and economic burden of pollution were also highlighted through the briefing [Beating cardiovascular disease – the role of Europe's environment](#), identifying that environmental risk factors are likely to cause more than 18% of cardiovascular-related deaths in Europe.

EEA's work on chemicals and health in 2023 included the development of an indicator framework to measure progress towards the objectives of the chemicals strategy for sustainability (CSS). This work is being carried out in close collaboration with the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) with input from other EU agencies. The framework (and an accompanying synthesis report) is due to be published in Q2 2024. The EEA is also a partner in the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC) research project, which includes, amongst other activities, a continuation of the human biomonitoring activities from Human Biomonitoring for Europe (HBM4EU), development of new approaches and methods for hazard and risk assessment, new methods for environmental monitoring and activities that are closely linked to policy objectives under the CSS such as development of a safe and sustainable by design (SSbD) Toolbox and an early warning system (EWS) for chemicals. The EEA is playing a key role as work-package co-leader in WP2 (a common science-to policy-agenda) in ensuring that these activities can respond to identified policy and regulatory needs. Furthermore, the EEA is involved in WP3 (communication) and WP8 (SSbD and EWS). The significant value of human biomonitoring data as an assessment tool was demonstrated in a briefing published by EEA in 2023 on [bisphenol A \(BPA\)](#), identifying a significant risk to health from current BPA concentrations present in EU citizens (based on data reported under HBM4EU). A briefing on [pesticide impacts on health and ecosystems](#) was also produced to support discussions in Brussels on the proposed regulation on the sustainable use of pesticides. In late April, the EEA presented the briefing at three events in the European Parliament, hosted by the rapporteur for the file, the PEST Committee and the EU40 group.

In the area of One Health, the EEA established a close working relationship with other EU agencies (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), ECHA, European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), European Medicines Agency (EMA)) as part of the EU agencies task force on One Health. The first output from this task force was a [joint statement on One Health](#), with work continuing to develop a joint work programme across the agencies.

The EEA also completed capacity-building work to deliver on its role under the recently revised regulation on Serious Cross-Border Threats to Health, where the EEA has a role to support the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) in responding to designated cross-border threats of an environmental nature (including climate).

Finally, following the publication of the Zero Pollution Monitoring Assessment in December 2022, work continued in 2023 on the preparation of the next assessment report under the Zero Pollution Action Plan. This work is being completed in close collaboration with the European Commission JRC and is expected to be published before the end of 2024.

1.4 Circular economy and resource use

1.4.1 Specific objective

To deliver expected results as set out in the annual work plan and to deliver key assessments, indicator updates and process data flows in support of policy information needs.

Activity 4: Key performance indicators		
KPI	Target 2023 (%)	Achieved 2023 (%)
Eionet data submission – Eionet data flows	90	Data flows in this area are not designated as Eionet data flows
Work programme delivery – indicators updated	90	100
Work programme delivery – publications	90	100
Eionet interactions – country participation in Eionet events	66 (TBC) ^(a)	63

Note: ^(a) Network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

1.4.2 Achievement of objectives and results

The EEA's activities in this work area directly contribute to improving knowledge on the transition to a circular economy in Europe and support the implementation and priorities of the circular economy action plan of the EGD.

In 2023, the EEA continued to support the agenda on circular economy monitoring – complementing the work of other institutions such as Eurostat (with their Circular Economy Monitoring Framework) and JRC. This included activities such as the Circularity Metrics Lab, an online platform that explores alternative and existing metrics, trial data and other knowledge to illustrate Europe's progress in achieving a circular economy. This platform is online and was the subject of the first update cycle. Modules on plastics, waste prevention and additional metrics were developed in 2023. The lab supports the European Commission's established circular economy monitoring framework.

The seven indicators on circular economy themes were updated and, where relevant, adapted to the 8th EAP monitoring report.

The EEA also finalised an assessment report to be published in early 2024 that takes stock of the state and outlook of the transition to a circular economy. This report provides a view of the next steps needed to accelerate a transition that, unfortunately, is showing a very slow uptake.

The circular economy action plan structures actions at the sectoral level through selected key product value chains. The EEA has prioritised its work across these domains by delivering targeted knowledge for three sectors: textiles, plastics and buildings. Highlights on this theme are:

- A series of technical reports and briefings in support of the EU textiles strategy focusing in 2023 on issues such as the PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) content of textiles or the destruction of unsold stocks. New challenges in textile waste management, stemming from stronger regulation on the matter and the issue of trade of this waste, were also studied.
- An ongoing cross-cutting initiative on the built environment and the material and GHG dimensions of buildings was finalised with Eionet support. A report compiling all the evidence to achieve greater sustainability and circularity in the building sector will be published in early 2024.
- Consumption footprints and the role of circular approaches to arbitrate those were the subject of two publications in 2023 in the form of briefings with underpinning ETC reports.

The EEA also directly supports the implementation of EU waste legislation, including in 2023 by delivering the biannual report on waste prevention envisaged in the Waste Framework Directive (focus on establishing a monitoring framework) and the next cycle initiated (focus on food waste, report to be published in 2025). This report provided significant evidence for the formulation, by the European Commission, of amendments to the Waste Framework Directive, which are currently in co-decision.

A data flow on the reuse of products, also mandated by the EU waste legislation, completed its full first reporting cycle. The Agency produced technical methodologies, built capacity in reporting countries with a series of webinars, established an electronic tool and harvested the reported data. Data were also analysed for the European Commission to use in the co-decision process referred to above, which also included an amendment on the reuse of products.

The process for evaluating country policies and performance in the area of waste management – envisaged in the Waste Framework Directive and known as the 'early warning mechanism' – had a significant impact on policymaking in 2023, being published in June by the Commission together with additional briefings by the EEA bringing together the intelligence gathered from the process and signalling best practice to scale up.

Assessments of other key aspects of EU waste policy and targets were analysed and the conclusions were published in the form of, for example, a briefing on the prospects to meet the targets on circular material use rate with a footprint perspective.

When it comes to material flows and resource efficiency, the EEA finalised its contribution to the upcoming *Global resources outlook of the International Resource Panel* – where the EEA's executive director was the lead author and EEA staff contributed to the drafting. This report was released in UNEA-6 in February 2024 and published on 1 March.

In 2023, the EEA's engagement with the Eionet group on circular economy and resource use has been very fruitful. A series of expert webinars were organised on the various assessment products listed in previous paragraphs. Two plenary meetings took place during the year, an online webinar in the spring and a very well-attended physical meeting in September.

1.5 Sustainability trends, prospects and responses

1.5.1 Specific objective

To deliver key assessments and indicators in support of EU policy needs and EEA assessments, especially *The European environment – state and outlook 2025* report (SOER 2025).

Activity 5: Key performance indicators		
KPI	Target 2023 (%)	Achieved 2023 (%)
Work programme delivery – publications	90	100
Eionet interaction – country participation in Eionet events	66 (TBC) ^(a)	50

Note: ^(a) Network participation does not capture the agile approach of designing events for specific stakeholders, therefore the ambition is not for a global participation rate of 100% in all events. Since the target was set through the 2021 baseline, there has been an evolution of increasingly targeted events in some work areas. The ambition is to make use of the rich data available through the Eionet tools modernisation to improve the indicator by 2025 to better reflect this.

1.5.2 Achievement of objectives and results

EEA activities focused on preparing the SOER 2025 report, including investments in priority knowledge developments (integrated assessment methods, socio-economic analysis, policy analysis, foresight and outlooks, systems interlinkages and country analysis). The implementation plan was finalised and approved in December 2023 and set out the details for the work in 2024/2025. The list of 36 SOER 2025 thematic snapshots has been defined and agreed upon, the annotated outline of the SOER 2025 synthesis report was developed and the pilot phase of the SOER 2025 country space was completed with 12 volunteer countries.

Development of the theoretical and empirical knowledge basis for the EEA needs and SOER has progressed. Three key reports were drafted and reached the final stage with anticipated publication in the first half of 2024:

- *Sustainability transitions outlook* went through data gathering and using two workshops in Brussels, inputs were collected for the text, resulting in the first draft before the end of the year.
- The report *Governance in complexity: sustainability governance under conditions of high uncertainty and complexity* was sent for informal consultation to scientific experts, including members of the scientific advisory board of the EEA.
- The report *Transformative resilience: The key to governing Europe's sustainability transitions in the polycrisis* was finalised and prepared for consultations and production.

The series of briefings *Narratives for change* to strengthen the characterisation of systemic challenges and governance strategies continued with two issues published:

- *The case for public participation in sustainability transitions;*
- *Exiting the Anthropocene? Exploring fundamental change in our relationship with nature.*

The work in the foresight stream focused on the development of methodologies and practical applications for the EEA needs with the project 'Targets and assumptions', launched as a collaborative work across the Agency on the topics of circular economy, decarbonisation of transport, air quality and bioeconomy. The scenarios for a sustainable Europe 2050 (co-created with Eionet) were further developed and used as an entry point for cross-system analysis and for work on transformative resilience.

In terms of monitoring progress towards sustainability, the EEA delivered on its role to assess progress towards the 8th EAP objectives, using a set of 28 headline indicators to measure progress towards corresponding targets as set out in the [Communication on the 8th EAP monitoring framework](#). Outputs included the [EEA monitoring report on progress towards the 8th EAP objectives](#), complemented by an [interactive scoreboard](#) and a [compilation of indicators](#). The report was extensively covered in the European press and will support the mid-term review of the 8th EAP to be carried out by 31 March 2024.

In addition, the EEA contributed data, indicators and assessments to the EU Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring process and the [2023 report, Sustainable development in the European Union – Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context](#) produced by Eurostat. At the global level, the EEA delivered on its role as contributing author on two chapters of the United Nations Environment Programme's 7th Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7). To ensure that EEA knowledge meets user needs, the EEA invested in the development of an infrastructure to facilitate the dissemination of EEA data and indicators under a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Eurostat. Additional work under the SLA fed into the production of EU-wide ecosystem accounts and explored how the EEA can make better use of Eurostat products.

Regarding work on the enablers of sustainability transitions, EEA activities focused on policy packages, sustainable finance, innovation and justice in transitions. In support of the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), the EEA report [Transforming Europe's food system – Assessing the EU policy mix](#) explored the role of diverse policies in enabling change at different scales and accelerating the transition to a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system.

As a member of the Platform on Sustainable Finance, the EEA contributed to the review of the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation and provided technical input to the EU Taxonomy. Other activities included input to guidance on double materiality produced by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group and delivering training to national financial supervisory bodies, organised by the European Securities and Markets Authority. In terms of knowledge developments, the EEA briefing [Investments in the sustainability transition: leveraging green industrial policy against emerging constraints](#) explored how green industrial policy can mobilise funding. In addition, a new EEA indicator was produced to [track the percentage of bonds issued in the EU that are green](#).

On innovation, the EEA developed knowledge on the roles of both social and technological innovation in supporting sustainability transitions, to be published in 2024.

On just transitions, the EEA held exchanges with stakeholders to identify EEA's added value, including the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, the JRC, the Fundamental Rights Agency, Eurofound and Cedefop. In October, the EEA held a workshop with the European Commission to discuss policy mixes for just sustainability transitions. Work then focused on shaping up a conceptual framework to support the development of just and equitable sustainability transition policies, recently presented in the briefing [Delivering justice in sustainability transitions](#).

Eionet groups on state of environment (SoE) and foresight were involved in the work through a total of 13 online events, two joint SoE-foresight coordination team meetings and one physical meeting in Copenhagen. For the Eionet group on foresight, a key highlight was the annual Expert Group meeting (providing a range of new project ideas) and the four horizon scanning workshops for both groups (plus two informal scanning sessions) that led to the brief characterisation of eight emerging issues. This provided the basis for a webinar with participation from the European Commission linking the work on foresight at EU level. Other activities included interactions on youth engagement, including a webinar, together with the Expert Group Communications. The working group on planetary boundaries met four times to discuss and develop the role of footprint data.

The SoE group focused on country space for the SOER 2025. The co-creation process continued with an overview provided in June 2023. The EEA developed and implemented a piloting phase with 12 volunteer countries from September to December 2023. The results provided valuable feedback and helped to design the final scope and content. Preparatory work for creating and establishing a new working group on just transition started. Updates of key activities and projects were provided by the EEA through quarterly newsletters.

1.6 Horizontal activities

1.6.1 Communicating for impact

The EEA published 55 publications (assessments and briefings for policymakers) and 68 indicators on key environment, climate and sustainable transition topics. This included joint reports, like *EMEP/EEA air pollutant emission inventory guidebook 2023*, the *Uptake and impact of the WHO Environmental noise guidelines for the European Region: Experiences from the Member States and Flexibility solutions to support a decarbonised and secure EU electricity system* resulting from close cooperation between the European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP), WHO and ACER respectively. The first edition of the *Monitoring report on progress towards the 8th EAP objectives in support of the European Union 8th Environment Action Programme* was also published in 2023.

On corporate communication, 2023 included some institutional milestones: the new executive director taking up office in June and changes to the Management Board chair and the Scientific Committee were communicated. Additional stakeholder events, involving Eionet and other Brussels-based stakeholders in March were organised and communicated externally. The new corporate teaser video focused on the people in the EEA-Eionet with a commitment to supporting environment and climate policies across the EU. A new corporate website was also presented in March, which also emphasised stronger links with Eionet and EEA's role in policy support.

To strengthen engagement with stakeholders, the EEA procured a new stakeholder relations management tool and ensured a smooth switch of its existing contacts to the new tool, while planning for wider integration and consolidation with other stakeholders, including those from Climate-ADAPT. The Agency also cooperated with ECDC, ECHA, EFSA and EMA on the One Health conference with communication, including a joint statement, event, action plan and other activities of the cross-agency task force.

On the outreach side, 2023 recorded another all-time high in media coverage generated by almost 50 press releases published and disseminated, as well as several under-embargo press briefings organised online, for example air pollution impacts on children and bisphenol, plus an in-person advance press briefing in

Brussels on air pollution and health impacts briefing with the new executive director for selected European news outlets. A joint press conference with the EEA's executive director and the Environment Commissioner was organised, as well as an exhibition stand at the Clean Air Forum in Rotterdam. In Denmark, the EEA took part in the democracy festival Folkemodet.

Efforts to communicate with the wider public included the annual photo competition, ZeroWastePIX, which received more than 700 entries from across Europe, as well as a record-breaking public enquiries service. More than 2,200 enquiries were handled, with significant numbers from research and business communities. EEA's social media presence continued to grow, aimed at generating more engagement with diverse audiences, especially on LinkedIn. For example, 11 episodes of 'Live Q&A Ask an Expert' also invited citizens to ask questions about EEA work focusing on zero pollution, marine litter, climate change impacts, textiles, air quality, pesticides and soil, and more. Videos promoted each episode, all of which are viewable on EEA's YouTube channel. In line with the translation budget allocation, 28 translation requests were handled, mainly for web texts such as press releases and feature articles aimed at increasing public outreach.

1.6.2 The European Environment Information and Observation Network

On 1 March, the EEA – in close cooperation with the National Focal Points (NFPs), Eionet experts, representatives of the Management Board and ETCs – held an EEA-Eionet day. The event was designed to contribute to positioning EEA-Eionet as the key knowledge network in supporting the EGD and 8th EAP and to accelerate the implementation of the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030. It brought together 250 people in Copenhagen and around 700 people online.

Microsoft Teams – the Eionet collaboration Tools 2.0 – was rolled out to the ETCs in the first quarter of the year and preparations were made for onboarding of the NFPs and members of the Eionet groups, thematic groups and working groups at the beginning of 2024. The onboarding was supported by the development of e-learning modules for NFPs and Eionet experts and through national webinars provided on request. Tools 2.0 is more than a technological solution; this change results from the EEA-Eionet Strategy and aims to foster more co-creation across the network.

In 2023, the NFPs held three regular NFP/Eionet meetings – in Copenhagen, online and in Malta – providing a platform for regular EEA, EU and Eionet updates; addressing specific topics of interest, e.g. digitalisation; and facilitating peer-to-peer exchange between the countries through an ideas market or a country presentation by Malta.

As for Eionet modernisation, the mandate of the working group on Eionet modernisation implementation was extended to June 2024 so that the group can tackle a few additional issues in the modernisation process, such as updating the Eionet ABC.

With regards to Eionet structure, the EEA and NFPs have agreed to refocus the Eionet group on biodiversity and ecosystems 1 (BE1) to a group on nature restoration and protected areas and to put on hold activities of Eionet group on biodiversity and ecosystems 2 (BE2).

1.6.3 Other networks and partnerships

In line with the EEA-Eionet strategy, in 2023 the EEA continued working with other networks and leading organisations to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

The Network of the Heads of Environmental Protection Agencies (EPA) continued its close and regular interactions, addressing a variety of aspects, among others the EGD's implementation. In 2023, the EEA hosted the March meeting of Heads of EPAs in Brussels, back-to-back with the EEA-Eionet conference. The autumn meeting was hosted by the Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). The agendas of the network addressed the state-of-the-environment analysis and digitalisation, integrating climate and nature policies, improving knowledge-driven decision-making, nature/climate nexus and broader environmental and climate-related security and resilience issues. A new interest group on Ukraine to stocktake needs and offers for support as well as to communicate with Ukraine was established. The EEA took part in six EPA network interest groups (out of a total of 12) and co-chaired three (green and circular economy, green finance and sustainability research).

1.6.4 Working with European neighbouring regions

In the framework of the joint work plan with UNEP-MAP, the EEA hosted a meeting of the UNEP-MAP Executive Coordination Panel (ECP), gathering together the directors of all regional activity centres, and held a joint session on the operationalisation of the joint work plan. The EEA's executive director held a bilateral meeting with the UNEP-MAP coordinator, confirming both parties' interest in enhanced technical cooperation and value added by a joint ECP/EEA session. However, the need for an appropriate resource mobilisation to support the effective implementation of the joint work plan was stressed.

The EEA supported the EU at COP23 of the Barcelona Convention in Portoroz, Slovenia, as a continuation of the EEA's longstanding work in the region under the joint work plan with UNEP-MAP and the Union for the Mediterranean.

Based on a new contribution agreement with the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), the EEA has continued its support to the development of Eionet capacities for the green agenda and started support to the Energy Community in monitoring the climate and energy domain. The contracting parties (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo⁽⁵⁾, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Ukraine) have started to report a range of data and information on climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

⁽⁵⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

1.6.5 EEA international engagement

In support of the EEA's strategic objectives on international engagement and the global ambitions specified in the EGD and 8th EAP, the EEA continued with expert contributions to relevant international processes and events, in close dialogue with the European Commission and in cooperation with international organisations, including:

- the EU delegation in preparation for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP28 (Dubai), where the EEA played a significant role in discussions related to GHG emission inventories, trends and projections. The EEA also engaged in high-level discussions and side events;
- the EU delegation in the negotiations on a new global legally binding agreement on plastics at INC-2/Paris, including co-hosting a side event on monitoring and reporting and at INC-3/Nairobi with a special focus on delivering support for the draft provisions related to National Action Plans, reporting/monitoring and regular assessments;
- the EU team working on the EU implementation of the global biodiversity framework, including its monitoring framework, agreed at CBD/COP15, and support to IPBES-10;
- the EU team in the working group of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the ozone layer;
- developing the GEO-7 through the drafting process with two contributing authors and in the guidance of the work by a representative in the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group;
- the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) and the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) process through the GEO ministerial plenary in Cape Town that adopted a post-2025 strategy and a GEO Global Ecosystems Atlas.

The EEA explored synergies and potential areas of work aligned with EEA priorities through bilateral meetings, including: 1) the executive directors of EEA and UNEP in Brussels in the margins of the annual EC-UNEP meeting; 2) Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) management (environment) on continued support and mutual areas of concern; and 3) UNEP's Chief Digital Officer on the World Environment Situation Room and possible EU/EEA contribution to the European part, building on outcomes of SOER 2025.

The EEA contributed to EU and global indicator-related processes, including EU SDG-reporting, OECD Working Party on Environmental Information, the United Nations Statistics Division Expert Group on Environment Statistics, the United Nations Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators, the UNECE Joint Task Force on Environmental Indicators and the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment.

Enlargement

The interest shown by various countries in cooperating with the EEA has been growing. Additionally, it is expected that the new enlargement package (December 2023) will accelerate the interest in developing closer relations with the EEA, initially focusing on a 'cooperating status' with a view to membership in a longer-term perspective. In 2023, new Cooperation Agreements between the EU with Andorra and San Marino were signed. There is a possibility that both countries could join the EEA at relatively short notice.

Historically, the Western Balkans had shown interest in becoming EEA members and with the new status of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, there is an increased interest in cooperating with the EEA or becoming EEA member countries. Under the Regulation (Article 19), the EEA is open for membership to non-EU countries which is illustrated by the current 32 EEA member countries, five of them beyond the EU27. In this respect, there is a theoretical and longer-term possibility of joining the EEA, however, a number of requirements need to be fulfilled before the membership issue can be brought to the table and discussed with EC/Council.

As these countries are in different stages of development and cooperation with the EEA, it is important to distinguish three different categories because these differences will require distinct approaches. The three categories are as follows:

1. Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo ⁽⁵⁾, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia);
2. new candidate countries (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).
3. non-Member State (Andorra and San Marino). The possibility of EEA-membership for these two countries is formally open under the Cooperation Agreement. It remains to be seen to what extent the countries are interested in membership in the short or mid-long term future.

Cooperation with these countries is expected to intensify over the years and the EEA is following guidance from the European Commission on the further development of the relations.

1.6.6 Improving information delivery through the digitalisation framework

The following activities identified by the EEA-Eionet digitalisation framework and laid down in the roadmap were undertaken in 2023:

- Under the National Data Flows Coordination group (NDFC), the consultation process for the 2022 evaluation of the Eionet core data flows was undertaken, which resulted in the [technical briefing published in June 2023](#). The NDFC met three times in 2023 for alignment on reporting overview and planning. The purpose of these meetings is to inform the countries on dataflow activities in the immediate future and also alert new or changing dataflows on the horizon; inform on overarching processes; and focus on specific dataflows. The June meeting is dedicated to Eionet core dataflow evaluation process, and the learning and sharing of challenges country's face in delivering timely and quality data. Overall, the NDFC group is dedicated to providing an opportunity for discussion between the EEA and countries on any aspect of data reporting.
- In 2023, Eionet delivered more than 70 environment and climate data flows. The Eionet core data evaluation process (a subset of 12 dataflows in 2023) preliminary results show an average data flow score (79%) which did not achieve the target (90%) but was above the 2022 evaluation score (70%). The main driver for low scores is the delays in the delivery of data due to challenges in the country for the timely collection which can be the consequence of various factors for example, complexity, data ownership, institutional sign-off process, capacity. The EEA uses the Eionet core data evaluation to leverage discussion with the countries where information delivery can be improved, also addressing the EEA-provided expertise, support and tools.
- Through the Eionet group on data and digitalisation, several webinars covering machine learning applications in environmental data analysis were offered. In the

first webinar, the focus was on noise (Environmental Noise Directive) and legal documents data extraction. In the second webinar, the focus was on artificial intelligence applications in habitat mapping and biodiversity. The third webinar focused on the Green Deal data spaces and how to deliver the power of data cubes and machine learning to decision-makers and scientists.

- The innovation projects in the areas of nature, water and noise reporting that started in 2022 to explore the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies were continued by extending the scope and geographic coverage. A project to explore the potential of large language models produced a digital service proof of concept for climate adaptation in the policy case of just resilience. Operational conclusions are expected for some of them in 2024.
- The EEA web presence project has been extended to the next phase and the new data hub was launched. Activities have started to add analytical functionalities to the data hub.
- The EEA continued to improve its information platforms. The ability of Reportnet 3 to accommodate new types of data and growing data volumes has been increased with an orchestrator function and the new data lake house architecture has become operational.
- EEA IT governance has been strengthened with an IT project management methodology based on PM² and an IT risk management policy. The EEA has appointed an IT security officer to address the increasing cyber risks and compliance demands.
- The Eionet modernisation process has continued with the project for the development of the new Eionet collaboration tools, which were initially rolled out for the ETCs in 2023. This will also improve communication and collaboration for the rest of the Eionet network with the migration of all Eionet groups from January 2024.
- The learning and development programme with an e-learning focus has started and enhances the knowledge base on digitalisation amongst EEA staff.

1.6.7 Support to the EU space programme – Copernicus

The Copernicus land monitoring service activities delegated to the EEA are defined in the 2023-2024 Copernicus work programme. For this new phase of Copernicus 2.0, the focus is on the user uptake of the products as it should guide the evolution of the product portfolio, meaning enabling the EEA to support the European Commission and Member States in the implementation of the EGD and the 8th EAP.

Beyond the continuity of work on products from former years, the following milestones are emphasised:

- the delivery of the 2018 and 2021 updates of the CLC+ land cover data in raster format;
- the publication of the 2017 to 2022 products for the European Ground Motion Service, a mutualised service providing precision measurements to the nearest centimetre of ground movements based on Sentinel-1 interferometric synthetic aperture radar (inSAR) data;
- the continuation of production of the two biophysical parameters included in the portfolio, i.e. high-resolution service on vegetation phenology and productivity,

providing information on the status of vegetation in Europe and the high-resolution service on snow and ice coverage over Europe. The latter will have continuity in the frame of the new contract for high-resolution water, snow and ice that will integrate the monitoring of snow and ice with the monitoring of liquid water extent;

- the launch of production of the High Resolution Layer (HRL) vegetated land cover characteristic will integrate former HRL forest and HRL grassland and for the first time provide yearly crop type and agricultural patterns;
- the launch of production of the HRL non-vegetated land cover characteristic will give continuity to HRL;
- the publication of HRL small woody features;
- the launch of the national collaboration programme to support user uptake at national and subnational levels.

In the frame of cross-cutting access to in-situ data, within the Copernicus contribution agreement, the EEA continued to focus on three primary strands of activities:

1. maintenance of its overview of in-situ data, with the preparation of a new State of Play of in situ data access in Copernicus;
2. improving access to in-situ data, by increasing Copernicus Reference Access Data (CORDA) data offering and implementing specific projects supporting Copernicus entrusted entities;
3. maintaining partnerships with selected data providers, in particular with EuroGeographics via the agreement signed in 2022, which is facilitating access to mapping agencies' data for the benefit of the Copernicus emergency management, land monitoring and security services.

1.6.8 Support to the Group on Earth Observation System of Systems – GEO/GEOS

During 2023, the work under the EEA-DG RTD service level agreement to support the work of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) has continued, with the following key highlights:

- The EEA continues to lead European contributions to GEO in the context of improving access to open in-situ data, including the implementation of an in-situ requirements database for GEO.
- A number of showcases have been implemented in collaboration with thematic groups at the EEA, supporting access to in-situ data in the domain of climate adaptation in urban areas and damage and losses due to weather and climate extremes, ecosystem mapping and nature restoration.
- EEA has also supported the Commission in EuroGEO-related activities, including its promotion at the GEO Week in Cape Town (South Africa).

As a result of the good spirit of collaboration with DG RTD, a new three-year service level agreement, *Enhancing the access to in-situ Earth observation data in support of climate change adaptation policies and activities*, is under preparation and should start in Q2 2024.

1.6.9 Support to the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

In 2023, the EEA continued providing targeted support to the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) with the implementation of the SLA 'Regional and urban environmental indicators and analysis' by addressing regional and urban land use and various aspects of air pollution in Europe. This work will be finalised in 2024 when the EEA will deliver on three main objectives:

1. innovative data production, indicator development and assessments of the impacts of land use on the continental, regional and local scale, including specific assessments of functional urban areas (ongoing);
2. supporting the evolution of CLMS by increasing the update frequency of the Urban Atlas products (completed in 2023);
3. providing tailored information and data on air pollution, industry and environment based on data reported under the EU and international reporting obligations (ongoing).



2 Management

2.1 Management Board and Scientific Committee

The Management Board made key decisions in leading the Agency through changes in its governance in 2023. The Board selected the EEA's new executive director in March following an external selection procedure and elected a new Management Board chair in June, as well as two new vice-chairs. Other main Bureau and Management Board discussions focused on the EEA/Eionet evaluation for the period 2017-2021, the follow-up to Eionet modernisation, preparations for the next policy cycle and engagement with EU institutional stakeholders, and work programme and budget planning from 2024 onwards. From early 2023, the Management Board also started implementing improvements to its ways of working following a review of the Management Board and Bureau operations.

In 2023, the Management Board held three regular meetings, while the EEA Bureau met five times. In addition, the Management Board established a Management Board advisory committee in June 2023 to follow the EEA/Eionet evaluation for the period 2017-2021. The advisory committee met twice during the year to provide input to the evaluation process, bringing in both the Management Board and the country perspectives. The Management Board also played an instrumental role in the March 2023 EEA-Eionet conferences which took place in Copenhagen and Brussels.

The EEA Scientific Committee focused its discussions in 2023 on plans for the *European environment – state and outlook 2025 (SOER 2025)*, governing sustainability transitions and the role of nature in transformations towards sustainability, including nature-based solutions, finance, bioeconomy and the One Health approach. The Committee also discussed the *EU's Strategic Foresight Report 2023* and provided steering on the *EEA Sustainability transitions outlook* report, planned for 2024. As stipulated in the EEA Regulation (article 8), the Scientific Committee provided opinions on the *EEA Single Programming Document 2024-2026* and recruitment of EEA scientific staff. Members of the Scientific Committee also reviewed and commented on a range of key EEA products, helping to ensure the scientific quality of EEA products as well as maintaining links with the scientific community and European-level research projects of relevance to the agency.

2.2 Major developments

The EEA's activities for 2023 were considered that of a normal year, without any major developments or new challenges. Regarding resourcing for new tasks, the EEA received four new posts and a EUR 0.5 million increase to its EU subvention for the EEA to redevelop, set up and maintain the two databases on Seveso establishments and major industrial accidents (i.e. eSPIRS and eMARS) under the Seveso III Directive. This development was reported in the SPD 2023-25.

2.3 Budgetary and financial management

2.3.1 Budget performance

The EEA's approved budget for 2023 to deliver its work programme was reported in the Single Programming Document 2023-2025. In its consolidated annual activity report (CAAR), the EEA is required to report its performance in the management of the budget, specifically:

- any changes to the originally approved budget (amendments and transfers);
- implementation of budget appropriations against target;
- carry-over of amounts committed in 2023 but not paid by the year-end.

The following information is also required to be reported:

- a summary of procurement procedures by type;
- any major commitments for actions extending for more than 1 financial year;
- any interest paid to suppliers for late payments.

2.3.2 Budget amendments and transfers

One **budget amendment** was made during 2023, comprising several elements as follows:

- a reduction of **EUR 2,301,430** to the EEA's EU subvention due to the delay in the adoption of the Nature Restoration Law, causing the Commission to remove the foreseen funds from the EEA's budget;
- the final calculation of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and Swiss contributions, which resulted in a net increase of **EUR 297,767**;
- a reduction of **EUR 21,780,460** in the 2023 budget for the Copernicus Contribution Agreement (**COPERNCA**) to match the pre-financing received by the EEA from DG DEFIS for the year;
- the anticipated pre-financing for a new SLA with JRC under the Nitrates Directive of **EUR 871,000**.

Table 2.1 EEA 2023 revenue budget

Revenue (EUR)	Original 2023 budget	Budget amendments	Final 2023 budget
EU subvention	54,352,060	-2,301,430	52,050,630
Third countries contribution	6,270,733	297,767	6,568,500
Core revenue	60,622,793	-2,003,663	58,619,130
Grant, contribution and service level agreements	38,404,460	-20,909,460	17,495,000
Total revenue	99,027,253	-22,913,123	76,114,130

The Financial Regulation allows the Executive Director to make budget transfers between expenditure titles without needing to consult the Management Board, providing the cumulative transfers from each title do not exceed 10% of that title's original budget appropriation (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 Transfers 2019-2023

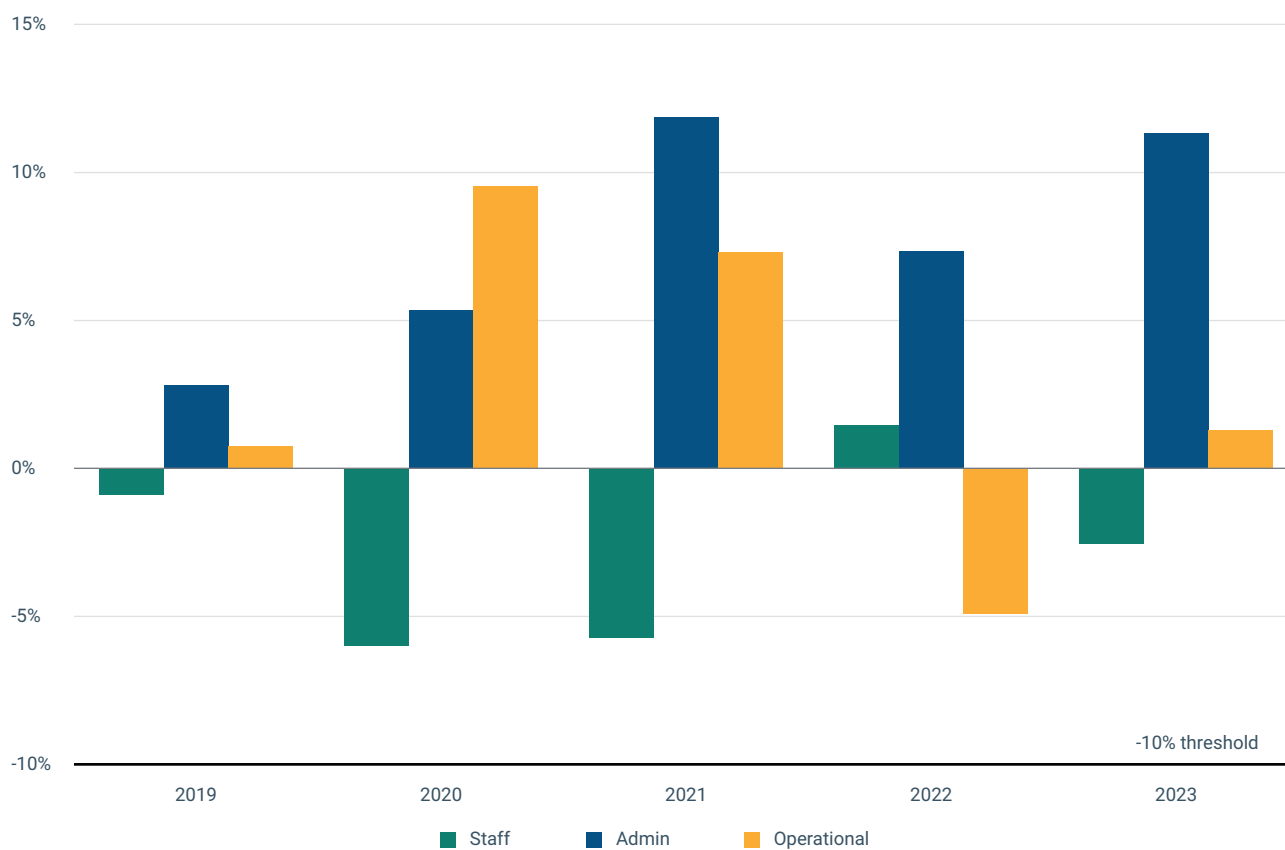


Table 2.2 Core expenditure 2023

Core expenditure (EUR)	Original 2023 budget	Budget amendments	Budget transfers	Final 2023 budget	Transfers as % of original budget
Title 1	36,723,793	-674,673	-935,660	35,113,460	-2.5
Title 2	6,214,000	-324,990	703,464	6,592,474	11.3
Title 3	17,685,000	-1,004,000	232,196	16,913,196	1.3
Core expenditure	60,622,793	-2,003,663	0	58,619,130	

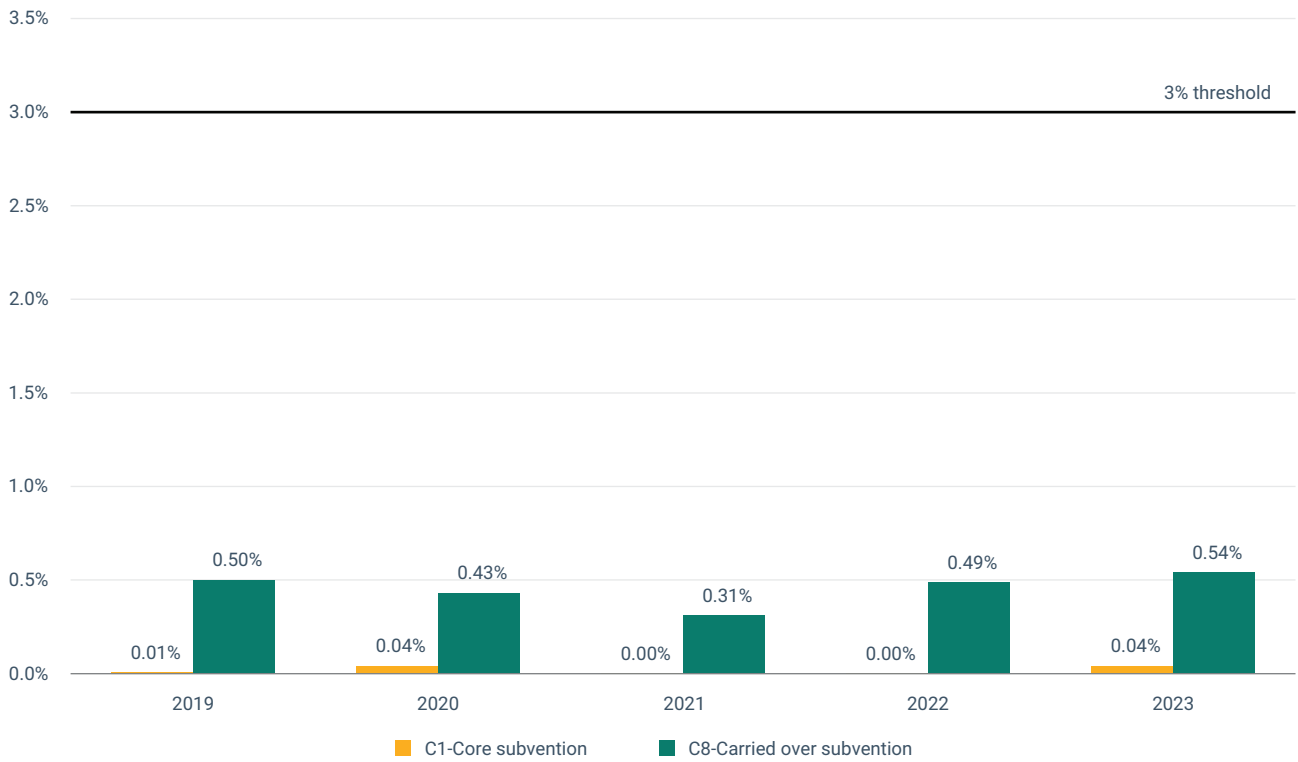
The budget transfers in 2023 were from Title 1 to Titles 2 and 3, with the transfer from Title 1 being well within the 10% threshold. The transfer from Title 1 was primarily because of savings on salaries arising from a low annual salary indexation, well below the forecast provided in the Commission's budget circular used to establish the original budget. The transfer to Title 2 allowed investment in a fourth phase of converting the EEA's office space in its main building, Kongens Nytorv 6, to an open-plan activity-based working space. The transfer of EUR 0.2 million was used for much-needed IT expenditure.

2.3.3 Budget implementation

Figure 2.2 shows the percentage of budget appropriations for the current year and appropriations carried forward from the previous year that were not implemented. The budget circular issued by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Budget specifies that to avoid penalties the combined amounts not implemented should not exceed 3%.

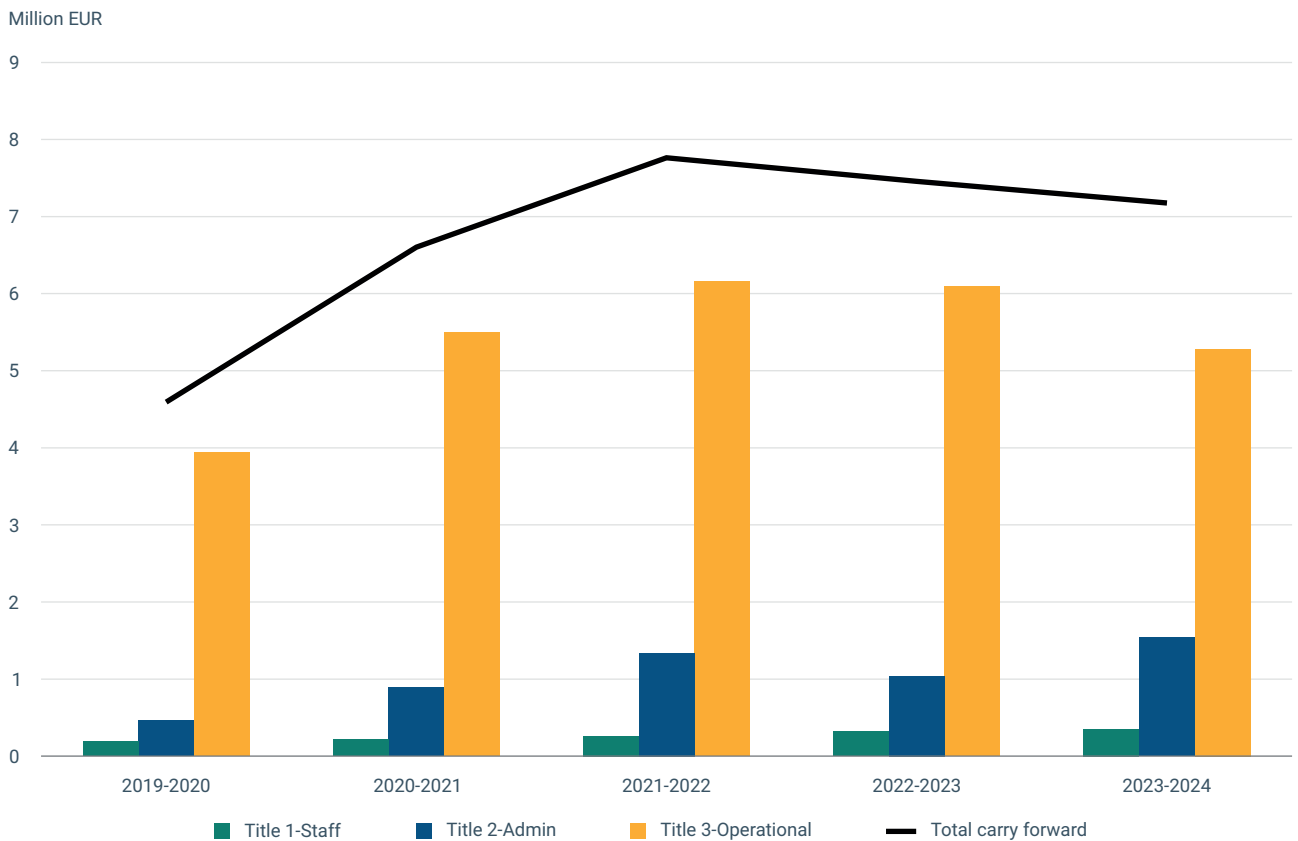
The EEA achieved excellent budget implementation in 2023, with cancelled appropriations well below the 3% threshold. Almost full implementation of C1 budget appropriations was achieved (99.6% implementation). The cancellation of C8 appropriations carried over from 2022 totalled EUR 301,356. Of this, EUR 187,560 was from Title 3, the largest amount from the settlement of the final cost statements of four ETCs. The other cancellations were small amounts across a number of budget lines in Title 1 (EUR 55,108) and Title 2 (EUR 58,689).

Figure 2.2 Budget outturn: loss on core subvention 2019-2023



2.3.4 Carry-forward

Figure 2.3 Carry-forward development 2019-2023: core funds



The largest amount in the Title 3 carry-forward is EUR 2.2 million for the ETCs; their work programme reports and final cost statements will be submitted, verified and paid in the first half of 2024. The carry-forward also contains IT, communications and areas of work expenditure ordered in 2023 but not yet paid for. The Title 2 carry-forward is primarily for the fourth phase of conversions to the open-plan activity-based working space, which is ongoing.

2.3.5 Procurement procedures

The 2023 procurement plan, attached as Annex 13 to the Single Programming Document 2023-2025, adopted by the EEA's Management Board on 8 December 2022, anticipated the implementation of the following procurement procedures (Figures 2.4 and 2.5).

Figure 2.4 Core revenue: 20 procedures

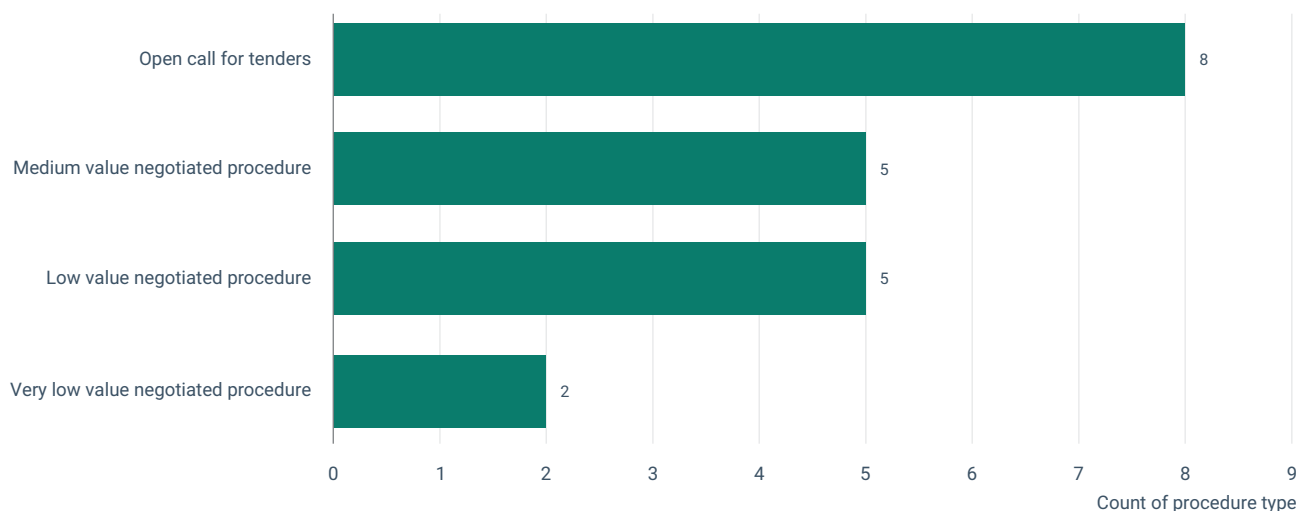
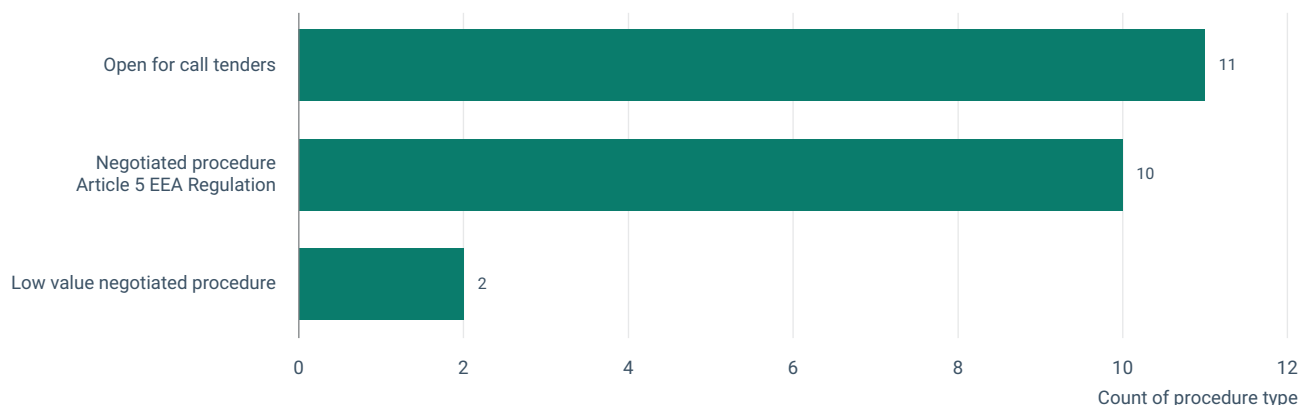


Figure 2.5 External assigned revenue: 23 procedures



The amended version of the 2023 procurement plan, which reflects the actual procurement needs, was approved by the EEA's Management Board through the decision EEA/MB/2023/024 on 14 December 2023.

By 31 December 2023, the actual procurement procedures implemented by the EEA were as shown in Figures 2.6 and 2.7.

Figure 2.6 Core revenue: 36 procedures

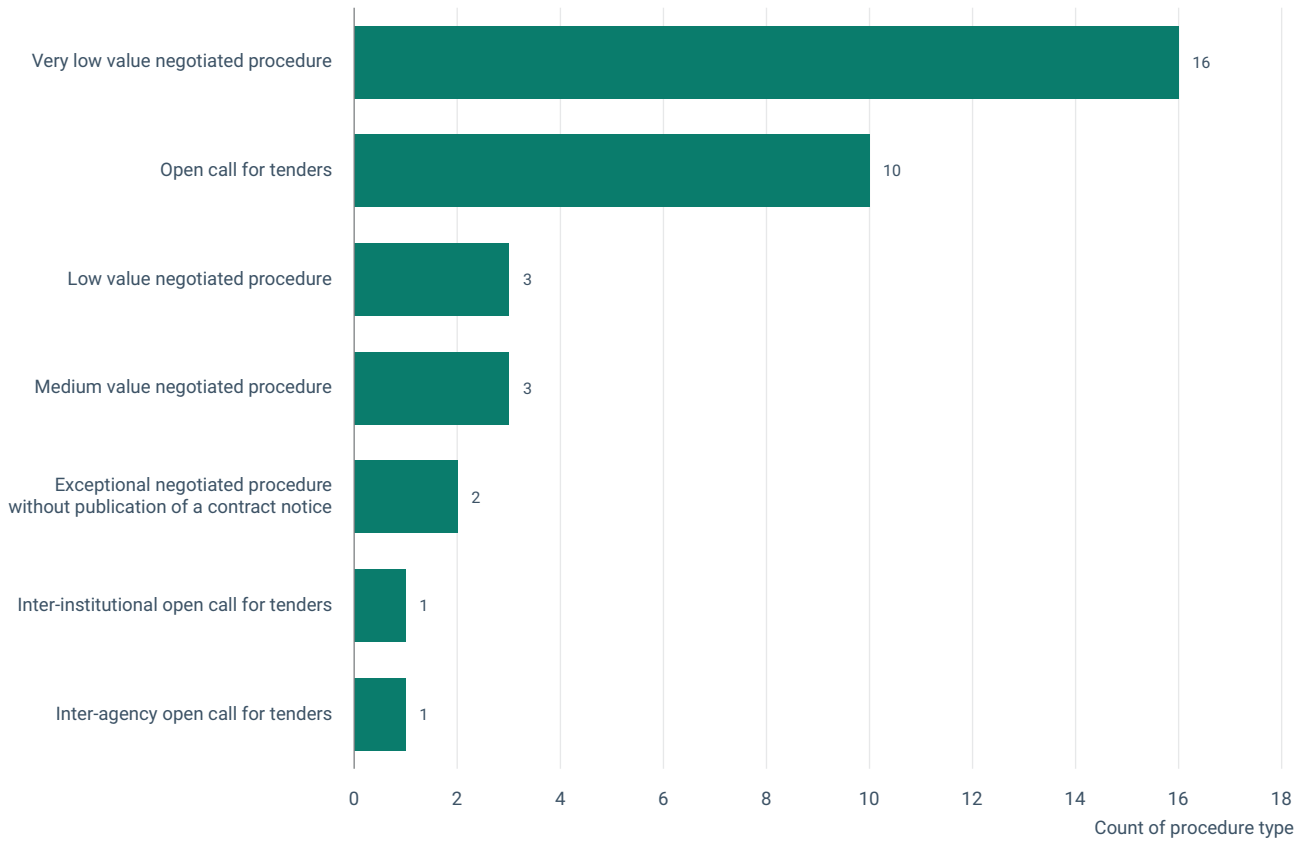
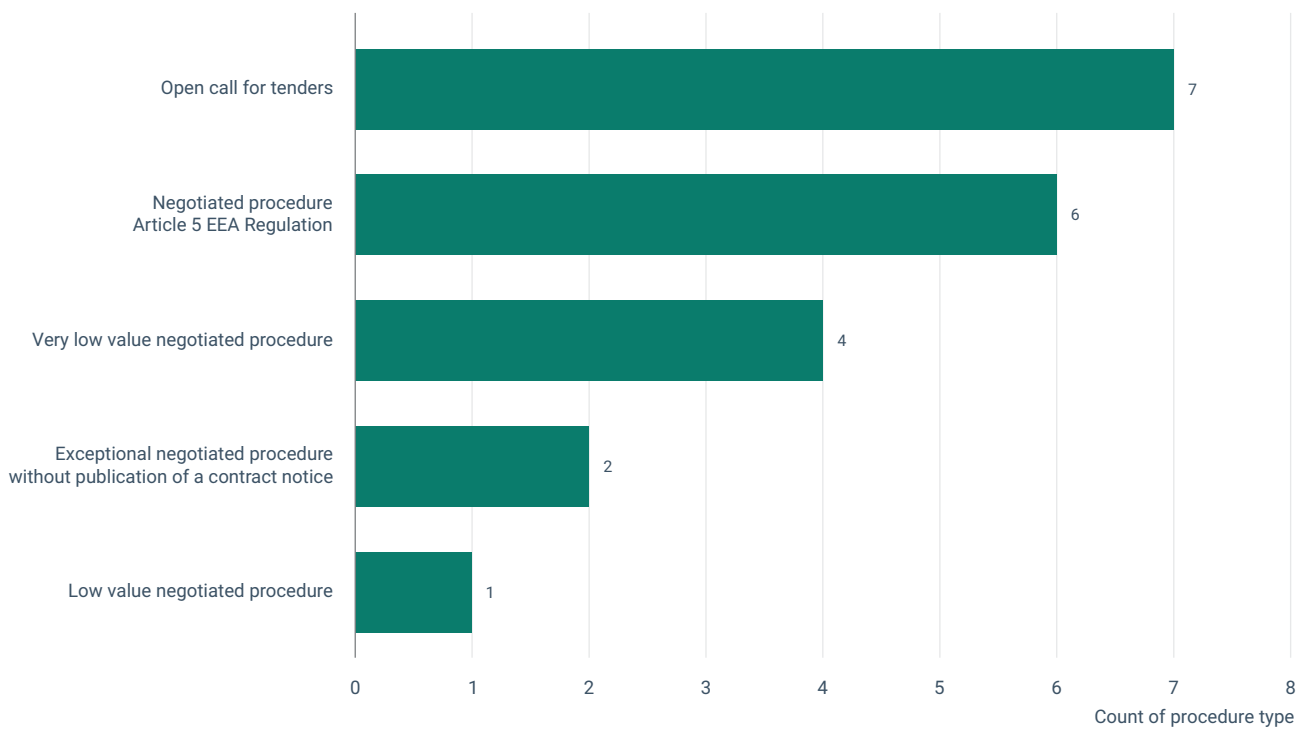


Figure 2.7 External assigned revenue: 20 procedures



The increased number of procedures for the implementation of the core revenue stems from various factors. In some cases, the initial tendering procedure was unsuccessful, resulting in the need to launch a new procedure; in others, various tendering procedures became necessary to cover needs under ongoing activities or other unexpected additional needs.

2.3.6 Negotiated procedures carried out in 2023 under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation

Pursuant to Article 74(10) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 (the 'Financial Regulation'), the authorising officer shall record, for each financial year, contracts concluded by negotiated procedures in accordance with point 11.1(a)-(f) of Annex I to the Financial Regulation. If the proportion of negotiated procedures in relation to the number of contracts awarded by the authorising officer increases significantly in relation to previous years, the authorising officer is to report to the Management Board, setting out any measures taken to reverse the trend. Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show the EEA's negotiated procedures in 2023.

Table 2.3 Negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation carried out in 2023

Fund source	Subject of the contract	Budget (EUR)	Type of contract	Legal basis
Core revenue	EMAS recertification for the European Environment Agency (EEA)	25,000	Framework service contract	Point 11.1(b) Annex I to FR ⁽¹⁾
Core revenue	Provision of language training services for the staff members of the European Environment Agency (EEA)	240,000	Framework service contract	Point 11.1(a) Annex I to FR ⁽²⁾
External assigned revenue	Copernicus Land Monitoring Service – Seamless continuation of the production of HR-S&I (Part 1) products	150,000	Service contract	Point 11.1(e) Annex I to FR ⁽³⁾

- Notes:**
- ⁽¹⁾ Artistic/technical reasons or exclusive rights or technical monopoly/captive market.
 - ⁽²⁾ Follow-up of an open/restricted procedure where no (or no suitable) tenders/requests to participate have been submitted.
 - ⁽³⁾ New services/works consisting in the repetition of similar services/works.

Table 2.4 Negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation carried out in the last five years

Procurement procedures	2019	2020	2021	2022	Average	2023
Total number of contracts awarded by the EEA authorising officers	29	57	59	60	51.25	56
Number of contracts resulting from negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation	1	4	5	3	3.25	3
Proportion (%)	3.45	7.02	8.47	5	6.34	5.36

The proportion of negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation in relation to the number of contracts awarded by the authorising officers decreased in 2023 compared with 2021 and 2022.

2.4 Delegation and sub-delegation

Article 41 of the EEA's Financial Regulation entitles the director to delegate the powers of budget execution and for these to be sub-delegated. Powers to execute each type of expenditure are delegated to a head of programme, with the head of administration receiving delegation for all types of expenditure. Sub-delegation, limited to only the approval of payments for certain expenditure, is given to heads of group in the administration programme and the head of group for the secretariat of the Scientific Advisory Board for Climate Change.

The delegations are valid for the calendar year and they are renewed at the beginning of each year before the EEA's budget and finance system (ABAC) opens for that year.

The delegations and access rights are annually audited by the EEA's internal audit capability. In 2023, all accesses have been properly authorised and the rights attributed to the relevant users, following the actions implemented to respond to the auditor's recommendations.

2.5 Human resource management

2.5.1 Brief description of the major human resource developments

In 2023 the EEA's establishment table increased further with the new tasks making a total of 158 approved posts. This increase was limited to operational staff and as a consequence the constraints to support staff over the past years has continued. Despite this, the EEA was able to fill 97% of the approved posts (this is complemented by 119 contract agents and 18 seconded national experts; see Annex 4 for more details).

2.5.2 *Implementing rules adopted in 2023*

In 2023 the EEA did not adopt any new implementing rules.

2.5.3 *Brief description of the results of the screening/benchmarking exercise*

The EEA has been carrying out an annual screening/benchmarking exercise since 2015, in accordance with the guidelines that were agreed by the EU agencies in their working group on a joint agency approach.

Following the austerity measures laid down in the multiannual financial framework, the EEA experienced a fall in support staff between 2014 and 2018. Since then, the Agency has been given additional new tasks and a significant increase in practically only operational staff. Consequently, the ratio of staff dedicated to operational activities has increased to approximately 85% (from 80%) and, as a consequence, the proportion of support staff has been reduced to 15%.

For additional information on human resource management please see Annex 4.

2.6 **Strategy for efficiency gains**

As eReporting is growing in volume and frequency, the EEA is adapting the reporting system (Reportnet 3) to accommodate this. With the continuous development of the EEA common workspace (CWS), an integrated data management platform (a prerequisite for further evolving on interactive data products) is provided. On the governance level, this is supported by the enforcement of data custodian and data steward roles – a process that stretches over years as new staff have been recruited and training needs to be provided.

The IT team is creating the conditions for the above-mentioned efficiency gains in data management by continuously improving the IT infrastructure. The co-location of IT systems has also created efficiency gains and allowed us an improved cybersecurity response. Both areas need to be further strengthened in the coming years, in particular through further Cybersecurity measures as well as considering increased usage of the cloud. Growing data volumes and more service demands, especially in the Copernicus area, are drivers for more cloud usage.

The EEA is experimenting with improving workflows. In the freshwater area, considerable efficiency gains were made using a combination of machine learning to gap-fill the reported data and automating the workflow needed to update the two indicators 'Water scarcity conditions in Europe' and 'Water abstraction by source and economic sector'. This means that future updates will become more frequent (annual rather than every other year).

In the area of health and environment, several initiatives to streamline work have been identified including:

- streamlining the preparation of the Zero Pollution Monitoring and Outlook assessment through the preparation of a joint report with the JRC, compared to the previous iteration of the assessments where separate analyses and reports were prepared;

- heavy engagement by the EEA in the efforts to establish a One Health cross-agency task force with ECDC, ECHA, EFSA and EMA to harmonise and ensure efficiency in the One Health-related activities carried out by each of the agencies;
- close collaboration between the EEA and ECHA under the CSS to exploit potential synergies in the development of a joint indicator framework and synthesis report.

In the area of web projects and design systems, the new EEA design system makes it easier to create websites with a coherent visual identity. It provides a set of harmonised functionalities and design elements that website owners can use to create a new site with the Plone 6 Content Management System. Each site can have its own branding, by choosing a unique set of colours in the corporate palette, using its own logo and combining the design blocks in different ways. However, coherent design signals to the user that they are still within the EEA's online ecosystem. This has generated significant efficiency gains: new websites can be created easier and faster, without investing in a new design each time; improvements made for one site, like a new block, or the AI-powered search, can now be used by all the other sites. Examples of this are BISE, the EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change Portal and the Circularity Metrics Lab.

In the context of delivering a service level agreement (SLA) with Eurostat, the EEA invested in the development of an infrastructure to facilitate the dissemination of EEA data and indicators. This will serve not only Eurostat but also other users. Overall, the engagement with Eurostat provided valuable insight into user needs, enabling EEA to improve how we provide data, information and knowledge as a service to our stakeholders.

2.7 Assessment of audit and ex-post evaluation results during the reporting year

2.7.1 Assessment of audit results

The ECA report on the EEA's annual accounts for the financial year 2022 ⁽⁶⁾ was published in October 2023 and expressed an unqualified opinion on the reliability of the accounts and an unqualified opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts. All recommendations from previous years are closed. The next audit of the EEA's annual accounts will examine the 2023 financial year. It started with a preliminary desk review in September 2023 and the fieldwork took place at the end of January 2024.

The audit on IT governance and project management (related to IT) that was carried out by the internal audit service in 2022 was finalised at the beginning of 2023. Its objective was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the design and implementation of IT governance and IT project management practices in the EEA. The audit resulted in four recommendations including two very important ones. In the first very important recommendation, Internal Audit Service (IAS) auditors recommended developing a comprehensive IT strategy, with adequate metrics to measure IT performance, at a time of increasing activities due to the EGD. The second very important recommendation was related to project management, with the

⁽⁶⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/ECAPublications/SAR-AGENCIES-2022/SAR-AGENCIES-2022_EN.pdf

auditors advising to strengthen and monitor the implementation of a comprehensive IT project management methodology that is specifically tailored to the needs of EEA and consistently applied to IT projects.

Additionally, in line with the strategic internal audit plan for the EEA for 2022-2024, the IAS began to audit HR management and ethics in 2023. The audit report will be finalised in May 2024.

2.7.2 Ex-post evaluation

As foreseen in the EEA financial regulation (Article 29(3)), the EEA is subject to periodic retrospective evaluation, carried out by the European Commission.

Between 2016 and 2018, the European Commission evaluated the EEA and its Eionet network, including the Agency's Founding Regulation. The evaluation covered the period from mid-2012 until the end of 2016 and considered the previous evaluations of the Agency (such as that from April 2013). The evaluation followed the Better Regulation guidelines and thus included an analysis of five main themes: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and European added value.

The conclusions of this evaluation and the subsequent recommendations of the Management Board are available on the EEA website ⁽⁷⁾. Follow-up on the recommendations is being addressed by the EEA in its ongoing planning and also in the implementation of the EEA-Eionet strategy covering the period 2021-2030.

The next evaluation by the European Commission is currently ongoing and covers the period 2017 to 2021. This period includes two multiannual programmes: the Multi Annual Work Programme 2014-2020 and the EEA/Eionet strategy for 2021-2030. As previously, the evaluation follows the Better Regulation guidelines and thus includes an analysis of the same five themes as before. As of the end of 2023, this evaluation was still ongoing.

2.8 Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations

There were no ECA recommendations to be addressed during 2023.

To address the recommendations of the IAS report on IT governance and IT-related project management, EEA management agreed to several actions that will be followed up by the IAS. In particular, the EEA started to develop a comprehensive IT strategy with adequate metrics to measure IT performance and worked on an IT project management structure with a revised IT project management methodology and baseline quality management practices for IT projects.

(7) https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/documents#c4=public%20administrative%20document&b_start=0&c6=Eionet%20evaluation

2.9 Follow-up of observations from the discharge authority

The discharge process involves (interchangeably) the European Parliament and the European Council. Concerning the discharge process with respect to the implementation of the EEA's budget for the financial year 2022, the European Parliament and the following committees were involved:

On 12 February 2024, the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety adopted its opinion and provided it to the European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control. The latter committee adopted its opinion on 18 March 2024.

The final opinion was adopted by the European Parliament in its plenary session on 11 April 2024.

The EEA prepared a response to the discharge: *Report of the executive director to the discharge authority on measures taken in the light of the discharge authority's recommendations of 2022 in accordance with Article 107(2) of the Framework Financial Regulation.*

2.10 Environmental management

An accredited Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) environmental verifier has verified and validated the EEA's full compliance ⁽⁸⁾ with the EMAS Regulation and declared on 27 July 2023 that the data and information of the *EEA environmental statement 2022* ⁽⁹⁾ reflects a reliable, credible and correct image of the EEA's activities and environmental improvements. Subsequently, in September 2023, the EMAS registration for the EEA was successfully extended by a competent body under EMAS for another year.

The 2023 Verification certificate (Bureau Veritas), and the registration certificate are both available on EEA website under [Becoming a climate neutral agency \(europa.eu\)](#) page.

For further details of the EEA's environmental management, see Annex 7.

2.11 Assessment by management

The CAAR 2023 describes the delivery of a work programme (Single Programming Document 2023-2025). Overall, the EEA has delivered well and achieved what it had set out to do by exceeding the expectations set out by the KPIs.

It is the EEA management's assessment that the underlying factors ensuring the organisation's long-term performance are sound and functioning well. Following the logic of the constituent elements of this report (achievements, management and internal control systems), the EEA has delivered a satisfactory result in 2023, given the risks and challenges the organisation has had to manage.

The EEA will continue to strive for continuous improvement to bring added value to all its stakeholders.

⁽⁸⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/who-we-are/becoming-a-climate-neutral-agency>

⁽⁹⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-statement-report-2022>



3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

3.1 Effectiveness of internal control systems

The assessment of the effectiveness of internal control systems covers all 17 principles of the EEA internal control framework. All principles adopted by the Management Board in 2017 are annually reviewed in light of the evidence to demonstrate that the controls are effective.

In 2023, the EEA continued to work on structural changes in its ways of working. Whereas most principles are present and functioning, some are only partially present and functioning and will therefore require major improvements to be fully effective. Those principles are identified in Table 3.1.

Some of the weaknesses had already been identified in 2022. Among the reasons of slow progress in addressing the weaknesses is the change of Executive Director in June 2023. The EEA management is working on improvements to ensure the proper functioning of all internal control principles in 2024.

As for the new weakness related to the security of its IT systems identified late 2023, the EEA has undertaken a comprehensive review of its IT security protocols. Recognising the criticism regarding the inadequacy of the controls in place, the EEA management has identified and planned the implementation of significant enhancements to bolster the security posture of the organisation. In doing this, the EEA has been closely collaborating with CERT-EU, thereby benefiting from its profound insights and recommendations.

Table 3.1 EEA internal control framework

EEA internal control framework component	EEA internal control framework adoption by Management Board, December 2017	Assessment
7 Risk management	The EEA identifies risks to the achievement of its objectives across the organisation and analyses risks as a basis for determining how the risks should be managed.	Partially compliant: risks are followed up at agency level with the annual risk assessment exercise and for specific projects to determine mitigating actions. However, the more systematic identification, assessment and follow-up of risks at project group level through the management plan system has been limited.
10 Control activities	The EEA selects and develops control activities that contribute to the mitigation of risks to achieving objectives to acceptable levels. Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="491 813 879 1048">• Control activities are integrated in EEA internal control systems. These include a variety of checks, such as supervision arrangements and where appropriate should include a balance of approaches to mitigate risks, considering manual and automated controls, and preventive and detective controls. <li data-bbox="491 1081 879 1429">• Business continuity plans based on a business impact analysis following corporate guidance are in place, up to date and are used by trained staff to ensure that the EEA is able to continue working to the extent possible in the event of a major disruption. Where necessary, business continuity plans must include coordinated and agreed disaster recovery plans for time-sensitive supporting infrastructure (e.g. IT systems). 	Partially compliant: control activities to mitigate risks related to certain objectives are outdated given structural changes in 2023. The ETC verification policy and the policy for grants are outdated given the change in the verification structure put in place from 2022. A business continuity plan has been developed since 2011 and was updated in 2015. The annexes were reviewed in 2017 and were used effectively and efficiently to organise work at the start of the COVID-19 crisis in March 2020 and during 2021. However, business continuity plan measures are now scattered through many different documents according to domain (IT, human resources) and the core plan has not been updated to reflect the new ways of working.
11 Control activities	The EEA selects and develops general control activities over technology to support the achievement of objectives. Characteristics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="491 1641 879 1877">• Security of IT systems. <i>The EEA applies appropriate controls to ensure the security of its IT systems. It does so in accordance with the IT security governance principles, in particular as regards data protection, professional secrecy, availability, confidentiality and integrity.</i> 	Partially compliant: if policies and documentation are available, the implementation of procedures to respond to security threat is not satisfactory. If controls to ensure the security of EEA IT systems exist, the testing of the efficiency of these controls is not satisfactory.

3.1.1 Costs and benefits of controls

A requirement in the CAAR guidelines is that agencies report on the balance between the effectiveness (including benefits), efficiency and economy of controls.

The EEA's controls are essential to ensure its legal compliance, application of sound financial management and protection of its reputation in the performance of its work programme and other activities. The benefits of its controls have been demonstrated through:

- the ECA consistently expressing an unqualified opinion on the reliability of the accounts and an unqualified opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts;
- the relatively few observations made by the ECA, the IAS and other auditors, and the prompt action the EEA has taken in addressing the recommendations accompanying these observations, thereby reducing the risks;
- the relatively few exceptions registered, which are reported to the Management Board in a timely manner;
- the EEA's timely and accurate payment of its suppliers;
- the EEA's very high budget execution in recent years.

The ex-post evaluations of the EEA (see Section 2.7) found that the EEA's support activities, which include control activities, are performed efficiently and effectively.

For calculating and reporting the costs of controls, the EEA has used an informal guideline developed by the Internal Control Working Group of the Performance Development Network, which is a sub-network of the EU Agencies Network. This guideline has taken inspiration from the approach used by the European Commission. The guidance focuses on the cost of controls regarding budget implementation, especially on the control objective for the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions. Non-spending activities, such as IT security, are not addressed.

The cost of controls is split by the main control systems.

Table 3.2 Estimated costs of control for 2023

Relevant control system	Ex-ante controls			Ex-post controls		Total	
	Funds managed	Estimated cost of controls	Ratio (%)	Estimated cost of controls	Ratio (%)	Estimated cost of controls	Ratio (%)
Salaries and allowances	33,372,000	80,000	0.2	326,000	1.0	406,000	1.2
Travel and meetings	1,365,000	140,000	10.3	13,000	1.0	153,000	11.2
Procurement	15,603,000	987,000	6.3	152,000	1.0	1,139,000	7.3
Grants (ETCs)	8,280,000	133,000	1.6	81,000	1.0	214,000	2.6
Total (EUR)	58,620,000	1,340,000	2.3	572,000	1.0	1,912,000	3.3

Note: Travel and meetings include all funds administered by Travel Service, including missions, staff travel on training, Eionet and expert meetings, and meetings and reimbursements for the Management Board, Scientific Committee and the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change.

The main cost reported is the time spent by finance, accounting, procurement, human resources and operational staff performing the relevant controls and includes purchased audit services for ETC cost statement verification (ex-ante) and the audit of the annual accounts (ex-post).

3.1.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

In 2023, building on what was started in 2022 and welcoming new people at leadership positions (among whom are a new executive director and a new chair of the Management Board), the EEA continued to work on changing its ways of working, which impacted its organisational structures. Major improvements are still needed to ensure full compliance with a few principles. This does not, however, affect the positive results of the existing controls, as shown in the section 'Costs and benefits of controls'.

3.2 Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

I, the undersigned,

Head of Administration within the European Environment Agency,

In my capacity as Head of Administration, I declare that, in accordance with the European Environment Agency's internal control framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the European Environment Agency to the executive director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present consolidated annual activity report and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.

Signed in Copenhagen, 5 June 2024

Søren Brostrup Nielsen

4 Management assurance

4.1 Review of elements supporting assurance

4.1.1 Brief description of the building blocks of assurance

The information reported in Chapters 2 and 3 stems from the results of the work undertaken by management and audits. Audit reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available and cover only a part of the EEA's many core activities. Furthermore, different audit capacities (the EEA internal audit capability, the IAS and the ECA) cover different areas, and therefore, between them and the internal controls in the EEA, ensure a comprehensive basis for assurance.

This approach provides sufficient guarantees of the completeness and reliability of the information reported, and results in exhaustive scrutiny of the budget delegated to the executive director.

In conclusion:

- there were no reservations listed in the previous years' annual activity reports;
- all recommendations of the IAS issued in relation to audits finalised in previous years have been closed;
- the EEA had not received final observations from the ECA at the date of publication of this report;
- there are no open observations from the European Parliament.

4.1.2 Summary analysis of the conclusions of any significant weaknesses reported in Chapters 2 and 3 and an assessment of their combined impact on the declaration of assurance

Taking the above into consideration, no weaknesses were identified regarding the financial management of appropriations within the EEA and so no reservations are made in this context in the declaration.

4.2 Reservations

No significant weaknesses have been identified and there are no formal reservations.

5 Declaration of assurance

I, the undersigned, Executive Director of the European Environment Agency,

In my capacity as authorising officer,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, ex post controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service, the work of the internal audit capability and the lessons learnt from the reports of the European Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here that could harm the interests of the European Environment Agency.

Signed in Copenhagen, 5 June 2024

Leena Ylä-Mononen



Annex 1 Core business statistics

For details and analysis of the KPIs for 2023, please refer to Chapter 1.

Annex 2 Statistics on financial management

Annex 2 provides additional financial statistics requiring disclosure, which have not already been provided in Section 2.3.

Indication of commitments for actions that will extend for more than 1 financial year; major items (greater than EUR 500,000) only

Nothing to report.

Information on interest charged by suppliers through late payments (>30 days late)

We received no late interest charges from suppliers.

Budgetary outturn for 2023

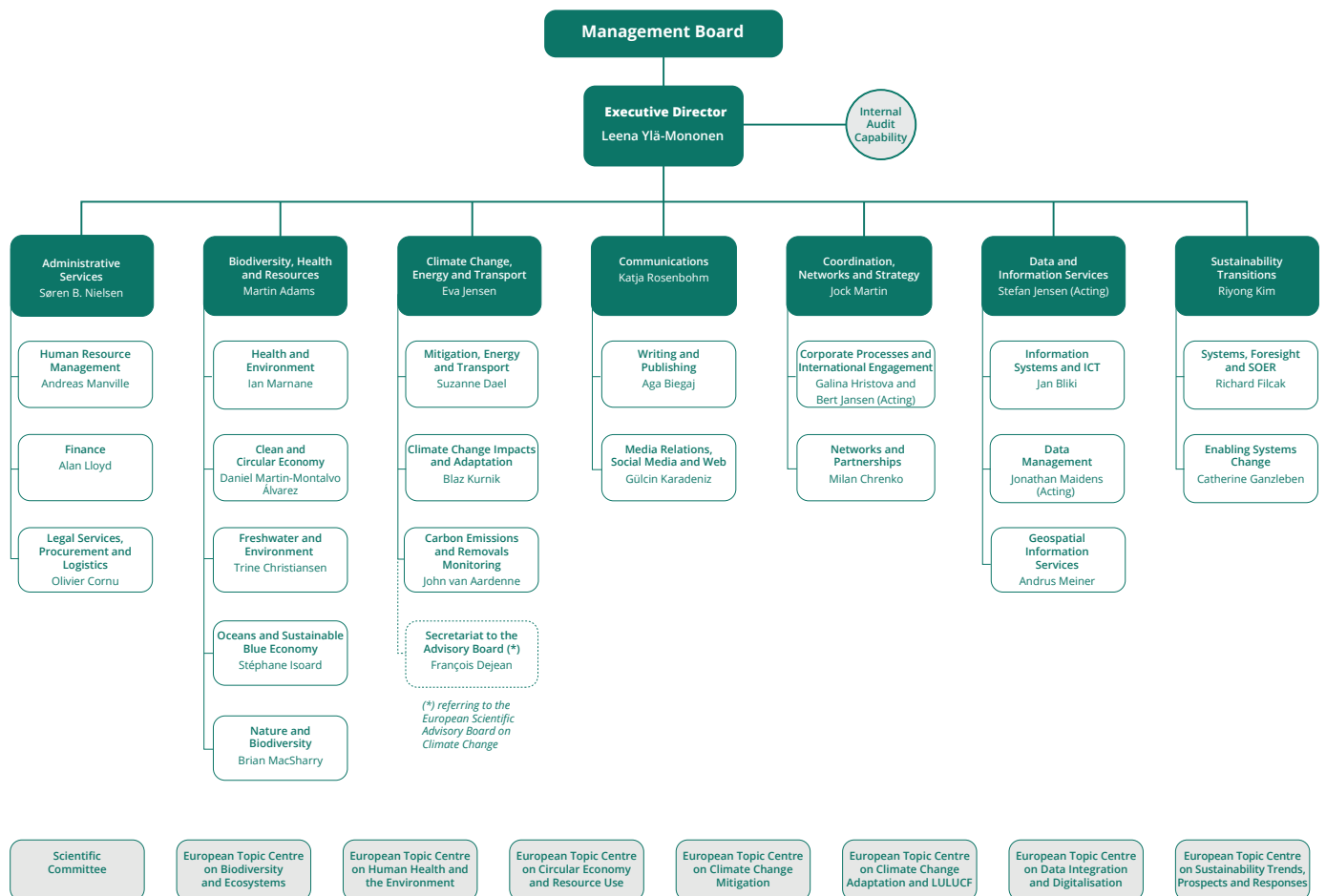
Table A2.1 Budgetary outturn for 2021-2023

Budget outturn	2021	2022	2023
Reserve from the previous years' surplus (+)			
Revenue actually received (+)	66,608,472	85,374,306	76,461,229
Payments made (-)	-57,559,461	-64,607,077	-68,363,709
Carryover of appropriations (-)	-28,102,672	-36,737,126	-34,296,083
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	160,082	250,600	301,357
Adjustment for carryover of assigned revenue appropriation from previous year (+)	21,230,293	15,986,712	26,26,590
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	-4,218	- 15,543	-1,728
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year	-2,160,873		
Total	171,623	25, 873	361,656

The cancellation of C8 appropriations carried over from 2022 totalled EUR 301,356. Of this, EUR 187,560 was from Title 3, the largest amount from the settlement of the final cost statements of four ETCs. The other cancellations were small amounts across a number of budget lines in Title 1 (EUR 55,108) and Title 2 (EUR 58,689).

Annex 3 EEA organisational chart

Figure A3.1 EEA organisational chart



Notes: The chart presents the EEA's organisation on 31 December 2023.
Coordination, Networks and Strategy includes a Brussels Liaison Office, located in Brussels.

Annex 4 Establishment plan and additional information on human resource management

Table A4.1 EEA statutory staff and seconded national experts 2023

Human Resources	2023	
	Amended Budget	Actually filled 31/12/2023
Administrators (AD)	102	99
Assistants (AST)	56	54
Assistants/Secretaries (AST/SC)	0	0
Establishment plan posts	158	153
Contract Agents (CA)	88	83
Seconded National Experts (SNE)	20	18
Total staff	266	254

Table A4.2 EEA establishment table 2023

Function group and grade	2023			
	Amended budget		Actually filled as of 31/12/2023	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts
AD 16				
AD 15		1		
AD 14		2		1
AD 13	1	5		2
AD 12		10	1	3
AD 11		13		8
AD 10		14		14
AD 9		10		10
AD 8		10		8
AD 7		15		17
AD 6		21		35
AD 5				
AD Total	1	101	1	98
AST 11		1		
AST 10	1	3	1	2
AST 9	2	7	1	5
AST 8		10		7

Table A4.2 EEA establishment table 2023 (cont.)

Function group and grade	2023			
	Amended budget		Actually filled as of 31/12/2023	
	Permanent posts	Temporary posts	Permanent posts	Temporary posts
AST 7		10		7
AST 6		10		12
AST 5		6		9
AST 4		5		5
AST 3		1	1	3
AST 2				1
AST 1				
AST total	3	53	3	51
AST/SC 6				
AST/SC 5				
AST/SC 4				
AST/SC 3				
AST/SC 2				
AST/SC 1				
AST/SC total				
Total	4	154	4	149
Grand total		158		153

Table A4.3 EEA contract agents and seconded national experts 2023

Contract agents	2023 amended	Recruited as of 31/12/2023
Function Group IV	65	64
Function Group III	12	17
Function Group II	11	2
Function Group I		
Total	88	83

Seconded national experts	2023 amended	Recruited as of 31/12/23
Total	20	18

Table A4.4 Additional staff financed from grant, contribution or SLAs

Contract agents (CA) per agreement	Partner DG	2023 authorised
PARC	RTD	2
Copernicus Contribution Agreement	DEFIS	12
IPA III – Green Agenda and Energy Community	NEAR	5
NDICI – Governance of the Energy Community	NEAR	
EuroGEO	RTD	2
Climate and Health Observatory	SANTE	1
Regional and urban environmental indicators	REGIO	2
LULUCF	CLIMA	0
Mission on adaption to climate change	CLIMA	4
European climate risk assessment	CLIMA	2
EEA – Eurostat Cooperation	ESTAT	3
Nitrates Directive	JRC	2
International Resource Panel	UNEP	1
Total		36

Notes: The table lists the posts for the agreements that are currently in force. Details of the agreements in force and future anticipated agreements are provided in Annex 6 Contribution, grant and service-level agreements, and in financial framework partnership agreements.

DG, Directorate-General; **DG CLIMA**, DG for Climate Action; **DG DEFIS**, DG for Defence Industry and Space; **DG NEAR**, DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations; **DG REGIO**, DG for Regional and Urban Policy; **DG RTD**, DG for Research and Innovation; **DG SANTE**, DG for Health and Food Safety; **Eurostat/ESTAT**, Statistical Office of the European Union; **UNEP**, United Nations Environment Programme; **PARC**, Partnership for the Assessment of the Risks of Chemicals; **IPA**, Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance; **NDICI**, Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument; **LULUCF**, Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry.

Table A4.5 Entry level per key function for establishment plan posts

Key function – general ^(a)	Type of contract (official, TA or CA) Function group; grade of recruitment (or bottom of the brackets if published in brackets)
Executive Director (level 1)	TA AD14
Head of Programme (level 2)	Official/TA AD11
Head of Group (level 3) ^(b)	Official/TA From AD6/AST6
Expert	Official/TA/CA From AD6/FGIV
Officer	Official/TA/CA From AST3/FGIII
Assistant	Official/TA/CA From AST1/FGII

Table A4.5 Entry level per key function for establishment plan posts (cont.)

Key function – example	Type of contract (official, TA or CA) Function group; grade of recruitment (or bottom of the brackets if published in brackets)
Head of Programme 'Administrative Services' (level 2)	Official/TA AD11
Head of Group 'Human Resource Management' (level 3)	Official/TA From AD6/AST6
Head of Group 'Finance' (level 3)	Official/TA From AD6/AST6
Head of Group 'Legal Services, Procurement and Logistics' (level 3)	Official/TA From AD6/AST6
Head of Programme 'Communications' (level 2)	TA AD11
Head of Programme 'Data and Information Services' (level 2)	TA AD11
Head of Group 'Information Systems and ICT' (level 3)	TA From AD6/AST6
Expert – Data Protection	Official/TA From AD6
Expert – Accountant	Official/TA From AD8
Expert – Internal Audit Capability	Official/TA From AD8

Notes: AD, administrator; AST, assistant; CA, contract agent; TA, temporary agent.

(^a) The text in bold indicates official EEA title.

(^b) Excluded from management allowance.

Annex 5 Human and financial resources by activity

The EEA has defined new activities under its strategy for 2021-2030.

The staff time and operational costs reported in Figures A5.1 and A5.2 are to deliver the EEA's annual work programme and they exclude staff time and budget to deliver project-financed actions funded by grant, contribution and service-level agreements.

The allocation includes a proportional allocation of support, management, governance and administration activities and resources.

Figure A5.1 Staff time in 2023 by strategic activity

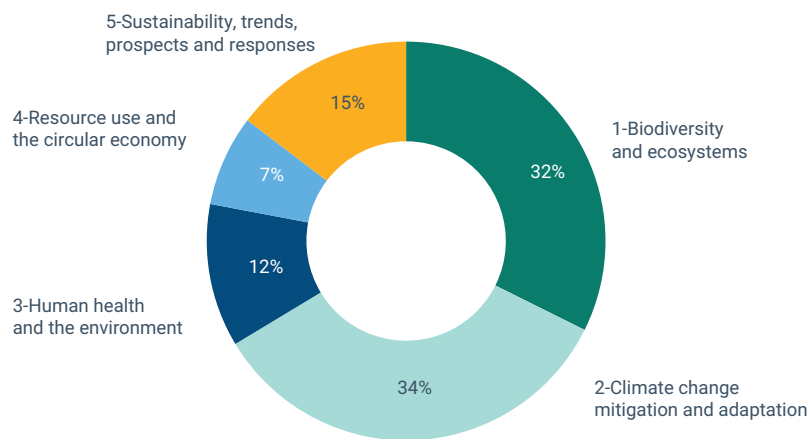
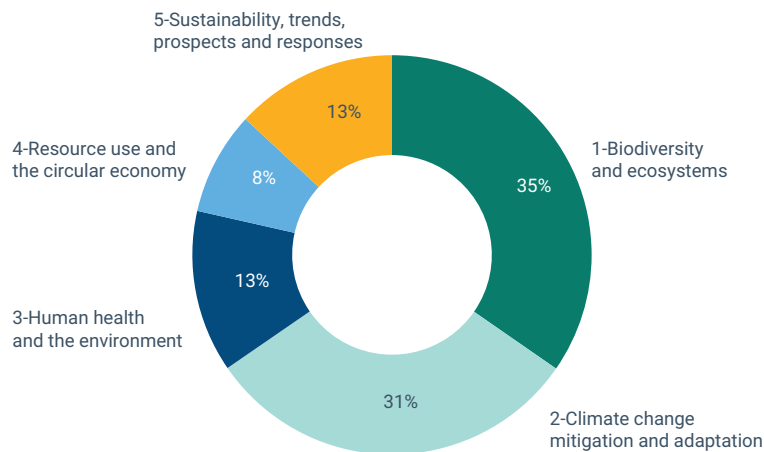


Figure A5.2 Operational costs 2023 execution by strategic activity



Annex 6 Contribution, grant and service-level agreements, and financial framework partnership agreements

Figure A6.1

Agreements	Start date	General information			Financial and HR information			
		Total amount (EUR)	Duration (months)	Counterpart	Short description	2022	2023	
Grant agreements								
HBM4EU	Jan 2017	2,000,000	66	DG RTD	Human biomonitoring initiative in a consortium led by the German Environment Agency under Horizon 2020	Amount (EUR)	357,000	
						No. of CAs	2	
						No. of SNEs		
PARC	May 2022	2,890,000	84	DG RTD	Continuation of human biomonitoring after the expiry of the HBM4EU agreement	Amount (EUR)	2,890,000	
						No. of CAs	2	2
						No. of SNEs		
Contribution agreements								
Copernicus Contribution Agreement	Nov 2021	135,000,000	86	DG DEFIS	Continuation of Copernicus activities, replacing the current agreement	Amount (EUR)	20,736,000	35,524,460
						No. of CAs	12	12
						No. of SNEs		
IPA 2020	Feb 2020	1,275,000	30	DG NEAR	Cooperation with Western Balkan countries under the Instrument for Pre-Accession	Amount (EUR)		
						No. of CAs	1	
						No. of SNEs		
IPA III – green agenda and Energy Community	Jan 2023	3,912,000	36	DG NEAR	Continuation of Green Agenda tasks from IPA 2020 agreement and 2/3 of Energy Community budget	Amount (EUR)	3,912,000	
						No. of CAs		4
						No. of SNEs		
NDICI – governance of the Energy Community	Jan 2023	1,000,000	36	DG NEAR	1/3 of budget supporting the implementation of the Governance Regulation in the Energy Community.	Amount (EUR)	1,000,000	
						No. of CAs		1
						No. of SNEs		

General information						Financial and HR information		
Agreements	Start date	Total amount (EUR)	Duration (months)	Counterpart	Short description	2022	2023	
Service level agreements								
EuroGEO	Dec 2020	1,500,000	36	DG RTD	Mainstreaming GEOSS data sharing and management principles in support of Europe's environment	Amount (EUR)	1,135,000	
						No. of CAs	2	2
						No. of SNEs		
European Climate and Health Observatory	Aug 2021	4,000,000	48	DG SANTE	Supporting the content developments of the European Climate and Health Observatory	Amount (EUR)	1,382,000	
						No. of CAs	1	1
						No. of SNEs		
Regional and urban environmental indicators	Dec 2021	1,324,000	36	DG REGIO	Supporting the implementation of regional and urban environmental indicators and analysis	Amount (EUR)	1,324,000	
						No. of CAs	2	2
						No. of SNEs		
LULUCF	Feb 2022	300,000	15	DG CLIMA	Supporting Member States to upgrade their GHG inventories to be fit for target compliance in 2025	Amount (EUR)	300,000	
						No. of CAs	0	0
						No. of SNEs		
Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change	May 2022	2,880,000	36	DG CLIMA	Developing a support system tailored to the needs of the Mission in the Climate-ADAPT platform	Amount (EUR)	2,000,000	880,000
						No. of CAs	3	4
						No. of SNEs		
European Climate Risk Assessment	May 2022	1,800,000	30	DG CLIMA	Support the development of the first EU-wide climate risk assessment	Amount (EUR)	1,800,000	
						No. of CAs	2	2
						No. of SNEs		
EEA - Eurostat Cooperation	Jan 2023	2,000,000	48	DG ESTAT	Cooperation to enrich and make increased use of ESTAT data and accounts	Amount (EUR)		2,000,000
						No. of CAs		3
						No. of SNEs		
Nitrates Directive	Dec 2023	871,000	25	JRC	Technical and scientific assistance in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive	Amount (EUR)		871,000
						No. of CAs		2
						No. of SNEs		

Notes: The financial amounts reported each year are the R0 budget appropriations (revenue and expenditure) made in that year. The EEA has non-differentiated appropriations and so the budget appropriations for commitments and payments are identical.

CA, contract agent; DG DEFIS, Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space; DG REGIO, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy; EuroGEO, European Association of Geographers; GEOSS, Global Earth Observation System of Systems; GHG, greenhouse gas; NDICI, Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument; SNE, seconded national expert.

Annex 7 Environmental management

Context of the EEA and its environmental management strategy

The Agency commits to its environmental policy to minimise its environmental impacts and continually improve its environmental performance. In February 2023, the EEA established a steering committee to strengthen the governance for implementing the EEA's environmental management system. This key decision-making and issue-resolution body consists of the EMAS environmental coordinator and three members of the senior management team – the EMAS top management representative and the heads of the two programmes; 'Administrative Services' and 'Coordination, Network and Strategy'.

Under the EMAS steering committee, the EMAS team was replaced by the EMAS working group. The EMAS working group is chaired by the EMAS environmental coordinator. Trained staff members perform internal environmental audits and support the EMAS environmental coordinator in implementing environmental improvement actions and communication activities. Several other steering committees and working groups under the EEA's new governance system helps ensure the coherent and efficient implementation of the environmental management programme in different areas, such as building management, staff travel, new ways of working, visitor travel and the purchase of goods and services.

Overview of the EEA's environmental management system

The EEA uses an environmental management system that was registered under EMAS in 2005. EMAS is part of the EEA's quality management system. In 2023, the EEA's EMAS registration ⁽¹⁰⁾ was successfully extended by a competent body under EMAS for another year.

Environmental management, procedures, responsibilities and annual activities are documented in the EEA environmental management handbook (EEA internal document).

Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

EEA activities have both direct and indirect impacts on the environment. Under EMAS, the EEA routinely monitors the following environmental aspects in its environmental statement:

- use of electricity;
- use of energy for heating;
- water consumption;
- paper consumption;
- generation of waste;
- CO₂ emissions.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Relevant documents for 2023 certification available under the following page: [Becoming a climate neutral agency \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/inline-photos/2023/02/10).

For each of the environmental aspects, the annual environmental statement report outlines details of objectives, monitoring and progress. It includes a summary table outlining the sources of the environmental impact, action plans, including responsibilities, performance indicators, the performance of the previous year and the percentage change compared with data from the previous five years.

The *EEA environmental statement 2022* ⁽¹⁾ was published in 2023 after the competent body had confirmed the extension of its EMAS registration.

The EEA has achieved most of its environmental targets since 2018, for example in electricity consumption, paper consumption, waste generation and GHG emissions. Most strikingly, the EEA achieved a 100% reduction in printed publications due to implementing a zero-printing policy for EEA publications in 2022.

Under the newly established EEA donation policy ⁽¹²⁾, EEA donated over 100 computer screens to EEA staff and external organisations. This donation reduced electronic waste by almost 500kg, a third of the total electronic waste generated in 2022.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/environmental-statement-report-2022>

⁽¹²⁾ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/about/who-we-are/becoming-a-climate-neutral-agency#eea-s-new-donation-policy>

Annex 8 Provisional accounts

The EEA's provisional annual accounts for the year 2023 are available [here](#).

Annex 9 Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Name
8th EAP	Eighth Environment Action Programme
ACER	Cooperation of Energy Regulators
CAAR	Consolidated annual activity report
CLC+	Extended Corine Land Cover (CLC) product package
CLMS	Copernicus Land Monitoring Service
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSS	Chemicals strategy for sustainability
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action
DG DEFIS	DG for Defence Industry and Space
DG ENV	Directorate-General for Environment
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG REGIO	DG for Regional and Urban Policy
DG RTD	Directorate-General for Research and Innovation
DG SANTE	Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EGD	European Green Deal
Eionet	European Environment Information and Observation Network
EMA	European Medical Agency
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
EMEP	European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ETC	European Topic Centre
EU	European Union
GEO	Group on Earth Observations
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GHG	Greenhouse gas
HBM4EU	Human Biomonitoring for Europe
HRL	High-resolution layer
IAS	Internal Audit Service

Abbreviation	Name
IT	Information technology
JRC	Joint Research Centre
KPI	Key performance indicator
LULUCF	Land use, land use change and forestry
MAP	Mediterranean Action Plan
MBAC	Management Board Advisory Committee
NDFC	National data flows coordination group
NFP	National focal points
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PARC	Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SoE	State of the Environment
SOER 2025	The European environment – state and outlook 2025 report
SPD	Single programming document
SSbD	Safe and sustainable by design
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WISE	Water Information System for Europe

European Environment Agency

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