

Consolidated annual activity report 2020



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Contents

Management Board's analysis and assessment	5
Executive summary	6
1 Achievements of the year	9
1.1 Informing policy implementation (SA1)	10
1.2 Assessing systemic challenges (SA2)	18
1.3 Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use (SA3)	21
1.4 EEA management (SA4).....	28
2 Management	30
2.1 Management Board.....	30
2.2 Major developments	30
2.3 Budgetary and financial management.....	31
2.4 Delegation and sub-delegation	36
2.5 Human resource management.....	36
2.6 Strategy for efficiency gains.....	37
2.7 Assessment of audit and <i>ex post</i> evaluation results during the reporting year.....	37
2.8 Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations	38
2.9 Follow-up of observations from the discharge authority	38
2.10 Environmental management.....	38
2.11 Assessment by management	38
3 Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems	39
3.1 Effectiveness of internal control systems	39
3.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems.....	40
3.3 Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control.....	41
4 Management assurance.....	42
4.1 Review of elements supporting assurance.....	42
4.2 Reservations	42
5 Declaration of assurance	43
Annex 1 Core business statistics.....	44
Annex 2 Statistics on financial management.....	45
Annex 3 EEA Organisational chart	46

Annex 4 Establishment plan and additional information on human resource management	47
Annex 5 Human and financial resources by activity	50
Annex 6 Contribution, grant and service level agreements, and Financial framework partnership agreements	51
Annex 7 Environmental management	52
Annex 8 Annual accounts	53
Annex 9 Outputs per activity	55
Annex 10 Abbreviations	73
Annex 11 ECA report on the annual accounts 2019	77

Management Board's analysis and assessment

Introduction

The Management Board welcomes the Consolidated Annual Activity Report for 2020 (CAAR 2020) and makes the following observations.

Commentary of overall achievements

The Management Board welcomes the following achievements by the EEA in 2020, recognising the very challenging circumstances of the year. The Management Board noted the commitment and dedication of EEA staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, adapting to the new way of working and delivering to a high level at a very challenging time.

- Adoption of the EEA-Eionet Strategy for the coming decade (2021-2030) aligned with the EU policy priorities. The engagement with the countries and partners across the network in the months leading to the Strategy adoption has been a good example of a participatory approach to shaping our further work jointly.
- Effective management of the governance processes and functioning of MB and Bureau has been ensured. The swift transition to online meetings and working modality safeguarded timely decision-making throughout the year.
- The increased funding to the EEA as of 2021 in relation to new tasks and areas of work under European Green Deal and 8th EAP are a recognition of the Agency's knowledge and expertise in supporting the EU environment ambitions.
- The Management Board welcomes the alignment of the new European Topic Centres (ETCs) with the new Strategy objectives. The good preparatory work led to the launch of the call for seven new ETCs in early 2021 as planned.
- The high delivery rates for EEA key performance indicators 2020 needs to be acknowledged: with budget execution rate of 99.5 % of the annual budget, 87.5 % delivery rate of key publications, 88 % of the core set of indicators updated and high engagement with key stakeholders and network partners throughout the year.
- Despite the challenging circumstances and move to online working modality, the effective cooperation with Eionet, EU institutions and other EU agencies needs to be highlighted.

- The work delivered under specific project-based activities through non-core funds, under Copernicus, European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) have contributed to enlarging the EEA impact and sharing experience with interested partners beyond Eionet.
- Preparations for the changes needed to be put in place in IT systems and data collection linked to Brexit have also been handled in a timely manner.

Recommendations

With the aim of ensuring efficient operation in the period to come, the Management Board puts forward the following recommendations:

- In order to ensure the delivery of the ambitions outlined in the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030, the Management Board recommends an equivalent level of ambition for the Eionet modernisation exercise. The Management Board supports the establishment of a Management Board Advisory Committee to ensure the fitness for purpose and adequate resourcing of the Eionet network in the countries when delivering the Strategy.
- The Management Board advises the EEA to remain consistent in the presentation of the accounts to facilitate comparisons from one year to the other, and to make changes to the procurement plan explicit.
- In the context of the implementation of the EEA-Eionet Strategy and the anticipated diversification of resources in the coming years, the Management Board encourages EEA to avoid duplication of administrative work and organisational inefficiencies, where possible, when taking on board project-financed actions.
- The Management Board encourages the EEA to continue to ensure regular information to be brought to the Board attention on the follow-up actions to audit recommendations.
- The Management Board recommends that the EEA to continue providing a commentary to the follow-up observations from the discharge authority and the actions undertaken by the Agency to address the observations.

Laura Burke
Chair of the EEA Management Board

Executive summary

The year in brief

The EEA's annual work programme 2020, which is structured around the Agency's four strategic areas (SAs) as set out in the Agency's multiannual work programme 2014-2020, established the framework for 2020. The following highlights provide a snapshot of the EEA's work during the year.

Strategic area 1: Informing policy implementation

The EEA's key role in informing the implementation of EU environmental policy continued effectively in 2020. Assessments and briefings continue to be a major input to policy implementation, covering areas such as:

- air quality (including the effect of the COVID-19 lockdown measures on air pollutant concentrations) and noise, in support of relevant legislation;
- progress towards climate and energy targets, the transition towards a climate neutral society, and climate change adaptation, monitoring and evaluation;
- marine and freshwater biodiversity, the implementation of ecosystem-based management, and the main impacts and necessary measures in agricultural management;
- protected areas, ecosystems and their services, and land cover accounts;
- biowaste management and treatment, biodegradable plastics, and the emerging challenges of waste management in Europe.

The agency also continues to provide support for the reporting of respective data flows, including through:

- support for member countries with the reporting of air pollutant emissions data under the EU National Emission Ceilings (NEC) directive and the UNECE Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP);
- a joint electronic reporting platform for the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR), the Industrial Emission Directive Reporting (IED) and the Inventory on Large Combustion Plants (LCP);

- a new Industrial Emissions Portal; a website replacing the current European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR)
- annual reporting of CO₂ emissions of new light-duty vehicles;
- support for waste policy implementation with a new methodology for the implementation of the so-called early warning mechanism.

Other knowledge products were also developed, including:

- a viewer documenting the impact of lockdown measures on air quality in European cities;
- maps presenting a story on how Europe will be affected by key climate hazards such as droughts, floods, forest fires and sea level rise during the 21st century and beyond;
- the European Climate and Health Observatory portal, developed together with DG CLIMA, DG SANTE and partner organisations;
- a new upgraded version of the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) platform;
- the European Climate Data Explorer (ECDE).

Strategic area 2: Addressing systemic challenges

The EEA continued its work on systemic challenges facing Europe. This included continuing co-leadership of the so-called Bellagio Process, to improve the existing tools and knowledge available to monitor circular economy in Europe. Analyses were carried out contributing to EEA publications in relation to 1) plastics, 2) textiles, 3) electronics, 4) construction, 5) business models and 6) the interface across climate mitigation and CE agendas.

In the area of environment, health and well-being, EEA published a report entitled 'Healthy environments, healthy lives', reviewing the evidence for how the environment both supports and impacts on health and well-being in Europe and documenting the role of social status in environmental health.

SOER 2020-related knowledge on systemic challenges and systemic transitions was further deployed. Based on the publication of the 'Drivers of change' report, selected analytical elements were pooled into selected narratives for change, the first of them addressing 'growth without economic growth', which marks a shift to more action-oriented knowledge. Three co-creation projects were put in place between EEA and NRC FLIS including work on horizon scanning and sustainability and 2050 solution scenarios that will inform the European Green Deal and 8th EAP in coming years.

The SOER 2020 report was referenced in the European Green Deal and acknowledged as a key underpinning for the 8th EAP proposal of the European Commission in October 2020. The Agency continued to support progress towards sustainable transitions with reports focussing on limits of the planet and urban sustainability.

Strategic area 3: Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use

Joint implementation of 2020 activities with Eionet partners was central to EEA work in improving the sharing of data, information, knowledge and assessments at European, national and global levels together with Eionet, and to broaden cooperation with stakeholders and networks beyond Eionet.

At the beginning of the year, the discussions on Eionet Modernisation were initiated. The overall objective was to discuss the transformation of Eionet to a more flexible and innovative knowledge network to better connect the strong country level expertise to the European level, encourage sharing of policy relevant knowledge across EEA member countries and thus facilitate addressing strategic objectives of the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030 in the context of the European Green Deal.

The EEA cooperation with the partners in the European Neighbourhood on the implementation of the shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) under two EU-funded projects in Eastern Partnership and Southern Mediterranean was completed in July 2020. The 4-year cooperation aimed at improving the capacities of the partner countries to manage and use environmental reporting and in producing regular state of environment and indicator based assessments in line with EEA and Eionet methodologies and practices.

Reportnet 3.0 was launched for production and the EEA also took over the ownership of the project on the Forest Information System for Europe (FISE) and launched the new platform. The EEA supported the development of Citizen

Science guidelines for monitoring and reporting, together with Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC) partners.

Implementation of the EEA communication framework continued during the year with a focus on maintaining quality while adapting to rapidly changing technologies and dialogue channels internally and externally.

Strategic area 4: EEA Management

During 2020, the Scientific Committee contributed to validation of results from the European Commission's Foresight for Environment project. It also provided substantial inputs to the new EEA-Eionet strategy. Ten new members were recruited to the Committee in line with the needs of the strategy and EU policy priorities. Scientific Committee members continued providing input to the EEA on core topics, through attending EEA meetings, representing EEA at external events and reviewing EEA publications relevant to their individual expertise.

The Review of ETCs was undertaken as part of the preparations for the launch of the call for proposals for seven new ETCs in early 2021. A report was prepared on the approach and recommendations for new ETCs, and was endorsed by the Management Board at the beginning of 2021.

With respect to the Environmental Management System, in November 2020 the Agency's senior management decided to raise the ambition of the EEA from being a 'climate friendly' organisation to becoming a 'climate neutral' one. This decision will be reflected in the EEA environment policy 2021.

The EEA and Eionet adopted a joint strategy in December 2020, outlining a shared vision and strategic objectives for 2021-2030. The strategy aims to provide trusted and actionable knowledge to help achieve Europe's ambitious environment and climate policy objectives.

Key conclusions

2020 provided unique challenges to the EEA in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, the EEA responded well, showing resilience and flexibility which allowed it to continue its activities and deliver its work programme without any significant disruptions or negative impacts, including its additional responsibilities and resources under the European Green Deal (EGD) and the 8th EAP, and the adoption of the EEA's strategy for 2021-301⁽¹⁾.

⁽¹⁾ EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030 — European Environment Agency (europa.eu).

EEA in brief

The mission statement of the EEA states that 'The EEA aims 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 policy-making agents and the public.'

The EEA is a decentralised agency of the EU. The EEA/Eionet Regulation ⁽²⁾ established the EEA ⁽³⁾, as an independent EU body with its own legal personality and for an indefinite period. The Agency's Founding Regulation also established the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) ⁽⁴⁾ and includes the provision that the Agency is open to countries that are not members of the EU ⁽⁵⁾.

The Agency's main task is to provide sound, independent information on the environment. The Agency is a major information source for those involved in developing, adopting, implementing and evaluating environmental policy, and also for the general public.

The EEA's overall mandate, established in the EEA/Eionet Regulation is:

- to help the European Community and the EEA member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability; and
- to coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

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 and mandate for both the EEA Management Board and the Scientific Committee are defined, as well as the responsibility and accountability of the Executive Director as the legal representative of the Agency.

The EEA's organisational structure includes three hierarchical levels:

- Executive Director's Office (EDO), led by the Executive Director;
- eight programmes, led by Heads of Programme;
- 18 groups, led by Heads of Group.

See the organisational chart in Annex 3.

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.

⁽²⁾ [EUR-Lex - 32009R0401 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#).

⁽³⁾ The EEA was formally established in 1990 by Council Regulation No 1210/90 (EEA/Eionet Regulation). The EEA /Eionet Regulation came into force in late 1993 and was amended by Council Regulation No 933/1999 and then again by Regulation No 1641/2003 of the European Parliament and the Council. In the interests of clarity and rationality, the regulation was codified by Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009.

⁽⁴⁾ [European Environment Information and Observation Network — Eionet Portal \(europa.eu\)](#).

⁽⁵⁾ 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 Turkey.

1 Achievements of the year

Part 1 of this report is structured around the Agency's four strategic areas (SAs), as set out in the EEA's Single Programming Document 2020-2022. The overall achievements for 2020 are placed in the context of the multiannual goals, key objectives and performance indicators and are reported in comparison with the performance indicators, key activities and expected outputs defined in the EEA's annual work programme 2020.

To monitor performance, the EEA uses a set of multiannual key performance indicators (KPIs; see Table 1.1). These quantitative KPIs require key outputs to be clearly identified, and for this reason the output tables in the annual work programme are divided into key and supporting activities. The additional performance indicator captures delivery from essential supporting activities. Disaggregated information on uptake and impact per strategic area is reported in qualitative terms.

Table 1.1 EEA key performance indicators 2020

No	Key performance indicator	Baseline (year)	Target	2020 realisation
1*	Staff occupancy rate: realised staff resources in annual establishment plan (%)	99 % (2016)	Min. 95 %	97 %
2*	Budget execution: rate of annual outturn and carry forwards of EEA core budget (%)	99.9 % (2016)	Min. 98 %	99.5 %
3*	Budget execution: cancellation rate of payment appropriations in year <i>N</i> (%)	(2027)	Max. 2 % of core budget	0.05 %
4*	Budget execution: payments executed within legal/contractual deadline (%)	99.4 % (2017)	100 %	99.7 %
5*	Reports/assessments: delivery rate of key reports/assessments (%) as planned in the annual work programme	2019	Min. 90 %	87.5 %
6*	Indicators: share of core set indicators updated as planned in the annual work programme (%)	-	Min. 90 %	88.2 %
7*	Data flows: annual performance for Eionet core data flows (%)	86 % (2017)	90 %	96 %
8	Media visibility: articles with reference to EEA (No)	13 800 (2017)	Stable/increase	25 626
9	Followers on social media (No)	97 000 (2017)	Stable/increase	178 593
10	Web traffic: registered sessions on EEA website (No)	4 400 000 (2017)	Stable/increase	8 200 866
11	Downloads: registered use of map services (No) (measured as 'machine-to-machine' traffic)	175 000 000 (2017)	Stable/increase	533 072 168
12	Stakeholder interaction: delivery rate of planned Eionet meetings (%)	-	90 %	100 %
13	Stakeholder interaction: average participant satisfaction rating (sub-indicator) (%)	-	80 %	94 %
14*	Staff satisfaction: average favourable rate for common items for agencies (%)	67 % (2017)	-	66 %
15*	Learning: average registered time for learning and development (days)	6.4 days	7 days	3.9 days

Table 1.1 EEA key performance indicators 2020 (cont.)

No	Key performance indicator	Baseline (year)	Target	2020 realisation
16*	Absence: annual average short-term sick leave (days)	10.4 days	Stable/ decrease	4.7 days
17*	Audit compliance: rate (%) of European Court of Auditors' recommendations implemented (with deadline in current year)	75 % (2017)	-	50 %

Notes: I Input; II Output; III Uptake; IV Development.

*, Mandatory Executive Director KPIs.

Publishing (No 5) in early 2020 included a number of 2019 publications, which resulted in a rate slightly below target for the year.

With regard to indicators (No 6), a review of Eionet core data flows is under way as part of the Eionet modernisation. At the same time, the EEA is working to improve the analytical and communication value of its indicators. The outcome of both of these processes will be discussed by the EEA Management Board in September 2021.

Fewer hours have been recoded against learning and development (No 15). Following the need for teleworking due to COVID-19, the EEA quickly offered online sessions. However, online learning and development sessions, out of necessity, tend to be of a shorter duration, which may be a contributing factor.

Regarding audit compliance (No 17), in the European Court of Auditors' report for the financial year 2019, the annex with the follow-up of the previous year's observations shows that two out of four recommendations have been closed. Although the two remaining recommendations have been addressed, they have yet to be reviewed by the European Court of Auditors; this will be done under the review of the accounts of the financial year 2020.

1.1 Informing policy implementation (SA1)

SA1.1 Air pollution and noise

Objectives

- To update publications and web services addressing air quality, air pollutant emissions and noise in support of relevant legislation, including the annual *Air quality in Europe* report, the European Air Quality Index, the National Emission reduction Commitment (NEC) Directive status report, the EU Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP) Convention inventory report and environmental noise assessments.

- To maintain support to countries for the reporting of data flows.
- To support countries with the development of a new data reporting model for noise aligned with Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (Inspire) requirements.
- To further improve the accessibility of data for key stakeholders and the wider public.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the areas of air pollution and noise by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	3	3
	Core data flows	3	3
	Eionet meetings	3	3
	Total key activities	9	9

Highlights for 2020

Regarding work on air quality, in spring, the EEA responded to the conditions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic by producing a viewer documenting the impact of lockdown measures on air quality in European cities. The EEA supported the Commission in tracking implementation of air quality legislation through a range of assessments, including the *2020 Air quality in Europe* report, which documented the status of air quality and related health impacts and assessed the effect of COVID-19 lockdown measures on air pollutant concentrations, as well as the indicator on the exceedance of air quality standards in Europe and updated country factsheets on air pollution. With the aim of making air quality information more accessible to the public, the EEA

maintained the European Air Quality Index, ran a joint citizen science project with the Environmental Protection Network, CleanAir@School, and published a report on assessing citizen science through air quality.

The EEA has supported member countries with the reporting of air pollutant emissions data under the EU NEC Directive and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP Convention). The EEA delivered the EU emissions inventory under the LRTAP Convention, as well as the annual briefing on reporting status under the NEC Directive. Synergies across measures to reduce emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases were also explored.

Work on noise included the provision of an updated assessment of the impacts of exposure to environmental noise on health in the *Environmental noise in Europe 2020 report*, publication of a briefing on estimating the health impacts of exposure to environmental noise, and finalisation of the Inspire-compliant noise data model.

In terms of interactions with the Eionet network, the EEA adapted to the 2020 working conditions and delivered webinars for our national reference centres (NRCs) on air quality, mitigation of air pollution, climate change and noise. In terms of networking activities, the EEA supported the European Commission, including relevant EU committee and working group meetings, and engaged with external stakeholders such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the European Network of the Heads of Environment Protection Agencies' (EPA Network's) Expert Panel on Noise and UNECE. The EEA delivered on its role as co-chair of the UNECE LRTAP Convention's Task Force on emission inventories and projections.

SA1.2 Industrial pollution

Objectives

- To support the EEA member countries and the European Commission with the implementation of reporting obligations under the EU Registry on Industrial Sites and integrated reporting on large combustion plants (LCPs) and the European Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (E-PRTR) for refineries, solvent installations and waste incinerators under the Industrial Emission Directive (IED), under Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury, and on emissions from medium combustion plants under Directive (EU) 2015/2193.
- To publish assessment products addressing the environmental pressures from industrial facilities.
- To improve the accessibility of data for key stakeholders and the wider public through an updated E-PRTR website.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the area of emissions from industrial sources by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicator

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Core data flows	1	1
	Total	1	1

Highlights for 2020

The year 2020 saw consolidation of the investments made to streamline reporting on industrial emissions, a process that started in 2014 and that has now delivered a joint electronic reporting platform for the E-PRTR, the IED and the inventory on LCPs. The new reporting tools are fully functional; countries have progressed, across the board, to reporting according to the new system, and the data can now be analysed jointly, creating more relevant assessments as a result. These new capacities are contributing to the ongoing reviews of policies in this area, led by the European Commission.

Additionally, the EEA has supported the European Commission and member countries on other reporting activities. Reporting is either finalised or ongoing for Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury, for emissions from medium combustion plants under Directive (EU) 2015/2193 and on compliance with the 'bubble approach' for mineral oil refineries under the IED. The EEA is also supporting the Energy Community Treaty, a key tool of pre-accession and EU neighbourhood mechanisms, in the implementation of reporting on combustion plants and chairing its Environment Task Force. These efforts are linked to the follow-up of important policy objectives, mainly the zero pollution ambition agenda, as well as international EU commitments.

On the knowledge aspects and their communication, the EEA has invested in two main strands of work in 2020. First, the new Industrial Emissions Portal, a website replacing the current E-PRTR, has been developed and was launched for beta-testing by all countries at the end of 2020. The website will be launched for the broader public in the first quarter of 2021. Second, the EEA has used the reported data to update environment, health and economic externalities arising from industrial sites, a piece of knowledge that will be released as an EEA publication in the first half of 2021.

This strategic area now takes a completely different strategic focus, where decarbonisation and health aspects will be paramount. The EEA is supporting several policy processes around these, namely the E-PRTR Regulation and the IED impact assessments.

SA1.3 Climate change mitigation, energy and transport

Objectives

- To follow up and support the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris Agreement and the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.
- To support the monitoring, reporting and assessment of Member States' and EU greenhouse gas emissions and projections, as well as their climate change mitigation policies and measures (PAMs) under the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, including through the e-platform for reporting and dissemination, and to publish updated datasets and information.
- To support reporting under Article 21 reporting under the Emissions Trading System (ETS) Directive.
- To support company-based reporting on ozone depleting substances (ODS) and fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) and to publish updated datasets.
- To assess progress towards short- and long-term climate change mitigation and energy targets in Europe, and to assess the role of climate and energy policies and socio-economic trends in achieving these.
- To assess progress towards transport and environment objectives, including the Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM) indicators and report.
- To support reporting of CO₂ from new passenger cars and new vans, including implementation of new data flows for the monitoring of CO₂ from new heavy-duty vehicles and to publish reported datasets.
- To support reporting under the Fuel Quality Directive and to publish reported datasets.

Expected result

To support and inform policy developments and implementation in the areas of climate change mitigation, energy and transport by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	7	7
	Core set indicators	5	5
	Core data flows	4	4
	Eionet meetings	2	1
	Total	18	17

Highlights for 2020

In 2020, the EEA directly supported the implementation of the European Green Deal and the 2030 policy framework on climate and energy through several activities. The EEA provided input to the elaboration of implementing acts under the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action and, in coordination with Commission services, made preparations for the first reporting, via Reportnet 3.0, of climate-related information under the Governance Regulation in 2021. The EEA also supported the 2021-2030 target-setting exercise under the Effort Sharing Regulation through the coordination of the review of national greenhouse gas data.

Regarding transport, in addition to handling the annual reporting of CO₂ emissions of new light-duty vehicles (cars and vans) and helping determine new targets for 2025 and 2030, the EEA collected the first data on CO₂ emissions from heavy-duty vehicles and started making preparations for future reporting on real-world CO₂ emissions.

These reporting activities supported EEA assessments of progress towards climate and energy targets, reflected in EEA indicator updates and the annual *Trends and projections* report.

As regards knowledge developments, the EEA carried out a number of assessments relevant to the transition towards a climate-neutral society: quantified benefits of circular economy actions in the building and the agrifood sectors, environmental co-benefits of renewable energy deployment, joint cross-border cooperation on renewable energy and comparison of the greenhouse gas intensity of different transport modes.

Despite the unusual context preventing physical meetings, 2020 was also a year of intense cooperation and networking activities. This was illustrated by the cooperation established with other EU agencies to work on specific outputs, such as the preparation of the first *European maritime transport environmental report* with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and a joint briefing on the social aspect of the energy transition with Eurofound. The EEA also initiated a dialogue between national climate change advisory bodies across Europe and held a successful 2-day webinar with representatives of these pools of knowledge on national climate policies across Europe.

SA1.4 Climate change adaptation and land use, land use change and forestry

Objectives

- To follow up and support the implementation of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement.
- To support the monitoring, reporting and assessment of Member States' information on climate change adaptation under the Monitoring Mechanism Regulation and the Regulation on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action.
- To publish updated indicators and assessments on climate change impacts, vulnerability, and adaptation and disaster risk reduction.
- To update, improve and enhance use of the European Climate Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT).
- To support implementation of new data flows under the Regulation on land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF), including the use of data from the Copernicus land monitoring service (CLMS).
- To further improve the accessibility of information for key stakeholders and the wider public.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the area of climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	2	2
	Core set indicators	4	4
	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	7	7

Highlights for 2020

In 2020, the new and more ambitious EU adaptation strategy was drafted and was launched in February 2021. The aim of the strategy is to support Europe to reach climate resilience objectives by 2050, in particular developing a climate-resilient society, fully adapted to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Moreover, in 2020 the mission on adaptation and societal transformation⁽⁶⁾ under the Horizon Europe programme was proposed with implementation of the mission starting in 2021. The aim of the mission is to accelerate transition to a climate-prepared and -resilient Europe with a particular focus on subnational- and local-level adaptation.

The EEA has contributed to the preparation of adaptation activities by supporting the European Commission and EEA member countries with data, indicators and assessments on climate change adaptation. Moreover, the EEA has started working on developing new and innovative products to increase the implementation of adaptation at various governance levels and increase knowledge on the topic. Among several EEA products addressing adaptation and LULUCF in 2020, the most notable were:

- Maps presenting a story on how Europe will be affected by key climate hazards, such as droughts, floods, forest fires and sea level rise, during the 21st century and beyond. These maps use different greenhouse gas emissions scenarios and climate models.
- Two reports, *Urban adaptation in Europe and Monitoring and evaluating of national adaptation policies throughout the policy cycle* were published, which track the progress made in adaptation at urban and national level, respectively. The reports highlight the urgent need to change the way we

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe/missions-horizon-europe/adaptation-climate-change-including-societal-transformation_en

plan and construct our cities in the changing climate and that concerted action at all governance levels — European, national and local — is needed to increase climate resilience. Continuing unsustainable urban development will magnify the impacts of climate-related hazards.

- The European Climate and Health Observatory was developed together with the European Commission Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) and the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) and partner organisations. The observatory will be launched in early 2021 and aims to enhance knowledge development on climate and health and to provide existing information prepared by partners through one portal.
- The European Climate Data Explorer (ECDE) was prepared together with the Copernicus climate change service (C3S). The ECDE provides an interactive tool embedded in Climate-ADAPT that offers access to specific climate information and data to support the adaptation efforts at different levels in Europe. The ECDE provides access to a selection of climate indicators from the climate data store (CDS) of the C3S.

The visibility of and communication with the NRCs were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and the planned meetings and events were conducted online.

SA1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems

Objectives

To deliver contributions supporting the EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (BD 2020) evaluation (specifically Target 2/Action 5) and the BD 2030 design.

To publish on bathing water quality in Europe, water and agriculture, and freshwater ecosystems (with an emphasis on hydromorphology aspects) in support of the evaluations and possible reviews of the water-related directives (Water Framework Directive (WFD)/Floods Directive (FD), Environmental Quality Standards (EQS) Directive, Groundwater Directive, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD), Bathing Water Directive (BWD)).

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the areas of water management, water resources and ecosystems, and related cross-cutting issues (e.g. biodiversity, public health, climate change) by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	2	2
	Core set indicators	3	3
	Core data flows	5	5
	Eionet meetings	1	0
	Total		11

Highlights for 2020

The 2020 deliverables and activities constitute a key contribution to the implementation of EU policies in the water domain, and specifically support the ongoing evaluation and reviews of the various directives. In addition, they provide information and support to critical elements of the European Green Deal, and particularly in connection with the restoration and protection targets of the BD 2030, the farm-to-fork strategy and the zero pollution action plan (e.g. the water, agriculture and food nexus; the barriers in European rivers and the 20 000 km of free-flowing rivers target; urban waste water and bathing water quality in relation to pollution in Europe). The Water Information System for Europe (WISE)-State of Environment (SoE) data call consolidates the data available for indicators and assessments, which are increasingly shared and made available through integrated, multi-purpose and user-friendly tools (e.g. data and map viewers, story maps). The support to the core set indicator (CSI) work continued to be extensive in 2020.

SA1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime activities

Objectives

- To deliver contributions supporting the EU BD 2020 evaluation (specifically Target 2/Action 5, Target 4) and the BD 2030 design.
- To initiate and scope work on the 2022 Marine environment trends and related EEA products, building on the analysis of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) 2018 reporting and *Marine messages II* (2019), to support the evaluation of the MSFD in 2023 and the implementation of the wider policy context relevant for the sustainable use of Europe's seas.

- To support an ecosystem-based approach to the management and sustainable use of European seas, to strengthen work on the land-sea continuum and the blue economy, particularly with regard to mapping human activities at sea, environmental concerns within maritime spatial planning, assessing cumulative pressures and impacts, and the capacity of Europe's seas to supply ecosystem services.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the areas of marine and coastal environment and maritime activities by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	2	2
	Core set indicators	1	0
	Core data flows	3	2
	Total	6	4

Highlights for 2020

The 2020 deliverables and activities constitute a key contribution to the implementation of EU policies in the marine domain, and specifically support the assessment of the MSFD implementation in Europe and the MSFD review planned for 2024. The release of *Marine messages II*, together with the supporting thematic assessments, is instrumental in that context and paves the way towards integrated assessments across the marine, freshwater and biodiversity domains, and the implementation of ecosystem-based management.

Work has been initiated to support critical elements of the European Green Deal, and particularly in connection with the restoration and protection targets of the BD 2030 and the zero pollution action plan within the context of the blue sustainable economy/integrated maritime policy.

In addition, the support to the MSFD CSI work continued to be extensive in 2020. WISE-Marine has been further developed and includes a set of new tools that greatly facilitate the access and sharing of marine data, including those reported under the MSFD. The close cooperation with the Copernicus marine environment monitoring service (CMEMS) allows the use of

satellite observation data and products to a larger extent and will increasingly support member country reporting and the availability of near-real time data and information.

Finally, the EEA-EMSA joint *European maritime transport environmental report* undertook a significant consultation in 2020 and is planned for publication in Q2-2021.

SA1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests

Objectives

- In support of the implementation of the Nature Directives and the BD 2020, to finalise the assessments for the *State of nature in the EU* report, including information from the Invasive Alien Species Regulation.
- In further support of the final evaluation of the BD 2020 and preparations by the Commission of BD 2030 (European Green Deal), to publish the EEA contributions to the EU-level integrated ecosystem assessment under the mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services (MAES), focusing on the condition of ecosystems, the integration of nature data, ecosystem accounts and specific thematic assessments on ecosystems like wetlands. Furthermore, to update the streamlining of European biodiversity indicators (SEBI) and related indicators as needed and upgrade biodiversity-relevant information systems (e.g. the Biodiversity Information System for Europe (BISE) and the European Nature Information System (EUNIS)).
- In support of the establishment of the post-2020 biodiversity policy and preparations by the Commission of BD 2030 (European Green Deal, including the farm-to-fork strategy), to develop knowledge support work on ecosystem-based management including aspects of forest and agriculture activities and climate change adaptation. The development of future objectives and targets for biodiversity policies take into account the work on planetary boundaries and the preparations for the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) by November 2020.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the area of biodiversity and ecosystems (natural capital), including agriculture and forest ecosystems, by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	8	6
	Core set indicators	4	4
	Core data flows	3	3
	Eionet meetings	3	2
	Total	18	15

Highlights for 2020

The EEA's deliverables in the area culminated in its successful participation in Green Week, with many elements of EEA work presented. The EEA's *State of nature in the EU* report was a specific focus, summarising the results of the implementation of the Nature Directives and leading to conclusions on the main impacts and necessary measures in terms of agricultural management. The EEA's work on protected areas (Natura 2000 and the Common Database on Designated Areas, CDDA) was presented in a digital report as part of the new upgraded version of BISE. BISE was an essential contribution by the EEA to the Commission's Green Week presentation of the Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity.

The MAES assessment, presented by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the EEA during Green Week, helps to track progress on ecosystem health and the integrated assessment of specific ecosystem types and of related biodiversity and climate change goals.

Intense planning discussions with the European Commission Directorate-General for the Environment (DG ENV) on the BD 2030 helped to effectively shape the future work programme in this area and to identify new, more systemic dimensions on the outputs delivered during Green Week. Elements of this new focus were presented with the following briefings: *Management effectiveness in the EU's Natura 2000 network of protected areas*, *Protected areas in the Eastern Partnership countries* and *Building a coherent Trans-European Nature Network*.

For the ongoing Commission work on the evaluation of the BD 2020, the EEA's contributions were delivered on time along with the indicator and assessments. SEBI indicators were updated to deliver progress reporting on many of the targets of the BD 2020.

The work on sector policies (forest and agriculture) and their impact on biodiversity has continued to be a substantial part of the work, as well as part of the contribution to the important sustainable finance initiative. With additional resources for the work in agriculture, the output in this part of the work area is back on track.

The Eionet cooperation was organised through a series of well-received webinars on biodiversity and forests, to be followed by agriculture in 2021.

SA1.8 Urban, land use and soil

Objectives

- To develop and publish geospatial indicators for land system assessments and mapping relevant land use aspects of agriculture, forests, LULUCF accounting and climate change adaptation based on CLMS, land use and coverage frame surveys (LUCAS) and other land-related data.
- To develop and publish geospatial indicators, in support of natural capital and ecosystem assessments, and to develop soil functional assessments addressing soil condition and land degradation relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- To advance geospatial and socio-economic data integration for the urban and peri-urban land systems and support urban sustainability assessments.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the areas of urban, land use and soil by means of data, information/indicators and assessments.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
	Eionet meetings	2	1
	Total	2	1

Highlights for 2020

The work area of urban, land use and soil has a pronounced cross-cutting character and supports several EU priorities. This year, support has been given to preparation for the revision of the EU soil thematic strategy and the launch of the EU Soil Observatory, as well as actions under the BD 2030 nature restoration plan and preparation for the zero pollution action plan. Support has also been given to the sustainable land use partnership under the urban agenda for the EU. Much of this was delivered in cooperation with the European Topic Centre on Urban, Land and Soil Systems (ETC/ULS), which, besides land and soil topics, supported the EEA work areas of ecosystems, agriculture, forests, LULUCF, adaptation to climate change and urban sustainability.

Making use of Copernicus land monitoring data, several land- and soil-related indicators were prepared and two new indicators were published. Another Copernicus-based product was Corine Land Cover country fact sheets for 2018 and 2012-2018 change analysis for the EEA-38 and the UK, which for the first time has been implemented as a system of interactive dashboards. The Eionet workplan was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown: the NRC on Soil meeting was held as planned, but the NRC on Land use and spatial planning meeting was cancelled, despite being fully prepared and scheduled for April.

An EEA briefing was published on land cover accounts — as an approach to geospatial environmental accounting — which is necessary for producing transparent and reliable statistics and trends in land use change, underpinning assessments of ecosystem extent and condition. Another briefing on nitrogen balances was developed and prepared for publication. A publication on soil quality indicators and thresholds was prepared and progress was achieved on European soil condition assessments.

The work planned on the land systems portal was reorganised into preparation for a more strategic land information system, based on the CLMS portal. Part of this work area is to manage the ETC/ULS consortium, and its action plan 2021 was prepared.

SA1.9 Waste and material resources

Objectives

- To produce policy-relevant assessments on waste and material resources to support EU policy initiatives on waste and the circular economy.
- To build EEA-Eionet capacities on waste, material resource efficiency and the circular economy in line with EU policy priorities, ensuring connections with decarbonisation and bio-based economy activities.

Expected result

To support and inform policy development and implementation in the area of waste and material resources by means of data, information/indicators and assessments, in close cooperation with Eurostat.

Highlights for 2020

The new circular economy action plan (CEAP), resulting from the European Green Deal, establishes a range of specific measures in the area of waste and material flows. In 2020, the

EEA focused on supporting implementation of EU waste policy in line with its legal responsibilities, as well as consolidating knowledge on specific aspects of the new policy orientation on waste resulting from the CEAP.

Supporting waste policy implementation, the EEA has developed a new methodology for the implementation of the so-called early warning mechanism. This mechanism aims to identify countries at risk of not meeting the targets established for specific waste streams in the Waste Framework Directive and related pieces of EU legislation. This process was conducted in cooperation with countries through a collaborative process. The EEA also has an obligation to compile information and support the evaluation of waste prevention programmes. This involved several activities in 2020: (1) the drafting, also in cooperation with countries, of the Eionet report *Evaluation of waste prevention programmes*; (2) the finalisation of the first policy evaluation of waste prevention policies (to be published in early 2021); and (3) the preparation of country profiles (postponed to 2021, as many countries are still in the process of adopting them).

The EEA also supported Western Balkan countries in waste-related activities, financed by the European Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) funds. These support activities are similar in nature to the two legal mandates described above.

The EEA has assessed the latest knowledge addressing several waste streams and published specific products, such as a report on biowaste management and treatment in Europe, a dedicated EEA briefing on the issue of biodegradable plastics, an EEA briefing highlighting the emerging challenges of waste management in Europe with respect to the potential for and limits of recycling, an EEA briefing on the role of digitalisation in waste management and an EEA briefing on construction and demolition waste.

Work is ongoing for further assessments to be published in 2022, for example on the environmental aspects of critical raw materials and the role of waste management, the functioning of secondary raw material markets, and interactions between the key-product value chains of the CEAP and waste aspects.

On networking and outreach, the EEA increased the attention given to this area while being constrained by the conditions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Eionet NRC on Waste met in a series of online workshops during the year. The waste team also participated more frequently in online workshops and conferences and organised EEA-branded events around the knowledge products referred to above. A recent example is the side event to the World Circular Economy Forum on the circular economy in the construction sector.

1.2 Assessing systemic challenges (SA2)

SA2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment

Objectives

- To provide support to EEA member countries, the European Commission and other partners on the CEAP through assessments and stakeholder interactions.
- To assess links between the low carbon and circular economy policy agendas, with a particular focus on the possible synergies and trade-offs between greenhouse gas emissions and circular economy approaches.

Expected result

To inform progress and identify opportunities to improve the environment in Europe, and indirectly other regions of the world, in accordance with circular, green and bio-economy perspectives.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	1	0
	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	2	1

Highlights

The new CEAP calls for knowledge investments to promote the transition to greater circularity. A first element is to improve the monitoring of precisely how these policies are transforming current economic systems. The EEA is co-leading with the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, and in the framework of the Heads of EPA Network, the so-called Bellagio process, to improve the existing tools and knowledge available to monitor the circular economy in Europe. After intense discussion with participating national experts, a set of principles and additional technical material was developed and endorsed. To reinforce these processes, the EEA ran a collaborative process with Eionet countries to compile best practice examples in circular economy monitoring. Three online workshops took place, and an Eionet report summarising this knowledge is planned for publication in 2021. Work to strengthen EEA indicators on the circular

economy and sustainable consumption and production was also commissioned in 2020.

A second knowledge element related to the CEAP is key-product value chains, systems that are particularly relevant in the transition to greater circularity in Europe. In that regard, a series of analyses were carried out, in some cases resulting in EEA publications in relation to (1) plastics, (2) textiles, (3) electronics, (4) construction, (5) business models and (6) the interface across climate mitigation and circular economy agendas. Specific details are provided in the outputs table in Annex 9.

On networks, partnerships and outreach, links with experts in the Eionet NRC on Circular economy and resource efficiency were considerably strengthened during the year. The NRC workshop on the circular economy took place at the end of November. Examples of ongoing activities beyond Eionet include the EEA's participation as an observer in the coordination group of the Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, providing support in the drafting of the upcoming *World resource outlook report*, authored by the International Resource Panel, and the planning of a series of activities in cooperation with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation. Additionally, a process to produce a joint report with the JRC on the interface of raw material supply started in 2020 and is expected to conclude in 2022.

On the macro-economic aspects of sustainability transitions, the first analysis has been produced and several webinars organised by the EEA and the European Topic Centre on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy (ETC/WMGE) to explore in more depth aspects such as long-term financial and fiscal aspects, demographic change and consumption implications and different modelling outcomes.

SA2.2 Environment, human health and well-being (?)

Objectives

- To provide support to initiatives to protect the environment and human health and well-being through, inter alia, performing relevant assessments, contributing to the Human Biomonitoring for Europe (HBM4EU) initiative and supporting the European Information Platform for Chemical Monitoring (IPCHEM).
- To strengthen EEA and Eionet partnerships in the area of environment and health, including chemicals, to deliver an improved understanding of exposure and impacts on human health and Europe's ecosystems.

(?) The activities in this work area on the Human Biomonitoring Initiative for Europe (HBM4EU) are financed through a Horizon 2020 grant agreement between the European Commission and a consortium of 38 partners including the EEA (with the German Environment Agency, UBA, as lead partner).

Expected result

To provide data, information and assessments on environmental pressures on and risks to human health and well-being, contributing also to the development of a broader framing of environment and human health interactions (cross-cutting work across SA1.1, SA1.2, SA1.5 and SA2.2), including exposure assessment.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	1	1

Highlights for 2020

In September, the EEA published a report entitled *Healthy environments, healthy lives*, reviewing the evidence for how the environment both supports and impacts health and well-being in Europe and documenting the role of social status in environmental health. The meeting of the NRC on Environment and health was held in November via webinar, with participants receiving updates on EEA work and on that of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, as well as presenting new evidence from the national perspective and discussing future areas of EEA-Eionet collaboration on environment and health.

The year 2020 saw a range of activities on chemicals. This included production of a briefing on approaches that are safe and sustainable by design, published in February 2021. A series of webinar exchanges on chemicals were co-organised with the Eionet ad hoc expert group on chemicals, focused on understanding Eionet priorities for exchanges on chemicals, as well as reviewing evidence of human and environmental exposure to chemicals. The EEA delivered on its role as coordinator of the modules on human biomonitoring and environmental monitoring under the IPCHEM, including work to bring in new datasets and further develop the platform's functionalities. In addition, the EEA provided support to DG ENV in the development of the chemicals strategy for sustainability and the associated staff working documents.

In terms of partnerships, the EEA engaged in exchanges with the European Chemicals Agency and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), with the aim of identifying common work streams and planning joint work on chemicals envisaged for 2021. This included EEA participation in the Emerging Risk Expert Network (EREN) led by EFSA. In addition, the EEA delivered its role under the Horizon 2020 project, HBM4EU, leading work to communicate and disseminate project results and leading a strategy to prioritise future research activities. The results of the prioritisation work were fed into the ongoing development of a proposed future partnership

on the assessment of chemical risks (PARC) envisaged under Horizon Europe.

SA2.3 Megatrends and transitions

Objectives

- To further improve understanding of the ecological and social dimensions of system change for sustainability transitions towards long-term EU policy visions and sustainability objectives, and improve understanding of different pathways and barriers and options for more coherent policymaking.
- To maintain and develop the knowledge base on drivers of change at different geographical levels with specific attention on emerging trends and issues.
- In support of integrated assessment, to develop a systemic approach for analysing and monitoring implications for environment and policymaking.
- To implement co-creation and co-production activities especially with Eionet, DG ENV and JRC.
- To consider an urban/cities dimension/implications of the above points.
- To strengthen the NRCs on Forward-looking information and services (FLIS) and SoE interactions to develop joint products and outcomes.

Expected result

To measure, monitor and report on long-term trends and sustainability transitions based on established EU policy visions to 2050 using appropriate foresight methods and key indicators.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	1	1
	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	2	2

Highlights for 2020

There were four main strands of activities undertaken during the year: (1) putting to work knowledge related to *The European environment — State and outlook 2020* report (SOER 2020)

on systemic challenges and systemic transitions; (2) moving from problem-focused knowledge to solutions-oriented knowledge; (3) responding to increasing EU policy demands for forward-looking information; and (4) framing new knowledge needs for coming years.

COVID-19 brought challenges and opportunities; it affected progress with work in some areas, while it enabled more frequent online interactions with Eionet and other partners. The launch of the European Green Deal in December 2019 also led to redirecting some efforts, e.g. on food systems.

Established knowledge has informed interactions with the European Commission on European Green Deal priorities and the Strategic Foresight initiative, with particular interest in knowledge around future outlooks, the socio-economic dimensions of sustainability transitions and how global drivers of change are affecting Europe, including key systems of production and consumption.

A key focus has been to ensure that knowledge investments since 2015 were increasingly utilised to help inform European Green Deal and Eighth Environment Action Plan (8th EAP) developments, as well as cooperation internationally with organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that have shared interests in sustainability transitions.

Based on the publication of the *Drivers of change* report, selected analytical elements were pooled into the selected narratives for change, the first of them addressing 'growth without economic growth'. This marks a shift to more action-oriented knowledge (see also SA2.4) in support of the EU policy agenda, providing insights on how societies need to move beyond established economic paradigms if transitions to sustainability are to be realised in the coming decades.

There has been an explosion of interest in the use of forward-looking information and methods as decision-makers recognise the importance of mapping pathways to achieve the long-term goals inherent to the European Green Deal. The EEA and Eionet NRC FLIS contributed to EU policies with insights from almost 15 years of work in this domain. Three co-creation projects were put in place between the EEA and NRC FLIS, including work on horizon scanning and sustainability and 2050 solution scenarios that will inform the European Green Deal and the 8th EAP in the coming years. In assessment terms, a joint project between NRC FLIS and NRC SoE will contribute to better utilisation of foresight studies, including at national level.

New knowledge developments take time and so a key focus during the year has been to anticipate knowledge needs and investments for the coming 3-4 years in support of EU policy

priorities and the SOER 2025. Discussions have focused on improved knowledge on systemic challenges, macro-economic dimensions of transitions, foresight for action and how social innovations can support transition objectives.

SA2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting

Objectives

- To review SOER 2020 and its implications for the design and assessments needed for SOER 2025.
- To further improve understanding and use of integrated assessments to support sustainability and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
- To further develop knowledge, learning, methodologies and tools, especially related to complexity and uncertainty analysis and sustainability transitions monitoring.
- To continue to design, develop and use stakeholder interactions to provide robust, action-oriented integrated assessments.
- To continue to contribute EEA information to strategic environmental policy processes (e.g. Seventh Environment Action Programme (7th EAP); post-2020 environmentally relevant policy frameworks; Environmental Implementation Review).
- To continue the reset of EEA indicators.
- To continue to contribute to the EU sustainable finance and fiscal agenda including the emerging Platform on Sustainable Finance — in close cooperation with the Communications programme of the EEA (COM), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs), the European Parliament and Member States.

Expected result

Based on the conclusions of the 2020 *Environmental sustainability in cities (ESIC) report*, to identify the scope of key future topics deserving specific assessments and urban/city interlinkages with the points above, e.g. sustainable construction and housing.

To keep under review the state of, trends in and prospects for the environment in Europe in order to inform environmental strategies and policies, including sustainable development policies and goals, with a comprehensive and integrated knowledge base.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	3	2
	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	4	3

Highlights for 2020

The SOER 2020 was referenced in the European Green Deal and acknowledged as a key underpinning of the 8th EAP proposal of the European Commission in October 2020. The EEA also engaged fully in discussions on the monitoring framework proposed under the 8th EAP and continued to support developments under the Environmental Implementation Review and the annual EU Semester process with indicators and insights.

COVID-19 drastically curtailed opportunities to disseminate the SOER 2020 in countries and elsewhere as originally planned. The upside for the EEA was more time to reflect on the outcome of SOER 2020 and plan for SOER 2025, in line with European Green Deal and 8th EAP priorities. The trajectory for knowledge developments for the coming 3-4 years is now clearer and has informed investments for 2021.

The report *Is Europe living within the limits of our planet?*, published in April, engendered wide interest across EU institutions and helped inform discussions around relevant European Green Deal strategies and the 8th EAP proposal.

On urban sustainability, a report entitled *What is driving cities environmental change?* was finalised for publication. Three further outputs — an overall integrated assessment, a nexus analysis and a methodological report — were prepared for publication, in cooperation with a bespoke urban stakeholders group.

On indicators, the EEA revamped its existing indicators to improve their look and communication, while new indicators were added in line with new policy priorities, especially the European Green Deal. The EEA indicators also fed into multiple policy processes, including EU monitoring of the SDGs and a new dashboard under the Strategic Foresight Initiative. A new system will be launched in 2021 reflecting these efforts, and in time for discussions on the monitoring framework envisaged under the Commission's proposal for the 8th EAP.

On supporting the EU sustainable finance agenda, the EEA co-authored the climate taxonomy report launched in March with substantial policy impact and market attention. The EU Taxonomy Regulation came into force, with the EEA being a

permanent member of the Platform on Sustainable Finance. The EEA has engaged in the platform across several work streams, and support will intensify in 2021 with new staff recruited during 2020.

The knowledge for action report has taken longer than expected to realise. There are several reasons for this, most notably the longer time it has taken to reframe EEA knowledge in line with the European Green Deal, 8th EAP and EEA-Eionet strategy. The EEA has also invested in better understanding how knowledge influences action and more time has been needed to determine how to best reflect this research in the report in line with EU policy priorities.

1.3 Knowledge co-creation, sharing and use (SA3)

SA3.1 Networking and partnerships

Objectives

- In conjunction with national focal points (NFPs), to continue strengthening cooperation and communication within Eionet, and between Eionet and the EEA, the EEA Management Board, and the EEA Scientific Committee (SC), as well as with the Environmental Knowledge Community (EKC) and other relevant actors and networks.
- To continue building up relations and partnerships beyond Eionet, including continuing to coordinate EPA Network activities by hosting the secretariat and through being a member of the network, as well as focusing on partnerships with business and the research community, and through citizen science.
- Within the EEA framework for international engagement, to provide knowledge to and engage in international processes at global and regional levels. This includes global processes within the United Nations (UN) Environment Programme and the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) as regional Pan-European, Arctic and Mediterranean processes.
- To support the adaptation of relevant reporting frameworks to underpin the monitoring and review process of the UN SDGs, in cooperation with Eionet, DG ENV, the European Commission Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), DG CLIMA and the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union, Audit and Anti-Fraud (DG ESTAT).
- To continue to develop and operationalise the EEAcademy, including regular lectures, summer and winter schools and other relevant activities.

Expected result

To improve the sharing of data, information, knowledge and assessments at European, national and global levels together with Eionet, and to broaden cooperation with stakeholders and networks beyond Eionet.

At the NFP/Eionet meeting in October 2019, it was agreed that an Eionet working group would be established on the modernisation of Eionet. This working group would work throughout 2020, in close cooperation with the development of the EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030.

The EEA will improve possibilities for remote participation in meetings.

Work will be initiated to update roles, including the scope and functioning of NRCs and European Topic Centres (ETCs).

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Eionet meetings	3	3
	Total	3	3

Highlights for 2020

In 2020, three NFP/Eionet plenary meetings were organised, two of them online. These were complemented by numerous webinars on topics specific to NFP/Eionet groups.

Throughout the year several key topics were discussed with the NFP/Eionet network. Key discussions were related to the preparation of the new EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030, modernisation of Eionet, including reviews of the structure and responsibilities of NRCs, Eionet core data flows and the review of ETCs. From a broader EU policy perspective, attention was paid to the European Green Deal and related strategies and legislative proposals and to Copernicus developments.

The discussions on the strategy included a thorough consultation process with the NFP/Eionet network. The feedback from these consultations, incorporation of the comments and regular discussions contributed to strong Eionet support for the EEA-Eionet strategy and its smooth adoption by the Management Board in December 2020.

At the beginning of the year, the Eionet modernisation working group was established. Its main objective was to discuss and prepare a proposal for a future strengthening of the network, addressing strategic objectives of the new EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030. The modernisation working group, co-chaired

by NFPs and the EEA, met online frequently to discuss various aspects of the Eionet review. Its work was regularly reported to NFP/Eionet plenary. The focus ranged from a review of the structure and functioning of Eionet, through data flow coordination to the development of a full strategy implementation timeline. Later in the year specific groups co-led by NFPs and the EEA were established to discuss the future functions and structure of NRCs and review the content and structure of the Eionet core data flows.

The work of the NFP/Eionet groups was affected by COVID-19 and most activities had to be converted to online interactions. The higher frequency of plenary and working group webinars, the easy accessibility allowing more Eionet colleagues to join webinars, and the general availability of EEA and Eionet colleagues across Europe provided a different network dynamic, and, to some extent, compensated for the lack of physical meetings.

The year 2020 was a time for pausing and reflecting for the EEAcademy, with events cancelled owing to 'COVID-19 and discussions focused on positioning the academy within the new strategy and its increased focus on learning and capacity building across EEA-Eionet.

SA3.2 Technical systems development

Objectives

- To finalise the implementation of Reportnet 3.0 in support of the European Commission action plan on streamlining environmental reporting.
- To support further improvement and maintenance of EU policy-specific thematic information systems hosted by the EEA, i.e. for cross-cutting assessments and for accessibility to a wider public.
- To establish a new EEA information and communications technology (ICT) strategy, including the Eionet interface.
- To maintain the information technology (IT) applications used by the EEA and Eionet to support their monitoring, data, information, assessment and reporting activities.
- To provide helpdesk support on EU policy-specific information systems used by internal and external stakeholders.

Expected result

EEA IT systems continually meet the needs of the organisation and its stakeholders, enabling it to efficiently implement the 2020 work programme.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	1	1

Highlights for 2020

Reportnet 3.0 was launched for production on time in July. This is a version with core functionality, and work continued throughout 2020 and into 2021 to implement additional features. While Reportnet 3.0 is being developed the EEA is still investing in Reportnet 2.0 maintenance, as it is expected to be several years before the old system can be retired. The improvements have been on stability, security and performance.

Development has been started on the next generation of the Indicator Management System. A study has been launched on the strengths and weaknesses of the current EEA web presence. E-PRTR was replaced with a new information portal for industrial emissions.

The EEA took over the ownership of the project on the Forest Information System for Europe (FISE) in January and launched the new platform in February. Since then, multiple feature and content improvements and refactoring of core components have been made to adapt it to the common EEA IT architecture. FISE now has monthly release cycles and clear version management.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a business continuity site was set up under Office 365 to be better able to communicate with staff. Existing plans to make teleworking easier for staff were sped up. Internal systems were made available via a web gateway, enforcing two-factor authentication in April, and in June the intranet website migrated to Office 365 replacing the business continuity site.

The Joint Environmental Data Infrastructure (JEDI) was redesigned to use cloud infrastructure. This means that a geographical dataset at 100-metre resolution that usually took 2 hours to process can now be performed in a couple of minutes.

SA3.3 Monitoring, data and information management

Objectives

- To support actions 3-10 of the EU action plan 2020 on streamlining environmental reporting, in line with the outcome of actions 1 and 2;
- Action 3: re-engineering data flow processes using the Reportnet 3.0 suite of tools;

- Action 4: developing and testing of tools for data harvesting at EU level;
- Action 5: developing guidance and promoting best practices for European and national information systems including better access to data;
- Action 6: promoting the full implementation of the Inspire Directive with priority geospatial datasets most relevant for the implementation and reporting of EU environmental legislation;
- Action 7: making better use of data generated through the Copernicus programme;
- Action 8: promoting the wider use of citizen science to complement environmental reporting;
- Action 9: improving cooperation in sharing and use of data gathered in other areas for the benefit of the environment, including the further development of the EKC data centres;
- Action 10: streamlining sharing and information management between the EU level and the international level.
- To manage the increasing amount of data and information services handled by the EEA and Eionet and improve the efficiency of existing data flows, quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) processes, indicator management, and map and graph production.
- To maintain the reporting obligations database (ROD) and Reportnet infrastructure.
- To strengthen the use of Europe's Group on Earth Observations (EuroGEO)/Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) data and information in support of EU environmental policy and decision-making in alignment with relevant GEO engagement priorities and through the reuse of information and data made available by the Copernicus programme.

Expected result

To ensure the availability, quality, accessibility and sustainability of monitoring, data, and information needed for the knowledge base, supporting environment and climate policies.

Highlights for 2020

The EEA has been supporting the implementation of the EU action plan. Emphasis has been on actions 3 and 6-10. Details are continuously reported to Eionet as part of the NFP/Eionet meetings.

The EEA discussed with EKC partners its potential contribution to the new Green Data Task Force, which the European Commission is proposing to establish in support of the European Green Deal. This work will build on the results achieved by the EKC Task Force on Data Centres, which is chaired by the EEA.

The Inspire alignment activities of e-reporting data flows are ongoing for the Environmental Noise Directive, among others.

The EEA supported the development of citizen science guidelines for monitoring and reporting, together with EKC partners. These guidelines are now published.

Several new datasets were registered in the EEA Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI), which currently includes 1 440 geospatial datasets. An internal SDI newsletter is keeping staff informed about the increasing number of data sources and new updates that are made available for monitoring and reporting.

The EEA is cooperating with Eurostat to ensure access to and use of the TomTom MultiNet transport network datasets for the purpose of updating the EEA land fragmentation index.

SA3.4 Communication, outreach and user analysis

Objectives

- To engage with stakeholders in outreach and dialogue.
- To improve website usability.
- To implement outreach activities for the SOER 2020.
- To prioritise outreach activities in line with the key highlights for 2020.

Expected result

To inform and engage in dialogue with key stakeholders and other users of EEA outputs around key messages and corporate communications.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	1	1
	Eionet meetings	1	1
	Total	2	2

Highlights for 2020

The 2020 work programme was delivered with very good results and a large number of EEA assessments were published. An in-depth stakeholder analysis study confirmed that EEA products are of high value to our stakeholders, demonstrating robust evidence and quality.

The EEA implemented online outreach activities and boosted innovative formats such as online launch events, 'ask an expert' series and debates, for example for the EEA reports *Healthy environment, healthy lives, State of nature in the EU, Urban adaptation in Europe* and *Monitoring and evaluating of national adaptation policies*.

The EEA achieved growing media coverage, increasingly in lead media and TV thanks to intense media relations. The EEA reached 25 626 media articles by the end of 2020, an impressive 80 % increase compared with 2019. Social media outreach also continued to grow, with a focus on LinkedIn in 2020, based on an increasing number of GIFs and videos, social media posts, dialogue activities and promotions. By the end of 2020, the EEA had reached 178 593 combined followers, a 56 % increase compared with 2019.

The 2020 photo competition, REDISCOVER Nature, received a record number of high-quality entries (> 2 800) and the finalists were recognised by the Commission, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and *The Guardian*. The 2020 NRC for Communication meeting was well designed and implemented with great feedback as a truly interactive online event.

A COVID-19 project was designed and successfully implemented. It included the briefing '*COVID-19 and Europe's environment: Impacts of a global pandemic*, published in November. A database provides access to research projects and studies provided by EEA networks. A series of online debates to contribute to knowledge and policy debates around COVID-19, its impacts and a sustainable recovery attracted thousands of views on social media.

A web analysis resulted in a proposal to significantly change the EEA's online presence. A product review will deliver a new approach to product planning and management. A cross-agency project to improve the EEA indicators continued with a significant rewrite of the indicators. Innovations in visualisation and layout continued. Work on a new EEA-Eionet communication framework and on updating the EEA corporate branding kicked off in 2020 and will be finalised in 2021.

SOER 2020 featured at various events led by the EEA, Eionet and third parties. The country outreach was affected by the outbreak of COVID-19; however, 14 Eionet-led events organised in nine countries did take place.

The intranet upgrade and contributions of the internal incidence response team, with constant proactive intranet updates, were highly appreciated by staff.

SA3.5 Quality management and operational services

Objectives

- To provide an EEA risk management framework and EEA quality management system in line with total quality management principles, and other relevant EU practices and international standards.
- To provide IT governance and document management, IT helpdesk services covering internal systems, hardware, telephony and internet access.
- To operate the EEA ICT infrastructure, including hardware for computing, storage and backups, internal and external cloud-based services and applications, software licenses and administration for the EEA's internal, networking and public IT systems.
- To maintain the appropriate level of information and ICT security in close cooperation with the Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU (CERT-EU).
- To reduce environmental impacts of EEA operational services through the implementation of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS).

Expected result

High-quality operational support to the running of the EEA, including risk and quality management frameworks and environmental performance management.

Highlights for 2020

EEA staff spent 13 March 2020 packing the things they needed to work from home. The EEA issued almost all the laptops available and let staff take cameras, loudspeakers, mice and keyboards from their offices. The EEA has been using Office 365 for email for several years and most of the staff were already familiar with using the web to read email. Microsoft Teams had already been rolled out to the administration department, and therefore the risk assessments, including making policies on what content may be stored in Teams/SharePoint/OneDrive were done. The data and information services programme of the EEA (DIS) was therefore able to provide training to all staff on how

to use Teams immediately after the lockdown. Over the next few months a hundred new laptops were purchased. Desktop computers and desk phones were phased out and replaced with laptops and mobiles. Therefore, when staff can work in the office again it will be a very different experience for them.

Throughout the year client satisfaction with the helpdesks was high. This has been down to fast responses to enquiries and proactive training sessions on all the new tools and procedures staff needed for working from home.

The computer room in the office building was in need of a very significant upgrade to be able to serve the agency for another 10 years. After a cost-benefit analysis it was decided to move the IT infrastructure to an external data centre. The move took place in January 2021.

The document management policy for work documents was reviewed to adapt to the situation, and digital signatures are widely used for procurement purposes.

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) has been rolled out to all staff. MFA is of the highest importance and urgency regarding the obligatory teleworking of all staff and the widespread use of private devices at home during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The quality management system (QMS), whereby the EEA documents its procedures was an integral part of the intranet site. When the site was migrated to Office 365, it was not possible to carry the QMS over. An internal project has been put in place to redesign the QMS functionalities and adapt it to the new teleworking modality and digital workplace developments.

SA3.6 Copernicus operational services ⁽⁸⁾

The specific activities in 2020 that are delegated to the EEA are defined in the Copernicus work programme 2020.

The operational activities for pan-European land monitoring 2020 focused on:

- the production of the high-resolution layer (HRL) small woody features 2018;
- the finalisation of the production of the HRLs (imperviousness and built-up areas, forests, grasslands, wetness and water) 2018;
- the preparation of specifications, including consultation, for the production of the HRL crop types;

⁽⁸⁾ EEA work under this strategic area is funded through a delegation agreement between the European Commission and the EEA, and agreed through a separate annual work programme.

- the continuous production of high-resolution vegetation phenology and productivity (HR-VPP) datasets;
- the continuation of the production of the Corine Land Cover plus BackBone (CLC+ BB) as part of the CLC+ suite of products (first phase);
- the production of the CLC+ core hybrid database as part of the CLC+ suite of products (second phase);
- the ramp-up of the activities for an operational pan-European Ground Motion Service database (EGMS).

The operational activities for local land hotspot monitoring will continue focusing on:

- the Urban Atlas, including change mapping, street tree layer and building block height information;
- riparian zones 2018, including change mapping 2012-2018;
- coastal zones 2018;
- the high-resolution snow and ice (HR-S&I) product;
- Natura 2000 (N2K) 2018, including change mapping 2012-2018.

In 2020, regarding cross-cutting coordination of the Copernicus in situ component, the EEA continued to focus on three primary strands of activities:

- **Overview:** the EEA continued to maintain and update the overview of the Copernicus in situ component across and in collaboration with all six Copernicus services. The overview helps emphasise the importance of in situ data, identifying and solving critical data gaps, and supporting awareness-raising activities.
- **Awareness:** the EEA continued, in close collaboration with the Copernicus services, to improve stakeholders' knowledge and understanding of the Copernicus in situ component.
- **Access:** the EEA continued to improve access to critical in situ data for Copernicus services by operating dedicated data portals and creating partnership agreements with selected data providers.

Objectives

- To implement the CLMS to provide data and information in support of environmental monitoring of land cover and land use status and change, biodiversity, soil, water, forests, natural resources and the urban environment.

- To support coordination and harmonisation of the collection and provision of in situ and reference data for the Copernicus core services.

Expected result

Regular updated data and information products from the CLMS.

Coordination of the Copernicus in situ component across services.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Eionet meetings	1	2 webinars, replacing the annual physical meeting
Total		1	2

Highlights for 2020

Several new contracts have been awarded to implement the Copernicus tasks delegated to the EEA on the land monitoring service and the coordination of the in situ component across Copernicus services. 2020 was the final year of a 7-year delegation agreement (DA) between the European Commission Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS) and the EEA for the 2014-2020 period. The EEA managed to commit very close to the full operational budget under that DA before the end of 2020.

In terms of products, the CLMS successfully finalised the production of the 2018 HRLs (imperviousness, forests, grassland, wetness and water, and small woody features), including the change layers 2015-2018. Also, the final version of CLC2018 has been made available in the CLMS portal.

Furthermore, the local hotspot monitoring updates to the reference year 2018, including the change layers 2012-2018, have been successfully finalised (Urban Atlas, riparian zones, Natura 2000 and coastal zones). The Urban Atlas has been complemented with the street tree layer and building block height information on a subset of major European cities.

In the domain of image and reference data, the very high-resolution imagery from the reference year 2018 (VHR2018) image mosaics are brought close to finalisation and the EU-Hydro river network product has been updated to version 1-3, thus providing a European reference dataset on hydrography.

Beyond the continuity of work on products from former years, four crucial and substantial files were successfully started, i.e. the implementation of the CLC+ core hybrid database, in

which the CLC+ BB base layer, as well as other CLMS products, will be incorporated, along with the (planned) incorporation of national land use data. The second crucial file concerns the start of the production of the EGMS, a mutualised service providing centimetre-precision measurements of ground movements based on Sentinel-1 interferometric synthetic aperture radar (inSAR) data. Two more important productions have been implemented that move the CLMS into the domain of near-real time (NRT) information, i.e. the HR-S&I monitoring and the vegetation phenology.

A new development for 2020 concerned the start of the move of both production workflows and dissemination channels towards a Copernicus data and information access service (DIAS), namely WEkEO (a reference service for environmental data, virtual processing environments and skilled user support), which is a cooperation between the European operational satellite agency for monitoring weather, climate and environment from space (EUMETSAT), the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) and Mercator-Océan International, a partnership the EEA has decided to join.

Finally, the EEA continued to perform its role as cross-service coordinator on in situ data, maintaining the overview of in situ data and facilitating access to such data for Copernicus service providers.

SA3.7 Capacity building in Western Balkan and European neighbourhood countries ^(?)

Objectives

- To further develop EEA cooperation with the Western Balkan partners via different thematic activities, data delivery and success stories over the years with a view to further increasing the participation of the six Western Balkan beneficiaries in the full range of EEA and Eionet activities.
- To further support the Shared Environmental Information System for Europe (SEIS) implementation and cooperation with the partner countries in the European neighbourhood in the East and South regions to improve quality and access to environmental information and good environmental governance, in line with the current European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) actions coming to an end in mid-2020.

Expected result

To improve the knowledge base for environmental policy in the pan-European area and the Mediterranean based on SEIS principles.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	2	2
Total		2	2

Highlights for 2020

The cooperation with the Western Balkans in 2020 was enhanced through a new project under the IPA that started in February 2020. It builds on the EEA's continuous engagement with the Western Balkans while offering the possibility for increased support to identified priority areas of work. Full integration in EEA/Eionet activities and events has been ensured throughout the year.

In 2020, the EEA finalised the implementation of two regional projects under the ENI supporting the further extension of the SEIS principles and practices in the European neighbourhood regions. The cooperation under SEIS was in place for 4.5 years (February 2016-July 2020) and covered several activities continuing the EEA's earlier strong engagement with the countries in the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Mediterranean regions. This engagement contributed to building stronger expert networks, a harmonised knowledge base and methodologies for indicator development and the production of environmental assessments in the neighbourhood countries to support knowledge-based policymaking in line with EEA and Eionet methods.

Many positive outcomes illustrate the impact of the EEA's intervention, which was aligned to relevant regional priorities and processes. The production of the second regional Euro-Mediterranean assessment, jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP), was a key deliverable of the ENI South project. It brought together the work on a regional set of indicators, data flows and joint infrastructure aspects in

^(?) All activities in this work area are financed through grant agreements between the European Commission and the EEA. Continuation of activities with the Western Balkans (2020-2022) under IPA funding contracted through DG NEAR is in place; further cooperation with the ENI regions East and South beyond 2020 is under discussion with relevant EC services and awaiting the operationalisation of the new funding instrument.

terms of streamlining countries' responses to reporting. The production of the Eastern Partnership regional water indicator-based assessment underpinned a series of technical assistance activities to the region and the development of environmental portals and information systems in making water quality data compatible with European datasets. Further successful examples cover deliverables on air quality, biodiversity, land cover, and open data and e-governance activities aligned with Aarhus Convention reporting. All these activities conform to the SEIS principles of having environmental information openly accessible, close to the source, informing citizens and decision-makers and enriching knowledge-based environmental policymaking.

The visibility and communications at the end of the ENI projects were affected by the 'COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the planned meetings and events, including the two concluding ones, were conducted online.

Future EEA engagement with the European Neighbourhood will be aligned to the adopted EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030 and the revised framework for international engagement to be produced in 2021.

1.4 EEA management (SA4)

SA4.1 Governance and management

Objectives

- EEA governance: to provide efficient support to the Management Board, Bureau and SC to ensure that they are well informed for their respective decision-making and advisory duties.
- EEA staff management: to manage EEA staff by ensuring objective setting and professional development, and to motivate staff and inspire excellence in delivering the EEA management plan. This is framed by the EEA career development cycle and the learning and development framework.
- Internal audit and control (internal audit capability, IAC): to deliver on all IAC activities included in the annual internal audit plan for the IAC, in line with the internal audit charter for the IAC and to ensure the implementation of the Agency's internal control framework.
- Strategic programming and reporting: to finalise the EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030, to draft the multiannual and annual programming documents for the Agency, taking into account the overall legal, policy and resource context for the Agency, and to report on the delivery of the EEA annual work programme in the CAAR for 2019.

- Work programme delivery: to manage the EEA to deliver the annual work programme; this includes the management and coordination of the ETCs, as well as their review in preparation for future decisions and new calls on the ETCs.
- External evaluation: to follow up on the outcomes of the Commission's evaluation of the EEA and of Eionet.

Expected result

To sustain and strengthen cooperation with the main stakeholders and others, such as the European Commission, European Parliament and member countries; and to deliver the annual work programme.

Performance indicators

Activities	Outputs	No planned	No delivered
Key	Key reports/ assessments/ briefings	1	1
Total		1	1

Highlights for 2020

During 2020, the EEA Management Board met three times and the EEA Bureau met five times. In addition, the Management Board Advisory Committee on the EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030 met twice during the year and the Bureau subgroup on governance during the COVID-19 crisis met three times.

COVID-19 substantially restricted interactions with the EEA SC on new knowledge developments. Nevertheless, the Committee contributed to the validation of results from the European Commission's Foresight for Environment project. It also provided substantial inputs to the new EEA-Eionet strategy and delivered the annual SC Opinion on the EEA Single Programming Document and contributed to the recruitment of EEA scientific staff. Furthermore, the EEA, with support from the European Commission and the European Parliament, recruited 10 new members to the Committee in line with the needs of the strategy and EU policy priorities.

The review of ETCs was undertaken as part of the preparations for new ETCs for 2022. A review committee, chaired by the Management Board member (alternate) for Luxembourg and comprising members of the EEA's management team, NFPs, the European Commission and the SC met using Microsoft Teams to prepare a report on the approach and recommendations for new ETCs. The report was endorsed by the Management Board and used as a basis for preparing terms of reference for calls launched at the beginning of 2021.

SA4.2 Administration

Objectives

- To deliver input to the budget life cycle: draft budget and procurement plan (European Commission); budget (EEA Management Board approval); final accounts and budget implementation report (EEA Management Board and budgetary authorities); and discharge process (European Parliament) according to set deadlines.
- To ensure that the Agency has the necessary skills and expertise to deliver the work programme through the recruitment of appropriately qualified staff and the tailored training and development of all staff under the EEA learning and development framework.

Expected result

A minimum number of serious observations/recommendations from audits received; implementation of EEA budget and procurement plan, and accounts published within the deadlines as set out in the Financial Regulation. Full utilisation of the EEA establishment table.

Highlights for 2020

The first experiences with an activity-based work (ABW) environment (open plan) were gained in early 2020 just before the COVID-19 pandemic caused a lockdown of the Agency's premises. In the period that followed, the pandemic had a significant impact, especially on human resource management-related, activities. This resulted in adapting an array of administrative-led activities, such as learning and development in different (digital) ways, dealing with onboarding in a locked-down Europe and adapting to different working methods for staff.

Procurement and finance activities continued, by and large, without any interruptions, as related workflows and procedures were all completely paperless prior to the lockdown.

Following the initial positive experience with ABW, and having all staff working remotely, reconstruction of an additional floor in the EEA premises has started to fit these new ways of working.

The EEA experienced an increase in total favourable score in the annual staff engagement survey, as well as a significant decrease in the overall absence rate. These are undoubtedly related to the new ways of working forced on the Agency during the lockdown periods.

2 Management

2.1 Management Board

Significant items approved or decided by the Management Board

In 2020, the Management Board adopted all the documents required by the applicable regulations, including the ones on planning and budget. The Management Board adopted the new EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030, in alignment with the priorities of the European Green Deal and the 8th EAP. They also re-elected the current Chair of the Management Board for another mandate of 3 years and renewed the mandate of one of the Vice Chairs for 3 years. The Board adopted all the decisions that will enable the EEA to launch the calls for proposals for the new ETCs in early 2021, to be operational from 2022 onwards. In addition, the Board approved the nomination of 10 new SC members.

Risk and control issues

The Bureau set up an ad hoc subgroup of the Bureau to ensure the ongoing governance of the EEA during the COVID-19 crisis, without prejudice to the roles of the Management Board and the Bureau. Further to the advice from the subgroup, the Management Board and Bureau adapted their work practices to the ongoing situation: meetings were organised virtually and the election of the Management Board Chair was conducted using an online tool compliant with data protection rules and the Management Board rules of procedure. The Bureau and Board discussed the impact of the delayed adoption of the 8th EAP and the EU budget 2021, in particular on the Single Programming Document 2021-2023 and the budget 2021. The Board meeting initially scheduled for November was moved to December in order to allow for a clarification of resources for the final budget for 2021, and a written procedure was planned in case the EU budget was adopted after the Management Board's adoption of the EEA budget 2021.

2.2 Major developments

Major developments in 2020 included the impact of the **COVID-19 pandemic** and the EEA's response to it, the additional responsibilities and resources given to the EEA under the **European Green Deal** and the **8th EAP**, the adoption of the

EEA's strategy for 2021-2030, Eionet modernisation and the conclusion of the EEA's activities with Mediterranean and East European region countries under the **ENI**.

The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdowns across Europe significantly affected the EEA. However, the Agency was able to continue its activities and deliver its work programme without any significant disruptions or negative impacts. Its prior investments in cloud IT services and electronic processes allowed a relatively smooth switch to working from home, and a number of initiatives were taken to support staff with the changes. The EEA was able to continue its engagement with its stakeholders, in particular the Commission and other EU bodies, and Eionet, NFPs and NRCs. Expert meetings, in particular NFP and NRC meetings, continued online, as did the meetings of the SC and Management Board, thereby preventing any disruptions to governance structures. The EEA also introduced online recruitment, allowing the completion of a large number of recruitment procedures, and ended the year with low vacancy rates. The replacement of physical meetings with online meetings resulted in significant budget savings in travel-related expenditure. These savings were redeployed to additional investments in the EEA's strategic actions, IT and additional refurbishment of its premises, which includes consideration of the EEA's future workplace needs in a 'new normal' of more working from home and online interaction.

The European Green Deal provides a framework for ambitious actions and measures to position Europe firmly on a path towards sustainability. This proposal acknowledged the work of the EEA in highlighting the extent and urgency of the challenges, and 2020 saw the rapid introduction of new measures in support of this. Among those proposed was the 8th EAP to help ensure implementation, enforcement and effective delivery of environmental and climate policies and legislation. The European Commission plans to introduce a new monitoring framework for the this and aims to present a headline indicator set before the end of 2021, drawing on EEA support.

From late 2019 through to 2020, the EEA developed a strategy for the EEA and Eionet for the period 2021-2030. During 2020, the strategy underwent extensive stakeholder consultation. This consultation expressed broad support for the vision, strategic objectives and proposed areas of work for the EEA and Eionet. It also resulted in a considerable volume of constructive feedback

that the EEA has incorporated — feedback from an extensive consultation of Eionet countries, the European Commission services, the EEA SC and an online public consultation. The Single Programming Document 2021-2023 reflects many elements of that feedback. The EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030 was adopted by the Management Board in December 2020.

At the beginning of the year, the Eionet modernisation working group was established to strengthen the network, addressing the strategic objectives of the new EEA-Eionet strategy. See SA3.1 in Section 1.3.

In July 2020, the EEA successfully concluded the implementation of two regional projects under the ENI, which began in 2016. See SA3.7 in Section 1.3.

2.3 Budgetary and financial management

The EEA's approved budget for 2020 to deliver its work programme was reported in the Single Programming Document. In the 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 2020 but not paid by 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 one financial year;
- any interest paid to suppliers for late payments.

The key statistics are reported below. Further details are provided in Annex 2. Details of the grant, contribution and service level agreements are provided in Annex 6.

Budget performance

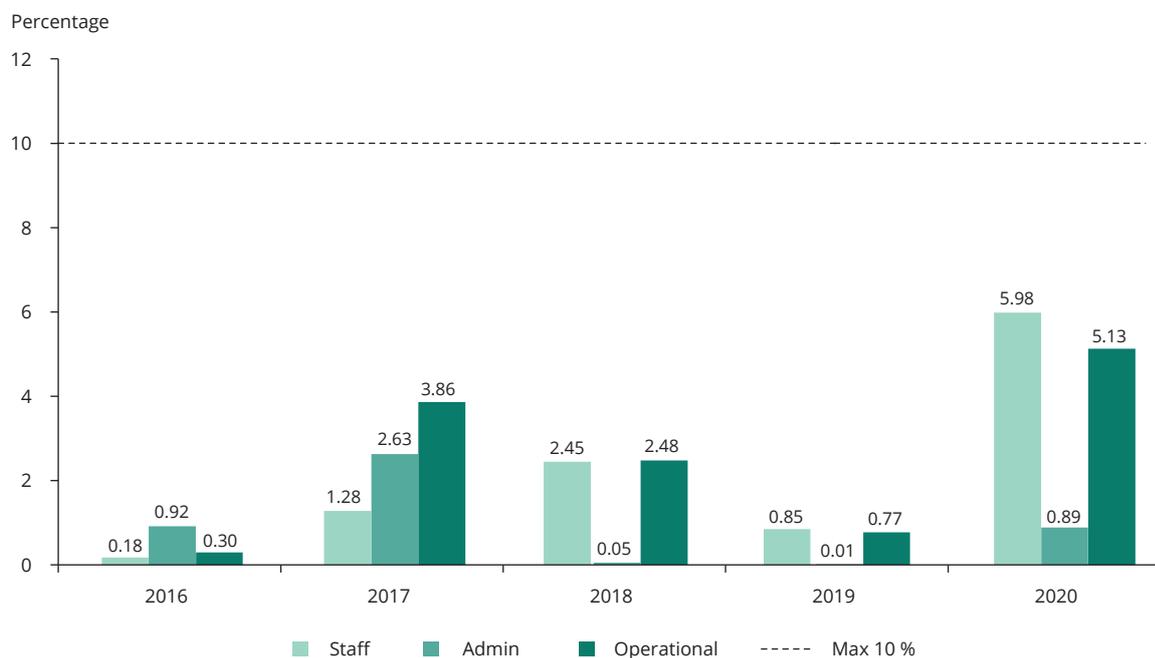
Budget amendments and transfers

A single amendment was made in December 2020 comprising two elements:

1. the final calculation of the European Free Trade Association-(EFTA) and Swiss contributions saw a net increase of EUR 9 936;
2. an increase in the Copernicus budget of EUR 1 979 000 to allow additional contracting in 2020 as the work was ahead of schedule.

The Financial Regulation allows the Executive Director to make budget transfers between titles of up to 10 % of each title without needing to consult the Management Board for approval.

Revenue	Original 2020 budget (EUR)	Budget amendment (EUR)	Final 2020 budget (EUR)
EU subvention	41 972 000	0	41 972 000
Third countries' contributions	5 629 131	9 936	5 639 067
Core revenue	47 601 131	9 936	47 611 066
Grant, contribution and service level agreements	13 639 000	1 979 000	15 618 000
Total revenue	61 240 131	1 988 936	63 229 066

Figure 2.1 Transfers 2016-2020

Core expenditure	Original 2020 budget (EUR)	Budget amendment (EUR)	Budget transfers (EUR)	Final 2020 budget (EUR)
Title 1	27 925 531	9 936	-1 680 729	26 254 738
Title 2	4 652 500		248 311	4 900 811
Title 3	15 023 100		1 432 417	16 455 517
Total core expenditure	47 601 131	9 936	0	47 611 066

The increase in budget transfers in 2020, while remaining well below the 10 % threshold, was a result of the redeployment of funds triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The replacement of physical meetings by online meetings in response to the restrictions on assembly and travel movement resulted in a saving of EUR 1.5 million (expert, Management Board and SC meetings, missions and recruitment). A EUR 1.0 million saving was achieved against salaries and allowances, primarily because the salary increase announced at the end of 2019 was below that budgeted for, but also because of initial recruitment delays until online recruitment was implemented. These savings allowed welcome investments in the tight operational budget (Title 3): direct expenditure on the EEA's strategic actions was increased by EUR 0.7 million and IT expenditure by EUR 1.2 million. It also allowed the EUR 0.6 million investment in a second phase of converting the EEA's office space in its main building, Kongens Nytorv 6, to open-plan activity-based working space.

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 circulaire issued by the European Commission Directorate-General for Budget (DG BUDG) specifies that, to avoid penalties, the combined amounts not implemented should not exceed 3 %.

The EEA achieved excellent budget implementation in 2020 with cancelled appropriations well below the 3 % threshold. Full implementation of C1 budget appropriations was achieved (99.96 % implementation). The cancellation of C8 appropriations carried over from 2019 totalled EUR 203 867. Of this, EUR 121 322 was from Title 3, the largest amount (EUR 62 625) from the settlement of the final cost statements of two ETCs. The other cancellations were small amounts across a number of budget lines in Title 1 (EUR 39 429) and Title 2 (EUR 43 117).

Carry forward

There was an increase in the carry-over in 2020 compared with the redistribution of budget under the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because the investments in strategic actions, IT and

activity-based working office space took place in the latter part of the year, and at the year-end a significant portion of these investments had either been delivered but not yet been paid, or were in progress and will only be delivered in early 2021, thus requiring the carry-over of the appropriations.

Figure 2.2 Budget Outturn 2016-2020

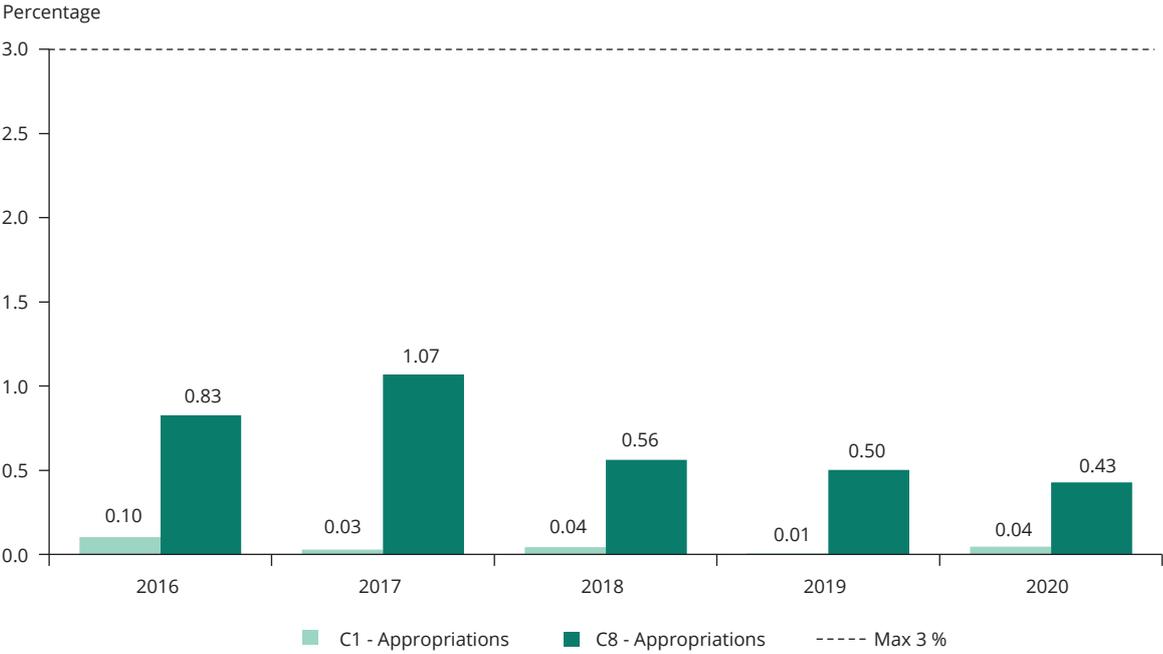
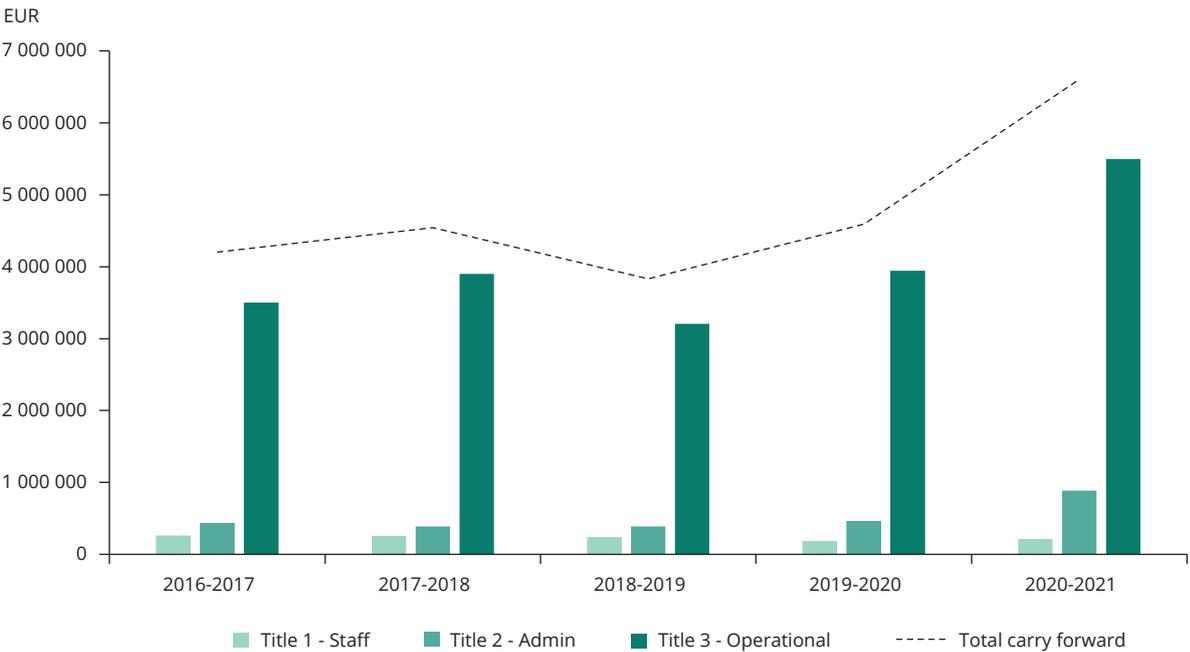


Figure 2.3 Carry Forward Development 2016-2021 – Core Funds



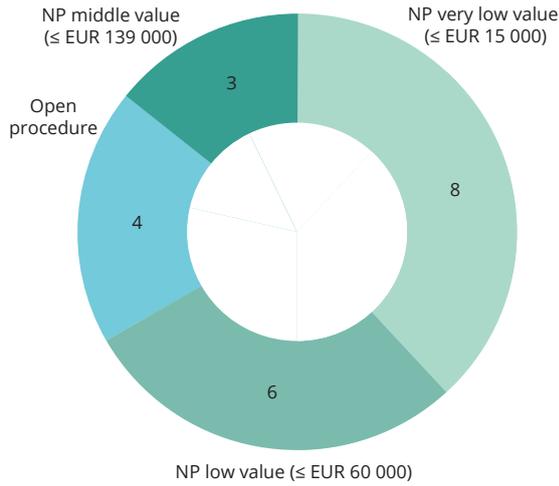
Procurement procedures

The 2020 procurement plan, attached as Annex IX to the Single Programming Document 2020-2022 adopted by the EEA's Management Board in December 2019, anticipated the implementation of the following procurement procedures.

An amended version of the 2020 procurement plan reflecting the actual procurement needs was approved by the EEA's Management Board at its 88th meeting on 11 June 2020.

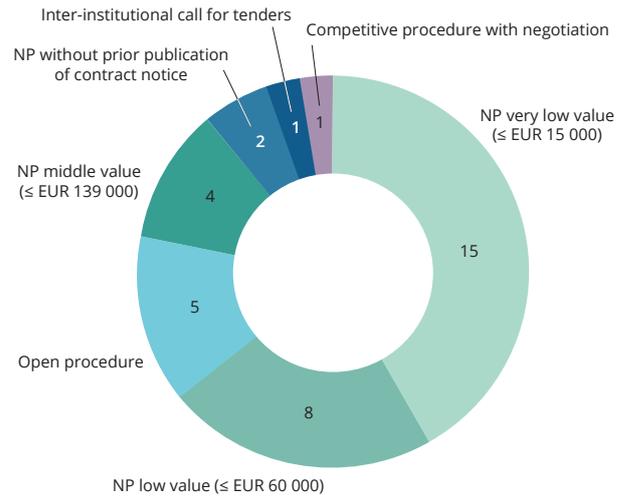
By 31 December 2020, the actual procurement procedures implemented by the EEA were as follows.

Figure 2.4 Core revenue: 21 procedures



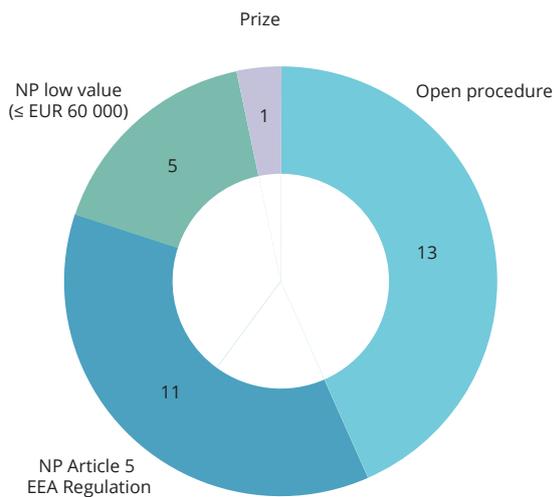
Note: NP, negotiated procedure.

Figure 2.6 Core revenue: 36 procedures



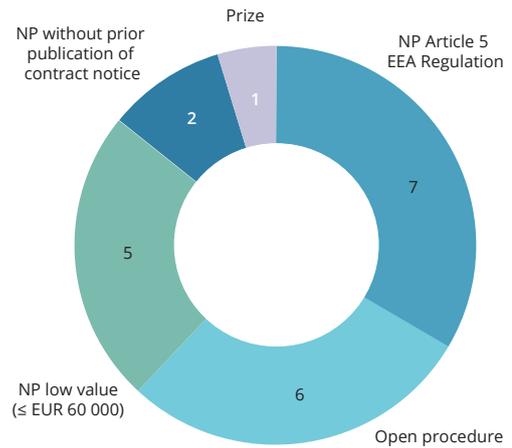
Note: NP, negotiated procedure.

Figure 2.5 External assigned revenue: 30 procedures



Note: NP, negotiated procedure.

Figure 2.7 External assigned revenue: 21 procedures



Note: NP, negotiated procedure.

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; various tendering procedures initially anticipated to be carried out in the course of 2021 were actually brought forward and launched in 2020 to respond to imminent needs entailed by either an earlier consumption of the budget on existing framework contracts, or additional needs under ongoing activities (e.g. the refurbishment of the Agency's premises), or additional needs stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

Negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation carried out in 2020

Pursuant to Article 74(10) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('FR'), the authorising officer shall record, for each financial year, contracts concluded by negotiated procedures in accordance with points (a) to (f) of point 11.1 of Annex I to 2018 FR. If the proportion of negotiated procedures in relation to the number of contracts awarded by the authorising officer increases significantly in relation to earlier years, the authorising officer shall report to the Management Board setting out any measures taken to reverse the trend.

Table 2.1 Negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation carried out in 2020

Fund source	Subject of the contract	Budget (EUR)	Type of contract	Legal basis
Core revenue	Munich Re data on economic losses from extreme climate- and weather-related events	19 000.00	Direct service contract	Point 11.1 ^(b) ^(a) Annex I to FR
Core revenue	Upgrade of the Nopolu application and the underlying data for the new version of the European water accounts	33 000.00	Direct service contract	Point 11.1 ^(b) Annex I to FR
External assigned revenue	Revision of the imperviousness degree 2015 product for consistent time series analysis and indicator use from 2015 onwards	200 000.00	Direct service contract	Point 11.1 ^(a) ^(b) Annex I to FR
External assigned revenue	Production of CLC+ and provision of complementary consultancy services	3 100 000.00	Framework service contract	Point 11.1 ^(a) ^(c) Annex I to FR

Notes: ^(a) The service can only be provided by a single economic operator.
^(b) Provision of new services consisting of the repetition of similar services entrusted to the contractor to whom the Agency awarded the initial contract.
^(c) Negotiated procedure without prior publication of a contract notice when no tenders have been submitted in response to an open procedure after that procedure has been completed.

Table 2.2 Negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the Financial Regulation carried out in the last 5 years

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Average	2020
Total number of contracts awarded by the EEA authorising officer	33	32	34	35	29		57
Number of contracts resulting from negotiated procedures under point 11.1 of Annex I to the FR	1	3	4	2	1		4
Proportion	3 %	9.37 %	11.76 %	5.71 %	3.45 %	2.2 %	7 %

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 officer increased in 2020 compared with 2019. It should be noted, however, that the total number of contracts awarded in 2020 almost doubled compared with 2019, so the trend remains stable compared with previous years.

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.

The delegations are valid for the calendar year; the delegations are renewed at the beginning of each year, prior to the EEA's budget and finance system, ABAC, being opened for that year.

Early in the year, a review is conducted by the ABAC local security officer and Head of Finance to ensure that access rights given in ABAC match the delegations given to each authorising officer. The delegations and access rights are also audited by the IAC. In 2020, no significant weaknesses were identified,

although the need for some small changes to access rights were identified and immediately made.

2.5 Human resource management

Brief description of the major human resource developments

After the EEA followed the austerity measures and reduced the number of its staff by 10 % down to 124, in line with the overall principles laid down for EU institutions for the period 2013-2018, the Agency was provided with six new posts in 2020 and the establishment plan showed an increase for the first time since 2013, with 130 posts approved.

Brief description of the results of the screening/benchmarking exercise

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

Approximately 80 % of all staff are dedicated to operational activities, which has been more or less unchanged since 2014.

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

Table 2.3 Implementing rules adopted by the EEA in 2020

Application by analogy
Commission Decision C(2020)1559 amending Decision C(2013)9051 on leave (concerns special leave for newborn child)
Commission Decision C(2020)4818 amending Decision C(2011)1278 on transfer of pension rights
Commission Decision C(2019)7822 amending Decision C(2004)1318 on duties of Commission drivers
Commission Decision C(2019)6855 on procedures for dealing with professional incompetence (Art. 51 SR, only applicable to officials)
Model decisions for agencies
Type of post and post titles
Non-application of the Commission Decision on the maximum duration for the recourse to non-permanent staff in the Commission services

2.6 Strategy for efficiency gains

In the 2018 evaluation of the EEA, reported in Section 2.7 below, the Commission concluded that the EEA-Eionet is very cost-effective, that the EEA has optimised task efficiency where possible, and that the Agency has adapted very well to new EU policy developments. In the Single Programming Document 2020-2022 it was therefore concluded that there was limited scope for further efficiency gains and that when the EEA is requested to take on new tasks in its work programme, these would need to be accompanied by the resources to perform them.

Nevertheless, the EEA has continued to pursue efficiency gains through shared services. Firstly, the EEA actively pursues joint procurement: on the one hand it has procured and leads several framework contracts that are also used by the Commission, and on the other it uses a number of Commission-led framework contracts for its own needs. It also utilises a variety of Commission services (e.g. payroll, IT security) and systems (e.g. ABAC, Sysper, Ares, e-Prior).

In the last few years, the EEA has focused on converting to electronic administration processes (procurement, finance and human resources), which has delivered efficiency gains and supported the EEA in quickly and effectively switching to a working-from-home environment at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the pandemic restrictions, the EEA also introduced online recruitment, supported by the implementation of a recruitment platform, Systal, which allowed it to complete a large number of recruitments in 2020, giving a low vacancy rate at the year-end.

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

Assessment of audit results

The European Court of Auditors' (ECA) report on the EEA's annual accounts for the financial year 2019 was published in October 2020 and expressed an unqualified opinion on the reliability of the accounts and unqualified opinion on the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts. Three recommendations from previous years remain open. The report is attached in Annex 11, providing the ECA's opinion, their observations, the Agency's reply and the status of the open observations from previous years' audits.

The next audit of the EEA's annual accounts will examine the 2020 financial year. It started with a preliminary desk review in October 2020, while the fieldwork took place at the beginning of February 2021.

Two reports on which EEA staff were consulted in 2019 are now published by the ECA:

Marine environment: EU protection is wide but not deep (No 26/2020) and Biodiversity on farmland: CAP contribution has not halted the decline (Special Report No 13/2020).

The Internal Audit Service finalised its report on the audit, Project financed actions in EEA, and accepted the action plan proposed by the EEA to respond to the three important recommendations. In addition, the auditors followed up on the recommendations issued for the audit on procurement.

Ex post evaluation

Between 2016 and 2018, the European Commission carried out an evaluation of the EEA and Eionet, including the Founding Regulation. The evaluation covered the period mid-2012 to the end of 2016 and took into account the previous evaluations of the Agency (such as that in 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 overall conclusion of the evaluation was that the EEA and Eionet fulfil the main objectives set by the Founding Regulation. The evaluation found that the EEA and Eionet continue to be relevant and provide added value to the EU by implementing the multiannual work programmes in a largely effective, efficient and coherent way.

The evaluation recognised that Eionet is a unique network of environment and climate expertise that provides essential expertise in many areas and contributes to the efficiency of the EEA's work. There was margin for improvement in the information provided on Eionet activities, clarification of its role and increased visibility of the added value of the various Eionet components and how these interact with the EEA and the Commission services, notably in the area of reporting.

The EEA and Eionet were seen as essential data providers, both for the Commission and for member countries. Although data collection was seen as working efficiently in all climate and many environmental fields, they did not always fully benefit from new technologies, such as Copernicus. The evaluation identified that these additional requests demonstrate recognition that the EEA and its network provide unique value for money. While additional but temporary resources accompanied some of these specific requests, the EEA had to adjust to a nominal freezing of the EU core subsidy and corresponding reduction in human resources, in line with the Commission policy for decentralised agencies.

The evaluation further concluded that the EEA has proved to be reliable in providing the necessary information to support EU policymaking and had adapted very well to new EU

policy developments. The evaluation also noted that these accomplishments had been achieved against a backdrop of decreasing staff resources and increasing demand from the Commission to support new legislation on both the environment and the climate, as well as supporting Copernicus.

The conclusions of the evaluation, and the recommendations of the Management Board thereupon, are being addressed by the EEA in its ongoing planning and, moreover, in the formulation of the EEA strategy to cover the period 2021-2030.

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

Three remaining recommendations of the ECA from previous years were implemented during 2020. The actions taken will be reviewed in the context of the audit of the 2020 financial year that will take place in 2021. The report is attached in Annex 11, providing the ECA's opinion, their observations, the Agency's reply and the status of the open observations from previous years' audits.

All recommendations issued before 2020 by the Internal Audit Service have been implemented.

The implementation of the four very important recommendations of the IAC issued in the context of the IT security audit are awaiting review by the internal auditor.

2.9 Follow-up of observations from the discharge authority

As a preamble to the discharge procedure for 2018, the European Parliament sent a questionnaire to all EU agencies, to which the EEA submitted a reply. The European Parliament had additional questions for several agencies, which did not include the EEA. The Agency's network chair participated, together with agencies who had received additional questions, in a hearing on 4 December 2019.

On 21 January 2020 the Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) considered the 2018 discharge draft reports.

The Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin) recommended on 18 February 2020 that the European Parliament should give the EEA discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget for the financial year 2018.

On 19 and 20 February the members of the CONT adopted the draft reports concerning the 2018 discharge.

During a plenary session on 13 and 14 May 2020, the European Parliament voted by remote participation to grant the discharge for the financial year 2018.

Follow-up on the 2018 discharge by the European Parliament

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 2018* in accordance with Article 107(2) of the Framework Financial Regulation.

2.10 Environmental management

An accredited EMAS environmental verifier has verified and validated the EEA's full compliance ⁽¹⁰⁾ with the EMAS Regulation and declared on 23 May 2020 that the data and information of the EEA's environmental statement 2019 ⁽¹¹⁾ reflects a reliable, credible and correct image of the EEA's activities and environmental improvement. Subsequently, in November 2020, the EMAS registration for the EEA was successfully extended ⁽¹²⁾ by a competent body under EMAS for another year.

It has been decided to raise the level of ambition for the EEA from being a 'climate-friendly' organisation to becoming a 'climate-neutral' one. This decision will be reflected in the EEA's environment policy for 2021.

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

2.11 Assessment by management

The CAAR 2020 describes the delivery of a work programme (Single Programming Document) in a somewhat unusual year. Overall, the EEA has delivered well and achieved what it had set out to do by exceeding the set expectations of the key performance indicators.

It is the EEA management's assessment that the underlying factors ensuring long-term performance of the organisation are sound and functioning well. Following the logic of the constituent elements of this report (achievements, management and internal control systems), 2020 has delivered a satisfactory result, compared with the risks and challenges the organisation has had to manage.

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

⁽¹⁰⁾ [2020 Bureau Veritas Certificat for 2019 statement.pdf — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁽¹¹⁾ [Final EMAS Environmental statement 2019.pdf — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁽¹²⁾ [Certifikat EEA. 2020.pdf — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](#)

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 principles of the EEA internal control framework. All principles adopted by the Management Board in 2017 are reviewed in the light of evidence that can be collected to demonstrate that the controls are effective.

In 2020, with the drastic change in working procedures due to the COVID-19 crisis, the EEA decided to move the intranet from a local network to SharePoint. This allowed all EEA staff to access easily key information for their work. However, some corporate information, such as procedures from the QMS, were not transferred to SharePoint. This was because many procedures changed in the space of a few months to adapt as

quickly as possible to an unknown situation, but remain in alignment with the business continuity plan.

Cost and Benefits of Controls

A new requirement in the CAAR guidelines this year is that agencies report on the balance between the effectiveness, efficiency and benefits of controls.

The EEA is currently working on a formal methodology for implementing this in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commission. In order to ensure that reporting of the costs and benefits of controls is provided with the appropriate context and benchmarking to allow and support management decision making, the EEA is via the

	EEA internal control framework components	EEA internal control framework's adoption by the Management Board, December 2017	Assessment
1	Control environment	The EEA demonstrates a commitment to integrity and ethical values	Partially compliant: no more access to the course on ethics and integrity for all staff
12	Control activities	The EEA deploys control activities through corporate policies that establish what is expected and in procedures that put policies into action	Partially compliant: some corporate policies that could previously be retrieved under the umbrella of the QMS structure are no longer available. Some others are now embedded in IT systems or under the relevant thematic sections
14	Information and communication	The EEA internally communicates information, including objectives and responsibilities for internal control, necessary to support the functioning of internal control	Partially compliant: there are many channels used to communicate on controls, in particular with references under the relevant thematic sections. However, some key information, such as the procedures to allow staff to raise concerns about fraud, corruption and other serious wrongdoing, is no longer available because of the migration of the intranet

EU Agencies' Network engaging with other agencies to align our methodology and reporting; this is being specifically addressed by a working group in the EUAN Performance Development Network.

The EEA's controls are essential to ensure the 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 by:

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

Although we are still developing the methodology to measure the cost of controls, the ex-post evaluations of the EEA (refer to section 2.7) have found that the EEA support activities, which include control activities, are performed efficiently and effectively.

3.2 Conclusions of assessment of internal control systems

The assessment of EEA internal control systems shows that some principles for which the EEA was compliant in previous years are now only partially complied with. This is explained by the need for a prompt response by management to a completely new way of working. Despite uncertain circumstances, EEA staff managed to adapt quickly to the situation and delivered the work programme envisaged in 2020, embedding new procedures in their actions.

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

Statement of the Head of Administration

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, 14 June 2021,

Søren Brostrup Nielsen

4

Management assurance

4.1 Review of elements supporting assurance

Brief description of the building blocks of assurance

The information reported in Parts 2 and 3 stems from the results of management and audits. Audit reports result from a systematic analysis of the evidence available and cover only a part of many core activities within the EEA. Furthermore, different audit capacities (the IAC, the Internal Audit Service and the ECA) cover different areas, and therefore, between them and the internal controls in the EEA, a comprehensive basis for assurance is ensured.

This approach provides sufficient guarantees of the completeness and reliability of the information reported and results in exhaustive 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 Internal Audit Service 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.

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

Taking the above into consideration, no weaknesses were identified with regard to 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

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, 14 June 2021,

Hans Bruyninckx

Annex 1

Core business statistics

For details and analysis of the key performance indicators for 2020, please refer to Section 1, Achievements of the year.

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 one financial year; major items only (> EUR 500 000)

n/a

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

All payments in 2020 were made within the deadlines set by the Financial Regulation. However, some contractors have shorter payment terms and some payments (0.3 % of the total) were paid later than their terms but without any interest charges being paid.

A positive budgetary outturn is to be reimbursed to the Commission. The positive outturn for 2020, exactly EUR 235 161.20, comprises the following components:

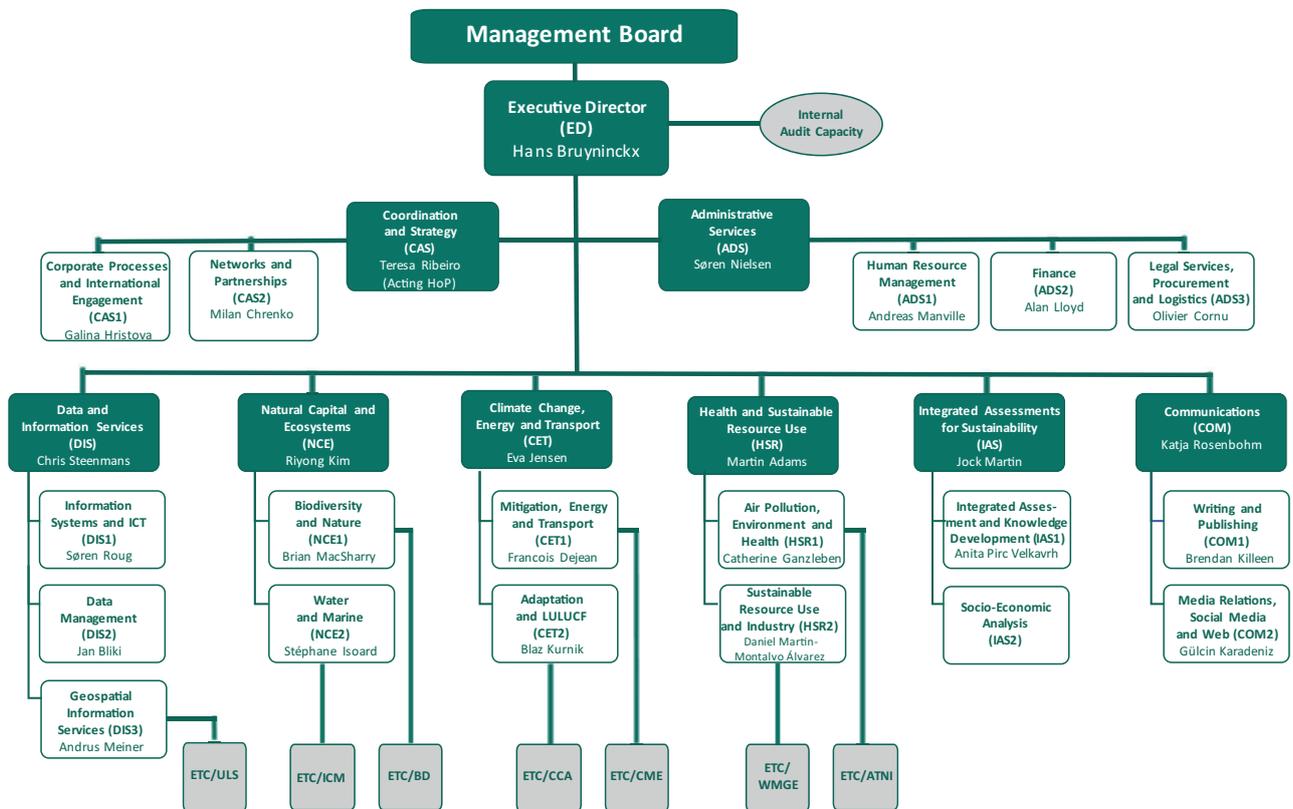
- cancellation of the current year's appropriations (C1 funds) that were not committed amounted to EUR 21 095, which, although small, were higher than in the previous year (EUR 6 559);
- cancellation of unused payment appropriations carried over from the previous year (C8 funds) amounted to EUR 203 867, which was lower than in the year before that (EUR 226 600);
- exchange rate differences, as reported in the table below.

Budget outturn	2020	2019	2018
Reserve from the previous year's surplus (+)			
Revenue actually received (+)	61 169 120	52 316 361	66 085 813
Payments made (-)	-64 118 346	-55 223 813	-57 008 158
Carry-over of appropriations (-)	-27 834 239	-33 337 392	-40 372 493
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	203 867	226 600	242 025
Adjustment for carry-over of assigned revenue appropriation from previous year (+)	30 805 060	36 251 401	31 313 807
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	9 700	-14 898	-7 776
Total	235 162	218 261	253 218

Annex 3

EEA Organisational chart

Figure A3.1 EEA Organisational chart



Notes: As at 1 January 2021.
 ATNI, Air Pollution, Transport, Noise and Industrial Pollution; BD, Biological Diversity; CCA, Climate Change Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation; CME, Climate Change Mitigation and Energy; ICM, Inland, Coastal and Marine Waters.

Annex 4

Establishment plan and additional information on human resource management

Table A4.1 Staff population and its evolution — overview across all contract type categories

Staff population		Staff population actually filled at 31.12.2019	Authorised under EU budget 2020	Staff population actually filled at 31.12.2020
Officials	AD	1	1	1
	AST	2	3	2
	AST/SC	0	0	0
TA	AD	59	68	67
	AST	58	58	56
	AST/SC	0	0	0
Total		120	130	126
CA GF IV		44	53	52
CA GF III		10	11	12
CA GF II		7	10	7
CA GF I		0	0	0
Total CA		61	74	71
SNE		19	20	12
Structural service providers		16	16	16
Total		200	224	209
External staff for occasional replacement		-	-	-

Table A4.2 Contract agent posts — number of positions filled at 31 December 2020

Positions filled on 31.12.2019	GF I	GF II	GF III	GF IV	Total
Under core funds	-	7	12	52	71
Under HumanBio	-	-	-	2	2
Under IPA2020	-	-	-	1	1
Under Copernicus	-	-	-	6	6
Total	-	7	12	61	80

Table A4.3 Establishment plan 2020

Category and grade	Establishment plan in EU budget 2020	
	Officials	TA
AD 16	-	-
AD 15	-	1
AD 14	-	2
AD 13	1	6
AD 12	-	16
AD 11	-	10
AD 10	-	11
AD 9	-	9
AD 8	-	5
AD 7	-	4
AD 6	-	4
AD 5	-	-
Total AD	1	68
AST 11	-	2
AST 10	-	5
AST 9	3	11
AST 8	-	11
AST 7	-	11
AST 6	-	10
AST 5	-	7
AST 4	-	1
AST 3	-	-
AST 2	-	-
AST 1	-	-
Total AST	3	58
Overall total	4	126

Table A4.4 Entry level per key function for establishment plan posts

Key functions — 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
Key functions — examples	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: CA, contract agent; TA, temporary agent.
^(a) The text in bold indicates official EEA titles.
^(b) Excluded from management allowance.

Annex 5

Human and financial resources by activity

Figure A5.1 Staff time in 2020 by strategic activity

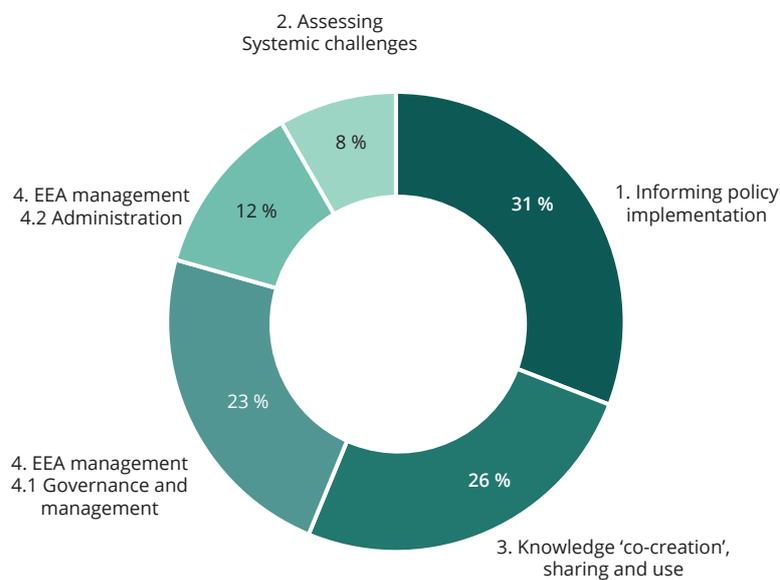
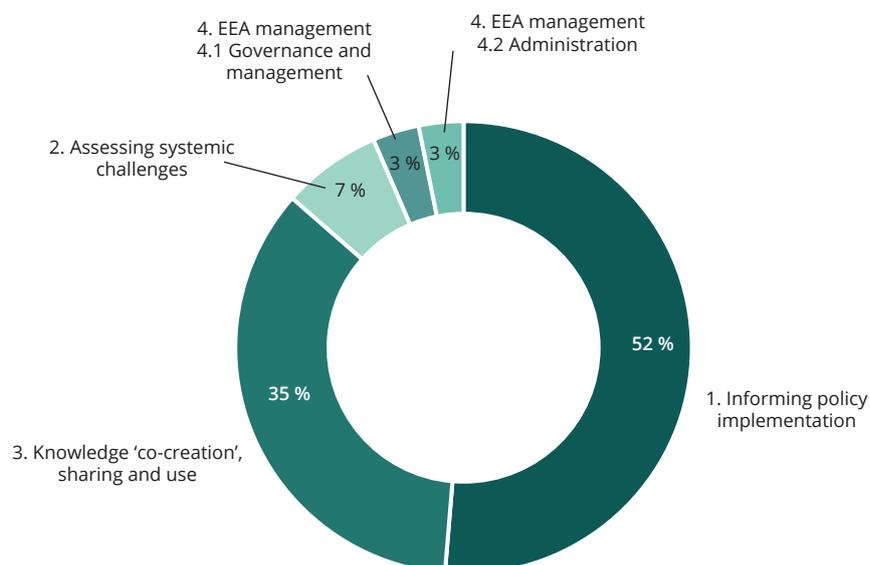


Figure A5.2 Operational cost 2020 execution by strategic action (payments)



Annex 6

Contribution, grant and service level agreements, and Financial framework partnership agreements

General information						Financial and human resources information		
Start date	Total amount (EUR)	Duration (months)	Counterpart	Short description		2019	2020	
Grant agreements								
IPA 2020	February 2020	1 275 000	24	DG NEAR	Cooperation with Western Balkan countries under the Instrument for Pre-accession	Amount (EUR)	-	1 275 000
						Number of CAs	-	1
						Number of SNEs	-	-
HBM4EU	January 2017	1 400 000	60	DG RTD	Human biomonitoring initiative in a consortium led by the German Environment Agency under Horizon 2020	Amount (EUR)	-	-
						Number of CAs	1	2
						Number of SNEs	-	-
Contribution agreements								
Copernicus delegation agreement	December 2014	87 000 000	97	DG DEFIS	Delivery of land services and in situ coordination under the Copernicus programme	Amount (EUR)	6 846 000	14 343 000
						Number of CAs	6	6
						Number of SNEs	-	-
Service level agreements								
EuroGEO	December 2020	1 500 000	36	DG RTD	Mainstreaming GEOSS data sharing and management principles in support of Europe's environment	Amount (EUR)	-	-
						Number of CAs	-	-
						Number 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, so the budget appropriations for commitments and payments are identical. SNE, seconded national expert.

Annex 7

Environmental management

Context of the Agency and its environmental management strategy

The Agency commits in its environment policy ⁽¹³⁾ to minimise its environmental impacts and continually improve its environmental performance. In November 2020, the senior management team decided to raise the level of ambition for the EEA from being a 'climate-friendly' organisation to becoming a 'climate-neutral' one. This decision will be reflected in the EEA's environment policy for 2021.

Overview of the Agency's environmental management system

The EEA uses an environmental management system, which was registered under EMAS in 2005. EMAS is part of the EEA's QMS (see SA3.5). In 2020, the EEA's EMAS registration ⁽¹⁴⁾ 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). The handbook was subject to an internal audit in 2020 and will be revised accordingly in the handbook version of 2021.

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;
- energy for heating;
- water consumption;
- paper consumption;
- generation of waste;
- CO₂ emissions from business travel.

For each of the environmental aspects, the statement report outlines details on objectives, monitoring and progress. It includes a summary table outlining the sources of the environmental impact, action plans, performance indicators, the performance of the previous year and the percentage change compared with data from the previous 5 years.

The environmental statement ⁽¹⁵⁾ was published in May 2021. Most of the environmental performance data for 2020 show a substantial fall, concomitant with the 'COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the greenhouse gas emissions from business travel and meetings dropped by approximately 90 % compared with the 2015-2019 average. The data also indicate significant reductions in the use of electricity, heating, water, paper and waste due to fewer staff in the building on Kongens Nytorv.

⁽¹³⁾ Final EMAS Environmental statement 2019.pdf — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

⁽¹⁴⁾ Certifikat EEA. 2020.pdf — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

⁽¹⁵⁾ Environmental management (EMAS) — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)

Annex 8

Annual accounts

Table A8.1 Calculation of budget outturn

Budget outturn	2018	2019	2020
Reserve from the previous years' surplus (+)			
Revenue actually received (+)	66 085 813	52 316 361	61 169 120
Payments made (-)	-57 008 158	-55 223 813	-64 118 346
Carry over of appropriations (-)	-40 372 493	-33 337 392	-27 834 239
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	242 025	226 600	203 867
Adjustment for carry over of assigned revenue appropriation from previous year (+)	31 313 807	36 251 401	30 805 060
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	-7 776	-14 898	9 700
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)			
Total	253 218	218 261	235 162

Cancellation of appropriations

Cancellation of commitment appropriations
n/a

Cancellation of payment appropriations for the year
EUR 21 094 of appropriation non-committed.

Cancellation of payment appropriations carried over
EUR 203 867 of payment appropriations carried over from 2019 were cancelled in 2020.

Justification

Budget outturn

A positive budgetary outturn is to be reimbursed to the Commission. The positive outturn for 2020, EUR 2365 162 is composed of the following components:

Cancellation of appropriations

Cancellation of unused payment appropriations carried over from previous year (C8 funds) amounted to EUR 203 867.40 which is significantly lower than the previous year (EUR 226 600.65).

Budgetary result specification	2020	2019
C1 – Current year appropriations		
Amount not cashed	0.42	-0.08
Non-committed	21 094.44	3 202.27
C4 – Reuse of funds current year		
Amount not made available in the budget	499.38	3 356.00
C8 – Appropriations carried over from previous year		
Cancellations of unused appropriation	203 867.40	226 600.65
Exchange rate difference (gain +/-loss-)	9 699.56	-14 897.62
Total	235 161.20	218 261.22

Annex 9

Outputs per activity

SA 1.1 Air pollution and noise

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Annual report: Air quality in Europe	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 9/2020
Briefing R ^(*)	Annual report: NEC Directive reporting status 2020	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 4/2020
Standard EEA report R ^(*)	Annual report: EU emissions inventory report under LRTAP Convention	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 5/2020
Core data flow	(E1a) Information on primary validated assessment data — measurements (Article 10)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	(E2a) Information on primary up-to-date assessment data — measurements (Article 10)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	LRTAP Convention — National emission inventories	Data and maps	Completed
Eionet meetings	Eionet NRC workshop on mitigation of air pollution and climate change	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Eionet meetings	Eionet NRC workshop on air quality	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Eionet meetings	Eionet NRC workshop on noise	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Note: ^(*) Regular reporting under EU legislation and/or an international convention.

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Country fact sheets	Air pollution country fact sheets	Fact sheet	Completed
Briefing	National actions to reduce air pollutant emissions and synergies with greenhouse gas reduction measures	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 19/2020
Briefing	Estimating health impacts caused by exposure to environmental noise	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 21/2020
Data flow	Reporting under the Environmental Noise Directive	Data and maps	Completed
Website	European Air Quality Index	IT system	Completed

SA1.2 Industrial pollution

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Core data flow	E-PRTR data reporting	Data and maps	Completed Data service page

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Data flow	EU Registry on industrial sites	Data and maps	Completed Data service page
Data flow	Reporting under the Mercury Regulation	Data and maps	Completed EEA's central data repository
Data flow	Reporting under the Medium Combustion Plants Directive	Data and maps	Completed
Data flow	Reporting on refineries	Data and maps	Completed
Data flow	Reporting on combustion plants under the Energy Community Treaty	Data and maps	Completed Data service page
Website	New E-PRTR website (E-PRTR v 3.0)	IT system	Completed
Country fact sheets	Country profiles on industrial pollution	Assessment	Completed
Webinar	Eionet webinar — NRC on Industrial pollution	Meetings	Completed

SA1.3 Climate change mitigation, energy and transport

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Monitoring CO ₂ emissions from new passenger cars and vans in 2018 (carried over from 2019)	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 2/2020
Standard EEA report	Annual report on trends and projections in Europe	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 13/2020
Standard EEA report	Annual report on fluorinated greenhouse gases	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 15/2020
Standard EEA report	Annual report on transport and environment	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 19/2020

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing (changed to standard EEA report)	Briefing accompanying the annual submission of the EU under the UNFCCC: <i>Annual European Union greenhouse gas inventory 1990-2018 and inventory report 2020</i> (Merged with carried over 2019 supporting EEA report <i>Key trends and drivers in greenhouse gas emission, policy co-benefits and the importance of a sustainable MRV system</i>)	Briefing (changed to EEA report)	Completed EEA Report No 3/2020
Briefing	Briefing accompanying the annual submission of the EU under the Montreal Protocol	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 10/2020
Briefing	Briefing on trends and projections in the EU ETS	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 20/2020
Briefing	Briefing on renewable energy in Europe	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 32/2020
Website	EEA climate and energy platform finalisation	Contribution to key processes	Postponed Launch in second half of 2021
Data flow	Development of reporting templates in view of the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action in 2021	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Data flow	Coordination of the comprehensive review of national greenhouse gas inventories under the Effort Sharing Decision and the Effort Sharing Regulation	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Core set indicator R ^(a)	CSI010/CLIM050 — Greenhouse gas emission trends (biannual update, with data reported under the UNFCCC for the year Y-2 (May/June) and approximated greenhouse emissions for the year Y-1 (September/October))	Indicator	Completed CSI010/CLIM050
Core set indicator	CSI013/CLIM052 — Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations	Indicator	Completed CSI013/CLIM052
Core set indicator R ^(a)	CSI006/CLIM049 — Production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances	Indicator	Completed CSI006/CLIM049
Core set indicator R ^(a)	CSI044/CLIM048 — Emissions and supply of fluorinated greenhouse gases	Indicator	Completed CSI044/CLIM048
Core set indicator	CSI037/TERM031 – Use of renewable fuels in transport	Indicator	Completed CSI037/TERM031
Indicator R ^(a)	New indicators — Quality of road transport fuels and Life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions of road transport fuels	Indicator	Completed CLIM055
Indicator R ^(a)	TERM017 — CO ₂ emissions from new light-duty vehicles (cars and vans) (biannual update with provisional and final data)	Indicator	Completed TERM017
Core data flow R ^(a)	Greenhouse gas inventories (UNFCCC)	Dataset	Completed
Core data flow R ^(a)	Greenhouse gas inventories	Dataset	Completed
Core data flow R ^(a)	Approximated greenhouse gas inventories	Dataset	Completed
Core data flow R ^(a)	Greenhouse gas projections	Dataset	Completed

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Data flow R ^(a)	National policies and measures (climate change mitigation)	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Use of auctioning revenues and project credits	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Implementation of the EU ETS Directive (Article 21)	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Ozone-depleting substances	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Fluorinated greenhouse gases	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Quality of fuels supplied for road transport	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	Greenhouse gas intensity of fuels supplied for road transport	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	CO ₂ emissions from new passenger cars	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	CO ₂ emissions from new light commercial vehicles (vans)	Dataset	Completed
Data flow R ^(a)	CO ₂ emissions from new heavy-duty vehicles (reporting in 2020, dataset available in 2021)	Dataset	Completed
Eionet workshop	NRC Eionet workshop on environment and energy	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Eionet workshop	NRC Eionet workshop on environment and transport	Workshops and meetings	Cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic

Note: ^(a) Regular reporting under EU legislation and/or an international convention.

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing	Benefits of circular economy actions on decarbonisation in the construction and building sector	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 6/2020
Briefing	Benefits of circular economy actions on decarbonisation in the agri-food sector	Briefing	Cancelled
Briefing	Analysis of the second-hand market for used vehicles in Europe	Briefing	Postponed to 2021
Briefing	Co-benefits of renewable electricity generation	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 23/2020

SA1.4 Climate change adaptation and land use, land use change and forestry

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Assessment of urban climate change adaptation	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 12/2020
Standard EEA report	Assessment of national climate change adaptation strategies and policies	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 6/2020
Core set indicator	CSI012 — Global and European temperature	Indicators	Completed CSI012
Core set indicator	CSI047 — Global and European sea level rise	Indicators	Completed CSI047
Core set indicator	CSI042 — Economic losses from climate-related extremes in Europe	Indicators	Completed CSI042
Core set indicator	CSI053 — Arctic and Baltic sea ice	Indicators	Completed CSI053
Eionet workshop	Eionet NRC workshop on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation (and expert meetings)	Workshops and meetings	Completed
IT system — information platform	Updated and improved European Climate Change Adaptation Platform (Climate-ADAPT)	Information systems	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing	Summary of climate change impacts in Europe	Briefing	Cancelled Replaced by new online product — story maps on key climate hazards
Briefing	Impacts of climate change outside Europe ('spill-over')	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 27/2020
IT system — information platform	EEA web atlas <i>Climate hazards in Europe</i> . Map collection and/or interactive web portal on Climate-ADAPT, in close collaboration with the Copernicus climate change service (C3S)	Indicators	Completed
	Support to the implementation of the Energy Union and Climate Governance Regulation	Contribution to key processes	Completed
	Contribution to the Commission's (DG CLIMA) Covenant of Mayors initiative, and regular ICLEI conference on urban adaptation	Joint products and contributions	Completed
	Support to the implementation of the LULUCF Regulation	Contribution to key processes	Completed

Note: ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability.

SA1.5 Water management, resources and ecosystems

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing R ^(a)	European bathing water quality in 2019 (annual)	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 1/2020
Standard EEA report	Water and agriculture: water pollution, water abstraction and hydromorphology	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 17/2020
Core set indicator	CSI019 — Oxygen-consuming substances in rivers	Indicators	Completed CSI019
Core set indicator	CSI020 — Nutrients in freshwater	Indicators	Completed CSI020
Core set indicator	CSI024 — Urban waste water	Indicators	Completed CSI024 - WAT005
Eionet meeting	Eionet NRC Freshwater workshop	Eionet meeting	Postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic
Core data flow	WISE SoE — Water quantity (WISE-3)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	WISE SoE — Water quantity (WISE-4)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	BWD — monitoring and classification of bathing waters	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	BWD — identification of bathing areas	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	UWWTD — implementation	Data and maps — potentially briefing depending on data quality	Completed

Note: ^(a) Regular reporting under EU legislation and/or an international convention.

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Country factsheet R ^(a)	Bathing water quality country reports (annual)	Reports and assessments	Completed
Standard EEA report	Bathing water quality — integrated assessment	Reports and assessments	Completed EEA report No 11/2020
Briefing	Dams and reservoirs in Europe, water quality and biodiversity	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 30/2020
Indicators	Input to SDG and agri-environmental processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> biochemical oxygen demand in rivers phosphate in rivers nitrate in groundwater water exploitation index (WEI+) bathing water quality 	Indicators	Completed CSI019 CSI020 CSI024/WAT005

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Other	Contribution to EEA knowledge to action report: water management, resources and ecosystems	Contributions	Completed
Other	Contributions supporting BD 2020 (specifically Target 2/Action 5)	Contributions	Completed
Other	Continue work on water quantity and water quality accounts	Contributions	Completed
IT system — information platform	Maintain WISE-Freshwater in relation to Eionet core data flows and reporting (WISE SoE), and BWD, UWWTD, WFD and FD at the agreed levels of support. Work towards enabling WISE as a dissemination and information sharing tool for freshwater and marine domains	Information systems	Completed
Other	Continue supporting the CIS — WFD and other water-related directives at the agreed levels of support	Other	Completed
Data flows	Reporting under the recast Drinking Water Directive selected as a pilot under Reportnet 3.0	Other	Completed

Notes: ^(*) Regular reporting under EU legislation and/or an international convention. CIS, common implementation strategy.

SA1.6 Marine and coastal environment and maritime activities

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing	Pressures and cumulative effects in Europe's seas	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 18/2020
Briefing	Biodiversity in Europe's seas	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 31/2020
Core set indicator	CSI032/MAR007 — Status of marine fish and shellfish stocks in European seas	Indicators	Postponed until early 2021 (due to long-term absence)
Core data flow	WISE SoE — Biological data in transitional and coastal waters (WISE-2)	Data and maps	Cancelled for the 2020 data call (due to limited resources)
Core data flow	Marine data (ME-1) — WISE SoE — Water quality in transitional, coastal and marine waters (WISE-6)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	Marine Strategy Framework Directive monitoring programmes (Article 11)	Data and maps	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Other	Contribution to EEA knowledge to action report: marine	Contributions	Completed
Other	Contributions supporting the BD 2020 (specifically Target 2/Action 5, Target 4)	Contributions	Completed
Indicators	<p>Marine indicators, including marine litter and Copernicus marine-fed indicators — input to SDG process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ocean acidification • marine protected areas • bathing water quality • nutrients in transitional, coastal and marine waters • status of marine fish stocks indicator 	Indicators, workshops and meetings	Completed
IT system — information platform	Organise Eionet core data flows, reporting (WISE-SoE) and visualisation. Search engine on MSFD 2019 reporting (Article 18)	Information systems	Completed
IT system — information platform	Implement phase III of WISE-Marine: enabling WISE as a dissemination and information sharing tool for freshwater and marine domains	Information systems	Completed
Other	Transitions to sustainable ports and shipping — catalogue of existing measures to reduce the pressures from shipping and ports on the marine environment made available online in WISE-Marine	Other	Completed
Key processes	<p>Cooperation with Regional Seas Convention secretariats, ICES, EMODnet, CMEMS and other EU agencies (e.g. EMSA, EFCA) on marine data, data flows and information, particularly with regard to collaborations on inputs to thematic assessments, indicators and SDGs (14 and 6).</p> <p>The EEA maintains a selected overview of governance/assessment developments in the Arctic, and, when relevant, in consultation with lead European Commission services, the EEA comments on meeting documents or thematic reports</p>	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Key processes	Continue supporting the implementation of the MSFD and the IMP, e.g. analysis of the MSFD 2018 reporting, support MSFD reporting (Articles 18, Article 11) and the use of WISE-Marine, co-chair WG DIKE and TG DATA, observer to MSP technical WGs	Contribution to Key processes	Completed

Note: DIKE, data information and knowledge exchange; EFCA, European Fisheries Control Agency; EMODnet, European Marine Observation and Data Network; ICES, International Council for the Exploration of the Sea; IMP, integrated maritime policy; Marine spatial planning; TG DATA, Expert group on strategic coordination for the marine strategy framework directive; WG, working group.

SA1.7 Biodiversity, ecosystems, agriculture and forests

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
EEA standard report	State of nature, presenting EU-level assessments and national summaries of 2013-2018 reports under the Nature Directives	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 10/2020
EEA standard report Changed in 2020 to briefing	Integrated ecosystem assessment under MAES, including thematic ecosystems such as wetlands, using nature reporting data and relating to pressures. Focus on wetlands in 2020	EEA report	Cancelled
Briefing	Summary on SEBI 2020 indicators — updated in support of BD 2020	Reports and assessments	Cancelled due to priority shift under new biodiversity policy
Briefing	Ecosystem extent accounts	Reports and assessments	Completed EEA Briefing No 24/2020
Briefing	BISE re-launch, communicating the BD 2020	Information systems	Completed
Briefing	Protected areas — their state and effect on biodiversity	Briefing	Completed
Briefing	Effectiveness of the Natura 2000 network	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 11/2020
Briefing	The investment case for green infrastructure	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 5/2020
Core set indicator	CSI050/SEBI001 — Abundance and distribution of selected species	Indicators	Completed CSI050/SEBI001
Core set indicator	CSI007/SEBI003 — Species of European interest New title: Conservation status of species under the EU Habitats Directive	Indicators	Completed CSI007/SEBI003
Core set indicator	CSI057/SEBI005 — Habitats of European interest	Indicators	Completed CSI057/SEBI005
Core set indicator	CSI008/SEBI007 — Nationally designated protected areas	Indicators	Completed CSI008/SEBI007
Core data flow	Nationally designated protected areas (CDDA-1)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	Information on Natura 2000 sites (SPAs, Birds Directive)	Data and maps	Completed
Core data flow	Information on Natura 2000 sites (SCIs/SACs, Habitats Directive)	Data and maps	Completed
Eionet meetings	Eionet workshop: NRC on Biodiversity	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Eionet meetings	Eionet workshop: NRC on Agriculture	Workshops and meetings	Postponed due to recruitment delay
Eionet meetings	Eionet workshop: NRC on Forests	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Note: SAC, special area of conservation; SCI, site of Community importance; SPA, special protection area.

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Indicators	Final update of several SEBI indicators (e.g. 004; 005; 007; 008) as further developed in the SEBI group; prepare a post 2020 review for the SEBI set and process	Indicators	Completed SEBI 008 SEBI 023 SEBI 026
Data flows	Support to reporting process for NEC Directive Article 9 ecosystem assessment (hosting process, financed by DG ENV)	Data and maps	Completed
Data flows	Follow-up and preparatory work for 6-yearly report on progress and implementation of Article 12, Birds Directive, and Article 17, Habitats Directive, and the reporting under the Invasive Alien Species Regulation	Data and maps	Completed: Birds Directive Habitats Directive
Data flows	Support to Bern Convention on reporting under the Emerald Network	Data and maps	Completed
Information system	BISE re-launched in support of final evaluation of BD 2020, including links to FISE	Information system	Completed
Information system	Support to development of FISE, its launch and its links to BISE (hosting process, financed by DG ENV, maintenance of FISE still waiting to be resourced as a new task)	Information system	Completed
Key process and information system	Renovate and further develop the EUNIS data base including services to BISE	Information system	Completed
Key process, possibly briefing	Develop the final revisions for the EUNIS habitat classification; summary on use of EUNIS	Data and maps. Contribution to key processes	Completed
Assessment	Develop assessment on forest ecosystems and sustainable management; linking to ongoing developments in Europe (e.g. possible revision of the EU forest strategy) — publication in 2021	Assessment	Completed
Assessment	Develop assessment on agricultural ecosystems and sustainable management — publication in 2021	Assessment	Completed
Key processes	Technical inputs to the evaluation of BD 2020	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Key processes	Technical inputs to the EU post-2020 process and the EU contribution to the UN CBD COP 15, Kunming, to the IPBES	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Key processes	Input to the EKC's innovation projects on natural capital accounting (INCA) and planetary boundaries (WiLoP), final integration of ecosystem accounts (extent, water, nutrient) into final evaluation of BD 2020	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Key processes	Further develop the EEA agricultural roadmap as a cross-cutting activity, relating ecosystem assessment and biodiversity to land use, water and marine aspects, soil functionality, LULUCF, etc.; input to CAP — indicator development	Contribution to key processes	Completed
Key processes	Further develop agri-environmental indicators as part of the MoU on agri-environmental indicators	Contribution to key processes	Completed

Notes: CAP, common agricultural policy; IAS, integrated assessments for sustainability programme of the EEA; IPBES, Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services; MoU, Memorandum of understanding.

SA1.8 Urban, land use and soil

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meeting	Eionet NRC on Soil	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Eionet meeting	Eionet NRC on Land use and spatial planning	Workshops and meetings	Cancelled

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
EEA briefing	Geospatial support to ecosystems assessment	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 12/2020
Thematic EEA indicator	Update of land recycling indicator (based on Copernicus Urban Atlas 2018 data)	Indicators	Postponed
Thematic EEA indicator	The indicator of drought pressure on land and terrestrial ecosystems (LSI011). Note: new title — Vegetation response to water deficit	Indicators	Completed
Thematic EEA indicator	LSI010 — Length of vegetation growing season	Indicators	Cancelled (converted into a dataset)
Thematic EEA indicator	Update of LSI099 — Vegetation productivity	Indicators	Completed
Interactive data viewer	Urban nature-based solutions and green infrastructure portal	Data and maps	Completed
Interactive data viewer	Land systems portal for combining and improving access to land data	Data and maps	Completed
Interactive data viewer	Corine Land Cover country fact sheets, 2018 and 2012-2018 change analysis for EEA-38 and the UK	Data and maps	Completed
Joint report	Soil condition in Europe	Joint report	Postponed
Thematic EEA indicator	Update of contaminated sites indicator (based on Eionet inputs)	Indicators	Postponed
Contributions to key processes	Review of thematic indicator set for land and soils	Joint products and contributions	Completed

SA1.9 Waste and material resources

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
EEA report	Managing bio-waste in Europe — turning challenges into opportunities	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 4/2020
Briefing	Emerging challenges of waste management in Europe: the limits of recycling	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 3/2020
Briefing (added in 2020)	The opportunities of digitalisation for waste management in Europe	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 26/2020

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet report (added in 2020)	Guideline on evaluation of waste prevention programmes	Eionet report	Completed
Country fact sheet	Waste prevention fact sheets	Assessment	Postponed to 2021
Webinar	Eionet webinar: waste prevention	Meeting	Completed

SA2.1 Resource-efficient economy and the environment

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Macro-economic transition: framing of what's at stake	EEA report	Postponed to 2021
Eionet meetings	NRC on Resource efficiency and circular economy	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Increasing circularity in European industry — resource efficiency, pollution reduction and use of raw materials	Standard EEA report	Cancelled
Signals-style report	Curbing the environmental pressures from plastics	Signals-style report	Completed EEA Report No 18/2020
Briefing (added in 2020)	Innovative business models, a key for success towards a more circular economy in Europe	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 22/2020
Briefing	Environment and climate pressures from plastic use in textiles	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 25/2020
Briefing	Europe's consumption in a circular economy: the benefits of longer lasting electronics	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 2/2020
Briefing (added in 2020)	Biodegradable and compostable plastics — challenges and opportunities	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 9/2020
Eionet report	National circular economy monitoring frameworks	Eionet report	Postponed to 2021
Expert meeting	Macro-economic transitions	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Contribution to key processes	Environmental policy integration: design of analytical methodology	Working paper	Completed

SA2.2 Environment, human health and well-being

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meetings	NRC on Environment and health	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing	Safe by design chemicals — opportunities to protect health and Europe's ecosystems	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 29/2020
Report	Healthy environment, healthy lives: how the environment influences health and well-being in Europe	Report	Completed
Meeting	Ad hoc expert group meeting on chemicals	Workshops and meetings	Completed

SA2.3 Megatrends and transitions

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
EEA briefing	Growth without economic growth, narrative of change	Briefing	Completed
Eionet meetings	NRC FLIS meetings and webinars	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Country fact sheet	Global megatrends and their impacts at national level — country case studies	Reports and assessments (changed to HTML/composite)	Postponed
Expert meeting	NRC FLIS experts on finalisation of co-created FLIS product(s)	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Stakeholder interaction meeting	Meeting on food systems on measurement and monitoring as first step in preparation of the next EEA food report	Workshops and meetings	Postponed to Q2-2021

SA2.4 Sustainability assessments and state of the environment reporting

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Standard EEA report	Urban sustainability in Europe – what is driving cities' environmental change	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 16/2020

Standard EEA report	From knowledge to action report, based on the SOER 2020 integrated assessment report	EEA report	Postponed to 2021
Joint report	Within limits of the planet report, an EKC knowledge innovation project	Joint report	Completed EEA Report No 1/2020
Eionet meetings	NRC on SoE meetings and webinars	Webinars, meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Country fact sheets	State of environment reporting country fact sheets co-created with NRCs on SoE	Reports and assessments	Completed
Contributions to key processes	Resource nexus approach to analysing system complexity and implications for policy coherence, 'Assessing transboundary issues through a systemic lens: insights and proposals from EEA's sustainability assessment reporting'	Working papers	Completed
Contributions to key processes	Socio-ecological perspective of sustainability transitions	Working papers	Completed
Contributions to key processes	SDGs — framing an integrated analysis from the systems of production and consumption perspective	Working papers	Cancelled
Country fact sheets	Eionet country briefings drawing out key environment findings from submissions to the UN	Reports and assessments	Completed
Contributions to key processes	Brief reports arising from individual SOER 2020 stakeholder interaction process events	Working papers	Completed
Stakeholder interaction meetings	Stakeholder interaction meetings on SOER 2020 outcomes with civil society, the EU research community and EEA stakeholders	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Stakeholder interaction meeting	Fourth urban sustainability stakeholders meeting	Workshop and meetings	Completed
Stakeholder interaction meeting	Sustainable finance initiative implementation of the taxonomy and stakeholder platform	Workshop and meetings	Postponed
Stakeholder interaction meeting	Frameworks and methodologies for sustainability monitoring — examples of best practice across Europe	Workshop and meetings	Completed
Stakeholder interaction meeting	Workshop on quality of evidence and uncertainty	Workshop and meetings	Completed
Contributions to key processes	Maximise EEA knowledge inputs to the Environmental Implementation Review, the 8th EAP and the EU Semester process	Working papers	Completed
Indicators	Revision of EEA indicators to maximise policy relevance and communication value under new EEA-Eionet strategy	Indicators	Completed
Contribution to key processes	Input to the taxonomy report by the EU Technical Expert Group on Sustainable Finance	Joint report	Completed
Contribution to key processes	Input to the Platform on Sustainable Finance in line with EEA legal obligation under Regulation (EU) 2020/852	Working papers	Completed

SA3.1 Networking and partnerships

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meetings	NFP/Eionet meetings	Eionet meetings	Completed
Eionet meetings	NFP/Eionet webinars	Eionet meetings	Completed

SA3.2 Technical systems development

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meetings	Eionet workshop: NRC on Environmental information systems	Workshop and meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
	Reportnet 3.0 Project deliverables planned for 2020, including pilots or test cases	Information system	Completed
	Support EU policy-specific information systems	Information system	Completed
	European integrated data platform	Information system	Completed

SA3.3 Monitoring data and information management

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing	Eionet country core data flows 2019	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 7/2020
	User support to external software applications for data mining, processing and analysis, i.e. Tableau, FME, ArcGIS	Information system	Completed
	Mainstreaming GEOSS sharing and management principles in support of Europe's environment	Data and maps	Completed

SA3.4 Communication, outreach and user analysis

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meeting	Annual meeting and communication activities with Eionet NRC on Communication	Workshops and meetings	Completed
Signals-style report	Signals 2020	Signals-style report	Completed Signals 2020

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Briefing (added in 2020)	COVID-19 and Europe's environment: impacts of a global pandemic	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 13/2020
Diverse	SOER 2020 communication	Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Biodiversity communication	Communication products	Completed
Online	Quarterly online corporate newsletter	Communication products	Completed Issue 2020/4, 16.12.2020 Issue 2020/3, 16.09.2020 Issue 2020/2, 15.06.2020 Issue 2020/1, 20.03.2020
Online	Improved user experience of EEA website	Information systems	Completed
PDF	EEA stakeholder analysis	Corporate document	Completed
PDF	EEA communication framework 2021 onwards	Corporate document	Ongoing
Online	Media relations	Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Production and dissemination of quality-assured and targeted EEA outputs (editing, publishing and dissemination)	Reports/assessments Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Dialogue activities such as face-to-face meetings, events, conferences and workshops, enquiry service	Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Promotion of EEA outputs and messages through social media channels	Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Customer relations and targeted dissemination to stakeholders	Communication products	Completed
Diverse	Evaluation of uptake, reach and impact of EEA outputs	Corporate products	Completed
Diverse	Strive towards the use of EU official languages when communicating with the public, translations	Communication products	Completed

SA3.5 Quality management and operational services

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
	EEA ICT infrastructure and services	Information system	Completed
	IT helpdesk support	Information system	Completed

SA3.6 Copernicus operational services ⁽¹⁶⁾

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Eionet meetings	Eionet workshop NRC on Land cover	Workshops and meetings	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
	Land use and land cover change data services of the pan-European and the local component of the CLMS	Data and maps	Completed
	Management of the land.copernicus.eu portal for access to Copernicus land monitoring products and services	Information system	Completed
	Management of the insitu.copernicus.eu portal for access to Copernicus in situ data	Information system	Completed

SA3.7 Capacity building in Western Balkan and European neighbourhood countries ⁽¹⁷⁾

Outputs (key activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
Report/assessment	Regional assessment report on the Mediterranean — second Horizon 2020 regional assessment	EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 7/2020
Joint report (carried over from 2019)	EEA UNEP/MAP second joint report on Horizon 2020 for a cleaner Mediterranean	Joint report	Completed EEA Report No 8/2020
Briefing (added in 2020)	Protected areas in the Eastern Partnership countries	Briefing	Completed EEA Briefing No 8/2020 Russian version
Report (added in 2020)	Water availability, surface water quality and water use in the Eastern Partnership countries. An indicator-based assessment	Standard EEA report	Completed EEA Report No 14/2020
Publication/ brochure	Publication on the EEA's cooperation with the ENI East countries under an externally funded project	Corporate document	Completed

⁽¹⁶⁾ EEA work under this strategic area is funded through a delegation agreement between the European Commission and the EEA, and agreed through a separate annual work programme.

⁽¹⁷⁾ All activities in this work area are financed through grant agreements between the European Commission and the EEA. Continuation of activities with the Western Balkans (2020-2022) under IPA funding contracted through DG NEAR is in place; the further cooperation with the ENI regions East and South beyond 2020 is under discussion with relevant EC services and awaiting the operationalisation of the new funding instrument (NDICI).

SA4.1 Governance and management*Outputs (key activities)*

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
EEA report	EEA-Eionet strategy 2021-2030	Corporate document	Completed

Outputs (supporting activities)

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
	EEA Single Programming Document	Corporate document	Completed
	EEA CAAR	Corporate document	Completed

SA4.2 Administration*Outputs (supporting activities)*

Format	Description	Product type	Outcome
	Reply to European Parliament's discharge 2018	Corporate product	Completed
	Compliance reporting: Reply to ECA Internal Audit Service	Corporate products	Completed
	Annual accounts	Corporate products	Completed
	Budgetary and financial management report	Corporate products	Completed

Annex 10

Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Name
7th EAP	Seventh Environment Action Programme
8th EAP	Eighth Environment Action Programme
ABW	Activity-based work
ADS	Administrative services programme of the EEA
BD 2020	EU biodiversity strategy to 2020
BD 2030	EU biodiversity strategy for 2030
BISE	Biodiversity Information System for Europe
BWD	Bathing Water Directive
C3S	Copernicus climate change service
CA	Contract agent
CAAR	Consolidated annual activity report
CAP	EU common agricultural policy
CAS	Coordination and strategy programme of the EEA
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDDA	Common Database on Designated Areas
CDS	Climate data store
CEAP	Circular economy action plan
CERT-EU	Computer Emergency Response Team for the EU
CET	Climate change, energy and transport programme of the EEA
CLC	Corine Land Cover
CLC+ BB	Corine land cover plus BackBone
Climate-ADAPT	European Climate Adaptation Platform
CLMS	Copernicus land monitoring service
CLRTAP	Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution
CMEMS	Copernicus marine environment monitoring service
COM	Communications programme of the EEA
CONT	Committee on Budgetary Control
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSI	Core set indicator
DA	Delegation agreement
DG	European Commission Directorate-General

DG CLIMA	DG for Climate Action
DG DEFIS	DG for Defence Industry and Space
DG ENV	DG for the Environment
DG GROW	DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
DG NEAR	DG for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
DG RTD	DG for Research and Innovation
DIS	Data and information services programme of the EEA
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDE	European Climate Data Explorer
ECMWF	European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts
EDO	Executive Director's Office
EEA	European Environment Agency
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EGMS	European Ground Motion Service
Eionet	European Environment Information and Observation Network
EKC	Environmental Knowledge Community
EMAS	Eco-Management and audit scheme
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EPA Network	European Network of the Heads of Environment Protection Agencies
E-PRTR	European Pollutants Release and Transfer Register
EREN	Emerging Risk Expert Network
ETC	European Topic Centre
ETC/ULS	ETC on Urban, Land and Soil Systems
ETC/WMGE	ETC on Waste and Materials in a Green Economy
ETS	Emissions Trading System
EU	European Union
EUMETSAT	European operational satellite agency for monitoring weather, climate and environment from space
EUNIS	European Nature Information System
F-gas	Fluorinated greenhouse gas
FD	Floods Directive
FISE	Forest Information System for Europe
FLIS	Forward-looking information and services
GEO	Group on Earth Observations
GEOSS	Global Earth Observation System of Systems
HBM4EU	Human Biomonitoring for Europe
Horizon 2020	International initiative to tackle pollution in the Mediterranean by 2020
HRL	High-resolution layer

HRL2018	High-resolution layer for the reference year 2018
HR-S&I	High-resolution snow and ice
HR-VPP	High-resolution vegetation phenology and productivity
HSR	Health and sustainable resource use programme of the EEA
IAC	Internal audit capability
IAS	Integrated assessments for sustainability programme of the EEA
ICT	Information and communications technology
IED	Industrial Emissions Directive
Inspire	Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPCHEM	Information Platform for Chemical Monitoring
IT	Information technology
JEDI	Joint Environmental Data Infrastructure
JRC	Joint Research Centre
KPI	Key performance indicator
LCP	Large combustion plant
LRTAP	Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (UNECE Convention)
LUCAS	Land use and coverage frame survey
LULUCF	Land use, land use change and forestry
MAES	Mapping and assessment of ecosystems and their services
MFA	Multi-factor authentication
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Natura 2000	EU-wide network of nature protection areas established under the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive
NCE	Natural capital and ecosystems programme of the EEA
NEC	National Emission reduction Commitment (Directive)
NFP	National focal point
NRC	National Reference Centre
NRT	Near-real time
ODS	Ozone-depleting substance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAMs	Policies and measures
PARC	Proposed future partnership for the assessment of risk from chemicals
QMS	Quality management system
ROD	Reporting Obligations Database
SA	Strategic area
SC	EEA Scientific Committee
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SDI	Spatial data infrastructure

SEBI	Streamlining European biodiversity indicators
SEIS	Shared Environmental Information System for Europe
SoE	State of Environment
SOER 2020	The European environment — State and outlook 2020 report
SOER 2025	The European environment — State and outlook 2025 report
TA	Temporary agent
TERM	Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism
UN	United Nations
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP/MAP	United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UWWTD	Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
VHR2018	Very high-resolution imagery from the reference year 2018
WEkEO	EU Copernicus DIAS reference service for environmental data, virtual processing environments and skilled user support
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WHO	World Health Organization
WISE	Water Information System for Europe

Annex 11

ECA report on the annual accounts 2019



EUROPEAN
COURT
OF AUDITORS

Report on the annual accounts of the European Environment Agency (EEA) for the financial year 2019,

together with the Agency's reply

Introduction

01 The European Environment Agency (“the Agency”, or “EEA”), which is located in Copenhagen, was established by Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90¹. The Agency is responsible for setting up an observation network to provide the Commission, the Parliament, the Member States and, more generally, the public with reliable information on the state of the environment. This information should, in particular, enable the European Union and the Member States to take action to safeguard the environment and assess the effectiveness of such action.

02 *Graph 1* presents key figures for the Agency².

Graph 1: Key figures for the Agency



* Budget figures are based on the total payment appropriations available during the financial year.

** “Staff” includes EU officials, EU temporary agents, EU contract staff and seconded national experts, but excludes interim workers and consultants.

Source: Consolidated annual accounts of the European Union for the financial year 2018 and Provisional consolidated annual accounts of the European Union Financial year 2019; Staff figures provided by the Agency.

Information in support of the statement of assurance

03 The audit approach taken by the Court comprises analytical audit procedures, direct testing of transactions and an assessment of key controls of the Agency’s supervisory and control systems. This is supplemented by evidence provided by the work of other auditors and an analysis of information provided by the Agency’s management.

¹ OJ L 120, 11.5.1990, p. 1, repealed by Regulation (EC) No 401/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the European Environment Agency and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (OJ L 126, 21.5.2009, p. 13).

² More information on the Agency’s competences and activities is available on its website: www.eea.europa.eu.

The Court's statement of assurance provided to the European Parliament and the Council – Independent auditor's report

Opinion

04 We have audited:

- (a) the accounts of the Agency which comprise the financial statements³ and the reports on the implementation of the budget⁴ for the financial year ended 31 December 2019 and
- (b) the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying those accounts

as required by Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Reliability of the accounts

Opinion on the reliability of the accounts

05 In our opinion, the accounts of the Agency for the year ended 31 December 2019 present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Agency at 31 December 2019, the results of its operations, its cash flows, and the changes in net assets for the year then ended, in accordance with its Financial Regulation and with accounting rules adopted by the Commission's accounting officer. These are based on internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector.

³ The financial statements comprise the balance sheet, the statement of financial performance, the cash flow statement, the statement of changes in net assets and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

⁴ The reports on implementation of the budget comprise the reports which aggregate all budgetary operations and the explanatory notes.

Legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the accounts

Revenue

Opinion on the legality and regularity of revenue underlying the accounts

06 In our opinion, revenue underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 is legal and regular in all material respects.

Payments

Opinion on the legality and regularity of payments underlying the accounts

07 In our opinion, payments underlying the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 are legal and regular in all material respects.

Basis for opinions

08 We conducted our audit in accordance with the IFAC International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) and Codes of Ethics and the INTOSAI International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Auditor's responsibilities' section of our report. We are independent, in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants issued by the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA Code) and with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of management and those charged with governance

09 In accordance with Articles 310 to 325 of the TFEU and the Agency's Financial Regulation, the Agency's management is responsible for preparing and presenting the Agency's accounts on the basis of internationally accepted accounting standards for the public sector and for the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. This includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal controls relevant to the preparation and presentation of

financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. The Agency's management is also responsible for ensuring that the activities, financial transactions and information reflected in the financial statements comply with the official requirements which govern those statements. The Agency's management bears the ultimate responsibility for the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying the Agency's accounts.

10 In preparing the accounts, the Agency's management is responsible for assessing the Agency's ability to continue as a going concern. It must disclose, as applicable, any matters affecting the agency's status as a going concern, and use the going concern basis of accounting, unless management either intends to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

11 Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Agency's financial reporting process.

The auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the accounts and underlying transactions

12 Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the accounts of the Agency are free from material misstatement and the transactions underlying them are legal and regular, and to provide, on the basis of our audit, the European Parliament and the Council or the other respective discharge authorities with statements of assurance as to the reliability of the Agency's accounts and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit will always detect a material misstatement or non-compliance when it exists. These can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these accounts.

13 For revenue, we verify subsidies received from the Commission or cooperating countries and assess the Agency's procedures for collecting fees and other income, if any.

14 For expenditure, we examine payment transactions when expenditure has been incurred, recorded and accepted. This examination covers all categories of payments (including those made for the purchase of assets) other than advances at the point they are made. Advance payments are examined when the recipient of funds provides justification for their proper use and the Agency accepts the justification by clearing the advance payment, whether in the same year or later.

15 In accordance with the ISAs and ISSAIs, we exercise our professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the accounts and of material non-compliance of the underlying transactions with the requirements of the legal framework of the European Union, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinions. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement or non-compliance resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the overriding of internal controls.
- Obtain an understanding of internal controls relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of the accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Agency's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the accounts or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause an entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the accounts, including the disclosures, and whether the accounts represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence regarding the financial information of the Agency to express an opinion on the accounts and transactions underlying them. We are responsible for the direction, supervision and performance of the audit. We remain solely responsible for our audit opinion.
- Considered the audit work of the independent external auditor performed on the Agency's accounts as stipulated in Article 70(6) of the EU Financial Regulation, where applicable.

We communicate with the management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal controls that we identify during our audit. From the matters on which we communicated with the Agency, we determine those matters that were of most significance in the audit of the accounts of the current period and are therefore the key audit matters. We describe these matters in our auditor's report unless law or regulation precludes public disclosure about the matter or when, in extremely rare circumstances, we determine that a matter should not be communicated in our report because the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.

16 The observations which follow do not call the Court's opinion into question.

Observations on internal controls

17 The Agency has a contract in place for the provision of database and dissemination services. The ceiling of this contract is 200 000 euros. By the time of our audit, the Agency had purchased services to the value of 238 456 euros, thereby exceeding the contractual ceiling by 38 456 euros (19,2 %). This control failure occurred because the Agency did not correctly monitor the accumulative consumption of the contract before placing new orders.

Follow-up of previous years' observations

18 An overview of the action taken in response to the Court's observations from previous years is provided in the **Annex**.

This Report was adopted by Chamber IV, headed by Mr Alex Brenninkmeijer, Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg on 22 September 2020.

For the Court of Auditors



Klaus-Heiner Lehne
President

Annex - Follow-up of previous years' observations

Year	Court's observations	Action taken to respond to Court's observations (Completed / Ongoing / Outstanding / N/A)
2017	The Agency publishes vacancy notices on its own website and on social media, but not on the website of the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO).	Completed
2018	The Agency terminated a contract for IT consultancy due to unsatisfactory contractor's performance. A new contract was signed however, the technical specifications do not contain elements that would neutralise the risk of similar problems. The Agency should only award contracts if satisfactory performance can be expected.	N/A
2018	The Agency increased the ceiling of a framework contract without formalising it through a contract amendment. EEA should improve its monitoring of framework contract ceilings and formalise any contract modifications in line with public procurement provisions.	Ongoing
2018	The Agency should adopt and implement a sensitive posts policy.	Ongoing

European Environment Agency

The Agency's reply

Observations on internal controls

17. The Agency acknowledges the correctness of the observation.

The Agency uses the ABAC Legal Commitment Kernel (LCK) as a control tool for FWC consumption. In this instance the control failed firstly, because the FWC consumption was not checked prior to placing the specific contract. Secondly, manual consumption, being specific contracts that had already been closed when the Agency commenced the use of the LCK in January 2018, was not correctly captured. Therefore, no warning was triggered when this specific contract was entered in the LCK.

Despite the control failure, the Agency is confident that a thorough exercise of capturing manual consumption for all contracts was conducted when the LCK was launched and that contracts are entered into the LCK in a timely manner, so that it remains an effective control.

Finance, resource and authorising officers will be reminded to always check available FWC budget within ceilings prior to placing specific contracts and to ensure timely updating of the LCK.

Actions taken by the EEA on the follow up of European Court of Auditors' previous years recommendations

Prior to the audit by the ECA of the EEA for 2020, the EEA took the below actions to implement the ECA's recommendations from prior years' audits.

Year	ECA's observations	Action taken to respond to the ECA's observation
2018	The Agency increased the ceiling of a framework contract without formalising it through a contract amendment. EEA should improve its monitoring of framework contract ceilings and formalise any contract modifications in line with public procurement provisions.	The Agency reviewed its manual of procedure on public procurement and contract management in April 2020 to include additional information on contract amendment in line with the Court recommendation.
2018	The Agency should adopt and implement a sensitive posts policy.	The Agency's Management Board adopted an updated policy regarding sensitive posts in December 2020.
2019	The Agency did not correctly monitor the accumulative consumption of a contract before placing new orders. This resulted in the Agency purchasing services exceeding the contractual ceiling by €38 456 (19.2 %).	The Agency uses the ABAC Legal Commitment Kernel (LCK) as a control tool for FWC consumption. It has taken action training and informing finance, resource and authorising officers to ensure the available FWC budget within ceilings is checked prior to placing specific contracts, and to ensure timely updating of the LCK.

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