



43rd Scientific Committee
Doc. EEA/SC/43/03
8 October 2008

Final minutes of 42nd meeting of the EEA Scientific Committee Copenhagen, 7 May 2008

A. PARTICIPANTS – see the list in annexes under item E

Pamela Kennedy from JRC attended the meeting as observer. Apologies were received from László Somlyódy, Teresa Andresen, Andre Berger, Helmut Haberl, Manfred Kleemann, Franc Lobnik, Juan Martinez-Alier, Julius Oszlányi, Peter Wadhams, and from the following observers Ludo Holsbeek (EP nominee), Ahmet Saatçi (Marmara University) and Christian Heidorn (Eurostat). The meeting was chaired by the SC Vice-Chairman, Detlef Sprinz.

B. AGENDA – see annexes under item E

The tabled documents were acknowledged under the respective agenda items throughout the meeting (listed in annex 1 under item E).

C. PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 6 May 2008

The Scientific Committee dedicated the seminar on the format and structure of the State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2010, taking into account some lessons learned from the production of the previous SoE report in 2005. D.Stanners (EEA) presented the anticipated process and some initial ideas on the report content, structure, geographical coverage and output formats. In the discussion that followed the members emphasised the importance of tailoring the report to the targeted users, explore various format for its publication and demonstrate the impact of Europe on the rest of the world and vice versa. The committee underlined the independent nature any environmental assessment should have. The members also took note of the main findings of the effectiveness evaluation study of SOER 2005, which were presented by Tarja Porkka (EEA).

The members expressed an interest to be involved in the further process, particularly in the planning and evaluation stages. The SC members decided to wrap up the discussion the following day and then decide on the production of a SC opinion on SOER2010 in support of the further process (see item 8 below).

Wednesday, 7 May 2008

Item 1. Opening and welcome by the SC Vice-Chair Detlef Sprinz

The Vice-Chairman welcomed the members to the 42nd SC meeting and passed on apologies on behalf of the members, who were unable to be present (see the Attendance list in annex 2). He confirmed that the necessary quorum for holding the meeting was in place.

Item 2. Adoption of the draft agenda

The committee adopted the 42nd SC agenda (final version in Annex I). The members agreed that any additional issues should be raised under AOB (item11).

Item 3. Approval of minutes of 41st Scientific Committee 20 February 2008

With a small correction under item 11, the Scientific Committee adopted the minutes of its 41st meeting held on 20 February 2008 (final version of Doc. EEA/SC/42/03 available on CIRCA).

Item 4. Update by the Executive Director on EEA developments since the February SC meeting

Further to the written report provided in advance of the meeting, the Executive Director updated the committee on some key topics tackled by EEA in the period since the February SC meeting:

- After the publication of the Communication on SEIS, the Agency continued to be strongly involved in the country diagnostic visits that would feed in the subsequent development of the SEIS implementation plan in the coming months. She underlined the importance of promoting SEIS on a wider scale in the countries and possibly – with the help of the SC members – identify and address the right scientific community during these visits.
- In the recent months the GMES discussions have moved forward; an immediate aim for the in-situ working group was to establish a more dynamic interaction between the identified four fast-track projects. Austria and Slovenia have volunteered to lead the committee on in-situ observation.
- EEA was continuing its joint work with JRC on the 'Beyond GDP' initiative.
- The Executive Director also updated the committee on the most recent EEA publications and various upcoming events.

Following the Executive Director's update, the committee was informed on the media inquiries and contacts following the publication of the Scientific Committee's opinion on biofuels in late March. All in all, out of the approximate 100 inquiries dealt by the Agency, around 60 were coming from media. Once EEA prepared its media monitoring report for the month of April, it would be forwarded to the SC members. The Executive Director thanked the committee for the proactive approach on that matter and welcomed the SC involvement on similar issues in future, one of which could be the cross-cutting area of sustainable mobility.

Item 5. Economic valuation of ecosystem services – update on COP in Bonn

During her update, the Executive Director touched upon the EEA input to the 'Potsdam' report to be presented at the Biodiversity COP meeting on 28-30 May in Bonn. The Agency had been in active discussions with the study leader on the format and messages in the report. In parallel, EEA had also produced underpinning reports on forests and wetlands.

Item 6. Process towards the next EEA Strategy 2009-2013 since the February meeting of the Scientific Committee

The Scientific Committee took note of the process on the development of the new EEA Strategy over the past couple of months. The formal consultation process would be open after the June Board meeting and the SC members would be invited to comments on both – draft Strategy 2009-13 and AMP2009.

As required by the EEA Regulation, the committee should issue an opinion on these documents at its October meeting.

The Executive Director also informed the committee that the effectiveness evaluation of the current strategy was going on and the members would be informed of the findings at a later stage.

Item 7. Presentation on the burden of evidence around modern technologies (EMF, nanotechnologies, GMOs) and EEA role on that

David Gee (EEA) made a presentation 'From Knowledge to Evidence: Towards Transparent and Justified Judgements' that can be found on [CIRCA](#). He said that the Late Lessons vol.2 was on its way with chapters grouped in 5 sections. He also informed the members on the upcoming workshop in end of May on risk assessment terminology and various approaches to evaluating scientific evidence on environmental and health issues, organised jointly with DG Sanco and ECDC.

The SC members agreed on the need to raise awareness on this issue with the scientific community and that scientific committees, as well as EEA, should be pro-active in identifying early warnings. SC members highlighted the importance of assuring the quality of relevant data and referred to current efforts to develop international norms on risk management. Making decision-makers aware of the strength of evidence was recognised as a challenging task since uncertainty was difficult to handle on the policy side. The importance of risk management, comparison of false positives versus false negatives and demonstration of non-marketable impact of a certain action were also mentioned.

The SC members were invited to contact David Gee should they be interested to join the further deliberations on this topic and the workshop on 28-29 May.

Item 8. Conclusions and follow-up from the SC discussion on SOER2010. SC recommendation to the Board on the format and structure

Following from the discussions from the day before, the committee members considered the potential users, structure and geographical coverage, as well as architecture and output formats of the SOER2010. The SC members recommended considering some lessons learned from the SOER2005 process. They also noted the importance of the methodology selected for the SoE production and the transboundary nature of the report that plays a role in capacity building and information awareness on environmental issues beyond Europe.

The SC members agreed to collect all the comments in a recommendation to be produced in the following weeks under T.Vermeire's directions and presented to the Management Board in June. Additionally, D. Stanners (EEA) informed the members that the input from the NFP discussion on SOER on 21 May would also feed to the Board and that the topic of the MB Seminar in November would be SOER2010. Furthermore there was a joint NFP/NRC SoE workshop scheduled to take place in late September, which could be attended by interested SC members.

Recommendation: The committee members agreed to produce a SC recommendation on the SOER2010 taking into account the discussions during the SC Seminar on 6 May. After the summer EEA should come up with an annotated table of content of the report and propose a format for the regional assessments.

Item 9. 2008 call for SC experts and appointment of SC representatives to the evaluation process

The Executive Director informed the members that the call for new members to the Scientific Committee had been published the day before. The evaluation process should involve both SC and MB representatives and would be staggered into a screening phase and interview panel over the next couple of months.

Yves Desaubies and Marc Bonazountas volunteered to join the evaluation process on behalf of the EEA Scientific Committee.

Recommendation: Given the number of absent members, it was agreed that the SC Secretariat shall inform the whole committee on the open call and the upcoming evaluation after the meeting.

Item 10. Proposed topics for the SC seminar in October 2008

The Chairman of the meeting referred to the list of proposed topics and presenters drawn up earlier in the year; the theme of the SC Seminar in October could be on the use of environmental directives and their implementation.

Recommendation: To discuss with Teresa Andresen and Pierre Laconte the possibility to give a talk at the SC seminar on the above topic on 7 October.

Item 11. Any other business

Under this agenda item, T. Zylicz attracted members' attention to a deliberated Gazprom project to build a pipeline across the Baltic Sea and questioned its compliance with EU environmental requirements considering the marine ecosystem vulnerability of the Baltic Sea. The members agreed on the political sensitivity of such a project and asked to be informed about any further developments. Depending on further developments, the SC will revisit the issue.

Furthermore, the Executive Director wrapped up the meeting by listing some of the agenda items for the October SC meeting, i.e. committee's opinion on the EEA Strategy/Multi-annual Work Programme 2009-13 and AMP2009, follow-up on the SOER2010 discussion, update on GMES fast track services, feedback from the effectiveness evaluation of the current Strategy and election of both – a new SC Chair- and one Vice-Chairperson.

In closing, the Chairman of the meeting reminded the members of the upcoming meetings in May: 'Bridging the Gap' Conference on 14-16 in Slovenia and the NFP/Eionet meeting on 21-22.

The meeting closed at 16:30.

ACTION LIST – 42nd Scientific Committee, 7 May 2008

Item	Action	Status 20 August 2008
3	To upload the final version of 41 st SC minutes on CIRCA and the web	Done
4	To involve interested SC members/ scientific community in the SEIS discussion during the diagnostic visits to the EEA member countries	Regular updates to be provided to the SC
4	To provide the SC with the full media monitoring report for the month of April when finalised	Done – update sent out on 19 May
6	To involve the SC members in the consultation process on the next EEA Strategy and AMP2009	Done – consultation process launched on 24 June 2008 (with deadline 15 July)
7	The members interested in the further discussions on the burden of scientific evidence and the workshop organised by EEA on 28-29 May to get in touch with David Gee (EEA)	In process
8	The SC to draft an opinion/ recommendation on the main lines for developing SOER2010 and share it in advance of the MB meeting in June	Done – SC recommendation finalised by 29 May & included in the background papers for the MB meeting on 18 June
8	EEA to present the committee with an annotated table of contents and proposed format for the regional assessments for the October SC meeting	Ongoing – on the agenda of the 43 rd SC meeting on 8 October
9	SC Secretariat to inform all the members of the committee on the open call for SC experts and the upcoming evaluation	Done – Yves and Marc to join the evaluation process as SC representatives
10	To select topic(s) for the October SC Seminar with the members, who have volunteered to present their a topic (esp. T.Andresen and P.Laconté)	In process

E. ANNEXES

- Annex 1 – Agenda of the 42nd meeting of the EEA Scientific Committee
- Annex 2 – Attendance list to the 42nd SC meeting, 6-7 May 2008
- Annex 3 – EEA Scientific Committee Recommendation on SoER 2010 (as of 29 May 2008)

Annex 1 - Agenda of the 42nd meeting of the EEA Scientific Committee

Tuesday, 6 May 2008, 17:30-19:30, Auditorium – Kongens Nytorv 28

SC seminar on Environmental Assessments, with a special focus on SC input to the format and structure of the State of the Environment Report 2010

Presented and co-chaired by D. Sprinz (SC) and D. Stanners (EEA)

Presentation on the effectiveness evaluation of SOER 2005 by *Tarja Porkka*

Brainstorming and discussion

Dinner with the SC members (EEA canteen)

Wednesday, 7 May 2008, 09:30-17:00, room 28.2.2 at KN 28

1. Opening and welcome by the SC Vice-Chair, Detlef Sprinz
2. Adoption of the draft agenda – *for decision*
3. Approval of minutes of the 41st Scientific Committee held on 20 February 2008 – *for decision*
4. Update by the Executive Director on scientific developments in EEA since the February SC meeting
5. Economic valuation of ecosystem services - update on COP meeting in Bonn
6. Process towards the next EEA Strategy 2009-2013 since the February meeting of the Scientific Committee
7. Presentation on the burden of evidence around modern technologies (EMF, nanotechnologies, GMOs) and EEA role on that – *by David Gee*
Discussion
8. Conclusions and follow-up from the SC discussion on SOER2010. SC recommendation to the Management Board on the format and structure
9. 2008 call for SC experts and appointment of SC representatives to the evaluation process
10. Proposed topics for the SC seminar in October 2008
11. Any other business

Tabled documents:

- Item 4. Activity summary of the EEA's press office following the publication of the SC opinion on biofuels
- Item 8. SC input to the discussion on the SOER2010 report received in advance of the SC Seminar on 6 May
- Item 11. Draft programme for the workshop on Risk Assessment Terminology and Evaluating Scientific Evidence, 28-29 May, EEA

**Annex 2 – Attendance list
EEA 42nd Scientific Committee meeting, 6-7 May 2008, Copenhagen**

NAME	ORGANISATION	SIGNATURE
SC members		
Teresa ANDRESEN	Departamento de Botânica Faculdade de Ciências- Universidade do Porto	Apologies
André BERGER	Institut d'astronomie et de Géophysique G Lemaître, Université Catholique de Louvain	Apologies
Marc BONAZOUNTAS	Epsilon International SA	Signed
Pierluigi COCCO	Department of Public Health, University of Cagliari	Signed
Yves DESAUBIES	IFREMER	Signed
Helmut HABERL	Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies of Austrian Universities	Apologies
Ulrike KASTRUP	SBB – Swiss Federal Railways	Signed
Manfred KLEEMANN	Research Centre Jülich	Apologies
Pierre LACONTE	Foundation for the Urban Environment	Signed
Franc LOBNIK	Biotechnical Faculty, Center for Soil and Environmental Sciences	Apologies
Juan MARTINEZ-ALIER	Department of Economics and Economic History, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona	Apologies
Nadia PINARDI	University of Bologna	Signed
Július OSZLÁNYI	Institute of Landscape Ecology, Slovak Academy of Sciences	Apologies
László SOMLYÓDY	Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Department of Sanitary and Environmental Engineering	Apologies
Detlef SPRINZ	PIK-Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, Global Change and Social Systems	Signed

Theo VERMÉIRE	National Institute of Public Health and Environment (RIVM)	Signed
Peter WADHAMS	Centre for Mathematical Sciences, University of Cambridge	Apologies
Tomasz ZYLICZ	Economics Department, Warsaw University	Signed
Guest		
Christian HEIDORN	Eurostat	Apologies
Ludo HOLSBECK	Free University of Brussels, EP nominee	Apologies
Pamela KENNEDY	JRC	Signed
Ahmet Mete SAATÇI	Marmara University	Apologies
EEA Staff		
Jacqueline McGLADE	EEA Executive Director	Signed
Marion HANNERUP	Head of Programme – Communication and Corporate Affairs (CCA)	Signed
Galina GEORGIEVA	Scientific Committee secretariat, CCA1	Signed

Annex 3

EEA Scientific Committee Recommendation: SoER 2010 29 May 2008



The European Environment Agency (EEA) has established itself as the main reporting agency on the European environment. THE one mandated report from EEA is the State of the European Environment Report (SoER, article 2 of Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 of 7 May 1990). The next SoER is due for 2010 and EEA has started preparations via consultations of NFP, Eionet, staff and through a user questionnaire. The EEA Staff will present a proposal on the structure and the format of SoER 2010 to the Management Board in June 2008.

The EEA Scientific Committee acknowledges the high importance and potential usefulness of the SoER. The Committee would like to be involved in the production process, notably in the planning and evaluation stages. Therefore, it has appointed one of its members as liaison between the EEA and the Committee. The Committee discussed SoER 2010 at the 42th Meeting on May 6 and 7. The following recommendation is the result of that discussion. It subsequently reflects on the customers for SoER, the lessons learned from SoER 2005, and structure and format of SoER2010.

The customer

The actual use and impact of SoER reports has not been measured consistently, but is considered to be too limited by the Committee. The main, current customers are considered to be the EEA and network partners, political decision-makers, and stakeholders. Academics use the SoER for teaching purposes and the press uses the material as background information. Use of the underlying data by scientists is considered to be too limited.

It is recommended to start measuring the use and impact of SoERs on a regular basis and to explore ways to better reach major potential users, including scientists, the youngsters, as well as the general public at large. The different target groups will need partly different products (see below).

Better dissemination into the scientific community would also depend on communication of main results of the report through channels popular within the scientific communities, i.e. scientific conferences and journals, in addition to media targeted to general audiences that already broadly report on EEA's SoERs. To that end, the Agency might consider publishing key insights into major scientific journals around the date of publication of the main report, providing links to data available online and to the EEA website.

Lessons from SoER 2005

Important lessons are the necessity of an early start of the production process and, first of all, with a thorough consideration of the target groups to be reached, as well as the type of product(s) most suitable for an effective communication. The Scientific Committee strongly recommends to maintain several positive elements of SoER2005, notably the overall quality and presentation of the information, the consideration of indicator uncertainties and the A (integrated assessments)-B (thematic, indicator-based assessments) -C (country assessments) structure used. A sequential roll-out of these sections and other publications derived from it could increase their impact.

With regard to the content, it is recommended to again concentrate on state, drivers and impacts and projections, but also to give more emphasis to policy evaluation and to assessments of implementation as well as to new and emerging issues such as renewables and sustainable consumption and production. In contrast to SoER2005, the relations between the environment at large and health deserves a separate chapter in section A. The results of recent outlook discussions, some of which the Scientific Committee was involved in, should find its way into the SoER.

Structure and format

The A-B-C structure should be maintained. However, multiple products should be available to the different target groups. Several of these products should also be available in web-based, searchable and interactive formats with links to underlying data, if appropriate. On the one hand publications could be prepared which are subsections or cross-sections of the complete SoER. Examples of these are a separate volume of parts A and B and a separate volume C. Besides these, various target groups will be reached only through specialized summary paper and web-based publications which take into account the complexity allowed and the amount and type of language to be used. Examples of these are overall summaries and thematic summaries for different target groups, summaries of country reports, and Signal reports.

Other issues

The Committee strongly favours the linking of SoER-production to SEIS. This will greatly facilitate the future productions of SoERs and enhance data consistency and standardization. With regard to geographical coverage it is important to show the impact of Europe on the rest of the world and vice versa. Linking of SoER activities at different levels (e.g. EEA-countries, Mediterranean, Eastern Europe) is encouraged. The Committee noted the discussion with regard to co-ownership of country studies and emphasizes the independent nature any environmental assessment should have.