

Copenhagen, 20 March 2013

Note to the European Commission, Parliament and Council: European Environment Agency Management Board recommendations regarding the COWI report on the evaluation of the European Environment Agency (EEA)

The Management Board of the European Environment Agency,

- having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 of 7 May 1990 on the establishment of the European Environment Agency and the European Environment Information and Observation network as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 1641/2003;
- having regard to the European Parliament's resolution of 24 April 2007 with observations forming an integral part of the decision on the discharge for the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2005 (C6-0391/2006 - 2006/2158(DEC));
- having particular regard to the European Parliament's request expressed in the aforementioned resolution that
 - *"before 1 January 2010 and every five years thereafter, the Agency commission an independent external evaluation of its achievements on the basis of its founding Regulation and the work programmes decided by the Management Board;*
 - *the evaluation assess the working practices and the impact of the Agency and take into account the views of the stakeholders, at both Community and national level;*
 - *the Management Board of the Agency examine the conclusions of the evaluation and draft such recommendations to the Commission and Parliament as may be necessary regarding changes in the Agency, its working practices and programmes;*
 - *the evaluation and the recommendations to the Commission and Parliament be made public, for example on their websites;*
 - *the funds needed to carry out the external evaluation shall be allocated through the budget of the corresponding DG";*
- having regard to the European Parliament's resolution of 23 October 2012 with observations forming an integral part of its Decision on discharge in respect of the implementation of the budget of the European Environment Agency for the financial year 2010 (C7-0278/2011 – 2011/2217(DEC));
- having regard to the Joint Statement and Common Approach of the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission on decentralised agencies from 19 July 2012 as well as the subsequent Roadmap on the follow-up to the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies issued by the European Commission on 19 November 2012;
- having regard to the recommendation of the Common Approach that *"Agencies should prepare a roadmap with a follow-up action plan regarding the conclusions of retrospective evaluations, and report on progress bi-annually to the Commission. Follow-up to*

evaluations should be a task of the Management Board, and of the Executive Board".

- having regard to the on-going negotiations on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework of the EU budget and its possible implications for the available resources for the EEA during the period 2014-2020;
- 1. acknowledges that the EEA commissioned an independent external evaluation carried out by COWI of its achievements in the period 2009- 2012 on the basis of its founding Regulation and the work programmes decided by the Management Board in order to inform the preparation of the EEA strategy and multi-annual work programme 2014-2018;
- 2. confirms that the evaluation was steered by the Management Board, by an appointed Evaluation Steering Committee. The Management Board has consulted the Scientific Committee and the EEA senior management on its response to the recommendations of COWI;
- 3. acknowledges that the evaluation assessed the EEA according to two evaluation criteria: *effectiveness* as regards the external perspective including the needs of stakeholders and satisfaction with EEA outputs and *efficiency* as regards the internal perspective including EEA operations and cooperative relations within the Eionet network structure, taking into account the views of the stakeholders, at both EU and national level in accordance with its terms of reference;
- 4. welcomes the overall evaluation and endorses the opinion of the independent, external evaluators that *"the EEA and Eionet are well established and well-functioning structures, delivering comprehensive and reliable outputs which, to a large extent, satisfy stakeholders' needs."* It also endorses the further conclusion that: *"The EEA continues to be the most effective and efficient solution to providing credible information on the state of the European environment"*;
- 5. examined, at the Management Board meeting on 20 March 2013, the final conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation with regard the following five main recommendations:
 - i. Continue and further strengthen dialogue with stakeholders;
 - ii. Further strengthen the focus on delivering outputs of high quality as this is the basis for achieving impact;
 - iii. The Management Board of the EEA to consider how it can best exercise its strategic governance function;
 - iv. Review and upgrade the planning system and approaches in order to provide transparency of prioritisations and greater accountability;
 - v. Reassess the use of the Scientific Committee with the purpose of ensuring enhanced value added to the work of the EEA.
- 6. decides to take the following course of action:
 - a) regarding effectiveness:

- i) undertakes to reflect together with the EEA Senior Management on how to improve the already well-functioning dialogue with key stakeholders in view of the importance of this dialogue to ensure the policy relevance of the work of the EEA; stresses the importance of further strengthening the relationship with Eionet.
 - ii) places emphasis on the areas identified as particular areas of attention in the recommendations in preparing the EEA strategy and multi-annual work programme 2014-18, especially with a view to budgetary constraints that can be anticipated for the period 2014-2020, as part of defining priorities and activities to be implemented;
 - iii) calls on the EEA senior management to reflect in the preparation of the EEA strategy and annual management plans how to maintain the necessary high quality of its outputs;
- b) regarding efficiency:
 - i) undertakes to further improve the current procedures in order to strengthen the strategic governance functions of the Management Board and its Bureau;
 - ii) calls on the EEA senior management, based on the current EEA internal management planning system, to simplify the structure, specify objectives and performance indicators and add more information on resource allocations to priorities in the strategy and the Annual Management Plans in order to increase transparency and the accountability of the Agency;
 - iii) undertakes to continue the joint work with the Scientific Committee already initiated in 2012 on the use of the Scientific Committee with a view to establishing a clear framework for cooperation, in order to ensure enhanced value added to the work of the EEA;
- 7. calls on the EEA senior management to prepare a roadmap with a follow-up action plan, as recommended by the Common Approach, to be presented to the Management Board for decision and follow-up action to be embedded in the upcoming EEA strategy and multi-annual work programme 2014-2018.
- 8. recommends that the next independent external evaluation of the EEA's achievements shall be carried out, as requested by the European Parliament, in 2017, in time for the preparation of the next EEA strategy and multi-annual work programme;
- 9. recommends to the European Commission, Parliament and Council to take note of the evaluation and the Management Board's view on it, especially on the key statement that the EEA remains the most effective and efficient solution to providing credible information on the state of the European environment;
- 10. requests the Executive Director of the European Environment Agency to publish the evaluation and the recommendations of the Management Board and any possible responses of them on the EEA's website, and, in line the Common Approach, to report on progress of implementing the recommendations of the evaluation in the EEA's annual report.