

**FINAL MINUTES OF THE 72ND BUREAU MEETING,
held in Copenhagen on 16 May 2017**

Adopted by the Bureau at its meeting on 4 October 2017

Signed

Laura Burke
Chair, EEA Management Board

Record of proceedings

The Chair, Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler, opened the meeting by welcoming the Bureau members and observers, in particular the new representative for the Commission in the Management Board, Mr Gilles Gantelet and observers. The Chair presented apologies on behalf of those unable to attend.

The following documents are provided as annexes to the minutes:

Final agenda:	Annex 1
Attendance list:	Annex 2
List of decisions and guidance at the 72nd BU meeting:	Annex 3

ITEMS 1–2 FOR DECISION

Item 1 Adoption of draft agenda

The Bureau adopted the agenda (Doc. EEA/BU/72/01REV) with the following minor adjustments:

- It was clarified that item 9 is for guidance rather than for information;
- Agenda item 21 on ‘Update of EEA publication plan 2017’ was cancelled as a separate agenda item. The topic was included under item 7 ‘Update by the Executive Director’.

Item 2 Adoption 71st Bureau minutes, 31 January 2017

The minutes (Doc. EEA/BU/72/02) were adopted without any changes.

ITEM 3 FOR INFORMATION

Item 3 Draft minutes 78th Management Board, 14 March 2017

The Bureau took note of the draft minutes of the 78th Management Board meeting held on 14 March 2017 (Doc. EEA/BU/72/03).

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

Item 4 EEA/Eionet evaluation – European Commission/COWI

The Chair welcomed the initiative to organise an exchange of views on the strategic orientation for the evaluation of EEA and Eionet with the Bureau members; and invited the Commission consultants for the special session with the Bureau.

The DG ENV representative opened the session with a presentation, providing background information on the context of the Commission’s better regulation agenda, the (simplified) intervention logic, the timelines for the evaluation and the public consultation process. DG ENV also confirmed that the draft final outcomes will be presented at the stakeholder workshop on 5 December 2017 in Lyngby; and that the Commission foresees to publish its findings during the second quarter of 2018.

The Commission consultants (led by COWI) further informed the Bureau on the methodology for the consultation, the selected case studies and the timelines for the consultancy project (spanning over the period November 2016 to June 2018). The presentation concluded with the guiding questions, included in the background document (Doc. EEA/BU/72/04). It was clarified that the aim of the questions was to stimulate the debate. Discussions on other topics of concern for Bureau members were also explicitly welcomed.

General outcomes

It was stressed that the present EEA/Eionet evaluation is another type of review from previous exercises, which were Management Board led. In light of this, it will be important to ensure that Member countries' issues and concerns are taken into account.

The 2017 EEA/Eionet review needs to take into account the findings of the 2013 EEA review as well as follow-up actions and developments since then.

Question 1 – How effective are the mechanisms put in place to ensure that the EEA work programme is in line with its mandate and coherent with the policies and activities of its stakeholders?

- The Bureau members agreed unanimously that effective mechanisms are in place.
- Sub question 1.1 - Are opinions expressed by all relevant stakeholders on the work programmes being taken into consideration in EEA work programmes?
 - The Bureau members agreed that all opinions expressed by stakeholders were transparently documented, taken into consideration and decisions on follow-up actions likewise transparently documented and communicated to stakeholders.
 - The Bureau welcomed the fact that EEA takes not only the formal opinions of the Commission and the Scientific Committee into account, but also consults with its other stakeholders including the European Parliament and the Eionet network; and that all consultation feedback is given due consideration for EEA's work programming.
 - It was recognised that not all countries/stakeholders provide (detailed) feedback.
 - It was highlighted that there is sometimes a difference between what certain stakeholders would like the Agency to include in the work programme compared to what the EEA is mandated to do.
 - Several Bureau members, including a representative from the Commission, raised the concern that the complexity and the number of administrative rules and procedures imposed on the Agency could be overburdening the Agency.
 - It was raised that it would be good to reflect on options to optimise the timing for the interventions and opinions formulated in the context of both legally required and other consultation processes.
- Sub question 1.2 – Are current EEA activities and forward planning addressing relevant evolving policy priorities (at EU and national levels)?
 - The Bureau unanimously agreed that the EEA activities and forward planning address relevant evolving policy priorities, both at EU and national level.
 - The Bureau raised the concern that the shrinking resources allocated to the EEA is making it more and more difficult to respond to (all) evolving policy priorities and that resources

assigned to EEA do not always reflect the additional work for EEA agreed by EU institutions and thus risks presenting the Agency with unfair expectations.

- The Bureau welcomed the effective process in ensuring extra resource allocations to EEA over the past years in relation to new tasks in the field of climate change mitigation.
- The Bureau recognised that EEA was very effective in adjusting to the decreasing resources, that it becomes more and more difficult to accommodate expectations from all stakeholders, and that EEA has dedicated increased efforts to ensure the balancing of interests of in particular the Commission and the member countries.
- The Bureau expressed the view that the new role of EEA in areas such as Copernicus, Climate change and the Energy Union, the Agency should be considered to be classified as a new tasks agency and be able to receive extra resources from the 'redeployment pool' for decentralised agencies. It was clarified that this would offer a more sustainable financing and planning process than the increasingly chosen process of separate financing agreements for specific tasks (such as Copernicus and ENI).
- The Bureau agreed on the fact that compliance checking of Member States' legal obligations has to be established by the Commission and falls outside of EEA's mandate but that EEA has a role in securing the knowledge base.

Question 2: Do the composition and working methods of the Management Board and Bureau contribute to achieving their mandates?

- The Bureau members agreed unanimously that the composition and working methods of the Board and Bureau contribute and ensure the achievement of their mandates.
- Sub question 2.1 – Is the Bureau's interaction with the senior management team of the EEA based on clear governance processes?
 - The Bureau fully agreed on the fact that the interaction between the Bureau and the EEA senior management team is based on clear governance processes.
 - The Bureau members highlighted the function of the Bureau and Board in the process of balancing of the interests of different stakeholders in line with the EEA mandate and the available resources; it also clarified the role of the Board and Bureau in establishing the most appropriate focus of EEA's work programming, while addressing diverging stakeholder views, which have also been evolving over time.
 - It was also highlighted that interactions between the EEA senior management team and Board members are not limited to the formal meetings but include numerous bilateral contacts in various settings.
- Sub question 2.2 Are relevant stakeholders (member countries, Commission DGs, European Parliament) sufficiently represented in the Management Board and their views thus heard and taken on board in a balanced way?
 - The Bureau members expressed the strong view that all stakeholders are sufficiently represented in the Management Board and clarified that all views are given due consideration before reaching a decision, which is mostly consensus based.
 - The Bureau clarified that the debates in the Board and Bureau adapt to changes and new challenges, thus demonstrating their aptitude to adapt to a changing context. More recently debates for example include increasingly an exchange of views on negative priorities in the light of the decreasing resources.

- It was recognised by the Bureau members that there is an ‘information asymmetry’ which all Board and Bureau members need to navigate; i.e. very deep understanding of policies at thematic working level or the detail of EU administrative procedure versus the broader and strategic understanding of the policies by the Bureau and Board members.
- The representative in the Bureau from the non EU Member State countries expressed strong appreciation to be included in the Bureau meetings as well as all member countries being represented in the Board, which is a very effective way of making ensuring their interests are taken into account.

Further reflections from the Bureau on the value of the EEA/Eionet evaluation

- The focus of the evaluation should be to bring elements to the table, required to ensure an informed discussion on EEA’s future mandate and priority setting as well as to identify options for improvements.
- The outcomes from the 2013 evaluation have been instrumental as a tool for the present Executive Director to decide on priority settings with the EEA management team.
- The Board and Bureau have a very comprehensive view on the Agency with a lot of information coming forward in the context of the work programming. The value of the evaluation will lie in providing an outside perspective and in this case also the possibility to compare with the findings from the previous evaluation, which was led by the same consultants.

ITEMS 5–9 FOR INFORMATION

Item 5 Update by the Management Board Chair

The Chair highlighted the upcoming election for the Chair of the EEA Management Board and provided further clarifications in relation to the Chair’s letter to the Board of 8 May 2017:

- the Chair’s term in office is coming to an end on 31 August 2017 and the Board is therefore required to elect a Chairperson at the 79th Management Board (MB) meeting on 13 June;
- the Chair will not put forward an application for a re-election for a second term;
- the new Chair will be elected for a term from 1 September 2017 until 30 August 2020;
- applications for the post of Chair of the EEA Management Board should be provided to the EEA Management Board Secretariat by 2 June 2017;
- each nomination should be accompanied by a short CV. In addition, candidates may, if they wish, provide a short statement setting out how they see the task and what they would bring to it if elected;
- the procedures for the election are defined in the EEA/Eionet Regulation and the Rules of Procedure of the Management Board and the Bureau.

The Chair expressed a strong appreciation for the effective and collegial cooperation over the years with the Board and the Bureau.

Finally, the Chair informed about the proposal from the Austrian Embassy in Copenhagen, to organise a reception to thank the Board for the long-standing cooperation, which would take place on 12 June 2017 in the evening, the day before the Management Board meeting.



Item 6 Update by the Scientific Committee (SC) Chair

The Chair of the Scientific Committee (SC) informed about the joint EEA-SC seminar and the SC meeting, which are taking place back-to-back with the Bureau meeting on 17 and 18 May 2017:

- The joint EEA-SC seminar's focus is on 'Chemicals for a sustainable future', a topic of high relevance to the European environmental policy agenda and in particular the European Union strategy for a non-toxic environment, which is being developed by the Commission by 2018.
- The Scientific Committee meeting will address the draft SC opinion on EEA's AWP 2018, as required by the EEA/Eionet Regulation. The Scientific Committee members will also discuss the organisation of the joint EEA-SC seminar in October on 'Big data and SOER 2020' and define the focus of the 2018 topics for the joint seminars. Furthermore, the Scientific Committee will further identify the key EEA areas of work to which to provide scientific support over the coming period.

The Scientific Committee Chair informed about the intention to provide a full update on the outcomes of the SC meeting and the joint seminar at the June Management Board meeting.

The Executive Director recognised the policy relevance of the seminar on 'Chemicals for a sustainable future' and clarified the increased role of EEA in the field of 'chemicals, environment and health', and this in particular in the context of the European Human Bio-monitoring Initiative (EHBMI) ⁽¹⁾. EEA's Executive Director also clarified that the aim of the joint EEA-SC seminar in October is to strengthen the knowledge base of EEA, the Eionet network and other stakeholders as well as to clarify how the data can be used in different types of assessments.

Ireland confirmed the usefulness of the joint EEA-SC seminars as a means of knowledge sharing, including with Board members; and highlighted the importance of looking into the links between chemicals in the environment and circular economy.

Upon a request for clarification from the representative of the European Parliament, the Chair of the Scientific Committee provided information on the interaction with the European Commission's DG on Research and Innovation (DG RTD), including the active involvement in previous seminars. The Executive Director further clarified that DG RTD is invited to all joint EEA-SC seminars and that cooperation extends beyond the seminars (e.g. the cooperation with EEA in the context of the European Knowledge Community (EKC) and with members of the Board through for example the advisory Group for Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 5 'Climate action, environment, resource efficiency and raw materials'). EEA's Executive Director also informed about the upcoming strategic meeting between EEA and DG RTD to look into a further strengthening of the cooperation.

Upon an expression of interest from Iceland to receive follow-up information from the seminars, the Chair of the Scientific Committee confirmed that the presentations of the upcoming seminar as well as any report on the outcomes will be made available to the Board.

Item 7 Update by the Executive Director, including publication plan 2017 progress

Taking the document 'Update by the Executive Director' (Doc. EEA/BU/72/07) as read, the Executive Director's presentation focused on highlights since the last meeting. In the context of the update by the Executive Director, the Bureau engaged in a discussed on the following topics:

- Monitoring of the 7th EAP

¹ More information about EEA's activities in relation to the European Human Bio-monitoring Initiative is available on the EEA webpage at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/human/human-biomonitoring>.



Following a request for clarification from DG ENV, EEA's Executive Director clarified that EEA report '*Environmental indicator report 2016, In support to the monitoring of the 7th Environment Action Programme*'⁽²⁾, is a specific EEA contribution to the evaluation by the Commission in relation to the monitoring of the 7th EAP. The Executive Director also informed about ongoing indicator updates and knowledge-base work in preparation of the SOER2020; and confirmed that the EEA products will be available in a timely manner for the Commission's 7th EAP review.

- Tourism and Environment report

Following a question on the timing for the report from DG ENV, the Executive Director informed about the presentation of the results of EEA 'Tourism and environment' report at the high level conference on sustainable tourism on 8 May 2017; and recognised that the final publication of the indicator-based report was slightly delayed and is planned for the summer. It was further clarified that EEA is presently not foreseeing any follow-up products, since the report was specifically produced in the context of 2017 being the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Following a question from Iceland for clarification about EEA's role in the SDGs, the Executive Director informed that the process for and the role of the different EU institutions in the monitoring of the SDGs is still being further defined. It was further clarified that Eurostat is focusing on an indicator-based approach, where EEA's interest lays mostly in providing support to the process through an assessment-based approach.

- Geodiversity

In relation to an enquiry from Iceland about EEA's activities in the field of geodiversity, the EEA informed about the Agency's focus is presently not on geodiversity and geosystem services, but more on biodiversity and ecosystem services. It was further highlighted that the Mapping and Assessment of Ecosystems and their Services (MAES) project is a joint exercise involving the Commission, countries and EEA, which involves geospatial analysis of land cover grids on a scale of 1km by 1km and is based on complex landscape ecological theory.

The Executive Director further informed about EEA cooperation with EuroGeoSurveys (Association of the European geological surveys) and of the follow-up agreement with EuroGeographics (association of the European national mapping, cadastral and land registry authorities) in the context of the Agency's Copernicus work. EEA's Executive Director also highlighted the joint EEA-Scientific Committee seminar on 'Use of the Geological Underground' mid-2015, which addressed competing claims on the underground and the governance aspects related to this; and of which the main outcomes are published in '*Report of the EEA Scientific Committee on the use of the Geological Underground*'⁽³⁾.

- Reporting platform and performance of reporting by countries

Following a question from Latvia, EEA clarified that the Eionet reporting platform Reportnet has been under pressure due to the increased complexity and volumes of data being reported to EEA, resulting in an exponential increase in data volumes and informed on the preparatory

² <https://www.eea.europa.eu/airs/environmental-indicator-report-2016>.

³ The Scientific Committee report is available on EEA's website at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/governance/scientific-committee/reports/the-use-of-the-geological-underground/view>.

activities for the upgrade of the platform. EEA also recognised that some countries score systematically low in terms of quality and/or timing of reporting of Eionet core data flows ⁽⁴⁾.

Item 8 Update by the European Commission

The **DG ENV representative** informed about the following Commission activities:

- Monitoring and reporting fitness check

The monitoring and reporting fitness check is being finalised and the Commission foresees to adopt its action plan to streamline environmental reporting by the beginning of June.

The actions will be structured around five areas:

- Getting the right information in the right form at the right time;
- Streamlining of reporting processes;
- Promotion of active dissemination of environmental information at European and national level;
- Exploiting other data sources and alternative approaches complementing environmental reporting (including the role and the use of Copernicus data); and
- Improving coherence and cooperation;

The DG representative welcomed the excellent cooperation with EEA and informed on the prominent role for EEA foreseen in the action plan, including a proposed resource allocation of 3.1 million EUR and two new contract agent posts.

- Environmental Implementation Review (EIR)

Following the adoption of the first EIR package in February 2017 ⁽⁵⁾, including country fiches for all EU-28 Member States. Bilateral country dialogues have started. Dialogues with Estonia, Belgium, Slovakia and Germany have already taken place, and country dialogues with Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg are planned for the second half of 2017.

In parallel with the country dialogues, the Commission is starting the preparation for the next EIR package and looking into options for increased cooperation with EEA and this in particular in relation to climate change, chemicals and industrial emissions.

- Action Plan for nature, people and the economy

The European Commission adopted the Action Plan for nature, people and the economy ⁽⁶⁾ on 27 April 2017, the main goal of which is to improve the implementation of the Birds and Habitats Directives through a focus on four priorities:

- Improving guidance and knowledge and ensuring better coherence with broader socioeconomic objectives
- Building political ownership and strengthening compliance
- Strengthening investment in Natura 2000 and improving synergies with EU funding instruments
- Better communication and outreach, engaging citizens, stakeholders and communities

The actions include: public online access to data necessary for implementing the Directives (e.g. satellite imagery from the Copernicus programme), completing the Natura 2000 network

⁴ More information on the Eionet core data flows is available at: <https://www.eionet.europa.eu/dataflows>.

⁵ The full EIR package is available in a single document at : http://ec.europa.eu/environment/eir/pdf/full_report_en.pdf.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/communication_en.pdf.

(especially filling gaps for the marine environment) and the development of guidance to support the deployment of green infrastructure for better connectivity of Natura 2000 areas.

- Evaluation of the 7th EAP

The Commission's evaluation of the 7th EAP commenced, including assessing how the work of EEA can feed into it. The Commission evaluation, which is foreseen to be finalised by the beginning of 2019, will be supported by a Commission service contract. Commission foresees to develop indicators for the 7th EAP scoreboard.

The Commission will look into how the 7th EAP evaluation can feed a potential 8th EAP and provide information on implementing the environmental dimension of the SDG.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A set of indicators have been defined under the leadership of Eurostat and with input from EEA. The indicators are to be aligned to the extent possible with the 7th EAP indicators.

The European Parliament is drafting an own-initiative (INI) report by end of June. The first report on the implementation of SDGs in the European Union is foreseen by end 2017

Following the update by the DG representative, the Bureau engaged in a discussion including the following topics:

- Environmental Implementation Review (EIR)

Following a question from the Chair relating to EEA's role in the EIR process, the DG ENV representative clarified that not always all information provided by EEA was reflected in the first EIR package and that the Commission aims at better use EEA information.

The Irish representative shared the view expressed at the latest meeting of the Better Regulation Interest Group (a subgroup of the heads of Environmental Protection Agencies), that the EIR package was welcomed as a tool to communicate with the public on implementation of environmental policy and therefore offering a better opportunity to discuss on the status of implementation. The Bureau was also informed on the Irish initiative to pool the best practise information from the EIRs, presently as a small research project and further reflection is ongoing on identifying best practise examples which could be covered in the future.

- Monitoring and reporting fitness check

Germany suggested that the next Board meeting on 13 June, could be a good occasion to share the action plan with the EEA Management Board. The DG ENV representative welcomes the idea and ensured to look into the possibility to bring the action plan to the June Board meeting. It was also announced that a stakeholders workshop will be organised in autumn, which would also offer an option to discuss further on the action plan.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Chair enquired about the Commission's view on how to implement and monitor the SDGs. The DG ENV representative clarified that the Commission is committed to both the implementation and monitoring but that the way the Commission will report on the SDGs will be defined through a discussion between the EU institutions, which is presently ongoing.

It was also clarified that the Commission is drafting a staff working document for the process until 2020. The priority setting and implementation beyond 2020 will be linked to the White

Paper on the Future of Europe’ (7). DG ENV further clarified that the 7th EAP is largely linked to the policy areas of climate and environment and are therefore under the leadership of DG ENV and DG CLIMA, the more general coordination of all the SDGs is coordinated by SEC GEN (e.g. aspects related to social dimension of Europe, education and gender balance).

The **representative of DG CLIMA**, provided an updated on the status of the Energy Union and Climate package:

- All major parts of the legislative proposals of relevant for climate being the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR), Land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) and the governance of the Energy Union; are presently under negotiation in the European Parliament and Council.
- EU ETS 2021-2030 (proposal July 2015)

The Member States reached a common position at the Environment Council in February 2017 and the interinstitutional negotiations (trilogues) between the Parliament, the Council and the Commission are expected to extend into the Estonian presidency.
- LULUCF (proposal July 2016)

The major question and answer phase in the Council is over and the Maltese Presidency aims for a common position at the June Environment Council.

In the European Parliament, the report of the rapporteur Norbert Lins (Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee) is foreseen for June.
- ESR (proposal July 2016)

The major question and answer phase in the Council is over and the Maltese Presidency aims for a common position at the June Environment Council.

In the European Parliament, the report of the rapporteur, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy (Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee) is presented during the week from 22-26 May.
- Governance of the Energy Union post 2020 (proposal November 2016)

The DG CLIMA representative expressed appreciation for the fact that the governance proposal has been referred to two Committees namely the Parliament’s Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) and the ENVI Committees, this to ensure the coverage of both climate and energy aspects, with Claude Turmes as rapporteur. DG CLIMA also expressed the hope that also at the Council level, the Estonian presidency will foresee a similar process. Until now the proposal is only discussed in the Working Party (WP) on Energy in the Council, which has led to some mis-interpretation of the Commission proposal.
- Specific links to EEA work planning
 - ESR – potential proposal from the Parliament for an EEA report

The European Parliament rapporteur Gerbrandy is considering to propose an additional reporting requirement for the EEA, which would consist of a report by September 2018 to inform the ‘Facilitative Dialogue’ at COP 24.
 - Governance – resource requirements have been submitted by the Commission

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf.

Until now no questions from Parliament or Council have been received. Also the proposed role for EEA has not been questioned in the WP on Energy, although it needs to be noted that the WP is in the early stages of examining the proposal.

Item 9 Follow-up of the Management Board seminar on 6 December 2016

EEA introduced background document EEA/BU/72/09, which included a first draft of the key Management Board reflections on the December 2016 Board seminar and drafted on the basis of the 15 contributions received from Board members.

The Bureau agreed on an approach to prepare a short one-page document on Board reflections to which the more detailed outcomes and reflections could be attached.

The Bureau also engaged in a discussion on big data and the link to data from traditional monitoring and legal reporting obligations, although this was not covered during the seminar. It was concluded that the topic could be the focus for future seminars and discussions including the EEA, the Scientific Committee and the Board.

ITEMS 10–11 STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

Item 10 ETC topic review process and timelines

The Executive Director introduced background document EEA/BU/72/10, which addressed the potential proposal for a decision by the June Board meeting to modify the decision on a ETC light review (at the December 2016 Board meeting) to allow for a more thorough review of the ETC/Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation; and to establish a Review Committee for the ETC/ACM review.

Following a request for clarification of the advantages of a differentiated approach for the ETC/ACM review, EEA informed on three issues:

- The grant agreement size of the ETC/ACM

The ETC/ACM is already substantially larger than the other ETCs. The inclusion of the additional tasks (and budget) in line with the proposed role for EEA and Eionet in the Energy Union Governance Regulation, would bring the annual grant above 3 million EUR per year.
- Competition in the call for proposal process

Grant agreements are awarded on the basis of a comparison of technical merit (quality of the proposal) between different proposals. During the last calls for proposals only one bid was received for a number of ETCs. Reducing the number of topics covered by the ETC as well as the annual budget, could ensure better competition.
- Achieving synergy between topic areas

A potential risk associated with this could be the perception of loss of integration of e.g. air pollution and climate mitigation. In EEA's experience synergies between topics are largely ensured by EEA rather than by cross-partner work within the ETC, although the proposed review committee should address this issue of synergies directly.

The Executive Director also clarified that that for the other ETCs, the MAWP 2014-2020 would be the reference framework for the next call for proposal, and that adjustments to the Terms of References would be ensured to reflect policy and implementation developments since 2013, when the MAWP was drafted.

In the light of the future role for the EEA and Eionet envisaged in the proposed Energy Union Governance Regulation, the Bureau endorsed the proposal for a request to the Board:



- to modify the decision taken by the Board in December 2016 in order to allow for a more thorough review of the needs for future ETC support in the energy topic area covered by the present ETC on Air Pollution and Climate Change Mitigation (ETC/ACM); and
- to consider establishing a Review Committee for the ETC/ACM review of which the mandate includes looking into how synergies between topics can be maintained (e.g. air and climate co-benefits) in the case the ETC/ACM would be split into two ETCs.

Item 11 Future options for contractual arrangements with ETCs

EEA introduced background document EEA/BU/72/11 and highlighted the fact that the use of grant agreements had been of particular interest for the European Court of Auditors (ECA), which has conducted a cross-agencies audit on the use of grants for the period 2013-2015 ⁽⁸⁾.

EEA informed that in light of the ECA findings and recommendations, EEA has evaluated the possible options for contractual arrangements with ETC; and that the Agency has concluded that despite the limitations of the contractual arrangement, grants would still be the best option available to the EEA at present. It was also clarified that the future contracting structure of the ETCs requires a formal Board decision, since the Management Board is mandated by the EEA/Eionet Regulation with the designation of the ETCs.

EEA further highlighted a few specific aspects related to grants such as the resource-intensiveness of verifications (ex-ante and ex-post) and the fact that grant agreements are in line with the cooperative spirit of the Eionet network (e.g. the outcomes of grant agreements remain the property of the grant holder and the strong influence of the ETC on the annual action plans).

The Bureau was invited to provide feedback on the findings of the Agency and to provide guidance in relation to the decision to be taken at the June Board meeting on the preferred future contractual option for the ETCs.

Aspects raised during the Bureau discussion included: the benefit of the co-financing by the countries as well as it being a limiting factor for some countries and the cost per man hour being estimated lower than for service contracts. Nevertheless, countries were in favour of sticking with the present contractual arrangements (grants).

The Bureau endorsed the proposal to ask the June Board for a decision to continue with grant agreements as the contractual arrangement for ETCs.

ITEMS 12–18 OPERATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

ITEMS 12–15 FOR GUIDANCE

Item 12 Draft meeting calendar 2018

The Bureau took note of the meeting calendar 2018. The draft meeting calendar for 2018 will be presented to the June Board meeting for adoption, after a cross-check with plenary sessions of the European Parliament.

Item 13 Draft consolidated annual activity report 2016 (CAAR)

The Executive Director introduced background document EEA/BU/72/13 and apologised for the delay in providing it to the Bureau.

⁸ The findings are published in the ECA special report 'Agencies' use of grants: not always appropriate or demonstrably effective' http://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR16_12/SR_GRANTS_EN.pdf.

The DG ENV representative informed on the finding that the delivery rate across the different work areas is uneven, highlighted in this respect the strategic area on ‘urban, land use and soil’; and suggested to include additional information on reasons behind not delivered or substantially delayed outputs.

The EEA clarified that the 2016 activities in the area on ‘urban, land use and soil’ had been affected by the delay of the land cover data as an input to the work. EEA also informed about the additional information on reasons behind delivery issues in the draft 2016 CAAR, information which was not included in the 2015 CAAR.

Most Bureau members agreed that short reasons behind delivery issues through for example standard sentences provide sufficient information.

The Bureau agreed to provide further input through written comments to the Management Board Secretariat by 19 May, which will allow for a timely adjustment of the draft CAAR 2016 to be adopted by the Board on 13 June.

Item 14 Draft annual accounts 2016

The Bureau took note of the process of audit and closing of the annual accounts for 2016 and agreed to table the accounts for adoption at the Management Board in June.

Item 15 Outcome EEA discharge 2015 and follow-up actions on discharge 2014

The Bureau took note of the discharge by the European Parliament for the financial year 2015 and discussed the further course of action for Management Board members on making CVs and declarations of interest (DoI) publicly available, in light of the Parliament’s call upon the Agency to ensure the necessary oversight and scrutiny of its management.

During the discussion, most Bureau members agreed to provide a CV and DoI for publication on EEA’s website. The German representative reiterated the German position that Board members are designated by the member countries and therefore the appointing country is solely responsible for assessing and ensuring compliance with the policy on conflicts of interest, as is also specifically stated in EEA’s policy for the prevention and management of conflict of interest.

The Bureau explored the option to ask all Board members to provide a declaration of interest (DoI) to EEA but to make the publication on the website subject to consent from the Management Board member concerned, as a means for the EEA to comply with the requirement to assess the exposure to risk of conflict of interest.

The Bureau members agreed to make a renewed effort to provide CVs and declarations of interest (DoI) for publication on the EEA website and to encourage the Board in June to provide CVs and DoI for publication on EEA’s website. In particular in relation to the short CVs for Management Board members, the Bureau agreed that this type of information is already publicly available in different shapes and forms on the internet, and that it would be useful to have a concise CV with the most important information for publication on the dedicated Management Board section on the EEA webpage ⁽⁹⁾.

⁹ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/about-us/governance/management-board>.

ITEMS 16–18 FOR DECISION

Item 16 EEAcademy — Advisory Committee

The Bureau adopted the designation of the members of the EEAcademy Advisory Committee for a second year of operation until May 2018 (Decision EEA BU 2017 005).

Item 17 Revised meeting calendar 2017

The Bureau adopted the revised meeting calendar 2017, i.e. a new date and location for the next Bureau meeting, namely 4 October 2017, in Lisbon.

Item 18 Approval draft agenda 79th Management Board, 13 June 2017

The draft agenda for the 79th Management Board meeting was adopted with one minor modification: the item on the publication plan was taken off the agenda since the topic will be addressed under the item of the Executive Director's update.

Following a question for clarification from Germany regarding the scope of the list of implementing rules requiring adoption, EEA clarified that the implementing rules needing adoption in 2017 are part of a new list. It was also clarified that there are two ways by which the Agency can address the implementing rules adopted by the Commission:

- The Commission implementing rules apply by analogy to the Agency;
- The Agency can decide to depart from the Commission rules, after having obtained the Commission's agreement. The approach to depart from Commission rules is relevant for rules which do not (fully) reflect the context of EEA being a decentralised agency. For these cases, EEA informed on its aim to propose to the Board decisions based on standard models for rules for agencies as developed through the standing working party (SWP).

The EEA also informed the Bureau that it aims at avoiding written procedures for future Board decisions on implementing rules, which was welcomed by the Chair.

ITEM 19–22 FOR INFORMATION

Item 19 Timetable for PD 2019–2021 and finalisation of PD 2018–2020

The EEA introduced background document EEA/BU/72/19 and the Bureau took note of the timetable for the finalisation of EEA's Programming Document (PD) for the period 2018–2020 and the drafting process for the PD 2019–2021. It was further clarified that the Bureau in October will engage in a high level discussion on the PD 2018-2020, since the updated PD 2018-2020 only will become available in November.

Item 20 Overview of audits

EEA introduced the background document EEA/BU/72/20 and informed the Bureau on the most recent audit activities, which were not yet included in the document:

- The visit of a high-level representative of the European Court of Auditors, Dean Phil Wynn Owen, on 5 May 2017
- Preliminary outcomes of the Internal Audit Service (IAS) risk assessment, which will form the basis for the IAS audits over the period 2018-2020.

Item 21 Update on EEA publication plan 2017

The Bureau took note of the execution of the publication plan 2017 as of 25 April 2017 (as discussed under item 07, the Executive Director's update).

Item 22 Feedback from Bureau members

There was no further feedback from Bureau members.

The Executive Director informed the Bureau about the European Environmental Evaluators Network Forum (EEEN) on Evaluating Innovation in Environmental Protection & Sustainability, which will take place on 23-24 November 2017 and for which contributions can be provided to the EEEN network by 31 July 2017⁽¹⁰⁾.

The meeting closed at 15.30 h.

¹⁰ <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/policy/events/eeen2017>.

**Annex 1 Agenda of 72nd Bureau meeting,
Tuesday, 16 May 2017, 9.30-17.00, EEA premises**

FOR DECISION

1. Adoption draft agenda
2. Adoption 71st Bureau minutes, 31 January 2017

FOR INFORMATION

3. Draft minutes 78th Management Board, 14 March 2017

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION – SPECIAL SESSION

4. EEA/Eionet evaluation: Presentation by DG ENV and European Commission consultants (COWI) followed by exchange of views

FOR INFORMATION

5. Update by the Management Board Chair
6. Update by the Scientific Committee Chair
7. Update by the Executive Director
8. Update by the European Commission

STRATEGIC ORIENTATION

FOR GUIDANCE

9. Follow-up of the Management Board seminar 6 December 2016
10. ETC topic review process and timelines
11. Future options for contractual arrangements with ETCs

OPERATIONAL/ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

FOR GUIDANCE

12. Draft meeting calendar 2018
13. Draft consolidated annual activity report 2016
14. Draft annual accounts 2016
15. Outcome EEA discharge 2015 and follow-up actions on discharge 2014

FOR DECISION

16. EEAcademy — Advisory Committee
17. Revised meeting calendar 2017
18. Approval draft agenda 79th Management Board, 13 June 2017

FOR INFORMATION

19. Timetable for PD 2019–2021 and finalisation of PD 2018–2020
20. Overview of audits
21. Feedback from Bureau members

Annex 2 72nd Bureau meeting

Copenhagen, 16 May 2017

MEMBERS	COUNTRY/AFFILIATION	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE
Elisabeth FREYTAG-RIGLER	Austria	Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Environment and Water Management	<i>Signed</i>
Laura BURKE	Ireland	Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	<i>Signed</i>
Julia WERNER	Germany	Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety	<i>Signed</i>
Nuno LACASTA	Portugal	Portuguese Environment Agency (APA)	<i>Apologies</i>
Alda OZOLA	Latvia	Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development	<i>Signed</i>
Maria PEPPA	Greece	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change	<i>Apologies</i>
Michael SCOULLOS	European Parliament	University of Athens	<i>Signed</i>
Gilles GANTELET	European Commission	DG ENV, Director A – Policy	<i>Signed</i>
Artur RUNGE-METZGER	European Commission	DG CLIMA, Director	<i>Signed</i>
GUESTS/OBSERVERS			
Per MICKWITZ	Chair, EEA Scientific Committee	Finnish Environment Institute	<i>Signed</i>
Herdís Helga SCHOPKA	Observer from non-EU Member State	Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources, Iceland	<i>Signed</i>
Jacques DELSALLE	European Commission	DG ENV	<i>Signed</i>
Hans BERGMAN	European Commission	DG CLIMA	
Walter KAHLENBORN	COWI Evaluation Team	adelphi	<i>Signed</i>
Sofie LYSGAARD TEILMANN	COWI Evaluation Team	COWI	
Birgitte MARTENS	COWI Evaluation Team	COWI	<i>Signed</i>
Dinne SMEDERUP HANSEN	COWI Evaluation Team	COWI	<i>Signed</i>
Sam TAYLOR	COWI Evaluation Team	Eunomia Research & Consulting Ltd	<i>Signed</i>

MEMBERS	COUNTRY/AFFILIATION	ORGANISATION	ATTENDANCE
Daniel WEISS	COWI Evaluation Team	adelphi	<i>Signed</i>
Tony ZAMPARUTTI	COWI Evaluation Team	Milieu Ltd	<i>Signed</i>

72nd Bureau meeting, 16 May 2017

Agenda item	Outcome	Comments
1 Adoption of the agenda	Adopted with minor modifications	It was clarified that item 9 is for guidance rather than for information. Agenda item 21 on 'Update of EEA publication plan 2017' was cancelled as a separate agenda item. The topic was included under item 7 'Update by the Executive Director'.
2 Adoption 71st Bureau minutes, 31 January 2017	Adopted as drafted	The minutes will be published on the EEA website and the Forum
3 Draft minutes 78th MB, 14 March 2017		No comments were formulated by the Bureau in advance or during the meeting.
5 Update by the Management Board Chair	The Bureau took note of the fact that the deadline for the election of a new Chair of the Board is the June Management Board meeting. Bureau members were invited to nominate candidates.	EEA will provide further information on the election process should be provided in conjunction with the invitation to the 13 June Board meeting.
9 Follow-up of the MB seminar 6 December 2016	The Bureau agreed with the approach to prepare a short one-page document on Board reflections to which the more detailed outcomes and reflections could be attached.	
10 ETC topic review process and timelines	Bureau endorsed the proposal for a request to the Board to: a) modify the decision on an ETC light review to allow for a more thorough review of the ETC/ACM; and b) consider establishing a Review Committee for the ETC/ACM review.	EEA will ensure that the background document for the Board includes additional information on the arguments for a more in-depth review of the ETC/ACM.
11 Future options for contractual arrangements with ETCs	The Bureau endorsed the proposal to ask for a Board decision on the continued use of grant agreements for the ETCs at its June meeting.	



Agenda item	Outcome	Comments
12 Draft meeting calendar 2018	The Bureau took note of the draft meeting calendar for 2018.	The draft meeting calendar for 2018 will be presented to the June Board meeting for adoption, after a cross-check with Plenary sessions of the European Parliament.
13 Draft CAAR 2016		The Bureau was invited to provide further input through written comments by Friday 19 May to be MB Secretariat.
14 Draft annual accounts 2016	The Bureau took note of the draft annual accounts for 2016 and agreed to present them for adoption by the Board in June.	
15 Outcome EEA discharge 2015 and follow-up actions on discharge 2014	In relation to the Parliament's call upon the Agency to ensure the publication of CVs and declarations of interest from Management Board members, the Bureau agreed a) to make a renewed effort to provide CVs and Declarations of Interest (DoI); b) encourage the Board in June to provide CVs and DoI for publication on EEA's website.	
16 EEAcademy — Advisory Committee	The Bureau adopted the designation of the members and the Chair of the EEAcademy Advisory Committee (Decision EEA/BU/2017/005).	
17 Revised meeting calendar 2017	The Bureau adopted the revised meeting calendar 2017, i.e. the date and location for the Bureau meeting on 4 October 2017, in Lisbon.	
18 Approval draft agenda 79th MB, 13 June 2017	Adopted with a small modification	The item on the publication plan was included in the item on the update by the Executive Director.
19 Timetable for PD 2019–2021 and finalisation of PD 2018–2020	The Bureau took note of the timetables for the PD process.	
20 Overview of audits	The Bureau took note of the overview of audits.	

Approved by the Chair of the Management Board on 16 May 2017

Signed

Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler



Annex 4

Decision EEA/BU/2017/005

Decision on the appointment of an Advisory Committee to the EEAcademy

THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

HAVING REGARD to 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 Information and Observation Network, and in particular Article 8 thereof,

HAVING REGARD to the decision of the European Environment Agency Management Board EEA/MB/74/13 of 26 November 2015,

HAVING REGARD to the Management Board and Bureau Rules of Procedure, as amended by the Management Board on 26 November 2015, MB decision number 016/EEA/MB(74)-GOV/2015, in particular article 2 (7).

WHEREAS:

- (1) The EEA Multiannual Work Programme (MAWP) 2014–2020, *Expanding the knowledge base for policy implementation and long-term transitions*, foresees the development and implementation of the EEAcademy as the central framework encompassing mutual capacity-building and knowledge-sharing activities to support EEA work, involving the EEA, Eionet, Scientific Committee, Commission services and others.
- (2) The MAWP 2014–2020 foresees the establishment of the EEAcademy in 2016.
- (3) The Management Board established for one year, in February 2016, an Advisory Committee to ensure the functioning and management of the EEAcademy; that the said committee should be composed of: two persons from the Management Board, two from the Scientific Committee, and two from the National Focal Points, with the support of two Agency staff and an additional Agency staff member to function as its Secretariat as part of his/her duties; and that the tasks of the Advisory Committee are: to advise on the implementation of the EEAcademy calendar of activities; to review and evaluate progress; to identify new activities and opportunities; to report frequently on progress to EEA stakeholders; and to advise on the development of the future rolling calendar of activities including a post-2018 perspective and agenda.

HAS DECIDED:

to appoint the following persons as members of the Advisory Committee to the EEAcademy to be valid for one year from 1 June 2017 until 31 May 2018:

From the Management Board:

- Peter Pärt (Chair)
- Sabine McCallum

From the Scientific Committee:

- Ana Iglesias
- Angel Borja

From the National Focal Points:

- Jana Bašistová
- Brendan Wall

Done in Copenhagen on 16 May 2017

Signed

Elisabeth Freytag-Rigler

Chair, EEA Management Board