



## Opinion of the EEA Scientific Committee on the EEA Evaluation by COWI

### General comments

The EEA Scientific Committee (SC) confirms that the EEA evaluation by COWI was steered by a Steering Committee appointed by the EEA Management Board, and that the former and current chairs of the Scientific Committee have been members of this Steering Committee.

The SC acknowledges that the EEA evaluation has been assessed according to two criteria set out in the terms of reference: effectiveness and efficiency. In the evaluation, effectiveness refers to the external perspective, including the needs of the stakeholders and satisfaction with EEA outputs. Efficiency refers to the internal perspective including EEA operations and cooperation with the Eionet, taking into account stakeholders' views.

The SC acknowledges that it has been consulted on the final draft of the EEA Evaluation and that COWI made a presentation at the 55<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Scientific Committee in February 2013, during which SC members provided oral feedback to COWI.

The SC welcomes the overall evaluation, its conclusions and the five recommendations.

The SC notes that the overall evaluation is extremely positive, reflecting the quality and relevance of EEA work. The SC welcomes in particular the overall conclusion which states:

*“In summary, the evaluation finds 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. The qualitative assessment inherent in this evaluation indicates that the EEA continues to be the most effective and efficient solution to providing credible information on the state of the European environment.”*

### Specific comments

The SC notes the low numbers of responses from stakeholders and EEA staff, and would therefore recommend focusing on better level of responses for the next evaluation.

The SC is concerned with the low level of satisfaction with the added value for the EEA of the work of the Scientific Committee. The SC agrees that there is room for improvement in order to ensure increased added value for the EEA. In this regard, the SC started strengthening its working relations with the Management Board, the

Executive Director and EEA staff during 2012. In 2013, the SC will continue its efforts. To more effectively pursue this aim, the SC suggests, jointly with the Management Board, the Executive Director and the Staff, to identify and implement appropriate and proactive ways of operation.

The SC nevertheless points out to the voluntary nature of its membership and calls for a realistic framework of expectations from the MB and EEA staff and Executive Director.

Recommendation 5 of the evaluation reads: *“Reassess the use of the Scientific Committee with the purpose of ensuring enhanced value added to the work of the EEA.”*

To address this recommendation, the SC agrees with the MB on the need to “continue the joint work 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”. The SC recognises that the proposal made by COWI under recommendation 5, which reads:

*“It is recommended that the EEA and the Scientific Committee make a joint assessment of current use and modalities for cooperation with a view to establishing a clear framework for the cooperation. This could be integrated with considerations for the future strategy and identify key areas (and products), where the input and guidance from Scientific Committee members could be particularly valuable. It could also consider the appropriate timing of input from the Scientific Committee in relation to the phases in the production of particular products. The potential value added of Scientific Committee input could, in many cases, be higher if involved in the earlier phases where methodologies and approaches are defined.”*

is a good next step and looks forward to collaborating with the MB, ED and Staff in the development of such framework. In reviewing the EEA activities, plans and products the cooperation can build on both the specific expertise of individual SC members and the interdisciplinary, systemic knowledge of the Committee. Such a global and interdisciplinary perspective can in particular be deployed in the joint SC-EEA seminars, to which each SC member could be asked to contribute from her/his own field of expertise and from a broader perspective as appropriate.

Done in Copenhagen, on 8 April 2013

*SIGNED*

Dr Sybille van den Hove  
Chair, EEA Scientific Committee