# EEA report guidelines

**About reports**

Reports provide an in-depth analysis of a topic for an audience that may include policymakers, experts in the field or the general public. They consist of a set of key messages, an executive summary and a main body text. They may include several visuals and are published in PDF format.

We apply strict character counts for the front section of briefings, so they fit with stakeholders’ preferred formats for receiving environmental information:

* Key messages — no more than one page of bullet points, for a total of approximately 1,500 characters without spaces.
* Executive summary — no more than three pages, for a total of approximately 4,500 characters without spaces.
* Main body of the report — this should be no longer than 80 pages, for a total of approximately 120,000 characters without spaces.

Please see the [Publishing Guide](https://eea1.sharepoint.com/sites/Publishing/SitePages/Publishing-guide.aspx) for an overview of the briefing workflow.

**Clear writing**

Be sure to use plain English when you write, in line with the European Commission’s guidelines on ‘[How to write clearly](https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/725b7eb0-d92e-11e5-8fea-01aa75ed71a1)’. These include:

* Think before you write. Clear writing starts with and depends on clear thinking.
* Focus on the reader. Be direct and interesting.
* Kiss: keep it short and simple.
* Get your document into shape.
* Make sense: structure your sentences.
* Cut out excess nouns: verb forms are livelier.
* Be concrete, not abstract.
* Beware of false friends, jargon and abbreviations.

**References**

There are three types of sources in online briefings and we treat them as follows:

* Links to EEA products.

It is good practice to put as many links as possible to other EEA products in the text. This helps readers dig deeper and highlights the reliability of the content. It also increases the content’s ranking by search engines.

Links should be made directly to the relevant text. For example:

‘*A qualitative overview of the measures reported by Member States is available in an* [*online data viewer*](https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/dashboards/overview-of-compliant-air-pollution-policies).’

* References to external sources for information purposes:

When another institution, convention or body is mentioned for information purposes only, a link to its website should be provided directly in the text. For example:

*‘Consistent with a similar procedure agreed by Parties under the* [*Gothenburg Protocol*](http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/multi_h1.html) *of the* [*LRTAP Convention*](http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/30anniversary.html)*…’*

* References to external sources upon which your work is based:

When referencing published content that you have used as the basis for your work, the EEA style guide applies. Source material should be cited in the text and a full bibliographic reference should be provided at the end of the briefing.

For more information on referencing, please see Section 3.4 of the [EEA Writing manual.](https://eea1.sharepoint.com/sites/Publishing/SiteAssets/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FPublishing%2FSiteAssets%2FSitePages%2FWriting%2C%2Dediting%2Dand%2Dstorytelling%2FEEA%2DWriting%2Dmanual%2D%2D%2Dupdated%2DMarch%2D2024%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FPublishing%2FSiteAssets%2FSitePages%2FWriting%2C%2Dediting%2Dand%2Dstorytelling)

# How to use the EEA report template

Use the EEA report template to prepare your report before submitting it for editing. It provides the structure you should use as you develop your report. For more information about report structure and style, please refer to pp. 6-9 of the [EEA Writing Manual](https://eea1.sharepoint.com/sites/Publishing/SiteAssets/SitePages/Writing%2C-editing-and-storytelling/EEA-Writing-manual-May-2024.pdf?web=1).

Before starting to work in the template, ensure you have the latest version of Microsoft Word installed. If you don’t, update Word.

Once you’re sure you’re working in the latest version of Word, save the file using the following naming convention: PUBL\_202X\_XXX\_Name of report.docx

## Styles and numbering

Predefined Word styles are used in the template for all headings, body text, feature (figures/maps/tables/boxes/photos) captions, notes and sources. These styles set fonts and font sizes. When writing your report, simply replace the existing text with your own text (e.g. chapter titles, headings, subheadings) without altering the predefined styles.

The following styles are used in EEA reports:

Title

The report title takes the ‘Title’ style.

Chapter titles, headings, sections and sub-sections are styled as follows:

# Heading 1 (Calibri (Body), 22. Bold)

This is used to number chapters.

## Heading 2 (Calibri (Body), 14. Bold)

This is used to number sections.

### Heading 3 (Calibri (Body), 12. Bold, italic)

This is used to number sub-sections.

#### Heading 4 (Calibri Light (Headings), 11. Bold, italic)

This is used for a further level of sub-section. Note, no numbering is used so this level will not appear in the table of contents.

Note: Headings 1-4 are used for the main body of your report/assessment. The remaining headings are used to number annexes, and annex sections and sub-sections.

##### Heading 5 (Calibri (Body), 22. Bold)

This is used to number annexes. Note that the style is set up to number annexes sequentially from Annex 1.

###### Heading 6 (Calibri (Body), 14. Bold)

This is used to number sections of annexes.

Heading 7 (Calibri (Body), 12. Bold, italic)

This is used to number sub-sections of annexes.

Any further levels of sub-section in annexes use Heading 4 style.

The numbering of chapters, headings and sub-headings is automatic when these styles are used. Note that numbering only begins with the Introduction. Your foreword, preface, table of contents, acknowledgements and executive summary are not numbered. The last numbered chapter should be your conclusions. Lists of abbreviations, references and annexes are not numbered.

The table of contents will be generated automatically if you respect the pre-defined styles for chapters, headings, sections and sub-sections. You should not need to adjust the table of contents manually.

The Quickstyle gallery, found under the ‘Home’ tab, displays all the styles used in this template:

|  |
| --- |
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You should not need to use this as the styles are pre-set in the template, but to apply a style, just click on it in the Quickstyle gallery. To view a style without applying it, just mouse over that style in the gallery.

## Features

Features are boxes, figures, maps, photographs and tables. These can appear in any chapter including the executive summary, introduction and conclusions. Features should be numbered sequentially according to where they appear in the report, i.e. the executive summary, the chapters or the annexes, and should include a caption.

To number features and add a caption, you should follow these instructions:

* Select the object (box, figure, map, photograph, table) that you want to add a caption to.
* On the **References** tab, in the **Captions** group, click **Insert Caption**.



* In the **Label** list, select the label that best describes the object, e.g. figure or map. If the list doesn't provide the label you want, click**New Label**, type the new label in the **Label** box, and then click **OK**.



* Type your caption text after the label.



* Click **OK**.

Note that the labels and captions are styled using the ‘Caption’ style. For EEA reports, the numbering of features follows the ‘Chapter No, feature No’ convention, beginning at 1.1 (i.e. Figure 1.1, Map 1.1 etc.). Numbering in the executive summary and conclusions follow the same procedure, but labels will be as follows: Figure ES1, Figure A1.1. Numbering will continue sequentially. Also note that for photographs, the caption will appear below rather than above the feature.

* Notes should appear immediately after the feature. Notes use the ‘Graphic source/notes’ style:

Note: Note text

* Sources appear after the notes and also use the ‘Graphic source/notes’ style:

Source: Source name (Surname, initial., (Year)).