

EEA multiannual work programme 1999-2003 – a brief overview



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Introduction

The European Environment Agency was set up to support European Community environmental policy and the progress toward sustainable development. Its contribution is through the provision of reliable, relevant, timely and targeted environmental information. The EEA coordinates and makes use of a wide range of data and information from EIONET (the European Environmental Information and Observation Network), a European network of national institutions dealing with environmental information in the 18 EEA member countries, as well as similar institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

The demand for consistent data delivered in a format suitable to be used by policy-makers is pressing. With the commitment to integrate environmental considerations into all other policy areas of the European Union, along with the enlargement to the East, the need for reliable and relevant environmental information has increased substantially and is anticipated to expand even further to meet growing requirements.

Objective, reliable and comparable information of this kind is needed by decision-makers at European and national levels when framing, implementing and further developing environment policy. With new policy areas and requirements being created every year, the Agency will need to stretch its

capacities to the limit to provide information to its primary users. In addition, this information is in demand by a variety of other interested parties and organisations. The need for providing relevant information for private bodies and individuals will also grow, not least because the concept of sustainable development is gaining foothold and a shift is taking place from regulatory 'end of pipe' control of point sources of pollution to the reduction of energy and material use via preventive measures such as clean production and consumption.

The Agency is a clearinghouse for information provided by and for EIONET, which incorporates several hundred contributing organisations. This network is a demonstration of how European countries can cooperate in an efficient and mutually beneficial way. Not only is information shared and improved through joint efforts, but common problems are addressed in delivering the information needed, with common solutions shared as well.

Building capacities was a main priority of the work during the first multiannual work programme (MAWP), and it will remain a challenge for the Agency in the coming years. With the dawning of the new millennium, the Agency sets out its priorities for its second multiannual work programme, outlined in this document.

The EEA's contribution

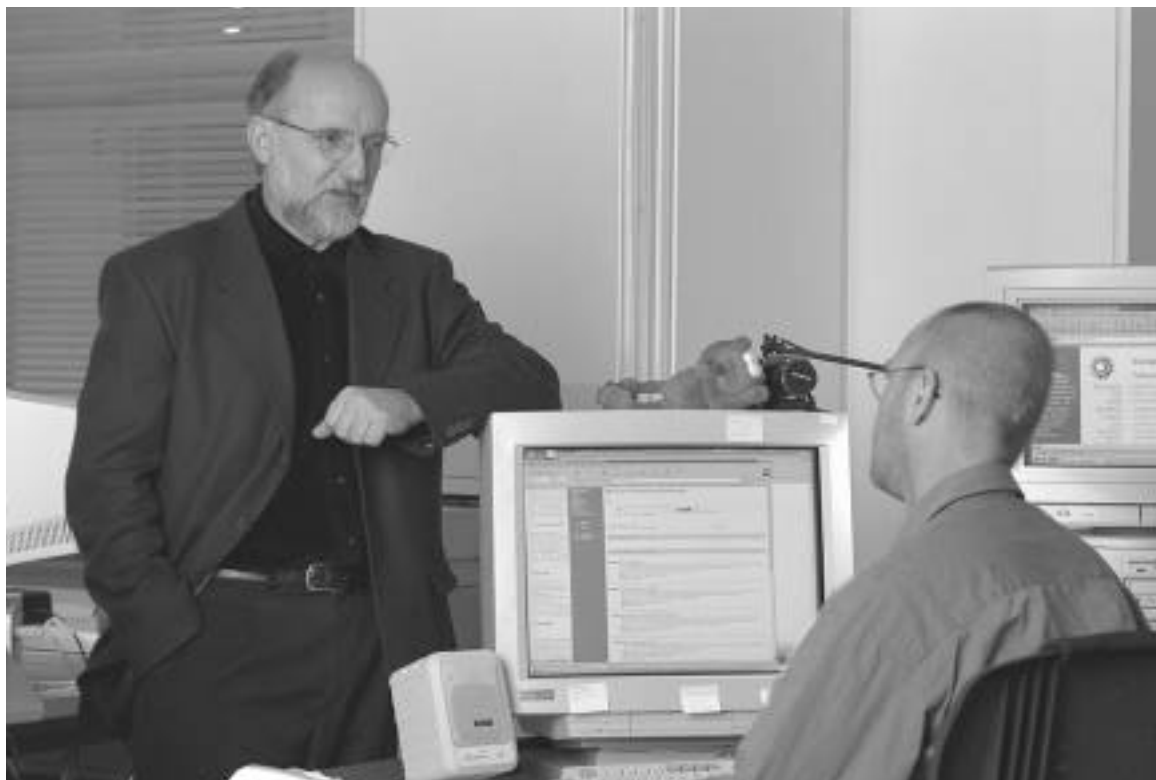
Until the EU launched its co-ordinating efforts in this area, member states concentrated mainly on building their own, individual environmental data and information systems across Europe. Definitions, indicators and statistical methods differed, as did the important resulting data and assessments. The European Environment Agency was set up in Copenhagen in 1993 to gather, consolidate and adjust the wide range of relevant data and information already in existence from national environmental organisations and agencies.

This was by no means an easy task. The Agency began by collecting and sifting existing information, building up a picture of what was known and not known about Europe's environment. At the same time, there was an intense demand for consistent data delivered in a format to be directly used by policy-makers.

Policy-makers need a solid foundation of facts and analysis on which to base standards and benchmark indexes for the preservation and recovery of environmental quality. In order to enhance existing legislation, policy-makers need the Agency's system of early warning of impending environmental pro-

blems and its system of evaluating the effectiveness of environmental regulations and instruments already in force. Before determining the extent of financial assistance for Eastern European neighbouring countries, decision-makers need to know not only the state of environmental resources in these countries, but also the state of environmental information.

At the Luxembourg summit in December 1997 and later at the Cardiff meeting in June 1998, the European Council committed the European Union to developing and implementing reporting on trends in specific indicators for sustainable development. This also relates to the EU objective of integrating environmental considerations into all other policy areas of the European Union. In particular, this work requires an independent assessment of the scientific uncertainties involved in a young but rapidly developing discipline. Furthermore, it relates to the work the Agency carries out involving environmental impact assessments of projects and policies. At the same time, the EU is beginning its enlargement preparations to the East and, in connection with these activities, the demand for reliable and relevant environmental information has increased.



Access to information

The current trend in the field of environment is for greater and more open reporting. This is as much a case for countries as it is for individual companies. The information-provision and sharing fostered by the Agency give all interested parties – EU-bodies, national ministries, organisations and individuals alike – a shared access to the same European-level information. Providing open access to environmental information empowers citizens, enabling them to form an opinion and take appropriate action. Therefore, the public access that the Agency offers to its products and services also furthers the objective of supporting the public participation process.



Co-operation

The geographical remit of the Agency's work already extends beyond the 18 member countries to the PHARE countries and the TACIS countries (which include the Russian Federation) and the countries bordering the Mediterranean, Baltic and Arctic Seas. It is expected that several of the PHARE countries will become full members of the Agency during the 1999-2003 planning period, while contacts with the TACIS countries are set to intensify. To cover truly pan-European reporting will, however, require greater resources in funding and staffing.

Enhanced co-operation is also necessary with EU's DG XI (the Directorate General with responsibility for environmental matters) to support the development of the Union's environment policy, and DG XII (responsible

for research) on the 5th Framework Research Programme, as well as with DGs responsible for integrating environmental aspects into sector policies such as transport, energy and agriculture. Co-operation is also set to increase with the EU's Joint Research Centre and Eurostat.

In addition, greater co-operation will be needed with third parties such as the United Nations Environment Program, the World Health Organization, UNECE and OECD. The work the Agency conducts with these international organisations ensures consistency of information and a reduced risk of duplication of work. The Agency also interacts with a host of other organisations, from universities to financial institutions

The challenges ahead

In the new multiannual work programme, the Agency has formulated its mission for the next five years as follows: 'The EEA aims to support sustainable development and to help achieve significant and measurable improvement in Europe's environment through the provision of timely, targeted, relevant and reliable information to policy-making agents and the public.'

In order to focus its work over the next planning period, the Agency has defined seven specific challenges covering its various responsibilities. The challenges will help identify priorities and maintain a balance of resources. Put simply, the first four challenges have to be met in order to enable the Agency to meet the last three.

1. Networking. Develop and maintain the EIONET
2. Build the Reference Centre for environmental information
3. Develop the monitoring-to-reporting process
4. Identify emerging environmental issues

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5. Assist development of environmental policies by delivering information that is of direct use to the policy-makers
6. Support implementation & evaluation of environmental policies
7. Support the environment element of the EU enlargement process

EEA output

The Agency's efforts manifest themselves in a wide range of products and services.

- Environmental Assessment reports, covering the whole range of environmental driving forces, pressures, state, impacts and responses
- Environmental issues reports on priority problems, sectors and issues
- Topic reports – monitoring of air, water, soil and other topic areas
- Technical reports, specialist-oriented guide-lines and handbooks
- The Reference Centre, giving access to EEA databases and other information sources
- Services and reporting to policy-makers

The five-yearly 'Europe's Environment' report is probably the most widely known of the Agency's publications. From 1999 it is being supplemented by the annual 'Environment Signals' reports, based on key environmental indicators. Both reports provide key information and an integrated assessment which cover the driving forces, pressures, state, impacts and societal responses to various environmental issues. In so doing, they are able to give a broad overview of the present situation as well as an indication of future prospects of the environment. The information and conclusions in these reports are supported by graphs, maps and statistics, accessible to experts and non-experts alike.

Programme areas

On a practical level, the work of the Agency as formulated in the MAWP has been divided into five programme areas:

1. Topic databases and reporting, to improve monitoring and environmental reporting.
2. Integrated assessment, generating in-depth analysis on specific environmental problems, geographical areas, economic sectors or responses to the problems.
3. Periodical reporting, covering the development of the Environmental Assessment reports mentioned above.
4. Reporting system support, including development of methodology and data tools needed by the EEA and EIONET, and the development of the Reference Centre.
5. Service and network infrastructure, providing the required IT support, as well as publishing, dissemination and information services.

In each area, the operational groups will each work with a number of projects that are defined in the work programme. The reporting process requires inputs along the way from all programme areas. On the following page is an overview of the individual project titles under the five programme areas.



Overview of programme areas, project groups and projects

1. TOPIC DATABASES AND REPORTING	3. PERIODICAL REPORTING
1.1 Socio-economic data	3.1 The five year report
1.1.1 Eurostat data co-operation	3.1.1 EU98 SoER
1.1.2 Co-operation with other bodies	3.1.2 State and Outlook on Europe's Environment
1.2 Pressures	3.2 Regular indicator-based report
1.2.1 Atmospheric emissions	3.2.1 European Environmental Signals reports
1.2.2 Waste	4. REPORTING SYSTEM SUPPORT
1.2.3 Chemicals	4.1 Scenarios, Methodologies, Guidelines
1.2.4 Water discharges	4.1.1 Integrated Environmental Assessment
1.2.5 Releases to land and soil	4.1.2 Scenarios and prospective analysis
1.3 State and Quality	4.1.3 Guidelines for environmental reporting
1.3.1 Air Quality	4.1.4 Support for reporting requirements (EU legislation and multilateral agreements)
1.3.2 Water Quality and Resources	4.2 Data and information management
1.3.3 State of Flora, Fauna and Biotopes	4.2.1 EIONET data flow
1.3.4 State of Soil	4.2.2 EEA GIS support
1.3.5 Land Cover	4.2.3 Data warehouse management
1.3.6 Coastal and Marine Environment	4.3 Public access to environmental information - Reference Centre
1.3.7 Noise	4.3.1 Directory of EEA/EIONET information resources
2. INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT	4.3.2 The EEA Web site: The Gateway to the Reference Centre
2.1 Environmental issues	4.3.3 Access to Data warehouse and Topic databases
2.1.1 Air Quality and Ozone	4.3.4 Gateway to other information providers - GELOS, Envirowindows
2.1.2 Climate Change	4.4 Institutional networking, etc
2.1.3 Water Stress	4.4.1 EIONET and co-operation with third countries (ETCs, NFPs, NRCs)
2.1.4 Eutrophication	4.4.2 European Commission (DGXI, other DGs, JRC, Eurostat)
2.1.5 Acidification	4.4.3 Council, Parliament, EcoSoc, Regions Committee
2.1.6 Biodiversity changes	4.4.4 International bodies
2.1.7 Exposure to Chemicals	4.4.5 NGOs (Business and ECO)
2.1.8 Health	5. Service and Network Infrastructure
2.1.9 Land and soil degradation	5.1 Information and Networking Technology
2.1.10 Waste Management	5.1.1 IT capacities
2.2 Regional assessments	5.1.2 Telematics capacities
2.2.1 Mediterranean area	5.1.3 IT application developments
2.2.2 Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)	5.2 Information Capacities and services
2.2.3 Transport TEN SEA	5.2.1 Publishing
2.2.4 Landscape	5.2.2 Distribution and marketing
2.2.5 Urban Environment	5.2.3 Communicating environmental information
2.3 Sectors and Instruments	
2.3.1 Transport	
2.3.2 Agriculture	
2.3.3 Energy	
2.3.4 Tourism	
2.3.5 Industry	
2.3.6 Households	
2.3.7 Instruments	
2.4 Research Dissemination and Emerging Issues	
2.4.1 Research and environmental information	
2.4.2 Emerging environmental issues	

Budgetary aspects

5.2.4 Library and information services

The major part of the EEA's work is multiannual in nature as projects are initiated, developed and carried out over a period of years. The Agency follows a multiannual work programme. Therefore it is consistent for the Agency to have a multiannual budget estimate to outline the long-term development of its work.

The EEA began operating with a modest budget and staff. It was envisaged that the responsibilities and budget would grow progressively over the years to match the mandate and needs of the primary clients. The effect of budget limitation was first noticed in 1998, when budget constraints resulted in the early termination of various projects. In real terms, the 1998 annual budget of 16.8 MEUR represented a decrease in funds available for external activities compared with the 1997 budget. The 1999 annual budget foresees 18.1 MEUR with a staff of 68 working at the EEA headquarters in Copenhagen. A thorough analysis of the first years' experience allows estimates to be made of the resources needed to fully implement the Agency's mandate as this is defined in Council Regulation 1210/90.

A minimum scenario has been defined in the MAWP for the development of the

Agency to meet its work requirements as laid down in the founding Regulation. This scenario implies an annual budget of 18-20 MEUR for the next 2-3 years, with an increase in the later years of the planning period to 23 MEUR. This will provide for continuation of a selected number of core projects defined as major priorities in the first annual work programme, but will only allow for a modest development of other important issues.

The multiannual work programme has been designed to allow flexibility for additional priorities should resources in addition to the estimates given in the multiannual multiannual budget be made available. This flexibility will be exercised by directly negotiating with key clients on how additional activities can be financed and undertaken by the Agency.

An activity and staff level designed to meet the growing needs and cover a wider spectrum of work will have budgetary consequences. In more concrete terms: In order to tackle issues such as support to the EU enlargement process, pan-European reporting and integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas, the Agency will need additional resources to those stipulated in the MAWP.



Editorial