EEA - European Environment Agency

3. Environment and multi-domain statistics (EEA)
3.1 Environment (EEA)
Environment Statistics

Summary description:

The main objective of EEA's work is 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.
The EEA has the mandate to establish and coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet), based on the infrastructure for collection, analysis, assessment and management of data shared with the European Commission services, EEA member countries and international organisations, agreements and conventions.
In 2005, DG Environment, the Joint Research Centre (JRC), Eurostat and the European Environment Agency (EEA) agreed on the division of coordinating roles in environmental reporting and dissemination and to establish Environmental Data Centres.
EEA will furthermore contribute to the development of a Shared Environmental Information System for Europe (SEIS). The objective of SEIS is to establish a distributed and sustained environmental information system to improve accessibility and sharing of data and information within Europe and provision of services to policy makers and citizens.

General priority objectives:

To establish the Shared Environmental Information System for Europe (SEIS) and the five data centres for which the EEA has responsibility, i.e. in the thematic areas of climate change, air pollution, water, biodiversity and land use, in partnership with DG Environment, JRC, Eurostat and EEA member countries.
To establish agreement on arrangements for data transfer and cooperation in the areas of waste, material flows and resource accounting with Eurostat and on chemicals, environment and health, soil and forestry with JRC.

Specific priorities and objectives in 2011:

Resource efficiency, the green economy and physical ecosystem accounting

• Improve the economy's environmental performance referred to as "eco-efficiency" (or first decoupling), which is currently assessed by the ratio:value of commodities/ natural resource use. Resources include energy, materials, land and water, including those embedded in international trade;
• Inter-generational optimisation of non-renewable resource use in order to maximise the income flow from such limited, depleting resources by means of resource savings and/or substitutions between different resources (the "weak sustainability" paradigm);
• Improve the ratio: value of commodities/ impacts on ecosystems (inland, sea and atmosphere systems). This "second decoupling" needs to be developed further considering the impacts of resource use (extraction and emissions) on human health, quality of life and on ecosystems (fragmentation, robustness, resilience, biological productivity, biodiversity);
• Maintain over time of the living natural capital to continue to supply sufficient quality and quantity economic resources as well as life support (clean water, clean air, stable climate, food). Efficiency of resource use in this case refers to the ecosystems' carrying capacity, related to, practices that are respectful of ecosystems' multiple functions and structure.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

• Use of established indicator sets, analysis of the information and data available on the impacts of and vulnerability to climate change and adaptation actions being undertaken by member States, regional and local authorities;

• Identify additional information and data necessary to fully assess member States' integration of climate change into EU policy areas;

• Further develop methods for regular indicator-based assessments;

• Analyse vulnerability for priority sectors and themes;

• Support to the implementation of the EU Clearinghouse on climate change impacts, vulnerability and adaptation and its hosting from 2012 onwards - upgrade EEA data centre and thematic web site accordingly;

• Contribute and federate user needs towards GMES climate and emergency response services, and compile a feasibility study on a ClimateWatch service on Eye on Earth.

Implementation of new information technology and communications systems to support environmental observation, monitoring, reporting and assessment

• Extend support to the GMES core services, particularly the in-situ component, INSPIRE and SEIS. EEA will do this via a range of web services and applications. There will be an enhanced emphasis on cloud computing, semantic web and sensor web technology, mobile GIS applications and electronic publishing using a range of social media networks and online dissemination channels for different target groups;

• Improve the sharing, usability and scalability of the existing priority data flows, and build a range of new dynamic spatial services;

• Provide guaranteed continuous public access to data and information gathered by EEA and other actors and encourage more co-production of knowledge through information exchange, clearing house mechanisms, crowd sourcing and open data;

• Introduce new product line including e-books and "apps" for mobile telephones and other devices.

Support environmental reporting within the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Arctic

• Enable the regular updating of state and outlook environmental reports, assessments and benchmarking within EEA cooperating countries, the European Neighbourhood and adjacent regions including the Arctic, and from 2010 onwards the continuous updating of the EEA's own regular integrated environmental assessment on the state and outlook of Europe's environment;

• Establish strong working relations and agreements in cooperating countries, the European Neighbourhood and adjacent regions including the Arctic to provide near-real-time data flows on air quality, updated water quality estimates and the basis for a series of indicators on water availability, use and efficiency;

• Link to European environmental policies and data sharing in the ENP-East and ENP-South;

• Provide guidance on the effective use of the SOER 2010 report and assessments under the ENP within international assessments including GEO-5, UNEP's International Resource Panel reports, a European follow-up to TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystem Services and Biodiversity), the European sub-regional follow-up to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the UNGA Regular Process for the Global Assessment of the Marine Environment;

• Prepare an update to the 2004 joint Arctic report on environment and health for the Arctic with WHO.

Key meetings 2011:

• Regular NFP/Eionet meetings on 2-3 March, 17-18 May, 28-29 September 2011.

• UNEP GEO-5 Data and Indicators Working Group Meeting on 1-2 March 2011.

• Follow-up to the GEO/GMES observatory meeting 'Global Workshop on in-situ Instruments and Sustainability of Data Sharing' on 14-16 September 2011.