

# Communication strategy



# Communication goals — where do we want to go?

**Knowledge based on independent, quality-assured information empowers people. It helps them to develop ideas, engage in discussions, influence policy and make decisions that can secure our environment.**

The demand for easy to understand up-to-date information is growing. This demand comes from both political decision makers and from European citizens, who increasingly request full transparency on information from public bodies. Alongside this development, the rapid evolution in new information technologies provides us with more tools to communicate more effectively.

The European Environment Agency (EEA) and its extensive network, Eionet, aims to meet this demand by clearly and openly communicating its findings on environmental issues to the policy-makers and citizens of Europe, making the best possible use of modern communication technologies.

We will do so through the implementation of this strategy, thereby putting the EEA's mission into practice and at the same time adding transparency between the European Union and its citizens.

We will work closer with our institutional networks throughout Europe and with international and national media to reach as broad an audience as possible.

## Overall communication goals

- To give Europe's decision makers and citizens the independent information they need to make informed choices about the environment.
- To raise awareness on the environment by communicating our messages in a transparent, understandable way to as broad an audience as possible.
- To raise the profile of the Agency and its network as being the key providers of relevant, reliable information on Europe's environment.

**Note:** Independent in the context of this strategy means that the EEA is not under instruction from any other institution. While the EEA works with a variety of partners to ensure the accuracy of its communications, the EEA decides on and takes full responsibility for the final content of its messages.

We will promote our messages in a pro-active, responsive way and contribute to political and public agendas.

We will improve our corporate profile by being consistent in communicating our key messages, consistent in our design, easy to reach and clear on who we are and what we stand for.

Our overall communication goals are rooted in the Agency's founding regulation and the EEA strategy. They reflect the increasing importance of participatory processes in democratic societies as laid out in major policy agreements such as:

- The Aarhus Convention.
- The EU Directive on Public Access to Environmental Information.
- The 2006 Commission White Paper on a European Communication Policy.
- The 2005 Commission White Paper on European Governance.

To achieve our communication goals, the Agency will continue to reinforce communication as a shared responsibility of all staff.

Furthermore, all EEA projects and their communication activities must be:

- designed to fulfil an identified objective;
- aimed at defined target groups;
- evaluated, reflected upon and learnt from.

This communication strategy is the basis for the implementation plan and the steering tool for all annual communication planning in the European Environment Agency.



# Implementation — how do we get there?

## Target groups

The provision of useful information depends on effective two-way communication.

We must engage in **dialogue** with our target groups to understand their information needs and to give the **right information** at the **right time**, so it has **most impact**.

Our **primary target groups** are policy-makers, meaning **politicians and their institutions at European and national level** and **European citizens**.

Our secondary target groups are **non-governmental policy-influencers** with strong environmental interests such as researchers, businesses, think tanks and non-profit organisations.



To best serve our primary target groups, we aim to integrate our communication initiatives with the environmental agendas of the European Commission and Parliament, the current Presidency of the Council and the public interests in different regions of Europe.

In today's Europe, citizens play an increasingly important role in environmental decision making. We therefore aim to make our main messages available to both target groups at the same time.

In addition to the above mentioned target groups, the EEA strategy includes a commitment to strengthening the Agency's communication with **younger audiences**. We will do so by leveraging the EEA's main messages for various outputs suitable for children and for teaching purposes.

## Channels and products

All our target groups, experts and generalists, share one common requirement: the need for **brief, easy-to-read** presentations of the main messages of our outputs.

We will leverage our outputs for **multiple purposes and audiences**, and use a **variety of channels to deliver them**. The main messages from our products must, over time, reach all our target groups in different countries. We will achieve this by using three main communication channels: our **website**, the **media** and **networking**.

We aim to offer **full transparency** regarding our sources and easy access to the full report and background data that support our messages.

### Channels

**The website** is our key communication channel. However, it will only be an effective channel if our target groups use it. The website must therefore have a clear identity, be continuously updated and be easy to navigate. It must develop from a site that stores documents into an interactive site that supports the two-way communication aspirations of our communication goal. We will continue to focus on writing regular news items for the web and making the best possible use of multimedia techniques to maximise outreach and impact of EEA messages.

**The media** are an important gateway to the public and to national politicians. We will strengthen and widen our media network and use it to multiply the effect of our messages and increase the visibility of the Agency as a key provider of environmental information. We will move towards a more targeted media approach. In other words, we select the media we wish to work with depending on the messages we want to get across and the target group we aim to reach.



**EEA's mission:** *The European Environment Agency 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.*

**Networking** done by EEA staff through their **direct contact** with EU institutions is a major communication channel to governmental policy-makers. We aim to expand our contacts to cover **more sectors** engaged in environmental policy making and meet their needs for environmental information when possible.



## Products

To reach all target groups the EEA has developed a range of different products and will further streamline the content outline and writing style for these products to increase recognition, usability and impact.

In addition to existing products, the EEA aims to develop a regular indicator-based country-benchmarking product. This benchmarking concept has a strong communication value to all target groups. It is intended to create discussion on country performance in order to inspire policy-makers to generate new ideas that ultimately will lead to a better environment.

For young people, the EEA will continue developing web-based products. We will establish and use environmental education networks for efficient and broad dissemination.

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# Main target groups, main objectives and main communications channels

Target groups	Policy-makers: politicians and their institutions — European and national	Non-governmental policy-influencers: researchers, businesses, think tanks, non-profit organisations etc.	European citizens	Young people
<b>Long-term communication goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that policy-makers across EU and the member countries use EEA information products and services to underpin their arguments for environmental improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that analysts and researchers use EEA products and services in their work with politicians, communication experts and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide European citizens with the environmental information and knowledge they need to make informed choices on how to live their everyday lives.</li> <li>Contribute to transparency between EU and citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that EEA information becomes an integrated part of the environment curricula across Europe</li> </ul>
<b>Short-term communication goal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and maintain systematic networking habits at both levels</li> <li>Awareness raising through use of key messages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systematic networking to help define relevant topics for future EEA products and be inspired with ways to improve EEA information. Promote new outputs with relevant stakeholders, so our messages are part of the debate that policy-nfluencers initiate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update citizens with latest information from EEA such as key messages from new reports and other outputs.</li> <li>Improve EEA website's user-friendliness</li> <li>Increase EEA visibility amongst citizens by securing more frequent quotes and references in international and national news media, scientific and other magazines. Also through a more targeted media approach and through establishing a strong network of key environmental journalists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage with teachers' networks</li> <li>Carry out activities for children, e.g. web-based competitions, public events for children, etc. Primary age group 8–15</li> </ul>
<b>Product types</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EEA reports</li> <li>Briefings, oral and written</li> <li>Conference presentations</li> <li>Technical reports</li> <li>Regular benchmark product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EEA reports</li> <li>Briefings, oral and written</li> <li>Technical reports</li> <li>Regular benchmark product</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Marketing/ advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EEA briefings</li> <li>Web highlights etc.</li> <li>General information material on all main topics, brochures, exhibitions, AV material, animation, books, visits</li> <li>Regular benchmark product</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Open door events</li> <li>Marketing/advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive games and other material useful for teaching purposes</li> <li>Web-based competitions</li> </ul>
<b>Communication channels</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking, EEA staff</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Networking, EEA staff</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Marketing/advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Information Centre</li> <li>Conferences</li> <li>Events</li> <li>Marketing/advertising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website</li> <li>Teachers' network</li> </ul>
<b>Network/member country involvement</b>	<p><b>EU: (main)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commission</li> <li>EP</li> <li>Council</li> </ul> <p><b>National:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MB/Eionet/ NFPs/NRCs</li> <li>EEA staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scientific Committee</li> <li>ETC network</li> <li>EPA network</li> <li>MB/Eionet/NRCs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRCs for communication to broaden media contacts and establish weblinks</li> <li>Other Agencies for marketing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRCs for communication and Eionet to establish and maintain contact with national teachers networks, schools, relevant educational associations, etc</li> </ul>
<b>Multicultural considerations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take into account political cultures/agendas of countries targeted</li> <li>Consider language abilities of country targeted</li> <li>Take into account communication culture of countries targeted</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure material is available in all EEA languages</li> <li>Take into account IT access/availability</li> </ul>



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