Delivering data and knowledge to achieve
Europe's environment, climate and sustainability ambitions

EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030

Update January 2026

About EEA and Eionet

The European Environment Agency (EEA) is an agency of the European Union. The regulation establishing the EEA and the European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) was adopted by the European Union in 1990, and the EEA started operations in Copenhagen in 1994.

Together with Eionet, the EEA's task is to provide sound, independent information on the environment and climate change. Through our data and knowledge, we help European policymakers and citizens make informed decisions, and thus contribute to achieving Europe's environment, climate and sustainability ambitions.

Eionet is a network which brings together thousands of experts from hundreds of institutions in EEA member and cooperating countries across Europe to create, collect, and disseminate environmental data and knowledge. Eionet is structured around National Focal Points (NFPs); National Data Flow Coordinators; Eionet groups (supported thematic and working groups); and Topic Centres (organisations with expertise in specific environmental areas).

To support policymaking in Europe, the EEA works closely with national and European institutions, in particular the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

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This document presents the vision and strategic objectives that will shape the work of the European Environment Agency and European Environment Information and Observation Network in the upcoming period to 2030. The work will be carried out under the three areas of work identified in the document. More detailed information on concrete activities will be provided in Single Programming Documents.

Foreword

We are pleased to present this update of the EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030, which will ensure it remains fit for purpose during the second half of the strategy period.

This document underlines EEA-Eionet's continuing commitment to providing robust data and knowledge on the development and implementation of EU environment and climate policies, and on solutions for a more sustainable and resilient Europe.

The need for action is increasingly urgent. Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent and we are experiencing ever fiercer, costlier and more frequent extreme weather events. Europe's natural environment is also under significant pressure from climate change, pollution and land use. Meanwhile, access to critical raw materials and minerals, essential for the transition to a sustainable EU economy, is being hindered by geopolitics and changes in the terms of trade. All these factors pose risks to our security, competitiveness, and way of life.

Investing in the transition to a more prosperous, sustainable future is essential for our societal cohesion, economic vitality and strategic autonomy. This green and digital transition can bring societal benefits through sustainable industrial production, reduced energy costs, and enhanced resource efficiency.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the implementation of EU environment and climate policies is a core task of the EEA and our network of national experts, Eionet. Digital solutions, including artificial intelligence, are enabling faster, more efficient data delivery and more timely analyses.

The EEA's Management Board adopted the joint EEA-Eionet Strategy in December 2020. While the overall vision, narrative and structure of that original version remain valid and relevant, we have now updated the strategy to take account of major political, policy, knowledge and technology developments and their future implications for EEA-Eionet.

At its core, the updated EEA-Eionet Strategy is designed to align with the goals and objectives of the 8th Environment Action Programme, the EU Competitiveness Compass and the UN Agenda 2030. EU priorities for 2024-2029 also highlight the importance of simplifying technical and administrative procedures for businesses and Member States, and the need for more dialogue with citizens and stakeholders in order to accelerate policy implementation on the ground. We are confident that the EEA and Eionet are uniquely placed to support all these priorities, drawing on more than 30 years of practice.

The update process through 2024-2025 was led by the EEA Management Board and included consultation of Eionet partners and input from the EEA Scientific Committee and EEA staff. We would like to thank everyone for their efforts in support of this outcome.

We look forward with excitement and determination to delivering the strategy, and to supporting Europe's environment, climate and sustainability ambitions with timely and robust data and knowledge.

Leena Ylä-Mononen
EEA Executive Director

Dr André Weidenhaupt
Management Board Chair

European Environment Agency and European Environment Information and Observation Network

Providing evidence-based knowledge on Europe's environment, climate and sustainability

About us

The European Environment Agency (EEA) and European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) have been providing data and information on Europe's environment and climate to European citizens and policymakers since 1994.

Today our extensive network connects hundreds of institutions from 39 member and cooperating countries, contributing to reinforced efficiency, effectiveness and policy-oriented data collection and analyses to support robust and agile EU policymaking.

The knowledge base we have created together is broad, ranging from sharing near-real time air quality measurements from across Europe, to documenting greenhouse gas emissions trends and projections, providing satellite data on land cover, and delivering integrated assessments on the state of Europe's environment and climate.

What makes EEA-Eionet unique?

- **A network focused on adding value**: Connecting institutions across Europe and delivering benchmarking, capacity building, streamlining as well as exchange of best practice.

- **Data infrastructure**: Innovative e-reporting infrastructure for national and international data flows, underpinned by quality assurance processes.

- **Knowledge backed by data**: Comprising assessments, indicators, and progress-to-target analyses, using the broadest and most up-to-date collection of data on environment and climate topics.

- **Policy support**: Established knowledge role based on working closely with policymakers across Europe and contributing to key global processes.

- **Analytical expertise**: Capacity to assess progress, prospects, drivers of change and potential policy responses, covering a wide range of environment and climate topics.

- **Shared responsibility of EEA-Eionet**: To support policy implementation at European and national levels.

Responding to challenges ahead

Building resilience requires ambitious policies supported by actionable knowledge

European citizens face turbulent times, as multiple economic, social, geopolitical and environmental crises converge to pose systemic risks to our way of life. At the same time, political realities across the world have undergone a seismic shift, with Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine especially, focusing minds on defence and security.

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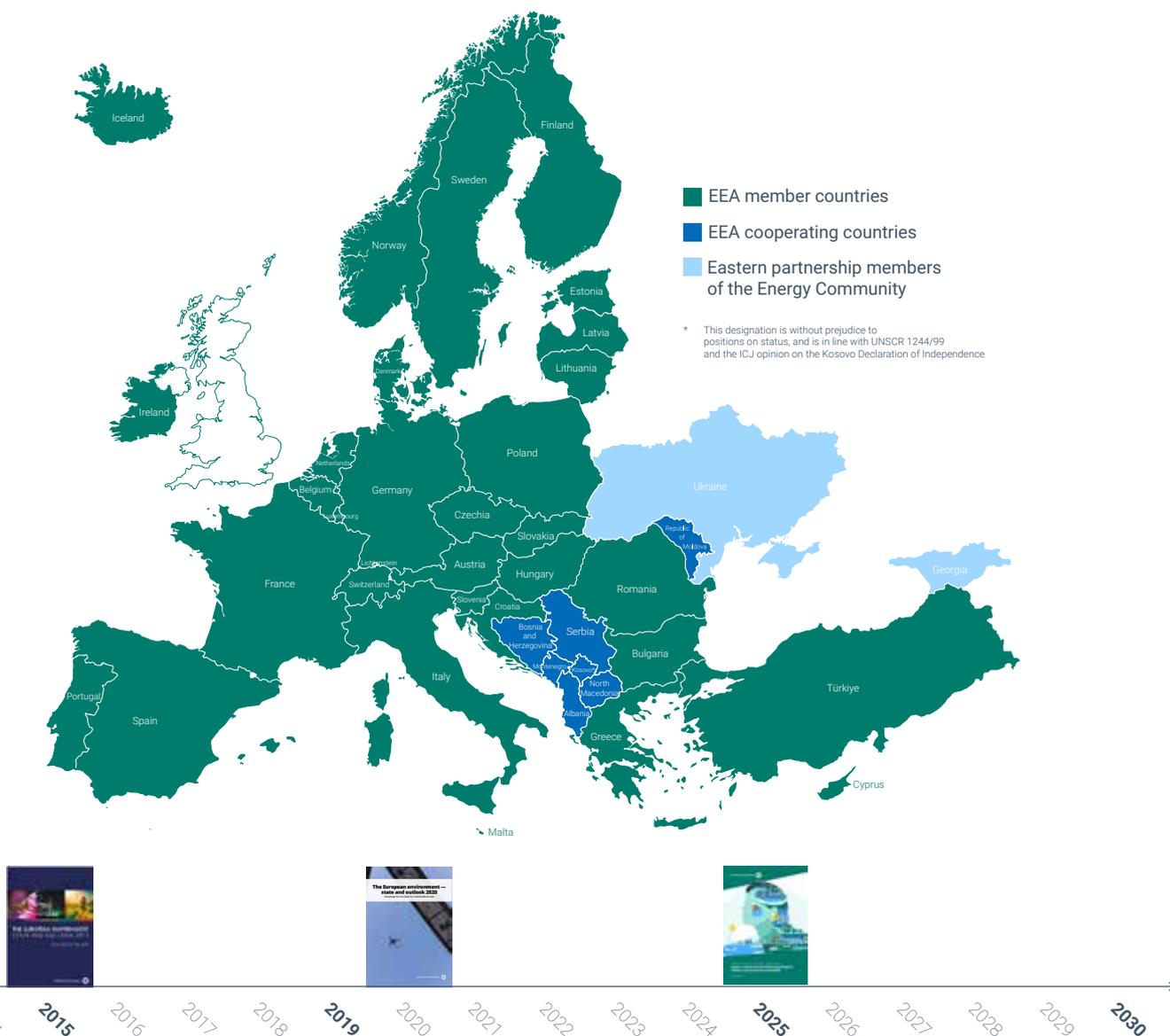
The European Union has responded to this volatile context through its strategic policy priorities to 2029 which confirm that the EU must stay the course on its green ambitions and implement the environment and climate policies agreed under the European Green Deal and 8th Environment Action Programme. The new Competitiveness Compass has three areas for action — innovation, decarbonisation and security — that all have strong environment and climate dimensions. Key priorities include clean industry, circular economy, energy system transformation, and societal resilience and preparedness. The EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) priorities focus on building a stronger, more competitive, and secure Europe by boosting innovation, digitalisation and green transitions.

The EEA's European Climate Risk Assessment (EUCRA) report from 2024 identifies 36 critical climate risks threatening Europe's infrastructure, economies, and societies. It stresses that some risks have already reached critical levels and, without urgent action, could spiral into system-wide crises. This is a call to action for policymakers, businesses, and civil society to integrate resilience into all aspects of decision-making. At the same time, decarbonisation is considered to benefit competitiveness and security.

The recent 'Europe's environment 2025' report develops this analysis further, providing a comprehensive picture of the environment, climate and sustainability trends in Europe. Europe has made crucial progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. Nevertheless, the overall state of Europe's environment is not good, especially nature, which continues to face degradation, overexploitation and biodiversity loss. The damaging impacts of accelerating climate change are also an urgent challenge. Many goals will not be achieved without coordinated, global efforts, so Europe will need to maintain its influence, both in its immediate neighbourhood and at global level in order to respond adequately and adapt to systemic crises.

The choices made by policymakers, companies and citizens over the coming years will determine whether and how Europe will achieve its long-term ambitions. The EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030 will support those choices by delivering actionable knowledge on trends, prospects and solutions for a sustainable Europe.

EEA member countries
EEA cooperating countries
Eastern partnership members of the Energy Community

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence
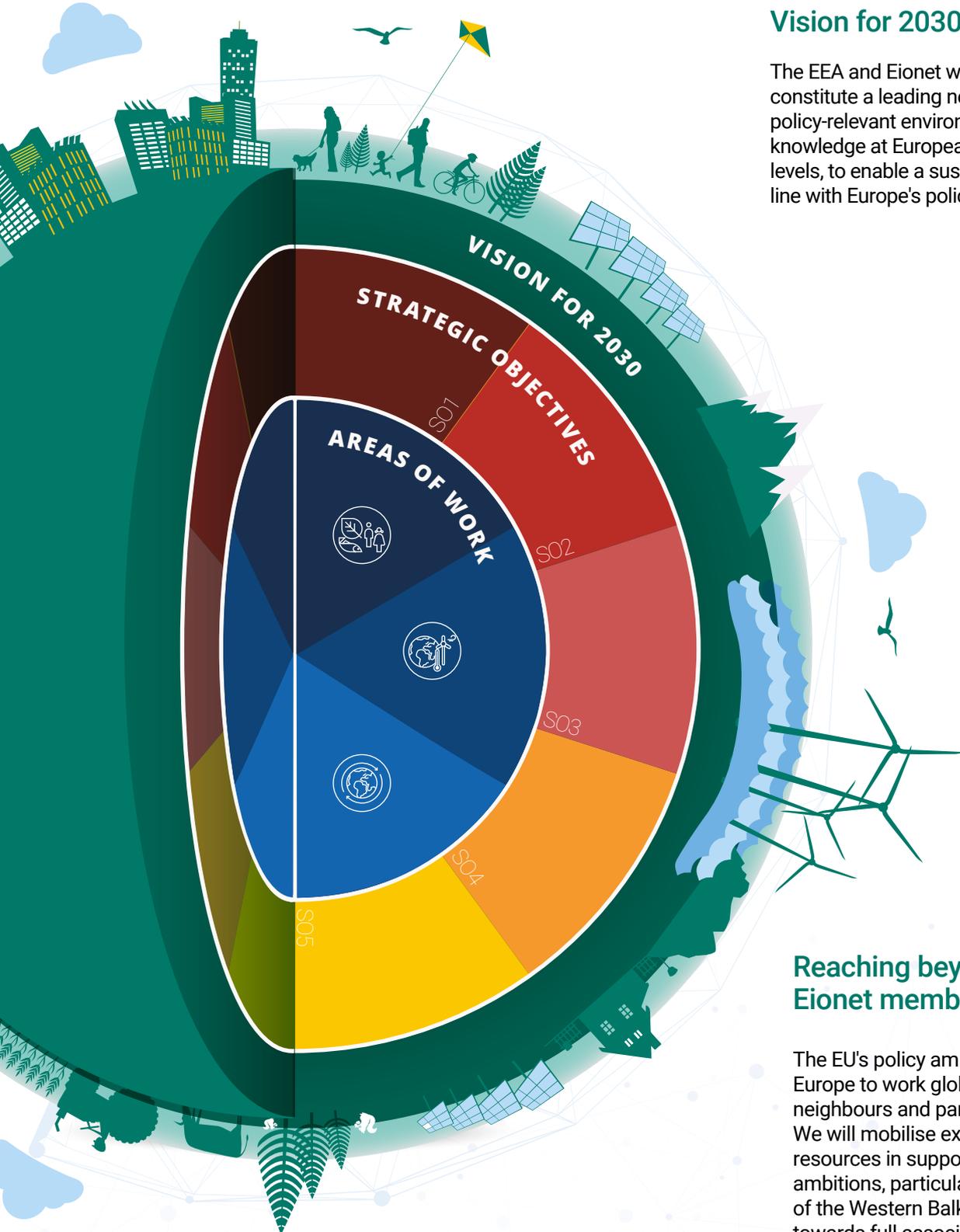
EEA-Eionet Strategy 2021-2030

Delivering data and knowledge to achieve Europe's environment, climate and sustainability ambitions

Vision for 2030

The EEA and Eionet will together constitute a leading network for policy-relevant environment and climate knowledge at European Union and country levels, to enable a sustainable future in line with Europe's policy ambitions.

Reaching beyond Eionet members

The EU's policy ambitions require Europe to work globally, with its neighbours and partners.
We will mobilise expertise and resources in support of these ambitions, particularly in the countries of the Western Balkans, leading them towards full association, as well as welcoming new European partners to the EEA-Eionet family.

Europe's environment, climate and sustainability policy ambitions

Our mission is to assess data and information, to provide relevant and timely insights on progress towards environment, climate and sustainability goals, and to ensure continuous monitoring for full implementation of relevant environment and climate policies. We recognise that Europe's ambitious goals will be achieved through a series of decisions and interlinked choices at different levels — European, regional, national and local — and will necessitate our working with key partners and other organisations. In carrying out our work programmes, we will work in close cooperation with other knowledge providers. To achieve greater impact, we will further focus on targeted and timely communication to ensure wide uptake by decision-makers and the public.

How we will work: Strategic Objectives

SO1 Supporting policy implementation and sustainability transitions

Deliver timely and robust data and knowledge to support and simplify policy implementation, ensure compliance with environmental standards and accelerate system transitions.

SO2 Providing timely input to solutions for sustainability challenges

Deliver insights to inform policy and public discussions, by digitally organising and communicating available knowledge on innovative solutions.

SO3 Building stronger networks and partnerships

Strengthen the impact of our network through more active engagement. Work with other leading organisations in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

SO4 Making full use of the potential of data, technology and digitalisation

Support the implementation and further development of Europe's policy agenda, by maximising the benefits of digitalisation for EU institutions and countries.

SO5 Resourcing our shared ambitions

Develop structures, expertise and capacity across our network to meet evolving knowledge needs, securing and diversifying the resources needed to achieve our joint vision.

What we will do: Areas of work

In the second period of the Strategy to 2030, the EEA will continue to support the environment, climate and sustainability goals set, inter alia, under the European Green Deal. In doing so, we will maintain focus on the five Strategic Objectives above, and continue delivering actionable knowledge in support to EU policy across three areas of work:

Environment
We support EU efforts to protect biodiversity and ecosystems through monitoring and analyses. We assess environmental pollutants and climate impacts on health, focusing on exposure and vulnerability. Our work advances the EU's zero-pollution goals and promotes a One Health approach linking human, animal, and environmental well-being.

Climate
Europe faces rapid warming and rising climate risks. We aid climate mitigation by tracking emissions and carbon removals. We help Europe adapt and become more resilient to unavoidable climate impacts. Our assessments provide guidance in developing the EU's path to climate neutrality by 2050, and a resilient, secure and competitive Europe, ensuring that progress benefits the economy and society without leaving anyone behind.

Sustainability
Sustainability sits at the intersection of environment, society, and the economy. Our work focuses on key levers of systemic change, including sustainable finance, innovation, and socio-economic trends and enablers, as well as thematic areas such as foresight, systemic risk, and the circular economy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE **1**

Supporting policy implementation and sustainability transitions

Deliver timely and robust data and knowledge to support and simplify policy implementation, ensure compliance with environmental standards and accelerate system transitions.

Our knowledge, based on the latest scientific findings and stable, quality-assured data, will help the European Union, its Member States and other EEA member and cooperating countries achieve their common policy goals, including those identified in the EU environmental acquis, the European Competitiveness Compass, the 8th Environment Action Programme, and global commitments.

The EEA and Eionet will:

- Deliver services to facilitate policy implementation and simplification, focused on enhancing the quality and timeliness of data and knowledge, reducing disproportionate administrative burden, and optimising deployment of digital technologies

- Deliver knowledge services to inform the development of post-2030 initiatives to accelerate the transition to sustainability, despite the current context of polycrisis

- Deliver our broad range of high-quality datasets through a digital hub, and integrate them with socio-economic data to support a wide range of policies

- Ensure we use the best available science through engagement of the EEA Scientific Committee and the wider scientific community

- Develop and share knowledge on key sustainability challenges and solutions across the systems of energy, mobility, food, industry and the built environment

- Deliver analyses of the wider challenges and opportunities of sustainability transitions at the European, national, regional, urban, and transboundary levels, including enablers of change such as finance, digitalisation, and research and innovation

- Deliver strategic, targeted and timely communication to ensure uptake of EEA knowledge by decision-makers and the public, in order to foster trust and active participation in Europe's sustainability transition by businesses and citizens

- Strengthen our capacity to contribute to the evaluation of policies and measures through broader analyses of information reported by countries through Reportnet

- Explore the options for modernising and climate-proofing monitoring beyond 2030, in relation to countries' needs, including enhanced integration of Copernicus earth observation and in-situ services, and uptake of new techniques and standards emerging from EU research (e.g. eDNA)

STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE **2**

Providing timely input to solutions for sustainability challenges

Deliver insights to inform policy and public discussions, by digitally organising and communicating available knowledge on innovative solutions.

National data and expertise are vital inputs to EEA products. They serve both to evaluate Europe's environment and to support policy implementation at EU and national levels.
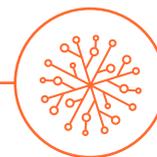
The influence of EEA-Eionet knowledge will depend on our ability and capacity to bring it to relevant public and policy debates at the right time and in the right format. To do so, we will:

- Increase our capacity to monitor and identify emerging risks, hazards and innovations using the vast array of environment and climate datasets and available data assimilation models

- Strengthen our capacity to provide immediate response to knowledge requests by policymakers through the provision of up-to-date, user-friendly data, knowledge services, and clear messaging

- Share innovative solutions being implemented at different governance levels in European countries, via more integrated, innovative digital services, co-developed with Eionet, that cater to different language needs and audiences

- Develop and deliver our knowledge to policymakers and the public in formats most suitable to their needs in order to facilitate wider uptake and use in decision making

- Prioritise, in assessment and communication activities, the relevance of nature, climate, resource use and human health for competitiveness, prosperity, security and resilience

- Ensure that the EEA's outputs take due consideration of the EU's political priorities and timing to ensure consistency and relevance, while respecting the EEA's independence as a science-based knowledge provider

- Continuously develop audience-centred, data-informed and platform-relevant communication approaches, including proactive use of digital channels and tools to ensure that our knowledge is available and understandable to businesses, public administrations and citizens

STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVE **3**

Building stronger networks and partnerships

Strengthen the impact of our network through more active engagement. Work with other leading organisations in order to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and expertise.
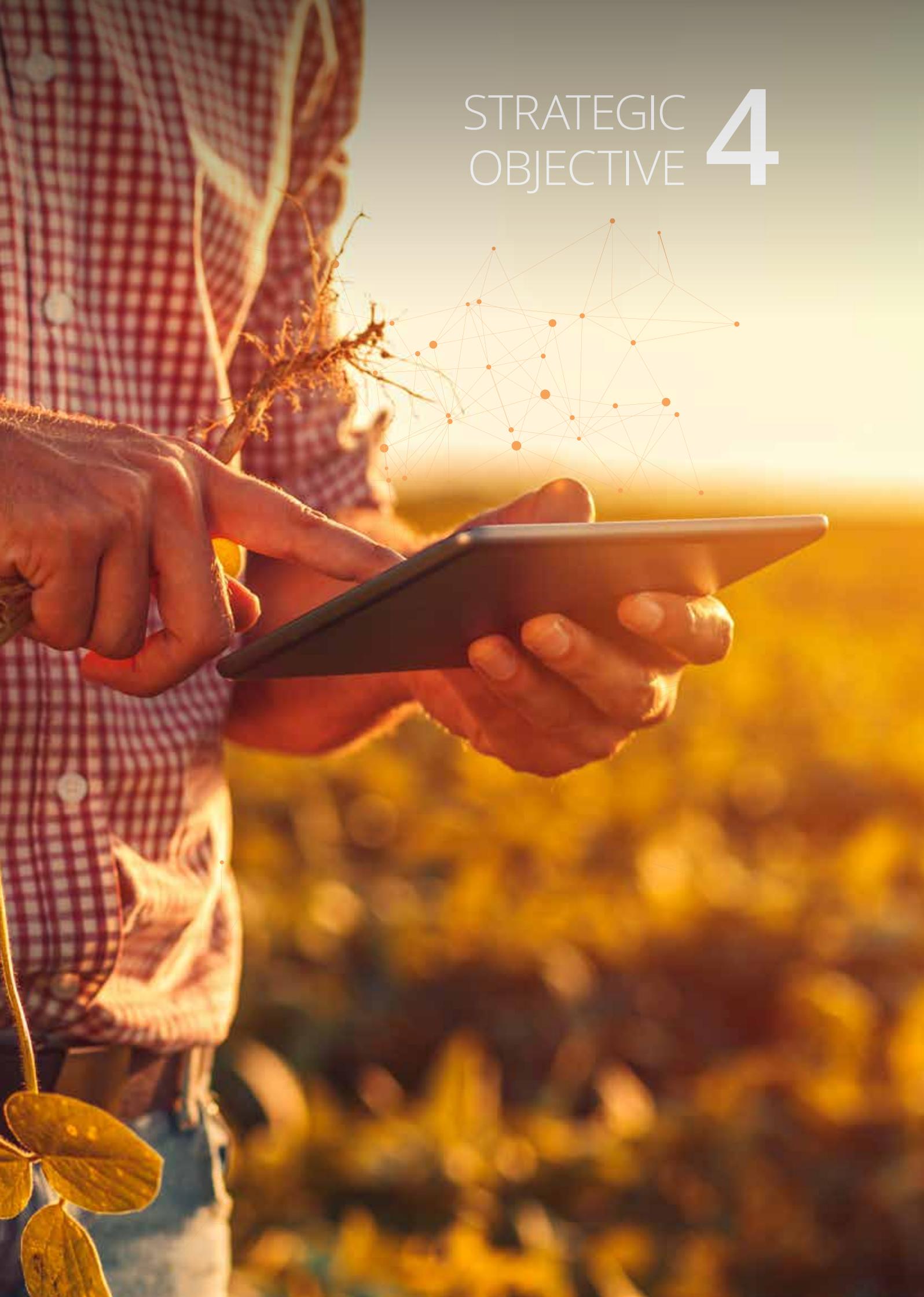
The EEA and Eionet bring together hundreds of organisations — European institutions, public authorities and research institutions from across Europe. Eionet includes EU Member States, countries engaged in the EU accession process as well as several non-EU member countries.

We form a unique knowledge network, connecting robust data, analytical and scientific expertise to European, and in some cases global, policy processes. This allows us to deliver assessments covering the widest range of topics and backed by solid data and expertise.

To deliver the knowledge Europe needs to achieve its sustainability goals, we will:

- Continue transforming EEA-Eionet into a knowledge network, with joint responsibility in providing objective, reliable and comparable information to support policy implementation at European and national levels

- Strengthen Eionet identity — national networks and Topic Centres — highlighting their scientific expertise and strategic role in knowledge generation, so that its value is better understood within EU institutions and by actors beyond the environment community

- Foster more active engagement with actors in countries, by strengthening the role of National Focal Points, and facilitating regular visits and online activities involving a diverse set of organisations

- Work with other leading networks, such as the Environmental Protection Agencies Network, reporting and scientific networks, and associations

- Work with the EEA Scientific Committee to ensure broader use of EU research and innovation investments, also in cooperation with the Directorate-General Research and Innovation, the Joint Research Centre, Eurostat, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

- Identify emerging knowledge gaps and explore collaborative actions with relevant partners, including the European Chemicals Agency, European Food Safety Authority, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, and European Investment Bank

- Ensure collaboration with the United Nations and other international institutions on simplifying reporting obligations, data strategies, and relevant assessments

- Work in partnership with Eionet to share collective expertise on the opportunities and use of digitalisation and technology, including artificial intelligence

- Expand the stakeholder base to include representatives from business, the general public, social organisations, and other relevant sectors, to help ensure diverse inputs and feedback, and facilitate the integration of competitiveness, security and resilience aspects in the knowledge base

Making full use of the potential of data, technology and digitalisation

Support the implementation and further development of Europe's policy agenda by maximising the benefits of digitalisation for EU institutions and countries.

Data and digitalisation are essential for delivering all our strategic ambitions. Common digital services for reporting, data and knowledge can make EEA-Eionet's work more efficient and timely, thereby providing the essential foundations to inform decision-makers and the public about Europe's environment, climate and wider sustainability issues.

Simplifying reporting and maximising value from data will be top priorities for EEA-Eionet towards 2030. Artificial intelligence will be investigated as a priority, to identify how it can be an effective enabler of innovation in EEA-Eionet's digital services, while maximising effectiveness, impact and cost efficiencies.

The EEA Digital Capability strategy 2025-2030 outlines investment priorities across technology, data, people, processes and innovation to leverage digitalisation and embrace new ways of working and collaborating. At its core, the strategy addresses aspects relating to monitoring, reporting and simplification, as well as increased value of EEA data and information, including in-situ and Earth observation data from Copernicus. To guide and prioritise implementation, the strategy has six missions:

- Missions 1 and 2 focus on strengthening the technology and data foundations of EEA-Eionet. A modernised, cloud-smart infrastructure will enable more resilient, secure and flexible digital services that safeguard digital sovereignty. Our reporting and data services will focus on common, efficient, interoperable data sharing and analytics solutions for EEA and Eionet.

- Mission 3 will enable EEA-Eionet to deliver more value and impact in support to policymakers and citizens by ensuring that digital services are tailored and evolve to meet their needs. Leveraging emerging technologies — especially artificial intelligence and advanced analytics — will enable more timely, multilingual, engaging and targeted outreach to diverse audiences.

- Missions 4 and 5 will drive digital transformation and innovation initiatives, including exploring concrete applications of artificial intelligence solutions. Developing the digital capabilities of EEA staff and Eionet is also key to improving data literacy and fostering an innovation culture.

- Mission 6 underscores that digital transformation will require investment in governance, change management and partnerships to maximise value and remove barriers to fully realising the benefits and potential of digitalisation.

STRATEGIC **5**
OBJECTIVE

Resourcing our shared ambitions

Develop structures, expertise and capacity across our network to meet evolving knowledge needs, securing and diversifying the resources needed to achieve our joint vision.

Continuous developments in knowledge, technology, communication and management practices require organisations and networks to adapt and innovate existing structures and tools and to invest in new areas.

To be at the forefront of such developments and to achieve our shared ambitions, we will:

- Attract top talent and invest in our staff to develop and maintain the competencies and expertise needed to deliver on this vision

- Ensure a managed diversification of the EEA's financial resource base, while safeguarding the institutional role and independence of the EEA

- Seek the necessary funding to use the full potential of Copernicus data through strong networking with other key actors who link the increasing data flows to policymakers

- Continue to build a comprehensive monitoring system based on the Delivery Model and Better Regulation criteria – efficiency, effectiveness, added value, relevance and coherence.

- Broaden diverse country participation in relevant EU research projects, harnessing the EEA-Eionet partnership and thereby strengthening our role at the interface of science and policy

- Explore funding opportunities through EU financial instruments to enable our network to support simplification and policy implementation, in line with country reform priorities

- Strengthen capacities in the member and cooperating countries to ensure that our network can respond to changing needs and demands in support of policy implementation

- Invest in management and expert capacities at the EEA, and where feasible in our network, through implementation of the Learning and Development Framework 2030

- Support knowledge expertise and requirements linked to full implementation of EU environment and climate policies and legislation in the Western Balkans and other partner countries affiliated to the network

Areas of work

Each of the five Strategic Objectives will be delivered through our three areas of work
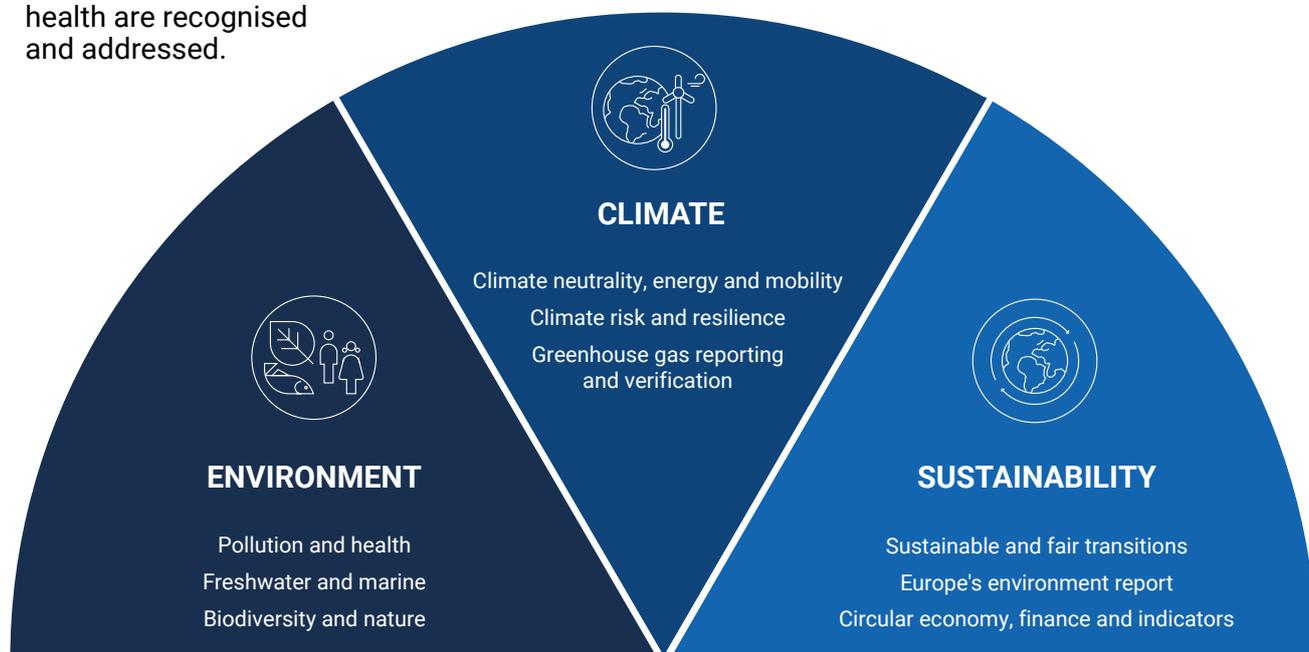
1 Environment

Europe faces continued biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. We actively contribute to the EU's efforts to protect and restore nature's biodiversity and ecosystems by providing comprehensive monitoring and analyses on the state of Europe's nature, waters and seas. We also monitor how environmental pollutants, including chemical substances and industrial emissions, alongside Europe's changing climate, affect human health. We help improve the understanding of the combined impacts of these stressors in relation to societal health and resilience, as well as the factors affecting the exposure and vulnerability of Europe's residents. This includes supporting and assessing progress towards the EU's zero-pollution objectives for air, water and soil, and promoting a One Health approach, where the links between human, animal and environmental health are recognised and addressed.

2 Climate

Europe is the world's fastest-warming continent. Climate risks are growing rapidly as we approach 1.5 degrees of global warming. We support climate change mitigation by tracking emissions and carbon removals, and help Europe adapt and become more resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. The EU has set the course for climate neutrality by 2050 in a way that supports the economy, promotes a resilient, secure and competitive Europe, and leaves no one behind. We support this transition by delivering data and assessments on progress and gaps.

3 Sustainability

Sustainability sits at the intersection of environment, society, and the economy. To deepen society's understanding of what it means to live well within planetary limits, we generate knowledge for decision-makers and stakeholders across sectors on how to advance the sustainability transition in Europe. Our work focuses on key levers of systemic change, including sustainable finance, socio-economic trends and enablers, and innovation, as well as thematic areas such as foresight, systemic risk, and the circular economy. Drawing on the EEA's data, information, and knowledge, we provide insights and solutions to reduce consumption footprints, encourage green production, reinforce waste prevention and sustainable waste management, and strengthen indicators and assessments on the state and outlook of Europe's environment.

CLIMATE

Climate neutrality, energy and mobility

Climate risk and resilience

Greenhouse gas reporting and verification

ENVIRONMENT

Pollution and health

Freshwater and marine

Biodiversity and nature

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainable and fair transitions

Europe's environment report

Circular economy, finance and indicators

The three areas of work will be implemented through the EEA delivery model, with an increased emphasis on services and outputs, alongside enhanced digitalisation and innovation efforts, communication and resources. The EEA delivery model structures the agency's work across reporting, data, knowledge and network services, transforming environmental data into accessible services, assessments and collaborative outputs that support European environmental policy. The digital transformation will be enabled by the digital missions of the Digital Capability Strategy, as outlined under Strategic Objective 4, cross-cutting the five Strategic Objectives and across the three areas of work.

EEA delivery model

Reporting services

Data services

Knowledge services

Networks and collaboration services

Foundational and corporate services

European Environment Information and Observation Network

European Environment Agency