

Preliminary Announcement

Seminar “Towards Effective Monitoring” House of the Dutch Provinces, Brussels October 25th & 26th, 2007

Introduction

Member states, regions and the European Union have a large number of monitoring obligations. Monitoring is required to develop, implement and evaluate environmental policies. Collectively, the obligations represent a large administrative burden. The question arises if it is possible to lighten this burden by improving the effectiveness and efficiency of monitoring systems, e.g. by better harmonization and organization of monitoring and reporting activities among regional, national and European levels. This seminar will endeavor to look into opportunities for more effective environmental monitoring in the EU context.

Objectives

- To share experiences presented in the Dutch monitoring review on how to comply efficiently with EU regulations
- To learn from the experiences on similar activities in other EU member states on how to be compliant & efficient, and to share “good practices”
- To exchange information on harmonization of monitoring activities among regional, national and the European bodies
- To explore options for efficiently improving reporting activities, data accessibility and data comparability

Target group

Officials with experience in horizontal monitoring representing member states, regions, the European Commission, European Environmental Agency, Eurostat and EC Joint Research Centre. These officials oversee the various national and regional monitoring programs in the areas of nature, water and the environment.

Maximum number of participants: 60

Program

Day 1 Thursday October 25th: How to be compliant and efficient

12:30-14:00 **Registration and Lunch**

14:00-17:30 **Afternoon session**

We would like to share our findings on effective monitoring with other EU countries as well as learn from their experiences. What do other EU countries do in order to comply with EU regulations in an efficient way? On this first day we would like to focus on learning from each other's "good practices" through presentations by several EU countries on their efforts in keeping their monitoring programs efficient.

Chairperson Marc Sprenger – Director-General of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM)

Opening speech Timo Mäkelä – European Commission DG Environment –
Director Sustainable Development and Integration

The Netherlands Ype Brouwer – Dutch Steering Committee Monitoring

Sweden Speaker to be confirmed – Swedish Environmental Protection Agency

United Kingdom John Custance – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Belgium Speaker to be confirmed – Belgian Interregional Environment Agency
IRCEL

Germany Wilhelm König/Thomas Delschen – Landesamt für Natur, Umwelt und
Verbraucherschutz (LANUV), Nordrhein-Westfalen

20:00-22:00 **Conference Diner**

Day 2 Friday October 26th: EU data accessibility and comparability

9:00-12:30 Morning session

The environmental data collected by member states are reported to the European Commission. These data are required to comply with the legislation, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policy, to develop new policies and to empower the public (entitled to the "right to know" strategy, Aarhus convention). These different purposes bring along several challenges. We will focus on two challenges related to achieving efficiency: 1) data accessibility/reporting and 2) data comparability.

- *Data accessibility/reporting*. How can we provide access while minimizing the administrative burden? For example, the European Commission is considering the extent to which reporting to the Commission could be replaced by improved access to national databases.
- *Data comparability*. How can we improve the quality and comparability of data. It is of little use to collect large amounts of data if they are not comparable. In terms of cost-effectiveness, this may be an even more important issue than accessibility.

On Day 2 of the seminar we will invite several EU organizations to address these issues.

Chairperson

to be confirmed – Association of the Dutch Provinces

9:00-10:45 Keynotes

Summary Day 1

Ype Brouwer – Dutch Steering Committee Monitoring,
Association of the Dutch Provinces

European Environmental Agency

Jacqueline McGlade – Executive Director of the EEA

European Commission

Timo Mäkelä – European Commission DG Environment
Director Sustainable Development and Integration

Eurostat

speaker to be confirmed

11:15-11:45 Short statements

Environmental movement:

Pieter de Pous – European Environmental Bureau

Businesses:

Speaker to be confirmed

Regional perspective:

Speaker to be confirmed

National perspective:

Kees Plug – Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial
Planning and the Environment

11:45-12:30 Panel discussion and closing statements

Chairperson

Association of the Dutch Provinces

Jacqueline McGlade

European Environmental Agency

Timo Mäkelä

European Commission

To be confirmed

Eurostat

Ype Brouwer

Dutch Steering Committee Monitoring

To be confirmed

EU member state

Background

The background to the seminar is formed by a review, commissioned by the Netherlands, into monitoring and reporting obligations on the environment, nature and water in the light of international, European and national regulations. This review considered to what degree monitoring is carried out excessively or insufficiently relative to the relevant legislation. It concluded by considering actions required to improve the system of data collection and reporting in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, compliance and quality assurance.

The European Commission and agencies such as the European Environment Agency collect both data and reports, sometimes in connection with specific legislation and sometimes on a voluntary basis. This information contained is needed to comply with legislation, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policy and to develop new policy. It also forms part of the "right to know" strategy (reflected in the Aarhus convention) to empower the public.

To address this information challenge, while at the same time keeping the administrative burden to a minimum, the Commission is considering the extent to which reporting to the Commission could be partially replaced by improved access to national databases. At the same time, the need to improve quality assurance and harmonization of data forms a specific challenge. Indeed, it may be of little use to collect large amounts of data if they are not comparable. In terms of improving the cost-effectiveness of monitoring efforts, this comparability may indeed be a more important issue than the access improvement one.

During the seminar these issues are being addressed in the context of plans under development within the European Commission towards the implementation of a Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS). This system aims to establish an integrated, modern, common, and sustained infrastructure for environmental information in Europe, building on what is already available. Input from the member states and regions will be needed for realization of an optimal system (i.e. for all levels: Europe, member states, regions).

Organization

This seminar is commissioned by the Dutch Steering Committee Monitoring. The Steering Committee is a joint venture with members from the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), the Association of the Dutch Provinces (IPO), the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV), The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (MNP), and the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM).

Organizing Committee

Adriaan Oudeman	Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, International Affairs Directorate
Arnoud de Klijne	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
Esther Wattel-Koekkoek	National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
Rob van Eijkeren	House of the Dutch Provinces, Brussels
Ronald Groen	Province of Zuid-Holland, the Netherlands
Wil van Duijvenbooden	Association of the Dutch Provinces

For more information and registration:

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