

## European Environment Agency – Intervention GEO plenary Mexico November 2015. Tim Haigh

- As an independent European agency, providing information to the policy cycle and the public, EEA is in a unique position to co generate knowledge and inform stakeholders:
  - institutions and governments;
  - EU institutions: European Commission services, Parliament, Council)
  - International organisations (UNEP, UNECE, WHO, OECD).
  - Policy influencers: civil society;
  - NGOs, business, media, advisory groups, scientists, debaters;
  - The general public.
- The EEA was established in tandem with a network in countries European Environment Information and Observation Network (Eionet) which creates a robust a two-way flow of data information and knowledge, in particular with public authorities. Operating across Europe, beyond the EU 28 to include EFTA countries, EEA has 33 member countries and six cooperating countries in West Balkans.
- Europe stands roughly halfway between the initiation of EU environmental policy in the early 1970s and the EU's 7th Environment Action Programme 2050 vision of living well within the limits of the planet, which is connected to the global goals for sustainable development. Since 1970s, Our understanding of environmental challenges has evolved. We have better understanding of the links between issues and their interplay with a wide range of economic and social trends.
- EEA's work increasingly focuses on how we manage our knowledge centres and how this can be used to illustrate pathways – or transitions as we refer to them – to a sustainable future.

- GEO has contributed to the EEA in a variety of ways as it:
  - strengthens comparability and validity of outputs by using more broadly accepted approaches & integrating other data sources;
  - provides a forum for technical dialogue & cooperation with communities beyond Eionet (e.g Atmosphere parameters data exchange Community of Practice);
  - encourages and improve data access, (data policy related and also technical access; e.g Open data and data sharing taskforce);
  - leverages the scope and results research and development
  - provides a framework and stability for partnerships within and beyond EEA's own member network.
  
- GEO has brought added value though work on data sharing principles, brokering and on provenance – making it easier for the EEA to obtain and also disseminate data holdings.
  
- GEO is recognised for its work on earth observation – but mainly with a narrow definition of monitoring data coming from space.
  
- However, there is a need for GEO to be recognised much more broadly as addressing the whole landscape of data sources and also to move up the Data – Information – knowledge chain, not only about data, about integration, connecting to complementary data, information, to create new knowledge to support transition and respond more explicitly to global needs
  
- Some elements of GEO need to remain broad, lightweight applications and other parts of GEO need to be focussed, targeting specific issues in detail to build capacity, knowledge and competency and responding to gaps in information for policy making.

- The GEO community is important, it is a core strength of GEO, it needs to be made more robust through self-awareness of its role in the wider information landscape and flex itself to re-orient to respond to emerging challenges by creating partnerships to helpfully share knowledge, information and data.
- The EEA is looking forward to interacting on what we can expect from GEO during the forthcoming ten year period. The planning and programming documents prepared provide a sound basis for the next ten years. Now the words need to be come actions that will not only create pretty graphics but also enable this information to support people to implement solutions to societal challenges.
- EEA would also like to highlight some other priority topics for the EEA in terms of data and potential / ongoing GEO involvement:
  - low carbon;
  - biodiversity;
  - resilient food systems.