

Consultation on a Monitoring Framework for the 8th Environment Action Programme

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Following its proposal for an 8th Environment Action Programme ('8th EAP') on 14 October 2020¹, which is presently being negotiated between the co-legislators², the Commission published a [consultative paper](#) on the proposed approach and architecture for the 8th EAP monitoring framework ('8th EAP MF'). This paper presents a **list of indicators as a starting point for consultations** with stakeholders (Annex) and explains the underlying reasons for this preliminary selection. The Commission will also circulate detailed indicator fiches in the coming weeks, which provide more details on the status of each indicator and its suitability to be included in the 8th EAP MF.

1. Purpose and structure of the 8th EAP MF

The 8th EAP MF should inform stakeholders and citizens about the progress (or the lack thereof) towards the programme's 2030 and 2050 priority objectives on the ground, and reflect its enabling framework. It will help policy makers to **adjust the political intervention** accordingly.

The monitoring framework should **follow the structure of the 8th EAP** itself, i.e. be organised around the six priority objectives (climate neutrality, climate adaptation, circular economy, zero pollution, biodiversity and environmental pressures), the enabling framework and the 2050 long-term vision of *living well, within planetary boundaries*. For the latter, the draft 8th EAP indicator set proposes indicators chosen for their ability to reflect the systemic nature of environmental challenges, as also requested by Member States and the European Parliament. The final product will need to reflect the outcome of the ongoing inter-institutional negotiations.

The **politically most relevant environment and climate policy goals to 2030** should guide the selection of best currently available indicators to support this story of progress, stagnation or regression.

Example: We aim for climate neutrality by 2050 and as a means of achieving this; we have the 2030 priority objective of reducing emissions by at least 55% compared to 1990. The indicator best placed to measure progress towards the long-term vision and the interim target is to look at the EEA indicator on Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In other areas, the selection of indicators is less straight forward, due to either lack of quantifiable targets or the lack of appropriate indicators for measuring progress towards a relevant target.

¹ COM(2020) 652 final.

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48870/st-7121-2021-init.pdf>;
[Texts adopted - General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030 ***I - Thursday, 8 July 2021 \(europa.eu\)](#)

The aim of the consultation is two-fold:

- agree on a **pool of key indicators** needed to reflect the full remit of the 8th EAP and to provide a more complete assessment, already requested by the co-legislators in the negotiation of the 8th EAP;
- agree on a more limited number of **headline indicators** (those indicators marked with an asterisk in the Annex).

This double approach would facilitate a “**dual reporting**” whereby a regular **lighter stocktake** would be complemented by more **in-depth assessments** in 2024 and 2029.

Example: The Common Birds indicator is proposed as headline indicator of progress towards the priority objective of protecting and restoring biodiversity and ecosystems. More details on progress towards the specific targets would be found in the pool of indicators, for the purpose of the in-depth assessments in 2024 and 2029, as well as in the Biodiversity Dashboard and Action Tracker, which are being developed for monitoring the 2030 EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Preference will be given to **impact and outcome indicators**, to focus the stocktaking and assessment on results on the ground. To cover the programme’s entire scope, , other types of indicators are proposed for some policy areas (pressure or output indicators).³

In line with the selection principles outlined in the Commission’s Consultative Paper, it is essential that the 8th EAP MF is **flexible enough to accommodate for future developments**, in particular new indicator developments, and helps identifying indicator gaps (**placeholders** in the table in Annex 1). In some cases, work is already ongoing to develop a new indicator (e.g. coastline macro litter and access to green areas), whereas in other areas we have identified a need for future development but work is still in early stages (e.g. for sustainable digitalisation and environmental inequalities).

³ See Commission Better Regulation Guidelines, p. 48, for the different types of indicators: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/better-regulation-guidelines-monitoring.pdf>.

8EAP monitoring framework with indicators - structure

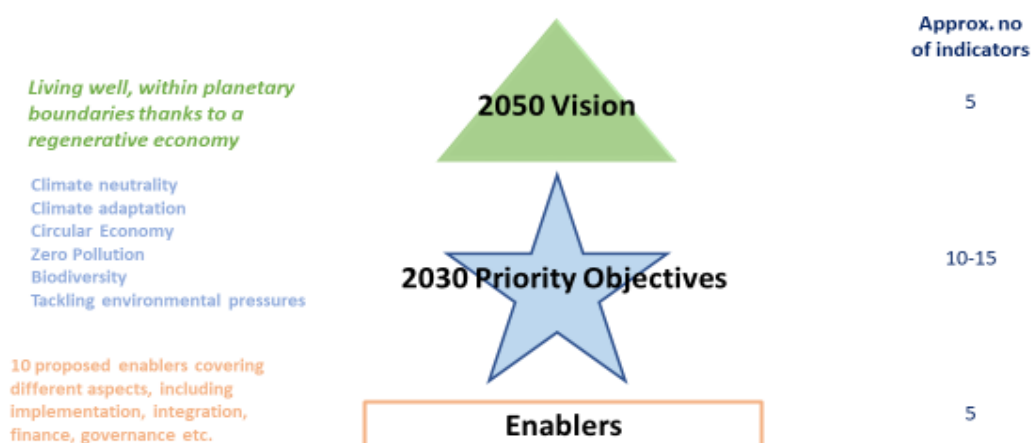
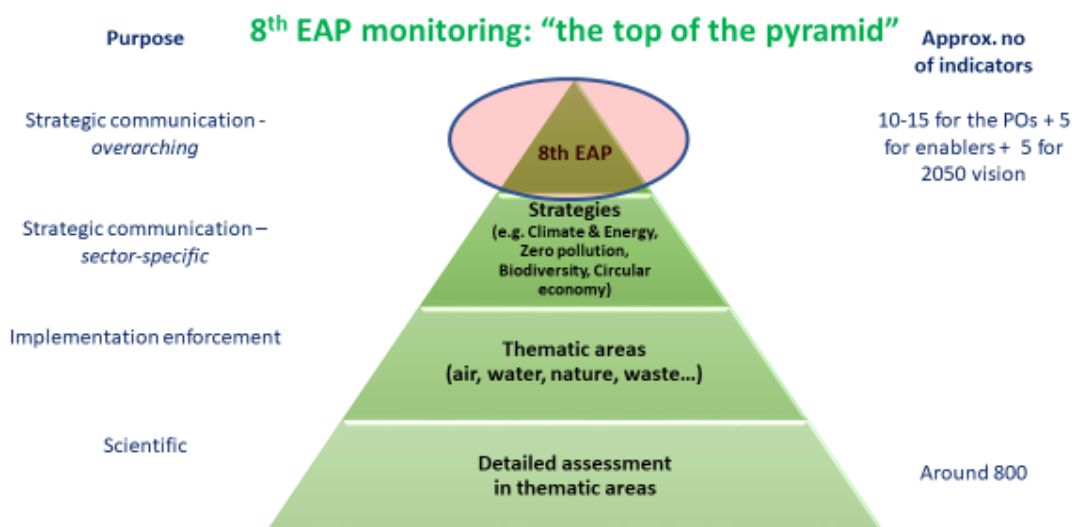


Image 1: Structure of the 8th EAP monitoring framework (8EAP MF) and estimated number of headline indicators

2. Articulation with other monitoring tools

The 8th EAP indicator set will **build on the thematic environmental and climate monitoring tools**, either existing (such as the climate and energy governance) or monitoring frameworks in the making (such as for zero pollution and biodiversity) or under revision (circular economy).



The headline indicator set would **supported** by and **coherently linked with** indicators from the other levels of the pyramid.

Image 2: The 8th EAP monitoring as a strategic summary of the sector-specific monitoring (Circular Economy, Climate & Energy governance, Biodiversity, Zero Pollution etc.)

In addition to these sector-specific tools, environmental and climate policy are also covered by several crosscutting indicator sets designed for strategic political communication. In

addition, the European Parliament calls for a new set of ‘beyond GDP’ indicators. The result is a rather complex indicator set landscape and it is important to consider how they fit together, in a way that promotes synergies and prevents duplication of work.

In the future, the 8th EAP MF headline indicators could work as a summary of progress towards its respective priority objectives, and are possible candidates for the ‘planet’ part of the EU’s overall efforts to measure progress towards sustainability, wellbeing and resilience and to a potential future headline indicator set for strategic political communication.

Questions for discussion:

1. Does the proposed list of indicators reflect the full remit of the 8th EAP? Is anything missing?
2. Have we chosen the right indicators? Do you see an alternative indicator for a specific policy objective? If yes, please explain the reasons.
3. Do you have information on progress in developing additional indicators relevant for the 8th EAP MF, from your respective national contexts?
4. How do you see the articulation between the 8th EAP MF and other monitoring frameworks covering environment and climate policies, including the monitoring of the European Green Deal?