

DRAFT_22_03_2010

**Preparation of an AoA module building
on Part B of SOER 2010**
**as input to the Europe's Environment Assessment of
Assessments**

March 2010

1. Background

Streamlining assessment and reporting across pan-Europe, including the gradual development of a shared environmental information system (SEIS), will be on the agenda of the environment ministers' conference to be held in Astana in 2011. The development of a sustainable "Regular Assessment Process" (RAP) of Europe's environment is driven by the need to tackle efficiency in terms of inputs/outputs to the assessment exercise through the use of the information available for multiple purposes; and the acknowledgment that evolving policy contexts require flexible and targeted assessment outputs based on regularly updated and easily accessible information.

The development of a RAP of Europe's environment goes together with the reform of the UNECE "Environment for Europe" (EfE) process agreed at the Belgrade environment ministers' conference in 2007. A draft of the EfE Reform Plan developed by the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) was endorsed by the 63rd session of the Economic Commission for Europe (Geneva, 30 March - 1 April 2009). The draft Reform Plan¹ envisages that the decision on the themes to be prioritised at the Ministerial Conferences shall take into account '*preliminary findings of available assessments and statistical reports on environment*' and that the '*official substantive documentation*' produced for the Ministerial Conferences shall be limited to '*the pan-European assessment and theme-specific reports*'.

The first "Assessment of Assessments" (AoA) of the state of the marine environment (marine AoA), launched in 2005 by the UN General Assembly resolution 60/30, is a pioneer in determining the foundations for the development of a Regular Process for global reporting and assessment, though limited to the state of the marine environment. The Europe's Environment – AoA is meant to build on the experience of the marine AoA and adopt a similar modular approach allowing the input of various running activities or projects. In turn, the preparation of an AoA module building on Part B of the State of the Environment Report 2010 (AoA – SOER 2010) is conceived as a preliminary step towards the more comprehensive Europe's Environment AoA.

2. The conceptual framework of the module AoA – SOER 2010

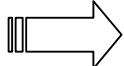
The AoA – SOER 2010 module had a twofold aim:

- (a) To identify and appraise existing assessments and the main information sources used in the production of the thematic chapters of Part B of SOER 2010, the final aim being the outlining of gaps, concerns, emerging issues, needs and priorities.
- (b) To define the module's procedural steps, emphasising the need for these steps to be as replicable as possible within different geographical and thematic contexts and the possibility to draw general lessons eventually supportive of the establishment of a RAP of Europe's environment.

Taking into consideration the above two objectives, three main principles guided the definition of the conceptual framework of the AoA - SOER 2010 module:

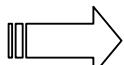
¹ ECE/CEP/S/2009/1

1. Coherence with similar experiences and contribution to ongoing processes



Conceptual consistency of AoA –SOER 2010 with similar experiences (in particular, the marine AoA) allows to contribute to ongoing processes at the UN level. Consistency relates to the adoption of a modular approach but also to the compliance with UN definitions, a standardized terminology meaning comparability and common understanding.

2. Efficiency in the handling of the information



How data and information are used, updated and made accessible is fundamental to the development of a Regular Process. Along the establishment of the EU Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) the AoA – SOER 2010 exercise seeks for coherence with the main SEIS components (governance, infrastructure and services, content) and adherence to SEIS guiding principles. (1)

(1) Information should: be managed as close as possible to its source; be collected once, shared and used for many purposes; be readily available; enable easy fulfilment of legal reporting obligations; be readily accessible to end-users, serving evolving policy developments in a timely manner, allowing for comparison at the appropriate geographical level and facilitating participation of citizens to the development and implementation of environmental policies; be available in the relevant national language(s); and be shared and processed through common, free open source software tools.

3. Easy adaptability to other assessment exercises



Within the modular approach, there will be the outlining of ‘common tools’ that may be easily replicated for similar assessment exercises and of ‘region-specific tools’ that take into account the peculiarities of the region the AoA refers to.

The conceptual framework defined on the basis of the above criteria is presented in figure 1.

Criterion 1 determines the use of definitions that are as far as possible common with those used in similar exercises and/or in other relevant ongoing processes. These definitions will be compiled into a ‘glossary’, that may be considered as one of the necessary *tools* for the implementation of the process (shaded area in figure 1).

Criterion 1 also implies that a modular approach is used in structuring the various components of the framework. In the AoA reporting process, these components correspond to the chapters of a table of contents. According to the proposed framework, the AoA reporting process would then be developed along four main ‘chapters’: 1. Governance, 2. Infrastructure & services, 3. Content, and 4. Analysis, synthesis, conclusions, where chapter 4 evidently builds on the information contained in chapters 1, 2 and 3.

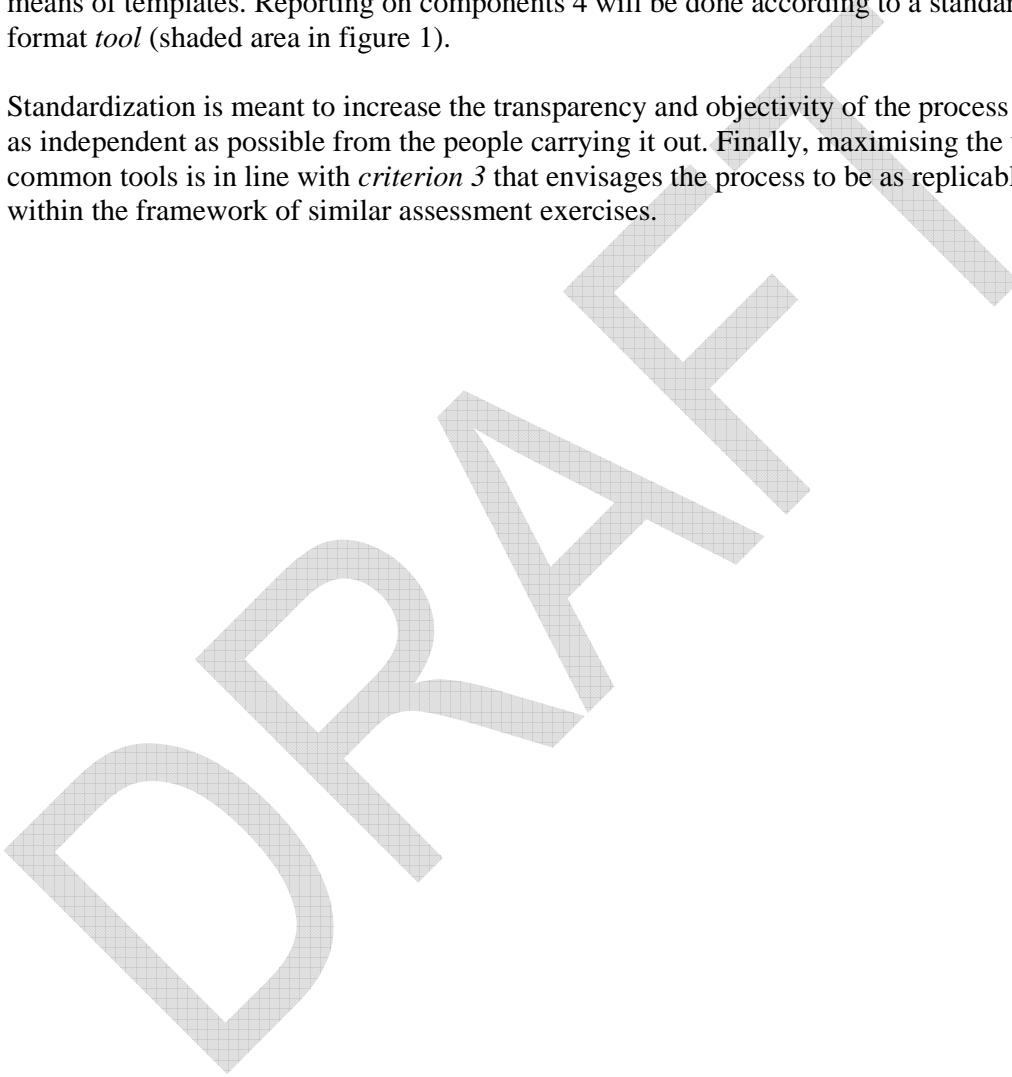
The proposed components have been outlined according to *criterion 2*. In particular they are consistent with the components of the upcoming EU SEIS, expected to increase efficiency in the handling and use of information throughout the pan-European region. Furthermore, specification

of what will be addressed within each component has built on the experience of the marine AoA, namely on the ‘individual assessment template’ used for the review of individual assessments.²

The information related to components 1, 2 and 3 will be collected by means of ‘templates’, i.e. questionnaires for the review of assessments and information sources. These questionnaires and related protocols (including the protocols for the selection of assessment/information sources and for the compilation of a database of assessments/ information sources) represent other necessary tools for the implementation of the AoA – SOER 2010 module (shaded area in figure 1).

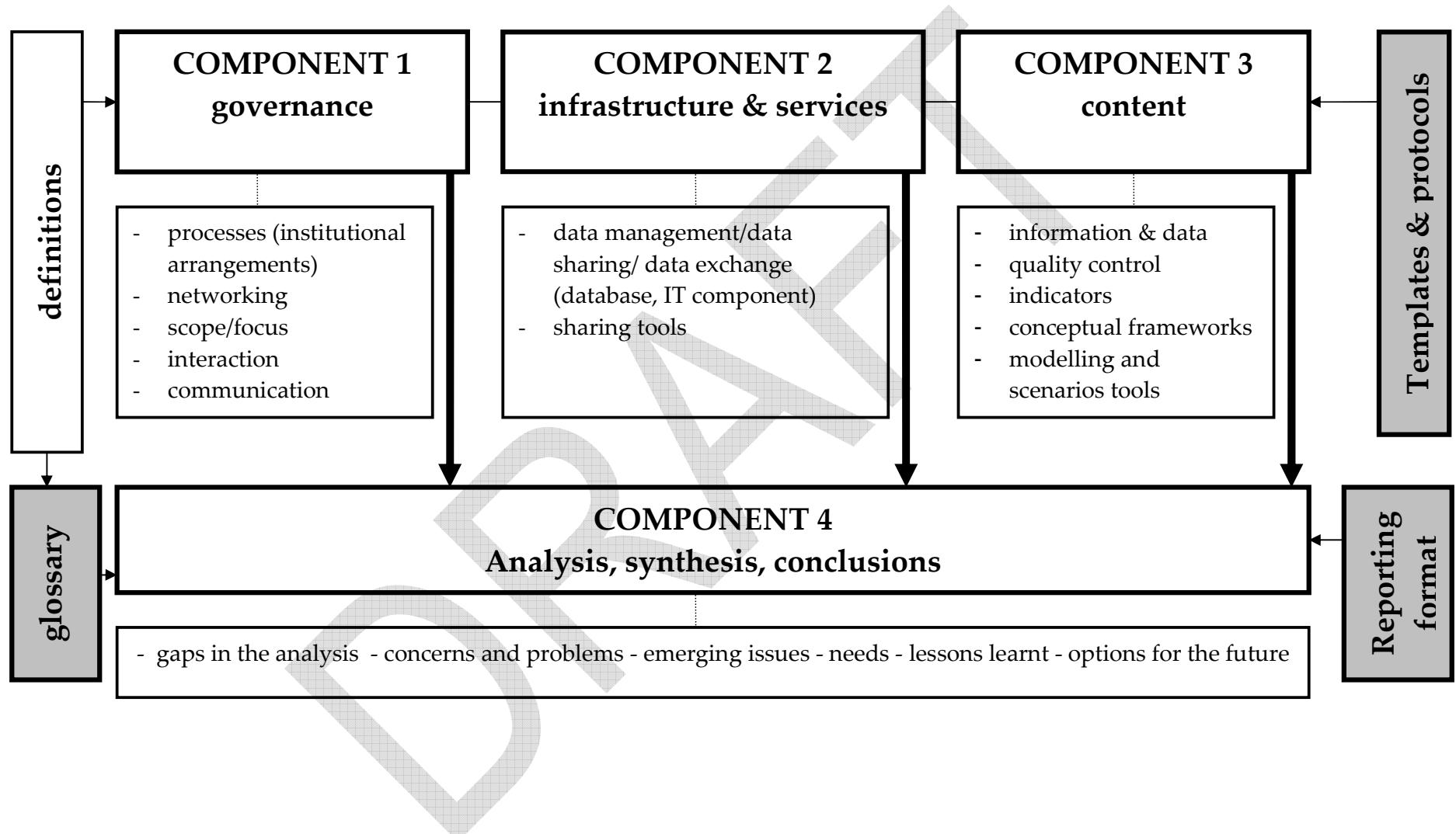
As mentioned, component 4 builds on the information gathered under components 1, 2 and 3 by means of templates. Reporting on components 4 will be done according to a standard reporting format *tool* (shaded area in figure 1).

Standardization is meant to increase the transparency and objectivity of the process and make it as independent as possible from the people carrying it out. Finally, maximising the use of common tools is in line with *criterion 3* that envisages the process to be as replicable as possible within the framework of similar assessment exercises.



² UNEP (2009), An Assessment of Assessments – Findings of the Group of Experts. Annex VII.

Figure 1 - Conceptual framework of the module AoA - SOER 2010



3. Necessary tools for the implementation of AoA – SOER 2010

In the following sections and annexes the tools used to carry out the AoA – SOER 2010 module are described in detail. These tools encompass:

- a glossary
- a protocol for assessments' selection and prioritization
- a general template
- SOER 2010-specific templates, and
- a reporting format for component 4 (analysis, synthesis, conclusions).

For each of the above tools, whether it is replicable within similar assessment exercises, with or without adaptation, is specified.

Additionally, lessons learnt while defining these tools provide recommendations for possible ways forward with regard to both other regional assessments and the development of a RAP.

3.1 TOOL 1 – Glossary (definitions)

Conceptually, an “Assessment of Assessments” does not make any new assessment but brings together and reviews existing assessments. The definition of ‘assessment’ is thus fundamental. The AoA – SOER 2010 module builds on the work of the marine AoA and complies with the definitions agreed upon within the UN-led process. The Glossary in Annex I includes relevant definitions from the marine AoA exercise and terms/concepts specific to the AoA – SOER 2010.

A standardized terminology leads to comparability and common understanding therefore it is advisable for a common glossary to be gradually compiled within the framework of similar assessment exercises and referred to by all current and future exercises as a common resource.

AoA - SOER 2010 tool 1	Replicable in similar exercises	Lessons learnt	The way forward
glossary	yes	Building on past consultation processes, avoiding to re-invent the wheel	It is advisable to keep on updating the glossary with new terms/concepts, as needs arise in similar assessment exercises. It is recommended to have one glossary for all exercises, as a common reference and resource, possibly published on the web.

3.2 TOOL 2 – Protocol for the selection of assessments and/or main sources of information

Although the AoA – SOER 2010 was to be based on the list of references of the SOER 2010 chapters, a general protocol for selecting assessments and/or main sources of information was developed according to two main guiding principles: it was to be simple to understand and easily replicable in other similar exercises.

The selection protocol is structured around four main steps:

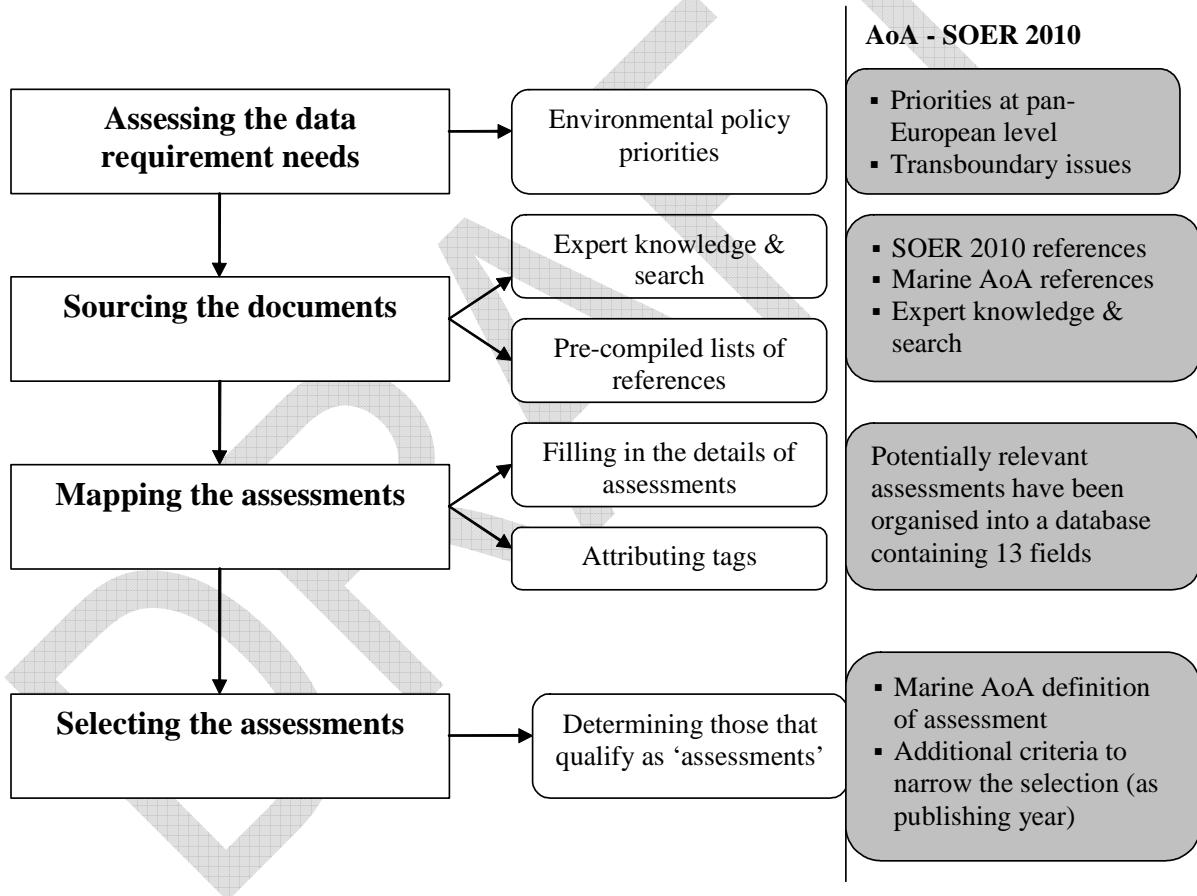
- assessing the data requirement needs;
- sourcing the documents;
- mapping the assessments; and
- selecting the assessments.

Reference is to figure 2.

Assessing the data requirement needs refers to the identification of environmental policy priorities on the basis of which the references required are identified and ‘tagged’ as potentially relevant. While this criterion may be generally applied to all assessment exercises, within the AoA – SOER 2010 it was deemed important for the screening and data-collection process to uncover those assessments and sources addressing the environmental priorities faced at the pan-European level, paying particular attention to transboundary issues. To further refine the selection of assessments to be screened, the AoA – SOER 2010 also considered only assessments/references published from 2005 onwards.

Sourcing the documents requires the identification of ‘sources’ which are determined by the expert’s knowledge and search capacities, or may be based on previously assembled lists of documents. Within the AoA – SOER 2010 the main reference was the SOER 2010; where there were perceived to be gaps, additional research was carried out to fill these gaps.

Figure 2 Overview of the assessments’ selection tool



Mapping the assessments involves filling in the data with regards to the fields of the database. Finally, **Selecting the assessments** involves determining if the assessment qualifies to be an assessment. The screening process takes as its basis the definition of assessment after Mitchell and others (2006) to determine whether a piece of work is to be considered an ‘assessment’. In particular, it is screened whether each reference meets the three main conditions encompassed in the definition of assessment, namely:

- Whether the piece of work is ‘formal’;
- Whether it assembles ‘selected knowledge’;

- And whether it is ‘publicly available’.

The Glossary in Annex I provides the full definition of the above terms. In general, ‘formal’ requires that the assessment should be sufficiently organised to identify components such as products, participants and issuing authority. Assembling ‘selected knowledge’ indicates that the content has a defined scope or purpose and that not all information compiled and contributed is necessarily included in the report, while being ‘publicly available’ or in the public domain is a necessary condition to influence public debate and different types of decision-makers.

The module for the selection of assessments is reported in Annex II.

AoA - SOER 2010 tool 2	Replicable in similar exercises	Lessons learnt	The way forward
Protocol for the selection of assessments	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient resources and time shall be dedicated to the identification and selection of relevant assessments - Common guiding principles shall not prevent by considering principles for selection that take into consideration characteristics of the regions in terms of type of source material that may be available, i.e. a degree of flexibility is required to adapt to regional contexts - The higher the number of principles for the selection of assessments, the longer the time needed. For example, ‘tagging’ assessments on the basis of key thematic tags implies a preliminary screening of the assessments that may be very time-consuming. - Mechanisms allowing access to/visibility of source material coming from all countries are needed. 	<p>Further elaboration of criteria, in particular for the assessment of the data requirements needs and the selection of assessments.</p> <p>Establish mechanisms to allow access to/visibility of source material from all concerned countries</p>

3.3 TOOL 3 - Templates for the review of assessments and information sources

Once relevant assessments and information sources have been identified they have to be reviewed in order to evaluate how they come to be considered ‘relevant’, ‘legitimate’ and ‘credible’. To this end, two types of templates were defined within the AoA – SOER 2010: a general template to gather information on ‘governance’, ‘infrastructure & services’ and ‘content’; and SOER 2010-specific templates to gather information on ‘content’ according to the specific priorities of the AoA – SOER 2010 module.

The outlining of two different templates was deemed necessary to ensure flexibility. The general template, in fact, contains questions of general interest and is replicable in other similar assessment exercises. The SOER 2010-specific templates, on the other hand, focus on topics/matters having a specific interest at that point in time (for example, the Astana conference) or for that specific assessment (for example, the 10 themes of SOER 2010), thus they are not replicable in other similar assessment exercises without adaptation.

The general template (see Annex III A for the format and for one example of filled template) includes questions concerning:

- General information;

- Governance (institutional arrangements, networking, scope, interaction, communication)
- Infrastructure & services (infrastructure, services);
- Content (thematic coverage, information, data & quality control, indicators and assessment tools, outputs).

The SOER 2010-specific templates were developed with the aim to: (a) providing a contribution to the Astana process by outlining the coverage, in the assessments, of themes that will be given special emphasis at the Ministerial Conference in 2011, namely: water & water-related ecosystems and the green economy; (b) checking whether the assessments touch upon the five cross-cutting issues identified as structural elements in SOER 2010 – Part B, namely: CC vulnerability and adaptation, ecosystems services, sustainable consumption, environment & health, cross-sectoral analysis; (c) checking whether the assessments touch upon key issues for the pan-European region, for each of the 10 themes addressed by SOER 2010 – Part B.

Accordingly, ten theme-specific (SOER 2010) templates were developed for: atmospheric pollution, climate change (mitigation), water quantity, water quality, marine & maritime, soil, land, biodiversity, resource use & waste, urban environment. Each of these specific templates includes questions concerning:

- The two themes to be emphasised at the Astana conference;
- The five cross-cutting issues of SOER 2010;
- Theme-related key issues for the pan-European region.

An example of theme-specific template related to water quality is reported under Annex III B (the format and one example of filled template).

Building on the approach used in the marine AoA, questions in the specific templates were to be assessed against three levels: detailed coverage, general coverage, or not covered.

For each assessment's review, one general and one specific template were filled. The questions were answered as factually as possible given the information that was available; on average, each review took approximately 3-4 hours (to be confirmed).

AoA - SOER 2010 tools 3	Replicable in similar exercises	Lessons learnt	The way forward
General template	yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The general template shall be kept as 'general' as possible to allow its use in different contexts and times without needing adaptation. This applies in particular to the 'content' section that may be elaborated further and focussed on the themes to be prioritised by means of the specific templates. - There is the possibility to reduce or the number of questions included in the general template (but not the information gathered) and to standardize further the replies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further elaboration of the general template in terms of aggregating questions and, consequently, replies. - Increasing the number of replies having a 'multiple choice' option, i.e. guiding replies along common standards
Specific templates	no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of the specific templates shall be guided by a clear guidance on the topics to be looked for in the assessments. - Such guidance needs to find a balance 	It may be considered to structure the specific template along the expected 'table of contents' of the Europe's

		between too generic indications that may not highlight the presence of the necessary information, and too detailed indications that may be very time-consuming for the assessors while providing very limited information on the content of the assessment.	Environment AoA.
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3.4 TOOL 4 - Reporting format for analysis, synthesis and conclusions

(WORK IN PROGRESS)

The purpose of identifying, classifying and then screening the selected assessments is to evaluate how they come to be considered ‘relevant’, ‘legitimate’ and ‘credible’. Therefore, through the proposed reporting format and by means of the information gathered with the templates:

- it is evaluated how the selected assessments came to be considered ‘relevant’, ‘legitimate’ and ‘credible’;
- it is provided a synthesis of the findings;
- conclusions and recommendations for the way forward are drawn.

Relevance denotes the ability of an assessment to address the particular concerns of those using it. It is also referred to as ‘salience’. An assessment is relevant if the user is aware of it and it informs his/her decisions or behaviour.	Within the analysis phase, relevance is assessed by referring to replies contained in the general template. In particular, it refers to the informing of the decision-making process, the regularity of the information process, the geographical scope of the assessments and the communication processes.
‘Legitimacy’ is a measure of the acceptability or perceived fairness of an assessment. A legitimate assessment is one that has been conducted in a manner that allows users to be satisfied that their interests have been taken into account appropriately and that the process has been fair.	Within the analysis phase, legitimacy is assessed by referring to replies contained in the general template. In particular, it refers to the fairness of the process (transparency, consultation) and the presence/absence of networking
‘Credibility’ is concerned with whether the knowledge assembled in the assessment is believed to be valid. An assessment gains credibility and authority by virtue of its information, methods and procedures.	Within the analysis phase, credibility is assessed by referring to replies contained in the general template. In particular, it refers to information, data, and indicators used, absence/presence of quality control and assessment tools, and infrastructure and services used.

The reporting format is enclosed as Annex IV together with an example of filled format for the theme ‘water quality’.

AoA - SOER 2010 deliverable	Replicable in similar exercises	Lessons learnt	The way forward
Reporting format template	Adaptation needed	- Few processes were found to be documented thoroughly To be developed	To be developed

		SEE filled template for water quality	SEE filled template for water quality
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ANNEX I

TOOL 1 - GLOSSARY

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Term/concept	Definition/description
Assessments	<p>Formal efforts to assemble selected knowledge with a view toward making it publicly available in a form intended to be useful for decision-making (Mitchell and others 2006). By 'formal' the definition requires that the assessment should be sufficiently organised to identify components such as products, participants and issuing authority. 'Selected knowledge' indicates that the content has a defined scope or purpose and that not all information compiled and contributed is necessarily included in the report. The sources of knowledge may vary. While results from research and scientific knowledge predominate, assessments can supplement this with local, traditional or indigenous knowledge. Further, assessments can evaluate both existing information and research conducted expressly for the purpose. The definition also notes the importance of ensuring that assessments are in the public domain, as they may influence public debate and different types of decision-makers.</p> <p><i>Source: Marine AoA</i></p>
Credibility	<p>It is concerned with whether the knowledge assembled in the assessment is believed to be valid. An assessment gains credibility and authority by virtue of its information, methods and procedures.</p> <p><i>Source: Marine AoA</i></p>
Ecosystem	<p>An ecosystem is a dynamic complex of plant, animal, and micro-organism communities and the non-living environment interacting as a functional unit.</p> <p><i>Source: Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005</i></p>
GMES	<p>Global Monitoring for Environment and Security. European Initiative for the establishment of a European capacity for Earth Observation.</p> <p><i>Source: GMES portal http://www.gmes.info/</i></p>
Governance	
Impact assessments	<p>They identify and characterize the impacts of human activities and/or natural pressures on ecosystems and society</p> <p><i>Source: Marine AoA</i></p>
Infrastructure & services	
INSPIRE	<p>Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community, established by Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 March 2007. INSPIRE aims at making available relevant, harmonised and quality geographic information to support formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and activities which have a direct or indirect impact on the environment.</p> <p><i>Source: EC INSPIRE Geoportal http://www.inspire-geoportal.eu/index.cfm</i></p>
Integrated Assessment	<p>Assessments that integrate across environmental, economic and social aspects, across industry sectors, and across ecosystem components (which may include land-based sources of inputs as well as land-based industries that depend on marine resources).</p> <p><i>Source: Marine AoA</i></p>
Legitimacy	<p>A measure of the acceptability or perceived fairness of an assessment. A legitimate assessment is one that has been conducted in a manner that allows users to be satisfied that their interests have been taken into account appropriately and that the process has been fair.</p> <p><i>Source: Marine AoA</i></p>
Process	Institutional arrangements established to govern, guide and conduct the assessment

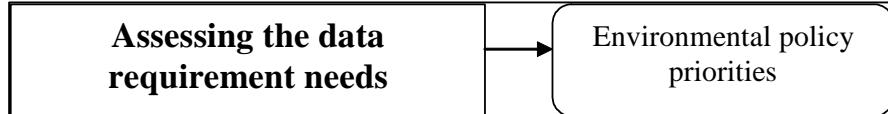
	and to ensure that the mandate and procedures are followed. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Product	It includes both the expert reports/summaries/scenarios and underlying data and information used in the analyses. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Relevance	It denotes the ability of an assessment to address the particular concerns of those using it. It is also referred to as 'salience'. An assessment is relevant if the user is aware of it and it informs his/her decisions or behaviour. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Reportnet	Eionet's infrastructure for supporting and improving data and information flows. Reportnet is based on a set of inter-related tools and processes which all build on the active use of the World Wide Web. <i>Source: Eionet portal http://www.eionet.europa.eu/reportnet</i>
Response assessments	Assessments that identify and evaluate measures that reduce human contributions or vulnerabilities to environmental changes. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Sectoral assessments	Assessments that address a particular sector of human activity. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Status and trend (or process) assessments	Assessments that typically describe the present and changing status of ecosystems. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>
Thematic assessments	Assessments that focus on a theme or issue other than a single sector of human activity. <i>Source: Marine AoA</i>

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ANNEX II

TOOL 2 – SELECTION OF ASSESSMENTS

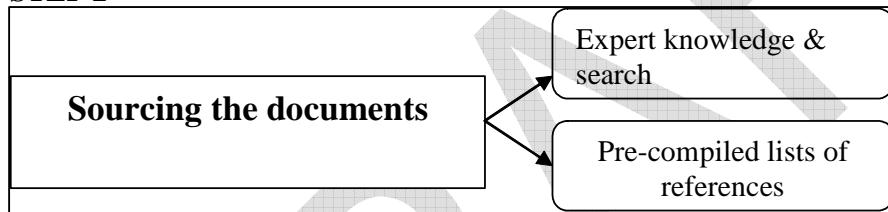
STEP 1



Assessing the data requirement needs refers to the identification of environmental policy priorities on the basis of which the references required are identified and ‘tagged’ as potentially relevant.

Example: within the AoA – SOER 2010 it was deemed important for the screening and data-collection process to uncover those assessments and sources addressing the environmental priorities faced at the pan-European level, paying particular attention to transboundary issues. Therefore, the type of data required was that which referred to the environment and some degree of evaluation thereof, either quantitative or qualitative. The scope of material included also those assessments that were not directly environmental but were necessary to provide the socio-economic context relating to pressures or impacts on the environment.

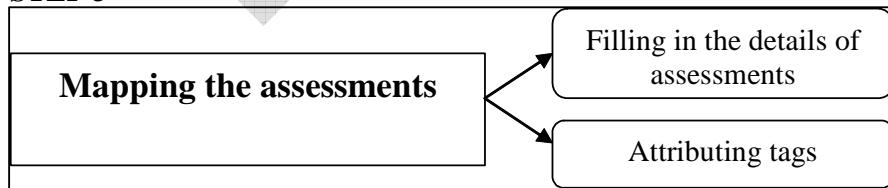
STEP 2



Sourcing the documents requires the identification of ‘sources’ which are determined by the expert’s knowledge and search capacities, or may be based on previously assembled lists of documents.

Example: within the AoA – SOER 2010 the main reference was the SOER 2010 and the corresponding lists of references at the end of each chapter; where there were perceived to be gaps, additional research was carried out to fill them. For example, the marine AoA was considered as a relevant source of assessments for the Marine & Maritime chapter, in particular for those assessment covering the pan-European area (NE Atlantic, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Arctic Ocean and the Baltic Sea) tough in the end they were not selected for the AoA – SOER 2010, priority being given to those assessments that had been carried out in the meantime (i.e. more updated).

STEP 3



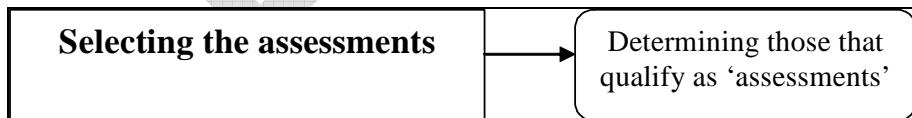
Mapping the assessments involves organising the assessment into a database and filling in the details of each assessment with regards to the following fields:

Theme	Source (Chapter title/version or expert-sourced)	In	Name of Assessment	URL	Organisation	Year	Pass?	Assemble selected knowledge (y/n)	Formal (products, participants, authority) (y/n)	Publicly available (y/n)	Prioritised?	Comments	Why is it a priority?
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Where:

1. **Theme:** refers to the thematic area. There are exceptions
 - a. **All** refers to assessments that cut across all themes such as national SOERs and global assessments.
 - b. **Demography** refers to those assessments listed in the SOER relating to population. These were not passed.
2. **Source:** refers to where the document was located. If from the SOER, then the chapter title and version is given. If IEEP add then document then 'IEEP' is given.
3. **In:** simply refers to whether the assessment should be assessed during this round by IEEP.
4. **Name of assessment:** the name under which the assessment is published.
5. **URL:** the webpage address to the assessment.
6. **Year:** the year in which it was published.
7. **Pass?** refers to whether it is deemed to be an assessment or not.
8. **Assembled selected knowledge:** see below
9. **Formal:** see below
10. **Publicly available:** see below.
11. **Prioritised:** does it match any of the priorities set out in Table 1. below?
12. **Comments:** gives first thoughts on the quality of the assessment, likely relevance and any reasons for failing the screening.
13. **Why is it a priority:** lists the priorities (according to table below) that the assessment meets.

STEP 4



Selecting the assessments involves determining if the assessment qualifies to be an assessment according to the definition of assessment after Mitchell and others (2006), in particular whether each reference meets the three main conditions encompassed in the definition of assessment, namely: whether the piece of work is 'formal'; whether it assembles 'selected knowledge'; and whether it is 'publicly available'.

Assessments are formal efforts to assemble selected knowledge with a view toward making it publicly available in a form intended to be useful for decision-making (Mitchell and others 2006). By ‘formal’ the definition requires that the assessment should be sufficiently organised to identify components such as products, participants and issuing authority. The *product* includes both the expert reports and underlying data and information used in the analyses. ‘Selected knowledge’ indicates that the content has a defined scope or purpose and that not all information compiled and contributed is necessarily included in the report. The sources of knowledge may vary. While results from research and scientific knowledge predominate, assessments can supplement this with local, traditional or indigenous knowledge. Further, assessments can evaluate both existing information and research conducted expressly for the purpose. The definition also notes the importance of ensuring that assessments are ‘publicly available’ or in the public domain, as they may influence public debate and different types of decision-makers.

Main **reasons for rejection (i.e. non inclusion in the database) of references** are given below.

Examples of references not meeting the criteria of being ‘formal products’

In practice, formal products were considered those products meeting two basic criteria:

- Having a publication date.
- Containing information correctly referenced.

Examples of references that in the AoA – SOER 2010 have been omitted due to lack of formal products included presentations such as the following:

GAEC (Cross Compliance Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition) http://www.sac.ac.uk/mainrep/pdfs/crosscompliance.pdf	Lacking in reference details as there is no publication date. This is a presentation with no formal referencing
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Another example of a document omitted for this reason is:

ICPRD Dams & Structures http://www.icpdr.org/icpdr-pages/dams_structures.htm	webpage - not formal product and very short synthesis
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Examples of references not meeting the criteria of being ‘assembly of selected knowledge’

The most common reason for exclusion of a reference is the lack of assembled selected knowledge. Published papers that do not provide information but refer to process or methodologies to collect information are not included such as the following:

Pauli, H.; Gottfried, M. and G. Grabherr (2008). <i>Developing a methodology for using plant species for an indicator impact on biodiversity of climate change.</i> Unpublished SEBI report, European Environment Agency, Copenhagen.	Provides the methodology of an indicator, but is not indicator itself
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Other certain to fail are legal documents such as conventions, directives and so on which do not contain any information. For example:

CBD,1992 Convention on Biological Diversity	This is not an assembly of information but a legal treaty which does not contain information.
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Pieces of work such as policy documents which use contextual information in order to provide the setting for a policy recommendation are more difficult to categorize, as the information is already included elsewhere and is only a very minor part of the work. These have not passed the screening. An example is:

ECNC, 2007, <u>Climate change and biodiversity</u> . The role of the European regions	The purpose of this report is to examine the role of regions in biodiversity protection against climate change. While it does provide some contextual information about ecosystems and climate change, this is only as an introduction to the main discussion, and is material that is much better covered in others assessments.
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A similar situation may arise for more methodological assessments, which were also rejected during the screening:

<i>Guidelines: adaptation, fragmentation.</i> <u>ENV.B.2/ETU/2006/0042R</u> . Task 1.	This is a theoretical examination of the interaction between climate change and fragmentation. While there is some selected information to illustrate the points being made, the information itself is not central to the work and are in effect only case studies.
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Individual scientific papers can be highly relevant in some cases. However, they are only selected if they are deemed to cover an area that is new and therefore not well covered by summary assessments.

Assessments can also be omitted if they contain information but it is unrelated to the environment. In cases where it is not clear whether there is enough information to warrant passing the screening, 'y/n' (yes/no) has been placed in the 'Assemble selected knowledge' field. However, the expert makes a decision whether to pass or to fail. This allows these grey area decisions to be checked at a later stage.

Expert opinion is used on whether to include a document for grey areas. If a strategy document (which does not assess about the likely implications on the environment) is produced with some contextual information, it may be included if it the information is deemed to be of sufficient quality and quantity. However, if it is accompanied by a scientific document that contains the relevant science on which to base the strategy, the strategy itself does not need to be included.

Examples of references not meeting the criteria of being 'Publicly available'

All reports that available to the public either through the internet, through a pay-per-view journal or in hard copy publication are deemed to be 'publicly available' for the purpose of the report. The screening process will eliminate those publications that are used as background reports for assessments that are held by the responsible institutions and have not been publicly published.

Any reports that we cannot access ourselves but are available to the public (e.g. at a cost) are marked 'Y/N' in the 'Publicly Available' column and the 'Pass?' Comments are written to illustrate that we are not able to access them.

Some general 'rules of thumb' for the screening of the references are given in the box below.

Rules of thumb for AoA – SOER 2010

- ☞ Reports for the purpose of establishing a methodology for an indicator or guidelines but not containing any information themselves are omitted.
- ☞ Assessments are selected on the basis of containing information about the environment. Those that look at processes are excluded.
- ☞ Where a book is broken into several chapters, the entire book was included as the reference, not the individual chapters.
- ☞ Suite of assessments that produced similar products and followed consistent processes, were considered as a single assessment.
- ☞ Scientific papers, databases, indicators were judged on the basis of adding to the overall picture. Thus they were deemed to pass if they covered an emerging issue and/or an area that poorly accounted for in the broader assessments.
- ☞ In general assessments older than 10 years were omitted if more recent information was available.
- ☞ If a document was rejected during the screening, it was still assigned a priority area if feasible.
- ☞ n/a (not available) was used for:
 - Cannot locate document.
- ☞ y/n (yes/no) was used for:
 - Documents not available, not yet published, available only at expense.
 - Documents in a different language than English
 - Documents with incomplete reference.



ANNEX III A

TOOL 3

GENERAL TEMPLATE

FINAL DRAFT - 15.02.2010

PART 0		GENERAL INFORMATION
Q.1	What is the name of the assessment?	
Q.2	What organisation carried out the assessment?	
Q.3	Which is the publishing year of the assessment? Year: <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years old <input type="checkbox"/> More than 5 years old	
Q.4	Is the assessment part of a regular process? If yes, how often it is produced?	
GOVERNANCE		
PART 1	INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS	
Q.5	Was the assessment the result of an initiative by the body carrying it out? If not, was the assessment commissioned by another body or required by a piece of legislation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (specify) _____	
Q.6	Was more than one body involved in producing the assessment? If yes, specify which one(s).	
PART 2	NETWORKING	
Q.7	Are collaborating bodies networked? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not specified	
If yes, which is the nature of the network? _____		
PART 3	SCOPE	
Q.8	Which is the geographical coverage of the assessment? If regional (above national level), specify the region. <input type="checkbox"/> Global <input type="checkbox"/> Regional: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> National	
Q.9	Were there explicit objectives for the assessment? If so, what are they?	
Q.10	What is (are) the main purpose(s) of the assessment? <input type="checkbox"/> Status and trend assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Response assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Sectoral assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Impact assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Project-related assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Others (specify) _____	
Q.11	If a 'status and trend' assessment, what periods of time does the assessment cover?	
Q.12	If an 'integrated' assessment, integration was across what? <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental, economic and social aspects <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic areas	

Ecosystem components

PART 4 INTERACTION

Q.13 How scientific expertise was selected to carry out the assessment and brought into the process?

Q.14 Was interaction with policy makers and/or civil society organisations organised during the assessment process? If yes, how?

Q.15 Was there a peer review of the assessment during the assessment process, and/or before the final text was published?

Q.16 Were any specific arrangements made to coordinate the assessment with other relevant and ongoing assessment processes?

Q.17 Were specific efforts made to strengthen institutional, scientific or technical capacity for the assessment? If yes, in which form?

Yes Not specified

If yes, specify the type of efforts and provide comments.

Technical assistance Capacity building Financial
 Technology Others (specify) _____

PART 5 COMMUNICATION

Q.18 How was the report presented and the findings communicated?

Q.19 How was the assessment made available?

Q.20 Was a summary of the assessment produced as a separate output?

Q.21 In which languages is the assessment available?

Q.22 Does the assessment appear to be easy to understand and accessible to non-specialist readers?

INFRASTRUCTURE & SERVICES

PART 6 INFRASTRUCTURE

Q.23 What are the support information systems for data management/ sharing/ exchange?

PART 7 SERVICES

Q.24 Are any INSPIRE/GMES/Reportnet compatible developments in place or under consideration? If yes, list.

Q.25 Are the processes of data management/sharing/exchange facilitated? If yes, by whom and at which geographical level?

CONTENT

PART 8 THEMATIC COVERAGE

Q.26 What thematic area(s) does the assessment cover?

Q.27 Were there cross-cutting themes explicitly addressed? If yes, what are they?

Q.28 Were social and economic aspects covered by the assessment?

No In a limited way Extensively

PART 9 INFORMATION, DATA AND QUALITY CONTROL

Q.29 Were the type of information and the sources of data explicitly mentioned in the assessment?

Yes No

Q.30 On what information is the assessment based?

data (wholly) expert opinion (wholly) traditional knowledge (wholly)
 data (partly) expert opinion (partly) traditional knowledge (partly)

Q.31 Which were the main sources of data?

Regular data flows Statistical publications Project-based exercises
 Ad-hoc collection exercises Others (specify) _____

Q.32 Were metadata available on the information used?

Q.33 Were any legal /institutional agreements made for ensuring regular flows of data/information?

Q.34 If regular access to the data was possible, on which platforms?

websites hardcopies Others (specify) _____

Q.35 How did the assessment control the quality of the data/expert opinion/traditional knowledge used in it?

PART 10 INDICATORS AND ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Q.36 Did the assessment use any form of indicators? If yes, specify which one(s).

Q.37 Are any indicators produced based on major, regular data/information reporting flows?

Q.38 Are there common methodologies for production of indicators to allow comparison/aggregation at some geographical level? If yes, specify which one(s).

Q.39 Were modelling and scenarios tools specifically developed for and/or used in the assessment? If yes, specify which one(s).

Q.40 Was any particular conceptual framework used to organise the assessment? If yes, specify which one(s).

PART 11 OUTPUTS

Q.41 Did the assessment rank the severity of problems? If yes, specify major ranking(s).

Q.42 Did the assessment identify priority concerns? If yes, list the main ones.

Q.43 Did the assessment identify specific needs and emerging issues to be addressed? If yes, list the main ones.

Q.44 Did the assessment indicate gaps in the information needed for the analysis or in the scientific understanding of relevant processes? If yes, list the main ones.

Q.45 Did the assessment provide options for future action? If yes, at which stage? Provide details if available.

- Agenda setting Policy formulation Policy adoption
 Policy implementation Policy evaluation



ANNEX III B

THEME-SPECIFIC TEMPLATES FINAL DRAFT 01.03.2010_REV

WATER QUALITY	Detailed coverage	General coverage	Not covered
PART 1 CONTRIBUTION TO ASTANA			
The Astana conference will give special emphasis to two themes: (a) water and water-related ecosystems and (b) the green economy. Specify whether the assessment touches upon these themes, providing details of the topics touched within each of the two themes.			
WATER AND WATER-RELATED ECOSYSTEMS			
Is the aspect of water quality covered with respect to water and water-related ecosystems? If covered, to which of the following topics is a specific reference made in the assessment?			
Climate change impact on water			
- water availability (change in precipitation, river runoff, floods, droughts etc)			
- water quality			
- other issues			
Water scarcity and drought			
- water abstraction and use by sectors			
- measures for more efficient water use (water saving and conservation, water pricing)			
- climate change impacts on water scarcity and droughts			
- other issues			
Floods			
Structural measures: hydropower and inland navigation			
Water quality and pollution			
- drinking water quality (MDG, safe water, water and health)			
- bathing water quality			
- sanitation and wastewater treatment			
- nutrients – eutrophication; oxygen consuming substances			
- hazardous chemicals			
- other issues			
Ecological state			
- freshwater biodiversity (selected species)			
- freshwater habitats			
- invasive species			
- other issues			
GREEN ECONOMY			
Is the aspect of water quality covered with respect to the green economy? If covered, to which of the following topics is a specific reference made in the assessment?			
- eco-efficient and low-carbon economy			
- energy efficiency and renewable energy			

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| | - sustainable production and consumption
- Green Public Procurement | |
|--|--|--|

PART 2 SOER 2010 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Specify whether the assessment touches upon the following five cross-cutting issues, identified as structural elements in SOER 2010 – Part B.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| CC vulnerability and adaptation | | | |
| Ecosystems services | | | |
| Sustainable consumption | | | |
| Environment & health | | | |
| Cross-sectoral analysis | | | |

PART 3 KEY ISSUES FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN REGION

Is the analysis of water quality-related policy framework covered? If yes, specify whether it addresses:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| - targets | | |
| - relevance to other sectoral policies | | |
| - policy responses | | |

Is the analysis of water quality-related legal framework covered? If yes, specify at which level:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| - global (<i>for example, relevant Conventions as the London Convention etc.</i>) | | |
| - regional (supra-national) (<i>for example, relevant Conventions as the Barcelona Convention etc.</i>) | | |
| - EU (<i>for example, relevant Directives etc.</i>) | | |
| - national (<i>for example, relevant laws, decrees, etc</i>) | | |

Is discussion on water quality trends covered in the assessment? If yes, specify with regard to which of the following environments:

- | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| - freshwater | | |
| - coastal water | | |
| - marine | | |

Is the analysis of water pollutants covered in the assessment? If yes, specify the pollutant's category:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| - nutrients | | |
| - pesticides | | |
| - microbes | | |
| - industrial chemicals | | |
| - metals | | |
| - pharmaceutical products | | |
| - other (specify) _____ | | |

Is the analysis of water pollutants from specific sectors covered in the assessment? If yes, specify the sectors:

	- agriculture	
	- industry	
	- domestic dwellings	
	- other (specify) _____	
Is the analysis of water pollutants impact covered in the assessment? If yes, specify on which of the following:		
	- human health (including via drinking water quality)	
	- ecosystems	
Is the identification of hot spots for water quality covered in the assessment?		
Is discussion on trans-boundary issues covered in the assessment?		
Is the outlining of relevant water quality-related networks/initiatives covered in the assessment? If yes, specify these networks/initiatives:		
Is reporting on water quality-related best practices covered in the assessment?		

DRAFT

ANNEX IV

TOOL 4

WATER QUALITY – draft 22.03.2010	
ANALYSIS	
Assessments (selection of)	
Relevance - How assessments came to be considered 'relevant'. [Derived from the general template]. ‘Relevance’ denotes the ability of an assessment to address the particular concerns of those using it. It is also referred to as ‘salience’. An assessment is relevant if the user is aware of it and it informs his/her decisions or behaviour.	
Informing decision-making	
Regularity of the information process	
Geographical scope of the assessments	
Communication	
Legitimacy - How assessments came to be considered 'legitimate' [Derived from the general template]. ‘Legitimacy’ is a measure of the acceptability or perceived fairness of an assessment. A legitimate assessment is one that has been conducted in a manner that allows users to be satisfied that their interests have been taken into account appropriately and that the process has been fair.	
Fairness of the process	
Networking	
Credibility - How assessments came to be considered 'credible'. [Derived from the general template]. ‘Credibility’ is concerned with whether the knowledge assembled in the assessment is believed to be valid. An assessment gains credibility and authority by virtue of its information, methods and procedures.	
Information, data, indicators and quality control	
Assessment tools	
Infrastructure and services	
SYNTHESIS ON CONTENT [Derived from the specific template].	
Contribution to Astana - Is the aspect of water quality covered with respect to (a) water and water-related ecosystems and (b) the green economy?	

SOER 2010 – Cross cutting issues (CC vulnerability and adaptation, Ecosystems services, Sustainable consumption, Environment & health, Cross-sectoral analysis)	
Key issues for the pan-European region	▪
CONCLUSIONS	

Example of filled template

WATER QUALITY – draft 22.03.2010	
ANALYSIS	
Assessments (selection of)	
<p>The original selection of source documents in the SOER draft chapter (2nd draft) seems to be limited in scope in terms of threats to water quality. It includes research works/academic literature focused on very specific topics. Apparently, several key assessments are missing, particularly those at a transboundary level. National reports are drawn only from the UK and the Netherlands.</p> <p>The below paragraphs are based on a selection of 12 assessments, several of which identified by external expertise and not included in the SOER 2010 list of references.</p>	
<p>Relevance - <i>How assessments came to be considered 'relevant'. [Derived from the general template].</i></p> <p>'Relevance' denotes the ability of an assessment to address the particular concerns of those using it. It is also referred to as 'salience'. An assessment is relevant if the user is aware of it and it informs his/her decisions or behaviour.</p>	
Informing decision-making	All assessments identify clearly the concerns but few rank the problems. Assessments carried out by UN agencies (UNECE, UNESCO, GEF/UNEP) have the explicit target to support policy formulation and/or policy implementation; the same applies to the reporting obligations under EC Directives. All other assessments are limited to an informative role, identifying concerns, data and analysis gaps but without proposing options for future action. Very few assessment highlight emerging issues.
Regularity of the information process	One third of the screened assessments were produced on a regular basis (every 3 or more years). Three assessments were based on EEA-CSI thus are reviewed regularly, though not systematically. UN and EU agencies also produced material (studies, assessments) on ad hoc basis, thus not necessarily linked to regular reporting and data flows.
Geographical scope of the assessments	UN agencies seem to focus on global and regional assessments, while EU agencies and the EC focus on European or pan-European level. National and research papers have a national or no geographic scope, respectively.

Communication	The Internet allows for most of the assessments to be made available to the large public, usually as PDF files freely downloadable. With the exception of research-based assessments, they are easy to understand and accessible to non-specialist readers. English is still the most common language. Awareness on the assessments' release is not systematically raised.
Legitimacy - How assessments came to be considered 'legitimate' [Derived from the general template]. 'Legitimacy' is a measure of the acceptability or perceived fairness of an assessment. A legitimate assessment is one that has been conducted in a manner that allows users to be satisfied that their interests have been taken into account appropriately and that the process has been fair.	
Fairness of the process	Overall, there is lack of clarity on how expertise is selected to carry out the assessments. With the exception of those processes where governments are required to deliver or provide necessary data and information directly, consultation with policy makers seems absent or very limited. Consultation with civil society organizations is rarely undertaken. Peer reviews of the assessments are not regularly carried out.
Networking	Networking arrangements, if any, are usually very unclear and so is the share of responsibility of the various participating organizations with respect to the reporting process.
Credibility - How assessments came to be considered 'credible'. [Derived from the general template]. 'Credibility' is concerned with whether the knowledge assembled in the assessment is believed to be valid. An assessment gains credibility and authority by virtue of its information, methods and procedures.	
Information, data, indicators and quality control	Only 7 assessments were based on regular data flows, the other being based on data collected ad hoc. Assessments not regularly carried out are not necessarily those carried out at national level and/or research-based; global reports may also be undertaken on ad hoc basis for a specific scope (GEF/UNEP). How the information is handled is usually specified in the assessment; handling methodologies also vary widely... There is no evidence in the assessments that data quality control was undertaken. Metadata are not systematically made available or pointed to in the assessments.
Assessment tools	A wide range of 'indicators' is used; rarely these indicators belong to a 'common' set, with the exception of the EEA CSI. The DPSIR framework is a common tool for organizing the assessments but not the rule. Scientific papers follow a traditional structure encompassing introduction, method, results, conclusions; others formulate a hypothesis and test it
Infrastructure and services	The use of infrastructure and services as supportive tools of the reporting process seems to be limited to EEA-led or EC-driven reporting processes.
SYNTHESIS ON CONTENT <i>[Derived from the specific template].</i>	
Contribution to Astana - Is the aspect of water quality covered with respect to (a) water and water-related ecosystems and (b) the green economy?	(a) All the selected assessments related to some extent to 'water quality and pollution'; only 50 % of the assessments considered the 'ecological state' of waters and only 42 % the 'impact of climate change on water'. Three assessments addressed 'water scarcity and drought' and 'floods', and only 1 water-related structural measure. (b) None of the 12 assessments were touching upon the issue of green economy.

SOER 2010 – Cross cutting issues (CC vulnerability and adaptation, Ecosystems services, Sustainable consumption, Environment & health, Cross-sectoral analysis)	5 out of the 12 selected assessments did not touch upon the SOER 2010 five cross cutting issues. In the others, the most frequently considered cross-cutting issues are 'environment & health' (in 5 assessments) and 'ecosystem services' (in 4 assessments).
Key issues for the pan-European region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only 66 % of the assessments refer to the policy framework, mostly addressing targets-related issues and, to a lesser extent, the relevance to other sectoral policies. Policy responses were considered only by 4 assessments but in a detailed manner only in 2 UN-led reports. ▪ With a few exceptions (3 assessments) trends are presented, the majority focusing on freshwaters. ▪ The analysis of water pollutants mainly refers to nutrients, pesticides and industrial chemicals, but also to pharmaceutical products. Pollutants from the industry and agriculture are given more space than those from domestic dwellings. ▪ Water pollutants impact is not analyzed in 33 % of the selected assessments. When analyzed, it mainly refers to impact on ecosystems rather than on human health. ▪ 50 % of the assessments identify hot spots for water quality; 42 % address trans-boundary issues; only 25 % refer to relevant water quality-related networks/initiatives; and only 20 % report on water quality-related best practices.

CONCLUSIONS

Gaps in the analysis. There seems to be a gap in the selection of assessments considered for SOER 2010. In particular, concerns are on research papers with a narrow-thematic scope and on national papers coming from only two of the EU-27 countries (the Netherlands, UK). The relevance of the 12 selected assessments seems satisfactory but often limited in scope; several of the assessments will be unable to inform other policy-making process than the ones they were committed for. Concerns. Several of the assessments are not transparent on how the expertise undertaking the assessment was selected, on the way the reporting process was organised, whether consultation was carried out and with whom. Interaction with civil society and policy makers seems to be rarely envisaged, unless when reporting is carried out by governments directly within existing reporting processes based on regular data flows or under specific reporting obligations. (poor legitimacy) Problems. Even the most recently published trend assessments always refer to data that are at least three years old (i.e. if published in 2010 the latest available data is in 2007). This gap is worsened by the fact that an AoA will rely on a very diverse range of sources, using different indicators, varying methodologies and covering different temporal trends. Concurrently, the take up of common platforms for data sharing (infrastructure and services) is mainly EU-driven under the leading of EU agencies (EEA) and institutions (EC) (credibility is an issue). Emerging issues. In terms of content, selected assessments did not address at all one of the two topics that will be emphasised at the Astana conference (green economy).

Needs. The fact that Anglo-Saxon countries publicise better their studies/reports (facilitated both by the language and, possibly, by a more pronounced culture for sharing) shall not prevent from considering a wider range of sources.

Options for the future. Multi-lingual expertise capable of accessing material in several languages is necessary. Alternatively, a mechanism allowing countries to propose national or regional assessments to the best of their knowledge could be put in place.